

It's No Secret • Joshua 7:13-26

INTRO • Disaster at Ai

1. Joshua came up with a brilliant plan for the conquest of Canaan.
2. After his reconnaissance of the region 40 yrs before, he knew Canaan was divided up into several regions, each ruled by a powerful city-state.
3. Size-wise, think of these regions as **counties**, each with a city as its HQs, dominating all the lesser towns in that region.
4. The ruler of each of these city-states were petty kings.
5. In the S, Jericho was the biggest and most powerful city-state to which many of the Southern kings paid allegiance.
6. Hazor was the main city-state in the N.
7. Jericho & Hazor competed with each other for power.
 - a. The city-states in the middle went back and forth to whichever made the most attractive offer of assistance,
 - b. OR, posed the bigger threat.
8. But Joshua knew what would cause these 2 regions that had competed with each other for generations to unite, was the threat of a common foe = Israel.
 - a. So his plan was to cut straight across Canaan, thereby keeping the N & S from reinforcing each other.
 - b. The key was taking the gateway city of Jericho.
 - c. Without Jericho, the southern city-states would be without a leader.
9. After Jericho fell, the next objective was a much smaller town up in the hills guarding the main road leading into the heart of Canaan called Ai.
 - a. Compared to Jericho it seemed a piece of cake.
 - b. So Joshua only sent 3K men to take it. But something strange happened.
 - c. When the men of Ai came out to meet them, the men of Israel lost heart, turned tail and ran away.
 - d. It was a complete rout.
 - e. While Israel lost not a soul in the victory over mighty Jericho, they lost 3 dozen at little Ai!

Read vs. 6-9 - Pray

Vs10-15

1. Watch God's answer to Joshua's desperate prayer . . .
¹⁰ So the Lord said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? ¹¹ Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff. ¹² Therefore **[that's why]** the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you.
1. In his confusion & fear, Joshua laid Israel's defeat at God's feet. He ought to have known better.
2. After the amazing miracle at Jericho, he ought to have known God was with them.
3. When they'd **done what God's said**, it was victory.
4. So, defeat meant Israel, not God, had failed.
5. God makes that clear. **Someone** violated the prohibition of taking loot from Jericho.
6. That disobedience weakened Israel so she couldn't stand in battle.
7. The way to get back up was by doing the right thing.
- ¹³ Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: "*There is* an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you."¹⁴ In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be *that* the tribe which the Lord takes shall come according to families; and the family which the Lord takes shall come by households; and the household which the Lord takes shall come man by man.
- ¹⁵ Then it shall be *that* he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.' "
1. The entire assembly of Israel is to come before the tabernacle.
2. Then God will point out WHO's brought this calamity on them.

Vs16-18

¹⁶ So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. ¹⁷ He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. ¹⁸ Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

1. [Illustration of picking someone]
2. As we read this, we wonder: Why didn't Achan just step forward & confess?
 - a. When the 1st lot fell to his **tribe**, he said, "1 out of 12 is safe odds. There's still 10's of thousands in my tribe."
 - b. When the 2nd lot singled out his clan, "There's still dozens of families."
 - c. When the next singled out his family, "What are the chances it'll pick **my** household?"
 - d. The final lot fell on him; as it should, because he's the guilty one.
 - e. There was no chance, no odds involved.
 - f. Each narrowing of the field **ought have been** a spur a prod to move Achan to 'fess-up.
 - g. That he stubbornly REFUSED to reveals the willful blindness of his heart.
3. And it proves a deep, a profound spiritual truth **Sin makes you stupid**.
4. People think they can **hide** their sin; that they can **get away** with it. **They can't**.
5. In Num 32:23 Moses says, "**Be sure your sin will find you out.**"
5. Pro 6:27 warns, "**Can a man take fire to his bosom and his clothes not be burned?**"
 - a. The great preacher Charles Spurgeon said,
 - b. "Coals of fire cannot be concealed beneath the most sumptuous apparel, they will betray themselves with smoke and flame. Neither can pet sins be long hidden beneath the [boldest] profession of faith; they will sooner or later discover themselves, and burn sad holes in a person's reputation. Sin needs quenching in the Savior's blood, not concealing under the garb of religion."

Birds in His Shorts

1. He thought he was so clever.
2. As he packed his suitcase for his return to Europe in his hotel in Brazil, he carefully placed the baby reptiles in the false bottom of the bag.
3. They were rare and would fetch a lot of money back home, more than paying for his entire vacation in South America.
4. Of course, it was illegal to transport them outside Brazil, so he hid them.
5. What would earn even more were the exotic bird eggs he'd purchased.
 - a. They also were illegal, but he couldn't resist.
 - b. Too fragile to put in the suitcase, he put them in a sock & placed them in his shorts.
6. There they stayed, safe & **warm** till he arrived back in Europe.
7. Standing in line at Customs, the eggs hatched, & the baby birds began to cry.
8. Customs agents escorted him to an interrogation room where he & his luggage were searched.
9. The animals were found. He was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to prison.
10. Hear & remember this.
 - a. Don't file it away in the drawer of "Once hear at church."
 - b. Stick this on the refrigerator of your memory.
 - c. Eggs hatch! Secret sin doesn't stay secret. Be sure your sin will be found out.
11. Truth may be obscured **for a time**, but it can't be ultimately denied.
12. In Rom 1 Paul says Truth **always** outs.
13. What might have happened if Achan had stepped forward & confessed his sin, as soon as the report of the defeat at Ai had come to the camp at Gilgal?
 - a. Knowing the mercy of God, I have to believe he would have been forgiven.
 - b. Certainly there would have been **consequences** for his disobedience, there always are.
 - c. But God has shown Himself to be patient & forgiving with those who genuinely repentant.
14. But Achan **didn't** come forward, **didn't** confess & repent.
15. He stood there acting innocent till he couldn't duck his guilt.

Vs. 19-23

¹⁹ Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to

Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide *it* from me.”²⁰ And Achan answered Joshua and said, “Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: ²¹ When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing 50 shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.”²² So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it.²³ And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord.

1. Now that the game’s up, Achan admits he snatched some loot from Jericho.
2. He knew he wasn’t supposed to but did it anyway; the **ONLY** one of all the people to disobey.
3. The problem **NOW** is, his confession comes too late.
 - a. The damage has already been done. 36 men are dead.
 - b. And now **ALL** Israel is endangered . . .
 - 1) Because if word of their defeat gets out, the Canaanites who’ve been in terror of Israel,
 - 2) Will know Israel’s divine favor has lifted, will take courage and attack.

Vs24-26

²⁴ Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ And Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.” So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. ²⁶ Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor [**Trouble**] to this day.

1. Everything belonged to Achan, including his family, was executed.
2. Why did Achan’s **family** share his judgment?
 - a. Where did they find the loot? In his tent, where they lived.
 - b. They knew all about it but said nothing. They became co-conspirators in his crime. His sin became theirs.
3. Achan’s sin polluted his family.
4. His evil influence as the head of his home brought those under his roof to ruin.

CONCLUSION • Lessons from Achan

1. Achan teaches some crucial lessons about secret sin.
2. **First**, the sin that’s secret today, is public tomorrow.
 - a. Secret sin on Earth is Open scandal in Heaven.
 - b. We may be able to **hide** it from others for a time.
 - c. But it’s naked and open before the Eyes of He Who sits on high.
 - d. Also; the voice that whispers temptation, promising it will stay secret, is already plotting when and how to make it public.
 - 1) You see, the devil wants to ruin you, to make you a trophy of his wickedness.
 - a) You were created in God’s image to reveal His glory.
 - b) Satan wants to clothe you in shame.
 - c) What better way to do that than put eggs of sin in your shorts?
 - 2) God wants to make you a trophy of His grace.
 - a) He does by convicting us, by moving us to confess & repent **before** we’re caught.
 - b) Before our sin finds us out, we out ourselves, we out our sin.
 - c) We admit the struggle to a mature brother or sister and ask for prayer.

James 5:16 • Confess your sins to one another, and pray for each other, that you may be healed [**renewed, restored**]

3. **Second**, secret sin harms others.
 - a. Part of the deceit of secret sin is thinking no one will get hurt.
 - b. That isn’t true: Ask Achan’s family.
 - c. Ask the one who’s had an affair. // The addict
 - d. All this began when 3 dozen men died.
 - 1) Achan’s secret sin caused 36 families to lose husbands, fathers, & sons.
 - 2) And the entire nation realized their peril at the hands of an emboldened enemy.

- 3) Because 1 guy saw some jewelry & a nice set of fancy duds!
- 4) In Rom 14:7 Paul makes this remarkable statement –
None of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.
 - e. Look around! How you live, what you do, the choices you make, effect that person sitting in front, behind, and next to you.

Romans 6:23

1. We end with Rom 6:23 –
The wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
2. Achan teaches us the truth of the first half of that v. The wages of sin *is* death.
3. The cross of Christ is the place where those wages were paid out for our sin.
4. God now extends forgiveness to ***all who repent***, who turn from sin to Him.
5. The name Achan means “***Troubler***”
6. Achor, where he was executed means “Trouble”
7. The troubler met his end in the Valley of Trouble.
8. For generations after the Valley of Achor was a memorial to the trouble secret sin brings the People of God.
9. But in Hosea 2:15 we read this
I will give her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope:-
 1. God promises to turn the Valley of Trouble into a doorway to Hope.
 2. That’s what the Cross is; the place where sin is judged in Christ; where we find forgiveness & hope.
 3. If there’s some secret that has you “ache’in’ Don’t wait till it exposes you.
 4. Make yourself a trophy of God’s grace.