

Joshua 7:7-26 | Sunday October 11, 2026

Israel's first success in the Promised Land was quickly derailed with a stunning defeat at Ai. God's victory that Israel walked in at Jericho was followed by defeat because sin had come into the camp. Achan took some of the things that were devoted to the ban so God could not bless Israel. Joshua was stunned and terrified by Israel's failure at Ai because he still didn't know why it happened. From his point of view, it seemed like God abandoned them.

Joshua 7:6-7 ESV

(6) **Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD** until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads.

(7) And Joshua said, **"Alas, O Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan!"**

Joshua is grieved and calls out in desperation to God. Joshua wants to know why this happened. From Joshua's perspective, God had not been faithful to His promises. In his pain and doubt he echoes the complaints that the other 10 spies had 40 years ago.

Numbers 14:1-3 ESV

(1) Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night.

(2) And all the people of Israel **grumbled** against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation **said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!"**

(3) **Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword?** Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. **Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?"**

The unbelieving spies grumbled and **complained about God**. They cried out that it would be better to be a slave in Egypt than die in the Promised Land in battles that they could never win. Joshua shares in some of this thinking. He cries out that it would have been better to live on the other side of the Jordan, out of the Promised Land, then to be destroyed in war with the Amorites. **The main difference between the spies and Joshua, though, is who these complaints were directed to.** The 10 spies along with the people of Israel complained to each other and to Moses and Aaron. They spent a lot of time talking to others about how upset with God they were. **Joshua, on the other hand goes directly to God.** Joshua brings His pain, doubts, and fears straight to God. The God whom Joshua is upset with is the only one who can bring clarity and peace.

Joshua 7:8-9 ESV

(8) **O Lord, what can I say**, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies!

(9) For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us **and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?"**

Joshua rightly understands that what happens to Israel is much larger than them. God's name and God's reputation have been connected to Israel. Joshua uses wordplay to emphasize this concern. **If Israel's name is cut off, what will become of God's great name?** What Joshua does not know is that God's name would have been tarnished if Israel defeated Ai. God could not bless Israel in their sin, and His holiness needed to be upheld. **God was defending His own name and His reputation by letting Israel be defeated.** God does not need Joshua's help defending His name.

God wants Joshua and Israel to walk faithfully with Him, and God will bring glory to His name.

Joshua 7:10-12 ESV

(10) The LORD said to Joshua, **“Get up! Why have you fallen on your face?**

(11) **Israel has sinned;** they have transgressed My covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings.

(12) **Therefore** the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. **I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.**

God’s response emphasizes again why He is the one we need to turn to in our fears and pain. If this answer came from anyone else, it would seem harsh, and the truth in it would be hard to see. Yet **God is able to pierce into our hearts and bring His truth.** Joshua needs to get up. It is not a time for grief and mourning but a time to repent and purge the sin out of the camp. The defeat at Ai would be the first of many if Israel does not deal with the sin. **In judgment, God warns that He will no longer be with Israel as long as sin is tolerated.** God will not give them the victories if they walk in disobedience from Him. God’s presence and His blessing are the very things that make Israel unique.

Exodus 33:15-16 ESV

(15) And he said to Him, **“If Your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.**

(16) For how shall it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? **Is it not in Your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and Your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?”**

Moses rightly understood that if God did not go with Israel, then they were like any other people. It was God’s presence and the fellowship that He had offered to them that made them distinct from all other people. **The same is true of us today.** Having fellowship with the one true God is what makes life so remarkable. It is not all the activities or good things we can accomplish. It is not about what we can do for God. The world has plenty of groups that do good work, service projects, or offer humanitarian aid. What is to set our lives apart is that we have trusted in the blood of Jesus and now are walking in fellowship with Him. It is only when we are in fellowship with God that we can truly live how He has called us to. Israel is not to move forward until fellowship has been restored.

Joshua 7:13-15 ESV

(13) **Get up! Consecrate the people** and say, ‘**Consecrate yourselves** for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, “There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. **You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you.”**

(14) In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes. And the tribe that the LORD takes by lot shall come near by clans. And the clan that the LORD takes shall come near by households. And the household that the LORD takes shall come near man by man.

(15) **And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and**

because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.’”

Joshua is to have the people consecrate themselves, which means **to set themselves apart as holy**. This would have involved ceremonial washings and making sure everyone is clean. God is reminding His people that they are set apart as holy and His holiness should be reflected in their lives. Whoever has sinned and taken the devoted things is to be removed from the people and put to the ban. Compromising with sin is not an option. Throughout history different groups of believers have tried to negotiate with sin or think they are holy enough to not be affected by it. Yet, God repeatedly calls His people to a holiness and to break fellowship with an unrepentant believer.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2 ESV

(1) It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.

(2) And you are arrogant! **Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.**

The Corinthians were boastful in how accepting of sin they were. They were progressive and could accept something that even the world turned away from. Yet, this was not God's love because they did not address the sin. God takes us just as we are for salvation because our sin has been paid for through Jesus. Then He calls us to walk in a fellowship with Him. This process of growth takes time, and grace needs to be shown as people mature. Yet, believers openly walking in sin and refusing to address it is not an option.

1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 9-11 ESV

(6) Your boasting is not good. **Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?**

(7) **Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.**

(9) I wrote to you in my letter **not to associate with sexually immoral people—**

(10) **not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world**, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

(11) **But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.**

Sin is called leaven. Leaven permeates and multiplies in whatever dough it is exposed to. Likewise, **sin spreads out and is multiplied** among believers if it is not confessed and repented of. The Corinthians did not understand how serious sin is within God's people. They thought they needed to be more cautious of the world than of an unrepentant believer. God says the opposite. **The World needs to be presented with what the blood of Jesus has accomplished for them.** That their sin is paid for because He died for them. **Then believers need to be encouraged to grow and mature in that truth.** We have been made unleavened through Jesus. We are declared sinless; now we are to learn what that actually means for daily life. **Open sin in a fellow believer's life is such a big deal to their walk that we are even called not to eat with them.** This is not done to be harsh but to value their eternal walk with Jesus. Just as Israel is called to purge Achan, we are called to purge unrepentant sinners. **We are to love each other enough in the body of Christ to humbly call each other to holiness.** This break of fellowship should not be done hastily and only applies when the erring believer refuses to repent. Matthew 18:15-17

describes the process that needs to be followed, and the hope is that it never escalates past an encouraging call back to truth.

Joshua 7:16-18 ESV

(16) So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of **Judah** was taken.

(17) And he brought near the clans of Judah, and the clan of the **Zerahites** was taken. And he brought near the clan of the Zerahites man by man, and **Zabdi** was taken.

(18) And he brought near his household man by man, and **Achan** the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

Achan has had so many chances to repent of what He has done. When Joshua called the people to consecrate themselves, Achan could have stepped forward. When His tribe was chosen, He could have come clean. At each step, Achan remains silent and refuses to acknowledge what He has done until He is exposed by God.

Joshua 7:19-21 ESV

(19) Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, **give glory to the LORD God of Israel** and give praise to Him. **And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.**"

(20) And Achan answered Joshua, "**Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel**, and this is what I did:

(21) **when I saw** among the spoil **a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted** them and **took them**.

And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

Once directly confronted, Achan finally admits his sin. He took a beautiful exotic robe, along with some gold and silver. Everything he took could be grabbed quickly and then easily concealed under his cloak.

At today's prices the gold and silver amount to a little over **\$70,000**. By some estimates this would have been equivalent to a **lifetime's wages for a common laborer**. It is important to see the progression that sin takes. Seeing the cloak, gold and silver was not the problem. Plenty of other Israelites saw riches and costly valuables as the walk in an obedience to God's command. The issue was not the external but Achan's heart.

James 1:14-15 ESV

(14) But each person is tempted when he is **lured and enticed by his own desire**.

(15) Then **desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin**, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Once he saw the valuables, he coveted them. After 40 years of wearing the same cloak in the wilderness, the beauty of the new cloak and the value of the gold and silver appealed to his flesh. **Achan was lured and enticed by his own heart**. He sinned by coveting the things of God, and then he acted on this sin and took them. He decided that he deserved these things instead of devoting them to God. **Achan never stopped to analyze if he really wanted to steal from God**. We don't think about the cost of our sin. We just act based on the desires of our sinful flesh and ignore the ramifications. Achan acknowledges his sin, and yet there is not a zeal or eagerness to clear his name. He stood there the entire time hoping he would not be revealed.

2 Corinthians 7:8-12 ESV

(10) **For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.**

(11) For see **what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment!** At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

Godly grief draws us to repent before a holy God and leads us to Him. We are to have an eagerness and zeal in this. We are to desire to be made right with God. Achan acknowledges his sin, and yet there is no zeal to make things right. He became under the ban of destruction through his actions.

Joshua 7:22-25 ESV

(22) So Joshua sent messengers, and they **ran to the tent**; and behold, it was hidden in his tent **with the silver underneath.**

(23) And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel. And they laid them down before the LORD.

(24) And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold, **and his sons and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor.**

(25) And Joshua said, "Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD brings trouble on you today." **And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones.**

Just as Jericho was to be put to a complete destruction, so was the entire household of Achan. It is interesting that a wife is never mentioned. His sons and daughters are included in the punishment. Deuteronomy 24:16 tells us that no children are to be put to death for the sins of their father. **God would not violate His own Word**, so we can assume that His sons and daughters must have been involved in helping hide the banned items. Israel had to purge this family and their sin. They executed God's judgment by burning and stoning them.

Joshua 7:26 ESV

(26) And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his burning anger. **Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.**

This great heap of stones served as a very different monument than the twelve memorial stones used to remember crossing the Jordan River. **These stones were to serve as a remembrance of the judgment and destruction that sin brings.** The valley was named trouble. Sin always leads to trouble. Yet what is truly amazing is this is not the only time we hear of the Valley of Achor. There is an amazing future promise for the Valley of Achor (Trouble).

Hosea 2:15; 19-20 ESV

(15) And there I will give her her vineyards **and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.** And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.

(19) **And I will betroth you to Me forever. I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy.**

(20) **I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.**

Despite being used as a memorial for trouble and judgment, God restores. The valley where one of God's people were judged for their disobedience will become a door of hope. **Jesus took the full judgment for our sins. Once sin is judged, God can know and show His grace to us.** We will walk with Him forever, in righteousness and faithfulness. We will be in perfect fellowship and know the Lord! God's people, both Israel and the church, will finally be free of our sin nature. Our future is great. Let us not walk in the valley of trouble and be disciplined for our sin and experience the trouble that it brings. Let us look forward to the door of hope that the blood of Jesus has secured for us.
