

# 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** (שָׂרַף, saraf) indicates total conflagration, while **heap** (תֵּל, 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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וַיִּשָּׂרָף	וְהָיָה עַ	אֵת	הָעִיר	וַיַּשְׁמֵךְ	הַתֵּל	עוֹלָם
burnt	And Joshua	H853	Ai	and made	it an heap	for ever
H8313	H3091		H5857	H7760	H8510	H5769
שָׁמָּה ה	עַד	הַיּוֹם	הַזֶּה:			
even a desolation	H5704	unto this day	H2088			
H8077		H3117				

## 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.