

Joshua 7:16-26 The Culprit Discovered and Punished

¹⁶ Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was taken.

¹⁷ The clans of Judah came forward, and he took the Zerahites. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was taken. ¹⁸ Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

¹⁹ Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give him the praise. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me."

²⁰ Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done:

²¹ When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

²² So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath.

²³ They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the LORD.

²⁴ Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor.

²⁵ Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today." Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them.

²⁶ Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since.

QUESTIONS

Achan hid the things he took because he knew he had sinned.

Madvig, Donald H. "(4) The culprit discovered and punished (7:16-26)" In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: Volume 3. 288. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, © 1992.

How do we try to hide our sin?

Why did all of Achan's family have to be punished as well? How were they guilty?

APPLICATION

We must recognize three things from this passage:

1. God takes sin seriously and withholds blessing because of it.
2. The sin of an individual affects the community of believers in various ways.
3. In the same way that God is just in His punishment of sin, in Christ He is just in His forgiveness. (1 John 1: 9)

Joshua 7:1-5 Israel Defeated at Ai

¹ But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD'S anger burned against Israel.

² Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So the men went up and spied out Ai.

³ When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary all the people, for only a few men are there."

⁴ So about three thousand men went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai,

⁵ who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

QUESTIONS

The crossing of the Jordan and the victory at Jericho were high points in Israel's history and clear reminders of God's blessing and presence with His people. However, they are soundly defeated by a small village. What did Joshua do differently? Why are we often tempted to be arrogant following God's blessings?

How does your sin affect the rest of the church?

Joshua 7:6-9 Joshua's Intercession

⁶ Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads.

⁷ And Joshua said, "Ah, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan!

⁸ O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? ⁹ The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?"

QUESTIONS

Joshua addressed God in a reverent manner, but that did not keep him from arguing with God. If victory was to be attributed to God's help, then defeat must come from God's failure to intervene. Joshua accused God of wanting to destroy his people.

Madvig, Donald H. "(2) Joshua's intercession (7:6-9)" In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: Volume 3. 285. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, © 1992.

What made Joshua's angry intercession reverent?
Are we ever dishonest in our prayers when we may be angry or frustrated?
Where have we heard complaints like in v. 7 before?

Joshua 7:10-15 God's answer

¹⁰ *The LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?"*

¹¹ *Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions.*

¹² *That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.*

¹³ *"Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, 'Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: That which is devoted is among you, O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it.*

¹⁴ *" 'In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe that the LORD takes shall come forward clan by clan; the clan that the LORD takes shall come forward family by family; and the family that the LORD takes shall come forward man by man.*

¹⁵ *He who is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the LORD and has done a disgraceful thing in Israel!" "*

QUESTIONS

All of the treasures left over from the victory of Jericho were to be dedicated to the Lord. God had promised victory to Israel if they did what He commanded. Withholding what should've been dedicated to the Lord meant destruction not just for the sinner but for the whole nation.

God told Joshua to "Stand up" so He could answer the prayer.

Are you ever guilty of not waiting for God to answer and why?

How can we be sure we are on the side of the Lord in our battle against the sin of this world?

Why didn't God just tell Joshua it was Achan?

Read 1 Cor. 7:5-12. How does this passage relate to Joshua 7:14-15?

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON March 7, 2010

Achan's Sin

Focal Passage: Joshua 7

Cross References: Deuteronomy 20:16-18, 1 Chronicles 2:7, Proverbs 16:33, 2 Corinthians 7:5-12, 1 Corinthians 5:6-13

Central Idea: Achan chose to lie and take what belonged to the Lord. His sin affected his family and the whole community. God demanded justice for the good of the people and the good of His Name.

Lesson Idea: As followers of Christ we are accountable to God and one another. Disobedience stunts the growth of the individual believer and the growth of the entire Body.

Historical Context: Prior to their entering Canaan, God issued a ban on the things dedicated to Him. This referred to things offered to the priest and those things accumulated in battle. In both cases the things belonged to the Lord and were to remain dedicated solely to Him.

The first six chapters of Joshua detail the entrance of the people into the Promised Land of Canaan. From the dramatic crossing of the Jordan to the epic defeat of the city of Jericho God's presence with Joshua and His people is unmistakable to Israel and to the surrounding nations. This is why the defeat at Ai is so discouraging and frustrating to

Joshua. The story of Achan demonstrates the gravity and reach of sin. Throughout the story there is still the hope of a relationship with God and the opportunity to move on in Him.

Bible in a Year Daily Readings

February 28 – March 8, 2010

Feb 28 Deut 23-25
Mar 1 Deut 26-27
Mar 2 Deut 28-29
Mar 3 Deut 30-32
Mar 4 Deut. 33-34
Mar 5 Josh 1-4
Mar 6 Josh 5-7
Mar 7 Josh 8-10

Read the Bible Through Highlights of the Week: February 21-28, 2010

Deut 26: Tithing
Deut 27-28: Cursings and Blessings
Deut 29: The terms of the covenant
Deut 30: Choosing life or death
Deut 31: Moses introduces Joshua, Israel's Corruption Predicted
Deut 34: The death of Moses
Joshua 2: Rahab and the Spies
Joshua 3-4: Crossing the Jordan
Joshua 5: Circumcision of new generation and non-Israelites.
Joshua 6: "Shout for the Lord has given you this city."
Joshua 7-8: The two battles of Ai

Ai, the city in Ch. 7 of Joshua was about 15 miles north of Jericho near Bethel. It was still an arduous journey as it set 1500 feet above the elevation of Jericho.

Its total population was 12,000 with about a 3,000 member army. This could have led to Joshua's assumption of victory.

