



## "REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

### KEEP CALM AND MARCH ON!

#### Marching through the book of Joshua: Lesson 10

The Israelites entered Canaan in approximately 1405 BC. The victory at Jericho began their military campaign to take possession of the Promised Land. Joshua first established the Israelites in the central part of Canaan and then launched a campaign to the southern and northern parts. These military strategies are laid out for us in Joshua chapters 1-11. It took the Israelites about 7 years to do this, from 1405 to 1398 BC.

We ended our last lesson in Joshua chapter 6 with an incredible victory at Jericho. Unfortunately, chapter 7 begins with the word "but." That's not a good sign! This "but" warns us that their victory didn't last too long.

This week we will be reminded about the dangers of hiding sin "in the camp," and how serious it is to disobey God. I pray that as we read and study this chapter together, we will understand how our own personal sin affects all those around us, as well as the entire body of Christ!

#### First Day

1. Read Joshua 7:1-26. Give this chapter a title and then give each section a subtitle.
  - a. Section 1: Verses 1-5
  - b. Section 2: Verses 6-15
  - c. Section 3: Verses 16-26
2. What is the main theme of this chapter?
3. Are we introduced to any new characters? Who are they?
4. Read part of the genealogy of the sons of Judah in 1 Chronicles 2:3-7. How do they describe Achan or Achar?

5. What city did Joshua send the spies to?
6. What else happened near this city? Read *Genesis* 12:8, 13:3

The name "Ai" means "ruin." This city was located two miles north of Jericho, east of Beth-Aven (which means "House of Vanity, or nothingness"). It was considered a smaller city than Jericho, having a population of about 12,000 people (*Joshua* 8:25).

7. Describe the writing style of this chapter. For example, does the author use a delayed climax? Is it mainly facts? Is it dramatic, humorous, etc.?
8. How does the word "but" in 7:1 tie chapters 6 and 7 together?
9. Write your thoughts after reading this chapter. Also, list any questions you may have.

In chapter 6, the Israelites learned that complete victory only comes by total dependence on God. After a victory like the one at Jericho, it's easy to become self-confident or puffed up with pride, thinking that the victory was due to something you did. Christians seem to be very vulnerable after a victory or a time of blessings and prospering. Tomorrow we will see what happens when we get distracted by the things of the world. How quickly we can fall when we focus on **the victory**, rather than the **Victor**, Jesus Christ!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." **Proverbs 15:3**

### Second Day

**Review this week's memory verse. Meditate on it throughout the day.**

1. Read Joshua 7:1-5. What did you title this section?
2. What was Achan's sin? Why was it so serious?
3. If Achan is the one who committed the sin, why does God hold all the children of Israel responsible? (Joshua 7:1, 11-13)
4. What did the spies report after they came back from Ai?
5. Compare the report of these two spies with that of the two spies in Joshua 2:22-24. What was the difference? (I wonder if they were the same guys?)
6. Explain the philosophy of these two spies. Why did they give Joshua the counsel that they did? What do you think their attitude was? Should they have been telling Joshua what to do?
7. Did Joshua receive their counsel? What does it seem like he forgot?
8. How many men went to Ai? What was the result?

In Joshua 2:11 we read that it was the hearts of the Canaanites that were melting. Now, the hearts of the Israelites were doing the melting.

9. Why do you think this defeat scared the children of Israel so much? What had Joshua assured them of in Joshua 3:10?

One man's sin turned away God's presence from a whole nation. Corporately, God regarded Israel as one unit, not a group of individual tribes. God dwelt in the midst of their camp which made the Jews God's chosen people. This camp was to be kept holy (Deuteronomy 23:14). Because Achan defiled the camp, his sin was considered a sin of the nation. God had also told Joshua that He wanted **ALL** of Israel to present a united front before the enemy until the victory was complete (Joshua 1:12-15). Later, in 8:1, God again told Joshua to take **ALL** the people of war to Ai.

10. Why was it so important that all of Israel be together as they moved forward?
  
11. How are we all held responsible for one man's sin? Read Romans 5:12-19. What is the result of one Man's obedience?

This ends our lesson for today. We will look more closely at the reasons unity is so important later on. For now, let's rejoice that through the person of Jesus Christ, we can have the free gift of eternal life. Adam brought sin into the world, but Jesus provided the way to be forgiven! What a **"Reason to Rejoice"**!

### Third Day

**What's your memory verse? Are you hiding it in your heart? Are you hanging it on your fridge?**

In yesterday's lesson, Joshua received some bad counsel from his men. He acted on it before he prayed about it. (Or at least it appears that way.) We can learn a valuable lesson from Joshua. We need to be careful when we receive counsel from others, whomever they are. Although there is wisdom in a multitude of counselors (Proverbs 11:14), God is the only counselor who is all-knowing. He is our **"Wonderful Counselor"** (Isaiah 9:6). **Romans 11:33-34** says, **"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord?**

**Or who has become His counselor?"** We must always receive our final instructions from Him!

1. What does Psalm 62:5 say about this?
2. Have you ever acted on bad counsel from a well-meaning friend? What was the result?
3. Have you ever given bad counsel to someone? What was the result? What did you learn from it?

We are accountable for every word that comes out of our mouth (Matthew 12:36-37). We need to be careful not to be "wise in our own opinions" (Proverbs 3:7). We should make sure the counsel we are giving comes from God's Word, not our experience and our personal opinions. Proverbs 10:19 says, "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise." Proverbs 16:23 tells us that **"the heart of the wise teaches his mouth."** My mouth could do some learning; how about yours?

4. Read Joshua 7:6 -15. How did Joshua respond to the defeat?
5. Who did Joshua run to?

**The tearing of clothes and putting dust on their head was a sign of grief or distress.**

6. What three questions did Joshua ask God in verses 7-9?
7. What three statements did Joshua make in verses 7-9?

Joshua calls Him "Lord God" in verse 7. This title stresses God's Lordship over all events and over all of Israel.

8. What was God's response to Joshua? What way did God provide for Israel to cleanse themselves?
9. Do you see anything that Joshua may have done wrong, or neglected?
10. In your opinion, would you consider Joshua's prayer whining and complaining to God or just honestly pouring out his heart? Read the murmurs of the Israelites in Exodus 14:11-12, 16:2-3, 17:3. What seems to be the difference?
11. What does David say about pouring out your heart in Psalm 61:1 and 62:8?
12. What seems to be Joshua's greatest concern, in verse 9?
13. Is your greatest concern when you, or someone else sins, the reputation of God? When you see others sin are you simply disgusted or are you grieved because that sin will affect the entire body of Christ?
14. What does Paul say about the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27? How does the whole church suffer when one is suffering?
15. What does Paul compare sin to in 1 Corinthians 5:6-7? Why? How is sin dangerous to the whole body? How do the private sins of individuals affect their whole family, church, and community?

16. Do you think that it is possible to commit a sin that affects no one but yourself? Why or why not? If so, name that sin.
17. The sin of Achan prevented victory for Israel. Is there any sin in your life that is preventing victory in your life or the lives of your family and friends? Sin spreads like leaven. It starts small, then grows. Is there any "small" sin in your life that is beginning to affect your family?
18. What can you do about it? Read 1 John 1:9.

Sin not only affects those around us, it obviously affects our relationship with God. F.B. Myer said that we should strive for "unclouded fellowship with God." **Is your fellowship with the Lord unclouded?**

God was angry because of sin in the camp. Some commentators commend Joshua for his diligence and trust in God. Others suggest that Joshua is responsible for the defeat because of his self-confidence and his neglect of prayer. It has also been suggested that had Joshua been in closer fellowship with God, through prayer, that he would have been able to discern that Achan was in sin. Although this may be true, it is important to note that God rebuked Israel for the sin of Achan, rather than rebuking Joshua. Our text doesn't show God blaming Joshua for the defeat or His anger. John Calvin makes a good point: "God meant this defeat to show a sign of His anger towards Israel. He allowed the number of killings to be small in order that the loss may not be so serious."

Even though the spies gave Joshua bad counsel and Israel moved forward, God is still in control of everything. Remember, He is sovereign. Nothing happens that He has not allowed for His divine purposes! Proverbs 19:21 says, **"There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the Lord's counsel -- that will stand."**

#### Fourth Day

**What's your memory verse?**

1. Read Joshua 7:6-26. What did God say would be the punishment to the one who was guilty? (vs 15)

In verse 15, God calls the act a "disgraceful" thing. Joshua, Navpress Lifechange Series, says this: "Elsewhere in the Old Testament, this Hebrew phrase is used only of sexual sins (Genesis 34:7, Deuteronomy 22:21, 2 Samuel 13:12). Achan had prostituted himself with the gods of Canaan, especially with the lust for wealth, and so had committed adultery against his covenant Lord. Violating the covenant was equivalent to breaking marriage vows."

God was going to take tribe after tribe, family after family, household after household, man after man. Exactly how God was going to do this is not clear in our text. Casting lots may have been used. This was a common way to seek God's will because God was the one who would guide the lots (Proverbs 16:33).

2. According to verse 19, what did Joshua ask Achan to do?
3. Did Achan admit to his sin? What had he taken?

Verse 21 tells us that Achan "saw," "coveted," and "took." We all "see" things around us, but as we continue to look, we begin to sin.

4. What does "covet" mean? Read the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:13-21. What does God think of covetousness?

Achan cared more about wealth than about obedience to God. He followed the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. Luke 12:31 says to "seek the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you." Luke also says that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."(12:34)

5. We know where Achan's heart was; we can tell by the treasure he was seeking. What about you? Where is your heart? Is there something that you're coveting? Are you seeking the things above or the things below: money, possessions, success, fame, etc.? Is obeying God more important to you than doing well in this life?

6. Do you think that Achan really believed no one would ever find out? How do we swallow that same lie?
7. Is there anything that God doesn't know, or see? Is anything hidden from God? What do the following verses say about this?
- 2 Chronicles 16:9
  - Job 34:21
  - Numbers 32:23
  - Hebrews 4:13
  - Psalm 139:7-12
8. You know I have to ask ... is there anything that you "think" you are hiding from God? I pray that God uses each of these verses to remind us to walk honestly and uprightly before Him.

God reveals sin so that our fellowship with Him may be restored. God desired Israel, His chosen people, to be restored to His favor.

9. In 2 Samuel 12:1-14, who did God send to David to point out his sin? Why was it so important that this sin be brought out in the light?
10. What did Jesus say about sin in Matthew 5:29-30? What did He mean?

Sin is a serious thing; we should be alarmed over it. Jesus basically says to go to any extreme to avoid sin! God will not let His people remain comfortable in their sin. He loves us so much, He wants our relationship with Him to be pure and holy. We can learn from Achan's sin that God will never look the other way at sin. I **rejoice** in that! I don't want to serve a God that I can snowball ... do you?

### Fifth Day

**Write out your verse by memory. How has this verse ministered to you this week?**

Today we will finish our study of Joshua chapter 7 by looking at Achan's judgment. As you read, remember that God is a just God. Deuteronomy 32:4 says, "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He!"

1. Read the entire chapter once more.
2. What did Joshua's men do with the items they found under Achan's tent?
3. Did Joshua demand a private confession or a public confession from Achan? Why?
4. Where did Joshua and the people of Israel take Achan and his family?
5. What did Israel do to Achan, his family, and all his possessions?
6. Why do you think they included Achan's family in his judgment?
7. Read Deuteronomy 5:9. On the other hand, read Deuteronomy 24:16. How does this relate to our text?

It is quite possible that Achan's family knew about the taking of the "accursed" thing. After all, he had to dig up his tent to bury them. Maybe Achan's sin had already infected his entire family. Even though we don't know the answer to these questions for sure, we know that God is just. And when in doubt, hold on to what you know to be true! For whatever reason, God judged that Achan's family should also be held responsible.

8. What lesson should Israel (and us!) learn from Achan about:
  - a. sin?
  - b. God?
  - c. judgment?
  - d. themselves?

You may still be asking yourself, why was the judgment so severe? Warren Wiersbe points out that "at the beginning of a new period in Bible history, God sometimes revealed His wrath against sin in some dramatic way."

9. How did God deal with sin at the beginning of the church age? Read Acts 5:1-11. What was He trying to teach the church then?
10. What about in Leviticus 10:1-3? What was God teaching the priests?

Achan and his family were buried in the Valley of Achor, which means the "Valley of Trouble." Appropriate name, don't you think?

11. Why do you think they raised up a "great heap" of stones? Remember what they did with stones in Joshua 4:9, 20-24?

God had Israel set up monuments of His saving help and of His destroying wrath. He would also one day restore Israel by turning the Valley of Achor to a Valley of Hope. (Hosea 2:14-15) God can take your "Achor" and change it to hope as well.

12. Has God restored any "Achans" in your life once you've confessed them to Him?
13. Achan was drawn away by his own desires (James 1:14-15). How can we resist the temptations of the flesh, as well as the world? Give verses to support your answer.
14. Achan stole from God Himself. Anytime we steal, we, too, are stealing from God. It is even possible to steal time away from God as we neglect our devotion time with Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart, revealing any areas that could be considered stealing.

15. What was the most important lesson you learned this week as:
- a. a mother?
  - b. a wife?
  - c. a working woman?
  - d. a representative of Christ?

Alan Redpath posed these questions in his book, Victorious Christian Living. He says, **"Somebody says to me, I have never been guilty of Achan's sin. I say, Haven't you? Have you ever touched the life of another child of God and marred it? Has your influence on some friend been so shattering that he will never be the same again? Have you ever taken property of the Lord for yourself?"**

These are great things to think about. We should never be quick to point our fingers at the sin of others, even Achan's. We can always say, "There, by the grace of God, go I."

When God purges our hearts, or our families, or even our churches, it hurts. But let's rejoice that God loved this world so much that He gave His only begotten Son for us, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life! (John 3:16) That's my **"Reason to Rejoice"**! What's yours?