

Joshua 7 Israel Is Defeated at Ai

But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully regarding the things designated for destruction, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the designated things; therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

2 Now 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." So the men went up and spied out Ai. 3 Then they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not have all the people go up; have only about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai; do not trouble all the people there, for they are few."

4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. 5 And the men of Ai struck and killed about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them on the mountainside; and the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the ground on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, "Oh, Lord GOD! Why did You ever bring this people across the Jordan, only to hand us over to the Amorites, to eliminate us? If only we had been willing to live beyond the Jordan!

8 O Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned their back before their enemies? 9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear about it, and they will surround us and eliminate our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?"

10 So the LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? 11 Israel has sinned, and they have also violated My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things designated for destruction, and have both stolen and kept it a secret. Furthermore, they have also put them among their own things.

12 Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become designated for destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you eliminate from your midst the things designated for destruction. 13 Stand up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, because the LORD, the God of Israel, has said this: "There are things designated for destruction in your midst, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you have removed the designated things from your midst."

14 So in the morning you shall come forward by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD selects by lot shall come forward by families, and the family which the LORD selects shall come forward by households, and the household which the LORD selects shall come forward man by man. 15 And it shall be that the one who is selected with the things designated for destruction shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has violated the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.”

The Sin of Achan

16 So Joshua got up early in the morning and brought Israel forward by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was selected. 17 So he brought the family of Judah forward, and he selected the family of the Zerahites; then he brought the family of the Zerahites forward man by man, and Zabdi was selected. 18 And he brought his household forward man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was selected.

19 Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me.” 20 So Achan answered Joshua and said, “Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: 21 when I saw among the spoils a beautiful robe from Shinar, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I wanted them and took them; and behold, 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 behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath it. 23 So they took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel; and they laid them out before the LORD. 24 Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the Valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, “Why have you brought disaster on us? The LORD will bring disaster on you this day.” And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. 26 Then they erected over him a large heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore, the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

Paul’s observations and insights

1. You cannot stand against your enemies until, you have removed the designated things from your midst.
2. Remember the instruction regarding all the things that were under the ban.

3. Spying out the land was for the purpose of reconnaissance - just ask Southampton football club!
4. Know your enemy!
5. The report of spying out the land was good - but were they presumptuous?
6. The loss of the holy blessing, because of sin, was a revelation that God is not biased to a nation.
7. Achan let sin come into the camp of Israel.
8. Joshua questions God with regards to crossing into the land.
9. Why did Joshua and the elders, 'fall down to the ground' in despair for a long time?
10. There is always a reason why things go wrong.
11. What is it, 'to consecrate yourself to God'?
12. Sin needs to be dealt with at the root before God's blessing can come and bring fresh fruits.
13. Being in a community has responsibilities.
14. God knows how to root out the wrong in the heart of a nation, as well as in an individual person.
15. Joshua's invitation to Achan to come clean, was him playing the good cop.
16. Was Achan expecting mercy?
17. All our sin bears consequences to ourselves and to others.
18. Unless we do a complete removal of the sin from amongst us, there is no actual cleansing!
19. Confession is God's way of forgiving us for all of our sin as a Christian.
20. It is Jesus who is the one who encountered the judgement for each one of us.
21. Disobedience always leads us into the pathway of trouble.
22. Didn't Ai read the script - that Israel was to take control of the land?
23. Why were Joshua and the elders so outwardly demonstrative?
24. When their enemy got to hear about this defeat, Joshua saw the potential destruction of the nation of Israel!
25. If God were not on their side their enemy would destroy them!
26. Turning your back to your enemy was a show of weakness
27. All the enemy needs is to take away your strength
28. Your enemy is strengthened when he sees you on the run.
29. Joshua has a concern for God's great name. What about you - is God's name important to you, His reputation?
30. God is not wanting Joshua to be down there on his face, He wants him to rise up and root out the sin.
31. He wants him to release Israel from the curse.
32. The violation of God's instruction is to do what?
33. When we keep things hidden, we are enslaved to the hidden thing.
34. God can't protect us if we are out of His will. Until we stand, we can't go.
35. The process of elimination to identify the guilty party was very dramatic, but it got to

the root.

36. Keeping things hidden is never a good idea.

37. It is by fire that sin is ultimately cleansed and eliminated.

38. Joshua having identified who the culprit was, plays 'bad cop' to Achan.

39. Was Achan's explanation, as to the reason why he did what he did, acceptable?

40. There comes a point when we have crossed the line, when we cannot be redeemed.

41. When almighty God turns from His anger, it's a new beginning.

42. When your 'heart melts like water' you have lost your courage.

43. Achan said, 'I wanted them, so I took them', how dangerous is this statement?