

Sermon Follow-up | November 17, 2019

12 Books of History — Israel Defeated

Focus Passage: Joshua 7:1–13

Additional Context: Joshua 6:1–27; 8:30–35

Corollary Scripture: Joshua 24:1–18

Other Passages Referenced: Hosea 2:14, 15a, 19, 20

Sermon Recap: After a great victory at the fall of Jericho in Joshua 6, the Israelite soldiers are soundly defeated when they attack Ai in Joshua 7. The LORD reveals to Joshua that the Israelites were defeated because some of them kept part of the “devoted things” (Joshua 7:11–12). These “devoted things” were either to be destroyed or saved for the Treasury of the LORD (Joshua 6:17–19). The LORD’s continuing presence and protection of the Israelites along with the land He was giving them was to be sufficient reward. The LORD withdrew His protection of His people when a single Israelite, Achan, kept some of the devoted things. Because sin destroys and brings death, God made a big deal of Achan’s sin and Israel’s indirect complicity. We see that Achan gazed at, weighed (same root as “glory”) the value in his mind, coveted, took, and hid the forbidden devoted things. At the LORD’s instruction, because He takes sin seriously, the Israelites stoned Achan and his family outside the camp in the Valley of Achor (Trouble). Then the Israelites buried them along with the devoted things and piled stones upon the gravesite as sort of warning stones of remembrance. God’s word in Hosea 2 calls His unfaithful people back to Himself at the Valley of Achor and converts it into a “door of hope” (Hosea 2:15). We tend to follow Achan’s process into sin that begins with gazing at and glorifying things rather than gazing and glorifying God. Do you have hidden sin that is affecting you and others?

Comments

- In our main passage, the sermon highlighted the progression of how Achan moved from seeing/gazing to stealing. We also want to note how God held the entire people of Israel collectively responsible for Achan’s sin. Although the thought of God holding a group responsible for the behavior of an individual member of the group may offend our sense of fairness and individualism, it really is at the heart of the Bible’s message. Through one man, Adam, the entire human race was affected. Through one person, Jesus, salvation is provided for all who believe (Rom 5:12–17).
- “Several parallels exist between the accounts in Joshua 2 and 7. In Joshua 2, Rahab, a believing Canaanite, acted faithfully and, as a result, was promised deliverance from destruction. In effect, she became an Israelite. In Joshua 7, Achan, a disbelieving Israelite, acted faithlessly and, as a result, was not delivered but destroyed. In effect, he became a Canaanite.”¹ It is not coincidental that two of the women in Jesus’ genealogy in Matthew 1—Tamar and Rahab—were associated with prostitution. Those women, along with the Book of Hosea, portray how the LORD redeems His repentant people and takes them back, even after they have unfaithfully prostituted themselves with idols

Connect: Making Honest Connections with One Another

How did God speak to you through the sermon or your Bible reading this week?

Could you see progress or specific challenges this past week in terms of living by God’s word?

Were you able to let others know about God’s word this past week?

¹ David M. Howard Jr., *Joshua*, vol. 5, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 187.

Grow: *Listening to and Learning from God’s Word – READ Joshua 7:1–13, 19–26*

1. What did Achan do? (Joshua 7:1, 21)
2. Read aloud verses 1 and 11 in Joshua 7, paying attention to the singular and plural subjects. Who is said to have broken faith with the LORD, and with whom was the LORD angry?
3. Read Joshua 7:21 and note each step in the process advancing from Achan’s temptation to his sin.
4. What happened after Achan confessed his sin? (Joshua 7:24–26)

Serve: *Serving King Jesus and Others By Living Out and Letting Others Know God’s Word*

1. As the sermon mentioned, sickness or loss in our lives are not always related to specific sins we have committed (i.e. Job, the man born blind in John 9). However, there are times the Bible indicates that sickness or loss may be related to specific sins (i.e. some being sick or having “fallen asleep” in 1 Cor 11 for having taken the Lord’s Supper improperly; Ananias and Saphira falling dead in Acts 5:1–11 for trying to deceive the church; repentance also being needed along with prayer for healing in James 5:14–16). Without naming any names, what are some ways the sins of individual church members might affect God’s blessing of the church as a whole if those sins are not addressed?
2. After Achan’s sin in Joshua 7 and after the Israelites worshiped a golden calf in Exodus 32, God required His people to assemble and to execute His judgment against sin on their own peers. In both cases, the discipline was intended to protect God’s people from sin and to ensure the LORD’s continued presence and power among His people. In both cases the discipline was distasteful and gruesome, and in both cases, it was enacted by imperfect people who also had sinned against God. As God’s people today we know Jesus bore the gruesome punishment of sin that God’s righteous judgment required. God no longer calls His people to execute anyone. However, do you see any responsibility for the church today to address unrepentant sin of its members that, if ignored, may affect the health of the church and its witness to the world?

Further Resources

- Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org
- The Bible Project 9-minute video overview of the Book of Joshua <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/181310?episode=8>
- The Cutting Room Floor — www.wcchapel.org/thecuttingroomfloor