

## Joshua Chapter Seven (Part One) - Teaching Notes

**Introduction:** A key idea in the book of Joshua is that God blesses obedience. Today, we hope to discuss the defeat at Ai because of Achan's sin.

### **Body:**

#### **Read Joshua 7:1-12**

**2. Defeat at Ai: Achan's sin.** Achan took what belonged to God. When the soldiers went out to fight, they lost the battle. In an exchange between God and Joshua, God calls for the theft to be dealt with.

#### **Applications -**

- **Personal sin's impact on the team.** Notice in vs. 1 that when Achan took some of what belonged to God, it made all of Israel liable. There are too many who behave as if they are simply individuals in the church. But the reality is we are all members of one body. In other words, your sins impact me, and my sins impact you. Some of our sins would have been avoided, if we had thought about the impact they would have on others. *Let's work on our sin issues, so they will not negatively impact those around us.*

- **God's money.** Notice in vs. 1 that Achan's sin was that he took what belonged to God. In this case, it was some silver, gold, and a robe. In our churches today, over half of the "members" take God's tithes and offerings. When we look at how much trouble was caused by Achan's sin in our text, we should be moved to deal with the sins of our day. *Let's work on giving God His tithes and offerings.*

- **Avoiding unnecessary punishment.** Notice in vss. 4-5 that Achan's sin cost 36 men their lives. On one hand, it seems unfair or beyond our understanding that God would allow 36 men to die because of what Achan did. It seems that Achan alone should have died or at least people in his family should be the ones dying. But on the other hand, God doesn't have to explain Himself to us. Instead of trying to figure God out, we would do better to try to live by His will. There are more sins than robbing God of His tithes and offerings. And there are more punishments than death. *Let's work on obeying God, so we can enjoy His blessings, instead of His punishment.*

- **Focusing on God, instead of failure.** Notice in vss. 4-5 that the people's heart melted because of the failure that they saw. In other words, instead of being focused on their faith in God and having a strong heart, they were focused on the failure that they saw and had a weak heart. We should learn from their mistake. The more we look at our negative circumstances the more likely we are to feel afraid. However, the more we focus on God and obeying His will, the more confident we should feel. *Let's work on focusing on God, instead of simply the negative things that we see.*

- **Turning to God.** Notice in vss. 6-9 that Joshua turned to the Lord and demonstrated a concern with God's glory. First, there are so many people who turn to drugs, alcohol, and bad influences, when things go wrong in their lives. Joshua should be given credit for turning to the Lord, and we should strive to follow his example. Second, Joshua talks about God's glory. There are many people who are only concerned with their own well-being, not God's glory (i.e., how God looks).

*Let's work on turning to God and being concerned with His glory, in the time of trouble. Regular personal prayer and participating in the church's prayer meetings can help carryout this application.*

**- Honest and wise praying.** Notice in vss. 7-8 that Joshua was somewhat accusatory with the Lord. He was accusing the Lord of making a bad decision to lead the people into this area, where they have suffered defeat. Joshua is essentially second-guessing the wisdom of God. First, we should be thankful that we can share with God whatever is on our minds. We don't have to worry about God being too sensitive to handle our laments. Second, whenever we are accusing God of leading us the wrong way, we know we are heading in the wrong direction. God is too wise to make a mistake. And He is powerful enough to fix whatever is broke. *Let's work on being honest in our prayer life with God and learn to trust His wisdom.*

**- Dealing with our sins.** Notice in vss. 10-12 that Joshua learns that the real problem is sin in the camp. Furthermore, God will not bless until the sin is dealt with. First, as we look at our lives as individuals, families, churches, and communities, the biggest problem that we may all face is our own sins. Think about how sinful health choices impact our health, sinful behaviors in our families impact our families, and sinful behaviors in our churches impact our churches. Second, the reason things may not be getting much better is because God is withholding His favor, until we deal with our sins. For those willing to repent, this is good news. For those who still want to blame God or blame someone else then this means they can be in a state of defeat for quite a while. *Let's work on dealing with our sins, so we can experience God's blessings.* Repentance calls for turning to God from our sins. This is the case as individuals, families, churches, and communities.

**Conclusion:** Let's work on obeying God. God has much for those who obey His will.