

# Joshua 8:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city.

## Analysis

**And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city.**

This dramatic moment recalls Moses lifting his hands during the battle against Amalek (Exodus 17:11-13), establishing a typological connection between Israel's two greatest leaders. The Hebrew verb *neteh* (נָתַח, "stretch out") appears in both accounts, indicating not merely physical gesture but symbolic representation of divine power operating through human agency. Just as Moses' raised hands signaled God's intervention, Joshua's extended spear announces divine victory.

The phrase "I will give it" (*et'nenah*, אֶתְּנֶנָּה) uses the imperfect tense, indicating ongoing or imminent action—the victory God had declared completed (verse 1, perfect tense) now unfolds in real-time experience. This grammatical progression illustrates how divine sovereignty and human experience interface: what is eternally settled in God's decree becomes progressively realized in human history.

Joshua's obedience in stretching forth the spear demonstrates faith expressing itself in action. The spear remains extended "until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai" (verse 26), symbolizing sustained dependence on divine power

throughout the battle. Like the bronze serpent (Numbers 21:8-9) later typifying Christ (John 3:14), the uplifted spear directs faith toward God's provision.

## Historical Context

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The kidon (קִידוֹן, "spear" or "javelin") was a standard weapon of ancient warfare, lighter than the long spear but heavier than a dart. Archaeological finds from Late Bronze Age Canaan include various spearheads and javelin points. Joshua's spear likely served as both weapon and command staff, similar to how modern officers use distinctive insignia to direct troops.

The divine instruction to hold the spear extended throughout the battle transforms a military implement into a symbol of covenantal warfare. This parallels ancient Near Eastern practices where kings raised staffs or weapons as battle signals. However, Joshua's extended spear differs qualitatively—it represents divine presence operating through Israel's leader. The burning of Ai (verses 19-20) created a smoke signal visible from great distance, causing panic among Ai's defenders.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How does Joshua's extended spear as a symbol of dependence on God challenge our tendency to rely on our own strength?
2. What "extended spear" moments in your life require sustained faith until God's promises are fully realized?

3. How does this passage's combination of divine miracle and human action inform our understanding of God's providence?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה ה	אֶל	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	וַיִּט	בַּכִּיד וֹן	אֲשֶׁר
said	And the LORD	H413	And Joshua	Stretch out	the spear	H834
H559	H3068		H3091	H5186	H3591	
בְּיָד ו	אֶל	הָעִי	כִּי	בְּיָד ו	אֶתֶּן נָה	
it into thine hand	H413	toward Ai	H3588	it into thine hand	for I will give	
H3027		H5857		H3027	H5414	
וַיִּט	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	בַּכִּיד וֹן	אֲשֶׁר	בְּיָד ו	אֶל	הָעִיר:
Stretch out	And Joshua	the spear	H834	it into thine hand	H413	toward the city
H5186	H3091	H3591		H3027		H5892

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joshua 8:26** (Parallel theme): For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

**Job 15:25** (Parallel theme): For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.