



Course: A Survey of the Bible: Genesis to Revelation

Lesson: 11 (Part 6)

Passage: Joshua - Survey

BUT . . . (Joshua 7:1)

- This is one letter (7) that is a conjunction. A conjunction joins or connects! This same conjunction is found at 6:1; 5:1; 4:1; 3:1; 2:1!
- The **context** tells us to translate this letter into a **contrast** – and so we have “but”!
- What happened in chapter 6:
 - The people of God obeyed God in His instructions for destroying Jericho. (vv. 12-16, 20)
 - The soldiers were warned that Jericho was cursed and all that was in it was the LORD’s. (vv. 17-19)
 - The LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

BUT the Children of Israel . . . (Joshua 7:1)

- Here we are told that the **children** of Israel committed (acted treacherously) a sin regarding the accursed (devoted) thing (6:17-19).
- **BUT** we are told that **only** one soldier was guilty of violating the command and **yet** the **anger of the LORD burned** against all of Israel!

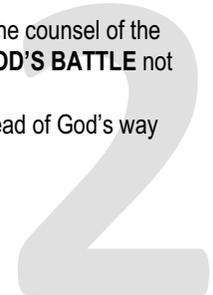
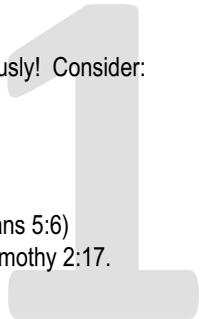
Some Important Lessons We Want to Learn

- ① God takes His commands seriously! God takes **sin** seriously! Consider:
 - Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-11)
 - Uzza (1 Chronicles 13:1-14)
 - Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)
- ② “One bad apple corrupts the whole bunch”
 - ★ “A little leaven leavens the whole bunch” (1 Corinthians 5:6)
 - See also 1 Corinthians 15:33; Galatians 5:9; 2 Timothy 2:17.

- ③ We are never in **greater danger** of yielding to pride and self-confidence when we have just had victory.
- ④ If we are to enjoy the blessings of God, we must remain steadfast in our obedience to Him.
- ⑤ Nothing escapes God sight. Everything lays naked before Him and we all must give an account to Him. (Hebrews 4:13)
- ⑥ There is nothing “personal” about “my” sin. Sin affects others. God looks at a church as “**a body**” (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:4-5). God sees nations in a similar manner.

Failure at Ai (vv. 2-4a)

- (v. 2) Joshua sends out spies to Ai (about 24 km from Jericho).
 - Joshua should be commended for this action. (Proverbs 20:18; 24:6)
 - **BUT** woe to those who make plans without God. (Isaiah 30:1-3; 31:1-3)
- (v. 3) Failure of the spies . . .
 - They were presumptuous in their **advice** to their “general.”
 - They were to **report NOT advise!**
 - They were full of self-confidence and pride. (Proverbs 11:2; 16:18; 18:12; 29:23)
 - They **assumed** that Ai was an **easy** victory! They **misjudged** their enemy.
 - They did not see it necessary for **all the people** to be in the service of the LORD.
 - They said nothing about the LORD! (Consider James 4:13-17)
 - They were not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men! (Matthew 16:21-23)
- (v. 4) Joshua **listened** to his spies and **not** the LORD!
 - Before Joshua attached Jericho he fell on his face before the LORD and said, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” (Joshua 5:14)
 - When Joshua was commissioned by Moses he was instructed to stand before the high priest to seek guidance from the LORD! (Numbers 27:18-21).
 - In Joshua 1:7-8, the LORD commanded Joshua not to turn to the left or the right in regards to the Law, so that he might be prosperous and have good success.
 - Joshua heeded the advice of men and did not seek the counsel of the Lord! **REMEMBER** the battle for Canaan was **GOD’S BATTLE** not Joshua’s!
 - Solomon later wrote about doing things our way instead of God’s way when he wrote Proverbs 3:5-7.



The Results of Foolishness (Joshua 7:4b-5)

- (v. 4b) Joshua's valiant men **fled** before the people the men of Ai!
 - ★ ★ ★ This is exactly what God had **promised!**
 - Leviticus 26:8, 17; Deuteronomy 28:7, 25
- (v. 5a) Thirty-six men died!
 - This is the **second** military defeat of Israel!
 - ① At Kadesh Barnea, – Numbers 14:39-45.
 - ② Ai – Joshua 7:1-5.
 - **BOTH** were campaigns conducted by self-confidence against the will of God!
- (v. 5b) "the hearts of the people melted and became like water"
 - The people's courage failed.
 - Consider Joshua 2:9 and 5:1!!
 - Consider God's **promise** – Deuteronomy 28:65-67; Leviticus 26:36.

When Faced with Defeat/Trouble (Joshua 7:6-10)

- **STEP ONE:** Humble yourself before the LORD. (v. 6)
 - Joshua and the elders humble themselves before the LORD (the Ark).
 - This is a stark contrast from their **self-confidence** in verse 3!
 - **NOTE:** Joshua did not reprimand his soldiers for their cowardice! Nor did he rebuke his spies. He realized the exceeding gravity of the situation! He knew that something was terribly wrong.
 - The **first step** when "the frown of God" is upon us is to **examine** ourselves.
 - We must "hear the rod" – pay attention to God's discipline in our lives.
 - Some refuse to "hear the rod" – such as Jeremiah 5:3. To ignore God's discipline is only to invite more severe discipline. **Oh, that we might learn from Scripture!**
 - **NOTE:** Do not lose sight – these are **public leaders** falling on their faces before the LORD. Where is such humility in our governments today?
 - **NOTE:** They did not know for what they were mourning, but they knew that God was displeased with them! They remained before the Lord until evening/sunset. **LESSON:** God did not answer them immediately! He **waited!**
- ★ **WARNING:** Joshua begins with **UNBELIEF!** He begins **blaming GOD!** (v. 7)
 - THIS IS FOR OUR LEARNING!
 - **Remember** – A little leaven leavens the whole bunch.
 - Joshua sounds like the Israelites while they were in the Wilderness!
 - See Exodus 14:11; 16:3; 17:3; **Numbers 14:1-3.**

- Joshua was walking by **SIGHT** and not by **FAITH!**
 - Joshua was not occupied by the **promises and Word of God** but by circumstances!
 - Joshua seems to be exaggerating — only 36 men died – not the whole congregation or the whole 3000!
 - Note the inconsistency in Joshua's words – he acknowledges that it was GOD who brought them across the Jordan – does he forget how GOD had done it! Has Joshua forgotten how GOD gave them victory at Jericho! Has Joshua forgotten the promises of God in chapter 1 and 6:2!!!
 - **Calling into question the promise of God is to call God a liar!**
 - "Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan" – they would rather have the "world" than the promises of God. (See Matthew 16:26)
- ★ We are **commanded** not to despise God's discipline or to become discouraged because of God's discipline! (Hebrews 12:5; Proverbs 3:11)
- **STEP TWO:** Fix your mind on God's glory — not your own! (vv. 8-9)
 - Joshua shows that he is more concerned for God's glory than his fame or Israel's victories.
 - Joshua seems to be turning from a **man-centered** prayer to one being **GOD-centered!**
- **STEP THREE:** Take corrective action! We are to confess **and** repent!
 - **NOTE:** When we humble ourselves before the LORD He (in mercy and grace) answers us. He give "more grace" to the humble. (James 4:6)
 - ★ Consider: The prayer of Manasseh – 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 (see context)
 - ★ See Isaiah 57:15
 - (v. 10) There is a time to pray and a time to ACT!
 - (v. 11) **NOTE: Again, God says, "Israel (not just Achan) has sinned.**
 - They have **transgressed** My covenant that I commanded them. (See Exodus 19:3-8; Luke 6:46; Romans 10:9)
 - They have **stolen!** – from the LORD!
 - They have **deceived!**
 - They have the accursed thing among their things instead of bringing it to the "treasury of the LORD."
 - ★ All of these show that this act was a deliberate ACT — making it even more terrible!
 - ★ **Remember:** This was the **firstfruits** that Israel was keeping for themselves. We are guilty when we **keep** our firstfruits from the LORD!

- (v. 12) **THEREFORE!** – This is the REASON why Israel could not stand before their enemies.
 - ★ **THEY** have become **doomed** for **destruction!**
 - ★ **“I will not be with you unless you destroy the accursed from among you!”**
 - God’s PROMISE to be ALWAYS with us is **NOT** an **ABSOLUTE** one! (See Deuteronomy 20:2-4; Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5; Joshua 1:5 with 6-9)
 - Consider GOD’s PROMISE in Deuteronomy 11:22-23.
 - ★ Many of God’s promises are **CONDITIONAL**.
 - We cannot claim John 8:32 without 8:31.
 - We cannot claim John 10:28 without 10:27.
 - We cannot claim Hebrews 8:10-12 without 3:6, 14.
- These are **TERRIFYING** words. They are **DIRECT** words.
- These words teach us about how God views **SIN!**
- (v. 13) **“Get up, sanctify the people”** – PREPARE yourselves for a solemn searching of the LORD!

God Charges ISRAEL with Sin (Joshua 7:11)

- (v. 11) **The charges:**
 - **“ISRAEL has sinned.”** – God charges the “body” with sin.
 - ★ The Church is **ONE BODY**. (1 Corinthians 12:18, 20, 26-27; Romans 12:4-5)
 - They have **transgressed** the covenant. (Exodus 19:3-8; Luke 6:46; Romans 10:9)
 - It is one thing to sin, but to sin against **covenant** makes the sin greater.
 - They **disobeyed** a direct command. “They have taken the accursed thing.”
 - They had **stolen**. – a violation of the 8th commandment.
 - They had stolen **from God!**
 - This was a deliberate, presumptuous sin.
 - They had **deceived – they lied!**
 - They had have put it among their stuff and kept it from God.
- (v. 12) **The ultimatum:**
 - Israel could not and will not be able to stand against their enemies.
 - ★ Victory was dependent on their **obedience**.
 - Israel is doomed for destruction. – **Same word as in 6:17!**
 - God **promises** not to be with them as long as the accursed thing is in their midst! See 1 Corinthians 5:1-13.
 - ★ See Revelation 2:14-16; 2:23.

God’s Instructions (Joshua 7:13-15)

- **GET UP!** There is a time to pray and there is a time to **DO!**
- **SANCTIFY the people.**
 - Gather the people – see Joel 2:15-16.
 - Have the people **PREPARE** to meet their GOD! (Exodus 19:14-15; Amos 6:12)
 - This would include **self** examination!
 - Consider Matthew 26:21-22.
- **IMMEDIATE WORK.** “In the morning . . .”
 - Once sin is known it must be dealt with immediately!
 - To delay is playing with fire.
- **IDENTIFIED.**
 - “it shall be the tribe that the LORD takes”
 - Probably the **URIM and THUMMIN** were used. (See Proverbs 16:33)
- Why should a long, drawn out process? Why not just identify Achan?
 - ❶ God is GOD and He decides the process. We are to obey.
 - ❷ To show that GOD (the Judge of all the Earth) is thorough and calm in judgment. He is a God of order!
 - ❸ To impress on all of Israel the reality and majesty of their **covenant** with God.
 - ❹ To afford the guilty time to **REPENT**.
- **THE PUNISHMENT:**
 - He and **all that he has** shall be burned!
 - **REMEMBER** the seriousness of the “crime” – sin! **GOD** determines the seriousness of sin and He determines the punishment.

Achan Identified & Executed (Joshua 7:16-23)

“Do Not Be Afraid . . .” (Joshua 8:1)

- When we have confessed sin (putting away and have repented [turned back to God with a willingness to do things His way]) **then** we can hear God say, “Do not be afraid . . .” to comfort us, and “Arise . . .” to guide us along the way.
- **SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD.** (Isaiah 59:2)
- These words were words of **great comfort** for those whose “hearts ... melted and became like water.” (Joshua 7:5)
- **GOD’s PROMISE:** “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

“Take All . . . Arise . . . Go” (Joshua 8:1-2)

- God’s first words were words of comfort but they were also **commands**.
- We are to be **steadfast** in the work that God has for us to do. (1 Cor. 15:58)
- God’s first word of instructions:
 - “take **all** the people of war”
 - The spies had said, “Do not let all the people go up . . .” (Joshua 7:3)
 - ★ A PERSONAL APPLICATION: “Make every effort . . .”
- God’s PROMISE: “See, I have given . . .”
 - God’s sovereignty over nations and nation leaders:
 - Job 12:23; Ezekiel 30:20-26; Zephaniah 2:12-13.
 - Daniel 4:17, 32; Job 34:24; Romans 13:1-4.
 - **ONLY those who follow God’s Word can claim God’s promises.**
(See Hebrews 6:11-12; 10:36)
- God’s detailed word of instruction:
 - Do to Ai what I commanded you to do to Jericho.
 - **LESSON:** There can be **no compromise** when it comes to sin. God does not **compromise**, nor can we. (Read 1 Thessalonians 5:22)
 - Ai was under God’s condemnation, just as Jericho was.
 - **BUT** the spoils of war you can keep!
 - ★ If Achan had only waited!
 - ★ The “firstfruits” were given to God and now Israel could keep the rest for themselves.
 - It is the same with our tithes: Give the first part (a small part) to God **FIRST** and keep the rest for yourself.
 - “Lay an ambush behind the city.” – God gives details for Joshua and Israel to keep.
- **GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY and HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY:**
 - ★ God sovereignly **determined** that Ai would fall into the hands of the Israelites.
 - ★ **BUT** God **also** gave clear instructions to Israel to carry out.
- **LESSONS to learn:**
 - ① God changes leaders so that we will not begin to trust in flesh and blood instead of trusting in God.
 - ② God changes His ways so that we will not start depending on our personal experience instead of trusting His promises.
 - ③ God **always** has a way a plan for His people to follow, and the only way for us to have victory is to obey God’s Word.

HAVE WE LEARNED!

Romans 15:4