

A The cause of the defeat (Joshua 7:1-5, 10-13)

- ❖ After the favorable report from the spies sent to Jericho, Joshua consulted God and received from Him the strategy for taking the city.
- ❖ If, after receiving the report from the spies sent to Ai, Joshua had done the same, the deaths of 36 people would have been avoided (Joshua 7:1-5).
- ❖ But what was the real reason for the defeat, or what would have been the reason for God to tell Joshua not to attack Ai (Josh. 7:11)?
- ❖ God had seen that “Israel has sinned.” Nowhere in the Bible is sin described with such nuances: “they have violated... they have taken... they have stolen... they have lied... they have put them with their own possessions.”
- ❖ Note the plural. The sin was committed by one man, but God held the entire people responsible. They had broken the covenant; sin had to be rooted out so it could be restored.

B Dismayed and afflicted (Joshua 7:6-9)

- ❖ Joshua and the elders were dismayed by the defeat at Ai, and they showed clear signs of mourning (Josh. 7:6).
- ❖ Joshua then reacts with a tantrum similar to Israel’s repeated reaction during their 40 years of wandering: “Why did you bring us across...? If only we had been content to stay ...!” (Josh. 7:7).
- ❖ However, Joshua's spirit was not the same as that of the Israelites in the desert. His complaint was not motivated by disappointment, but by fear that God's name would be dishonored among the Gentiles (Josh. 7:8-9).
- ❖ He clearly saw that God's character would be interpreted by unbelievers based on how His people acted. Today we continue to be God's testimony in the world. What a great responsibility!

C Discovering the transgressor (Joshua 7:14-19)

- ❖ To remove corporate sin (the guilt of the entire people), the sinner had to be eliminated (Josh. 7:15). Eliminated? Wouldn't he be forgiven if he repented? Of course he would! But Achan showed no sign of sincere repentance (and he had plenty of opportunities to do so).
 - The investigation was announced and postponed until the next day (Josh. 7:14-15). *Achan fell silent.*
 - The tribe of Judah was taken (Josh. 7:16). *Achan fell silent.*
 - The family of Zerah was taken (Josh. 7:17a). *Achan fell silent.*
 - The leader Zabdi was taken (Josh. 7:17b). *Achan fell silent.*
 - Achan was taken (Josh. 7:18). *Achan fell silent.*
- ❖ Reflecting divine kindness and love, Joshua asked Achan to confess his sin (Josh. 7:19).
- ❖ Achan's case was lost. He confessed, but he didn't ask for forgiveness (Josh. 7:20). Yet God mourned over his hardness of heart, demonstrated in every call to repentance.

D Achan's sin (Joshua 7:20-26)

- ❖ Joshua asked Achan to give glory to God and confess his sin (Josh. 7:19). It was his last chance. If, when he confessed, he had asked for forgiveness... But he didn't, and there was no forgiveness for him (Num. 15:30-31).
- ❖ Like Eve, Achan “saw,” “desired,” and “took,” and his sin affected many (Gen. 3:6). Like Ananias and Sapphira, Achan took some of the accursed things dedicated to God and paid for them (Acts 5:1-2).
- ❖ The decisions Achan made in Jericho were diametrically opposed to those of Rahab:

RAHAB	He hid the spies on the roof	He acted kindly toward Israel	He favored victory because of his faith	He made a covenant with Israel	He freed his life and that of his family
ACAN	He hid the loot in the ground	It brought trouble to Israel	He caused defeat by his works	He broke the covenant of Israel	He died with his family

E Victorious Again (Joshua 8:1-29)

- ❖ As in Jericho, God provided Joshua with the strategy to gain victory over Ai (Josh. 8:1-2).
- ❖ During the night, an ambush was set up behind the city. At dawn, the army approached Ai and pretended to flee before them again.
- ❖ As Moses raised his staff until he had victory over the Amalekites, at God's command, Joshua raised his “weapon” (probably a sickle sword used by the Egyptians) and kept it raised until he had complete victory (Josh. 8:18-22, 26).
- ❖ God was once again giving victory to his people. The Valley of Achor, where Achan and his family were executed, opened the door to victory, a “door of hope” (Hosea 2:15).
- ❖ When we accept divine forgiveness by faith, God buries our sin in Achor, and opens the door to hope.