

Achan's Sin & Battling Ai

Joshua 7 - 8

PPT Title

Achan's Sin & Battling Ai

Main Point: God will not bless us when we are disobedient.

PPT Verse

Key Verse: - *He told them, "God says, 'Why do you refuse to obey my commands? You will not have success. You have deserted me. So I have deserted you.'*" - 2 Chronicles 24:20b

Props: Silver cups, Gold plates (items that look like treasures); Fishing hook and worm or lure; sword

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: Last week we learned about God causing the walls of Jericho to tumble down. Jericho had lots of people, and people have lots of "stuff." God commanded that all of the people in Jericho, except Rahab and her family, were to be destroyed. Earlier in the Bible, when the Israelites were in the desert, God told them not to have pity on the people who lived in Canaan. The people were very wicked and worshipped other gods (Deuteronomy 7:25; 9:4). God warned the Israelites not to have anything to do with the people's false gods (Deuteronomy 7:16).

Ask: Who can remember what God commanded the Israelites to do with all of the people's "stuff"? Joshua gave a command to the Israelites about this right before the wall crumbled down. *Let's read this verse to see what it was:*

PPT Verse

"The city and everything that is in it must be set apart to the Lord in a special way to be destroyed." - Joshua 6:17a

Say: Everything was supposed to be destroyed. Joshua had a VERY strong warning about these things. Don't miss this!

"Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the Lord and must be brought into his treasury." - Joshua 6:17-19



Say: Everything was supposed to be destroyed, except the things made of silver, gold, bronze, and iron. **Teacher:** Show your gold and silver treasures. Those things were to be brought into God's treasury.

Ask: Was Joshua clear in his warning? Was there any way to mistake what he was saying? *No. He said if you take any of their "stuff," you'll be destroyed.*



Say: Sometimes we get warnings. We have street signs that warn us if a curve is coming. We might hear a warning on the radio that a tornado is coming. You might get a warning from a teacher on your progress report that your grade is not doing so well. I'm sure your parents warn you to be careful when you go off to school or

go out to play.

Ask: Why do people warn other people about something this about to happen? *Because the person doing the warning cares about the other person.* **Ask:** Why would God warn His people? *Because He loves His people.*

Say: It might seem wasteful to us to just burn up lots of valuable things. Let's see if we can take a look at why this "stuff" was so bad. Nearly forty years before, God had this to say about their "stuff":



Burn the statues of their gods in the fire. Don't long for the silver and gold that is on those statues. Don't take it for yourselves. If you do, it will be a trap for you. The Lord your God hates it. Don't bring anything He hates into your house. If you do, you will be completely destroyed along with it. So hate it with all your heart. It is set apart to be destroyed. - Deuteronomy 7:25-26

Say: God knew that His people would be trapped by these things. The word used for **trap** here means "to be caught by a bait." If any of you have been fishing, you know about catching with bait. **Teacher:** Hold up your fishing hook and worm or pretty lure. To a fish, this worm (lure) looks pretty good. It looks like a good snack to him. But it is a trap! Just under this worm (lure) there is danger! There is a hook inside, and it will send the fish to it's death. In the same way, these shiny, golden statues were like bait to the people. Their greed for these valuable items would make them hold on to these statues. Soon they would be caught up in them and even worshipping them just like the people of Canaan did. Just like the fish hook, worshipping idols leads people to destruction (Hosea 8:4). The first and second Commandments are:



1.) *Do not put any other gods in place of Me.*

2.) *Do not make statues of gods that look like anything in the sky or on the earth or in the waters. Do not bow down to them or worship them.* - Exodus 20:3-5a

We can only have life when we are following the one, true God. God, alone, DESERVES our worship. Worshipping these false gods can never bring peace and joy to the one worshipping (Jeremiah 16:19). God was very clear. He HATES these things. He wanted His people to hate them too.

ACHAN'S SIN (Joshua 7)

Immediately after God's victory in Jericho, we read these tragic words:



But the people of Israel weren't faithful to the Lord. They didn't do what they were told to do with the things that had been set apart to Him in a special way to be destroyed. Achan had taken some of those things. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel. - Joshua 7:1a

Say: One of the Israelites, a man named Achan, had taken some of the forbidden treasures and hid them. Joshua did not know about this. Joshua was concerned with the Israelite's next battle. Again, Joshua sent spies out to check out the land and the people. They went to a city named Ai. When the spies returned, they told Joshua that he would not need to send all of the Israelite men to fight, because there were not very many people in Ai.



So only about 3,000 men went up. But the men of Ai drove them away. They chased the men of Israel from the city gate all the way to Shebarim. They killed about 36 of them on the way down. So the hearts of the people of Israel melted away in fear. - Joshua 7:4-5



The few men of Ai easily defeated the 3,000 Israelite men. The men of Ai chased the Israelites and even killed several of them. The Israelites became very afraid. Joshua and the leaders fell face down in prayer for hours. Joshua asked God why this happened. Joshua wished they had never even crossed the Jordan River. He feared that the people of Canaan, who had been afraid of the Israelites, would hear about this battle and come to attack them.

God told Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying there face down?" God told Joshua that Israel had sinned. Someone had taken some of the forbidden items. God said they had stolen and lied. So, God had removed His hand of protection from them. Then God said these chilling words:

I will no longer be with you, unless you destroy what has contaminated you. - Joshua 7:12b

Say: God told Joshua to tell the Israelites to get ready, because the next day, God wanted Joshua to call all of the tribes together. God would choose a tribe. From that tribe, God would choose a clan. From that clan, God would choose a family. And from that family, each family member would come before God. God would reveal who had disobeyed Him. God commanded that this person must be killed because he disobeyed God's command.

Early the next morning, Joshua did as God had instructed. God chose the tribe of Judah, the clan of Zerahite, and the family of Zimri. Out of that family, God chose Achan. Joshua told Achan to confess what he had done.



Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from Babylon, 200 silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound. I wanted them so much that I took them. They are hidden in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than the rest." - Joshua 7:20-21



Joshua sent men to check Achan's tent. They found the stolen items hidden, just as Achan had said. The men brought the items out and laid them in front of everyone. Joshua took Achan, his family, the things he had stolen, and everything he owned to a valley. There, the Israelites obeyed God and stoned Achan and his family. Everything he owned was set on fire. Then God was no longer angry.

AI DESTROYED (Joshua 8)

Say: God told Joshua not to be afraid or discouraged. God instructed Joshua to take the whole army and attack Ai again. God promised, "I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land." Notice, God was doing the delivering. God said this time the Israelites could keep the livestock and everything else they took from the people. Just as He did with Jericho, God gave the plan of attack. God said to have some of the fighting men hide behind the city and take them by surprise.

Joshua took the whole army with him. At night time, he chose 30,000 of his best fighting men and told them to go around behind the city. Joshua and the rest of the army approached the city from the front. When the king of Ai saw Joshua and his men coming, the king and all the men of Ai came out to fight them. Joshua and his men pretended to be afraid and turned to run away. Every single man in Ai and the neighboring town Bethel went after them. They left the city completely unguarded. God told Joshua to hold out his sword, or javelin, toward Ai. **Teacher:** Hold out your sword while reading the following verse and the next paragraph.

PPT

"Be Strong and Brave."



As soon as he did, the men who were hiding behind the city got up quickly. They came out of their hiding places and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it. They quickly set it on fire. The men of Ai looked back. They saw smoke rising up from the city into the sky. But they couldn't escape in any direction. - Joshua 8:19-20a

The king and his men couldn't escape. The Israelites were around them on all sides. Joshua held out his sword until all of the people of Ai were killed. Only the king was taken alive, and he was hanged a short time later. The Israelites carried off the livestock and the goods of the city, and Joshua burned the city to the ground. God had promised to deliver the king, people, city and land of Ai into Joshua's hand (Joshua 8:1). Again, we see that God ALWAYS keeps His promises! **Teacher: Put your sword away.**



Then Joshua built an altar to God on Mount Ebal (Deuteronomy 27:2-8). The Israelites offered burnt sacrifices to God on this altar. Then, with every man, woman, and child gathered around him, Joshua read all of the words of the law that God had given to Moses. He read every word of it to the people! No doubt, Joshua did not want anyone to sin against God again. The people crowded around to hear. No doubt, they did not want to sin like Achan had.

Application: Today's lesson was about obeying God. God's Word is clear. There is nothing we can do to EARN salvation - eternal life in heaven. We cannot "obey our way" into heaven (Ephesians 2:8-9). Eternal life comes ONLY when we trust in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross (Romans 4:23-24). However, obeying IS very important. God's Word says that when we obey, God is delighted (1 Samuel 15:22). When we obey, God will be near to us (John 14:23) and we will be blessed (Luke 11:28). And, God's Word is clear about when we do not obey. When we disobey, we are headed for trouble. We take ourselves out from under God's protection when we chose to disobey Him (Joshua 7:12; Nehemiah 9:30). And, God will not bless those who are living in disobedience (2 Chronicles 24:20).

PPT Main Point

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