

COVETOUSNESS TROUBLES ISRAEL

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed for wisdom and read the Bible to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes below to meet the needs of your students.

Lesson Aim: God sees everything we do, the bad and good, so we need to be careful how we live.

Suggestion: Give next week's Student Lesson to your class to answer the questions. Let them share their answers in class. The questions below will reveal important truths you may want to emphasize.

Introduction: Joshua had successfully led Israel across the Jordan at flood-time and then had triumphed over Jericho with ease by the LORD's powerful presence. Then he met a shocking defeat at Ai. There seem to have been several contributing reasons for his defeat, but the primary reason was the secret sin of Achan in the conquest of Jericho. He had taken the forbidden items that belonged to the LORD and carefully hid them in his tent. He thought that he had hidden his sin from the eyes of everyone, but he forgot that the LORD sees everything, both the evil and the good. His sin contaminated Israel as long as he was in the camp. Israel had to be cleansed of Achan's sin, so the LORD's powerful presence could once again give Israel victories in their upcoming battles. Here are some lessons we can learn from Joshua on how the LORD wants us to live so we can do the things that please Him. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov 15:3).

Why was the LORD angry with Israel for the willful sin of Achan? 7:1

Achan was a part of Israel, so the willful sin of him and his family contaminated the whole nation. His act of rebellion against the LORD was contagious. Drastic action needed to be taken against these sinners or He would depart from them. Lesson to be learned: willful sin is serious and more contagious than HIV/AIDS. Remove willful sinners (1 Cor 5:1-5).

How did Joshua make a serious error in attacking Ai? 7:2-5

Joshua listened to his spies without getting orders from His chief Commander. Lesson: do not try to do the LORD's work without His orders. His ways are above your ways (Isa 55:8).

How did Joshua respond to the LORD for the defeat of Israel at Ai? 7:7-9

Joshua blamed the LORD for bringing Israel into Canaan to be defeated. Lesson: never blame the LORD for defeats in your life. Be humble and seek His answers (Jam 4:9-10).

How did the LORD respond to Joshua? 7:10-15

He said Israel sinned by transgressing His covenant, taking banned goods, stealing and lying. Israelites needed to sanctify themselves and follow His plan to find the culprit that brought sin into the camp. Lesson: cleanse your hands and obey the LORD (Jam 4:8).

How did Achan respond when the LORD exposed him as the guilty culprit? 7:21-23

He admitted he was guilty, but was he ready to forsake his rebellion? Forgiveness is given only to those who confess and forsake their sins. Lesson: know that the LORD judges your heart as well as your lips before He forgives. Confess and forsake every sin (Prov 28:13).

What happened to Achan for his rebellion against the LORD's clear command? 7:24-26

The LORD knew the hearts of Achan and his family. They apparently agreed with his rebellion because Achan and his family were stoned to death by the Israelites and burned with all his goods. Then stones were piled on them. Lesson: the eyes of the LORD are in every place seeing the good and the evil. Turn from evil and do what is good (Prov 15:3).

How did the LORD encourage Joshua after Israel was cleansed of sin? 8:1-2, 28

The LORD promised to give Ai to Joshua. He told him how to conquer Ai by an ambush, using all his troops, and he was victorious once again. Lesson: the LORD will encourage you with His presence and power when you depart from sin and depend on Him. Trust and obey Him (Josh 1:9).