

AI — THE THRILL OF VICTORY, THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

JOSHUA 7 & 8



HAVING WALKED AROUND **JERICHO** ONCE A DAY for **six days** and **seven times** on the **seventh day**:

- (**Josh 6:20**), “. . . **THE PEOPLE SHOUTED** when **THE PRIESTS BLEW WITH THE TRUMPETS**: and. . . **THE WALL FELL DOWN FLAT**, . . . and **THEY TOOK THE CITY**.”
- We can call that the **THRILL OF VICTORY**

GOD’S INSTRUCTION REGARDING THE FALLEN CITY OF JERICHO WAS **ABUNDANTLY CLEAR**. All four instructions are found in **CHAPTER 6**:

1) **RAHAB AND HER FAMILY WERE TO BE RESCUED** (6:22, 25)

S **RAHAB’S SALVATION IS AN EXAMPLE OF GOD’S GRACE**. **RAHAB’S SALVATION IS PROOF** that all the inhabitants of Jericho could have been rescued. All they had to do to be saved was to respond to God by faith like Rahab had.

S **SOMEONE MIGHT SAY**, “Yes, they included Rahab and her family, but **ONLY AS SECOND CLASS CITIZENS**.” **NOT SO!** As we search the genealogies in Scripture, we make a startling discovery. Rahab eventually **MARRIED** a man named **SALMON** who became the **GREAT-GREAT-GRANDFATHER OF KING DAVID** (Ruth 4:20; Matt 1:5). That means that Rahab was included **IN THE LINEAGE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**. That is a long way from being a second class citizen.

2) **DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY WAS TO BE COMPLETE** (6:21)

S **DEUT 7:1-5; 23-24**

- “**Utterly destroy them.**”
- “**Destroy their name from under heaven.**”

S **WHY?**

- (**Deu 9:4 NIV**), “. . . It is on account of **THE**

WICKEDNESS OF THESE NATIONS that the LORD is going to drive them out before you." (read Gen 15:16).

- **ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES** have revealed the **perverse** and **immoral** practices that existed among the inhabitants of Canaan (e.g., the **Ras Shamra Tablets**).

3) **FUTURE CONSTRUCTION OF JERICHO'S WALLS WOULD BE MET WITH JUDGMENT** (6:26)

S The man that set out to rebuild Jericho would do so at the cost of his **oldest** and **youngest** son.

S **FIVE HUNDRED YEARS LATER**, in the day of **KING AHAB**, the **BETHELITE NAMED HIEL** attempted to rebuild the walls of Jericho. He did so at the cost of his two sons, **ABIRAM & SEGUB** (1 Kings 16:34). (Note: Jericho had been occupied for brief periods of time prior to that <Jos 18:21; Judg. 3:13; 2 Sam 10:5>).

4) **ALL THE SPOILS FROM JERICHO WERE TO BE DEVOTED TO GOD ALONE** (6:19)

S **ALL THE SILVER**, and **GOLD**, and vessels of **BRASS** and **IRON** were to be consecrated to the LORD. They were to be put into the treasury of the LORD.

S Throughout Scripture, the **FIRST FRUIT** always belonged to God. **Jericho was the first city** taken in the land of Canaan.

FOUR INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) **RESCUE** Rahab & her family
- 2) **DESTROY** the city
- 3) **DO NOT REBUILD** the city.
- 4) **THE SPOILS ARE THE FIRST FRUITS** belonging to God alone

JERICHO WAS THE **FIRST CITY** Israel conquered in the land of Canaan. The **SECOND CITY** was NAMED **AI**. It was **much smaller & less formidable** than Jericho had been. That must mean that it would fall with greater ease than did Jericho — **RIGHT? WRONG!**

Though Ai was a smaller city, it represents **THE AGONY OF DEFEAT!**

- I. STEPS TO DEFEAT AT AI
- II. STEPS FOR CORRECTION AT AI
- III. STEPS TO VICTORY AT AI

I. STEPS TO DEFEAT AT AI (VV. 2-5)

S JOSHUA SENT SPIES to view the country and survey the city of Ai. They brought back **THEIR REPORT** to Joshua:

- 1) **NOT ALL** the people are needed to take Ai.
- 2) **ONLY A FEW MEN** are there.
- 3) Send **TWO OR THREE THOUSAND MEN** to take it.
- 4) **DO NOT WEARY** all the people.

S IN RESPONSE TO THEIR REPORT

- **THREE THOUSAND** men marched against Ai
- The men of Ai humiliated Israel causing them to **TURN AND RUN** chasing them a great distance
- **36 MEN** in Israel's army lost their lives
- The text states **the hearts** of the men of Israel **melted** and **became as water**

S **THE FIRST AND ONLY DEFEAT** that Israel experienced taking the land of Canaan **TOOK PLACE AT AI**.

S **WHY** did they EXPERIENCE THAT DEFEAT? Ai was a **LESS FORMIDABLE** city than Jericho. **GOD HAD PROMISED** them that **ONE** WOULD CHASE a **thousand** and **TWO** would put **ten thousand** to flight (Deu 32:30). It had worked that way in all the previous battles. Why didn't it work that way at Ai?

 THE REASONS FOR ISRAEL'S DEFEAT WERE TWOFOLD:

I) THE SIN OF A SOLDIER NAMED ACHAN

(V. 1), "... Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, **TOOK OF THE ACCURSED THING:**"

THE "ACCURSED THINGS," or "FORBIDDEN THINGS," WERE DESCRIBED IN JOSHUA 6:

(Josh 6:19), "BUT ALL THE silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

WE ARE **NOT LEFT TO GUESS WHY** ACHAN took something that belonged to God. Achan himself told us why he took them. **FOUR VERBS** SUMMARIZE **the course** of Achan's sin. You will find Achan's action to be **THE TYPICAL COURSE** of all sin.

(V. 21), "When **I SAW** among the spoils a goodly Babylonian 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."

#1. "I SAW"

S It has been said "**A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS.**" That is true for both good and evil. A picture can often express **truth** much easier than words. A picture can also express **error** much easier than words.

S **SATAN KNOWS HOW TO USE "THE PICTURE"** to entice someone to sin.

1) **SATAN USED "THE PICTURE" WITH JESUS:**

- **(Mat 4:8)**, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and **SHOWETH HIM** all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;"
- **SATAN DIDN'T JUST TELL** Jesus about the kingdoms, **HE SHOWED** Jesus the kingdoms.

2) **SATAN USED "THE PICTURE" WITH EVE**

- **(Gen 3:6)**, "And when the woman **SAW** that the tree was good for food, and that **IT WAS PLEASANT TO THE EYES**, . . . she **took** . . . "

3) **"THE PICTURE" WAS USED WITH KING DAVID**

- **(2 Sam 11:2)**, "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof **HE SAW** a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful **TO LOOK** upon."
- **(1 John 2:16)**, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and **THE LUST OF THE EYES**, and the pride

of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

- **QUESTION** — would David have committed adultery and murdered Uriah had he guarded his eyes? Only the Lord knows the answer to that question. With confidence **we can state** that many Christians have looked upon that which was forbidden, and as a result, they eventually fell.

THAT **SAYS MUCH** about the kinds of things Christians **WATCH, OBSERVE AND READ.**

- **(Mat 6:22-23)**, "THE LIGHT OF THE BODY IS THE EYE: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. {23} But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"
- That says something about what a person watches at the **MOVIES** or on **T.V.** It says something about the use of the **INTERNET.** These verses say something about the kind of **BOOKS** and **MAGAZINES** a person reads. **DO NOT** go places that pander to the lust of the eyes.
- **SOMEONE SAYS**, "O, those things DON'T AFFECT ME." Then why watch them? Why read them? Why go there? If they don't affect you, you need to go see a doctor because you aren't healthy.
- **THE TRUTH IS** there is not one of us **old** enough, **mature** enough or **strong** enough to see what which God has forbidden and remain unaffected by it.
- So as the songwriter says, "**BE CAREFUL LITTLE EYES WHAT YOU SEE.**"

#1. "I SAW"

#2. "I COVETED"

- S THE **LAST OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS** READS: **(Exo 20:17)**, "THOU SHALT NOT COVET thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's

wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor ANY THING that is thy neighbor's."

S **GOD SAYS** when see something that belongs to another, **DO NOT DESIRE THAT AS YOUR OWN.**

S **WAR** is often about taking something that belongs to another. **Hitler** saw Europe and wanted it for himself.

S **ACHAN** saw the gold and silver and wanted it for himself. **THE PROBLEM WAS** it belonged to God. If Achan took those things, he would be stealing from God Himself. How could anyone have been so foolish as to steal from God? How could anyone take something that belongs to God?

S LISTEN TO MALACHI
(Mal 3:8-10), "Will a man rob God? Yet **YE HAVE ROBBED ME**. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. {9} Ye are cursed with a curse: for **YE HAVE ROBBED ME**, even this whole nation. {10} Bring ye all **THE TITHES** into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the **LORD** of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

S **PAUL** showed that **IT WAS COVETOUSNESS** that proved to him that he was a sinner in need of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:7).

#1. "I SAW"

#2. "I COVETED"

#3. "I TOOK"

(Jer 17:9), "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

The condition of the human heart makes it EASY FOR ACHAN TO RATIONALIZE:

- "I'm entitled."
- "It is only a small thing." (No big deal)
- "It does not apply to me."
- "Joshua didn't really express what God meant."
- "God didn't mean it."

- “It won’t hurt anyone else.”

S Achan DID NOT HAVE A PRAYER MEETING and ask God for permission to take the gold and silver. He knew that God had already forbidden those objects. Knowing that, **HE TOOK IT ANYWAY!**

S ACHAN DID WHAT **MANY PEOPLE** IN THE BIBLE HAVE DONE

- 1) **KING AHAB** wanted **NABOTH’S VINEYARD** though Naboth did not want to sell it him. **JEZEBEL** explained to Ahab, her husband, how to get the things he wanted when they belonged to someone else. She had Naboth falsely accused and then took his vineyard (1 Kings 21).
- 2) **ABSALOM** wanted his father’s kingdom so he sought to kill his own father. He would have succeeded in killing David had Absalom not first been killed.

S THERE ARE **TWO WAYS** TO GET THINGS — one is THE **RIGHT WAY** and the other is THE **WRONG WAY**.

1) **THE WRONG WAY** TO GET THINGS:

(**James 4:2**), “Ye **LUST**, and have not: ye **KILL**, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye **FIGHT** and **WAR**, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.”

2) **THE RIGHT WAY** TO GET THINGS:

(**Mat 6:33**), “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

- **SOMEONE SAYS**, “But if I wait on God to give it to me, I will never get it.”
- **THE TRUTH IS** if God doesn’t give it to you, it isn’t worth having.
- HAD ACHAN **SIMPLY WAITED TWO MORE DAYS**, he would have had more spoils from the land than he could have handled.

#1. “I SAW”

#2. “I COVETED”

#3. "I TOOK"

#4. "I HID"

(V. 21), "... They are **HID** in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."

- S **SOME FOLKS EQUATE HIDDEN SIN TO BE THE SAME AS NO SIN AT ALL. THEY SAY**, "No one knows, therefore everything is **OK**.
- **MOM & DAD** don't know.
 - The **POLICE** don't know.
 - The **IRS** doesn't know.
 - My **BOSS** doesn't know.
 - My **CHURCH** doesn't know.
 - My **MATE** doesn't know."
- S **THEIR SOLUTION** to sin is **TO HIDE THEIR SIN AND PRETEND** it never took place at all. **THEIR SIN IS BURIED SO DEEP** they have convinced themselves they have concealed it forever.
- S **THE PROBLEM IS** there is **NO SUCH THING AS A SECRET SIN**.
- (**Luke 12:2**), "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."
 - (**Num 32:23**), "... Be sure your sin will find you out."
 - (**Prov 28:13**), "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."
 - (**Eccl 12:14**), "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
 - (Prov. 15:3; Jer. 16:17)

THE **REASONS** FOR ISRAEL'S DEFEAT AT AI WERE **TWOFOLD**:

1) THE **SIN OF A SOLDIER NAMED ACHAN**

2) **THE SIN OF ISRAEL**

S This chapter contains **AN IMPORTANT REVELATION** RELATED TO

THE CORPORATE LIFE OF OLD TESTAMENT BELIEVERS. We can apply that revelation to some aspects to the corporate life of New Testament believers. Granted, some differences exist because Israel was in a special covenant relationship with God as a nation. Still, we can apply some principles to New Testament believers in their *corporate life* as **CHURCH, FAMILY, ORGANIZATION**, etc.

- S UNDERSTANDING THAT ACHAN WAS THE ONE WHO SINNED, consider what God said to the entire nation. **CONSIDER TWO VERSES:**

(V. 1), "But **THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL COMMITTED A TRESPASS** in the accursed thing: for Achan, . . . took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was **KINDLED AGAINST THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.**"

(V. 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."

- S **DOES THAT STRIKE YOU AS STRANGE?** Achan was the one who did it, but **ALL ISRAEL WAS CHARGED WITH THE SIN. ACHAN'S SIN HAD AFFECTED THE ENTIRE NATION.**

- S Perhaps **CANCER IN THE LITTLE TOE** serves as an illustration. The eye, arm, brain, lungs, liver, pancreas and so on are all cancer free. The whole body has cancer although it is found only in the little toe. Proof of that fact is seen in letting the cancer in the little toe go unattended and discovering too late that the whole body dies.

- S **YES**, we are each responsible for our sins individually, but we do not sin in a vacuum. When we sin, we affect others. We do not sin in isolation. Our sin influences the lives of others.

ISRAEL'S SIN WAS TWOFOLD:

#1. PRESUMPTION

- S **THE SPIES** spoke for the nation when they said, ". . . **DO NOT WEARY ALL the people, FOR ONLY A FEW MEN ARE**

THERE" (V. 3). You can almost hear them thinking out loud:

- "Jericho fell so easy, this city will be a snap."
- "God did it at Jericho, He will do it at Ai."
- "Ai is lesser than Jericho, therefore Ai will be easier than Jericho."
- "Ai is an insignificant city."
- "Defeat is not a possibility."

S THEY FORGOT SOMETHING

- (**Prov 16:18**), "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
- (**Zec 4:6**), ". . . Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

S Israel's lesser battle **COST THEM** more casualties than any battle they fought in taking the land of Canaan. Israel presumed incorrectly.

HOW OFTEN TO DO WE THINK: "O, it is just a little sin."
"It is an insignificant battle." "It is no big deal." "I can handle this one."

S THE TRUTH IS THERE ARE NO INSIGNIFICANT BATTLES IN LIFE. Every battle in life has the potential to cause our fall. **THE MOMENT** we begin to think this battle is insignificant, is **THE MOMENT** we set ourselves up for defeat.

S (**1 Cor 10:12**), "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

ALAN REDPATH

"The fact is that, apart from the grace of God and the blood of Jesus, the smallest temptations will be too powerful for us." (*Victorious Christian Living, Studies in the Book of Joshua*, pg 116)

JOHN BISAGNO

"We make a grave mistake when we look to our Lord only for the difficult problems of life, and when the victory comes, forget too quickly that the victory was the Lord's. "Surely," we think, "we have handled the big problems. We

can handle the little problems.” But the truth is we can handle neither. It takes no more of God’s power to heal cancer than a cold. It simply takes God’s power. It takes no more of God’s grace to save the hardened criminal, and no less the youngest child. It just takes grace.” *(Life Without Compromise - Joshua Speaks Today, pg 49)*

S **THE REAL TEST OF LIFE IS NOT WHAT WE DO WITH THE “JERICHO’S”** of life; the real test is what we do with **THE “AI’S”** of life. Find out what a person does with the little insignificant things of life and you will find out who a person really is.

S **JESUS SAID IT THIS WAY:**
(Luke 16:10), “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”

S **EACH BATTLE**, whether **BIG** or **SMALL**, should be faced with **HUMILITY** and **DEPENDENCE** upon God. Without humility we are guilty of the sin of presumption.

ISRAEL’S SIN WAS TWOFOLD:
#1. PRESUMPTION

#2. PRAYERLESSNESS

S Israel made **GREAT PREPARATION** ahead of **JERICHO**. Israel **SANCTIFIED** themselves. They observed the **PASSOVER**. **JOSHUA** met the Captain of the Host of heaven while considering how to take Jericho.

S **THE ONLY PREPARATION** mentioned ahead of **AI** was to send out **SPIES**. They gave **NO INDICATION** of spiritual preparation. **NO PRAYER MEETING** was called. No ceremony for **SANCTIFICATION** took place.

S When you study the life of **KING DAVID**, you will find victory after victory. You will also discover prayer preceded those victories. Study the defeats of David and you will discover that David **FAILED TO PRAY** in advance. When David failed to pray, David was **not victorious**. That is not a coincidence.

S **PRAYER IS A SIGN OF DEPENDENCE** upon God.

PRAYERLESSNESS IS A SIGN OF INDEPENDENCE FROM GOD. Prayerlessness makes us vulnerable to defeat because Jesus said, “. . . **WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING**" (John 15:5). *Prayerlessness* and *presumption* are made out of the same stuff.

- **DO WE PRAY ONLY WHEN WE FACE A JERICHO?**
Don't misunderstand, we should pray in the face of every Jericho. Thank the Lord for the "Jericho" prayers. I knew of a young boy whose father was at the point of death in the hospital. The young boy at home went into their garage, fell down and cried out to God for the life of his father. God answered his prayer. Thank the Lord for prayers in the face of the mighty "Jericho's."
- **THE REAL TEST IS** how is **our prayer life** when FACED THE LITTLE INSIGNIFICANT "**AI's**" OF LIFE? Do we presume that we can make it on our own without God's help?
- **ISRAEL PRESUMED** they could handle AI WITHOUT GOD. **HAD THEY CONSULTED GOD**, He would have revealed to them the matter of disobedience had to be taken care of before going up against AI. God would have told them they were not ready to go into battle until they had taken care of their sin.

I. STEPS TO DEFEAT AT AI

II. STEPS FOR CORRECTION AT AI

#1. PRAYER

JOSHUA PRAYS:

(V. 6-9), "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."

(V. 7 NIV), "And Joshua said: "**AH**, 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} O 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?"

- S **IF ONLY** Joshua had prayed **BEFORE** the battle, he would have been spared much heartache.
- S **IT IS REALLY EASY** to point a finger at **JOSHUA'S** lack of prayer. Pointing a finger at **DAVID'S** prayerlessness is easy. Yet how often **HAVE WE** gone forward **without first consulting God** only to discover we had gone the wrong way?
- S (**Luke 18:1**), “. . . Men ought always to pray, and not to faint;”
- S (**2 Chr 7:14**), “If my people, which are called by my name, shall **HUMBLE THEMSELVES**, and **PRAY**, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and **WILL HEAL THEIR LAND.**”
- S **ALAN REDPATH**
“One of the greatest temptations that can come to you after you have proved that God is able to give you victory, is to neglect to pray. When you think that you are strong and don't need to pray any more, then you will have dulled your sensitiveness to sin. It is only prayer in the hour of victory that makes a man of God realize that he will face defeat again unless he maintains continuous contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment of victory is the moment of humiliation.” (*Victorious Christian Living, Studies in the Book of Joshua*, pg 118)

#2. OBEDIENCE

GOD GAVE **INSTRUCTIONS** TO JOSHUA AFTER PRAYER (**V. 10-15**), “And the LORD said unto Joshua, **GET THEE UP**; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? {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 **LIED** also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. {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. {13} **UP, SANCTIFY THE PEOPLE**, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: 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. {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. {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."

S **JOSHUA OBEYED!**

S **SAMUEL SAID TO KING SAUL**

(1 Sam 15:22), ". . . Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

#3. CONFRONTATION (16-21)

(V. 16-21 NIV), "Early **THE NEXT MORNING** Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was taken. {17} **THE CLANS OF JUDAH** came forward, and he took the Zerahites. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was taken. {18} Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. {19} **THEN JOSHUA SAID TO ACHAN**, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give him the praise. 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, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.""

S **SOMETIMES GOD REQUIRES CONFRONTATION:**

- **NATHAN HAD TO CONFRONT KING DAVID.**
- **ELIJAH HAD TO CONFRONT KING AHAB**
- **PETER HAD TO CONFRONT ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA**

S **SOMETIMES** we **MUST** face **THE WRONG**. It **cannot**, and **should not**, be **SWEPT** under the rug.

(Prov 28:13), "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

S **THERE IS A PROPER WAY** to confront sin according to

Jesus (Matt 18:15ff). **OUR PROBLEM** is not usually confronting sin improperly; our problem is too often we do not confront sin at all.

VANCE HAVNER

“We’re doing everything today but dealing with sin in the church. We dare not touch it with a forty-foot pole. Achan gets away with the wedge of gold, and **the** Ananias and Sapphira club is not rebuked.” *(Just a Preacher, pg 89-90)*

S **WHY DID GOD COMMAND JOSHUA TO WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING? WHY** was there such a **LONG PROCESS** after everyone arrived the next morning? God could have revealed Achan as the culprit right on the spot and saved all the hassles.

TWO POSSIBLE REASONS:

1) **TO DRAW ATTENTION**

- **THE PROCESS** caused everyone in the army to think about the seriousness of the matter. God was giving Israel a **LIVING DEMONSTRATION** of His Word.

2) **TO ALLOW TIME FOR REPENTANCE**

- Achan was given time to repent. He had **ALL NIGHT** to think about it. **Sleep** probably did not come easy as he thought about the coming day. Even with time Achan did not repent. He must have convinced himself that his sin was buried so deep that no one could ever discover it.
- God may have taken **SEVEN DAYS** to topple the walls of **JERICHO** to allow time for Jericho to repent. God was waiting for other Rahab’s to come to Him.

WHY IS GOD SLOW IN BRINGING JUDGMENT TODAY? Some folks have concluded that God’s delay in their judgment is God’s acceptance of their sin. They believe they have sufficiently hidden their sin. Nothing could be further from the truth. God has revealed why delay often exists between one’s sin and one’s judgment.

- **(Rom 2:4)**, “Or despisest thou the riches of **his goodness** and **forbearance** and **longsuffering**; not **KNOWING** that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

- **(2 Pet 3:9)**, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but **IS LONGSUFFERING** to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

- #1. PRAYER
- #2. OBEDIENCE
- #3. CONFRONTATION

#4. JUDGMENT (CAPITAL PUNISHMENT)

(V. 22-26), “So Joshua **SENT MESSENGERS**, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, **IT WAS HID** in his tent, and the silver under it. {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**. {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**. {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. {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.” (The valley of trouble)

S **SCRIPTURE DOES NOT TELL US WHY ACHAN’S** family was included in his judgment. O.T. law clearly revealed that a family member was not responsible for another family member’s sin. Based on that truth, we have to conclude that Achan’s family was in collusion with him. They must have known what he had done and agreed with him wholeheartedly.

S **BEYOND THAT, WHY DID GOD REQUIRE SUCH SEVERE PUNISHMENT OF ACHAN? PERHAPS IT WAS TO DISPLAY THE SERIOUSNESS OF HIS SIN.** His sin cost the lives of **36 MEN**. Those 36 families were going to be fatherless because of the selfishness of one man.

S **SIN IS SERIOUS!**

- **(Rom 6:23)**, “For **THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH**; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

- **(James 1:15)**, “ Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, **BRINGETH FORTH DEATH.**”
- **(1 John 5:16)**, “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not **UNTO DEATH**, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. **THERE IS A SIN UNTO DEATH:** I do not say that he shall pray for it.”
- A PERSON CAN **CROSS OVER THE LINE** and bring a conclusion to his physical life. Not all who commit the sin unto death go to hell. It is possible that a believer commits that sin and God takes him to heaven early. Their witness on earth is of no value in light of eternity.

- **EXAMPLES:**

- 1) **ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA** lied to the Holy Spirit about some property they sold and they were stricken dead on the spot (Acts 5). They displayed the sin unto death.
When they translated the Old Testament into Greek, the same Greek word was used to describe Achan’s sin as was used to describe Ananias’ and Sapphira’s sin. Both of them took that which had been dedicated to God.
- 2) **NADAB & ABIHU** were the sons of Aaron, the high priest. Knowing God’s requirements, they took incense God had forbidden into the temple. They were stricken dead on the spot (Lev 10:1-2).
- 3) **UZZAH** reached out and touched the **ARK** of the covenant and God took his life (2 Sam 6:7).
- 4) **THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS** were getting drunk at the **LORD’S SUPPER**. Paul said to them:
 - **(1 Cor 11:30)**, “For this cause many are **weak** and **sickly** among you, and many **SLEEP.**”
 - **(1 Cor 11:31-32)**, “For if we would **JUDGE OURSELVES**, we should not be judged. {32} But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

S SIN IS SERIOUS. Anytime a person begins to doubt how serious sin is, all they need to do is look at **THE CROSS**. Jesus hung on the cross **BECAUSE SIN IS SERIOUS.**

- I. STEPS TO DEFEAT AT AI
- II. STEPS FOR CORRECTION AT AI

III. STEPS TO VICTORY AT AI

(Psa 44:3), "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favor unto them."

- S ACCORDING TO CHAPTER 8, ISRAEL WAS DIVIDED INTO **THREE GROUPS** when they went back to Ai.
 - 1) One group was to **ATTACK THE CITY** and pretend they were being defeated as they ran from the city.
 - 2) Another group was to **WAIT IN AMBUSH** for the inhabitants of Ai as they pursued the fleeing Israelite army
 - 3) A third group was to **ENTER THE CITY** and burn it.
- S After the battle was complete, Israel was to go to **MOUNT EBAL & MOUNT GERIZIM**. They were to worship God according to Deut 27.

LESSON FROM AI

- 1) **YESTERDAY'S TRIUMPH OVER MIGHTY JERICHO DOES NOT GUARANTEE TODAY'S VICTORY OVER INSIGNIFICANT AI.**
 - ALAN REDPATH put it this way, "The victory you had yesterday will not bring you power today" (Victorious Christian Living, Studies in the Book of Joshua, pg 117).
- 2) **THE MOMENT OF GREATEST TEMPTATION OFTEN ARISES IN THE SHADOW OF SOME GREAT VICTORY.**
 - The **AMALEKITES** are an example of this truth. The Amalekites attacked David's camp while he and his men were away. They took all of the families of David and his men captive. David eventually caught up with the victorious Amalekites. What the Amalekites were doing demonstrates why the greatest hour of danger often follows a great victory.
 - (1 Sam 30:16), "And when he had brought him down, behold, they {the Amalekites} were **SPREAD ABROAD** upon all the earth, **EATING** and **DRINKING**, and **DANCING**, because of

all the great spoil that they had taken . . . "

3) **AN OBVIOUS OUTWARD CONNECTION BETWEEN DEFEAT AT AI AND THE SINS BURIED IN OUR TENT ARE NOT ALWAYS CRYSTAL-CLEAR.**

- Though the associations **may not be obvious**, they are **OFTEN CONNECTED**.
- We should always maintain a **CLEAR CONSCIENCE** before God so that sin does not hinder us or anyone else.
- When Jesus informed **THE DISCIPLES** that one of them would betray Jesus, they all began to ask, "**IS IT I?**" (Mat 26:22). Each disciple examined their own heart. That serves as an example to us. Rather than pointing our finger at Achan, we should ask, "Is it I?"

4) **PRAY WHETHER YOU FACE A JERICHO OR AN AI.**

- Failure to pray always **MAKES US VULNERABLE** to sin no matter how small the battle might be.
- Without prayer, any "Ai" is too big for us! "**WITHOUT GOD THE SMALLEST OPPOSITION** is too great for us."

5) **WE DO NOT SIN IN ISOLATION.**

- When we sin, we affect others. Our sins affect our **homes**; our **church**; our **nation**.

6) **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS SECRET SIN.**

- We may have **BURIED** that sin **so deep** that we have concluded everyone, God included, has forgotten it.
- Jesus' said:
(**Luke 12:2**), "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."

7) **TAKE GOD'S WORD AT FACE VALUE.**

- If God says that something **IS HIS, IT IS HIS!** We must not take things that God has forbidden.
- We are **NOT ENTITLED** to break God's Word whatever our reasoning might be.

8) **NO FAILURE NEED BE FINAL.**

- Israel failed big time the first time they went up against Ai.
- God gave them a second chance and they won the victory.
- You may have failed. You may be failing right now. God has

granted time and grace for repentance and restoration.

IS THERE AN AI IN YOUR LIFE?

- **VANCE HAVNER ASKS:**

“. . . Do you have **an Ai** in your life, **a place of DEFEAT** where **the Canaanites** have gotten the better of you?” (*Just a Preacher*, pg 89-90)

- **SOMEONE MIGHT SAY, “Yes, BUT IT IS JUST A LITTLE THING. I can handle it. It is NO BIG DEAL.”** That is the kind of explanation you find when someone has been set up for a great fall. We cannot conquer any sin, no matter its size, apart from God’s help.

(2 Chr 7:14), “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”