

## Pentecostal Sin Handlers

Joshua 7:1 KJV But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

Joshua 7:19-23 KJV And 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. [20] And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: [21] When 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. [22] So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. [23] And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto

all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

### I. INTRODUCTION—FROM THE BOOK, THE SNAKE CHARMER BY JAMIE JAMES

No snake kills more ruthlessly than the many-banded krait. It lives in the jungles of India and Southeast Asia. It's venom, drop for drop, is more deadly than the majority of all snakes. Only a rare breed found in the outback of Australia supersedes it. One drop of venom from the krait has enough toxins to kill two-dozen adult men.

The venom is a neurotoxin, which basically pulls the plug on the nervous system. As it spreads through the body of the victim, it is not too long before it stops the nerves from stimulating the diaphragm, which causes breathing to take place. The victim then will suffocate to death.

Generally the krait will attack its own kind, as it is cannibalistic in nature. In fact it rarely attacks human beings. However if confronted it will attack and bite whatever it is that is harassing it. Most people go at great lengths to avoid this snake along with most other kinds. In fact, there

are many who agree that the best kind of snake is a dead one.

But in 2001, Joe Slowinski traveled from San Francisco where he was a curator of herpetology at the California Academy of Sciences to Upper Burma in search of the krait. Joe was one of the leading experts of herpetologists in the world who specifically knew about the snakes of Asia.

Joe and his team of scientists were going in the late summer, which was the end of the monsoon season in Burma. Overall this was a terrible time to be going into this part of the world for that reason. But the heavy rains put all of the snakes on the move and this was the optimal time to look for the krait. On September 9, 2001 they arrived at a village in Burma that was called Rat Baw and it was the most advanced settlement they had been able to find in many days.

The team was wet and miserable but on September 9, the rain had finally stopped and the sun was now appearing and the snakes began to move in great numbers throughout the region. No one alive knew more how to identify this particular snake than Joe Slowinski. They can be mistaken for two other types of snakes and Joe

was the one man who was the most proficient in the world to be able to identify the krait.

Joe was a brilliant biologist who was in the prime of his career. He was greatly respected and revered by the academic and science community. His career was on the rise because only four years prior he had been a college teacher at a small college in Louisiana and appeared to be destined to spending his days teaching biology and zoology there. But he was discovered by the revered academics in California because of his expertise in working with snakes. They had offered him a very lucrative \$ 2.4 million grant to come to work with them.

On this day, it was no different. There was nothing that enthused Joe more than to be able to handle the most deadly snakes in the world. The villagers kept their distance from this white stranger who seemed to handle what they called the “royal tiger snake” with such bravado. After handling it for a bit, he put it back into one of the cloth bags they had brought along to take them back to San Francisco.

The rain had caused transportation to be shut off from Rat Baw and with the roads in bad condition; it was expected to be a week to two weeks before vehicles would be able to get in and

out. However this was of no particular concern for Joe, he decided it would be an opportunity to give himself and his team more time to capture snakes to take back home. The next morning Joe was up early and he was working with an assistant who handed him a bag and told him that it was a particular species of snake.

Joe reached into the bag and immediately jerked his hand back because of the searing pain in his middle finger on his right hand. Still attached by its fangs was a ten-inch snake hanging from his finger. He looked on in quiet horror and told his assistant that this snake was in a bag that had been mistakenly labeled. In reality it was the deadly krait that had bitten him.

Because of the condition of the roads there was no way for a vehicle to get in to rescue him. Because of the fog and rain in valley of the jungle, a helicopter could not get in the first day. As they waited, Joe began to tell them what to expect as far as his symptoms. He told them that it would not be long until his breathing gave out and if there were not respiratory assistance, he would die. After a bit, his eyelids began to droop and his speech became slurred. It was almost as if he were having a stroke. But this was not the case;

Joe Slowinski was experiencing the effects of the poison from the krait.

The chopper made it in the second day but it was too late, Joe Slowinski was dead because of his negligence in dealing with the deadliest snake in the world.

-In the professional sense, Joe Slowinski was handling physical snakes that were deadly but in the spiritual sense far too many saints attempt to handle sin with much the same skill that Joe handled these deadly snakes. But given time and circumstance, our sin will catch up with us.

## II. SIN

### A. General

Robert G. Lee—Sin has ruined men, ruined women, and ruined angels. Sin has occasioned every tear of sorrow, every sigh of grief, every pang of agony. Sin has withered everything that is fair, blasted everything that is good, made bitter everything that is sweet, dried up springs of comfort, rolled far and wide tides of sorrow. Sin has dug every grave, built every coffin, woven every shroud, and enlarged every cemetery . . . that the world has ever seen.

Carl Jung—All the old primitive sins are not dead but just crouching in the dark corners of our modern hearts—still there, and still has ghastly as ever.

William Secker—There are some things which are pleasant, but not good, as youthful lusts and worldly delights. These bees carry honey in their mouths, but they have a sting in their tails.

William Secker—Little sins are not like an inch of candle, which soon expires, but they resemble a trail of gunpowder, which takes the fire until at last the barrels burst asunder.

Screwtape's Advice to Wormwood in The Screwtape Letters—You will say that these are very small sins, and doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy (God). It does not matter how small the sins are, provided that their cumulative effect is to keep the man away from the Light . . . Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft

underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.

-Years ago, I ran across an article and it has been so long ago that I cannot even recall where it came from but it was powerful in its description of how the Eskimos will kill a wolf.

First the Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed in a block of frozen blood.

Next the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh, frozen blood. He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade in the arctic night. So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf does not realize that his own tongue has been anesthetized by the cold ice. He does not know that razor sharp sting is from his own tongue nor does he realize that the blood he now is after is his own. He just craves more and more until finally he drops dead in the snow.

-We are consumed, the Bible warns, by our own lusts.

## B. Biblical

-The word sin occurs in the KJV 448 times in 389 verses. Here are just a few of the references:

James 1:14-16 KJV But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. [16] Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Romans 6:23 KJV For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 KJV Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, [10] Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 6:7-8 KJV Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. [8] For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

## C. How God Sees a Sinner

-When the Lord looks at man as a sinner, He can see him in several ways:

- The Lord compares him to dross—Psalm 119:119
- The Lord compares him to chaff—Psalm 1:4
- The Lord compares him to a boiling pot of scum—Ezekiel 24:6
- The Lord compares him to a dog returning to his vomit—2 Peter 2:22
- The Lord compares him to a snake—Matthew 23:33
- The Lord notices him to be a man who has a heart filled with the devil—Acts 5:3

-Sin damages our inward man and hinders our communion with God.

- It removes the inspiration from prayer.
- It dries up the joy of worship.

- It makes the Christian life drudgery.
- It makes us want to avoid the saints of God.
- It creates excuses for us to withdraw from the household of faith.
- It causes us to live in a vain world of hypocrisy.
- It ruins our testimony and witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

-Sin endangers the very hope of eternity—heaven. Sin will keep us out of heaven and will consign us to a burning, eternal lake of fire.

### III. JOSHUA 7—A DREADFUL DEFEAT AFTER A GREAT VICTORY

-When we get to Joshua 7, we find a story of a man by the name of Achan. His choice has caused him to live in biblical infamy. In fact we can see the full-blown effect of the laws of the harvest in his life. People do reap what they sow. Sins done in private will be made public (Num. 32:23).

#### A. Trouble In Ai

-On a day when Israel should have been celebrating a great victory they had to return home nursing wounds and a defeat that never should have taken place.

-Israel had enjoyed the heady excitement that comes after a major victory. They had followed God's plan and Joshua's leadership and the walls of Jericho had fallen down. They had then enjoyed the spoils of war.

- The treasury of the Lord had been filled to overflowing.
- The fortress that had housed a major army had been brought down to rubble.
- The forces of Canaan had been destroyed.
- The Ark of the Covenant had led the way and Israel was victorious.

-But this victory had only prepared them for what was to be another victory. Ten miles to the northwest near a town called Bethel was a place known as Ai. So Joshua sent his spies to see about the small village.

-They had returned with much confidence and told Joshua that there was no need to send up the whole army (Joshua 7:3). There was an army of 30,000 but the spies recommended that only about 2-3,000 be sent to take care of it.

-It had taken seven days to destroy Jericho but Ai was another matter and it would only take about

seven minutes of battle to win this one. Or so they thought.

-But Jericho's victory did not assure Ai's conquest. Principle: Just because you have some victories under your belt that does not necessarily give assurance that you will have more.

- Our consecration to God has to be maintained!
- Our hunger for revival has to be kept alive!
- Our vigilance for holiness has to remain!
- Our determination to give ourselves unceasingly to God has to be fresh!

-On the heels of a major victory came a bitter defeat. The hand of God's favor was removed from them and suddenly there was great lament of defeat.

-In Joshua 5, Joshua had fallen before the Captain of the Host in worship and honor but in Joshua 7, he had dropped to his knees in shock and hopelessness.

#### B. A Little Word with Huge Ramifications

-The book of Joshua reads like a war journal. It is a great general recording victory, strategy, and

what happened to the conquered cities. In this journal there is only one place that you will find defeat . . . Ai.

-Joshua 6 concludes with the victory speech that Joshua gives after the amazing battle at Jericho. One second you, the reader, rejoices with that victory speech at the end of Joshua 6 and then you abruptly stumble over the next word.

**"But . . ."**

-That is the way that Joshua 7 begins. It describes the actions of one man who will always be remembered for committing a terrible sin that poisoned the whole camp.

-Earlier in Joshua 6, clear instructions had been given concerning the spoils of war. They belonged solely to Jehovah. Any precious items made of gold, silver, bronze, or iron was considered holy and reserved for God (6:19).

-In fact, Joshua had been so clear about it, there is no mistake to what would happen.

**Joshua 6:18 KJV And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed**

thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

-While the Israelites danced with joy, Achan was hidden away in his tent with the stolen goods. He had a stash of gold, a few bars of silver, and a very expensive coat.

-Away from all the worship, the joy, the freedom, and the power of God was a man hidden away with the fruit of his private sin. That same thing still takes place in modern times. Those who are just within hearing of the church . . . they can hear the sounds of worship, they can hear the singing, the praying, the preaching, and they feel the presence of God . . . even at a distance.

-The problem is their sin . . . Their sin has pulled them away from the fellowship of the household of faith and now they are worshipping alone but it is a place where they are giving the devil his due.

-We are left to wonder how many there are who even right now sit in the pews of the church but there is great distance between them and God. They hear, see, feel, and are aware but their feeling for God has been destroyed because of some private sin that took place while no one was around.

“But . . .” notes Joshua 7:1 . . . The Lord was preparing to execute His judgment on the people because of Achan’s sinful disobedience.

### C. Achan’s Dilemma

-After the defeat, the Lord revealed to Joshua that the reason was because of sin.

-After the process of elimination isolated Achan and his family, Achan admitted to his sin.

-The dilemma of Achan is noted in this segment of Scriptures:

- v. 20—I have sinned.
- v. 21—I saw.
- v. 21—I coveted.
- v. 21—I took.
- v. 21—I hid.

James 1:13-16 KJV Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: [14] But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin:



and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.  
[16] Do not err, my beloved brethren.

- v. 13—Tempted.
- v. 14—Drawn away.
- v. 14—Enticed.
- v. 15—Lust.
- v. 15—Conception.
- v. 15—Death.

-This will always be the downward path that the flesh takes and follows after. Achan was very motivated by the here and the now.

-He wants to trade some spoil for a moment over a lifetime in the Promised Land. Achan died along with his family. The judgment of the Lord caused the entire family to be stoned to death.

-That is heart-rending that such a thing could take place! We cannot manage private sin!

Many years ago the smaller farmers of Scotland, being very superstitious, kept a corner of their fields uncultivated in order to pacify certain evil spirits. They believed that by sacrificing this one corner to the spirits, the remainder of the field would be left undisturbed and fertile. What really happened, is that the

weeds in the uncultivated corner went to seed and was carried by the wind and scattered across the entire field . . . that is the picture of a man who thinks he can control the sin in his own life. It spreads out of control into every area of his life!

-The consequences to falling into sin can cause a loss of respect and reputation, the great pain that is inflicted on the spouse and children, a compromised testimony, the loss of a ministry, and the public shame that comes with the territory.

-There is much to be said about a daily relationship with the Lord through prayer, the Word, and personal commitment. There is much to be said about being involved in a regular time of corporate worship and attendance in church.

-But we all can be a warrior just like Achan and manage to move through the hoops without detection. However there will be a time coming when we will be exposed!

#### IV. SOME WISE ADVICE

-I regularly read a columnist by the name of J. Lee Grady who writes a blog that is primarily directed toward the Pentecostal world. I use the word

“Pentecostal” with some reservation because his tent covers a lot that I don’t necessarily believe to be Pentecostal.

-He wrote a column in February 2013 about some advice he received from an elder minister. He was instructed that he should guard his life and to quote the elder, “don’t do anything stupid!” So Mr. Grady comprised a list of stupid things that he ought not to do.

- Take illegal drugs.
- Refuse accountability of a local church and elder ministers. (Become a Lone Ranger!)
- Beat or abuse your wife.
- Surround yourself with “yes” voices.
- Fake spiritual gifts and talents. (Have the product without the relationship.)
- Be lenient toward sexual sin.
- Manipulate people.
- Teach exotic doctrines.
- Become an egomaniac. (Act like a rock-star.)

-While most equate private sin with that which is related to the sensual, secret sins don’t always fall into that category.

- It can be a mother who gives off the air of having a serene household when she motivates her children to perfection through anger.
- It can be a man who teaches Sunday school but gambles online.
- It can be a college student who proudly displays the dean’s list honors but hides the cheat sheets.
- It can be a man who gives the air of having his act together but drinks himself into a stupor on a regular basis.
- It can be a woman who gives the air of having a perfect marriage but at home she is an old shrew who is a compulsive record-keeper of past mistakes and failures.
- It can be someone who displays the outward signs of material success but are compulsive and reckless spenders.
- It can be someone who struts on the stage of popularity but is hiding gross immorality in their private life.

-Oh God . . . Bring us to repentance!!!

V. CONCLUSION—NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD OF JESUS!

-There is an old hymn written by Robert Lowry in 1876 that still is good for our time.

What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
what can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain:

Oh! Precious is the flow  
that makes me white as snow;  
No other fount I know,  
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon, this I see,  
nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
for my cleansing this my plea,  
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can for sin atone,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
Naught of good that I have done,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my hope and peace,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
this is all my righteousness,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Now by this I'll overcome—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
now by this I'll reach my home—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Glory! Glory! This I sing—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,  
All my praise for this I bring—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Romans 5:6-8 KJV For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. [8] But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.