

Joshua—Joshua 7

Loss at Ai; Achan Sins

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

1. Verse 3... FEW--8:25 gives the total.
2. Verse 6... PUT DUST ON UPON THEIR HEADS—“**put dust**: Rending the clothes, beating the breast, tearing the hair, throwing dust upon the head, and falling prostrate, were usual signs of deep affliction and distress among the ancient Israelites. In illustration of this custom, see note on [1Sa 4:12](#), when the messenger brought tidings to Eli of the discomfiture of the armies of Israel by the Philistines; again, in the case of Tamar, [2Sa 13:19](#), and in [Neh 9:1](#), when a whole nation, ‘assembled with fasting, and with sackcloth, and earth upon them.’” [TSK].
3. Verse 7... BEEN CONTENT AND DWELT—Cf., 1:2-4
4. Verse 9... SHALL ENVIRON US—“**Environ**, *To surround; compass*” [*King James Dictionary*].
5. Verse 11... DISSEMBLED—“**Dissembled, DISSEMBLED**, pp. Concealed under a false appearance; disguised” [*Webster’s Dictionary*]. Some Examples are listed in TSK—“[2Ki 5:25-26](#); [John 12:5-6](#); [Acts 5:1-2, 9](#); [Heb 4:13](#).”
6. Verse 21... I COVETED THEM—The New Testament teaching is very clear about the sin of covetousness--Luke 12:15; Rom 7:7; 13:9; 1 Cor 5:10; 6:10; Eph 5:3, 5; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 3:3; Heb 13:5; 2 Pet 2:14.
7. Verse 25... BURNED **THEM** WITH FIRE—“As the divine law expressly forbade the children to be put to death for their father’s sins ([Deut 24:16](#)), the conveyance of Achan’s ‘sons and daughters’ to the place of execution might be only as spectators, that they might take warning by the parental fate; or, if they shared his punishment ([Jos 22:20](#)), they had probably been accomplices in his crime, and, indeed, he could scarcely have dug a hole within his tent without his family being aware of it” [*JFB Commentary*]. DRL NOTE—The passage in Joshua 22:20 could be referring to the Joshua + the 36 who died in battle at Ai.
8. Verse 26... ACHOR—“*Trouble*, a valley near Jericho, so called in consequence of the trouble which the sin of Achan caused Israel ([Jos 7:24, 26](#)). The expression “valley of Achor” probably became proverbial for that which caused trouble, and when Isaiah ([Isa 65:10](#)) refers to it he uses it in this sense...” [*Easton’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*].

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **Period of the Conquest.**

III. Summary.

We are told in the first verse about the disobedience of Achan. Then we are told what happens as a result of Achan’s sin. In going against the small city of Ai, a disastrous loss of life took place among the Israelites. Thirty-six men were killed. Joshua, as would be expected, showed great remorse and sadness at this loss of life and the implications it had for even more losses in subsequent battles. The Lord explained to Joshua that the reason for the loss was sin among the children of Israel in taking of the accursed thing. Before the Lord would grant victories to the Israelites, this sin problem among them had to be confronted and settled. Instructions are given Joshua about the means of determining the guilty party among all of the Israelites. Those

instructions are followed closely and the guilty man makes the confession of his wrongdoing in verse 21. Immediately, Achan and all that he had was taken to the Valley of Achor (“trouble”) and stoned and burned. A memorial of a great heap of stones is placed here to remind all of Israel of this tragic disobedience.

IV. Outline.

1. There is sin in the camp (Josh 7:1).
2. A defeat at Ai means the death of 36 men (Josh 7:2-5).
3. Joshua’s grief and appeal (Josh 7:6-9).
4. The Lord’s response and instructions on how to deal with the problem (Josh 7:10-15).
5. Joshua confronts the sinner, Achan (Josh 7:16-20).
6. Achan confesses (Josh 7:21).
7. Achan is punished and a memorial is set (Josh 7:22-26).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The anger of the Lord is mentioned in chapter 7 of Joshua.
02. _____ Achan came from the tribe of Benjamin.
03. _____ Achan refused to acknowledge his sin.
04. _____ Joshua, alone, was grieving before the Ark after the deaths at Ai.
05. _____ A good way to describe the problem we read about in this chapter is that “there was sin in the camp.”

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ Joshua had fallen to the earth in front of the Ark, but the Lord told him to: (a) move himself away from the Ark; (b) get up; (c) search the camp.
07. _____ Which of the following are items not coveted by Achan: (a) gold; (b) silver; (c) food; (d) clothing.
08. _____ The fighting men of Israel were chased by the men of Ai to: (a) Jericho; (b) Shebarim; (c) Gilgal.
09. _____ Was Achan’s tent also among items that were destroyed at the Valley of Achor: (a) YES; (b) NO.
10. _____ A word of EMPHASIS found in verse 11 tells of the serious nature of Achan’s sin—What is that word: (a) even; (b) sinned; (c) transgressed.

Fill in the Blanks

11. “O Lord, what shall I _____, when Israel _____ their _____ before their enemies!”
12. _____ 9:1—“Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with _____, and with sackclothes, and _____ upon them.”
13. The Lord asked Joshua why he was lying upon his _____.
14. Four verbs Achan used in making his confession: _____
15. “And the men of Ai smote of them about _____ and _____ men...”

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to Lesson 01-73 ... [01—True, Josh 5:1; 02—True, Josh 5:14; 03—True, Josh 5:4; 04—False, Josh 5:12; 05—True, Josh 5:10; 06—a, Josh 5:5; 07—a, Josh 5:6; 08—a, Josh

5:9; 09—c, Josh 5:13-14; 10—b, Josh 5:10; 11—shoe, foot, place, standest, holy, Josh 5:15; 12—sharp, knives, Josh 5:2-3; 13—fourteenth, Josh 5:10; 14—rolled, reproach, Josh 5:9; 15—melted, Josh 5:1.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing...** (Josh 7:1). By reading further in this chapter we learn that it was one family and perhaps only one man who committed this sin (vv., 18-21), but the text shows that there were consequences that affected many more than just Achan. Sin works that way. Innocent people sometimes get hurt as the result of the sinful actions of a single individual. The anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. Of course the Just God led Joshua in the process of determining who was responsible in this instance. There was SIN IN THE CAMP, and that problem had to be taken care of before God would bless the people again. To the credit of Joshua and the rest of the people, when they learned of the problem, they immediately went to work to resolve it. The New Testament text that seems to me to relate here is 1 Corinthians 5. There was guilt to be shared among the congregation (vv., 2,6) because of the lack of response in resolving the situation of the fornicating brother. In order to correct that matter, the instructions of the Apostle Paul would have to be followed (1 Cor 5:5).
2. **And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord...** (Josh 7:6). Just having come from a tremendous victory against Jericho, this disheartening defeat struck hard in Joshua's heart. He and the elders of the people went to the place of the Presence of the Lord and vividly expressed their sorrow, disappointment, and grief. The cause of this disastrous loss of 36 men was sin. When Joshua and the elders learned what had caused the disaster, they acted quickly. Let us have leaders for God in the church today who will grieve sincerely and openly at the presence of sin among us! Such attitudes will compel a swift and complete effort at restoring sinful members.
3. **...for they have EVEN taken of the accursed thing,...** (Josh 7:11). The emphasis placed here by the use of the word, "EVEN," should not go unnoticed. Clear instructions had been given to all of the children of Israel about the spoils of the victory at Jericho. These spoils BELONGED TO GOD and they were not to be taken by the people. Here is the taking of that which belongs to God. The New Testament teaches us the importance of liberal, sacrificial, cheerful giving (2 Cor 8-9). Whenever we do not give according to these principles, we are becoming like covetous Achan. Malachi's question (3:8), "Will a man rob God?," is answered in the affirmative by Achan-spirited Christians.
4. **So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes;...** (Josh 7:16). Surely the rising early is an indicator of the obedient spirit of this godly leader. Just as Abraham rose up early in the morning after he had been told by the Lord to go sacrifice the son that he loved on Mount Moriah (Gen 22), Joshua does likewise here. There was a breach in the relationship between God and the people and Joshua was intent on removing that breach as soon as possible.
5. **When I saw... I coveted... I took... behold they are hid...** (Josh 7:21). Here is a real life demonstration of the origin of sin spoken of so clearly in James 1:13-15.
6. **And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua...** (Josh 7:23). Unfortunately, Achan was not the last to THINK that he would be able to sin and then hide it from the Lord. Many try the same foolishness today with the same degree of success that Achan achieved. Numbers 32:23 tells us that our sin will find us

out. How foolish we are being not to realize and appreciate that all things are naked and opened to the eyes of our Lord (Heb 4:13).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

M N B V C X Z L J A C H A N H G F D S A
P O I U Y S Y T R E W Q M N C B J V C X
Z L K J H P H G F D S D A P O O U I U Y
J Y T R E O W M N B V C X Z V L D K J H
H O G F D I D S A P O I G U E Y A T R E
W Q S M N L N B V C X Z O L T K H J G F
D S A H P S O S A W S I L V E R E D I H
I U Y T U R E W Q M N B D H D V C X Z K
L H G F D A S A P O I U S Y T R T E W Q
M N B V C C X Z L K J I H G T N G F D S
S A P O I G A R M E N T R O E O W Q A S
W S X C D E R F V O B G O T G I B G T Y
U J M N H Y D T L V F K E D X S S W X M
P O I U Y E T Y R E W H Q L K S J H G F
D S A C N V B M N B V C I B V E V F R T
G B N N H A Y U J M B G T D R F F V E C
C D I E B R F V B G T Y H T E N T N H Y
T S E D C X S W Q A Z X S W E O D C V F
T G B N H G L O R Y Y H N M J C U J M K
T G B V F R E D C X S W Q A Z B G T Y H

[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

Joshua 7:18-21--¹⁸And he brought his household man by man; and **Achan**, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of **Judah**, was taken. ¹⁹And **Joshua** said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, **glory** to the LORD God of Israel, and make **confession** unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; **hide** it not from me. ²⁰And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have **sinned** against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: ²¹When I **saw** among the **spoils** a goodly **Babylonish garment**, and two hundred shekels of **silver**, and a wedge of **gold** of fifty shekels weight, then I **coveted** them, and **took** them; and, behold, they are **hid** in the earth in the midst of my **tent**, and the silver under it.