

# Joshua & Peter: The Sufficiency of God

## Lesson 9: The Sufficiency of God's Judgment

**Key Verse:** Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies.

They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction.

I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. ~Joshua 7.11-12

As you read the title of this lesson did you think, "What? Isn't that title an oxymoron? Sufficiency and judgment don't belong in the same sentence!" Yet, God's total defeat of **sin**'s deadly consequence through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus explains the sufficiency of our Savior as the Lamb of God who removed your sin, and its deserved deadly judgment. No longer devoted to destruction, your **Jehovah Nissi** has devoted you to living eternally under His banner of love. *O Righteous God, who can stand in Your judgment? Apart from Christ, no one! Only You can protect us under the banner of Your holy name. Humble us and increase our hope in Your salvation as we study the consequences of our sin. Amen.*

**Joshua 6:** Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. **2** And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. **3** You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. **4** Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. **5** And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him."

**6** So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." **7** And he said to the people, "Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD." **8** And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them. **9** The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually. **10** But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout." **11** So he caused the ark of the LORD to circle the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

**12** Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. **13** And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually. **14** And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days. **15** On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. **16** And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city. **17** And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. **18** But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. **19** But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD."

**20** So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. **21** Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword. **22** But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her." **23** So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. **24** And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. **25** But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

**26** Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho." At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates." **27** So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

**CH 7** But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel.

**2** Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." And the men went up and spied out Ai. **3** And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are few." **4** So about three thousand men went up there from the people. And they fled before the men of Ai, **5** and the men of Ai killed about thirty-six of their men and chased them before the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them at the descent. And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

**6** Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads. **7** And Joshua said, "Alas, O LORD God, why have you brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan! **8** O LORD, what can I say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! **9** For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will you do for your great name?"

**10** The LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? **11** Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. **12** Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. **13** Get up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, "There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you."'

**14** In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes. And the tribe that the LORD takes by lot shall come near by clans. And the clan that the LORD takes shall come near by households. And the household that the LORD takes shall come near man by man. **15** And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel." **16** So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken. **17** And he brought near the clans of Judah, and the clan of the Zerahites was taken. And he brought near the clan of the Zerahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. **18** And he brought near his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

**19** Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me." **20** And Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: **21** when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar (~same value as the gold bar)<sup>1</sup>, and 200 shekels of silver, (~\$400) and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels (~\$4,000), then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath." **22** So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. **23** And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel. And they laid them down before the LORD. **24** And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor.

**25** And Joshua said, "Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD brings trouble on you today." And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. **26** And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.

**CH 8** And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land. **2** And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves. Lay an ambush against the city, behind it." **3** So Joshua and all the fighting men arose to go up to Ai. And Joshua chose 30,000 mighty men of valor and sent them out by night. **4** And he commanded them, "Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you remain ready. **5** And I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And when they come out against us just as before, we shall flee before them. **6** And they will come out after us, until we have drawn them away from the city. For they will say, 'They are fleeing from us, just as before.' So we will flee before them. **7** Then you shall rise up from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will give it into your hand. **8** And as soon as you have taken the city, you shall set the city on fire. You shall do according to the word of

<sup>1</sup> All values are approximate taken from a variety of commentary sources. They could have been worth far more, or less!

the LORD. See, I have commanded you.” **9** So Joshua sent them out. And they went to the place of ambush and lay between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai, but Joshua spent that night among the people. **10** Joshua arose early in the morning and mustered the people and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. **11** And all the fighting men who were with him went up and drew near before the city and encamped on the north side of Ai, with a ravine between them and Ai.

**12** He took about 5,000 men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. **13** So they stationed the forces, the main encampment that was north of the city and its rear guard west of the city. But Joshua spent that night in the valley. **14** And as soon as the king of Ai saw this, he and all his people, the men of the city, hurried and went out early to the appointed place toward the Arabah to meet Israel in battle. But he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city. **15** And Joshua and all Israel pretended to be beaten before them and fled in the direction of the wilderness. **16** So all the people who were in the city were called together to pursue them, and as they pursued Joshua they were drawn away from the city. **17** Not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. They left the city open and pursued Israel.

**18** Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand.” And Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. **19** And the men in the ambush rose quickly out of their place, and as soon as he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and captured it. And they hurried to set the city on fire. **20** So when the men of Ai looked back, behold, the smoke of the city went up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that, for the people who fled to the wilderness turned back against the pursuers. **21** And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had captured the city, and that the smoke of the city went up, then they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. **22** And the others came out from the city against them, so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side. And Israel struck them down, until there was left none that survived or escaped. **23** But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him near to Joshua. **24** When Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the open wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them to the very last had fallen by the edge of the sword, all Israel returned to Ai and struck it down with the edge of the sword. **25** And all who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000, all the people of Ai.

**26** But Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had devoted all the inhabitants of Ai to destruction. **27** Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as their plunder, according to the word of the LORD that he commanded Joshua. **28** So Joshua burned Ai and made it forever a heap of ruins, as it is to this day. **29** And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening. And at sunset Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the gate of the city and raised over it a great heap of stones, which stands there to this day.

**30** At that time Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal, **31** just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, “an altar of uncut stones, upon which no man has wielded an iron tool.” And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings. **32** And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. **33** And all Israel, sojourner as well as native born, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded at the first, to bless the people of Israel. **34** And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law.

**35** There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.

### **Diamonds:**

#### **Chapter 6**

The division between chapters 5 and 6 of Joshua should not be considered a break in the storyline. After Joshua worships the Commander of the army of the LORD (5.15), Joshua is immediately instructed on the military strategy God will use to defeat the Amorites residing in Jericho (6.1-11).

1. What is the order of this Israelite parade-style military strategy? Who/what is first, second, and so on?

One of the more intriguing strategies in this seven-day march is the command that all people are to remain silent during the march (V 10). Consider several million people of all ages marching, in silence, around the fortified walls of Jericho every day, for seven days.

2. How do you think the residents of Jericho were behaving toward the Israelites by day six? In your answer, consider what Joshua 5.1 tells us of their initial reaction to the crossing of the Jordan. Now, likely over two weeks later, this silent Israelite military “parade” is walking around their walls. How do you think the residents of Jericho responded to the Israelites?

A second intriguing strategy is the command to march for seven days with the priest blowing seven trumpets on the seventh day while circling the city seven times. This is not an insignificant instruction from the Commander of the army of the LORD. In fact, this proves God’s eternal sovereignty over *all* of history.

Revelation 9-11 gives us the spiritually symbolic meaning of the seven priests who blow the seven trumpets on the seventh day. The first six trumpets symbolize the reality of God’s judgment through destruction and death (Revelation 8.6-9.21). God’s judgment goes before the seventh trumpet whose blast ushers in God’s kingdom and His reign (Revelation 11.15). Worship immediately ensues and, in Revelation 11.19, God’s temple in heaven opens and the ark of His covenant is displayed inside!

Consider the distance in time between Jericho’s destruction and the future consummation of God’s kingdom not yet experienced in Revelation. In this military strategy against Jericho, God is pointing us toward His final fulfillment of His covenant promise!

3. How is your faith in our eternally sovereign God bolstered by His promise to Joshua in Joshua 1.9? What about His promise in 1 Peter 1.3-5?

## Chapter 7

4. According to Joshua 6.17-19, to whom do the spoils of the conquest of Jericho belong?
5. What does Achan admit is his sin (7.20-21)?
6. List all of Achan’s belongings and family that were destroyed (7.24). Why do you think Achan needed, or wanted, what he had stolen from God?
7. The list of Achan’s belongings and family indicates he was likely wealthy. What caution do you find in his story? In other words, what does God want you to know about Him, and how is He warning you through Achan’s destruction?

In 8.27, God allows Israel to take livestock and spoils from their conquest of Ai. God did not change His mind about post-conquest plunder, rather this was always His plan. How tragic it is that Achan didn’t wait for the LORD’s timing to give him what he had wanted.

8. Which verses in Joshua 7 or any other place in Scripture help you persevere in waiting on the LORD over rushing into your own methods and schemes to get what you want or need in your own timing?
9. It is difficult to comprehend the necessity of Achan’s total destruction and elimination from the Israelite community. To better understand the impact of his hidden sin, identify the consequences to others of Achan’s theft from God from 7.1-9:
10. What was the cost of your sin from 1 Peter 1.17-19?

11. Write your Scripture-Soaked Prayer in response to the reality that you, unlike Achan, will not bear the cost of your sin. Use any scripture that has caused your heart to face-plant before God.

Like Joshua, we may pray imperfectly (7.7-9), but there is no heart cry from His people that the Lord cannot hear (1 Kings 8.22-61; Revelation 5.8). He knows our hearts, our minds, and our circumstances that are compelling us to a cry of confusion, blame, misunderstanding, and disbelief (1 Peter 3.12, 4.7). Therefore, He will never turn His ear away from our crying out to Him. (Note that a rebellious heart is unlike a crushed and confused heart. God responds to a rebellious heart in judgment, while He comforts and comes alongside a crushed heart. See Isaiah 50.5-7; 57.15; Psalm 31.15-18 + 22, 51.17; Zephaniah 3.1-2.)

12. Think about a time when a circumstance was a “punch in the gut” resulting in confusion and disorientation about God, His purpose, and His plan for you and/or your family. What was your immediate heart’s cry to Him? What was His reply and/or response to you? What did God teach you about God?

**Deity: Jehovah Nissi (Banner)**~Jehovah-Nissi or Yahweh Nissi is Hebrew for “The LORD is My Banner”. This name for God is recorded only *once* in the Bible, in Exodus 17.15, after Israel defeated the Amalekites in a battle.

This battle was won in an unusual manner. Exodus 17.11 says, “Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed.” When Moses’ arms grew weary, his brother, Aaron, and a man named Hur held them up. After the battle, Moses built an altar and named it Jehovah-Nissi, “The LORD is My Banner.”

“Yahweh Nissi still leads the way for His people today. He is our defense, the One who protects us under the banner of His holy name (Isaiah 51.22a). Though our spiritual adversary seeks our defeat, our victory is assured because we belong to Yahweh Nissi (Song of Solomon 2.3-4; 1 John 2.1-2).”<sup>2</sup>

### Chapter 8

13. Read Exodus 17.8-16. What do you imagine Moses “recite[d] in the ears of Joshua” about God?
14. What role do you think Moses’ obedience to God had in Joshua’s obedience to God in 8.18-26?
15. Who has God placed in your life to “recite in [your] ears” about God? Likewise, in whose ears are you reciting (1 Peter 2.5)?

**Doctrine: Sin**~ Sin is any lack of conformity to the will of God. It is an outrage against God and a source of untold harm to ourselves and others. It subjects us to the wrath of God (John 3.36; Romans 1.18-20; 2.5). It has eternal consequences (Romans 6.23).

The Bible teaches that all are sinners and sin has so pervaded human nature that “there is no one righteous, not even one: there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God” (Romans 3.10-11). Sin’s power is so great it has affected our moral, intellectual, and decision-making capabilities, so that all fall short of God’s

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<sup>2</sup>Ava Pennington, One Year Alone with God: 366 Devotions on the Names of God

standards, fail to understand the gospel even when it is explained, and flee from God rather than seeking Him.

Our sin is an affront to the holiness of God. He cannot and will not tolerate sin because He is supremely holy. The penalty of sin is death (Romans 6.23), not only physical death but also eternal, spiritual death, which is eternal condemnation and separation from God.

Jesus Christ bore this penalty for us when He died in our place on the cross. However, the power of sin is still present. Believers are only able to stand against it through trust in the power of the Holy Spirit working together with obedience to God.

When we understand the power and the penalty of sin, then we can more fully understand the necessity for and appreciate the One Who died in our place...to pay the wages of OUR sin: Jesus Christ.

16. Imagine how Rahab and her family must have felt to experience their first worship of God with God's people recorded in Joshua 8.30-35. As they listened to the curses and the blessings, they knew this God had just saved them from His wrath, even though they knew little about Him. Recall when you first understood your salvation. What was your immediate response and feeling? How does Psalm 103 help you express your sentiment toward our Savior, Jesus?

17. As mentioned at the beginning of the lesson, the title of the lesson on first reading seems illogical. How do you now understand the "sufficiency of God's judgment"? Likewise, how would you explain it to a stranger?

**Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:** (this was/is to be completed through the instructions in question 11)

### **Lecture Outline:**

**Aim:** We need to know the sweet taste of . . . defeat.

- I. The Necessity of Defeat (Joshua 6) **T1:** When our wills submit to God, we experience the sweet blessing of His presence.
  - a. Are you following God or are you expecting Him to follow you?
  - b. How can you make more time for prayer and reading of God's Word in order to know His leading?
  - c. What area of obedience do you struggle to submit to God?
- II. The Revelation of Defeat (Joshua 7) **T2:** God lets us feel the consequences of our sin to draw us to repentance and back to fellowship with Himself.
  - a. Can you see the goodness in God's discipline in your life?
  - b. How do you see Him pursuing you?
  - c. How do you see His prizing of your purification?
- III. The Joy of Defeat (Joshua 8) **T3:** God can use even our defeat in sin for His glory as part of His sovereign plan.
  - a. How does knowing God can change sin and brokenness into something beautiful change your outlook on life?
  - b. How will it change the way you pray?
  - c. How will it change the way you respond to seemingly unanswered prayers?