

I'm in the Lord's Army



Lesson 5

Losing, then Winning at Ai

Theme: Obedience — Thinking about the consequences of sin

Memory Verses

“So the Lord gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. ... Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.”

Joshua 21:43, 45

Daily Bible Readings

Thursday Joshua 7:1-15
Friday Joshua 7:16-26
Saturday Joshua 8:1-9
Monday Joshua 8:10-23
Tuesday Joshua 8:24-35

When Israel crossed the Jordan River and entered the land of Canaan, the nation was in a new place — a good land given by God. The Israelites had obeyed God carefully in marching around Jericho, and they successfully took the city. God was with them fighting their battles. Joshua provided good leadership. But then everything changed. The Israelite army marched up to Ai to take the city, but they couldn't do it! What happened?

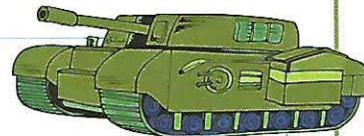
The First Battle at Ai

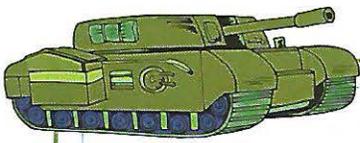
Instead of marching around the walls as they did at Jericho, the people

Joshua 7:1-15

Why did the Israelites lose the first battle at Ai?

How did God feel about Achan's sin?





Joshua 7:16-26

How did the Israelites find out who had sinned?

Why did Achan take the things from Jericho?

of Israel were to go up against Ai in a way battles are usually fought. Joshua sent 3,000 soldiers up to Ai, but they were defeated in battle and thirty-six Israelites died. Something was terribly wrong!

Joshua was upset about losing the battle and losing soldiers. He knew something was wrong, and he asked the Lord about it. God had told the Israelites when they went into Jericho that everything in the city belonged to Him. The people were not allowed to have anything from the city. Joshua learned from God that someone had stolen some things from Jericho. The person who broke God's law must be punished.

By choosing a tribe, then a family, and finally one man, God identified the one who sinned. He was trying to show His people that this matter was serious. Imagine how people must have worried while God narrowed the group down to one man.

God showed that Achan was the man who sinned. When God identified him, Achan confessed what he did. He explained that he saw the articles, then coveted them – he wanted them for his own. Next, Achan said he took the items and hid them in a hole he dug under his tent.

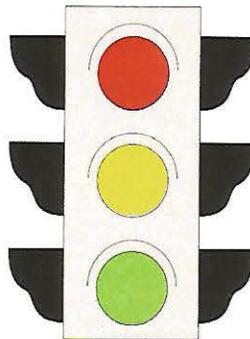
Joshua said that the stolen things must be given to the Lord, as they were supposed to be in the first place. Achan and his family were punished, and the Lord's anger was satisfied.



Joshua 8:1-9

Who told Israel how to win the second battle at Ai?

I try to hide it when I do something wrong.

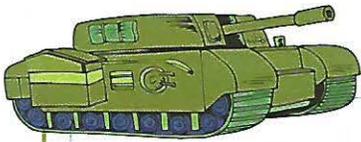


Put an X in the light that best describes you.

Red — usually

Yellow — sometimes

Green — never



Joshua 8:10-23

How did Joshua's troops win the second battle?

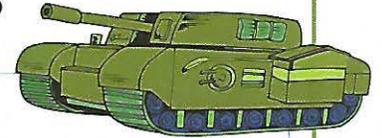
The Second Battle at Ai

Once the sin was punished, the Lord gave instructions for Israel to go against Ai again. This time, some soldiers hid to make a surprise attack. Joshua got up early in the morning to lead his army in the way God instructed. Israel's soldiers surprised the city of Ai and defeated it.

Committing to God's Will

Without God, the nation lost the first battle against Ai; with God's help, Israel won the second battle. Israel would have many cities to take and battles to fight. They would need God's help. The people needed to commit themselves to do God's will.

Earlier God gave instructions about a ceremony in the Promised Land. The tribes of Israel were divided to stand on two different mountains and pronounce the blessings and curses. At Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, God's law was read before all the people – men, women, and children. People said they understood God's law and the consequences of obeying or disobeying it. Before Israel took the rest of the land, the people needed to be reminded of their covenant with God.



Joshua 8:24-35

What did the Israelites do at Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal?

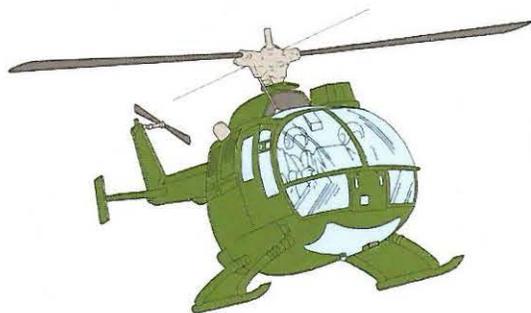
Why did they do this?

Think About It . . .



From what Achan did, think about how sin works. He saw the articles, he coveted them, he took them, and he hid them.

What does it mean that Achan coveted some things at Jericho? What do you learn from Achan's mistakes that will help you fight against sin?



Operation Bible Facts

Which book of the Old Testament is about crossing the Jordan River and taking and dividing Canaan?

Right here, right now, write from memory John 3:16.

On the map of the Divided Kingdom located on the inside back cover of this book, circle the nations of Israel and Judah.