

Joshua 07 - Israel Defeated at Ai; The Lord Rebukes Joshua; Achan's Sin Revealed & Punished

- I. Israel's conquest of Canaan (Joshua 1:1—12:24)
 - (3) Israel conquers Canaan (Joshua 5:13—12:24)
 - (A) Central campaign (Joshua 5:13—9:27)
 - (c) At Ai (7:1—8:29)
 - (i) Defeat (7:1-26)

Joshua 7

- (c) At Ai (7:1—8:29)
 - (i) Defeat (7:1-26)

1 But the **sons of Israel** acted unfaithfully regarding the **things designated for destruction**, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, **took** some of the designated things; therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

1 But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

1 Later, the Israelis broke their promise regarding the things that had been turned over to destruction. Carmi's son Achan, grandson of Zabdi and great-grandson of Zerah from the tribe of Judah, appropriated some of the things that had been turned over to destruction. As a result, the LORD became angry with the Israelis.

1 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.

- "But" - an adversative connective; it's a warning signal for the discerning reader
- Joshua 6 is a record of supernatural victory, but Joshua 7 describes a great defeat
- "...sons of Israel" - even though Achan was the individual who sinned, and even though his sin was private, God regarded what he did as the action of the whole nation
- This was the case because he was a member of the community of Israel, and his actions affected the rest of the Israelites

- "...acted" - *maál*, to act unfaithfully or treacherously
- Achan did not simply take some things that did not belong to him. This would have been bad in itself. Rather, he stole what was dedicated to God, robbing the nation of its innocence before God
- "...things designated for destruction" - *cherem*,
 - (1) A thing devoted, thing dedicated, ban, devotion
 - (2) A net, thing perforated
 - (3) Have been utterly destroyed, (appointed to) utter destruction (Josh 6:18 Cf. Deut 7:26; 13:17)
- "...took" - Gr. *nosphizo* [LXX], "kept back"; same word used to describe Ananias and Sapphira's sin in Acts 5:2
- Why the genealogy (both here and in v16-18)? Zerah offspring of Judah's whoredom with Tamar, his daughter-in-law (Gen 38:15-30)

We are never in greater danger than right after we have won a great victory.

- 2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near **Beth-aven**, east of Bethel, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." So the men went up and spied out Ai.
- 2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." So the men went up and spied out Ai.
- 2 Meanwhile, Joshua had sent some soldiers from Jericho to Ai, which was near Beth-aven, east of Bethel. He ordered them, "Go up and scout the land." So the soldiers went up and scouted Ai and
- 2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, 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.
- Ai was 15 miles from Jericho; about 1,700ft above sea level
- Joshua apparently did not ask for God's guidance before sending troops; Israel's overconfident assault failed miserably
- "...Beth-aven" - "house of vanity"
- 3 Then they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not have all the people go up; have *only* about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai; do not trouble all the people there, for they are few."
- 3 They returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up; *only* about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few."
- 3 returned to Joshua.

"Not all of the people need to go up," they reported. "Only about two or three thousand men should attack Ai. Since they are so few, don't make all of the army work hard up there."

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

- The spies who spied out Ai based their advice to Joshua on the numbers of these particular Canaanites versus the Israelites; Ai had a total population of about 12,000 (8:25)
- The (10) spies in Num 13-14 lacked faith in God, because they did not believe that the Israelites were strong enough to defeat their enemies; they failed to reckon on God's help
- The spies in Joshua 7 lacked faith in God, because they believed the Israelites were strong enough *in themselves* to defeat their enemies
- They disregarded their need for God's help (Cf. v5)
- Fear makes the enemy appear greater than he is; pride makes him appear less than he is
- Joshua had express instructions: "He shall stand before Eleazer the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at His word shall they go out and at his word shall they come in" (Num 27:18-21).
- There is no written record that Joshua followed this command in respect to Ai

4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai.

4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai.

4 So about three thousand went up there, but they ran away from the men of Ai.

4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

5 And the men of Ai struck and killed about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as **Shebarim** and struck them on the mountainside; and the hearts of the people **melted** and became like water.

5 The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

5 The men of Ai killed about 36 of them, pursuing them outside the city gates as far as Shebarim, killing them as they descended. As a result, the army became terrified and lost their confidence.

5 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 melted, and became as water.

- The Israelites only previous defeat was to the Amalekites (Num 14:41-45). Their losses were not what Deut 32:30 led them to expect!

— They could have defeated the whole city if the nation had been pleasing to the Lord (8:25; Cf. Is 59:2)

- We often fail after a great victory. We usually fail spiritually in our strongest strength! (Cf. Peter's profession, Matt 16:13-17, with his subsequent failure, Matt 16:21-23). And who would be the least likely to deny our Lord—the boldest of them all!

- "...Shebarim" - "breaches"

- "...melted" - this strongly hints that Israel was trusting in their own strength rather than in the Lord (Cf. contrast with 5:1)

— Their self-confidence collapsed into overwhelming fear. Behind the defeat lay God's burning anger with sin.

Many a Christian, in his first experience of victory over sin, makes the same mistake. He is likely to take pride in himself and somehow think that he has achieved victory. This attitude is disastrous. No matter how often we have overcome temptation, it is still true that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing. A victory we won yesterday does not insure us against defeat today. We must go on trusting the Lord moment by moment to win our battles for us.

6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and **fell to the ground on his face** before the ark of the LORD until the evening, *both* he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.

6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, *both* he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.

6 At this, Joshua tore his clothes, fell down to the ground on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening—he and the leaders of Israel—and they covered their heads with dust.

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

- "...fell to the ground on his face" - Joshua had fallen on his face once before, when he confronted the Commander of the Lord's Army (5:14)

— That was in humble worship; this was in the humility of defeat and shame

- How could there be defeat? Didn't they have God's promises? ...the ark? ...the leader? ...weren't they circumcised? ...established commemorative stones? ...celebrated Passover? (Deut 11:22-23)

- Dust as an expression of remorse (1 Sam 4:12; Job 2:12)

- The time to humble oneself is before the battle, not after

7 And Joshua said, "Oh, Lord GOD! Why did You ever bring this people across the Jordan, *only* to hand us over to the Amorites, to eliminate us? If only we had been willing to live beyond the Jordan!

7 Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord GOD, why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, *only* to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan!

7 "Lord GOD," Joshua asked, "Why have you brought this people across the Jordan River? To hand us over to the Amorites so we'll be destroyed? Wouldn't it have been better for us to be content to settle on the other side of the Jordan?"

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

- Wow, what a difference from Joshua's faith at Jericho to now...

— Joshua temporarily loses his divine perspective and courage; his complaining sounds like Israel's murmuring in the wilderness (Cf. Ex 16:3; Num 14:2-3)

— He knew God's promise, experienced God's miracles, and was certain he was following God's purpose. Now, he was distraught at how the Lord could permit Israel's humiliating defeat at Ai

— This attitude is all too typical of believers in every age. When they fail, they at once question God's faithfulness rather than their own loyalty and obedience. They are tempted to abandon faith in God just when they need it most.

Unbelief is always content to settle for something less than God's best.

8 O Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned *their* back before their enemies?

8 O Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned *their* back before their enemies?

8 Lord, what am I to say, now that Israel has run away from its enemies?

8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear about it, and they will surround us and eliminate our name from the earth. And **what will You do for Your great name?"**

9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?"

9 The Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of this, will surround us, and eliminate us from the earth! Then what will you do about your great reputation?"

9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear [of it], and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? - "...what will You do for Your great name?" - Joshua's concern turned to God's reputation to the other Canaanite tribes

— He learned this lesson from Moses (Ex 32:11-13; Num 14:13-16; Deut 9:28)

— Like Moses, Joshua desired above everything that God would receive glory.

Unfortunately he did not yet possess the stability and objectivity that characterized Moses' later years, because he had not yet walked with God as closely or as long as Moses had.

— Their defeat had robbed God of glory; for this they had to repent

10 So the LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face?"

10 So the LORD said to Joshua, "Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face?"

10 "Get up!" the LORD replied to Joshua. "Why have you fallen on your face?"

10 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

- God reminded Joshua that he should not look for the reason for Israel's defeat in God, but in Israel

— Joshua did not need to pray at this point...he needed to repent

— Prayer is not substitute for repentance when repentance is needed

11 Israel has sinned, and they have also violated My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things designated for destruction, and have both stolen and kept *it* a secret. Furthermore, they have also put *them* among their own things.

11 Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put *them* among their own things.

11 Israel has sinned. They broke my covenant that I commanded them by taking some of the things that had been turned over to destruction. They have stolen, have been deceitful, and have stored what they stole among their own belongings.

11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put [it] even among their own stuff.

- Israel sinned? If Joshua had gone to the Lord before the battle, this would have been revealed to him

— Deliberate rebellion against God never affects only one person

— We often think we can control sin or restrict it to one area of life, but sin deceives us (Ps 36:1-2; Rom 7:11; Heb 3:13)

- One man's sin can damage many:

— Abraham's disobedience in Egypt almost cost him his wife (Gen 12:10-20)

— David's disobedience in an unauthorized census led to the death of 70,000 (2 Sam 24)

- Jonah almost sank a ship (Jonah 1)
- A little leaven leaveneth a whole lump (1 Cor 5:6)
- Our “private” sins affect the one Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12ff)

Never underestimate the amount of damage one person can do outside the will of God.
[Wiersbe]

12 Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand against their enemies; they turn *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become designated for destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you eliminate from your midst the things designated for destruction.

12 Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn *their* backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst.

12 The Israelis have been unable to stand before their enemies. They’re turning their backs and running from their enemies because they themselves have been turned over to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy these things that have been turned over to destruction.

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 any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

- To suffer defeat was bad; to be deprived of His presence was worse
- God could have told Joshua who the person was that had done this thing, but He does not:

- (1) To exercise the zeal of Joshua and Israel in searching out the criminal
- (2) To give the sinner himself space to repent and make confession

— But Achan never revealed himself until the lot discovered him and evidenced the hardness of his heart; therefore, he found no mercy

13 Stand up! Consecrate the people and say, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, because the LORD, the God of Israel, has said this: “There are things designated for destruction in your midst, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you have removed the designated things from your midst.”

13 Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the LORD, the God of Israel, has said, “There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst.”

13 So get up and sanctify the people. Tell them, 'Sanctify yourselves in preparation for tomorrow, because this is what the LORD God of Israel, says: "There are things turned over to destruction among you, Israel. You won't be able to defeat your enemies until you remove what has been turned over to destruction.

13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify 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 take away the accursed thing from among you.

[Heb 13:12]

14 So in the morning you shall come forward by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD selects by lot shall come forward by families, and the family which the LORD selects shall come forward by households, and the household which the LORD selects shall come forward man by man.

14 In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the Lord takes *by lot* shall come near by families, and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households, and the household which the LORD takes shall come near man by man.

14 Tomorrow morning you are to come forward tribe by tribe. The tribe that the LORD selects is to come forward by tribes, the tribe that the LORD selects is to come forward by households, and the household that the LORD selects is to come forward one by one.

14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, [that] the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families [thereof]; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.

- Joshua used the Urim and the Thummin to root out the sin of Achan (see note on Ex 28:30; Cf. Num 27:21)

15 And it shall be that the one who is selected with the things designated for destruction shall be **burned with fire**, he and all that belongs to him, because he has violated the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel!"

15 It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel."

15 The one selected as having taken what has been turned over to destruction is to be incinerated, along with everything that pertains to him, because he has transgressed against the covenant of the LORD and committed an outrageous thing in Israel."'"

15 And it shall be, [that] he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

- "...burned with fire" - burning a criminal after stoning was a way to emphasize the wickedness of his crime (Lev 20:14; Cf. Deut 13:15-16)

16 So Joshua got up early in the morning and brought Israel forward by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was selected.

16 So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken.

16 So Joshua got up early that morning, brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was selected.

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

17 So he brought the family of Judah forward, and he selected the family of the Zerahites; then he brought the family of the Zerahites forward man by man, and Zabdi was selected.

17 He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken.

17 He brought near the tribes of Judah, and the Zerahite tribe was selected. Then he brought near the Zerahite tribe family by family, and the household of Zabdi was selected.

17 And he brought the family 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 And he brought his household forward man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was selected.

18 He brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken.

18 Next, he brought near his household one by one, and Carmi's son Achan, grandson of Zabdi and great-grandson of Zerah, was selected from the tribe of Judah.

18 And 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.

- Prov 16:33 - The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.

- Urim and Thummim means lights or perfections (Deut 33:8,10, possibly used, yet not stated which measure used to "take" tribe)

- Jer 16:7 and Ps 10:6-13 probably reflect Achan's thoughts

19 Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me."

19 Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me."

19 Joshua then spoke to Achan, "My son, give glory and praise to the LORD God of Israel. Tell me right now what you did. Don't hide anything."

19 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.

- Although his sin carried a punishment that could not be decreased or postponed, he could reduce his guilt by confessing his sin

— Confessing sin is one way to glorify God

20 So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, **I have sinned** against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did:

20 So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did:

20 Achan answered Joshua, "It's true. I'm the one who sinned against the LORD God of Israel.

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

- "...I have sinned" - Achan was sorry, but like Judas, did not show signs of a change of heart (Matt 27:3-9)

— God had promised abundance to His people (Ex 3:8,17; Deut 28:1-14), but Achan did not believe God's promise or was unwilling to wait

- Achan joined the ranks of seven other men to utter these words, some more than once, some without sincerity:

— Pharaoh (Ex 9:27; 10:16)

— Balaam (Num 22:34)

— King Saul (1 Sam 15:24,30; 26:21)

— David (2 Sam 12:13; 24:10,17)

— Shimei (2 Sam 19:20)

— Judas (Matt 27:4)

— Prodigal son (Luke 15:18,21)

21 when **I saw** among the **spoils a beautiful robe from Shinar**, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then **I wanted** them and **took them**; and behold, they are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and

behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."

21 I noticed among the war spoils a beautiful mantle from Shinar, 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels. Because I wanted them, I took them, and they're buried in the ground inside my tent. The silver is underneath."

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.

- "...I saw...I wanted...took them" - he first allowed the sight of something attractive to grow into covetousness, then he took the step from covert mental sin to overt physical sin.

Finally he sought to cover up his action rather than confessing it.

— The same progression appears in the story of the Fall (Gen 3:6-7,10), and in the story of David's sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:2-4,8)

— The eye seems to be the portal to which Satan makes his attack; God uses the ear

- "...spoils" - no, they were to be firstfruits

— Achan tried to "reclassify" his crime; we do the same: adultery becomes an "affair"; perversion becomes a "lifestyle"; theft become an "entitlement" (Is 5:20)

— Coveting is idolatry (Col 3:5); Achan was robbing God...do we? (Mal 3:8-10)

- "...beautiful robe from Shinar" - the "mantle from Shinar"; Josephus writes that this was a royal garment woven entirely of gold

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath it.

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it.

22 So Joshua sent some messengers, who ran to the tent. And there it was, hidden in the tent with the silver underneath.

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 So they took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel; and they laid them out before the LORD.

23 They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the LORD.

23 They took the things from the tent that had been turned over to destruction, brought them to Joshua and all of the Israelis, and laid them out in the presence of the LORD.

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.

- This event pictures God's promise to "bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil" (Eccl 12:14)

24 Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the Valley of Achor.

24 Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor.

24 Then Joshua, with all Israel accompanying him, took Zerah's son Achan, along with the silver, the mantle, the gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and everything that belonged to him to the Valley of Achor.

24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

- The Israelites executed Achan's children with him, evidently because they had participated in his sin (Cf. Deut 24:16; Prov 15:27)

— It would have been impossible for Achan to hide the amount of spoil he took under his tent without his family's knowledge

— The people also destroyed all of Achan's animals and possessions (Cf. Deut 13:16-17)

— Achan's sin was high-handed defiance against God (Cf. Num 15:30,35)

25 And Joshua said, "Why have you brought disaster on us? The LORD will bring disaster on you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

25 Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

25 Joshua announced, "Why did you bring trouble to us? Today the LORD is bringing trouble to you!" So all Israel stoned him to death, incinerated them, and buried them with stones,

25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou **troubled** 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.

- "...troubled" [KJV] - a play on words: *àkar*, "trouble" [2x]; Achan, "troubler"

— The Valley of Achor was named for this event (v26)

- Centuries later, when Israel fell into idolatry, the Lord gave an astounding promise to “make the Valley of Achor a door of hope” (Hosea 2:14-15)
- Just as in Jericho, those who made themselves God’s enemies died, were burned and buried under rubble
- God is serious about His instructions
- He had to expose sin in order to heal His people
- Before crossing the Jordan, the people consecrated themselves to prepare Israel for the glorious miracle that brought them into the Promised Land (3:5)
- Now, consecration would prepare Israel for another work of God that would again allow Israel to move forward
- It seems that in each new period of Bible history, God reveals His wrath against sin in some dramatic way:
 - After the Tabernacle had been set up, we have Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1-2)
 - When David moved the ark to its place of honor, God killed Uzzah (2 Sam 6:1-11)
 - Just after the birth of the Church, we see Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5)

26 Then they erected over him a **large heap of stones** *that stands* to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

26 They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day.

26 piling up a large mound of boulders that remains to this day. After this, the LORD turned his burning anger away, and that is why that place is called “the Valley of Achor” to this day.

26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones 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.

- “...large heap of stones” - memorialized this act of rebellion for the Israelites and their children (Cf. 8:29; 2 Sam 18:17)

Lessons

Israel’s defeat at Ai graphically illustrates the far-reaching impact of sin. The private sin of one or a few individuals can affect the welfare of many other people who do not personally commit that sin. Really there were three causes of Israel’s defeat:

- (1) The Israelites were self-sufficient because Ai was small
- (2) They failed to wait on God
- (3) They committed a trespass in the things devoted to the Lord.

Achan and his family were, to Israel at this time, what Ananias and Sapphira were to the early church (Acts 5). They were a strong warning of the consequences of sin among God's people. Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10), and Korah and his cohorts (Num 16), were similar examples. The fact that God does not judge sin today, *exactly* as He did on these occasions, does not mean He feels any less strongly about it. He mercifully withholds, delays, or sometimes cancels judgment in some instances. Nevertheless sin still produces the same destruction and death.

God's punishment on Achan was not unfair. It is only by God's mercy that any sinner lives to old age. God can judge any sinner—at any time in his or her life—and yet be perfectly just. No sinner has any claim on God's grace. God is no man's debtor, and owes nobody an explanation for His judgments.

Failure at Ai due to:

- (1) Self-confidence. The supposition that Israel conquered Jericho. (Israel had not, God had!)
- (2) Neglect of prayer. Joshua did not go back to Gilgal (for guidance with Ai).
- (3) Disobedience. Corporate responsibility:
 - Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (Rom 5:12)
 - God teaches His people lessons in holiness and humility through defeat and discipline. In the next chapter we will see that He is able to give His people victory in the very place of defeat.