

**Refuge City Church — August 1, 2021**  
**“Sin in the camp” [Joshua 7-8]**

**Introduction**

- Whatever ‘walls’ the Lord decides to tear down, are not meant to be built back up!
- Whatever God declares to be devoted to destruction, are meant to be destroyed forever!
- Jericho defeated, and was devoted to destruction; ‘everything’ as an offering to the Lord.
  - The first fruit is to be dedicated to God.
  - **Deuteronomy 26:10**, “And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O Lord, have given me.’ And you shall set it down before the Lord your God and worship before the Lord your God.”
  - **Nehemiah 10:35**, “We obligate ourselves to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of every tree, year by year, to the house of the Lord;”

**Joshua 7, “The Problematic Attack” [Verses 1-15]**

**1** But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the Lord burned against the people of Israel. **2** 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.” And the men went up and spied out Ai.

- Now the conquest continues, but something is wrong.
  - In ‘secret’, Achan takes items from Jericho.
    - **Joshua 6:18**, “But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and **make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.**”
- With sin in the camp, Joshua carries out his orders to take the city of Ai.
  - Spies are sent out and with much self-confidence, possibly stemming from their victory over Jericho, they believe they can defeat the city with only 2-3,000 men [“... for they are few.”].
  - Israel attacks and they are beat down and run off! [36 men killed]
- **[vs. 6-9]** Joshua for a moment loses confidence and questions God about the defeat.
  - God’s answer = “Israel has sinned”.
  - **When there is willful sin in us, why would God bless our next steps?**
    - We must deal with our sin immediately!
    - **Romans 6:1-2**, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”
    - **1 Peter 4:1-2**, “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.”
    - **REMINDER:** Step 1 of our recipe for victory? *Immediate obedience* [even in sin].
  - Anyone ever had a coach who would punish the whole team because of the mistake of one person?
    - During a game, if one person loses focus and/or does something they’re not supposed to do, who suffers the consequences = everyone. **[Verse 11; “they”]**

**Verses 16-26, “The Resulting Consequence”**

**16** So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken. **17** And he brought near the clans of Judah, and the clan of the Zerahites was taken. And he brought near the clan of the Zerahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. **18** And he brought near his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. **19** Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” **20** And Achan answered Joshua, “Truly I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I did: **21** when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.” **22** So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. **23** And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel. And they laid them down before the Lord. **24** And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. **25** And Joshua said, “Why did you bring trouble on us? The Lord brings trouble on you today.” And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. **26** And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.

- Ultimately, what are we dealing with here: willful, deceptive sin.
  - Willful = Achan did it with full knowledge of the command given by God through Joshua.
  - Deceptive = He purposefully hid the items to get away with it, with the full knowledge of his family, who apparently condoned his sin.
  - **Romans 6:23**, “For the wages of sin is death...”
    - He saw it. He coveted. He took.
      - Not only did he break direct orders, He stole items that were directly reserved for devotion to God.
    - **Sound familiar?** Adam and Eve saw the fruit, coveted what they could gain by the lies Satan told them, and took it. The result?
      - **Genesis 3:8**, “...and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”
      - **Jeremiah 23:24**, “Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.”
      - **Numbers 32:23**, “...be sure your sin will find you out.”
    - We don’t know how much time passed between the defeat of Jericho and Achan’s resulting consequence, but it was enough time for him to confess and ask for forgiveness.
  - **Verse 19**: “My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.”
    - **It is a praiseworthy thing to confess your sins.**
      - **James 5:16**, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another...”
      - **1 John 1:9**, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
    - Unfortunately, Achan’s confession came not as a result of a guilty conscience and willful repentance, but because he got caught.
    - In the end, God judges the heart, and His justice is right.

- Achan, his family, all his possessions, and the items in question were put to death, and burned.
- This takes place in what becomes known as the Valley of Achor **[trouble]**.

## Joshua 8, “Take 2”

### Verses 1-2

**1** And the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land.  
**2** And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its livestock you shall take as plunder for yourselves. Lay an ambush against the city, behind it.”

- With the sin of Achan purged from Israel, God gives his blessing and command to overtake Ai.
  - This time, God allows the people to reap the rewards and keep the spoils. If only Achan was obedient and had waited...

### Verses 3-29

- The military strategy assigned by God worked to perfection.
  - Israel defeats Ai, along with those from the neighboring town of Bethel **[vs. 17]**.
  - Joshua and Israel are obedient to the Lord and His commandments, and the results... blessings. **[vs. 27]**

### Verses 30-35

**30** At that time Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal, **31** just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, “an altar of uncut stones, upon which no man has wielded an iron tool.” And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord and sacrificed peace offerings. **32** And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. **33** And all Israel, sojourner as well as native born, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded at the first, to bless the people of Israel. **34** And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. **35** There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.

- We come to a very important part of the promised land story. But we have to go back to understand the context.
  - **Genesis 12:5-8**, “...When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem **[the exact place Joshua is in now]**... Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.”
  - **Deuteronomy 27:4-8**, “And when you have crossed over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, concerning which I command you today, on Mount Ebal... And there you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones... And you shall offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God... And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law very plainly.”
- So Joshua followed the commands of God, through Moses, to the letter and did all he was required to do.
  - The altar was built on Mt. Ebal.

- They offered burnt offerings.
- Wrote down a copy of the law of God, and read it in the sight of all Israel.
- This was a renewal of God's covenant with His people in the land He had promised them.
- The instructions are simple
  - Obey the commands of God and there will be blessing.
  - Disobey the commands of God, and there will be curse.
  - The choice is up to us.
- **For us today: 2 Peter 1:10, 12-13**, "Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to **confirm your calling and election**, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall... Therefore I intend always to **remind** you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of **reminder**."

## CONCLUSION

- In our story today, Achan's sin led to the death of 36 men.
  - We need to understand and take to heart that *every* battle we face matters in the sight of the Lord!
  - We can not look at defeat as simple, brush it off, and say, "Well, we live to fight another day."
    - This is why we are charged by God to 'deny ourselves, pick up our cross, armor up, follow Jesus, and stand firm *daily*'!
    - **Galatians 5:24**, "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."
    - The moment you think you have enough self-will and confidence to take on the day's battles, is the day you fail, fall, and forfeit God's blessings.
  - There is only one way that sin is to be dealt with according to God = death
- In the redemptive story from the entirety of Scripture, one man's sin [Adam], which affected all of humanity needed to be atoned for, so God could grant future blessings to His children.
  - **Romans 5:12, 18**, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men." [John 3:16]
  - Christ's sacrifice on the cross forgives your sins...all of them. Even the one's you think you're hiding.
    - God is calling you to come clean. Confess your sin, and accept the penalty that Jesus paid for you.
    - **Romans 8:1, 6**, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."
  - If you need to take action and devote all sinful things to complete destruction in your life, do it immediately. Do it today!