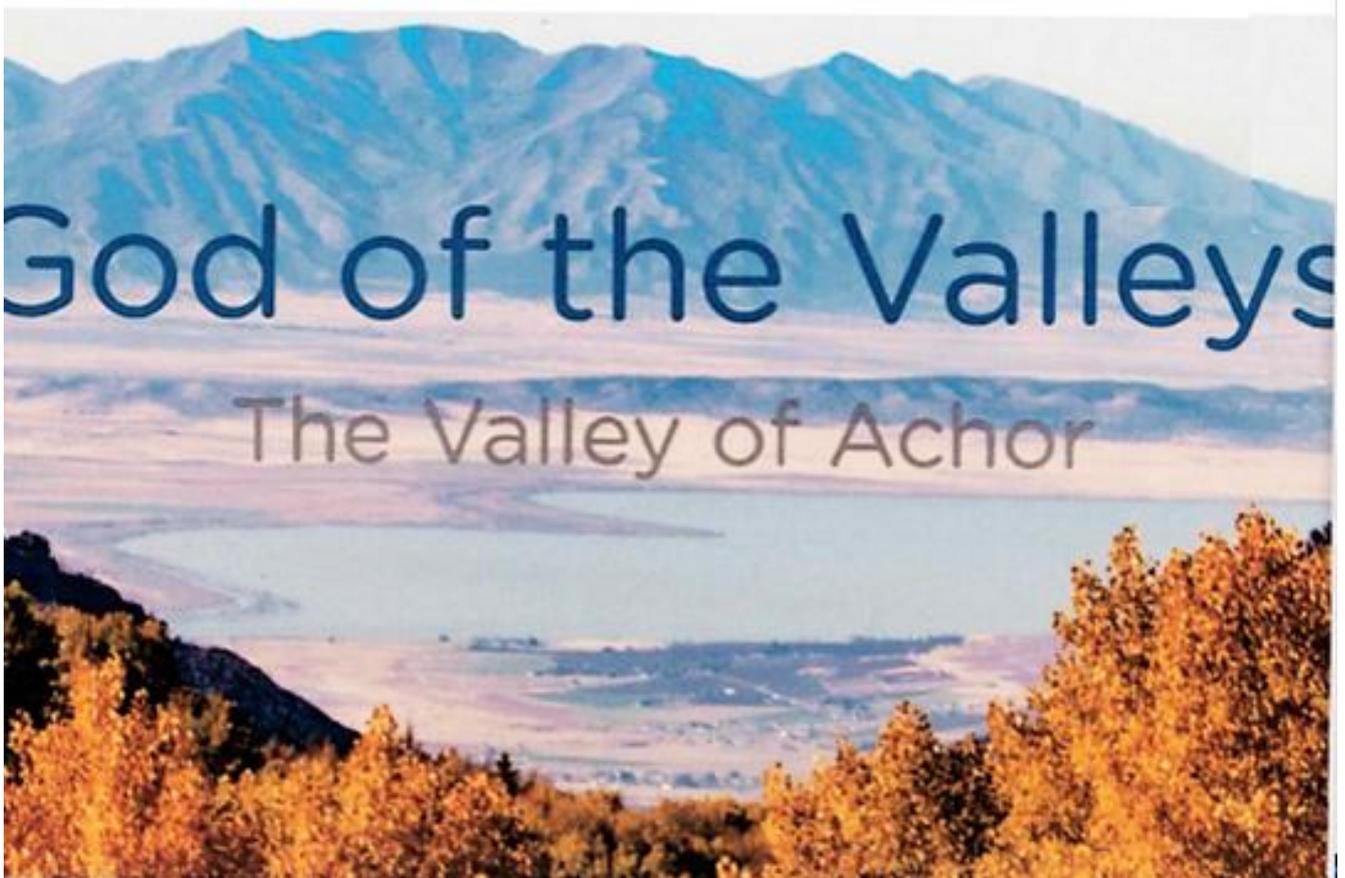


JOSHUA CHAPTER 7

Part 1

From Victory to Defeat: "How the mighty have fallen!" 2 Sam 1:25,27



- Chapter 7 gives us a shock! Everything has been going well for Israel.
 - How can victory turn into defeat? There is **so much** to learn here!
 - By comparison with the fortified city of Jericho, Ai was **an easy** victory: it was smaller and weaker. What went wrong?
- 7.1** We are going to witness **a series of failures** common among those who **claim** to love to serve God. 7.1 gives us the **main** cause of failure...
- (NKJV) **The children of Israel committed** (a sin) **trespass regarding the accursed things...**
(JB) “ “ “ **incurred guilt by violating the ban.**
- This is the main problem – but there are **many** more!
Human nature is **as unstable as water** (Gen 49:4 NKJV)
“ “ “ **uncontrolled as a flood** (JB)
- So, we **cannot**, **must** not trust ourselves. We can only succeed if we wholeheartedly trust in God.
- Trust in the Lord with ALL your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him
And He shall direct your paths.** (Prov 3:5-6 NKJV)
- Ⓝ **Because** these chosen people have the Captain of the Lord’s Army **with** them (Josh 5:13-15)
These events should **not** have happened!
Why would God **permit** their defeat after working miracles for them at Jericho?

Answer:

- (i) To teach all future generations that they are never in greater spiritual danger than when God has given them special or signal grace.
 - The **INTERNAL** 'giant' of **PRIDE** is stirred up! We secretly feel "I am important" "I am special" "I can do this..."

(NB) Pride is independence from God and reliance on **SELF** – hence disaster!
"Pride comes before a fall" Prov 16:18

- (ii) To illustrate the basic truth that if we are to **continue** with the Divine Will ruling our lives that we must **surrender** our human will **continuously** on a daily basis.

- (iii) To point out that God is jealous of His Holiness and Glory... so He will not tolerate sin among His People – whether that sin is hidden or obvious: cf Heb 12:14.

- (iv) To make it **clear** that nothing is concealed from Him. He sees and hears even our most hidden thoughts, words and actions. We are an **OPEN BOOK** to Him: Ps 139

**The eyes of the Lord are in every place,
keeping watch on the evil and the good. Prov 15:3**

Notice the warning in 7:1 (But)... it prepares for the disaster which follows!

Notice the contrast between 6:27 and 7:1

The Lord was with Joshua... and his fame spread throughout the country.

BUT...

Notice that the Lord was **with** Joshua but his anger was kindled against **ISRAEL** – the Nation!
Because of this Israel failed God at Ai.

And Joshua, humiliated, had to prostrate himself before God (7:6)

Sin is what brings disaster to us... and humiliations

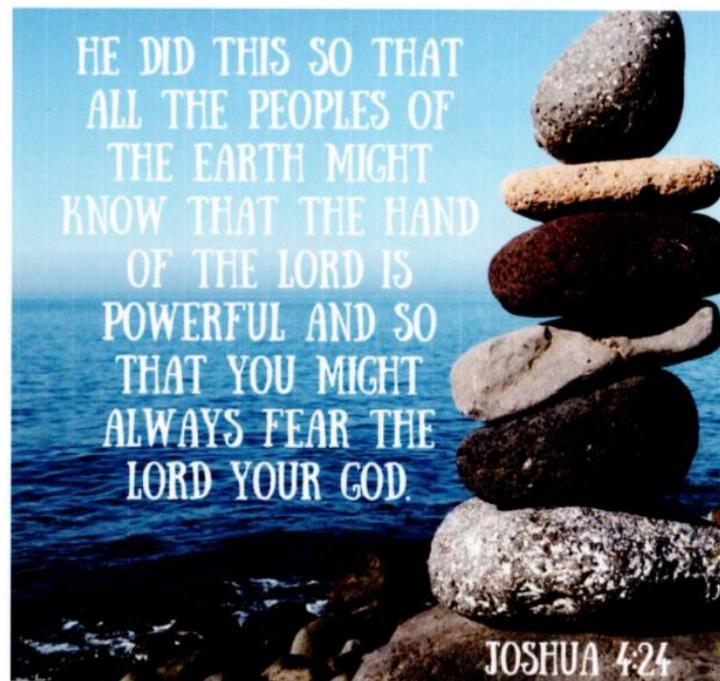
- There is no recovery unless we prostrate our souls before the Divine Majesty in repentance, reparation and intercession.
- Our greatest works and achievements are hindered or destroyed by sin.
 - examples: Samson, Saul & Solomon

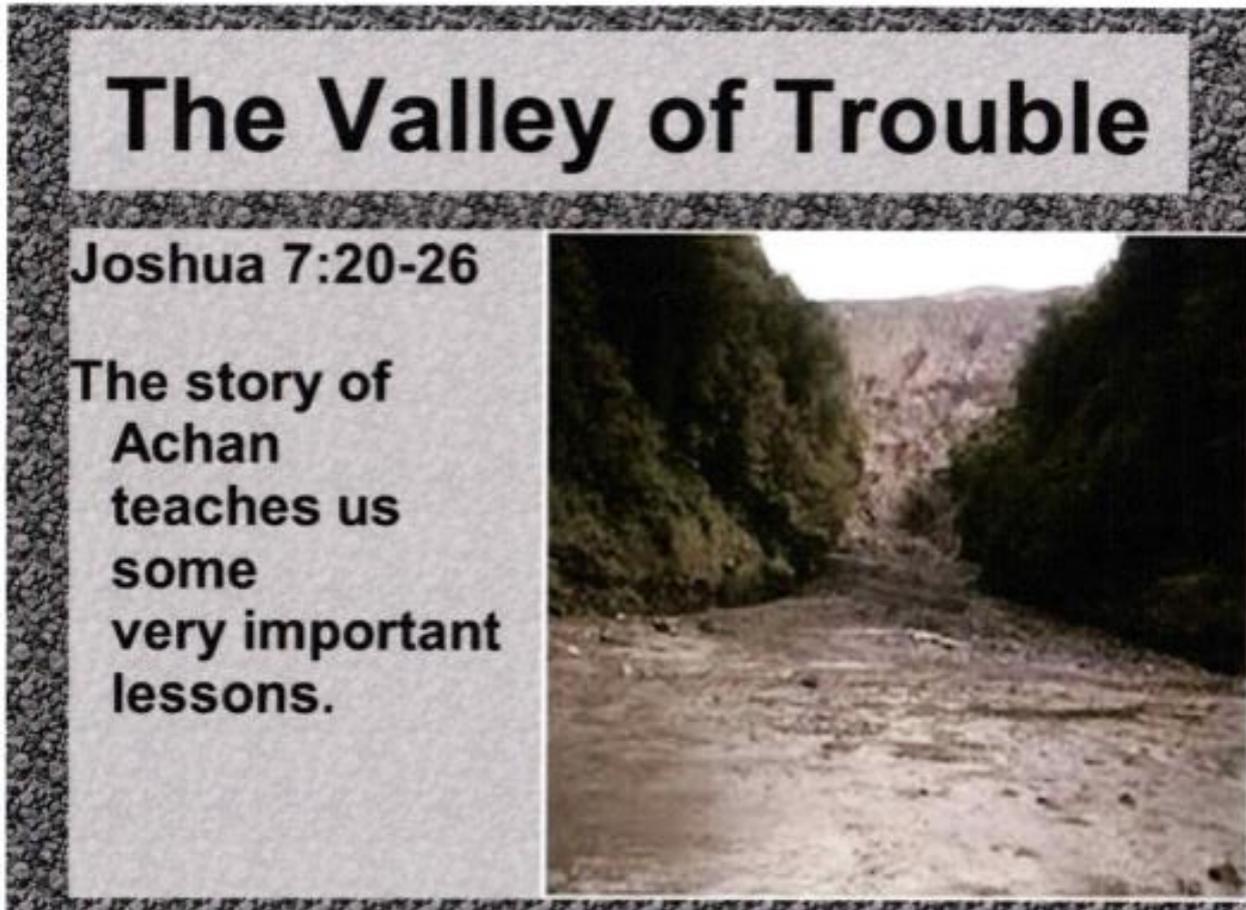
(NB) It is when we are successful that we need **to tread carefully.**

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling: Phil 2:12

Serve the Lord with fear And rejoice with trembling: Ps 2:11

- Unless the Lord keeps us **little in our own eyes** (1 Sam 15:17) we can mess up His Plans for us.





THE SIN OF ACHAN: This was the beginning of a series of **dangerous errors** – with consequences.

- (i) It was committed **during** the taking of Jericho **after** the Lord had brought the walls down miraculously. God was still **Present** with them **over the Ark!**
 - (ii) They were given certain instructions regarding the sacking of Jericho – **Josh 6:17-19**
 - everything was to be put “under the ban”
 - they were **not** to be covetous and take something for themselves.
 - all the silver and gold was to be put into the treasury of the Lord.
 - (iii) So, Achan committed the **sin of sacrilege** – taking what was consecrated to God alone.
- Achan’s genealogy is given in 7:1 to emphasise the awfulness of his sin. Achan = Trouble!!
 - God saw Israel as **one unit** and so it was **the Nation** which bore the guilt... just as **our Nations** bear the guilt of the shame of Abortion, etc.
 - cf 1 Cor 12:26 **If one member** (of the Body of Christ) **suffers, all the members suffer with it...**
 - cf 1 Cor 5:1-7 the sexual immorality of one brought shame **to all the Church...**
- Ⓝ Joshua 6:18 – **that would lay the whole camp of Israel open to the ban and bring disaster on it.**
- Yet, with all the warning **Achan** did not listen except to his own Selfish and rebellious heart.
- He kept in rank with all the others for seven days but as soon as he had the **opportunity** – in the heat of battle – he followed his own **human will...**
- 7.2 Joshua sent spies to reconnoitre Ai **which is beside Beth-Aven** (NKJV) on the east of Bethel... Joshua made moves to take the next town... **NOT KNOWING** that **trouble** had visited him...
- he is doing his duty in obedience to the Lord **not knowing** that there is an **enemy** Ⓜ the camp.
 - not knowing that Israel is **exposed** to Judgement because of the ban!
 - he would **not** have taken the next move if he had **KNOWN**... so we sometimes walk into danger unknowingly...



7:4 3,000 men went to Ai **but they fled before the men of Ai**. Was this God's Will? **Let's look!**

- (i) Joshua was told in Num 27:18-21 that when he took up office as Leader of Israel that he was to go to **ELEAZER, the priest**, to **find out** God's Will for him **and** the People.
- there is no mention of the High Priest here... or of the Ark!
How **could** Joshua – the obedient one – **FORGET** the most basic rule for his ministry?

(NB) **Mt 13:33** Jesus warned that even a **little** yeast would leaven the whole dough.
One bad apple is enough to destroy a case of apples!

So, the evil, spiritual "leaven" of Achan's sin is already affecting everyone.

- Satan has got a foothold in the Community, so **SECRET** lust, greed, etc. will destroy them and expose the Community to Judgement.

(NB) They are at the **BEGINNING** of their history in the Promised Land so if **deceit** is allowed they cannot stay in grace or in closeness to God.

Remember Ananias & Sapphira in Acts 5 – the Church was just beginning its long journey to the ends of the earth so **Peter**, the Leader, had to deal with it strongly cf Rev 2:14-16 and 20-23: secret sin in the church, destroying it.

- (ii) Since Joshua did not ask **the Lord** for His Will, he **now** lacks Wisdom and perception of the true state of affairs.
- (iii) Why didn't Joshua ask the Lord if **HE** wanted the **SAME** approach to Ai as to Jericho?
- why did he suddenly change his mode of operation?
- why drop down from the divine to the human level?
- why abandon his wonderful obedience and surrender to God?
- (iv) Why did Joshua send 3,000 men out to fight with **NO DIVINE** protection?
- (v) In the taking of Jericho God employed **the whole** of Israel **AS A UNITED BODY** in obedience to Him – **this** released **Divine** Power to work in the situation.
- (vi) When Jericho fell the **whole** Nation witnessed **GOD AT WORK**
- yet how quickly they fall back to worldly ways!

Is 2:22: Trust no more in man for he has but A BREATH in his nostrils.

Lesson: If we are to go forward and **TAKE** possession of the **INHERITANCE** God offers us in Divine Will, then we need to learn the lessons of Ai!

- We can only conquer the **world within us** by **relentless submission** to the Will of God in **all** circumstances, for we have to be conquerors of our **OWN** citadel if God is to use us to conquer the Kingdom of Divine Will on Earth for Him.

(NB) **Rom 15:4** Everything in the Scriptures – Old and New Testaments – is **FOR OUR LEARNING**

(NB) When we fall back to the old ways of self-will, God – **in His Merciful Love** – **HAS** to let us **Fail** so that we can begin the journey again.

Obadiah v19: the House of Jacob shall POSSESS their possessions!

- it is one thing to be **GIVEN** the divine inheritance
- it is altogether different to **TAKE HOLD** of it and then **POSSESS IT** – live in it
- although **God** is lavish in His Gifts, we may be LAZY in taking hold of them and using them.

Prov 28:10 **WHATEVER** causes the upright to go astray in an evil way

He, himself, will fall into his own pit;

But the BLAMELESS (faithful and attentive) **will inherit good**

- the **upright** are those walking with their eyes
 - fixed on God
 - Surrendered to His Divine Will
 - living in dependence on Him
- **These** actually **receive** the good things offered in the Divine Will.
- Those operating in self-will and wanting to please **themselves FORGO** the good things of the Lord.

- (NB) • All **goods** come to us through obedience to God's Will and the surrender of our will to Him.
- Jericho teaches us the secrets of **SUCCESS** spiritually:
Ai teaches the way to **FAIL** God and yourself.
 - the **world, flesh and Devil**, our real enemies, are only conquered by **GOD'S** ways. cf Is 55:8-9

The Great Lesson of Joshua is this: **Only God** can conquer our foes – internal or external
So, Joshua, you and I must **discover** that the Captain of the Lord's Army will **ONLY** fight **for us** when we are surrendered to God's Will, living in obedience to Him. cf Deut 11:22, 23

The other lesson of Ai is that God's People are never in greater danger of giving way to **Pride** and **presumption** until **AFTER** God has signally blessed them in some way.

Gal: 3:3 **Having begun in the spirit are you ending in the flesh?**

- We can **be** – and **remain** – **strong** only when we persevere in the knowledge of our nothingness and weakness and throw ourselves upon God's Mercy...
- We must "go to God with empty hands" to be filled daily: St Thérèse

(NB) Here at Ai (because of the sin of Achan) God left Israel to **its own devices...** to its **own** strength... so that they would discover their **Power** over the Enemy **came from God** above.

- they will learn **by experience** that they cannot be – or do – **without God**: Jn 15:5

(NB) According to their **own** understanding Ai was easy prey (vs 3).
God wanted **us** to learn not **to underestimate** the strength of our enemies!

- it takes our humiliation and failure to **Truly** bend the knee before God.

"God **HELP** me!" doesn't come easy to a **proud soul**.