

# Joshua 7–8

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## Day 1

The Battle of Ai. Read Joshua 7:1–9

1. What contrast is given by the word “but” in 7:1? (Connect 7:1 with 6:27.)

**FYI: acted/ violated/committed** Strong’s OT:4603 *ma`al*; properly, to cover up; used only figuratively, to act covertly, i.e. treacherously:

“A verb meaning to violate one’s duty. The term is used often as a synonym for sin; however, this word almost always denotes a willing act (Numbers 5:6; Ezekiel 14:13).”

— “*ma`al*” The Complete Word Study Dictionary, AMG Publishers, 2003

2. Who sinned? Who was held responsible (7:1)?

- How do you think this sin, right at the beginning, would have eventually affected the nation and their obedience to God? See 1 Corinthians 5:6.

**FYI:** “How we live inwardly, how we conduct ourselves when no one we know is around, brings either victory and enthusiasm, or defeat and discouragement to the church.” – R. Kent Hughes (88)

3. What do the following verses indicated about God’s knowledge of our thoughts and actions?

- Psalm 139:24
- Hebrews. 4:13

4. From the spies report about Ai (7:2–3), in what did they place their confidence? (Compare 6:2)

- Whose advice did Joshua follow (7:4)?

5. What happened to the men who attacked Ai (7:5a)?

- What effect did the defeat have on the people (7:5b)?

**FYI:** “The people of Israel had good reason to be afraid. Their panic was completely logical, because if God did not fight for them, they had nothing to expect but defeat.” – David Guzik

6. What effect did it have on Joshua and the elders (7:6–7)? Besides the loss of thirty-six men, what was Joshua mourning?

7. In Joshua's prayer (7:7a), what did he imply about the Lord's ability and intentions?

**Digging Deeper**  
See Moses' complaints in Numbers 11:10–14.

- What "if only" did Joshua wish for (7:7b)? Compare his complaints to the ones the people made in Numbers 14:1–3.

8. What misgivings did Joshua have about his leadership (7:8)?

- What did Joshua fear about the future (7:9a)?
- What higher concern did he have (7:9b)? Compare Moses's appeal in Exodus 32:11–14.

✂ **Applying the Word:** Do your prayers ever sound like Joshua's when dealing with difficulties in life? How well does God understand your needs?

## Day 2

Achan's Punishment. Read Joshua 7:10–26

9. What did the Lord say about Joshua's fear and attitude (7:10)?

10. From 7:11, list the things that describe Israel's actions.

*Israel has sinned...they have*

**FYI:** "The good news was that God had not failed the nation. The bad news was that this defeat was due to the sin of Israel. Joshua doesn't need to fear that the problem is with God – it is almost comforting to find that the problem is with us!

Therefore God told Joshua to **get up**. He didn't need to beg God to change *His* heart towards Israel. Joshua had to change Israel's heart before God." – David Guzik

11. From 7:12, list the consequences Israel suffered and would suffer for their disobedience. (Contrast 1:5.)

12. How concerned had Moses been about having God's presence? Exodus 33:15–16

13. What directions for restoration did God give (7:13)? What was at stake?

14. What do the following verses say about God's knowledge of us?

- Psalm 139:24
- Proverbs 5:21
- Ecclesiastes 12:14
- 1 Chronicles 28:9
- Hebrews 4:13

15. By what process was the guilty party made known (7:14–18)? (Consider: What would this process convey? At what point in this story should Achan have confessed? How do you think Achan was reacting to it?)

**FYI: disgraceful/outrageous/horrible/folly** OT:5039 *nebalah*; foolishness, i.e. (morally) wickedness; concretely, a crime; by extension, punishment:

“The account does not say explicitly how the Lord identified the guilty man. Possibly it was by casting lots or, more likely, it was by means of the priestly use of the Urim and Thummim (see note on Exodus 28:30).”  
– The Defender's Study Bible

16. What would Achan's confession bring (7:19)?

17. What things did Achan take (7:21)? What do his actions say about his trust in God? When stealing these things, what excuses do you think he made to himself?

- List the verbs in 7:21 that describe Achan's path to disobedience. (Compare Genesis 3:6,7.)  
*saw...*

**Food for Thought:** “Here we see Achan's redemption. He was going to die terribly. He had sinned against God and against his own people. Their blood cried. But he had confessed. He had, like David, confessed this his sin was against God (see Psalm 51:3–4) and he was transparently honest. He offered no excuses... His remaining moments afforded him no opportunity to demonstrate his repentance. I believe he was saved, 'yet by fire.' And this is what ancient Jewish sages also believe.”  
– R. Kent Hughes (90)

“Such a large amount of forbidden booty (Joshua 7:21) could hardly have been carried and hidden by Achan alone, unaided by and unknown to his family. They may even have urged him to carry out the crime.”  
– The Defender's Study Bible

18. What punishment was given (7:24,25)? What might this indicate about his family's involvement?

- From all the things Achan had recently witnessed, along with knowing God's care of the people in the desert for 40 years (Nehemiah 9:19–21), what reason did he have for stealing?
- Why did God give such a severe punishment to this sin? See Deuteronomy 13:6–11. (In what way was Achan's sin a form of idolatry?)
- What do you think would have happened if God had ignored or treated Achan's sin lightly?

**FYI:** "How do these hidden sins affect other believers? The answer is this: so-called hidden sins lead to a deterioration of character, reducing the ring of truth and reality of what we say and do.....And any reduction in my authenticity will have a telling effect on the church. The hidden sins of God's people are what destroy so many today. The mental adulterer, the secret gossip, the covertly hateful, the covetous reduce themselves and thereby bring defeat and discouragement to the church. Often their children fall way, and their business acquaintances and neighbors have no desire for their Christianity. How we live inwardly, how we conduct ourselves when no one we know is around, brings either victory and enthusiasm, or defeat and discouragement to the church." – R. Kent Hughes (88)

(Commentaries disagree about whether Achan's family was put to death.)

"As the divine law expressly forbade the children to be put to death for their father's sins (De 24:16), the conveyance of Achan's 'sons and daughters' to the place of execution might be only as spectators, that they might take warning by the parental fate; or, if they shared his punishment (Jos. 22:20), they had probably been accomplices in his crime, and, indeed, he could scarcely have dug a hole within his tent without his family being aware of it." – Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/joshua/7-24.htm>

"Notice the use of the singular in Joshua 7:25 and 7:26 (**you.... you.... him.... him**), in reference to a person being stoned. The use of the plural in Joshua 7:24–25 (**them.... them...them**) probably has reference to Achan's possessions, not his children." – David Guzik

See other commentaries at: <https://crosstheology.wordpress.com/were-achans-children-punished-for-the-sin-of-their-father/>

19. What reasons do you see in the following verses for holding Israel to such a high standard?

- Genesis 28:14–15 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. NIV
- Exodus 19:5–6 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." NIV
- Deuteronomy 4:5–6 See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>6</sup>Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

#### **Digging Deeper**

From Deuteronomy 28, what would the nation become through obedience (28:1)? What would happen to the nation because of disobedience (28:63)? What does this say about this nation's responsibility because of the privileges they were given?

20. What memorial did Joshua build for this event (7:26)?
21. How would you compare Rahab and Achan in regard to their culture, position in society, and training/experiences with God? How do they compare in faith?

**Digging Deeper**

From Colossians 3:5–9, what are we asked to get rid of?

- ∞ **Applying the Word:** Read Romans 5:15–17. Do you think that being under grace causes us to be more or less sensitive to sin; more or less appreciative of God's forgiveness? Take time to thank God for the grace and mercy we have been given in Christ.

### Day 3

The Second Battle of Ai. Read Joshua 8:1–26

22. What assurance did the Lord give Joshua about the next battle with Ai (8:1)?
23. How complete would the victory be (8:2a)?
- What rule did God make about the plunder (8:2b)? Compare 6:18. Why was there a change?
  - What does this indicate about God's desires for us after we've failed?

**FYI:** "What is past is past. We must deal with it before God by repentance and dying to self, and then look forward to what He has for us without delay. God wants us to use our failures in a good way, to use them as a foundation for a great victory in the LORD." — David Guzik

24. How did Joshua plan to ambush the city (8:3–7)?
- How were they to destroy the city (8:8)? What was this according to?
25. Where were the two groups of the army situated (8:9–11)?
- What other group did Joshua send out presumably as a protection from Bethel (8:12)?

26. How did the King of Ai and the men of the city react (8:14–16)?

- How vulnerable did this leave the city (8:17)? Apparently, who else joined the men of Ai?

27. How did the Lord tell Joshua to signal the ambush (8:18)? For how long (8:26)? What assurance did the Lord give Joshua? (See 8:7.)

- What would Joshua have remembered from a previous experience? See Exodus 17:8–15.

28. How did the 30,000 men (8:2–3) waiting in ambush behind the city react (8:19)?

29. How completely did the Israelites defeat the people of Ai (8:20–26)? Apparently, how many Israelites were killed (8:24b)?

- The word “hand” (8:18,26) and “place/power/chance” (8:20) are the same word. What does this play on words add to the story? Whose power was at work?

| **FYI: hand** Strong’s OT:3027 *yad*, a hand (the open one [indicating power, means, direction, etc]).

30. What relationship do you see between divine power and human effort in this battle? What had the nation learned about God’s faithfulness in spite of their failures?

✂ **Applying the Word:** When have you seen God turn your failures into good and grow your faith?

## Day 4

Victory and Covenant Renewal. Joshua 8:26–35

31. How complete was the victory (8:26)?

- How obedient were the people to the Lord’s commands (8:27)?
- According to 8:28, what did Joshua do?

32. What would hanging the King of Ai (8:29a) on a tree indicate? See Deuteronomy 21:22–23. (Compare Galatians 3:13.)
- What continual reminder did Joshua leave for this event (8:29b)?
33. Mark why it was so critical for the Israelites to destroy these people and not forget the dangers of their presence.
- Numbers 33:55–56 “But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. <sup>56</sup> And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.”
  - Deuteronomy 7:2–4 “...Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. <sup>3</sup> Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, <sup>4</sup> for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. NIV
  - Deuteronomy 20:17–18 “Completely destroy them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the LORD your God has commanded you. <sup>18</sup> Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God. NIV
34. According to Numbers 25:1–3, what had happened earlier with the people of Canaan? What does this say about how vulnerable the people were when exposed to the practices of the land?
35. What happened eventually? See Psalm 106:34–39.
- How bad did it get? See 2 Kings 16:3–4; 21:1–9 and 23:4–7 for practices that were instituted in Israel.
  - From 1 Kings 11:1–10, what happened even with wise King Solomon?

**FYI:** “We must see the destruction of Ai against the back drop of God’s amazingly gracious patience...The cup of the Amorites had been filling and filling – yet He withheld judgement in His forbearance. (Gen. 15:16)...Second, we must note the depravity of the Canaanites. Their sensuality was proverbial. ...David Hubbards says...’That Canaanites religion appealed to the bestial and material in human nature is clearly evidenced by the Ugaritic texts...Much of their statuary is pornographic. In addition they regularly practiced child sacrifice, as the foundation sacrifices uncovered at Gezer illustrate.’  
Third, when the Israelites did not obey God and exterminate the Canaanites, they did, indeed, pollute Israel...So for these reasons – the Canaanites’ depravity, their ability to pollute Israel, God’s incredible patience, and His resolve to punish when the cup is full – we must never fall to the foolishness of supposing God unjust in judging the Canaanites.” – R. Kent Hughes (96,97)

36. How did Joshua commemorate the victory (8:30–31)? See Exodus 20:24–25. (For the meaning of burnt offerings see Leviticus 1:4,9.)

37. See Moses' instructions in Deuteronomy 27:1–8. If you had been at this ceremony, what do you think would have impressed you the most?

**FYI:** "The 'burnt offering' was throughly consumed by fire, signifying the complete presentation of oneself to the Lord. It mean total commitment, total self-giving. By this token, Israel committed itself wholly to God. The 'peace offering' was not completely burnt for it constituted a type of communion meal. The fat was burnt on the altar to suggest God's part of the meal; the people who offered it ate the rest. This shalom offering symbolized wholeness and wellbeing in the people's solidarity with God. It was a celebration characterized by joy."  
– R. Kent Hughes (100)

38. What did Joshua do with the stones (8:32)? What do you think this included? (Compare 8:34.)

39. What effect would the piles of stones mentioned in 7:26, 8:29 and 8:32 have on the people? What feelings and thoughts about God would they evoke? What public witness would this give to the nations?

40. What did Joshua do with the people (8:33–34)? (See Deuteronomy 11:29 and 27:12–27 for Moses' directions about this event. Where were the tribes standing? What curses did the Levites read? How did the people respond?)

41. What did Joshua read to the people (8:34–35)? Who heard these words?

- What was God impressing on this generation about accountability for their actions and its consequences?

42. What did Christ's death on a cross do for us (Colossians 2:13–14)?

☞ **Applying the Word:** What significant lesson about a relationship with God have you see in these chapters?