

Achan's Sin & the Battle of Ai

Joshua 7:1–8:35

Main Street



bible verse

COMMITTING TO MEMORY

Numbers 32:23

...and you may be sure that your sin will find you out.



story lesson

BIBLE STORY

The people just had an amazing victory. They conquered the mighty city of Jericho! Things were good. The people were confident. They were trusting the Lord their God. They were being faithful. Things were going so good until one man named Achan son of Carmi. You see, Achan disobediently took some of the devoted things from the city of Jericho, "so the Lord's anger burned against Israel" (Joshua 7:1).

After the fall of Jericho, Joshua was preparing for the next battle. He had sent spies ahead to check out the region, specifically the city of Ai. The spies returned and said: "Not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary all the people, for only a few men are there" (Joshua 7:3). Joshua took their advice and sent about three thousand men; but they were routed by the men of Ai and thirty six Israelite men were killed. "At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water" (Joshua 7:5). Joshua tore his clothes and fell down before the Lord, pleading. The Lord responded:

"Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their back and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction" (Joshua 7:10-12).

So Joshua had the people stand tribe by tribe, clan by clan, person by person while the Lord directed him to the sinful individual. It was Achan son of Carmi. When Achan's sin was discovered he confessed: "It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. [I took a robe, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold.] I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath" (Joshua 7:20-21).

The stolen merchandise was brought out and spread out before the Lord. Then they took the stolen goods, Achan, his sons and daughters, all that he owned, and stoned

them and then they burned them. "Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger" (Joshua 7:26). The sin had been dealt with and removed. The nation could move on.

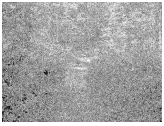
Then the Lord reassured Joshua not to be afraid or discouraged and to go attack Ai (Joshua 8:1-2). The Lord's instructions were to set an ambush behind the city with a certain amount of men. The main force would march to the city and then flee when the men of Ai came out after them. While the men of Ai were in pursuit of the Israelites, the ambush crew would enter and conquer the city. The men of Ai would be caught in the middle of two forces and destroyed. And this is exactly what happened. The city and the people of Ai were destroyed and the plunder was given to the Israelites.

Why would a loving God do such a thing to Achan and his whole family? Because God is infinitely loving... He goes to drastic measures to purge evil from Israel because the nation was to be a light to the nations of the world... "For God so loved the world..." that is why such a world-loving God would do such a thing to Achan. Does God treat sin the same way today as He did with Achan? Yes. Jesus Christ's death on the cross...the bone-crushing, spear-stabbing, crown-of-thorns-wearing, crucifying death of Christ paid for all the sin of all time, once-for-all.

You will note that the story of Joshua and the conquest of Canaan (the Promised Land) follows a pattern of obedience and disobedience.

Jericho, obedience

Ai, disobedience



life application

MAKING IT REAL

God Knows

God knows our secrets even when others do not. Your sin will find you out. Most of us have secret sins that no one knows about. It is easy for us to hide these amongst duty, responsibility, and/or activity. But the Lord knows. Sin is often a stumbling block to almost everything in our lives. It hinders our relationship with the Lord, with others, and in our own heart. Sin confuses, hurts, and lies. It is always a good thing to confess and get things right. Yes, the consequences may sting for a time, but confession and repentance are purifying for the soul.

Your sin will affect other people

Most of the time we think that we are just hurting ourselves, but we are affecting more than just that. We are connected with people in all kinds of ways, and our secret or not-so secret sins hinder those relationships. The corrective is confession and repentance.



questions

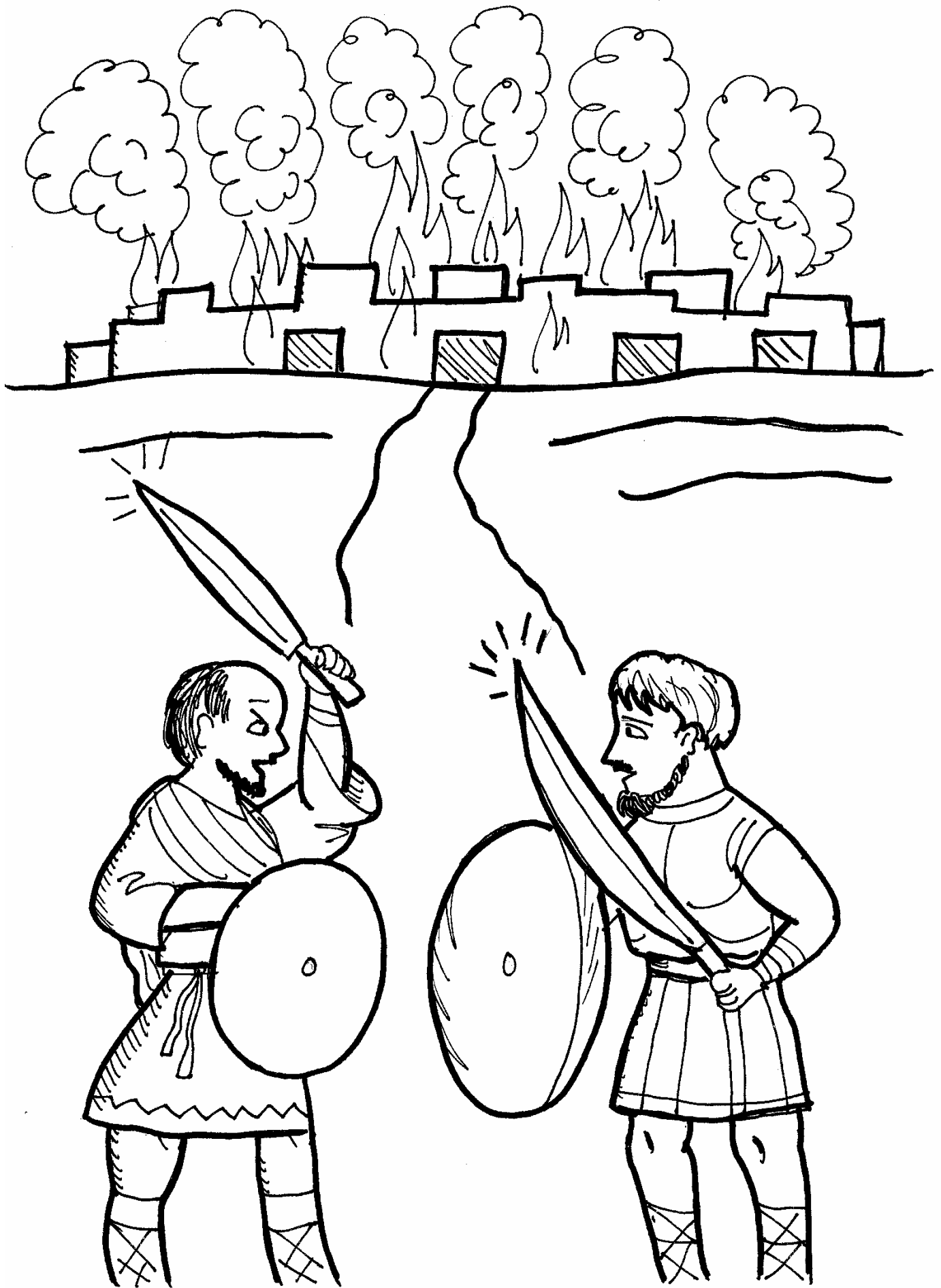
REMEMBERING

- 1. What city did the Israelites try conquer?** Ai
- 2. Why did the Israelites win the battle at Ai?** Someone had sinned & disobeyed God
- 3. Who took some valuables to keep for himself?** Achan
- 4. What things did he take?** a robe, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold
- 5. How was he punished for his sin?** the stolen goods, Achan, his sons and daughters, all that he owned, and stoned them and then they burned them
- 6. Why do people try to hide sin from God?**



coloring sheet

ON THE NEXT PAGE



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