

No Holding Back **Joshua 7**

Context:

- Jericho has just been defeated
- The promises of God have begun to be fulfilled
- *The Lord has been at war in Israel's place*—better yet, Israel has covenanted to follow the Lord in His sovereign plan

Reader's Advantage—v. 1

Israel has broken the covenant; Achan has taken what was devoted to God; the anger of God burns against His people.

A number of theological realities:

Collective nature of Israel—

One sins, all are responsible

Adam → Humanity

Jesus → Those who believe

Covenant betrayal, trust has been broken

Achan has pursued something other than his Lord as an object of affection
(Howard)

Here, a violation of the 1st Commandment (no other gods)

Holy Wrath—

God's wrath is not prejudiced; He hates sin

Sin is the proper object of the wrath/hatred of God

As though everything is okay—vv. 2-5

Spies sent like the last time; return with positive report—*send 2,000-3,000*, won't need more
Is there something *less than godly* taking place here?

Some commentators say, “no, focus on what the text explicitly states!”

Yet, there are times that the text intentionally leads our thinking without expressly stating every truth.

It is interesting that the spies speak of “toiling” in verse 3; *whose war was it?*

There has been a lot of instruction given by the Lord in the previous chapters, no mention is made of such here.

The last time they went against Jericho, the strategy the Lord had given was centrally ritualistic, *what lead them to simply move on Ai in this case?*

Israel attacks and is chased away, losing thirty-six soldiers in the meantime

Israel responds like the Canaanites—*their hearts melt*
Fear instead of faith
No sense of the presence of God

Impassioned prayer or bitter complaint?—vv. 6-9

Joshua lacks hope for the future; *there is much that must be said here.*
What about all that he has just seen and experienced?
What about the promises God had made?
There is definitely a struggle with faith here

Joshua sounds like the Israelites during the time of wandering—
Why have you brought us here?
It would have been better to stay where we were...
Now we will be destroyed

But two things we see that may reveal there is something different with Joshua:
First, he is not bickering to other humans but lamenting before God. Lament requires faith.

Second, as he ends his prayer, notice how the future of Israel and the honor of God's name are wrapped up together.
Cf. Ezekiel 20:14

Joshua displays an understanding of the heart of God, appeals to Him with the knowledge of what He has revealed about His love for His people *and His own glory*

God's Rebuke—vv. 10-12

Joshua is not thinking the thoughts of God, but the thoughts of man
Cf. Matthew 16:23

This is about sin, not defeat...

In other words, it is not about the circumstances, but about the relationship

The covenant has been broken, sin has become an obstacle once again (repeated pattern)

Note the consequence:

Because they took what was devoted to God for destruction, *now they have become devoted to God for destruction.*

Words used regarding the sin:

Sin, transgress, taken, stolen, lied, *put them among their own belongings*

They need to destroy the devoted things...

Devoted to destruction—vv. 13-15

God's sovereign ways

Powerfully displays the unity/corporate nature of the people of God
Reveals also the individual's responsibility

Note the emphasis on purity/holiness for God's people

Implications for church discipline?

Achan's sin—vv. 16-21

He saw, he coveted, he took

Cf. Genesis 3; James 1:14-15

What was he thinking?

From James Boice:

- 1- Achan was dissatisfied
- 2- Achan coveted what was not his
- 3- Achan stole the articles

“But if we do not repent of hidden sin, it will inevitably break out into the open.”

A few additional things that may help us think about temptation:

- What he took look like they could have been hidden easily
- What he took could have been carried easily too
- *He had them in his possession but couldn't use them...*

Justice, Mercy, and Warning—vv. 22-26

Items were brought back to where they belong, laid before the Lord

Achan and his household devoted to God for destruction; *could have been all of Israel.*

Over Achan a heap of stones—*a reminder*

The Lord's anger turned, wrath satisfied... reminds us of what Christ would do once for all on the Cross.

Powerful reality:

Earlier in Joshua, Rahab displays faith, becomes an Israelite—is spared

Now, Achan displays unbelief, becomes like the Canaanites—is destroyed

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