

Joshua Ch 7-8

Last week we isolated ch 6 and didn't get into ch 7 because I wanted to look at ch 7 and 8 together. But I'm afraid that there was enough in ch 7 to consume our time tonight because I don't want to just gloss over some of this stuff. Now, as we approach ch 7 the children of Israel are fresh off the heels of an awesome victory. They received God's plan, which invited God's presence, which assured them the victory over a formidable foe in the Promised Land. And you remember that in there lies a lesson for us as believers, it's absolutely essential that we be taking the time to seek God's desire for our situation, and upon receiving His instruction, we're not to question His instruction but simply follow through with it. Joshua could've questioned God on the seeming absurdity of marching around a city 1 time a day for 6 days and then on the 7th day marching around it 7 times, but he didn't. And God honored Israel's obedience with victory over the enemy. And though God went before them and gave the city into their hands, the battle still had to be fought, and such is the case in our lives today, there is much to be had in the life led in the Spirit, God wants to bless your life. But you have to lay hold of it by faith and odds are it won't come with out a fight, because your enemy isn't going to just lay down and die, he's going to do everything within his power to keep you from obtaining your inheritance. Again your enemy not being the people around you, but those powers and principalities, rulers of darkness and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. But God hasn't left us defenseless or unequipped to fight 2 Cor 10:4-5 *"the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God."* You and I wage war on our knees, through prayer and the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. The children of Israel obeyed the word of God and it brought forth victory in their lives, don't miss that lesson, the walls fell down, and Israel took the city, but you remember that before they ever went to war Joshua warned them to (notice vs 18-19 of Ch 6).

Joshua was admonishing and exhorting the people unto absolute loyalty, there could be no compromise, because to be disloyal or unfaithful would penalize the entire congregation. And God I believe exhorts and admonishes us in the same way, listen to what J. Vernon McGee says concerning this, "Disloyalty and unfaithfulness in the church today is hurting God's cause more than any enemy that is on the outside. The devil can only hurt our churches from the inside, not from the outside." When you get to the book of Rev and you read through chapter's 2-3 you see that Jesus was there warning the churches (all but 1). And in those warnings to the churches not one of them was concerning enemy attack from the outside, however He did issue warning concerning one of the churches that was holding to what was referred to as "the doctrine of Balaam", and they also had those who were holding to what was referred to as "the doctrine of the Nicolaitans." In another church this was the warning given; *"I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."*

In other words what He was saying in effect was that what was bringing about their destruction wasn't something that was coming against them from the outside, but they were being defeated from a problem that wasn't being dealt with from within, it would seem as though they were lacking church discipline.

And when your body is no longer able to purge those things that are harmful to it, then ultimately your body begins to be destroyed, and if not remedied soon you'll die. There was only one battle that we read of the Israel ever lost in the taking of the Promised Land, and it wasn't spurred on or brought about by the enemies on the outside, but by sin cropping up on the inside. And until the congregation of the children of Israel, took care of it, God would no longer be with them, and Just as Jesus said, with out Me, you can do nothing. So there is no victory apart from the work of God in our lives, and if God is the one who brings about the victory, and because of sin in our lives we forfeit the presence of God going with us, then we can expect nothing but defeat. That's why it's so important that we be continually in the position of David when He said, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart;*

Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting." They had received the warning, the need for the continual obedience to the word of God, but we read in vs 1.

Vs1

Man, as soon as you read that 1st word, the yellow light starts flashing, they had a tremendous victory, Joshua's fame spread throughout the entire country; "But", now Sunday morning we spoke of the glorious hope that lies behind the words "but God". But unfortunately the word "but" followed by practically any other word most generally means trouble, (finish vs). The word Achan means "trouble" or "troubler" and what we have here in vs 1 is sort of a parenthetical type statement whereby Vs 27 of Ch 6 makes a statement and vs 2 of this ch continues on from that perspective but in between here we have a little insight given to us that will enable us to understand what's about to take place. We have the benefit of hindsight given to us in advance, and we'll get into exactly what happened in greater detail as we get into this a little later and the ramifications of his decision. But Achan, while he was in Jericho saw this beautiful Babylonian garment and a wedge of gold, both of which God had said don't touch for yourself and he took them. And we're going to see how his sin alone, "troubled" the entire congregation of Israel; as a matter of fact Achan would go down in history as the man who troubled the nation of Israel. 1 Chron 2:7 we read that, "*The son of Carmi was Achar, (same thing as Achan) the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the accursed thing.*" and We can see in even that vs that God held the entire congregation accountable for the sin of one man. Why? Because the Israelites were to be one people before God, just as the church is one body before God. And when one sins, all are affected. That's why Paul told the Corinthians that "*if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.*"

The same thing happened in the beginning with the fall of Adam, the entire human race is guilty before God on the account of one man's sin, now the good news with that example is that that process can also be reversed through the one Man's (that is Christ's) obedience. Rom 5:18-19 tell us that, *"as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."* Adam's one sin condemned us all, but through the one sacrifice of Christ, all can be saved. So we have this precursor to what's about to happen, Achan has committed a trespass, he's crossed over the line that God has drawn unbeknownst to the rest of the children of Israel. Now we read in vs 2 (read)

Vs2

Do you see what seems to be happening here? Has Joshua sought the Lord concerning this, to see if that's what God would have him do? No, but do you recall what happened before they went in and defeated Jericho, even though it was to no tactical advantage whatsoever? He sent in spies to spy out the land, and so it would seem to me that Joshua is trying to imitate the process by which they won their last victory. And that would seem to make perfect common sense, but in this case it doesn't make kingdom sense. Much like last time we seen that God's plan didn't make common sense, that's because God likes to take means other than man's so that He alone gets the glory. And here we see that God won't allow Himself to be forced into a program or a process. There's no set formula for success; and what I mean by that is that gaining the victory through Christ is not a matter of imitating a procedure, it is a matter of prayerfully seeking the face of the Savior, looking for God's direction in your given circumstance. It's about being led by the Spirit every day, praying for guidance, waiting on the Lord, and listening to His voice. You see Joshua followed the leading of the Spirit in his last confrontation and consequently he won the battle, and so it would appear that he just assumed that he would go about confronting this city in like manner to the last and the results should be the same.

Vs3

Again, never seeking the Lord, just trusting in their eyes, walking by sight, but that's exactly the opposite of what the scriptures teach, God tells us to walk by faith and not by sight, but here Joshua is making decisions based solely upon that which he can see. Some of the biggest mistakes we will probably ever make in our Christian lives will be those "no-brainer" kind of decisions that we make. Those times when we look at everything, weigh things logically, and make a decision - all without seeking the Lord in prayer. Because if Joshua had prayed about this, the Lord would have told him, "You better no go up there, you've got sin in the camp, and until you deal with it I'm not going with you and you won't get the victory with out Me." But instead the spies formed their opinion by sight. Joshua made his decision by sight. And the results were devastating.

Vs4-5

Not much of a battle was it, they went up, the men came out and they fled and suffered defeat, this is what confidence in our own flesh will get us, devastating defeat, pride going before the destruction, and the haughty spirit before the fall. Now in ch 5 you remember that the rite of circumcision was reinstated which was a lesson to them to take no confidence in the flesh and how quickly they've forgotten that lesson. And now the situation seems to be reversed, before they were confident, and the enemy was terrified, now they've boosted the enemy's moral and their hearts are melting like water.

Vs6-9

So the leader who was once magnified now finds himself mortified, and notice he seems to be blaming God for this mess that he's gotten them into. Had Joshua sought God with such fervency before they went up to Ai and humbled himself before the battle, then the situation would've been different after the battle. But as it stands they're coming down off of a mountain top victory into the valley of defeat, and Joshua's confidence in God is being tested and shaken, and he finds himself struggling with unbelief. Now he's worried that the Canaanites are going to wipe them all out even though God has promised to give them the land.

And in his unbelief he finds himself content with settling for something less than God's best, and unbelief will always settle for less than God's best, remember that. And I find that at times God will allow us to experience defeat in order to try our faith, and show us what really lies in the depth's of our hearts, because He already knows, but sometimes we need to be reminded that we're not quite the spiritual giants that we'd like to believe we are. And one good thing that we see in what's being said here is that by the time that Joshua was done lamenting he was at the point where he was more concerned for the greatness of God's name than for himself, but I like what God says to Joshua here.

Vs9

Now you remember Moses experienced this same type thing once in Ex 14 (we don't have time to go into it) but here Joshua is getting a like rebuke. He's whining and griping to God about his plight in life, and God basically says hey, why are you whining and griping to me, get up off your face and take care of business. There is a time to pray, and a time to move, and God seems to be saying hey, you should've sought Me in the 1st place, but you've got yourself in this mess, and you need to take care of business, and many times that's the problem in our lives, if we would pray before we act we'd spare ourselves a lot of grief. But now that he's finally taken the time to seek God, God goes ahead and tells him that there's sin in the camp.

Vs11-15

Notice vs 11 *Israel has sinned* you see there it is, one man blew it and everybody paid, this vs shows us the divine view point on what it was that Achan did and it's called sin, he missed the mark. He didn't do what he was supposed to do which was not touch any accursed thing and turn in all the gold to the treasury, and he did what he wasn't supposed to do, which we see is a transgression, he crossed over the line of the covenant by taking unto himself that which belonged to God. And notice here in vs 11 that God breaks it down into the root issue of exactly what it was that had been done, there was sin, there was transgression, and it was that of stealing, and deceiving. And had already cost many and it was going to ultimately cost Achan and his family there lives, now there's sort of a NT counterpart to this, a similar event that took place with in the beginnings of the church, an act of coveting that led to stealing from the Lord and deceit. You remember when Barnabas sold a plot of land in Acts ch 4 and he took all the money and he brought it and laid it down at the apostle's feet. And he was no doubt esteemed over the act, didn't do it for that reason but just by the very fact that the Holy Spirit records it for us shows us that this would seem to be something of a known fact. And then this man by the name of Ananias, along with his wife Sapphira, sold a possession. He wanted in on some of that action, he was coveting the accolades that Barnabas was receiving, but the bible tells us that he kept back part of the proceeds, and his wife knew it, and so even though they were claiming to give all, in reality since he didn't he was robbing the Lord of what he said he was giving and was seeking to deceive ultimately even the Lord. Which is exactly what Achan is doing here, and it got the same results, both he and his wife were slain, God just killed them. And it would seem as though at each new period in biblical history God will show His judgment and wrath against sin in some radical way so that the purity of the movement is safe guarded while the foundation is being laid.

You remember in Lev ch 10 after the tabernacle had been set up, Nadab and Abihu offered profane fire, and God killed them, they weren't to be treating the sanctuary carelessly. When David sought to restore the ark to it's place of honor and Uzzah reached out and touched it in order to keep it from falling off the ark, God struck him dead as well, they weren't to be treating the sacred things of God carelessly. And here what was God teaching them, what was the warning signal that was being sent out, that they weren't to be taking the word of God lightly, God told them what they were to do and what they weren't to do. And if you sow to the wind you're going to reap the whirlwind, God will not be mocked, don't think that there isn't ramifications to the disobedience to His word.

Vs12

So their sin has separated them from God, and God demands repentance in order for reconciliation to take place. And also their sin has brought about defeat and the entire nation couldn't stand because of the sin of 1 man, let me tell you something here. If you think that your sin affects only you and nobody else, you are greatly mistaken and do not understand the scriptures. What does the bible say that a little leaven leavens? The whole lump, never underestimate the amount of damage that one person outside of the will of God, can bring about to the whole body.

I've seen it happen over and over again all over the place, this place not being excluded one bit, one person can get just a little bit tweaked and things start flying and people start getting hurt and more and more deception starts taking place and lives begin being ruined. And it often can be traced back to a single individual who gets out of the will of God for their lives one way or another and then the division starts. That's why Paul exhorted the Corinthian church to discipline the disobedient man in their church, because his sin was beginning to defile the whole fellowship. David's disobedience in taking a census of the people that wasn't authorized by God led to the death of some 70,000 people.

Jonah's refusal to obey the Lord practically sank the whole ship, Eccl 9:18 tells us that, "*one sinner destroys much good.*" When you or I sin, it permeates, affects, influences, impacts, and infects the lives of many, many others around us. There's no such thing as safe sin, sin that only hurts you, so many times people think, hey I'm making my own choice here and it's not hurting anyone else. That couldn't be farther from the truth, your sin always hurts other people, always.

Well, the Lord told Joshua to have the people sanctify themselves and He was going to reveal who it was who had violated the covenant, and he was to bring all the tribes forward, and God would select the tribe, and then the families of that tribe were to pass by and the right family would be selected, and then the men of that family were to pass by and God would reveal the man.

Vs16-18

Man you know that when Joshua announced what was going to take place, he started getting nervous, and then when all the tribes went by and Judah was selected, his heart started pumping. And then the family of the Zarhites was selected and then Zabdi was taken and then ultimately Achan was taken.

Vs19

In other words now's the time to get right, so come clean and don't try to hide it because we know it's you, the Lord has exposed you.

Jer 23:24 says, "*Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?*" says *the LORD;*" The answer is no, the bible says that you can be sure that your sin will find you out, maybe not today or tomorrow or even this year, but it will catch up to you mark my words. And if not in this lifetime then it will in the one to come. Jer 16:17 "*My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes.*" Eccl 12:14 tells us that, "*God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.*" Well, Achan was given the chance to come clean and at least he did that, but understand, that that doesn't reverse the law of sowing and reaping, that's an irreversible law that has nothing to do with forgiveness.

Vs20-21

Notice the 3 steps, #1 I Saw #2 I coveted, and # 3 I took, and that's usually the way that it goes, you see it, you want it, you take it. And he buried it beneath his tent, he couldn't even enjoy his sin, he had to hide it, and isn't that usually the way it goes as well. We try and hide what's going on, as if God doesn't know, the bible says that all things are open and naked to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account. Getting exposed is one of the worst fears that we face in our sin, we don't want anyone to find out and so we try to hide it, Alan Redpath once said, "All of us are more afraid of being found out than ashamed of the sin in our hearts. Our first reaction to the prick of conscience is always to plan that, somehow, our sin may not become known." When in reality, we should be worrying less about our sins being found out and more about turning away from it. If we were a people of repentance then we wouldn't have to worry about being exposed because we would be turning from our sin instead of repeating our sin, Achan tried to cover his sin and it never pans out when we try to cover ourselves because God just doesn't acknowledge man's own coverings for sin.

Vs22-26

The lust of his flesh cost him his life, James 1:14-15 says that, "*each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*" That's literally the story of Achan's life, his desire, or coveteousness gave birth to sin, and when his sin was brought into the light, ultimately it cost him his life, and not only his but his whole families. That's why again it's so important for you to choose carefully those things that you take part in and choose to engage in or circum to, because you've got not only yourself to consider but your whole family, both in your house and here as well, so I pray that God will purify us and help us to walk in integrity esteeming each other above ourselves so that we might be sensitive to those choices that we make. But once the poison was purged from the congregation God renewed Himself to His people and began once again to bless them as we'll see next week (Lord willing).