

Lesson 6

The Enemy Within

ABSG quote: Joshua 7 is the first instance where, thru a tragic experience = people of Israel learned the far-reaching consequences of the covenant & its deep meaning. While obedience to the stipulations of the covenant secured victory, disregarding the terms of the covenant brought defeat.

- Warning to us today = to walk in covenant relationship w/Lord

Memory verse frames = entire lesson: **Jeremiah 17:10, ESV**

“I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds”

- In conquest of Canaan = Israel's journey = more than military campaign = was **spiritual journey**= God testing = hearts / minds
- Victory depended not on military strength
 - but on **faithfulness** to God's covenant = God was more.... concerned w/**character/obedience** than outward achievements

Joshua 7 = Israel learned = painful lesson /defeat/ at Ai

- [spelled AI = pronounced EYE]
- Most dangerous enemy = **not fortified Canaanite cities**,
 - Not **advanced technology of their enemies**
 - But **unfaithfulness = within their own camp**
- Similarly today = as we stand / border of Promised Land
 - Our faithfulness / tested while waiting
 - heavenly inheritance
- **1 Peter 1:4** — Our inheritance is "incorruptible and undefiled ...reserved in heaven."
- Our greatest battles often internal = pride / covetousness
 - self-confidence

Sunday Breach of the Covenant

- **Joshua 7 = What went wrong 1st attempt to conquer Ai**
- Two major causes led to Israel's defeat
 - **Achan's hidden sin** — deliberate disobedience
 - **Israel's overconfidence** — relying on their own judgment without consulting God
- **Joshua 7:1** ¹But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan ... of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.
- **Joshua 7:11** = God exposes / gravity of Achan's sin
 - using **6 distinct Hebrew words for sin**
 - highlighted by repeated use Hebrew **gam** = even/also
- **Joshua 7:11-12** ¹¹ Israel has **sinned** [**#1 khata'** = basic wrongdoing] and they have **also transgressed** [**#2 'abar** = crossing forbidden boundaries] My covenant which I commanded them. For they have **even taken** [**#3 aqakh** = seizing what belonged to God] some of the accursed things, and have both **stole** [**#4 ganab** = violating divine ownership] and **deceived** [**#5 kakhash** = covering up the crime] and they have **also** put *it* among their own stuff [**#6 Hidden sim**— placing stolen goods among personal belongings—sins multiply when they're hidden]. ¹² Therefore / children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction
- Covenant between Yahweh/Israel involved people at both
 - Individual / corporate levels = shared responsibility
- Reveals = key covenant principle:
 - **Obedience brings blessing** (Deuteronomy 28:1–2).

- **Disobedience brings defeat** (Deuteronomy 28:15).
- Sin of one person (Achan) = brought guilt on **entire nation**
- Sin doesn't happen = in vacuum
- Our actions impact not only ourselves
 - but touches/harms whole community we represent
- **1 Cor 12:26** "If one member suffers, all suffer together."
- Scandals in churches = lead to public distrust in Christianity
- Corporate fraud = damages an entire company's reputation
- Small hidden sins = lead to greater disasters when unconfessed
- True repentance = must precede restoration
- Achan had ample opportunity = (1) when he saw armies of Israel return from Ai defeated/disheartened; (2) saw Joshua and elders of Israel bowed to earth in grief; (3) when he heard proclamation to the camp = great crime committed; (4) During the solemn investigation = saw his tribe pointed out/ then his family = **Still no penitence = kept his lips sealed = hiding his sin**
- Until God pointed out his household = him directly
 - Confessed only after exposure — not from godly sorrow
 - But worldly regret = too little / too late
 - God desires confession that comes from **desire to turn away from sin** = not just fear of consequences
- **Judas** (Matt 27:3–5) — worldly regret/ not true repentance
- **David** (Ps 51) — genuine "Create in me a clean heart, O God."
- Israel's restoration came only after:
 - **Identifying and removing sin** from their midst
 - **Renewing their covenant** w/God
 - **Victory in surrender = yielding to leading of Lord**
- Our personal victory likewise depends on:

- Daily heart searching = **Psalm 139:23–24**: "Search me, O God, and know my heart...and lead me in the way everlasting."
- Trusting Christ for cleansing / victory **1 John 1:9**:
"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

CLOSING THOUGHT:

- Covenant breach at Ai reminds us:
 - Victory is not by strength = but by faithfulness
- God's searching gaze sees beyond appearances
 - to / heart
- Hidden sin brings defeat
 - true repentance restores us to God's favor
- Today, God calls His people to renewed loyalty
 - as we stand on the borders of eternity
- May we yield fully to Him — that our lives, both individually and corporately, may reflect the purity of Christ.
- **Joshua 24:15**: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

NEXT WEEK: Ultimate Loyalty: Worship in a War Zone
