

# Joshua 8:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day.

## Analysis

**Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day**—The verb **burnt** (שָׁרַף, saraf) indicates total conflagration, while **heap** (תָּלָה, tel, mound/ruin) became the technical term for destroyed cities. The phrase **unto this day** (עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, ad hayom hazeh) was a common formula indicating the author wrote while ruins remained visible, authenticating the historical account.

The permanent desolation served as a lasting memorial to God's judgment on sin and victory over enemies. Unlike conquered cities preserved for habitation (11:13), Ai was made an example. The Hebrew name **Ai** (אֵי, ha-Ai) ironically means 'the ruin'—its destruction fulfilled its name. This foreshadows Babylon's future fate: 'Babylon shall become heaps... without an inhabitant' (Jeremiah 51:37).

## Historical Context

The phrase 'unto this day' places composition during eyewitness memory of the event, likely during Joshua's lifetime or shortly after. Archaeological debate surrounds Ai's location (et-Tell vs. Khirbet el-Maqatir), but both sites show Late Bronze Age destruction layers. The perpetual desolation served as a landmark and teaching monument for generations of Israelites.

## Related Passages

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

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

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

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

## Study Questions

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1. What 'ruins' in your spiritual life serve as memorials to God's deliverance and judgment?
2. How do you preserve the memory of God's past victories to strengthen present faith?
3. What does the permanent desolation of Ai teach about the finality of God's judgment on persistent sin?

## Interlinear Text

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עַזְלָם תִּשְׁרֵף יְהוָה עַת בָּעֵד תִּשְׁרֵם כָּל עַזְלָם  
burnt And Joshua H853 Ai and made it an heap for ever  
H8313 H3091 H5857 H7760 H8510 H5769

הַזֹּה בָּיִם עַד שְׁמַם הַזֹּה  
even a desolation unto this day  
H8077 H5704 H3117 H2088

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 13:16** (Parallel theme): And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again.