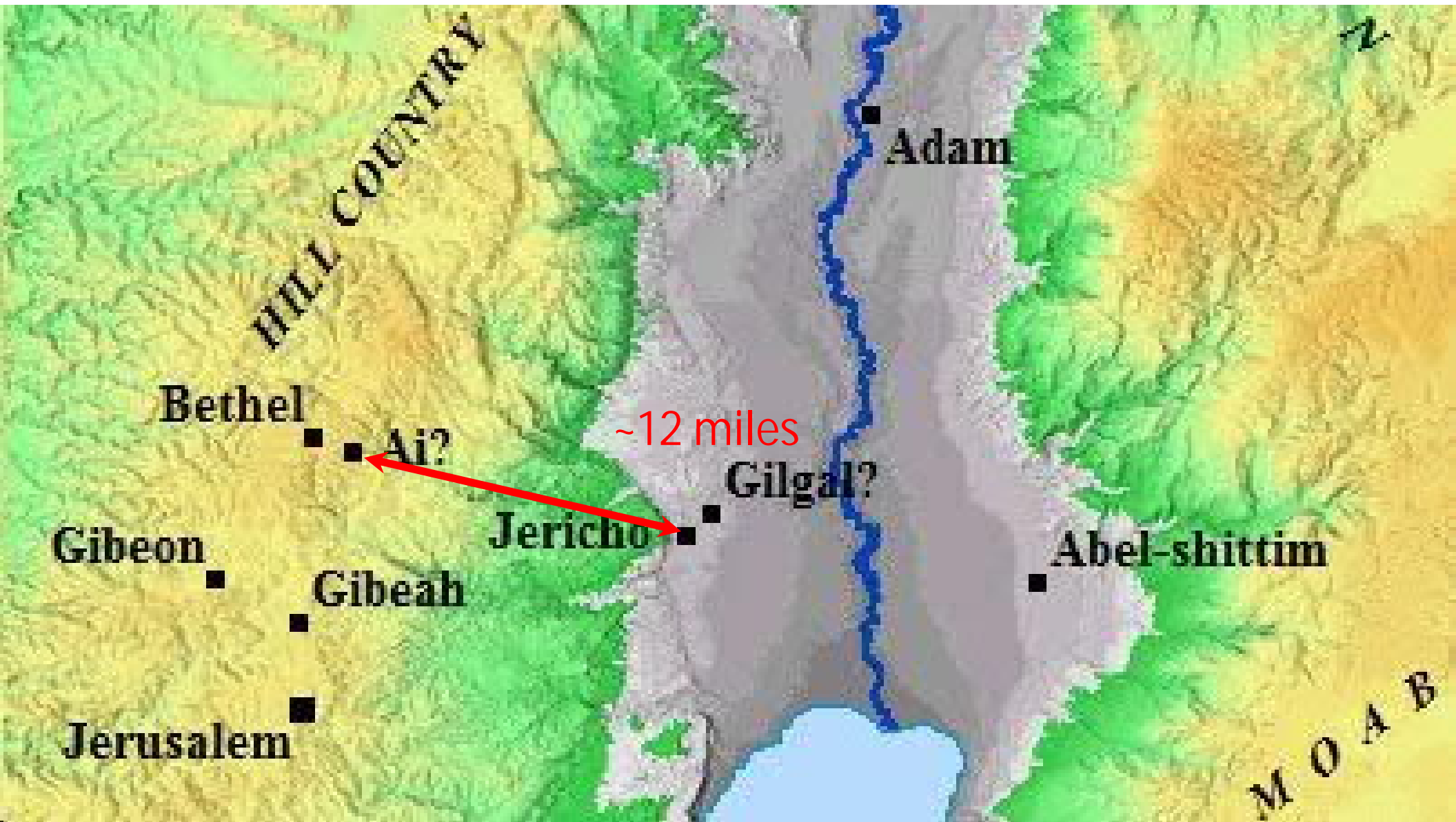


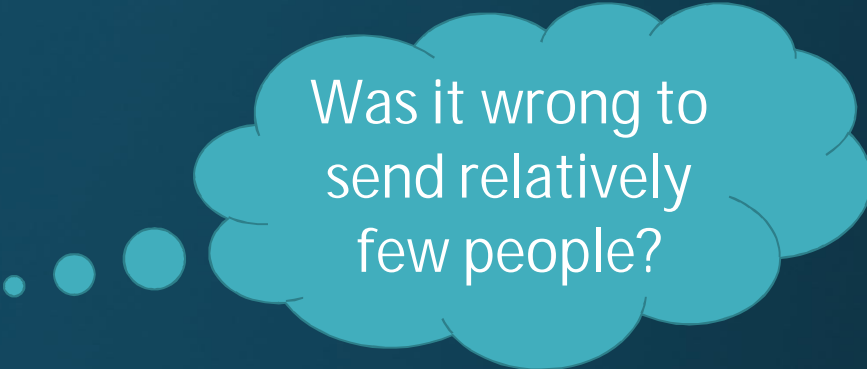
Abraham used to live between  
Ai and Bethel (Gen. 12:8)

Joshua 7 – 8

# Little Ai, Big Problem



# Achan's Iniquity



Was it wrong to send relatively few people?

- Scouting report: easy win, send a few
- Stunning upset for the Aiites; Joshua cries to God
- God reveals the reason for defeat (sin) & prescribes remedy
- What lessons can be learned here?
  - God sees everything
  - God held an entire population accountable for the sin of one
  - God does not appreciate being robbed
  - "I saw...I coveted...I took" (see Gen. 3:6; James 1:14-15)
- How do we reconcile family members' deaths with Deut. 24:16?

"...nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone will be put to death for his own sin."

# Analogous Incidents

## Defeat at Ai

- Followed resounding victory at Jericho
- Root cause was a hidden sin
- The sin was covetousness
- Capital punishment executed by Israel, witnessed by all
- Afterwards, success resumed

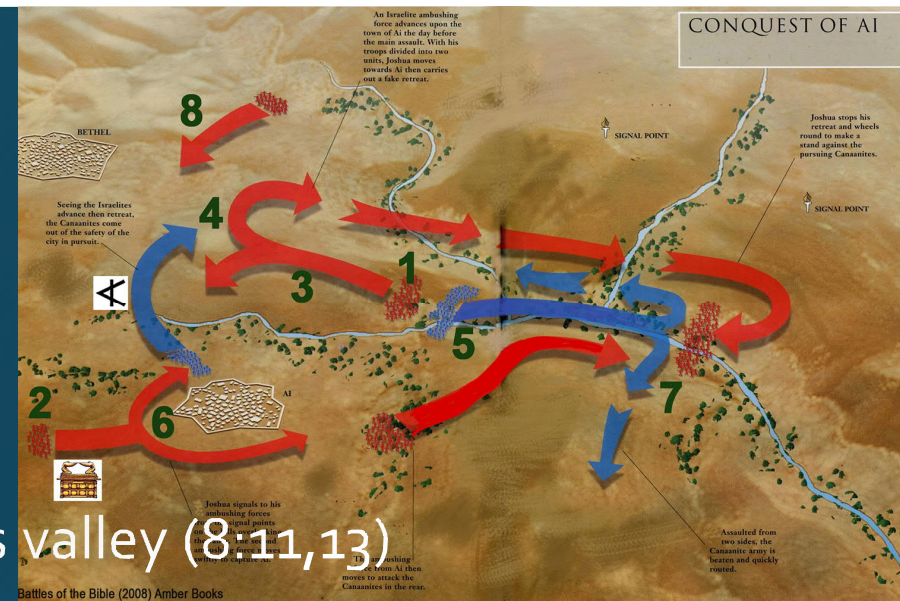
## Ananias & Sapphira

- Followed the resounding success of Pentecost
- Root cause was a hidden sin
- The sin was greed
- Capital punishment executed by God, witnessed by many
- Afterwards, success resumed

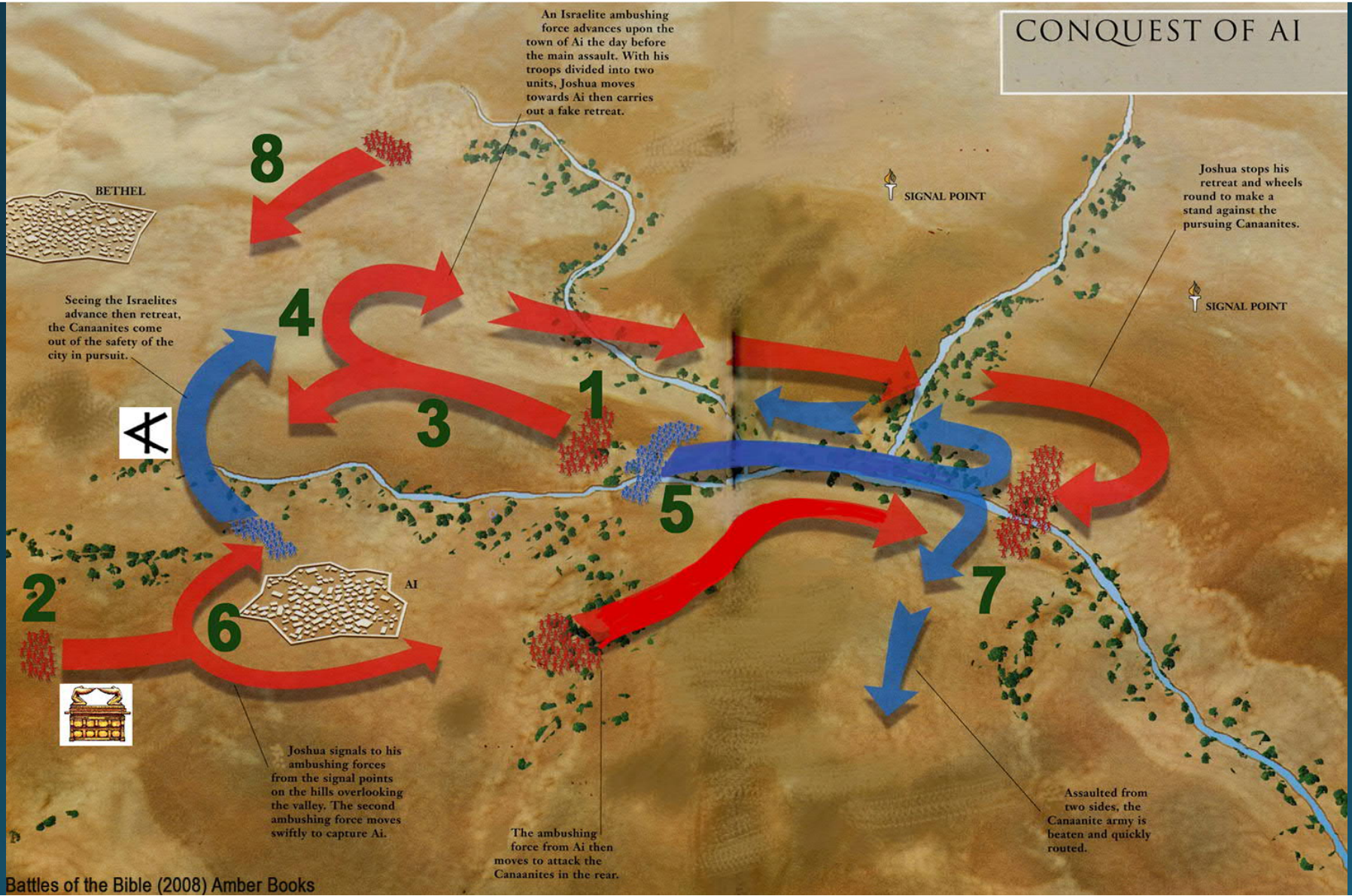
**God is making a point early on**

# Avenging Israel

- “Do not fear or be dismayed” (8:1)
- Troops positioned west of Ai (8:9,13)
- Joshua approaches from north, across valley (8:11,13)
- Ai & Bethel attack; Joshua retreats (8:14-17)
- Joshua stretches out javelin as a signal (8:18)
- Rear guard invades unprotected Ai; starts fire (8:19-20)
- Joshua reverses field, confronts enemies (8:21)
- Ambush troops close from behind (8:22)



# CONQUEST OF AI



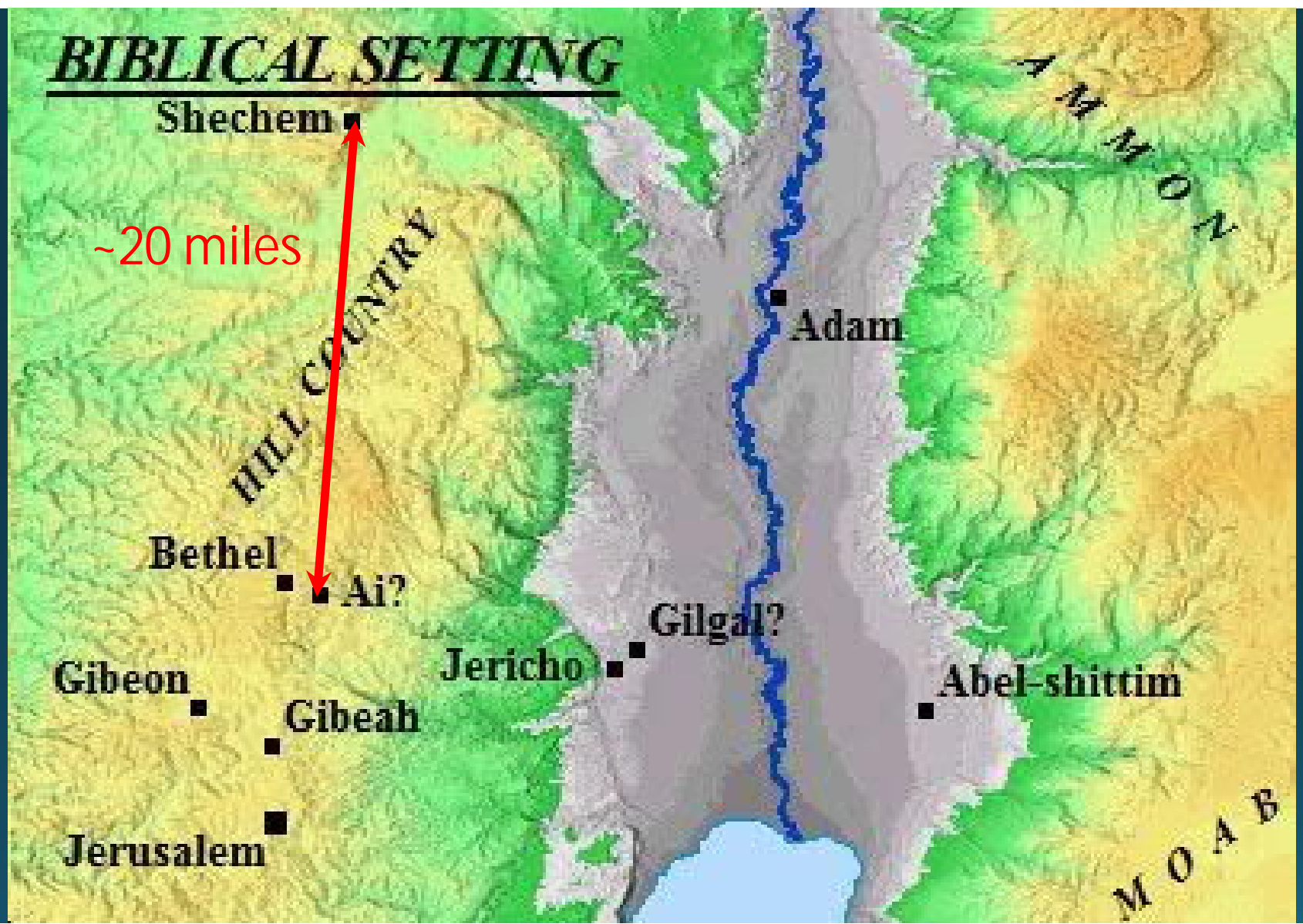


# Annihilation & Incineration

- Joshua's javelin remained outstretched; is that significant?
  - Similar to Exo. 17:11-13; God is in control of battle
- 12,000 fatalities (may include Bethel also)
- City burned to a heap (Ai = "heap")
- People allowed to keep livestock and material goods (8:2,27)
- King hanged until sundown, then unceremoniously dumped



# BIBLICAL SETTING



Shechem

~20 miles

HILL COUNTRY

Bethel

Ai?

Gibeon

Gibeah

Jerusalem

Jericho

Gilgal?

Adam

Abel-shittim

AMMON

MOAB

# Approvals & Imprecations

- Israel carried out Moses' instructions from Deut. 27-28
- Altar of uncut stones built on Mount Ebal
- Other large stones coated with lime plaster (27:4)
- Law was written on the plaster (27:8)
- Israel distributed between Ebal & Gerizim to recite blessings & curses (27:11-13)
- Joshua reads Law to everyone (8:35)
- With this ceremony, Israel lays claim to their land.

FOCUS ON GOD





Man Communicates to God

God  
Communicates  
to Man



# Joshua's Altar

Deuteronomy 27:2-8  
Joshua 8:30-35



<https://www.bible.ca/archeology/panorama-israel-archeology-joshuas-altar.jpg>

# Appropriate Idea

- Why would God send them all the way up there for this?
- Shechem was where God promised land to Abram (Gen. 12:6-7)
  - Jacob's well was there (Gen. 33:18-20 + John 4:6)
  - Joseph's bones were buried there (Josh. 24:32)
- The two mountains form a natural amphitheater

# Natural Amphitheater at Shechem

Scientists have tested this natural amphitheater many times and it works



**Mt. Gerizim Blessings**

- Simeon
- Levi
- Judah
- Issachar
- Joseph
- Benjamin

Town of Shechem  
(Modern Nabalus)

1 mile  
1.6 km



**Mt. Ebal Curses**

- Reuben
- Gad
- Asher
- Zebulun
- Dan
- Naphtali

**Joshua's Altar 2 km**

## Ceremony in Shechem

Deuteronomy 11:22-30; 27:1-13; Joshua 8:30-35

© 2008 National Geographic Society

© 2008 Europa Technologies  
Image © 2008 DigitalGlobe  
Streaming 100%

[www.bible.ca](http://www.bible.ca)

© 2007 Google™

Eye alt 1.88 km

Pointer 32°13'05.30" N 35°16'20.09" E elev 563 m  
424 m