

Sin – Never secret. Never private.

**Joshua 7: 1-6, 10-13**

**1 Corinthians 10: 11-13**

# Conquest of the Promised Land

- A series of successes and failures
- Joshua chapters 1-6; series of successes
- Victory / Success often a prelude to disaster / failure

■ So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land. (Joshua 6: 27)

■ But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things[a]; Achan ... of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel. (Joshua 7:1)

■ [a: The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them; also in verses 11, 12, 13 and 15.]

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! (1 Cor. 10: 11-12)

- Victory / Success often a prelude to disaster / failure

# Map 3 THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

▲ Phillistine cities

□ Cities of refuge

(1,742) Elevation, in feet

? Exact location questionable

0 10 20  
Scale of Miles



4. In a northern thrust, Joshua moved from Gilgal all the way to Hazor (Josh. 11).

2. Joshua made peace with Gibeon, then moved through the Valley of Aijalon and defeated the five Amorite kings (Josh. 9–10).

1. Upon crossing the Jordan, Joshua camped awhile at Gilgal, then moved to take Jericho and Ai. Afterward, he returned to Gilgal (Josh. 1–8).

3. From Makkedah, Joshua launched a southern campaign against Lachish, Hebron, Debir, and Gaza. Victorious, he returned to Gilgal (Josh. 10).





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# What's similar to the last time ?

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.

When they returned to Joshua, they said, “Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there.” So about three thousand went up; (Joshua 7: 2-4a)

# What's different this time ?

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# What's missing this time ?

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# Possible reasons for these differences ?

- ~ 3 thousand sent rather than entire army
- no detailed instructions from Joshua
- no waiting for the Lord's instructions; no inquiring/seeking the Lord
  
- Proud and arrogant
- Overconfident
- Under-estimated enemy's ability
- Presumed on continuous victory

# The result...

So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, 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 in fear and became like water. (Joshua 7: 4-5)

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Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites. (Joshua 5: 1)

# What did Joshua and the elders do?

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. <sup>7</sup> And Joshua said, “Alas, 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!

# What did Joshua and the elders do?

8 Pardon your servant, 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?” (Joshua 7: 6-9)

# What happened at evening time ?

The Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. (Joshua 7: 10-12)

# God told Joshua: Stop Praying!

- “Get up and do something to get rid of the sin that’s infecting all of you!”

The Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? 11 Israel has sinned; ... 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.

(Joshua 7: 11-12)



# Joshua's (earlier) instructions to the army

The seventh time around, ... Joshua commanded the army, “Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! <sup>17</sup> The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. <sup>18</sup> But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. <sup>19</sup> All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the Lord and must go into his treasury.” (Joshua 6: 16-19)

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# How the sin will be made public

“Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.

14 “In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the Lord chooses shall come forward clan by clan; the clan the Lord chooses shall come forward family by family; and the family the Lord chooses shall come forward man by man. 15 Whoever 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 an outrageous thing in Israel!”” (Joshua 7: 13-15)

12 tribes

1 tribe (Judah)

All the clans of Judah

1 clan (Zerahites)

All the families of the clan of Zerah

1 family (Zimri)

All the men of Zimri's family (1 by 1)

Karmi, son of Zimri

Achan, son of Karmi

# Why such a tedious process ?

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# Why such a tedious process ?

- To give Achan plenty of time to repent and confess his sin
- To give Achan's family members time to “pressure” him to set things right (if they knew about it)

# What did Achan do?

Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

(Joshua 7: 20-21)

# What happened to Achan?

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 bar, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor.



# What happened to Achan?

<sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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.

(Joshua 7: 22-26)

These things happened to them as examples  
and were written down as warnings for us, on  
whom the culmination of the ages has come.  
So, if you think you are standing firm, be  
careful that you don't fall! (1 Cor. 10: 11-12)

# What have we learned ?

- No secret sin – God sees everything; God knows everything
- No “private” sin
  - What Achan did affected the entire Israelite community
  - What Achan did affected his entire household

# What have we learned ?

- The church cannot have the victories it should when there is sin in her midst
- “Holy Spirit, reveal my sins to me so I can repent of them.”
- “Holy Spirit, help me to really care about sin in our midst.”

# What have we learned ?

- God gave Achan the entire night, and most of the next morning to repent of his sin
- Achan's confession while honest, was too late

# What have we learned ?

- God is holy and righteous; He is also merciful and loving
- For Joshua and the Israelites, the disaster / failure of chapter 7 was not final
- With the sin dealt with, God gave them victory over Ai in chapter 8

Seek the Lord while he may be found;  
call on him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake their ways  
and the unrighteous their thoughts.

Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have  
mercy on them,

and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

(Isaiah 55: 6-7)