



Passages to Study: Joshua 6:17-19, 7:1-26

Read with the class: Joshua 7:14-23.

Texts for memorization:

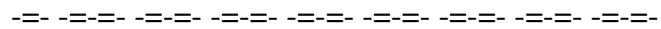
Younger: Numbers 32:23, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Older: Numbers 32:23.



OBJECTIVES: To teach that:

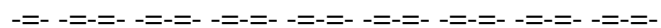
1. Nothing can be hid from God's eyes.
2. Unconfessed sin will be punished.
3. God is patient and allows time for a person to recognize his/her sin before judgment falls.
4. Sin affects not only the one who commits it but also affects others.
5. God expects that we "give to Caesar" that which is his without forgetting to "give to God" that which belongs to Him.



SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: Area near Jericho where a battle is in progress before the fallen walls of the city. Figure of a man heading toward his tent, carrying something.

DEVELOPMENT:

- During the battle of Jericho, the people were to destroy all that was in the city. (Joshua 6:17-19)
- Certain things that were indestructible, such as gold and silver, belonged to God.
- Achan disobeyed the order and took the anathema (that which was consecrated to God) to hide in his tent.
- The Israelites had been warned that taking anything anathema would make the camp of Israel anathema also. **Cmt. ANATHEMA** means something separated, either to be "consecrated" to God or set apart for destruction.
- The valuable metals that were to be found in Jericho had previously been claimed by God for Himself, even before the destruction of the city.
- The warning not to take that which was God's was a test of the people's loyalty. (See notes at the end of this lesson.)



SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: Another battlefield, with figures of Israelites fleeing from the soldiers of the city of Ai. In a separate space, a figure of Joshua praying.

DEVELOPMENT:

- This is Israel's first defeat in its task of conquering Canaan.
- Joshua goes to God in prayer about their defeat.
- God shows him that it is due to sin among the Israelites, that God has been robbed of something that belongs to Him.
- God used the defeat at Ai to teach the Israelites a lesson.

Apl. God uses circumstances in our lives to teach us important things we need to learn.

Cns. What Achan did was commit a robbery, for he took that which was God's.

Cns. Sin is, fundamentally, failing to take God into account, and retaining for oneself that which belongs to Him.

ACHAN'S SIN

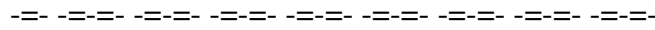


Sug. Although we recommend not mixing other stories with the lesson being taught, reference can be made to another that may help to illustrate an important point.

Ilu. Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden ate something that was anathema, something that God was keeping for Himself. They did not take Him into account.

Apl. God has given us Life, which we ought to use for His glory. When we use our lives to satisfy our desires without taking Him into account, we are sinning.

Cns. Many times we fall because we fail to realize that our life is on “loan” from God and is not our own.



SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS: Israel’s camp. Figures of Joshua, Achan and his family, plus a group of Israelites. In a separate area, a figure of a man hiding something in the ground, the sin to which Achan confesses.

DEVELOPMENT:

- The suspicion falls on Achan the next day, but it is made evident little by little.

- This gives time for the guilty party to confess his sin and ask for mercy.

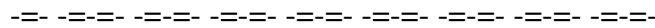
Cns. If a sinner pays attention to what the Bible says about sin and its consequences, he/she will seek mercy. **Apl.** The one who does not respond to the work of the Holy Spirit convicting of sin, will suffer for it without any pardon.

- In presence of all the people, Achan is shown to be the one who has caused the defeat.

- When he is obliged to do so, Achan confesses what he did. By then it was too late to receive mercy.

Apl. Those who admit their sin in this life seek pardon and are saved. Those who do not admit their sin in this life, will have to admit it when they are beyond reach of the mercy that would save them.

Cns. Christ will be recognized as Lord by all, even by those who did not yield to Him when they could have done so. (Philippians 2:10)



SCENE No. 4. VISUAL AIDS: One half of the background shows Achan’s tent, with figures of men discovering what had been hid underground. On the other half, a field with a pile of stones marking the scene where Achan was put to death and a group of Israelites observing.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Sin is often hidden. When something is good and acceptable there is no need to hide it. (John 3:20-21)

- Achan and all his family suffered the death that their sin merited.

Apl. The family suffered the consequence of having taken part in Achan’s sin.

- The things were hid in the family tent.

Cns. Many families today suffer on account of the wickedness of their parents.

Sug. Use this lesson to explain what confession of sin really is. To **CONFESS** is to agree **WITH GOD** in His evaluation of the facts. It gives the idea of spontaneously admitting the facts.

Cmt. Achan did not confess his sin but instead was **MADE TO ADMIT** it.

Sug. Ask the students, “Will a man rob God?” (Malachi 3:8)

Apl. Those who do not give their lives to God, receiving Christ as their Lord and Saviour, are taking for themselves that which belongs to God.

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JOSHUA 7: VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY.

The story of Achan is a complete contrast to that of Rahab.

- * He kept the pagan gold and silver. She abandoned it.
- * Achan was disloyal to the commitment he had made. Rahab kept hers.
- * The test at Jericho brought about death for Achan but life for Rahab.
- * Achan's sin affected the whole group of people. Rahab's faith affected her whole family.

v.1 Israel is looked at as a group although the sin was more particularly that of Achan. **Cmp.** v.11; 22:20.

TOOK OF THE ACCURSED THING. Achan took of that which God had reserved for Himself.

THE ANGER OF THE LORD. Everybody suffered as a result.

v.2 Spies were sent ahead as at other times.

Distance from Jericho to Ai: 24 kms. or 15 miles. The road went through a ravine, ascending into the hills that surround the Jordan valley.

Once Ai was conquered, the Israelites would have a foothold in the central highlands from which to conquer the rest of the land.

v.3 Ai means "The Ruin". It is 3 kms or about a mile and a half from Bethel. The spies considered it easy to overcome.

Had it not been for the problem of Achan, no doubt the two or three thousand soldiers would have been sufficient.

v.4 **THEY FLED.** No details are given about the reason for their flight. Was it for fear? Or distrust? Little faith?

Cmt. A feeling of defeat, sent by God, caused them to retreat.

v.5 The losses: 36 men dead.

SHEBARIM: Rocky place. It may indicate that there were stone quarries there. The people become discouraged. Would they ask the reason for the defeat?

v.6 Tells of signs of great sorrow.

JOSHUA AND THE ELDERS in the presence of the Lord.

They recognize that the Lord did not go with the troops. They do not know the cause but conclude from the defeat that something is wrong. It is the sign of a hidden evil.

v.7 A prayer full of questions. They suppose that the Lord has abandoned them.

Cmt. When things go wrong in life, we think the worst has happened.

Cns. Joshua's words show a lack of faith as he attributes hidden motives to God for having brought them there.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF JORDAN. Not to return to Egypt, but to return to a nomadic life in the desert.

Cns. They are not thinking of the lands and cities they are going to possess.

vv.8-9 Joshua thinks they are going to be taken off the face of the earth. They think the different nation-states will unite to form an army with the purpose of overcoming the invincible God.

WHAT WILT THOU DO? Not, what will they do? Joshua suggests that apart from themselves, God has no one else.

Sug. There is a human tendency to see oneself as more important than one really is.

Exm. Elijah thought he was the only one left, when there were really 7,000 other prophets. (1 Kings 19:18) Ex. The disciples who forbade some unknown person to use the name of the Lord to cast out demons. Jesus replied, "Forbid him not .. he that is not against us is for us." (Luke 9:50)



v.10 That's enough Joshua. No more words.

v.11 1) ISRAEL HAS SINNED.

2) THEY HAVE TRANSGRESSED MY COVENANT. (See Deut. 13:17).

3) THEY HAVE TAKEN OF THE ACCURSED THING.

4) THEY HAVE ALSO STOLEN.

5) THEY DISSEMBLED (lied) ALSO.

6) THEY HAVE PUT IT AMONG THEIR OWN STUFF.

ANATHEMA. Heb. **JEREM.** = "The accursed thing," (that which is dedicated to be used in a certain way or to be destroyed). "Devoted" (Newberry) to God, it was taken away from all human use and thus was accursed in possession of man. The spoils of war especially, as property of the Lord, had to be destroyed and thus given to Him. (Deut. 13:16-17; 1Sam. 15:21)

v.12 One person's sin caused the collective guilt of all.

Unless the evil was destroyed, God threatens to abandon them.

Lsn. God expects obedience.

v.13 **SANCTIFY.** A series of purifications in preparation for coming into God's presence.

v.14 The identity of the individual was revealed through a process.

Nation (Israel) - **Tribe** (Judah) - **Family Group** (Zarhites) - **Family Unit** (Zabdi) - **Individual** (Achan).

v.15 **THE COVENANT OF THE LORD.** The pact or contract between God and His people.

Achan had violated one of its terms, thus the "fine" required was the death of the transgressor.

vv.16-19 The process would cause great excitement. Perhaps they would use the Urim and Thummim. This was part of the equipment on the breastplate of the high priest by which he ascertained the will of God in doubtful cases.

Inf. The U. and T. were possibly two objects of different colours, perhaps stones, kept in a bag or pocket inside the breastplate of judgment. (Lev. 8:8) The High Priest wore it always when he went to ask direction of God. Speaking to Moses about the time after his death, the Urim was mentioned. (Num. 27:21)

They seem not to have been used from the first days of the monarchy, until after the exile. (Ezra 2:73; Neh. 7:65) They were not used to find the will of God in private matters, but national ones.

The U. and T. remained near the breastplate with its 12 precious stones carrying the names of the 12 tribes, and near the ephod. (Judg. 20:27-28; 1 Sam. 22:10) In most cases, the answers were just "yes" and "no". If it was used in Achan's case, the means of using it is not known. (1 Sam.10:9-22; 14:37-42)

MY SON. A paternal attitude shown by Joshua.

GIVE GLORY. Admit to what God says. vv.20-21 Recognition, open confession. The garment was imported and the silver and gold should have been given to the treasury of the Lord. vv.22-23 Unquestionable evidence.

v.24 Israelites required by the Lord to carry out judgment.

Apl. Those who are the judges are required to apply the punishment.

Cmt. **ALL** his possessions and his family were judged. Without doubt the family knew what Achan had done.

vv.25-26. Stoned for having violated the pact. (Ex. 19:13; Lev.24:23; Num. 15:36)

BURNED THEM AFTER. Symbolic act purging the land of sin.

ACHOR. Name derived from Achan.

Sig. Trouble. Achan had troubled or disturbed the peace of Israel.

THE LORD TURNED. His anger was appeased.

Apl. The wrath of God against sin, appeased by the death of Christ.

HEAP OF STONES. The second monument raised in Canaan. **Cmp.** 4:20.

Historical Notes from **NIV**