

Achan Discovered And Destroyed

Joshua 7:16-26.

Sunday evening, January 17, 2010.

I. Achan Discovered.

- A. The men of Israel had been defeated by the men of the relatively small city of Ai. 36 of them were killed. Joshua 7:1-5.
- B. Joshua and the elders had humbled themselves before the Lord and His people, pleading their case before the ark, and before the Lord. Joshua 7:6-9.
- C. The Lord had told them to get up; the fault was not with the Lord, it was with the people. There was sin in the camp. Someone had taken of the accursed things of the city of Jericho. Under these circumstances the Lord would not be with them anymore; they would be doomed to destruction unless they took decisive action in remedying the situation. Vs. 10-12.
- D. Joshua is given specific instructions as to how to go about this. Israel is to present herself to the Lord on the next day; tribe by tribe, family by family, household by household, and man by man. Lots will be cast, and the Lord Himself will reveal the guilty party who is to be put to death.
Joshua communicates to the nation these instructions from the Lord so that they are all ready the next morning to present and sanctify themselves to the Lord. Joshua 7:13-15.
- E. By the first light of morning Israel presents herself to the Lord. The tribe of Judah is chosen; next the family of the Zarhites, and the household of Zabdi. Out of Zabdi's household Achan is chosen. Achan confesses and the evidence is found in his tent. Joshua 7:16-23.

Applications:

There are a number of lessons for us to learn from this account.

1. That there is no sin so hidden in our lives or the Lord in His own way and time will bring it to light. "...You have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sins will find you out." Numbers 32:23; "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or whether evil." Eccl. 12:14; "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known. Luke 12:2; "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart." 1 Cor. 4:5.
2. We have in these proceedings an example of settling accounts with the Lord, such as will take place on the last day; the day of judgment. In a real sense our Lord's day gatherings are to serve this purpose for us. The Scriptures refer to gathering in the Lord's house as a gathering in His courts. That is where accounts are settled. As such Joshua is told: "Sanctify the people." That is set them apart to Me. The people are told by Joshua: "Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow..." That meant, prepare yourselves for tomorrow you will be presented to the Lord.
O that we would come with this kind of preparation to worship! Would we still complain and say: "I get nothing out of worship?" Look what Achan got out of it!
3. Notice the graciousness of the Lord in allowing time for Achan to reflect on what he had done. For Achan to come forward with confession and repentance; casting

himself as it were on the mercy of God and that of his brethren.

- The defeat at Ai should have served as a wake-up call to Achan.
- The death of 36 of his brethren and their surviving wives and children should have been gnawing at his conscience.
- Now comes the call of the Lord through Joshua. "Tomorrow morning you are going to be presented before the judgment seat of the Lord.

Yet such is the hardness of Achan's heart as a result of his covetousness that all this has no real effect on him and he stays the course of hiding his sin under the floor of his tent, so that he may have the benefit of these stolen riches for himself.

4. Notice that a confession as a result of being found out before the judgment seat of God brings only justice and no mercy. That is why we come with self-examination before the Lord at His table. "For", says the Apostle in the words of institution, "if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged (by the Lord)." 1 Corinthians 11:31. Achan and his entire family were stoned to death and burned together with their stolen riches. Was the rest of the family aware of Achan's deceit and therefore complicit in it? We are not told.

II. Achan destroyed.

In the remaining verses the whole congregation escorts Achan and his family outside the camp. Joshua raises the question to Achan: "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." With those words having been said all Israel stoned them with stones and burned them with their goods, and raised over the remains a great heap of stones as a remembrance for future generations.

Applications:

1. In Israel's actions with Achan's family we have a picture of the radical way in which we are to deal with sin.
Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day. These are fitting words to speak over our sins as we learn to see them for what they are.
Take them outside the camp, that is away from the camp of your heart and life, and there give them over to the cross of Christ. There part ways with them, the Holy Spirit helping you.
This is often hard for us for by nature we love our sins, and it grieves us to part with them except perhaps the vilest ones. We are like Abraham when he sent his son, Ishmael, away from his camp with his mother. He wasn't going to do it except that the Lord told him to do so.
2. Again in Israel's actions with Achan, the whole congregation escorting him out of the camp, and partaking in his execution, we have a type, an earthly illustration of the events of the great judgment of the last day.
1 Corinthians 6:1,2 speak to us about the fact that the saints will judge the world. A day is coming when the righteous, having been openly acknowledged as such, will escort the Achans of this world to their valley of Achor (trouble), and say to them in so many words: "Why have you troubled us? Today the Lord will trouble you."
3. A question remains: Is there nothing hidden under the floor of our tent? Yes. And that is why it is important that we deal straightforwardly with both the Lord about our sins, and with our sins in taking them "outside the camp for execution."

