

LESSON 45

Israel & Ai

JOSHUA 7–8



BIBLE TRUTH

DESTRUCTION COMES UPON THOSE
WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THE WORD OF GOD

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
 Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
 Read Joshua 7 from the Scriptures or read story 45, “Israel and Ai,”
 from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
 Hold the Javelin
SUPPLIES:
 ✓ a long broomstick pointed on one end
- 4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
- 5. OBJECT LESSON 2** **20 MIN**
 Ai and the Red Sea
SUPPLIES:
 ✓ pencils or pens
 ✓ copies of the provided question sheet
- 6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
- 7. ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
 Joshua and the Javelin
SUPPLIES:
 ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper
- 8. CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
- 9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
 What Do I Have Hidden?
SUPPLIES:
 ✓ tablecloth
 ✓ various objects, which, if covered by a tablecloth, have features that give clues as to
 their identity (e.g., a football, a cooking pot, a shoe, a book); also, some items that
 would be more difficult to guess; e.g., a quarter, a set of keys, a stapler

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Israel's defeat is due to Achan's sin—In Joshua 6, when the Israelites were preparing their assault on Jericho, Joshua gave clear instructions that they should destroy everything in Jericho except the silver, gold, and bronze. These were to be declared holy and brought into the treasury of the Lord.

Not everyone obeys Joshua. A man named Achan keeps some silver, gold, and a fine cloak for himself (Joshua 7:21). Because of Achan's sin, God allows Ai to defeat the Israelites in their first actual battle in the Promised Land.

Achan is discovered and judged—God tells Joshua to call all Israel before him so that those guilty of taking the devoted things can be found out. Under God's instruction, Joshua uses "lots" to identify who is guilty. As Joshua does this, first a particular tribe is chosen by lot, then a clan, then a household. Finally, Achan is revealed to be the guilty one, and he and his entire family are judged for his sin.

Back in Jericho, God has mercy on Rahab and her family. This was because Rahab honored God. Today we learn how God judged Achan and his Israelite family because Achan disobeyed God. God's mercy is for those who fear and obey him no matter who we are.

Israel defeats Ai and enjoys the spoils—What Achan selfishly craved after the defeat of Jericho, God freely gives to the Israelites after the defeat of Ai. If Achan had only been patient and obeyed and trusted God, he and his family would have survived and been enriched honestly.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Death by hanging

The King of Ai was hung on a tree by Joshua. Death by being hung on a tree was considered a curse.

And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.
(Deuteronomy 21:22–23)

This person would not only be killed by man but also be cursed by God. That is why crucifixion was such a defiling punishment. Jesus was hung on a tree and cursed by God because of our sin.

WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Take time to remind the children that God always punishes sin. Achan was killed for taking the gold and silver. He deserved to be punished for his sin. We all deserve to be punished for our sin as well. The penalty for even one sin is death. Jesus took the penalty for our sin at the cross so we can be forgiven. All those who trust in the Lord had their sin paid for on the cross.

After Achan was found out and Ai was destroyed, Joshua offered a sacrifice to God for a peace offering (Joshua 8:31). That offering pointed to the day when God would offer up his Son, Jesus, as the ultimate peace offering. Jesus said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Today, after the sacrifice of Jesus, there is no longer a need to offer peace offerings because we have peace with God (Romans 5:1).

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Joshua 7 from the Scriptures or read story 45, "Israel and Ai," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Hold the Javelin

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a long broomstick pointed on one end

Ask for a volunteer. Explain to them what Joshua did in holding up the javelin during the battle (Joshua 8:18). Ask them to hold up the javelin while you read the story. This is going to get tiring—that is the point. Have them hold it out toward Ai. Ask them, "How would Joshua

have held the javelin?” Likely, he held it high pointed out without much support. Go through and read the story slowly. Keep looking over at them to remind them to keep it high. When you have finished, ask the volunteer if they are tired. Thank them for their help.

Ask the class the following questions:

- **Why did God want Joshua to hold up the javelin?**
(God was going to give Israel victory over Ai. The javelin was a weapon like a spear. By holding it in the air, Joshua did no fighting but all the while recognized that it was God who was fighting for Israel.)

- **When did Joshua pull back the javelin?**
(Joshua pulled back the javelin when the last person in Ai was destroyed. Once God’s word was fulfilled Joshua rested but not before.)

- **What can we learn from this story?**
(God is able to deliver us. We should obey God in every task until it is complete. In addition, Moses’ upraised hands [Exodus 17:11] and Joshua’s upraised javelin are traditionally seen as analogous to constant prayer in our warfare.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 20 MIN

Ai and the Red Sea

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencils or pens
- ✓ copies of the provided question sheet

Read aloud as a class the following three accounts and then have the children each compare the story of the battle of Ai (Joshua 8:18–28) with the battle with the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8–16) and the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:16).

Pass out the paper and pencils, and have the children write their answer to the following question:

- From these passages what do we learn about God and how he leads his people in battle?

Ask for a few volunteers to read what they wrote. Look for answers that include the observation that God wants his people to know that the battle is the Lord's and he brings the victory.

God often used a staff held up for all the people to see. Just like a flag in battle, the staff of Moses and the javelin of Joshua represented victory. To drop the flag in battle tells the troops that the enemy has overrun their position. But to stand strong with the flag held high signifies that the enemy is not gaining a foothold.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Joshua and the Javelin

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of Joshua lifting up his javelin.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

What Do I Have Hidden

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ tablecloth
- ✓ various objects, which, if covered by a tablecloth, have features that give clues as to their identity (e.g., a football, a cooking pot, a shoe, a book); also, some items that would be more difficult to guess (e.g., a quarter, a set of keys, a stapler).

Place the football under the tablecloth prior to class, and don't allow the children to touch it. Keep the rest of the items hidden. After telling the Bible story, draw attention to the table with the hidden item on it. Ask the class if they can guess what is under the tablecloth. Repeat the exercise with each item going from the most obvious to the hardest to guess. If the class gives up on an item, give a few clues, but then tell them the answer. Help them to see that they are having a difficult time guessing what is hidden even though they have clues.

Talk about how God knew that Achan had stolen some of the devoted things even though they were well hidden. Ask the class to tell you what we learn about God and our sin from this story. (God knows everything, and we can't hide our sin from God.)