

Joshua Chapter 7: Israel's Sin and their Subsequent Defeat at Ai

Ricardo Campos, Elder Grace Chapel, Orange, CA August 24, 2008

INTRODUCTION

When we obey God, He's always on our side. But when we sin against Him, His wrath is against us and there is no way we can stand before our enemies (e.g., life's trials and tribulations). Instead of His sword being aimed at our enemies, it's now pointed at us.

Israel's History Prior to Joshua Chapter 1

- God frees Israel from Egypt (Ex. 12:29-41).
- God leads Israel to the Promise Land, but they refuse to enter (Num. 13:1-14:12).
- Israel is cursed to wander in the wilderness for 40yrs (Num. 14:20-35).
- Moses is not allowed to enter the Promise Land (Num. 20:5-12, 24; 27:14).
- Joshua is appointed by God to replace Moses (Num. 27:15-23; Deut. 31:14).
- God delivers two Amorite kings into Israel's hands. (Num. 21:21-35; Deut 2:24-3:10).
- God brings Israel back to the Promise Land (Num. 33:40-56).

Joshua Chapter 1: *Victory before Entering the Land*

God encourages Joshua and the nation of Israel by guaranteeing them victory over the Canaanites, but they must obey His Word.

Joshua Chapter 2: *The Two Spies Confirm God's Word about the Promise Land*

The two spies reveal that the Canaanites are terrified of Israel because of what God did to the Red Sea and the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og.

Joshua Chapter 3: *The Parting of the Jordan River and Israel's Crossing*

God parts the Jordan River, which cements Joshua as Israel's next leader and proves to Israel that **He** will drive out the Canaanites for them.

Joshua Chapter 4: *The Crossing of the Jordan and Stones of Remembrance*

Israel must forever remember the Jordan Crossing, so two memorials are set up. The miracle shows the world that Israel's God is powerful and teaches Israel to fear her God.

Joshua Chapter 5: *A Tuning Point in Israel's History*

God gives Israel their first battle command: circumcise every male. Instead of leaving Israel weak, it prepares them to conquer their Land and observe Passover. They're no longer a nation of slaves, but a nation about to conquer their Promise Land.

Joshua Chapter 6: *The Lord Delivers Jericho into Israel's Hands*

God gives Israel another strange battle command: march around Jericho for 7 days. Israel obeys, God brings the walls down, and they conquer the city (only Rahab and her family are spared). God also warns Israel not to take anything from Jericho.

Joshua Chapter 7: Israel's Sin and their Subsequent Defeat at Ai

7:1, Achan spoils Israel's victory over Jericho; he violated the Lord's command, 6:18-19. It was an individual sin that turned the Lord's sword (5:13) against the entire nation. God's children cannot sin with impunity and get away with it.

7:2-5, Joshua takes on the next city Ai, but Israel turns and runs from their enemy. And now Israel is melting with fear instead of the enemy (5:1). God's people aren't supposed to be defeated, but if we sin against Him, we will lose every time.

7:6-9, Joshua and Israel's elders mourn over Israel's loss. Although Joshua sounds like the Exodus generation (Num. 14:2-3), he's actually concerned about God's reputation. He's also in utter shock because God guaranteed him victory, 1:5-6. But "When we cannot see the hand of God, we must trust the Word of God."—Craig Stephen Skinner

7:10-12, rather than God abandoning Israel, Israel sinned against God, which guaranteed their defeat. They cannot stand before their enemies until they destroy the thing devoted to destruction (which is not just what Achan stole).

7:13-15, the Lord will slowly sift through Israel to find the guilty. The whole nation will see the one who caused their defeat and his punishment. The phrase, *O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you*, is a summary of Josh. 7. When you see God's servants fail like this, it should sadden and anger you, as it does Him, 7:1. But remember, the first servant you'll see fail is yourself, which should sadden and anger you into repentance and a change of course.

7:16-18, slowly the nation realizes who caused their defeat: Achan.

7:19-21, what's our thought process when we sin? Jam. 1:13-15. In our sinfulness, we always choose death rather than life and peace, Rom. 8:6. We do this, even in everyday conversations as we respond with anger and malice, rather than: Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:26.

7:22-24, the items stolen are laid before God and the entire nation is involved in Achan's punishment. 7:24 may appear to violate Deut. 24:16. However, the possibilities are: (1) the sons and daughters knew about Achan's sin, so they die for their own sin, or (2) God's treating the sons and daughters as part of "all that [Achan] has," 7:15 (as with Korah, Num 16:27, 32). But this is not a violation of His own Law. God's not **under** the Law, He's **above** the Law and not in a criminally negligent way.

7:25-26, Achan suffers the consequences of his sin.

Conclusion: God told Joshua to meditate on His Word day and night, 1:8. The next time you're about to sin, remember that this is chasing after death (Rom. 8:6) and then meditate on what God did to Achan and his entire family. We cannot stand against life's trials while in the midst of sin, not only will we have life to contend with, but God's wrath.