

Joshua

Lesson #8, Chapter 7

Please stop before you begin this lesson to ask the Lord's help in seeing all the treasures hidden in Joshua Chapter 7.

1. What sin has been committed and by whom according to verse 1? What are the consequences of the sin as seen in verse 1?
2. Joshua, still unaware of the sin that had been committed, sends out spies to Ai. What do the spies report back? Is their report an accurate assessment? See verse 3 and 8:25.
3. The men of Israel march on Ai with the miraculous victory at Jericho still thrilling their hearts. They are confident of God's promise to give them the land. What happens to shake that confidence in verses 4-5?
4. In verses 2-5 we read of Joshua's defeat at Ai. According to verse 1, what can we be sure of no matter how many men Joshua would have sent to Ai?
5. What is Joshua's response to their defeat (verses 6-9)? Why does he respond this way (2:24 and Ch. 6)?
6. Eager Beaver: What is the significance of the clothes and putting dust on the head? See Job. 2:12; Rev. 18:19.

7. God doesn't allow Joshua to despair for long before He gives the reason for Israel's defeat. What is it (verses 10-12)?

8. God makes it very clear how He views Israel's sin. What phrases does He use to describe their sin and His own response to it? See verses 10-15.

9. What are the consequences of Achan's sin (verses 1, 5, 6, 12)? What does this tell you about the seriousness of sin?

10. Verses 13-15 describe God's purifying and weeding out process. What does He command Israel to do?

11. Verse 14 reveals the use of *lots* to determine God's will. "The method of taking by lot is explained as the high priest had two pebbles, Urim and Thummim, in his ephod (priestly garment), one stone indicating *yes* and the other *no*. Whichever the priest took from his ephod was believed to be the answer to the question asked. In all cases it is taken for granted that the lot cast was an expression and indication of the Divine will (from the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*)."

Look up the following verses to discover what the Bible teaches about the reliability and use of lots. Record your findings. See Lev. 16:7-10; I Sam. 10:20-21; 14:41-42; Neh. 10:34; 11:1; Ps. 22:18 cf. John 19:24; Prov. 16:33; 18:18; Jonah 1:7; Acts 1:24-26.

12. When Achan is revealed as the offender in verses 16-18, Joshua confronts him. How does Joshua respond to him (verse 19)?

13. How are we as Christians to confront a brother or sister in sin? See Lev. 19:17; Matt. 18:15-20; Luke 17:3-4; Gal. 6:1; I Tim. 5:1-2, 19-20.

14. Achan finally repents and confesses his sin in verses 20-21. Look at the verbs in verse 21 and describe the steps to his sin.

15. Eager Beaver: Compare Achan's progression into sin in verses 20-21 with Gen. 3:6 and 2 Sam. 11:2-4. What steps do you note in each?

16. Achan said he coveted the spoils from Jericho. Define *covet*. What does God say about coveting? See Ex. 20:17; I Cor. 5:9-11, 6:10; Eph. 5:5.

17. We all covet to one degree or another. When faced with the devastation that coveting can produce in our lives, it's important that we take some time to discover any areas of coveting, that if left unchecked, could lead us into sin. What are some ways you can shore up, deal with, or overcome any covetous areas in your heart?

18. In verses 22-23 Achan's sin is revealed for all to see. Imagine your shame if your sin was laid open for all to see, just as Achan's was. Someone said, "Secret sin on earth is open scandal in Heaven." We may try to hide our sins, but no sin can hide undetected in our hearts, as we're told in Galatians 5:19, "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident." What are the first steps to bringing hidden sins to the light?

Take heed an hour produce not that which may shame us forever. ~George Hutcheson

19. In verses 24-26 not only is Achan judged guilty, but also his sons and daughters. For God's reason for this, see Deut. 24:16. What do you learn?

20. For the people just entering the new land, the judgment for the offender may have seemed harsh. Read Acts 5:1-11 and compare how God dealt with sin in the newly established church. What did God want the people to learn in both instances?

21. God's judgment may seem harsh to us, but is He truly being harsh? What are the wages of sin? See Rom. 5:12; 6:16, 23a.
 - a. Why aren't we all dead? See John 5:24; Rom. 5:21; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-9.

22. The Israelites constructed another memorial after Achan and his family were stoned (verse 26). In previous studies you learned that the memorial was to remind future generations of something. What would be the purpose of this particular memorial?

23. Unconfessed sin is a major obstacle in our relationship with God, even little things like snapping at our kids or being anxious about something must be confessed. Make it a point this week to confess each sin as soon as possible. Thank God for His forgiveness. Memorize 1 John 1:9 if you haven't already done so.

24. Achan's sin didn't affect only himself—it affected all of Israel. How would considering what consequences might ensue as a result of giving way to a particular sin help you not to fall into it? List, in a general way, different consequences you've experienced as a result of sins you've committed.

Final thoughts: Notice through this entire narrative, the plural is used to indicate Israel's guilt. Achan is singled out in the end, yet his sons and daughters are destroyed too. This seems to indicate that they too knew about the gold, for a hole was dug in their tent and it was hidden, most likely with their knowledge. But when Israel was defeated at Ai because of the banned things that had been taken, Achan's family did not come forward to reveal their father's sin. Instead, they banded together around their father and his sin, which caused them their lives, for they were destroyed along with Achan. Achan's wife is never mentioned. She may have died, or she may have tried to convince Achan to "give glory to God," and was therefore spared. There is a grave lesson here about choosing family allegiance above allegiance to the Lord when it comes to our love and obedience to Him.