**ACHAN’S SIN**

Joshua 7:1-26

Key Verse 13

“Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.”

**Introduction**



In this passage, the Israelites were defeated by their enemy even though the enemy was not strong because of Achan’s sin. His sin caused severe damage to his people. God told Joshua why they failed and commanded him to remove Achan’s sin from them. Through this event we can learn what leads us to fail in our spiritual battle and how we can restore us and our community before God.

**1. Read verses 1-5. Why did the Lord’s anger burn against Israel? (1) Where did Joshua send spies? (2) Why did they want to send fewer men to Ai? (3) What was the outcome of the battle? (4-5)**

**1-1. Read verses 1-5.**

But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5978a)]; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5978b)] the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord’s anger burned against Israel.**2** Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, “Go up and spy out the region.” So the men went up and spied out Ai.**3** When they returned to Joshua, they said, “Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there.” **4** So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, **5** who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water.

1-2. Why did the Lord’s anger burn against Israel? (1)

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***the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5978a)***]; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri,[***[***b***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5978b)***] the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them***

· God told Israelite that the city Jericho and all that was in the city should be devoted to God and warned them to keep away from the devoted things so that they would not bring about their own destruction by taking any of them.

**17 The city and all that is in it are to be devoted[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+6&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5967a)**] to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. 18 But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. 19 All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the Lord and must go into his treasury.” (Joshua 6:17-19)** - Jericho was devoted to God as first fruit of victory in Canaan land.

· But Achan son of Karmi took some of devoted things.

· the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things : Even though one man Achan violated God’s command, it was considered that whole Israelite community was unfaithful in following the commands.

· Achan thought that nobody would know about what he had done, but God watched everything.

· We could deceive people, but we can’t deceive God. We should fear God and live before him. We should take God’s command seriously and obey him instead of following temptation.

· ‘So the Lord’s anger burned against Israel.’ – God became angry at the whole Israel people because of one man, Achan’s sin. One man’s sin in a community can affect whole community. God considered Israelite as one body instead of gathering of separated individuals.

- God let Israel suffer from severe famine for three years because of the sin of Saul’s family (2 Samuel 21:1-10)

- God sees people in the church as one body. What each one does in the church affects whole church.

**1-3. Where did Joshua send spies? (2)**

***· Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, “Go up and spy out the region.” So the men went up and spied out Ai.***

· After conquering Jericho, Joshua sent spies to Ai as he did before.

· ‘Ai’ means ‘heap of stones’

**1-4. Why did they want to send fewer men to Ai? (3)**

***· When they returned to Joshua, they said, “Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there.”***

· Only a few people live in Ai.- twelve thousand people lived in Ai(8:25) They thought two or three thousand soldiers would be enough to defeat them.

- Ai might be easier target than Jericho but their judgment might be based on their pride or over confidence after their victory over Jericho.

**1-5. What was the outcome of the battle? (4-5)**

***So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, 5 who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water.***

· Israelites were defeated miserably by the men of Ai.

· They couldn’t defeat even weaker enemy because God didn’t fight for them because of Achan’s sin.

- Their victory depended on God, not their own strength. They were able to win only when God would fight for them.

- It doesn’t matter either enemies are strong or not. If God fights for us we can win the victory regardless enemy’s power. But God doesn’t fight for us we can’t win even if we may be stronger than enemy.

- The victory depends on how much we obey him avoiding sin.

· The hearts of Israel people melted in fear and became like water hearing the news.

- They became so fearful and lost heart to fight. The defeat affected whole community seriously.

- Before enemy’s heart melted in fear but now their hearts melt in fear. They were shocked at the unexpected defeat.

- But the real fact that caused their fear was not their defeat but the fact that God didn’t fight for them.

**2. Read verses 6-15. What did Joshua and the elders do? (6) What did Joshua say to the Lord? (7-9) Why were the Israelites defeated? (10-12a) What was God’s warning to them? (12b) What instructions about having the people consecrated? (13-15)**

**2-1. Read verses 6-15.**

**6** Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. **7** And Joshua said, “Alas, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! **8** Pardon your servant, Lord. What can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? **9** The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?”

**10** The Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? **11** Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. **12** That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction. **13** “Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them. **14** “‘In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the Lord chooses shall come forward clan by clan; the clan the Lord chooses shall come forward family by family; and the family the Lord chooses shall come forward man by man. **15** Whoever is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the Lord and has done an outrageous thing in Israel!’”

**2-2. What did Joshua and the elders do? (6)**

***· Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads***

· Joshua tore his clothes – it was expression of sorrow and bitterness.(Gen 37:34, Num(14:6) Joshua got so shocked and and became sorrowful with the defeat. It was really unexpected things.

- Joshua realized they were defeated not because the number of Israelites’ army was small or enemy was stronger than them, but because God didn’t fight for them.

· Facedown to the ground – it was expression of humbling himself and asking mercy and help.

· Before the ark of the Lord- he went to the presence of God with the problem. He wanted to hear from God about why that happened. He realized that the defeat came from God.

- He wanted get solution from God instead of arguing with people.

- We have to come to God first through prayer when we have troubles and get help from him.

· Remaining there till evening – waited God’s answer with patience.

* He prayed to the Lord God consistently until he got answer from God.

· The elders of Israel did the same – they had sense of responsibility as leaders. They worked together with Joshua to lead the people and shared burden. The elders came to God when they had trouble instead of blaming each other.

· Sprinkled dust on their heads- expression of sorrow, shame and humility.

**2-3. What did Joshua say to the Lord? (7-9)**

***· And Joshua said, “Alas, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! 8 Pardon your servant, Lord. What can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?”***

· Joshua expressed his despair, complain, worry and fear. It was his prayer before God seeking God’s mercy and help.

· He worried that Canaanites and other people would get courage hearing their defeat and attack them.

· What then will you do for your own great name?”- He related the defeat to God’s name. The victory or defeat of God’s people is related to God’s glory and his name.

- His ultimate concern was God’s great name would be dishonored because of their defeat.

**2-4. Why were the Israelites defeated? (10-12a)**

***· The Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? 11 Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. 12 That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction.***

· “Israel has sinned” – God clearly told them they were defeated because of sin.

- Even though Achan sinned, God considered it as all Israel community’s sin.

- God again considered Israel as one body and identified one man Achan’s sin as whole community’s sin.

- We should take care of each other not to commit sin remembering one person’s sin can bring destruction to the whole community.

- “That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; When God was not with them because of sin, they couldn’t defeat their enemy at all.

**2-5. What was God’s warning to them? (12b)**

***· I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.***

- “I will not be with you anymore’ –God is holy God. He cannot be with the people who keep their sin.

- If God would not be with them anymore they would never get the land.

- To let God be with them they had to remove sin from their community.

- To let God be with us we have to repent our sin and keep us holy before God.

**2-6. What instructions about having the people consecrated? (13-15)**

·  ***13 “Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them. 14 “‘In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the Lord chooses shall come forward clan by clan; the clan the Lord chooses shall come forward family by family; and the family the Lord chooses shall come forward man by man. 15 Whoever is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the Lord and has done an outrageous thing in Israel!’”***

· “Go, consecrate the people” : God told Joshua to consecrate the people to prepare God’s holy presence among them. God wanted to deal with their sin problem directly by exposing the sin for himself.

- We should prepare God’s holy presence in us by consecrating us.

· God would chose tribe, clan, family and man in order to expose the person who committed sin.

· Whoever is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him : God commanded severe punishment for the sin.

· He has violated the covenant of the Lord and has done an outrageous thing in Israel!’”

- Achan’s sin was not just stealing something but violating the covenant of the Lord. His sin was sin against God. It was great blasphemy to God.

**3. Read verses 16-24. How was Achan chosen at the end? (16-18) How did Achan confess his sin? (19-21) How did Joshua deal with his sin? (22-25) How did God respond? (26)**

**3-1. Read verses 16-24.**

**16** Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was chosen. **17** The clans of Judah came forward, and the Zerahites were chosen. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was chosen. **18** Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was chosen.

**19** Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.”

**20** Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: **21** When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5998c)] two hundred shekels[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5998d)] of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels,[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5998e)] I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

**22** So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath. **23** They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the Lord.

**24** Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold bar, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. **25** Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today.”

Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. **26** Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-6003f)] ever since.

**3-2. How was Achan chosen at the end? (16-18)**

***· Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was chosen. 17 The clans of Judah came forward, and the Zerahites were chosen. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was chosen. 18 Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was chosen.***

· Tribe of Judah was chosen first, then clan of Zerahites was chosen among Judah, and finally family of Achan was chosen.

· God chose Achan and exposed his sin. No one can hide his or her sin before God.

· Achan could confess his sin during the process before his was chosen but he hid his sin to the end. He didn’t fear God.

**3-3. How did Achan confess his sin? (19-21)**

·  ***Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.”Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: 21 When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia,[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5998c)***] two hundred shekels[***[***d***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5998d)***] of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels,[***[***e***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5998e)***] I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”***

· Joshua told Achan to confess his sin before God recognizing God exposed his sin. If he would deny his sin he was saying God was wrong.

· Achan couldn’t hide his sin anymore since God exposed his sin.

· ‘I coveted them and took them’ – When Achan saw the beautiful robe from Babylonia and silver and gold he was tempted with covet and took them violating God’s command.

**3-4. How did Joshua deal with his sin? (22-25)**

***· 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath. 23 They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the Lord.24 Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold bar, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. 25 Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today.” 26 Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day.***

· Joshua sent messengers and found all things that Achan hid and spread them out before the Lord. Achan’s sin was exposed clearly before God and men.

- All our sins will be exposed before God on the day of judgment.

· Joshua with all Israel took Achan, all the plunder he had taken, his sons and daughters, and all his livestock, his tent and all that belonged to him and heaped up a large pile of rocks over Achan.

· The Valley of Achor- ‘Achor’ means pain, suffering and sorrow’

· Joshua removed sin from Israelite and cleansed the community by destroying Achan and all things that belonged to him including his sons and daughters completely.

**3-5. How did God respond? (26)**

***· Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor[***[***f***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-6003f)***] ever since.***

· The Lord turned from his fierce anger- When Israelite removed the sin of Achan from them God turned from is fierce anger.

- If we keep our sins without repentance we remain under God’s anger. The only way to keep peaceful relationship with God is to remove any kind sins from us and keep us pure before God.

**Conclusion**

Israelites was defeated in the battle at Ai because of their sin. God said, “You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.”God can’t be with his people while they keep sin. We should remove all sins from each of us and church that causes God’s anger. They we keep ourselves pure before God, he fights for us to win the victory.

**One word: Consecrate!**