

Joshua 7

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 24 July 2017 13:22

This account is far more serious than most readers will admit. It spells out that the sin of one of God's people brought God's anger against the whole of Israel. Do you really think this is not happening today? How many so-called church 'leaders', preachers and pastors commit sin that is known to everyone? How many Christians listen to lies and believe in bad doctrine, which is itself a sin? How many have social discourse with pagan believers, pretending that God will not blame them for it?

Friends, we are in a far worse situation than the one we now read about... here is the sin of one man affecting the entire nation. So many of God's people today are going astray, that His punishment is being put upon us daily! It is our own fault. So, read this carefully and repent immediately; our woes are our own fault.

On some occasions in my ministry I have been impressed by a burden from God. Over the past year or so, this has resulted in issuing dire warnings to believers. In this chapter I see such a warning, to all Christians. Time is very short, and enemies are massing on all sides. It is not the enemies that are my concern, but those who claim to be believers and yet have a superficial view of God's glory and demands.

We are in the end times, and most do not see we have been swallowed into the belly of the Beast. Just as Jonah was coughed out of the fish, so we must seek God's help to scramble out of the belly of our greatest enemy – Satan. His friends, also our enemies, are not just willing, they are already activated and surrounding us with their wickedness. But, believers are slow to understand, and to recognise they are in grave danger.

This chapter underlines this danger with the blood of Jesus Christ. Did He save us so we could hide away, or live a diluted form of holiness? No. Being owned by the Lord requires us to live every moment of every day as His servant. And our behaviour and minds must reflect it strongly. Primarily, we are not here to obey our employers, or the government, or our friends, or even our spouses.

We are to obey God, Who saved us. I cannot over-emphasise just how important this chapter is, though I know many will not get to grips with its message and will treat it as just another bit of paper to read. God help them if they look upon it so lightly, for in doing so they will not even notice the enemy coming to destroy them on their own doorstep...

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“Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.” (Isaiah 49:1)

This is a call to the gentiles – us – to listen to the Christ, Whose glory and honour is interwoven in the very fabric of the Old Testament. This chapter in Joshua repeats the command to “listen... unto me”. The Christ we claim to serve wants to SEE us serving Him, and not just mouthing it in our churches. If we do not, we are liable to fail, as did Achan, and thus damage not just our spiritual lives but the lives of all other believers. The ripples we cause by our disobedience will become a tsunami of epic proportion when it strikes the distant shore! The warning is here. Will we listen?

Verse 1

1.

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

Adam and Eve were told to never eat of a particular tree. But, they did. Here, Achan was told by Joshua to not touch “the accursed thing”. That is, anything to do with Jericho. Only the valuable items of gold, silver, etc., were to be taken, but given to the Levites for the Tabernacle. He did this on the very same day everyone was warned not to stain themselves with the sins of Jericho! No doubt some Christians will gasp with shock... but we are all prone to ignore God, even immediately after being warned, or after receiving wonderful gifts from Him.

Achan lived up to his name, which means ‘troubler’. He was not a person of note, just an Israelite. His family were not just of the tribe of Judah, for his grandfather was the grandson of Judah himself, so he brought dishonour upon the whole tribe. But, his action had a far worse effect, for what he did brought God’s anger upon the entire Israelite nation. Verse 11 implies that Achan took an object. Whether this was valuable or not is irrelevant, for it belonged to the idolatrous pagans of Jericho, and God commanded that nothing was to be taken.

How many Christians understand the implications of this? Elsewhere, we have seen how God

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punishes a whole nation for ignoring His commands. One that is ignored today, to our continual bad effect, is the shame of not administering the death penalty for first degree murder. God warned that if such a murderer is not put to death, the guilt for the one who died would be on the shoulders of the whole nation. This has come about for two reasons – socialism (which hates God) and personal emotions (which often negate anything demanded by God). Between them they ruin any nation. What matters is God and His commands, not our feelings or friendships!

Some have, at times, argued that if they followed this dictum, they would be alone in this world. My answer is always – so what? It is better to be alone than to consort with pagans and heretics, just for the sake of a friendship that may only last a few years, and would end at death. Then we face God at the Judgment Seat, when He will demand an answer! And before anyone accuses me of being harsh – I have applied the same demand to my own life.

Be careful in your lives; do not align with pagans and heretics, for they can ruin your earthly sojourn, maybe in ways you cannot yet envisage. The more your friendship leans towards these ungodly influences, the less you will lean towards God.

So, when we allow one who is a Christian to get away with sin of any kind, God places the guilt of that sin upon us all. We all suffer because we will not rid our churches of sin by 'leaders' and other individuals. EVERY sin committed by a believer, if known to others, MUST be dealt with strictly. The person must repent and never repeat that sin. But, we must also stop our modern idea of being on continual social terms with unbelievers and pagans.

This also goes for believing wrong doctrine. It applies to allowing our minds and hearts to be swayed in favour of men and women who follow false gods. There can be no such favour, and Christians who have a friendly relationship with them are themselves in danger, and attract God's anger. At times He will even bring trouble or disaster upon those who allow such relationships to flourish. In this text, we see that the actions of one man instantly affected the nation itself.

Do not think the increase in crime, violence and murder in the West is a mystery! Do not think the rapid decline in godliness is unconnected to allowing heresies and pagan religions (Islam being one of the worst) into our midst. Do not think that the vast spread of sexual diseases is random – it is led by the freedom given to homosexuals, whose death cult affects us all.

Joshua 7

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What we see in the degenerate West is the hand of God slapping us hard, using enemies of Himself to overcome and deceive us. If we refuse to repent and turn the tide, the slap will become a hammer-blow, and this will become a total crushing on this earth. If we ignore the slap, designed to awaken us, then far worse will follow.

Indeed, this is what happened to the Israelites... the sin of that one man led to the defeat of Israel, this being God's punishment. The people had known repeated miracles at God's hand, along with several military victories... but even these did not prevent Achan from sinning. Are we not like this man in heart!

Verses 2-5

1.

And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

2.

And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

3.

So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

4.

And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

God had given Joshua a specific promise, to be with him and to show everyone he had God's

Joshua 7

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favour. He was unaware of what Achan had done, for the defeat of his soldiers came as a total surprise and shock.

The people of Ai (Aija, Aiath, Hai: 'heap of ruins': a Canaanite royal city) was close to Jericho near Bethaven, east of Bethel. The inhabitants were Amorites. Joshua sent a small party of soldiers to spy out the city. They came back with a nonchalant report, for they thought Ai would be an easy victory, having relatively few inhabitants.

Relying on the men, Joshua sent a band of three thousand to take the city. But, they were beaten back by the city's men. It did not make military sense, but the men forgot one important thing – ANY victory comes from God, THROUGH men. Thus, 36 Israelite soldiers were killed, chased from Ai to the area of Shebarim. The people feared their future because of this unexpected trouncing of their men. They automatically thought God was with them, but they reckoned without the sinfulness of Achan. This shows that even secret sins can bring us down.

Christians today think God is with them. Why? Their answer is usually vague: 'Because...' No other reason than a kind of pride in being saved! But, as we see in this chapter, being God's chosen people does NOT necessarily mean He approves of what we do. How many believers today worry because they see God silent? How many understand their lives must continually be perfected? How many realise they must repent before God to receive His blessings and any victory, no matter how small? Look hard at your lives if God appears to be distant. Can you see the "accursed thing" in your midst? Have you allowed sin to take over, in thought, word or deed? Not just you, but others who you align with? Look, then, to your thoughts, your actions, your speech, your relationships with others.

Joshua's soldiers came away from their beating with low morale and sad hearts. Their despondency passed on to the nation, and all feared that this one setback meant God was no longer with them. They did not investigate the reason why the soldiers were beaten by an inferior force. To simply fall down in despair is NOT a Christian answer to problems. The answer is to be pro-active, and to look at what went wrong, and then to put it right. As my mother often quipped: "I am far too busy to be depressed"! As believers we have an Almighty God, so let us prove it by our attitudes and actions, especially when there are problems.

Verses 6-9

1.

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until

Joshua 7

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Monday, 24 July 2017 13:22

the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

2.

And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

3.

O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

4.

For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

Even Joshua fell to the old lie, just as the Hebrews did soon after leaving Egypt, being chased by Pharaoh's men. Did they not cry out in anguish, saying they would rather return to slavery than die in the desert? This is because they vastly underestimated the power and will of God! And this same 'Me-oh-my' response is found amongst Christians today. Very debilitating and fruitless.

In typical old Jewish manner Joshua tore his clothing and lay face downwards on the earth before the Ark, in utter desperation. There he stayed until darkness fell, along with the elders, who all threw dust upon their heads as a sign of repentance. Joshua asked God why He allowed the enemy to win, when, until now, He had given them victory after victory. Why bring them all this way only to be defeated by the Amorites? It would have been better, wailed Joshua, if we had stayed on the east of Jordan, content with what we had achieved. This is how defeatist Christians are when things do not go their way. They cannot see the 'bigger picture' in which God moves; all they see is their own small patch of woes.

Joshua carried on with his complaint – what can I say, when Israel is defeated by the enemy ("turneth their backs" means to run away)? He rightly feared that if the rest of the Middle East came to hear of this defeat, God's name would be scorned and the people of Israel would be

Joshua 7

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Monday, 24 July 2017 13:22

shunned and no longer feared.

Though he was starting at the wrong point, by complaining, his words are the very ones I used in my own life when under severe attack from homosexuals, when they successfully destroyed my career. I was naturally concerned because this had thrown me into very deep distress and financial trouble. But, my major concern was not that; it was about losing spiritually to my enemies, who would laugh at God and say "Where is your God now?" God answered by keeping me and my family 'afloat' and not defeated by wicked designs. That others would scorn God came way above my fear of my future! The Lord did not let me down.

Verses 10-15

1.

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

2.

Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

3.

Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

4.

Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

5.

In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.

Joshua 7

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Monday, 24 July 2017 13:22

6.

And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

God's reply to Joshua must have stunned him: 'Get up off your face! Why are you being so complaining?' As I have taught for many years, we all sin and God knows it. We all fail at times. But, our sinful act or thought is not the main issue. God KNOWS we will sin, but when we repent and change, He is there for us immediately, giving support and help. But, this will not happen if all we do is cover our faces, cry, and moan about how awful life is!

If God is on our side, why do we fall in a heap as if God is nobody, or without power? What the Lord has done is to give us an instant 'pick-me-up' – once we have repented, get on with life, this time making sure we do not get it wrong again! Of course, we always DO get it wrong again, but the same proviso applies... repent and get on with it. Speaking from a personal opinion, I am very frustrated by Christians who are always wringing their hands and being laid low by circumstances and their own emotions. Their failure to rally round is systemic and tends to get worse, and before too long, few friends will want to stick by their side.

After telling Joshua to pick himself up and get going, God tells him why the Israelite soldiers were beaten (note that God only allowed a small number to be killed, as a token; it could have turned out much worse). "Israel hath sinned"! Today, Christians are used to being wrapped in cotton wool when they sin. It is my own way to point out the sin immediately, and then begin to show ways to overcome it. This is different from those fake counsellors, who will spin the counsel out for a long time, never coming to the core problem – unrepented-of sin.

The people, God said, have broken their promise to me, though I commanded certain requirements. They have "taken of the accursed thing", stolen, and lied, taking objects into their own tents for their own enrichment! When God said this, He was declaring disappointment (though He knew in advance what would happen). It is evident from the wording used that Achan must have removed valuable objects and hidden them in his tent, hence "stolen". Note that God uses the word "they". In reality, Achan was at fault. But, all of Israel suffered as a result of his sin.

Joshua 7

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Monday, 24 July 2017 13:22

For this one reason, said the Lord, your soldiers could not win such a small battle, and is also the reason they lost heart and became cowards, running away. Then, God gave a dire warning – get rid of the accursed thing, or I will leave you stranded. I know many Christians who stupidly have figures of Buddha (or other icons of pagan religions) in their homes. Some of these objects were bought on holiday, or at home for décor purposes.

Whenever I see such awful disregard I warn the house owner of consequences, which can often be terrible, and strongly advise them to get rid of the object, either by burning it or smashing it and placing it in a rubbish bin. It has to be treated with contempt, otherwise God teaches them a lesson. As I have asked several times before, “How many sins are acceptable before God acts?” The answer is, “None!” God will not tolerate even one sin in His people. He will punish them whether the sin is one or many, great or small. And this is what we see in the sin of Achan. God NEVER turns a blind eye to sin, even when we think it is committed in secret.

Every trace of sin must be rid of in our lives. EVERY sin and EVERY thing that offends the Lord. There are times when Christians laugh amiably when I warn them, or they just ignore the warning: “Oh, you know what Barry is like! He’s just a fuddy-duddy!” They fail to see the ‘bigger picture’ given by God: He hates ALL sin and anything to do with it. He EXPECTS us to act, think and speak honourably, and to avoid anything that will compromise our spiritual lives, firstly because it is what God demands, and secondly, for our own wellbeing.

After spelling out the sin and the reason for the beating of Joshua’s army, God gave the solution: All the tribes must gather together in the morning. Every family and every individual within that family. The punishment would be horrific, but reflected the seriousness of breaking their vows to the Lord. The ones who had taken the accursed thing would be burnt to death with fire. Then, everything he owned or had would be burnt. This was because his sin had to be cleansed from Israel.

Now apply the same thinking to today! God may not nowadays burn us alive for our sin, but He DOES expect us to view sin with the same seriousness and urgency. Can you not see the extreme warning in this chapter, for us today? We MUST be rid of all and anything that causes us to sin, whether it is objects, people, friendships, thoughts, even clothing. All must be of God.

Verses 16-21

1.

Joshua 7

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So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken:

2.

And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

3.

And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

4.

And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

5.

And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

6.

When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

Next day, Joshua got up early and called for the presence of the tribes. Once assembled, he singled out the tribe of Judah. Out of this tribe he took the family of the Zarhites (descendants of Zerah, from the family of Esau). And from this family Joshua took one man, Zabdi. He was the grandfather of Achan and grandson of Judah. From his family Joshua took the son of Zabdi, Achan, and set him aside.

Joshua 7

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Monday, 24 July 2017 13:22

Joshua demanded an explanation. He called on Achan to glorify God by confessing to his sin and saying what he had done. Joshua would not tolerate lies or excuses, particularly as it was God who instigated the interrogation. Achan was honest – he had taken a rich Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver, fifty shekels' weight of gold, hiding the gold and silver in the earth covered by his tent.

Modern Christians find no harm in lying about their sins, but they reckon without God's wrath; He will always exact a penalty for unconfessed sin, whether we think no-one knows about the sin, or not. God ALWAYS knows.

Verses 22-26

1.

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

2.

And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

3.

And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

4.

And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

5.

And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

Joshua 7

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Monday, 24 July 2017 13:22

Joshua sent men to Achan's tent, and they found the spoils, which they took back to Joshua and before the tribes and God. Achan had defied the Lord and brought defeat to the nation. Now, he would pay for it.

Achan, his family, and everything he had, was taken to a nearby valley, called Achor ('trouble', or 'disturbance'), just north of Jericho. Joshua, with heavy heart, asked why Achan should thus have troubled the people. It was rhetorical, for his words were followed by the sombre penalty from God: "The Lord shall trouble thee this day". Whether modern people accept it or not, God demanded the death of Achan and his family. The tribes stoned them, and when each had died, they were burned in a fire. Fire because the flames consume the dread thing.

The family was then buried under a huge pile of stones. In this way God was satisfied, and no longer punished Israel. The valley of Achor is still there, and was named by Joshua because of the trouble caused by just one man, and the awful penalty applied to him by God.

End Note:

I must repeat that this chapter contains a warning for us all. The situation for Christians is becoming more treacherous by the day. As I warned many years ago, Christians had to oppose homosexuality movements in their infancy. This did not happen, and now Christians are accepting homosexuals, even into the churches.

Similarly, I warned against giving any quarter at all to Islam. I acknowledged about fifteen years ago that many Muslims were 'quiet'... but that their religion was foul. Today, this threat is even becoming institutionalised, as governments protect those who wish to kill us. No Christian can, in good godly conscience, protect Islam or any Muslim. Even those who claim to be 'moderate' (no such thing).

Both Islam and homosexuality are "the accursed thing". We are not to touch them for any reason, but must shun and oppose them with all our might. It does not matter if those we oppose are 'quiet' or 'nice', for their very existence is anathema to the Lord. He has spoken against them clearly in His word and we may not overturn His judgment. Rather, we must obey. That this is so is shown in this chapter.

Joshua 7

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 24 July 2017 13:22

Our current problems with these two major Satanic movements arises from giving sympathy, friendship and help to them. In return, those who do so are placing all our lives in danger, and damage our spiritual present and futures. More than that, they dishonour God. To have anything at all to do with these enemies is to reject God's commands.

The warning, then is vital and is now presented to you. Ignore it at your peril. I care nothing for what you think of me – what I care about is that God must be obeyed, or we all suffer.

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