

Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 10: Cursed & Cleansed (7:1-26)

When they strapped on their armor, they felt invincible. If God was for them, who could be against them (Romans 8:31)! "*By this you will know that the living God is among you... that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites,*" Joshua proclaimed (3:10). But all was not as it seemed.

Upon their return, devastation swept through the camp as violently as the waves of the Jordan (Joshua 7:5). Dismayed and demoralized, Israel had been defeated. Thirty-six men laid dead on the slopes of the land that God had promised to give to *them*.

Unknown to them, inward corruption was hiding in the home and heart of one man and his family.ⁱ Among millions, it may have seemed a trivial matter. But God knew that this "*little leaven*" (Galatians 5:9) would destroy far more than those lost on the battle field; it would become the demise of the nation.

Israel must learn that sin could not be covered, nor contained, nor concealed without consequence to all.

Read Joshua 7:1-9.

1. For what reason did "*the anger of the Lord burn against the children of Israel*" (v.1)? Why not only against the transgressor?
2. Why did Joshua and the spies proceed with confidence? (Note Joshua 8:1, 25.)

"Yesterday's victory does not make a believer immune from defeat today."ⁱⁱ

3. What did Joshua neglect to do before entering into battle?

If he had done this, could defeat have been avoided?

How can trouble be avoided in our lives by taking this action?

4. Is God's reputation, and His body, the church, affected by the testimony of its individual members?

Does the victory of the whole community depend on the individual lives of its church members?ⁱⁱⁱ

Can an individual sin without affecting the body? Why or why not?

If these things are true, what sort of care and concern ought we to have for one another?

5. Why might the people have reacted in this way? (Joshua 1:5)
What thoughts might they have entertained?

6. How did Joshua initially respond? Who did he blame?

7. Joshua faced disappointment because of the disobedience of another. Have you faced a setback because of another's sin? Were others affected? How did you react?

8. What progression is observed in Joshua's questioning?

9. Ultimately, what was his concern? Do you share his concern during conflict?
10. How *had* the name of Jehovah been dishonored?

Read Joshua 7:10-15.

11. How did the Lord correct Joshua's thoughts and behavior?
12. What was revealed to Joshua? (v.11)
13. The Israelites "*could not stand against their enemies*" (v.12) while sin was hidden in the camp. What "stance" can we take before our enemies while sin is accepted or tolerated within our homes and/or congregations?
14. What was God's solution? (vv.12-13)
15. What consequence would come to the Israelites if they refused to confront and destroy the accursed thing(s) among them? (v.12)
16. Why might the Lord have chosen to filter through the people in this manner?

Keep reading: Joshua 7:16-26.

17. How did Achan explain what had occurred? What motivated his actions?

18. Define covetousness.

19. What was found in his tent? (vv.22-23)

20. Explain the process of temptation according to James 1:13-17.

21. What was the deception? (James 1:16)

22. Now read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13. Considering this, was Achan given time to part with the spoil and bring the items to the treasury of the Lord?

23. What occurred because he chose to hang onto and conceal his sin? (Joshua 7:5)

"God does not make it impossible for His children to sin: He always makes it possible for them not to sin. Defeat may happen in the life of the Christian, but it need not... And if it does, it is essential at that moment to discover the reasons for failure and to seek there and then to remove them."^{iv}

24. Who was punished along with Achan? What part might they have played in his sin? (See Genesis 18:25 and Deuteronomy 24:16.)

25. What promise is given to believers in 1 John 1:9?

Does this mean that the earthly consequences of our choices will be absolved?

26. If we acknowledge, confess, and forsake our sin, how can it be redeemed for good? Read Psalm 51:13.

27. Finally, how effective are the consequences experienced by others in preventing sin in your own life?

ⁱ Heitzig, Lenya & Rose, Penny. (2008). *Live Fearlessly: A Study in the Book of Joshua*. (p. 145). Cook: Colorado Springs, Colorado.

ⁱⁱ Campbell, D. K. (1985). *Joshua*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 344). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

ⁱⁱⁱ Redpath, Alan. (2013). *Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua* (p.108). The Redpath Family.

^{iv} Redpath, 104-5.