



Lesson 50 – Trouble at Ai

based on Joshua 7.

Joshua and the Israelites just experienced the Mighty Hand of God delivering the city of Jericho to them without a fight. God showed them to trust that He would go before them.

- 1) What did Joshua plan for next?

Joshua 7:2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to _____, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

- 2) What did they decide?

Joshua 7:3 And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about _____ or _____ men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

The great victory that God had gained for them had made the Israelites self-confident. Because He had promised them the land of Canaan, they felt secure and failed to realize that divine help alone could give them success. Even Joshua laid his plans for the conquest of Ai without seeking counsel from God.

- 3) How'd that go?

Joshua 7:4-5 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they _____ before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people _____, and became as water.

The Israelites had begun to exalt their own strength and to look with contempt upon their foes. An easy victory was expected, and three thousand men were thought sufficient to take the place. These rushed to the attack without the assurance that God would be with them. They advanced nearly to the gate of the city, only to encounter the most determined resistance. Panic-stricken at the numbers and thorough preparation of their enemies, they fled in confusion down the steep descent.

- 4) How did Joshua react to the news?

Joshua 7:6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his _____ before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

- 5) What did he ask God?

Joshua 7:7 And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to _____ us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

Joshua 7:8-9 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall _____ of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great _____?

- 6) What was God's answer?

Joshua 7:10-11 And the LORD said unto Joshua, _____ thee _____; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the _____ thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.



Joshua 7:12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you _____, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Joshua 7:13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, _____ yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye _____ the accursed thing from among you.

7) What was Joshua unaware of?

Joshua 7:1 But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for _____, 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 _____ against the children of Israel.

God's command had been disregarded by one of those appointed to execute His judgments. And the nation was held accountable for the guilt of the transgressor. Instruction was given to Joshua for the discovery and punishment of the criminal. The lot was to be employed for the detection of the guilty. The sinner was not directly pointed out, the matter being left in doubt for a time, that the people might feel their responsibility for the sins existing among them, and thus be led to searching of heart and humiliation before God.

8) Being rebuked by God, what did Joshua do right quick?

Joshua 7:16 So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of _____ was taken:

Joshua 7:17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the _____ man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

Joshua 7:18 And he brought his household man by man; and _____, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

9) What did Joshua ask Achan in the presence of all?

Joshua 7:19 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make _____ unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

To establish his guilt beyond all question, leaving no ground for the charge that he had been unjustly condemned, Joshua solemnly adjured Achan to acknowledge the truth.

10) What did Achan confess?

Joshua 7:20-21 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a _____ 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 _____ in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

11) Was his confession validated?

Joshua 7:22-23 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and _____ them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and _____ them out before the LORD.



12) What sentence was pronounced on the transgressors?

Joshua 7:25-26 And Joshua said, Why hast thou _____ us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of _____ unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

13) What was and is now the message for God's People?

Joshua 6:18 And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the _____ thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed...

The command was given immediately after the miraculous passage of the Jordan, and the recognition of God's covenant by the circumcision of the people, after the observance of the Passover, and the appearance of the Angel of the covenant, the Captain of the Lord's host. It had been followed by the overthrow of Jericho, giving evidence of the destruction which will surely overtake all transgressors of God's law. The fact that divine power alone had given the victory to Israel, that they had not come into possession of Jericho by their own strength, gave solemn weight to the command prohibiting them from partaking of the spoils.

Covetousness is an evil of gradual development. Achan had cherished greed of gain until it became a habit, binding him in fetters well-nigh impossible to break. While fostering this evil, he would have been filled with horror at the thought of bringing disaster upon Israel; but his perceptions were deadened by sin, and when temptation came, he fell an easy prey.

14) What did Jesus tell us later?

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will _____ the one, and _____ the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the _____ of the things which he possesseth.

We have before us the fearful doom of Achan, of Judas, of Ananias and Sapphira. Back of all these we have that of Lucifer, the "son of the morning," who, coveting a higher state, forfeited forever the brightness and bliss of heaven. And yet, notwithstanding all these warnings, covetousness abounds.

Achan acknowledged his guilt, but when it was too late for the confession to benefit himself. He had seen the armies of Israel return from Ai defeated and disheartened; yet he did not come forward and confess his sin. He had seen Joshua and the elders of Israel bowed to the earth in grief too great for words. Had he then made confession, he would have given some proof of true penitence; but he still kept silence. He had listened to the proclamation that a great crime had been committed, and had even heard its character definitely stated. But his lips were sealed. Then came the solemn investigation. How his soul thrilled with terror as he saw his tribe pointed out, then his family and his household! But still he uttered no confession, until the finger of God was placed upon him.

15) What warning was given to the Children of Israel (and us)?

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

Can you see we can't bring this world's things into heaven with us?

Would you like God to be your defender?

When is it time to let Him clean us up?