



## **An Achan Heart**

### **JOSHUA 7:1-26**

Israel has just been involved in the greatest military conquest in their history - they have just witnessed the tremendous defeat of the city of Jericho and they are still basking in the glow of that great event, but verse 1 tells us that God was upset with the people.

They thought that they were standing on the edge of a great string of victories that would see them conquering the entire land of promise, yet what they didn't know at this point, was that there was a problem, there was sin in the camp.

There was one in the midst who was causing a problem for the entire family of God.

Things are still the same today? We are all members of one body. Notice I Corinthians 12:26-27  
When one member of the body has problems----the entire body has problems. What you do effects the entire Church body.

Sin causes problems, it causes them for the sinner and for everyone else around them. Remember the first trip to the Jordan.

When we allow sin into our lives and when we try to hide our sins and try to cover it up, we bring pain and trouble into our lives

You see we are all Achans from time to time and when we are, our sins causes aching in our lives and so often in the lives of those around us.

However, these verses tell us that God has a prescription for an Achan heart.

#### **I)—A Painful Defeat-----V. 2-5**

a)—Israel was a confident people----v. 2-3

Israel was still basking in the glow of their victory at Jericho and they looked at Ai and felt like that little town would be no problem for such a great army

Israel was a confident people, but a closer look reveals that their confidence was misplaced in v. 3—they felt like that just a few of the soldiers are needed to secure a victory in little Ai. These people are guilty of resting on their laurels

Israel did not realize it, but they are living through one of the most dangerous times of life. The time just after a great spiritual victory is a dangerous time, often, like Israel we will be over confident and believe that we can handle any battle that comes our way

Proverbs 16:18—"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"

Confidence is a good thing as long as one's confidence is in the right place

b)—Israel was a conquered people—v. 4-5

When Israel went up to Ai they suffered a terrible defeat and 36 of their men were killed.

Now looking more closely at their actions it is easy to see that they made several mistakes; mistakes that many of us are guilty of making as well.

1)—Nowhere in this passage does it even hint that Joshua and the people of Israel sought the will of God for dealing with Ai.

If they had prayed, God would have revealed the problem before people died.

It is far better to consult God before we make the mistake than it is to expect Him to clean up our messes afterwards.

2)—They didn't take the Ark of the Covenant into battle

The Ark symbolized the presence and power of God. They went into the battle in their own strength and they failed.

We try to fight the flesh and the devil in our own power and we fail time after time.

We do not take the time to strengthen our walk with God

When we are walking with the Lord and in His Word as we should be, He will go with us into the battle and face our enemies on our behalf.

3)—Israel had their confidence in their own power and not in the Lord

They were not walking by faith, but they were guilty of trusting what they could do, they're own wisdom and intellect and making their own decisions.

We all need the Lord if we are to walk in spiritual victory in our lives.

Philippians 4:13—"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

John 15:5----"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

C)—Israel was a confounded people—v. 5

After their terrible defeat at the hands of Ai, the people of Israel are feeling the same fear that their enemies experienced.

This is one of the problems with sin, nothing is right in your life while there is sin in his midst.

Israel didn't know at this point what was wrong, thankfully God wants His people to have the victory, not the defeat, so He takes the necessary steps to reveal to the nation of Israel just exactly where the problem lies.

## **II)—A Painful Discovery—v. 6-15**

a)—Joshua and the Elders (leaders) react in prayer—v. 6-9

After the tragedy happens, Joshua and the elders find themselves before the Lord in prayer—notice v. 6.

There is also a hint of anger and accusation against the Lord, but they are going to learn that prayer is the correct recourse in a time of trouble, but that prayer will avail nothing until sin has been dealt with.

Psalms 66:18—"If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear"

Joshua wonders why Israel was powerless in the battle. The answer wasn't to blame God, or to dispute His will. The answer was in their own camp.

After we have made decisions that brought with them terrible consequences, it is never the right time to accuse God of anything.

When there is a defeat in our lives, we need to look within and see where the problem is.

b)—God rehearses the Problem—v. 10-15

While Joshua and Israel try to figure out what is happening—God in heaven already knows and tells Joshua all about it. He tells him that there is sin in the camp of Israel and that it is this sin that is hindering His power and it is what is bringing about their defeat.

He also tells Joshua how to discover the guilty party in these words to Joshua—God gives us some insights into sin of

which we need to take note.

Seven observations concerning sin and its effects in our lives:

1)—God knows about our sins—v. 11

Proverbs 15:3—"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good"

Hebrews 4:13

2)—God hates our sins—v. 11

Proverbs 6:16-19

3)—God has a plan for our sins—v. 14-15

I John 1:9-----Psalm 32:5

4)—God will punish our sins—v. 15

Galatians 6:9—"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."

5)—Sin affects those around us—v. 11-12

Your sins and mine have the ability to drastically lower the spiritual temperature of the Church. We are all one body and what affects you affects me.

6)—Sin hinders God's work—v. 12

Matthew 13:58

7)—Sin must be dealt with—v. 13

Either you and I will deal with our sins or God will deal with them, but one way or the other they will be dealt with.

I Corinthians 11:31—"But if we judge ourselves rightly, we would not be judged."

Often the greatest problems faced by the Church come from within and not from without. You see, it is not the water on the outside of the boat that causes the problems, it is the water on the inside of the boat that causes trouble.

### **III)—A Painful Death—v. 16-26**

In these verses —the wages of sin are put on clear display for all to see. Romans 6:23

a)—The sinner discovered—v. 16-18

God knew who was guilty, why didn't He just tell Joshua who they were looking for? He was giving Achan time to repent and to confess his sins and if he had confessed and repented, it may have turned out differently.

That's the way it is in situations in God's Church, but sooner or later it will be dealt with.

The lesson for us needs to be learned well. God already knows your sins and His finger is getting closer and closer to your life.

One day soon it will point you out. It is only a matter of time.

It will not and cannot be hidden forever.

Numbers 32:23 "But if you will not do so behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."

Luke 12:1b-3

b)—The sin discussed—v. 19-21

Now that the sin is out in the open it has to be dealt with/

So often in Church we don't want to do that.

Notice the two aspects of this section.

1)—The Compassion—v. 19

When Joshua speaks to Achan, he speaks with love in his heart.  
He knows that Achan is condemned, but Joshua still cares for this man who brought so much trouble to Israel.  
That's the way we should try to deal with those in the Church who have sinned.

Even though man is the enemy of God, God still wants man to repent and to come to Him for salvation.

## 2)—The Confession—v. 20-21

Achan finally confessed his sin, however don't believe for a second that Achan repented.  
He's like some others in the Bible, only confessed his sins after he got caught in them, but was never in real repentance.

God wants man to be open and honest about the sin in his life and for him to confess those things to the Lord.  
Proverbs 28:13 "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion."

God's way is for His people to throw the covers off their sins and tell God the truth that He already knows.  
He can bless a person who handles sin the Biblical way.  
However, the person who tries to hide his sins will never prosper, but will face God in judgment.

You will confess your sins one way or another. You can confess them where the confession will make a difference or you will do it when you face the Lord in judgment.

Not the progression in Achan's sin in v. 21: "I saw, I coveted, I took."

It is and will be this way in nearly any instance of sin you can name.

Another problem that Achan had is found in v. 21. Achan calls the things he took "Spoils." This word refers to the booty that a conquering army can claim after a victory. However, these things were no spoils. God said in 6:18-19 that these things were His. They were to be placed within the treasury of the Lord's House.

Achan was guilty of stealing from the Lord. Are you guilty of that sin? Malachi 3:8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, How have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings."

Notice this: Achan had things buried in his tent that he could not use. To use them would be to reveal his character to the entire nation of Israel. In other words, Achan sinned and died for nothing. The things he stole were no good to him at all.

## c)—The sinner destroyed—v. 22-26

These verses give us the sad conclusion to this tragic tale. Achan and all that he had were taken out and stoned to death by the people of Israel. Now it did not have to end this way. These verses demonstrate the horrible end that all sinners who refuse to repent will come to.

The name of the valley is called "Achor." This word means trouble.  
Folks, if you are going to sin, and never repent, you need to know that you are headed for trouble.

Sin that you have not repented of, sin in your life, you need to know that your sin is a hindrance to the Church.

God already knows about it and is touching your heart and giving you time just as He did Achan. What are you going to do?

Notice v. 24-25 and Deuteronomy 24:16. Achan's wife and children knew about the sin.

Hosea 2:15—"Then I will give her her vineyards from there, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt."

The promise here is that this place of trouble could become a door of hope-the same is true concerning your sins.

The altar can literally become a door of hope for you right now  
if you will come for the cleansing you need.

