
Joshua 7

Joshua 7:1–26

Israel is Defeated at Ai Because of the Sin of Achan

Outline of Chapter 7:

- vv. 1–5 **Israel suffers defeat at Ai**
- vv. 6–9 **Joshua prostrates himself before God, asking why**
- vv. 10–15 **God tells Joshua the problem is that someone has transgressed the ban**
- vv. 16–26 **Achan is exposed, tried and executed**

Charts:

Introduction: As we recall from the previous chapter, God had devoted all of Jericho to destruction, save the precious metals which were to be placed into the treasury for God. As one would expect during the attack upon Jericho, some men became covetous of the things which they saw. In Joshua 7, one man, Achan ben Carmi, saw some gold and silver during the slaughter, which he stole for himself. This would have been a temptation for anyone, and a great one for someone who had been poor all of his life. Achan took these precious metals and thus brought upon Israel their first defeat. After Israel's defeat over Jericho, Israel decided, without any communication with God, to attack nearby city, Ai. Because of Ai's meager population, it was suggested that only a small detachment of soldiers be sent to conquer it. Joshua agreed and this detachment was defeated, handing Joshua his first defeat and the first Jewish casualties. Then Joshua begins whining, asking God why they even crossed the Jordan and why didn't they just stay in the land on the other side? God first informs Joshua that the reason is Achan and then sentences Achan and his household to death. As ZPEB so patly pointed out, since Joshua's move into the land was a holy war, sin could not be tolerated in his camp.¹ At the end of this chapter, this punishment is carried out.

The events in this chapter really occurred; however, it is impossible to ignore the analogous situation between this chapter and the fall of man. Achan, as a representative of Israel, goes against God's direct command and steals that which belongs to God. Because of his sin, all of Israel stands under condemnation, just as Adam's choice to take of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil resulted in the condemnation of the entire human race. Achan and his family and all that he owned will be destroyed at the end of this chapter.

The NIV Study Bible: [This is] *the tragic story of Achan, which stands in sharp contrast to the story of Rahab. In the earlier event, a Canaanite prostitute, because of her courageous allegiance to Israel and her acknowledgment of the Lord, was spared and received into Israel. She abandoned Canaan and its gods on account of the Lord and Israel, and so received Canaan back. In the present event, an Israelite (of the tribe of Judah, no less), because of his disloyalty to the Lord and Israel, is executed as the Canaanites were. He stole the riches of Canaan from the Lord, and so lost his inheritance in the promised land. This is also a story of how one man's sin adversely affected the entire nation. Throughout this account (as often in the OT) Israel is considered a corporate unity in covenant with and in the service of the Lord. Thus even in the acts of one (Achan) or a few (the 3,000 defeated at Ai) all Israel is involved.*²

Scofield lists three reasons for the defeat of Israel at Ai: (1) The sin of Achan was the first and foremost of the three reasons. Achan deliberately disobeyed a direct command from God, for which God held all of Israel corporally responsible. (2) The decision to send only a few men to Ai was prompted by human viewpoint; that is, Ai was a city with a small population, which made the Israelites think that there was no reason to send much more than a small detachment to conquer Ai. The dependence was upon human strength rather than upon God's strength. (3) Throughout this chapter you will notice that there is no direct communication with God with regards

¹ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 708.

² *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 296.

to the attack on Ai. The Israelites just proceeded directly to the attack without the leading and direction of God. (4) Finally, recall what led the Israelites into battle against Jericho—the ark of God. The ark of God did not go with them into battle against Ai.³

We may also make a small application to our own lives from this. At the point that sin enters into life, we are no longer functioning as a tool for God. When bitterness flairs up, when we become angry, when we backbite or gossip, we are immediately out of fellowship with God and we cannot fulfill any sort of divine purpose. This is where Israel found herself. Israel had become infected with sin and God viewed her as a whole and God would not work through her. Hence, the defeat at Ai, hence our own spiritual defeat when we are out of fellowship. However, once we are back in fellowship, via I John 1:9, we again can accomplish our divine purpose and regain our momentum. The same was true of Israel—once the evil was removed, Israel would go into Ai and conquer it (Joshua 8:1, 28).

J. Vernon McGee has a rather lengthy introduction to this chapter of Joshua, but one which is so down-to-earth and applicable, that I would like to quote it in its entirety: *The worst enemy that you have is yourself. He occupies the same skin that you occupy. He uses the same brain that you use in thinking his destructive thoughts. He uses the same hands that you use to perform his own deeds. This enemy can do you more harm than anyone else. He is the greatest handicap that you have in your daily Christian life.*

There are two factors that make dealing with this enemy doubly difficult. In the first place, we are reluctant to recognize and identify him. We are loathe to label him as an enemy. The fact of the matter is most of us rather like him. The second problem is that he is on the inside of us. If he would only come out and fight like a man, it would be different, but he will not. It is not because he is a coward, but because he can fight better from his position within.

Nations, cities, churches, and individuals have been destroyed by the enemy within. Russia fell to the Communists, not because of the German pressure on the outside, but because of this doctrine fomenting on the inside.

There comes out of ancient history an authentic narrative, long held in the category of mythology, that the city of Troy held off the Greeks for ten long, wear years. Finally the Greeks sailed away leaving a wooden horse. The Trojans took that wooden horse within their gates, and that was the undoing and destruction of Troy.

In a similar way churches are wrecked from within, not from forces without. The Lord Jesus Christ, in writing to the seven churches in Asia Minor, gave them certain warnings; yet not one of these churches received warning as to the enemy on the outside. He said: "...Thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam... So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner" (Revelation 2:14, 15, ASV). Also He warned: "But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols" (Revelation 2:20). Christ said to these churches (in effect), "You have something within that is bringing about your own destruction." Disloyalty and unfaithfulness in the church today is hurting God's cause more than any enemy that is on the outside. The devil can only hurt our churches from the inside, not from the outside.

Also, my friend, an individual can be destroy from the inside. Alexander the Great was probably the greatest military genius who has moved armies across the pages of history. There has been no on like him. Before the age of thirty-five he had conquered the world, but he died a drunkard. He had conquered the world, but he could not conquer Alexander the Great. There was an enemy within that destroyed him.

The only battle that the children of Israel lost in taking the Promised Land was a battle in which the defeat came, not from without, but from within. When the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, not many enemies, but three conspicuous and outstanding ones stood in their way. They were Jericho, Ai, and the Gibeonites. These three enemies of Israel prevented Israel's enjoyment and possession of the Promised Land. The land was there.

³ Mostly paraphrased from *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York·Oxford University Press; p. 265 (an additional point was added).

God had told them that it was theirs. God had given them the title deed in His promise to Abraham. To Joshua He had said, “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses” (Joshua 1:3, ASV). God was saying to them, “It is yours, go in, possess, and enjoy that which you take.”

What a lesson that is for us today. These people were given a land that was made up of three hundred thousand square miles, and even in their best days they only occupied thirty thousand square miles. Christians have been given all spiritual blessing, but how many of them, Christian, are you enjoying today? How many of them are really yours? You have the title to them, but have you claimed them and are you enjoying them as He intended? Think of the many Christians who are blessed with all spiritual blessings and yet are living as if they are spiritual paupers. God has made them available to us, but, if we are to get them, there are battles to be fought and victories to be won. In fact, the Epistle to the Ephesians closes with the clanking of armor and the sound of battle, with the call to put on the whole armor of God.

In Joshua 7 and 8, defeat and victory at Ai represent the flesh in the believer. The sin of Achan was sin in the camp. Steps in sins of the flesh are: I saw—physical; I coveted—mental; I took—volitional. There will be no deliverance until sin is dealt with in the life of a believer.⁴

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Israel Suffers Defeat at Ai

Literally:

And so sons of Israel have transgressed a transgression [or, have stolen from] in the devotion [or, the ban]. And so Achan⁵ ben Carmi ben Zabdi⁶ ben Zerah, of a tribe of Judah, took from the devotion [or, ban] and so anger of Y^ehowah burned against all of Israel.

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Smoother English rendering:

And then the sons of Israel violated the ban. Achan Carmi, a descendant of Zabdi, a descendant of Zerah from the tribe of Judah, stole from the ban. Consequently, Jehovah burned in anger against Israel.

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of mā'al (אָלַל) [pronounced *maw-GAL*], which means *to act treacherously, to act unfaithfully, to commit an infraction*; when followed by the bēyth preposition, it means *to take something by stealth, to steal*. Strong's #4603 BDB #591. Although we have the bēyth preposition here, we also have the masculine noun cognate ma'al (אָלַל) [pronounced *MAH-gahl*], which means *transgression, faithlessness, trespass, infraction*. Strong's #4604 BDB #591. This gives us: **And so sons of Israel have transgressed a transgression or, the sons of Israel have committed a grave infraction**. The bēyth preposition tells us what kind of a transgression was committed—they have stolen something. So that you see how others have translated this first phrase:

The Amplified Bible
The Emphasized Bible

But the Israelites committed a trespass in the devoted thing;...
But the sons of Israel had committed an act of unfaithfulness in respect of what was devoted,...

NASB
NJB

But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, ...
But the Israelites were unfaithful to the curse of destruction.

⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; pp. 45–47.

⁵ For those who diligently check their margin references, you may have noticed that Achan is called Achar in I Chron. 2:7. This is a scribal error in I Chron. 2:7. In the Hebrew, Achan is אַחָן and Achar is אַחָר; could be a slip of the pen or because the scribe copied from a very poor manuscript. However, I think what we have here is a retrospective play on words. Achor, in the Hebrew, means *to trouble*, and is found several times in this chapter. Achan (Achar) is buried in the Valley of Achor, *the Valley of Trouble*. Put quite simply, *the troubler* is buried in *the Valley of Trouble*.

⁶ Possibly *Zimri* in I Chron. 2:6; see note there. Again, this could be a typo on the part of the scribe.

Owen's Translation	But acted unfaithfully the people of Israel unfaithfully [exceedingly] in regard to the devoted things,...
REB	In a perfidious act, however, Israelites violated the ban;...
Young's Lit. Translation	And the sons of Israel commit a trespass in the devoted thing,...

What follows is, literally, *in the devoted thing* or *in the devotion*. The word is the masculine singular substantive *chêrem* (חֶרֶם) [pronounced *KHĀ-rem*], which means *something completed devoted [to God]* or *something completely in God's possession, the act of completely devoting something to God, something dedicated to destruction, the curse, the ban*, this latter rendering being a short, modern rendering. Part of what is implied is a *separation* of some sort. In fact, the Arabic word, *harem*, comes from this. *Harem* is a living area set aside for women. Strong's #2764 BDB #356. Almost all the translations which I examined looked at this word as if this were a *devoted thing* and some tried to fudge a little bit by using the plural, but this refers to the act of devotion, as we will see there were several items taken. The idea of something belonging completely to God is based upon the fact that all that is in the world belongs to God and this is simply human recognition of that fact. Under no circumstances could these things under the ban be sold, taken and used by man, given away, traded, or even redeemed with something of equal value. They were completely and totally God's possessions. And that which is *chêrem* must die. Jesus Christ was our *chêrem*. He became accursed for us.

Only one person is mentioned, but he has stained all of Israel. We forget that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. It only takes a little degeneracy to begin and it will spread throughout all of Israel. When dealing with a holy God, our behavior must also be holy. The slightest wrongdoing sets us apart from God. In fact, the things which we do have long-term effects which we often are never aware of. The man who succumbs to adultery, the woman who takes her children and leaves her husband because she is unsatisfied, the child who takes a drug or gives another child a drug, a soldier who betrays his battalion as a traitor, the unmarried mother searching for love who brings men into the house to live, the young couple who give into pre-marital sexual relations. These *little* mistakes have effects which can last for generations. We can only speculate what would have happened had Achan been allowed to live and to keep the things which he stole from God. We do know that as a matter of history, God became less strict in His dealings with Israel and Israel, as a great nation, peaked, and then fell in a very short amount of time. This does not mean that God ever changed; what it does mean is that God employed different programs and different approaches when dealing with mankind in the midst of the Angelic conflict so that man as a whole would be without excuse before Him. That is, no man can go to God and say, "Had You been less (or, more) strict, then we would have responded more better to Your commandments."⁷

One of the key issues raised in the Bible is great blessing which is brought into the world by one man (e.g., Abraham, Paul after his salvation) and how great cursing is brought into the world by one man (in this case, Achan). All of this is tied directly to our salvation, which need is brought upon by Adam, who, as the federal head of the human race, sinned, and plunged us all into sin; and which salvation is given to us by the act of one Man, the Man Christ Jesus.

The verb associated with this person Achan ben Carmi is the Qal imperfect of *lâqach* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*] means, *to take, to take from, to take in marriage, to seize*. Strong's #3947 BDB #542. In the Hebrew, the verb comes first, then the identification of the subject, and then the prepositional phrase *from the devotion* or *from the ban*. Recall that God's direct command was: "And the city will be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to Jehovah; only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in the house will live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. But, as for you, keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not desire them and take some of the things under the ban, so you do not make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it. And all the silver and gold and artifacts of Bronze and iron are set apart to Jehovah; they will go into the treasury of Jehovah." (Joshua 6:17–19). So there was no mistaking God's will in this matter.

The *wâw* consecutive gives the logical consequence of his action. **Consequently, [the] anger of Y^ehowah burned against all Israel.** Now, all Israel did not lust after the things devoted to God in Jericho. Only Achan is recorded as desiring these things and taking from them. This has been an area which has been explained by several theologians on several different levels. Keil and Delitzsch gave a very precise concept of the nature of the

⁷ I am thinking of a man who is weak in both theology and English.

condemnation that Israel was under: *the crime was imputed to the whole people, not as imputatio moralis, i.e., as though the whole nation had shared in Achan's disposition, and cherished in their hearts the same sinful desire which Achan had carried out in action in the theft he had committed; but as imputatio civilis, according to which Achan, a member of the nation, had robbed the whole nation of the purity and holiness which it ought to possess before God, through the sin that he had committed, just as the whole body is affected by the sin of a single member...however truly the whole Scriptures speak of each man as individually an object of divine mercy and justice, they teach just as truly that a nation is one organic whole, in which the individuals are merely members of the same body, and...as a divine institution is founded upon family relationship, and intended to promote the love of all to one another and to the invisible Head of all. As all then are combined in a fellowship established by God, the good or evil deeds of an individual affect injuriously or beneficially the welfare of the whole society...therefore, when we regard the state as a divine organization and not merely as a civil institution, a compact into which men have entered by treaty, we fail to discover caprice and injustice in consequences which necessarily follow from the moral unity of the whole state; namely, that the good or evil deeds of one member are laid to the charge of the entire body. Caprice and injustice we shall always find if we leave out of sight this fundamental unity, and merely look at the fact that the many share the consequences of the sin of one.*⁸

Particularly during times of establishment, God treated Israel as a corporate whole, or, as Barnes put it, a Divinely constituted organic whole. *The sin of Achan defiled the other members of the community as well as himself, and robbed the people collectively of holiness before God and acceptableness with Him. Israel had in the person of Achan broken the Covenant.*⁹ Immediately, you're thinking that God's assessment here is just a little bit harsh. We're just talking about one man and perhaps a handful of soldiers who witnessed what he did and most of his family is aware of what he has done. This is out of two million people—why is that any kind of a big deal? At that time, Israel was God's representative here on earth. Now, haven't you ever heard the unbeliever who cites the hypocrisy of believers and church goers all the time as the reason why he avoids Christianity. An agnostic (or atheist, I'm not sure which) of my acquaintance, when he attacks the Bible and Christianity, cites the shortcomings of our spiritual fathers over and over again as one of the fundamental objections to Christianity and the Bible. You certainly know those who are in opposition to the Christian faith who cite with contempt the hypocritical behavior of high profile believers and pastors (particularly, those on television who are constantly asking for money and often live a lifestyle which is more luxurious than it need be). We represent our Lord here on earth. When our lifestyle is filled with hypocrisy and evil and with materialism lust or with sexual lust, what do we have to offer the unbeliever who can see right through us? And it doesn't have to be everyone—all it takes is just for a few that the unbeliever can point to and justly criticize. One of the great men of our day, with a high profile, and, as far as I know, an irreproachable life is Billy Graham. Now, Billy Graham has an old sin nature just like the rest of us and he struggles with sin just as we all do, but his work has been characterized by financial responsibility and emphasis upon the gospel. However, those who attack the cause of Christ bypass Billy Graham and name others who are high profile and have sullied the name of Christ with their behavior. So, is the testimony of Achan important? Absolutely! Is his behavior an issue? Absolutely! Is your lifestyle important? If you represent yourself to other people as a believer in Jesus Christ, then the kind of life you lead is extremely important. The choices that you make with respect to your family, the money that God has entrusted you with, the way you deal with the moral dilemmas which you face each and every day—these things are of the utmost importance. If your lifestyle is no different than any unbeliever, then do not represent yourself publically as a believer. Do not let those around you know that you are an ambassador for Jesus Christ. If there are just areas of your life that you do not want to surrender to Jesus Christ, then keep His name from your lips—do not confess him before men. Keep your faith a secret! If you are irresponsible in your finances, if you are living in sin, if you have homosexual liaisons, if you have sex outside of marriage, if your business practices are suspect, if you are lazy and inept at your place of employment; don't carry a Bible around and talk about Jesus all the time. As soon as you name our Lord Jesus Christ, people look at your life and your life is supposed to reflect Him. We all sin and we all have an old sin nature and that will never change; but when our lives show a continual giving into that old sin nature; when we sin against

⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 55.

⁹ *Barnes' Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 366. Barnes further compares the sin of Achan to that of Ananias and Sapphira, something which I will expand upon at the end of this chapter. Suffice to say the both sins occurred at the beginning of a new dispensational program instituted by God, both involved deceit, both involved diverting that which was devoted to God and using it for common purposes. Barnes calls it the sin of sacrilege.

others and make no effort to apologize or to set things right, then we don't further the cause of Christ by announcing ourselves to be Christians. I recall a person who leased a home from me and left the home in terrible condition and never offered to reimburse me for the condition of the home, never apologized for it, never even acknowledged that his leaving bags of trash in the garage, leaving trash around the yard, and leaving the walls marred and marked and the rug in poor condition was wrong—his testimony as a believer was severely lessened and, luckily, it was to me, a fellow believer who knows, I have learned to expect a lot less from a lot of believers (especially holy rollers and those who tell you within fifteen minutes of talking to you that they are Christians when they think that might be to their benefit).

I realize that throughout some of this exegesis, you often are thinking *what does this have to do with me? How can I benefit from this teaching?* So, let me give you some application. You have heard that *no man is an island*; the spiritual corollary to that is that *no man sins in a vacuum*. You might, while single, choose to have sex with someone to whom you have no ties; and they are agreeable to that. That sin will affect your relationships to come as well as her (or, his) relationships to come. It will impact the choosing of one's right man or right woman, as the more emphasis which is placed on the physical relationship, the more likely it is for you to reject the right person and choose the wrong. This will obviously impact your future mate and your children. If you are lucky enough to end up with the right person, then you will still be scarred because you have been unfaithful to the person God designed for you (unfaithfulness occurs not only in marriage but prior to; when you sleep around, this is unfaithfulness to your future mate whether or not you even know the person). If your sins causes you to miss that person, than you have impacted her life forever and the lives of her family.

There is often a call for the decriminalization of certain crimes because they are *victimless* crimes. There is no such thing as a *victimless crime*. Every sin which you commit affects the society in which you live in some way. Every sin that you commit leaves an indelible mark upon you, in your soul, which affects your relationships in the future or lack of same. Your professional and social relationships are all stained by what you choose to do that is wrong.

There is another aspect to this story in Joshua which I have not alluded to—not only is Achan observable by those around him, but he stands as a witness before all of angelic creation, both fallen and elect angels. Whereas we do not know our full impact and complete involvement in the angelic conflict, it is clear that we are observed by angels and that our activities are a part of courtroom activity in heaven. When we compromise the gospel and the grace that has been given us, this is dealt with in the courtroom of heaven. One of the things that Satan desires is to be given believers that he can make mincemeat of. He loves the sin unto death because he can cause you pain and hurt in every way possible. Satan wants God to allow him to take you out of this life—that is one of the pleasures that he lives for. I can guarantee you from the authority of the Word of God and from personal experience that if you sin, there are repercussions. If you are involved in sex outside of marriage, don't think you have gotten away with it. If you are living in sin, don't think that God has missed that or is looking the other way. If you have withheld from Him what is His; if you have been unrighteous with that which he has entrusted you with, don't think that you got away with anything.

Friend, if God has taken you from a life of no hope, then He has made it possible for you to be financially responsible; He has made it possible for you to be moral; He has made it possible for you to display integrity and competence in your vocation. As an aside: with regards to sexual morality, one of the best pieces of advice that I ever heard from a roommate was to know your weaknesses and do not place yourself in a position where you can be compromised. He was speaking of faithfulness in marriage and remaining faithful by being certain that he did not place himself in a position that he could not handle.

One more thing, so that there is no confusion. What we are speaking of in this context is the Christian life after salvation. Salvation is free and the only condition to be saved and to spend eternity with God is faith in Jesus Christ. You can sin in the most shocking ways and God will still save you. You can commit sins which cause every person in your periphery to revile you, but God has redeemed you and what He offers is free to you. It is not without a price, but that price was paid by Jesus Christ. If you chose today to start behaving morally and to attend church more often, but you never believed in Jesus Christ, then you will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire prepared for the devil and his angels. If you have sinned the most awful sins, take a break, believe in Jesus

Christ, and then return to a life of committing the most flagrant transgressions against God that you can think of, you are still saved and you will still spend eternity with Him in the heavenlies. What we are speaking of here is life after salvation. When you believe in Jesus Christ, you don't fully realize or appreciate the program you have signed up for. You do not realize the complete repercussions of that decision, and that is okay. No one does. Even with all of the study which I have done, I still do not know the full repercussions of that decision that I made back in 1972. Now if you are teetering between believing in Jesus Christ or not—don't worry, I'm not going to follow you around and pick apart your after salvation life—and anyone who does is a busybody and an embarrassment to Jesus Christ. The life you lead after salvation is between you and Jesus Christ and the free-will decisions that you make post-salvation is strictly between you and God.

I'd like for you to take notice of something. We are dealing with events which took place thousands of years ago—almost 3500 years ago, and, even though you have read this over and over again in your through the Bible in one year reading plan, you never realized that there was great application to you and your life. One of the marvelous things of the Bible is that any pastor who has slaved in the Word can turn to any book of the Bible and, if he exegetes it correctly, then in his teaching, you will find application to your life today, you will find a consistent theology, you will find the answers to questions which you have had—ladies and gentlemen, this is God's Word, it is a record of God's dealings with man on this earth. These men that we find here in the Bible are not less evolved than us—they have old sin natures, just as we do, and they make moral decisions just as we do. Their lives affected those around them just as our lives impact those around us.

And so Joshua sent men from Jericho [to] the Ai, which [is] with Beth-aven from east of Bethel; and so he spoke to them, to say “Go up and spy out the land.” And so the men went up and so they spied out the Ai.

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And then Joshua had sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel. And he had spoken to them, saying, “Go up there and spy out the land.” And so the men went up to Air and spied out the land.

Vv. 1 and 2 are almost simultaneous. V. 1 takes place while Jericho was being burned to the ground, and all the precious metals removed, although God's anger remains unrelenting; and v. 2 occurs immediately after the defeat of Jericho. Joshua has a lot of soldiers to work with and he likely began the spying immediately after the defeat of Jericho, giving the orders to burn Jericho and to go and spy out Ai even the same day. If our maps are to be trusted, Ai is almost due west from Jericho, near the top of the mountain range running between Jericho and the Great Sea.

Ai is obviously a transliteration, poorly done, from what I can tell. The Hebrew is ^ʿay (אֵי) [pronounced *AH-ee* or *GAH-ee*], and has several alternate spellings. In the Greek, it is Gai (Γαί) [pronounced *guy*] and it is said to mean *heap of ruins*, somewhat of an odd name for a city. My thinking is that perhaps it was given this name after it was destroyed, and that is the name which stayed with it. A note in the NJB says that this site is a spectacular ruin. It is always found with the definite article, which becomes a part of the pronunciation. That is hā^ʿay (אֵי הַ) [pronounced *haw-AH-ee*] (although, I am not too certain as to the emphasis or whether there is a diphthong involved here, making it *haw-Ā*). Strong's #5857 BDB #743.

Following Ai, we have the relative pronoun and the preposition ^ʿim (עִם) [pronounced *geem*], which is generally rendered *with*. According to BDB, however, ^ʿim can also be used of a locality, and be rendered *close to*, *beside*, *near*. Strong's #5973 BDB #767. I have been unable to find Beth-aven on a map. According to ZPEB, Beth-aven means *village of evil*, and is said to be a perversion of the name of Beth-El and possibly the archaic name for Ai, but this passage and Joshua 18:12–13 indicate that these are separate places. We have the additional fixing of this place by Joshua 18:12, which places Beth-aven on the northern boundary of Benjamin, west of Michmash (1 Sam. 13:5 14:23). According to the maps which I have examined, none of that is contradictory and there need not be two different Beth-aven's nor does Beth-aven have to be equivalent to Beth-el, as ZPEB suggests. Beth-aven is hardly mentioned in Scripture except by way of providing directions or fixing place of somewhere else. Only the prophet Hosea mentions Beth-aven several times (Hosea 4:15 5:8 10:5). Beth-El, once known as Luz (Gen. 28:19), on the other hand, has a rich Biblical history which we will cover at another time. A little less than 500 years previous, Abram himself trekked through this same area and built an altar to God. **And Jehovah**

appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to Jehovah, Who had appeared to him. Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah (Gen. 12:7–8).

NIV Study Bible: *From Jericho to Ai [is] and uphill march of some 15 miles through a ravine to the top of the central Palestinian ridge. Strategically, an advance from Gilgal to Ai would bring Israel beyond the Jordan valley and provide them a foothold in the central highlands. Ai...is usually identified with et-Tell (meaning “the ruin” in Arabic), just two miles east of Bethel, but some dispute this precise identification.*¹⁰

Two times in this verse we have the verb *ʿâlâh* (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*] and it means *to go up, to ascend, to rise*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748. First it is in the Qal imperative and then in the Qal imperfect. The second verb, found in the Piel imperative and then in the Piel imperfect, is *râgal* (לָךְ) [pronounced *raw-GAHL*], which means *to foot it, to go about, to go about as an explorer, to go about as a spy, to go on foot to scope something out*. Strong's #7270 BDB #920.

And so they returned unto Joshua and so they said to him, “Let not go up all of the people. About 2000 or 3000 men will go up and assault the Ai. Do not make all the people toil there for few they [are].”

Joshua
7:3

Later they returned to Joshua and said to him, “We do not need to send up all of the warriors. Only two or three thousand men need go up to attack Ai. Do not make all of the people toil because Ai has a small population.”

Let's see what some others have done:

The Amplified Bible

And the returned to Joshua, and said to him, Let not all the men go up; but let about two thousand or three thousand go up and attack Ai; do not make the whole army toil up there, for they of Ai are few.

The Emphasized Bible

And they returned unto Joshua and said unto him— Let not all the people go up, about two thousand men or three thousand men can go up and smite Ai,—do not weary the whole people to go thither, for but few they are.

NASB

And they returned to Joshua and said to him, “Do not let all the people go up; only about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few.”

Young's Lit. Translation

...and they turn back unto Joshua, and say unto him, ‘Let not all the people go up; let about two thousand men, or about three thousand men, go up, and they smite Ai; cause not all the people to labour thither; for they are few.’

What the men say to Joshua begins with a negative and the 3rd person masculine singular, apocopated Qal imperfect of *ʿâlâh* (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*] again. It means *to go up, to ascend, to rise*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748.

Prior to the number 2000, we have the kaph preposition or *kê* (כֹּ) [pronounced *kê*], which, when combined with numbers, it means *about, approximately*. No Strong's # BDB #453. This is followed by the *or* conjunction and the number 3000. They would go up and then we have the Hiphil imperfect of *nâkâh* (הִכָּה) [pronounced *naw-KAWH*] which means *smite, assault, hit, strike*. Strong #5221 BDB #645.

The spies then tell Joshua, *do not make all the people toil there*. They begin with a negative and then the verb *yâga* (יָגַע) [pronounced *yaw-GAHG*], which means *to toil, to grow or to be weary, to become exhausted from toil, exertion, endurance or to become weary from same*. Strong's #3021 BDB #388. This is followed by the adverb *shâm* (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced *shawm*], which means *there, thither, whither*. Strong's #8033 BDB #1027.

¹⁰ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 296. For a much more extensive identification of the exact site of Ai, please see Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 56.

Then the spies explain why. They use the explanatory conjunction, the adverb for *few* and the 3rd person masculine pronoun, which often implies the verb *to be*. The actual population of Ai was approximately 12,000 (Joshua 8:25). This means that they could have mustered perhaps 3000 soldiers. That Israel only would send up a small detachment, some will call this arrogance; however, the actual problem is that the Israelites of filthy before God and they have no more fellowship with Him. Sending a small detachment actually indicates Israeli confidence that God has given the land over to them.

McGee: *The children of Israel were in the flush of victory. They had overcome Jericho. Although it was God's victory, in a short time Israel thought of it as their victory. Joshua sent some of his men to look at Ai. After looking the city over carefully, they said, "Ai is nothing compared to Jericho." When I was in that land, I looked at it through binoculars—we didn't even go up to it. It is a little old place and doesn't amount to much.*¹¹

Several commentators make a big deal out of Israel depending upon their own strength here rather than upon God's and how Israel did not go to God and ask for His guidance here. Although there may be some merit to that position, all Joshua and his men were doing were obeying God's commands and doing that which was prudent in a military sense. God told Joshua to take the land and that is what he was doing. God nowhere implied that Joshua had to send his entire force to invade any given city, nor has God demanded that Joshua consult him before each and every conquest.

And so, went up out from the people there about three thousand men and so they fled before the faces of the men of the Ai.

Joshua
7:4

And so about three thousand men out from the people went up there; consequently they fled before the presence of the men of Ai.

In the midst of this verse, we have the Qal imperfect of *nûwç* (נוּחַ) [pronounced *noose*], which means *to flee*. Strong's #5127 BDB #630. What is applicable are the words which Moses spoke to them several months earlier: "But it will come to pass if you do not listen to the voice of Jehovah your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...Jehovah will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you will go out one way against them but you will flee seven ways before them; and you will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth." (Deut. 28:15, 25).

And so men of the Ai struck down from them about thirty and six men and so they pursued them before the faces of the gate unto the Shebarim [or, the quarries]. And so they struck them down in the descent and so melted [the] heart of the people and so it became water.

Joshua
7:5

And so the men of Ai killed thirty-six men and then pursued them before the gate to the quarries. So they killed them during the descent and the hearts of the people were melted and their hearts became like water.

The three thousand men were pursued to *sh^ebârîym* (שְׁבַרִים) [pronounced *sh^e-^bvaw-REEM*], which is either a proper name or it means *the quarries*. It is found no where else in the Bible and BDB groups it with the verb *to crush, to break, to fracture*. Strong's #7671 BDB #991.

Where they were struck down was *in the môrâd* (מֹרָד) [pronounced *moh-RAWD*], which appears to mean *descent* (some treat it as a proper noun). Strong's #4174 BDB #434.

At the end of this verse we have the absolute statues quo verb *to be* followed by the lâmed preposition. It appears to be a shortened from *el* (אֶל) [pronounced *el*] and almost synonymous with *el*. *EL* appears to be used in a proper and physical sense and lâmed in more of a figurative or metaphysical sense. Lâmed properly notes motion, or, at least direction, and a turning towards something. It has a myriad of meanings: ❶ *to, towards, unto*; it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to*; in this sense, it can

¹¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 48.

be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ③ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into*, as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). This is how it is used here. There are several other ways lâmed is used, but we will save that for the future. No Strong's # BDB #510. The picture here of their hearts melting is that of ice to water; ice has some substance and form and strength; as it turns into water, it oozes all over the place. The Israelites, expecting an easy victory, returned, oozing all over the place. We have a similar picture painted by Jacob in describing the tribe of Reuben, saying that he was as unstable (or, as uncontrollable, or boiling over) like water. Reuben, in his dealings with selling Joseph into slavery, showed that, as the older brother, that he had no backbone and was not fit as a leader even of his own younger brothers (Gen. 49:3). These soldiers, hit with a wave of panic, also lack the courage and backbone like Reuben.

Very few of the groups of people which Israel faced were willing to surrender. When the soldiers at Ai began to resist and realized, suddenly, that they were prevailing, they were giddy in battle and chased the Israelites down the mountain. The Israelites went in, thinking that this would be a cakewalk, until several of their men died; fear set in, and they retreated. It was likely that very few men had fallen before the Israelites retreated.

Edersheim: [This]...event was terribly ominous. It had been Israel's first flight west of the Jordan—and their first defeat. The immediate danger likely to accrue was a combination of all their enemies round about, and the utter destruction of a host which had become dispirited. But there was even a more serious aspect than this. Had God's pledged promise now failed? or, if this could not even for a moment be entertained, had the Lord given up His gracious purpose, His covenant with Israel, and the manifestation of His "name" among all nations...? ¹²

McGee: Jericho represents the world; Ai represents the flesh. Some saints are marching around Jericho, blowing trumpets as they talk about being separated Christians. But they are as negative as anyone could be as they declare, "We don't do this, and we don't do that." ...Israel was defeated by the men of Ai. You and I are defeated by the flesh. We cannot use the same tactics to overcome the flesh as we use to overcome the world. The Israelites did not recognize their weakness. The Apostle recognized his weakness when he said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18). Have you found out, my Christian friends, that you have no strength or power within yourself? You cannot live the Christian life, and god never asks you to. God wants to live the Christian life through you. In Romans 7 Paul discovered that there was no good thing in his old nature. He also found out that there was no power in his new nature. The new nature wants to live for God but does not have the power to do it. In Romans 8 we are introduced to the Holy Spirit of God. It is only when we are filled with the Holy Spirit of God that we can live the Christian life.¹³

McGee: You remember that the way we overcome the world is by faith. But that isn't the way we overcome the flesh. We want to have fellowship with god; we want to be filled by the Holy Spirit that we might serve Him. Now how are we going to have fellowship with Him? How are we going to have power in our lives? John's first epistle makes it clear the way we can't do it: "...God is light, and in him is no darkness at al. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (I John 1:5–6). If you say you are having fellowship with Him and are living in sin, you are not kidding anybody. You certainly are not having fellowship with Him, and you know it. Now suppose we say we have no sin. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). But what are we to do? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). You see, you cannot bring God down to your level. And friends, you cannot bring yourself up to God's level. The thing to do is to keep the communication open between you and God. And the only way you can do it is by confessing your sin. John adds, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:10). That is strong language, friends. God says if we say we have no sin we are lying. And I believe He is accurate. But what do we do about it? We are to confess ours sins. How are we to do that? True confessions does not deal in generalities. Spell it out...Tell God everything that is in your heart—just open it up to Him. You might as well tell

¹² Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 312.

¹³ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; pp. 47–49.

Him because He already knows all about it. McGee continues: *There are miserable saints because they do not deal with the sin in their lives. The Apostle Paul said, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Corinthians 11:31, 32). If we don't judge ourselves, God has to step in and judge us, and His judgment is sometimes pretty serious. I can tell you from experience what judgment of God is in my own life. And it will do not good to complain and whine like Joshua did. The thing to do is to go to God and get the miserable thing straightened out. When we confess our sin to Him and turn from it, then we experience the joy of the Lord.*¹⁴

Joshua Prostrates Himself Before God, Asking Why

And so Joshua tore his clothes and so he fell upon faces of the earth before faces of an ark of Y^ehowah until the evening, he and elders of Israel. And so they put dust upon their heads.

Joshua
7:6

And then Joshua tore his clothes and fell upon the ground before the ark of Jehovah and he remained there until evening, he and the elders of Israel. Also, they put dust upon their heads.

The historic Jews have always been very demonstrative. Joshua was so upset and confused that he tore his clothing and put dust upon his head and fell on the ground before God. For the Israelite, tearing their own clothing was an expensive venture. They couldn't just go out to Suit-Mart and pick up another suit for \$199. Whereas we buy houses with huge closets because we have so many clothes; an Israelite then had perhaps a change of clothing; and Joshua, being the leader, might have had a half-dozen changes of clothing, if that. We can only begin to understand how demonstrative this was if we, during a moment of crisis, purposely rip apart our favorite suit. Such behavior usually occurred at times of intense grief (Gen. 37:33–34 Judges 11:35 II Sam. 13:19). They also throw dust and ashes over their heads (Neh. 9:1 Job 2:12 Lam. 2:10). NIV Study Bible: *Joshua's dismay (and that of the people), as indicated by his prayer, arose from his recognition that the Lord had not been with Israel's troops in the battle. And without the Lord the whole venture for which Israel had crossed the Jordan would be impossible. Moreover, the Canaanites would now judge that neither Israel nor her god was invincible. They would pour out of their fortified cities, combine forces and descend on Israel in the Jordan Valley, from which Israel could not escape across the flooding Jordan.*¹⁵

Just because God has promised the Land of Canaan to Israel as an eternal possession, does not mean that this generation will be the generation to first possess it. They had to be cleansed of this sin of Achan before God would allow them to proceed. We have seen in the past how God was more than willing to scrap any given generation and move on with the rest. Had Joshua not correctly dealt with this, that would have been the result. The promise of God to Israel of this piece of real estate has never been rescinded. However, Israel does not presently possess it. You can decide—is the problem with God and His promises or is the problem with Israel? In fact, for any individual Jew, that should always be a question before them. Is God not able to keep His promise to Israel? Are the promises made to Israel by God just religious nonsense? Or is the problem with me? Israel's relationship to the land always revealed Israel's relationship with God.

Let me add to this: certainly, you might be Jewish and still think God's promises are bunk and what happened to the Jews over three thousand years ago is not pertinent to your life. But don't forget what Moses promised Israel: **"And among those nations you will find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there Jehovah will give to you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and despair of your soul; and your life will hang in doubt before you; and there you will be in dread night and day, and you will have no assurance in your life."** (Deut. 28:65–66). As God spoke to Israel through Moses: **"You, however, I will scatter among the nations and I will draw out a sword after you, as your land become desolate and your cities become waste."** (Lev. 26:33).

What is marvelous here is that because the people of Israel have been routed and some (at least 2,964 of them) are afraid in battle, Joshua immediately goes to God in prayer. Now, I am certain that a great many of our recent

¹⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; pp. 51–52.

¹⁵ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 297.

presidents have gone into prayer asking God to get them out of the jam that they got themselves into, but how many of them do you think went to God in prayer for help in a situation which was not their fault? And how many ever went to God's Word for guidance?

And so Joshua said, "Uh-HAWH, O Lord Y^ehowah, for why have you caused to pass over—a bringing—the people the this over the Jordan to give us into hand of the Amorite to put us to death. And I wish we had been content and so dwell beyond the Jordan.

Joshua
7:7

And then Joshua said, "Oh Lord Jehovah. Why have you caused this people to pass over the Jordan? To give us into the hand of the Amorite so he could destroy us? I wish that we would have been content to dwell on the other side of the Jordan.

Joshua is in a fit of emotion and his sentences become more complex to us because Joshua is not using his normal narrative approach to the language. It is not that it is more complex, it is just that Joshua is throwing in words in groupings which express a highly emotional state of being. It is not that his words don't make sense or that he is speaking in a more complex way than he writes; however, when you find yourself in a highly emotional state, the words you use to do not always reflect good English skills, and therefore would be more difficult for a translator to take into another language. For this reason, let me present what others have done before:

The Amplified Bible

Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, Why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all, only to give us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond Jordan. (I don't know why they left out the definite article).

The Emphasized Bible

And Joshua said— Alas! My Lord Yahweh! Wherefore hast thou brought this people over the Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorite to destroy us? Would then we had been content to dwell on the other side of the Jordan!

NASB

And Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord GOD [lit., YHWH], why didst Thou ever bring this people over the Jordan, *only* to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell [lit., had dwelt] beyond the Jordan!

Young's Lit. Translation

And Joshua saith, 'Ah, Lord Jehovah, why has Thou at all caused this people to pass over the Jordan, to give us into the hand of the Amorite to destroy us?—and oh that we had been willing—and we dwell beyond the Jordan!

The first word out of Joshua's mouth is the interjection ʾāhâh (אָהָה) [pronounced *uh-HAWH*], which is somewhat onomatopoeic; it is as much a cry of sadness as it is a word. The KJV render it as *Ah!* or as *alas*. Gesenius calls it an interjection of lamentation simply from the sound of it. It comes from a word which means *to grieve, to mourn*. The only contemporary interjection which comes to mind was *oh dear*, which is better than what I found in Roget's Thesaurus.¹⁶ That being unsuitable, I would almost rather transliterate it. Strong's #162 BDB #13. Bullinger categorizes this as an ecphonesis [pronounced *EK-foe-NEE-sis*], which is an exclamation.

After addressing God, Joshua says lâmah (לָמָה) [pronounced *law-MAW*], which means *why*. It is a combination of the lâmed preposition and the interrogative mâh (מָה) [pronounced *maw*], which means *what, how* (Strong's #4100 BDB #552). What follows is the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect of ʿâvar (עָוָר) [pronounced *aw^p-VAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. In the Hiphil, the causative stem, it means *to cause to pass over, to transmit, to send over, to conduct over*. Strong's #5674 BDB #716. This is immediately followed by Hiphil infinitive absolute of the same verb. The Hiphil infinitive absolute of the same verb complements or intensifies the meaning of the verb. Owen and Young render this as *at all*, NASB *ever*; Rotherham indicates the verb is doubly intensified (I don't normally show those markings). I would like to make a case for the emphasis being upon God, but Joshua would have used a personal pronoun in that case. However, I am thinking that in Joshua's emotional state of being, he first blamed God for bringing them over, and then quickly added the verb again, still in the Hiphil, mind you, to blame the *act* rather than to blame God. He continues this without emphasizing blame upon God by using the lâmed preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of *to give*. The key is that there is no person or number attached to the verb. The next verb

¹⁶ Roget's Thesaurus has been a God-send when it comes to finding contemporary words for the Hebrew.

is equally polite—the Hiphil infinitive construct of $\text{ʾā}^b\text{vad}$ (אָבַד) [pronounced *aw^b-VAHD*], which means, in the Hiphil, *to cause to languish, to cause the destruction of, to put to death*. Strong's #6 BDB #1. With it is the 1st person plural suffix—*us*. We will have a similar situation in the future when the Philistines defeat Israel in battle. *And the Philistines drew up in battle array to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield. When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why had Jehovah defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies.”* (I Sam. 4:2–3).

The final line begins with the *wāw* conjunction and then the conjunction *lū* (לוּ) [also written *lūʾ* (לוֹא)] [pronounced *lue*] and it means *O that, would that, if only, if*. Strong's #3863 BDB #530. Now Joshua uses some verbs with a clear subject. He begins with the Hiphil perfect of *yāʾal* (יָאָל) [pronounced *yaw-AHL*], which means *to be content, to willingly chose, to be willing to*. Strong's #2974 BDB #383. Now, I would have expected this to be followed by the Qal infinitive construct of *to dwell*, but it is followed by the *wāw* consecutive and the 1st person plural, Qal imperfect of *to dwell*. However, keep in mind that Joshua is in a highly emotional state of pain and confusion. The last couple of words are *beyond [or, on the other side of] the Jordan*. Now Joshua almost sounds like the people when they grumbled against Moses. *Then they said to Moses, “Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bring us out of Egypt?”* (Ex. 14:12). *But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”* (Ex. 17:3; also see Ex. 16:3 Num. 21:5). However, Joshua sounds more like Moses when his miracles before Pharaoh caused Pharaoh to place additional burdens upon Israel. *Then Moses returned to Jehovah and said, “O Jehovah, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people. Furthermore, You have not delivered Your people at all.”* (Ex. 5:22–23). You see, when the people complained before God, it was out of unbelief; Joshua brings himself before God out of confusion. He trusts in God and he is confused as to why God has seemingly deserted Israel. He cannot put it all together—God brought Israel out of Egypt into this land with great miracles and signs; God defeats of host of enemies prior to this point in time; God sees to it that their reputation is carried throughout the land; and then suddenly, God deserts them in what should have been a simple skirmish. Pretty much every believer has had some experience in his or her life or a set of circumstances which makes him or her wonder, *where is God?* Most of the time, it is our expectations of God which are mixed up or we are out of fellowship. God has never guaranteed us that our life would be easy and free of problems. In fact, if the more you investigate Scripture, the more you should realize that your life, even if you personally lead an exemplary life, will still be filled with troubles, dead ends, frustrations, difficult situations, tough decisions. We live in the devil's world and God ever keeps that before our eyes. As I think of people I have known and situations that I am aware of, there are many directions in which I could go. I think of some women who have set up in their minds how their life will be after marriage and how they will have this perfect house and good marriage and comfortable lifestyle and marvelous children, and certainly, on a good week, a small number of you might have all of this, because it does happen—but don't ever lose sight of the fact that you live in the devil's world and God has never promised that your life would be easy and without problems or difficulties. For the majority of you, on a good week, you might have one of those; and, during one week or two out of your lifetime, two or three of those things, but don't go to God in tears asking Him why your life is in shambles when the problem is that you are not getting everything that you think you should. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but lacked opportunity to express it. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am in. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me* (Philip. 4:10–13). *And because of the extraordinary quality of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself! And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong* (II Cor. 12:8–10). Now if Paul, who is a greater believer than you or I will ever hope to be, was in almost constant physical pain; he never had that perfect little house, that great

marriage (or even mediocre marriage with a few good moments). He spent several years in jail, unjustly, near the end of his life. If this was Paul's experience—Paul, who is a great believer—then please don't go crying to God because you don't get everything that you want out of life.

There are other believers who just feel that everything should just fall into place—that, if they are in God's will, that everything will be just smooth sailing. *Au contraire*. You are here partly as an example to others. If everything is going your way and you are relatively successful and financially set, then few people are impressed when you are happy or relatively pleasant. However, when you are under great pressures, when life does not go your way, when everything does not fall into place, it is then that people see what you are made of. In many cases, you embarrass the Lord Who bought you with your whining and complaining and expressions of disappointment. They might be giving you these looks of concern and empathy, but they are thinking, *put a cork in it*. Now, there are decisions that you will make where, when in God's will, everything just falls neatly into place, and there are decisions which you will make, and, while still in God's will, things do not all neatly fall into place. Perhaps months later or years later, things fall into place. When I moved to Texas, it was certainly in God's geographical will. Even when I read those words, it seems amazing to me because I, more than anyone that I have known, would have just stayed in the city wherein I was raised and would have never given serious thought to moving. In retrospect, everything fell into place as it should have. During the actual experience, there were decisions, things happened, some doors shut here and there, there were frustrations and dead ends—but, in looking back, it all fell together just as it should have—because God was in control and this was His will.

Finally, when things seem to be beyond what you can endure, then you must also look within. Is it you? In this passage, the problem is not with God or God's plan (the problem is **never** with God or God's plan, incidentally), the problem is with Israel. Israel is corporately out of fellowship. Joshua has gone to God asking God what is God's problem—but he should be looking at himself and Israel, asking, what is their problem? It is never, how did God fail you? It is how did you fail God? When you go to God and bitch about your life, keep in the back of your mind that God has never made an error in judgment, a bad decision, or a mistake; and He has never slighted you. He has never been confused about your life nor mistaken concerning the decisions that He has made about your life. God is perfect and His plan is perfect. And don't ever think that you can do something that is outside God's plan which is going to make everything all better (e.g., getting a divorce, marrying an unbeliever, marrying a religious believer or unbeliever, nagging your husband because he doesn't make enough money, pilfering from the company that you work for, being dishonest in your business dealings, misrepresenting the truth or the facts to a client or customer, acting out of greed or lust). That is, you do not do that which is wrong in order to make things right.

“Oh, Lord, what can I say when Israel has turned [their] neck before faces of their enemies?”

Joshua
7:8

“Oh, Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned her back and fled from her enemies?”

There are just a couple of nuances that I want to clear up here.

The Amplified Bible

O Lord, what can I say, when Israel has turned to flee before their enemies!

The Emphasized Bible

Oh My Lord,—what shall I say, after Israel have turned their backs before their enemies?

NASB

“Oh Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned *their* back before their enemies?”

Young's Lit. Translation

Oh, Lord, what do I say, after that Israel hath turned the neck before its enemies?

The first thing which Joshua says is *bîy* (בִּי) [pronounced *bee*], and it is a particle of entreaty, often used before addressing a superior. It can be rendered *I pray, excuse me*, and it is often rendered *oh*, when addressing God. Strong's #994 BDB #106.

After Joshua says *what can I say*, he uses the compound preposition *ʿachar* (אַחַר) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*], and it essentially means *after* (Strong's #310 BDB #29) and *ʿasher* (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*], which means *that, which, when* or *who* (Strong's #834 BDB #81). Together, they mean *when, after that, after which* with a finite verb. This gives us, **Oh Lord, what can I say when...**

Next we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect verb *to turn*, followed by the masculine singular substantive ʿōreph (ֹרֵף) [pronounced *OH-ref* or *GO-ref*], which means *neck, back of neck*. Strong's #6203 BDB #791. We would have used the phrased *have turned their backs to their enemies*; however, the Jew uses the word *neck* to refer to volition, so they use it in a similar fashion, with the added understanding that volition is involved.

Here, Joshua begins a good argument. The Israelites are known to be associated directly with God—the true God of the Universe. However, they have turned and run from the people of Ai. How can that be explained? How are the inhabitants of the Land of Promise to understand what has happened here? Israel, who represents God, has turned their backs and fled in battle from the heathen, who do not represent God, but everything which is evil in this world. How can this make sense?

And the Canaanite and all of [the] inhabitants of the land will hear and they will surround us and they will cut off our name from the earth. And what will you do for Your name the great?"

Joshua
7:9

And the Canaanite and all of the inhabitants of the land will hear about this and they will surround us and they will cut off our name from the earth. Furthermore, what will you do for your great name?"

Near the beginning of this verse we have the masculine plural, Qal active participle construct of *yāsha*^{bv} (יָשָׁבוּ) [pronounced *yaw-SHAH^BV*] and it means *to remain, sit, dwell*. In the Qal participle, masculine plural, it should be rendered *those inhabiting, those dwelling in*. Strong's #3427 BDB #442. The implication here is that there are other peoples living in the Land of Promise besides the Canaanites (Keil and Delitzsch suggest that the Philistines are among these groups).

What Joshua is worried that they will do is the 3rd person plural, Niphal perfect of *ṣāḥ*^{va^{bv}} (סָחֻ) [pronounced *saw^b-VAH^BV*], which means *to turn oneself, to go around, to surround, to encompass*; in the Niphal, it means *to turn oneself*; when followed by a lamed preposition, *to be transferred* [to someone]; or *to surround*, when followed by ʿal, used in the hostile sense, which is what we have here. Strong's #5437 BDB #685. The second thing that they will do is the Hiphil perfect of *kāath* (כָּאֹת) [pronounced *kaw-RAHTH*], which means *to cut off, to cut down*. In the Hiphil, it means *to cause to be cut off*. Strong's #3772 BDB #503. What is being cut off is *our name from the earth*. This gives us: **And the Canaanite and all of [the] inhabitants of the land will hear and they will surround us and they will cut off our name from the earth...**

What follows is the wāw conjunction, the interrogative and the Qal imperfect of *ʿāśāh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. What follows is, literally, *for your name the great*. Joshua's argument is this: if God cuts off their name, what becomes of His name? That is, isn't God's reputation tied indelibly to Israel?

You will recall the song of Moses: "I would have said, 'I will cut them to pieces; I will remove the memory of them from men.' had I not feared the provocation by the enemy, so that their adversaries would not misjudge the situation; so that they would not say, 'Our hand is triumphant and Jehovah has not done all this.' " (Deut. 32:26–28). Further, recall what Moses said to God when God was about to destroy His people: **Then Moses entreated Jehovah his God, and said, "O Jehovah, why does Your anger burn against You people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent, He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change You mind about harming Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven, and call this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever.'** " (Ex. 32:11–13; see also Deut. 9:26–29). You will notice that Moses was somewhat more eloquent than Joshua and presented a better argument, but the basic idea is the same. Why would God allow His own people to be defeated? It is God's honor and reputation which are at stake as much as anything else. What Joshua does not realize is that God, by allowing Israel to triumph here, would be compromising His perfect character. God's perfect holiness cannot be compromised. Since Joshua does not know that Israel is "out

of fellowship,” he cannot pray with Jeremiah: “We know our wickedness, O Jehovah; the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against You. Do not despise us, for Your own name’s sake. Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember and do not annul Your covenant with us.” (Jer. 14:20–21).

Edersheim: *Stranger, that amidst this universal agitation, one should have remained unmoved, who, all the time, knew that he was the cause of Israel’s disaster and of the mourning around. Yet his conscience must have told him that, so long as it remained, the curse of his sin would follow his brethren, and smite them with impotence. It is this hardness of impenitence—itself the consequence of sin—which, when properly considered, vindicates, or rather, demonstrates, the rightness of the Divine sentence afterwards executed upon Achan. His sin was of no ordinary character. It had not only been a violation of God’s express command, but daring sacrilege and profanation.*¹⁷

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God Tells Joshua the Problem Is that Someone Has Transgressed the Ban

And so Y^ehowah said unto Joshua, “Stand up for yourself. Why this? You are falling upon your faces?”

Joshua
7:10

And then Jehovah said to Joshua, “Get up. Why are you doing this? You have fallen on your face.”

Jehovah first tells Joshua to get up: that is the Qal imperative of qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means *stand up, rise up*. Strong’s #6965 BDB #877. This is followed by the lâmed preposition (*to, for, with respect to*) and a 2nd person masculine singular suffix, meaning *for yourself*. Lâmed is also used to denote the object of a verb. Therefore, we could render this, *stand up, you!* Joshua is not the problem and he needs to get on his feet and stop whining. God will give him direction.

Then we have the lâmed preposition again and the interrogative mâh (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], which means *why*. Strong’s #4100 BDB #552. This is followed by the masculine singular demonstrative adjective zeh (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*], which means *here, this*. Strong’s #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260.

Then God uses the 2nd person personal pronoun and the Qal active participle of nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*], which means *to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply*. Strong’s #5307 BDB #656. This is followed by *upon your faces*.

This is a call to action to Joshua. There is something which he must accomplish and he cannot do it while prostrated before God. He has a duty that he must perform to cleanse Israel. McGee: *He says to Joshua, “Get up off your face, and cut out all this whining in sack cloth and ashes.” There are Christians who spend their prayer time whining before the Lord. It won’t do any good, friends. We need to get at the root of the problem.*¹⁸

“Israel has sinned and furthermore they have transgressed My covenant which I commanded them and furthermore they have taken from the devotion and furthermore they have stolen and furthermore they have committed fraud and furthermore have placed [them] among their artifacts.

Joshua
7:11

“Israel has sinned and they have transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. They have taken from that which was devoted; they have stolen from Me! They have been deceptive and have placed these stolen items among their own possessions.

We have the repetition in this verse of the wâw conjunction and the adverb gam (גַּם) [pronounced *gahm*] which means *also, in addition to, moreover, furthermore*. Strong’s #1571 BDB #168. This is called a polysyndeton

¹⁷ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 312–313.

¹⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 49.

[pronounced *PAUL-ee-SIN-de-ton*], and it is a repetition of the word *and* (and, in this case, it is also the word *gam* which is repeated), and this brings great emphasis upon the charges which God has brought against them. God enumerates these charges against them: (1) Israel sinned against God. They knew what was wrong and they went ahead and did it anyway. (2) God had set an agreement before them, which they had ratified, and the firstfruits belonged to Him. Israel had reneged on their agreement with God. (3) The specific charge is then stated. That which was dedicated to God—that which belonged to God, they have taken. (4) What they did was stealing; it violated one of the Ten Commandments. It was no less wrong than wandering into someone's tent and taking a tunic that you have always wanted. In fact, since it was stealing from God, it was much more wrong. (5) The fifth offense was the Piel perfect of the verb *kâchash* (כַּחַשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-KHAHSH*], which means *to lie, deceive, defraud*. Strong's #3584 BDB #471. In this act, Israel defrauded God. (6) Finally, they have taken that which belongs to God and placed it with their own things. That which is God's is holy; their own possessions are profane. They have mixed the holy with the profane. Now, there was just one man who did this, but his sin affected all of Israel.

The next thing that we must consider is how many other people knew? We don't find out until v. 21 all of what Achan ben Carmi stole, but we should deal with that now. "And so I saw in the spoil a robe from Shinar—one beautiful [robe]; and 200 shekels of silver; and a tongue of gold—one, fifty shekels its weight; and so I desired them and so I took them, and, behold, they are hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it." (Joshua 7:21). A shekel is roughly 2/5ths of an ounce, making this 80 oz. of silver (5 lbs. or 2.3 kg) and a 20 oz. bar of gold. The latter may of been a very large golden ornament in the shape of a tongue. Thieme figures that it was probably a statue. These things could have been concealed, although the 200 coins might have been difficult to carry unless he got a bag or something. I'm thinking that Achan would not have been able to just grab the precious metals and put them in his pockets (he probably had no pockets). He may have wrapped them up in the robe. We have the full army of Israel going in to attack Jericho and then to burn it—it just seems highly unlikely that he could have done this without being seen by someone. Probably a few people. Now, what are they to do? From the text, whoever saw, did nothing about it. When he brought this stuff to his tent, very likely several family members were aware of what Achan had done. The robe is going to be too large to transport from the battlefield to his home without several observing him. It may have been stuffed inside his robe, but it would have been obvious to many who saw him that he was concealing something. My point in all of this is that Achan alone may have made this decision, but several people—perhaps up to a hundred—realized that he was taking something from the possessions of Jericho. Now, this may have seemed to be a small thing, but God's ban on the city of Jericho was so strong as to extend this ban over all time, cursing the family of anyone who rebuilt Jericho as a fortress (Joshua 6:26).

And even if we still view this as a small sin (and there is no such thing), in terms of corruption, all it takes is a little corruption. In the early church, churches had to be careful of who was a part of their church. **It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who has done this deed might be removed from your midst. For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have delivered such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover, also has been sacrificed** (I Cor. 5:1–7). What we had here was a church that was so boastful of their stand on grace that they were proud to have a member who lived in sin with his father's wife. This kind of corruption is dangerous and was part of the reason that the church at Corinth had become so corrupt in general. For proper application, do not think that you have to follow the members of your church around and then determine how serious their sins are. This was a situation where the sin was flaunted—everybody knew. The participants did not repent of their sin; it was instead flaunted. An easy example: in any church, there are going to be some people who have homosexual leanings. It is not our duty to ferret these people out and throw them out of the church. However, if they show up in church with a member of their own sex and they are holding hands and making demonstrations of love which go beyond a normal boundaries, then they need to be moved out. And one has to be careful here. There are even teenage girls who will occasionally hold hands with a girl friend out of sincere friendship, and it is indicative

of nothing more than a close, warm friendship. Similarly, there are women who hug each other, and that may or may not indicate a close friendship, but it in no way indicates that they are a homosexual couple. Insofar as the church is concerned, we are all members of the same body, each part which is necessary—however, since we are all members of the same body, there is a unity which extends to the realm of guilt. Israel was also viewed by God as a unity and what one person did, even if it had not been observed by anyone else, brought guilt upon the entire body of Israel. **For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many...And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, then all the members rejoice with it** (I Cor. 12:12–14, 26).

God had made it abundantly clear that no one was to take from the gold or silver in this instance: “The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you will not desire the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, so that you will not be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to Jehovah, your God. And you will not bring an abomination into your house and thereby become a devoted thing like it. You will utterly detest it and you will utterly abhor it, for it is a devoted [or, a banned] thing.” (Deut. 7:25–26). Joshua also made it clear that this was not to occur: **And it came about at the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, “Shout! For Jehovah has given you the city. And the city will be under the ban—it and all that is in it belongs to Jehovah; only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in the house will live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. But, as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban so that you do not desire them and take some of the things which are under the ban, so that you would caused the camp of Israel to be accursed and bring trouble upon it. And all of the silver and gold and artifacts of bronze and iron are holy to Jehovah; they will go into the treasury of Jehovah.”** (Joshua 6:16–19). We have also already studied Joshua’s rationale for the setting aside of Jericho to God. Since he, as the highest authority over Israel under God, set aside Jericho to God, reserving the precious and semi-precious metals for the treasury of God, anyone who pilfered from the artifacts of Jericho were stealing from God.

Once sin has gone out of control, all of Israel is in danger. When the Northern Kingdom fell in circa 721 B.C., we read: **In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria and settled them in Halah and Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. Now this came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against Jehovah their God, Who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had revered other gods and walked in the statutes of the nations whom Jehovah had driven out before the sons of Israel, and in the statutes of the kings of Israel which they had made** (II Kings 17:6–8).

“And [the] sons of Israel are not able to stand before faces of their enemies. They turn necks before faces of their enemies for they have become a devotion. I will not continue to be with you if you don’t destroy the devotion from among you.

Joshua
7:12

“And the sons of Israel will not be able to stand before any of their enemies. They will turn tail and run before their enemies because they have been placed under the ban. I will no longer elect to be among you unless you destroy that which is under the ban in your midst.

In this verse, we begin the conjunction, a negative and the Qal imperfect of *yākôl* (יָכֹל) [pronounced *yaw-COAL*], which means *to be able, to have the ability, to have the power to*. Strong’s #3201 BDB #407. Then we have the subject, *sons of Israel*. What follows is the Qal infinitive construct of *qûwm* (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means *to stand, to rise up*. Strong’s #6965 BDB #877. Then we have *before faces of their enemies*; this gives us: **And sons of Israel are not able to stand before faces of their enemies.** One of the signs of the cycles of discipline would be that Israel would not be able to stand against her enemies: **“And I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies...and you will have no ability to stand up before your enemies, but you will perish among the nations and your enemies’ land will consume you.”** (Lev. 26:17a, 37b). **Yet You have rejected us and brought us to dishonor and You do not go out with our armies. You cause us to turn back from the adversary** (Psalm 44:9–10a; see also Psalm 60:10). Israel has already faced a serious defeat and almost forty

years living in a desert due to their disobedience from before. **Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down, and struck them and beat them down as far as Hormah** (Num. 14:45).

God tells Joshua what he already knows: **“They turn the neck before faces of their enemies.”** Then God explains. He uses the explanatory conjunction, the 3rd person Qal perfect of *to be* and the lamed preposition, which means *for they have become*; and they have become the masculine singular of *chêrem* (חָרַם) [pronounced *KHĀ-rem*], which means *something completed devoted [to God]* or *something completely in God's possession*. Strong's #2764 BDB #356. What God said must have sent panic chills up and down the spine of Joshua. He had just participated in the devotion of the entire town of Jericho and all its inhabitants and all its production and now God was telling him that Israel was to be devoted.

What follows is difficult to render, so let me give you what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	I will cease to be with you, unless you destroy the accursed [devoted] things among you.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i> NASB	I will no more be with you, except ye destroy the devoted thing out of your midst. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	I add not to be with you—if ye destroy not the devoted thing out of your midst.

What is being said is easy. To put it into decent English is moderately difficult. We begin this sentence with the negative and the Hiphil imperfect of *yâçaph* (יָצַח) [pronounced *yaw-SAHPH*], which means *to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing*. Strong's #3254 BDB #414. This is followed by the Qal infinitive construct of *to be* (with the lamed prefixed preposition) and the phrase *with you*; all of this should read: **“I will no longer continue to be with you.”**

What follows is the negative and the hypothetical particle *ʿim* (אִם) [pronounced *eem*], which means *if*; together, they mean *unless*. Strong's #518 BDB #49. What follows is the 2nd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect of *shâmad* (שָׁמַד) [pronounced *shaw-MAHD*], which means *to annihilate, to exterminate*. This word is found only in the Niphal or the Hiphil, so a causal relationship may or may not exist. Strong's #8045 BDB #1029. What follows is *the devotion from your midst*. This gives us: **“I will no longer continue to be with you unless you annihilate the devotion from your midst.”**

This falling from grace was a constant in the lives of this Israelites. In this situation, they will root out the problem; however, there were several times where this was not taken care of as quickly. **And the anger of Jehovah burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer oppose their enemies** (Judges 2:14).

“Stand up, sanctify the people and say, ‘Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow because thus says Y^howah, God of Israel, “Devotion in your midst, O Israel, you are not able to stand before faces of your enemies until your removal of the devotion from your midst.”

Joshua
7:13

“Stand up! Purify the people and say, ‘Purify yourselves for tomorrow because, thus says Jehovah, God of Israel, “There are items under the ban in your midst, O Israel, and you will not be able to stand before the presence of your enemies until you remove these items from among you.”

God's first order to Joshua is the Qal imperative of *qûwm* (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which does not mean *go up*, as Owen puts it. It means *stand up, get up, rise up*. Strong's #6965 BDB #877. Joshua is laying around on the ground and God wants him to spring into action. “Get to your feet, dammit” or “Get up—NOW!” might give a more accurate understanding of what God said to Joshua. God follows this with another imperative, the Piel of *qâdash* (קָדַשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DAHSH*], which means *consecrate, sanctify, dedicate, set apart, hallow*. Strong's #6942 BDB #872. This gives us: **“Get up! Consecrate the people, and say,…”**

God then uses the Hithpael imperative of qâdash, which means *cause yourselves to be cleansed, cause yourselves to become consecrated, purify yourselves*. What follows is *for tomorrow*; it is not the explanatory conjunction, so God is telling Joshua to tell his people to become consecrated or purified for the next day. In other words, immediate action is required. Before Israel was to hear the voice of God and the Ten Commandments, God gave a similar command (Ex. 19:10). Before Israel was to cross over the Jordan River, Joshua also gave them a similar command (Joshua 3:5). “For I am Jehovah your God. Purify yourselves, therefore, and be set apart, for I am holy.” (Lev. 11:44a).

Then we have the explanatory conjunction and the adverb kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced *koh*], which means *thus, here, hence*. Strong’s #3541 BDB #462. Literally, what we have is: “Get up! Consecrate the people and say, ‘Purify yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says Y^ehowah, God of Israel, “Devotion in your midst, O Israel,...!’

I am at a loss where to associate the *O Israel*, whether that should go with the previous phrase or with the phrase to come. NASB places it with the previous phrase; Young envelops it in commas, not taking a stand in this regard. Rotherham treats it similarly, so I will go with Young and Rotherham on this.

After *O Israel* we have the negative and Qal imperfect of yâkôl (יָכֹל) [pronounced *yaw-COAL*], which means *to be able, to have the ability, to have the power to*. Strong’s #3201 BDB #407. This is followed by the lamed preposition and the verb *to stand* and the phrase *before faces of your enemies*. This gives us: “Get up! Consecrate the people and say, ‘Purify yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says Y^ehowah, God of Israel, “Devotion in your midst, O Israel, you are unable to stand before faces of your enemies...!’

Then we have the preposition ‘ad (אֲד) [pronounced *‘ad*] which means *as far as, even to, up to, until, while*. Strong’s #5704 BDB #723. This is followed by the Hiphil infinitive construct of çûwr (סֹוֹר) [pronounced *soor*] generally means *to turn aside*, however, in the Hiphil, it means *to cause to depart, to remove, to take away*. Strong’s #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693. With the 2nd person masculine plural suffix, this means: *...until your removal of...* What is to be removed is *the devotion or the devoted thing* in their midst.

Zodhiates rightly points out that God dealt with Israel as a whole, and not as a loosely bound group of individuals. The curse upon Achan fell upon all of Israel, just as the curse of Adam fell upon all mankind. Achan’s sin defiled not just him and not just his family, but it defiled all of Israel, just as Adam’s sin defiled all of mankind. This portion of Scripture helps give us a background for Paul’s arguments in Rom. 5:12–21: **Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (for until the Law, sin was in the world, but sin was not imputed when there is no Law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s offense, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the man died, much more did the grace of God, even the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. In fact, the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand, the judgment which came from one transgression resulting in the condemnation, but on the other hand, the free gift came from the many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ). So then, as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man’s disobedience, the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**¹⁹

When it comes to being cursed, we often dislike the idea of being cursed for what someone else has done. Some people completely reject the cursing of the entire human race because of Adam; however, we seem to have no problem of being blessed because of the decisions of actions of another. As a nation, we are greatly blessed because of the courage and foresight of our founding fathers and because of the hundreds of thousands of men who have given their lives on our behalf and have so kept our nation free.

¹⁹ Much of this came from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 586.

Achan did more than just covet what was not his—he took for himself that which was reserved for God; he took what belonged to God. Now might be a great time to launch into a sermon about giving, but suffice to say that part of what God has given you, you have a responsibility to give back to Him. This does not mean that you allow your family to starve or go without proper clothing, but it does mean that if you are able to purchase beyond what is necessary for your daily subsistence, then some of your excess (and, at times, all of your excess) belongs to God. If you don't do this, then you are stealing from God and you cannot expect Him to bless you. That being said, I will let further application be saved until the future, allowing you to make the proper application to your own life. Here, Achan violated God's commandments and his direct command. He was made aware of what was prohibited, but his materialism lust took over and he gave into it.

“ ‘And you will be brought near in the morning with respect to your tribes; and it will come to pass the tribe which Yehowah has taken it, will come near with respect to families and the family which Yehowah has taken it, will come near with respect to households; and the household which Yehowah has taken it, will come near with respect to men.

Joshua
7:14

“ ‘And in the morning, you will be brought near by tribes; and it will come to pass that the tribe which Jehovah takes will approach by families; and the family which Jehovah takes will approach by households; and the household which Jehovah takes will approach by men.

In v. 14, we continue with God speaking to Joshua telling him what he will say to his people (actually, Joshua will speak to his cabinet and they will filter the information on down to the people).

This verse begins with one of my favorite verbs—the Niphal perfect of *qâra^bv* (קָרַב) [pronounced *kaw-RA^bV*], which is occasionally given the incorrect English translations *offer*; but it means *to come near, to approach* in the Qal stem; in the Niphal, it means *to bring near, to be brought near*. This verb will occur three more times, all in the Qal imperfect. Strong's #7126 BDB #897. The Israelites would be brought near and then we have the lâmed preposition. Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by*, which would be apropos here. No Strong's # BDB #510.

One of the difficulties is keeping the correct subject with the correct verb. When one surveys a translation, they don't see it, but Jehovah goes with the verb *lâkad* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHD*], which means *to capture, to seize, to take*. Strong's #3920 BDB #539. The *family, the household* are the things which approach. The key is the word *family*, which is in the feminine singular; when we have the Qal imperfect of *qâra^bv*, it is in the feminine singular at that time. That one time is the key as to what verb goes with what subject. We have a repetition of these two verbs in this verse.

At the end of this verse, we have the lâmed preposition and the definite article and the masculine plural of *ge^bver* (גְּבוּר) [pronounced *ge^b-VAIR*], which means *men*, as separate from women and children. Strong's #1397 #1399 BDB #149. We are not given the selection method—just that the tribes will approach and God will choose a tribe; then the families of that tribe will approach, and God will choose a family. Then the households from that family will approach, and God will select a particular household; finally, the men from that household will approach, and God will select a man from that household, the one who has caused Israel to be unclean. This is difficult for us to understand. To us, what has occurred is not much more than petty larceny; at best, white collar, grand theft, a nonviolent crime, a crime which should carry with it very little by way of penalty. However, this one crime by this one man out of two million stained Israel before God and brought upon Israel the deaths of 36 of its valiant soldiers, because Israel was now unclean before God. We do not fully grasp just what it means that God is holy. These are His people and if just one of them has sinned in what He has clearly told them not to do, it places a stain over all of Israel. The sins that we commit are the same for us. It does not matter how little the sin is—any sin, whether it be of anger, lust, a foul mouth—puts us out of fellowship. **For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one aspect, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not commit murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law** (James 2:10–11 Ex. 20:13–14). Our Lord even taught: **“Whoever then annuls one of the**

least of these commandments; and so teachers others, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them all, he will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:19).

“ ‘And it will come to pass the one taken in the devotion shall be burned with fire—he and all which [is] to him because he has passed over the covenant of Y^ehowah and because he had done a shameful thing in Israel.’ ”

Joshua
7:15

“ ‘And so the one who is taken who has the devoted thing will be burned with fire—him and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of Jehovah and because he has done this shameful thing in Israel.’ ”

What this man has done is the Qal perfect of ^ʿâ^bvar (אָבַר) [pronounced aw^b-VAHR], which does not mean *to transgress* (as we find in Young, Owen, the KJV and Rotherham) but it means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. We’ve had this very same word in this chapter and several times in previous chapters. Strong’s #5674 BDB #716. Just as Israel passed over the Jordan, as if it were not even there, this person passed over the covenant of God, as if it were not there. What he did was the feminine singular of n^{eb}vâlâh (נִבְלָה) [pronounced n^{eb}vaw-LAW], which means *senseless deed, disgraceful thing*; the KJV often rendres this *folly*, but that is too tame for its application to rape and incest. Strong’s #5039 BDB #615. The disgraceful thing which was done was enumerated in v. 11: “Israel has sinned and furthermore they have transgressed My covenant which I commanded them and furthermore they have taken from the devotion and furthermore they have stolen and furthermore they have committed fraud and furthermore have placed [them] among their artifacts.”

This is God’s final directive to Joshua as to what he is to do with the one who is found guilty. He will be burned in fire, just as that which was devoted was burned in fire, along with all that belongs to him. He and his would first be put to death by stoning, and then he and all that was his would be burned. That which is devoted to God is generally burned so that it cannot be used by man (Deut. 7:25–26 Joshua 6:18–19, 21, 24 I Chron. 14:12 Isa. 37:19).

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Achan Is Exposed, Tried and Executed

And so Joshua arose early in the morning and so he caused Israel to be brought near with respect to its tribes; and so a tribe of Judah was taken.

Joshua
7:16

And so Joshua rose up early the next morning and he caused Israel to be brought near with respect to its tribes; and so a tribe of Judah was chosen.

Along with a little leaven leavens the whole lump, what we have here is an illustration of your sin will find you out. You cannot hide your sins from God.

We are given no indication as to how the tribe is chosen, or the family, or the man. We don’t know if representatives stood before Joshua and God tapped Joshua on the shoulder, so to speak, and told him which one; or whether lots were cast or whether Urim and Thummim were used. We don’t know if the High Priest stood at the front and when the right tribe or family came forward that some of the stones on his garb lit up. There was simply some unspecified method used to narrow down the sin to the tribe, the family, the household and finally to the man. Barnes suggests that God took these men by lot; that there were probably a group of white and black stones in a chest from which each representative would draw. From Joshua 21, Num. 26:55, I Sam. 14:42, I Chron. 24:31, Jonah 1:7 and other passages, there was some method used by the Israelites to throw lots and determine who gets what according to these lots. This method, whatever the exact mechanics were, and although this method was likely known even during the incarnation of our Lord (Luke 1:5). Some guess that it had to do with small pieces of wood or stone, which were called *lots*. However, this term is *never* used with lâkad (although there are three instances where the two would be reasonably used together *if* that were the method used). In any case, the exact method employed here has not been preserved by Scripture because we now have the complete

canon of Scripture and we do not have to decide things by throwing lots.²⁰ Had such a method been laid out clearly in Scripture, no doubt believers everywhere would employ that method of divine guidance rather than allow Scripture to lead them. Whereas, such a method was apparently valid at that time, it is no longer required due to the completion of God's Word, and as such, has been purposely lost to history.

What we have here is a clear difference between what occurred prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture and what occurs now. During the time of Joshua, there was very little by way of God's revealed Word, and even with Joshua having access to the writings of Moses, there was still a great deal of decision making which had to be done. Therefore, God allowed for the throwing of lots to determine His will. However, today, we can develop a great sense of spiritual discernment through His Word. Now, I would be hard-pressed if asked by someone else to determine what God's will would be for their lives. The best that I could do is to offer the same advice that Paul did—stay just as you are, do not make any major decisions, and learn God's Word. **But to the married I give instructions—not I, but the Lord—that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away. But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband,; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are set apart. Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such, but God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches. Was any man called circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what is important is keeping of the commandments of God. Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise, he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. Brothers, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called (I Cor. 7:10–24).**

Now, when it has come to my own life, determining God's will has been relatively easy. The only difficult decisions which I face are those which are a result of not going with God's will.

And so he caused a family of Judah to be brought near and so he took [the] family of the Zerahites; and so he caused [the] family of the Zerahites to be brought near, with respect to their households; and so Zabdi was taken.

Joshua
7:17

And so he then caused the family of Judah to be brought near and he took a family of the Zerahites. Then he caused the family of the Zerahites to be brought near by household and he took the household of Zabdi.

We have very organized family groupings of Israel. Israel is divided into twelve tribes (the tribe of Joseph being further subdivided into the half-tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim). Each tribe was further subdivided into families. This is the word *mishpâchâh* (מִשְׁפָּחָה) [pronounced *mish-paw-KHAWH*], which means *family, clan, class (of people), species (of animals), or sort (of things)*. In this case, we might think of this as being a *sub-tribe*. Strong's #4940 BDB #1046. In the Massoretic text, this reads, *and so he caused a family of the Zerahites to be brought near, with respect to men*; in the Syriac and Vulgate codices and its two early printed editions, it reads: *...and so he caused a family of the Zerahites to be brought near, by their households*. I think this is probably the correct reading, and have so rendered it. The Zerahites were one of the first divisions of the tribe of Judah, as we have seen in Num. 26:20.

²⁰ Keil and Delitzsch make an educated guess, thinking that perhaps little tablets or potsherds with names on them were drawn. At that time, it was believed, and rightly so, that the casting of lots would be ultimately determined by God, as stated in Prov. 16:33: *But lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from Jehovah*. See Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 59.

And so he caused his household to be brought near by men and so Achan ben Carmi, descendant of Zabdi, descendant of Zerah by a tribe of Judah was taken Joshua 7:18

And then he caused this household to be brought near by men and he took out Achan ben Carmi, the descendant of Zabdi, a descendant of Zerah in the tribe of Judah.

As we knew from the outset, Achan was the culprit. However, notice that throughout this entire procedure that Achan remains silent. He doesn't come forward and confess to the guilt of what he has done.

And then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, place, I respectfully implore you, honor to Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, and give to Him a confession [or, thanksgiving] and make known, I respectfully implore you, to me what you have done. Do not hide from me." Joshua 7:19

And then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, please give honor to Jehovah, the God of Israel, and confess before Him and make known to me what it is that you have done. Do not attempt to hide this from me."

Joshua begins by saying *my son*, and then uses the Qal imperative of *sîym* (סִיֵּם) [pronounced *seem*] which means *to put, to place, to set*. Strong's #7760 BDB #962. He follows this with the particle of entreaty, *nâ' (נֹא)* [pronounced *naw*], which means *please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you*. It is part of an exhortation or part of an entreaty. It is equivalent to our word *please*, although it often does not sound right when translated that way. I cannot come up with a good one word translation, so I will do what the KJV does, but update it from *I pray thee* to *I respectfully implore [or ask or request] you* or *I urge you*. Strong's #4994 BDB #609.

What Joshua asks Achan to place is the masculine singular of *kâ^bvôwd* (כָּבוֹד) [pronounced *kaw(b)-VODE*] and it refers to *glory, abundance, or honor*. Strong's #3519 BDB #458. Then we have the lamed preposition and the Tetragrammaton. **Give glory to Jehovah your God before He bring catastrophe** (Jer. 13:16a). Here is how others have rendered this:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, make confessions to Him; and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	My son give I pray thee glory unto Yahweh God of Israel and make to him confession,—and tell me I pray thee what thou hast done, do not hide it from me.
NASB	"My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me."
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	'My son, put, I pray thee, honour on Jehovah, God of Israel, and give to Him thanks, and declare, I pray thee, to me, what thou hast done—hide not from me.'

As you have no doubt noticed, we have a major difference in the renderings above (and these are perhaps the best four translations). After *Y^ehowah, the God of Israel*, we have the Qal imperative of *nâthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], which means *give, grant, place, put, set*. Strong's #5414 BDB #678. Joshua then uses the feminine singular of the Hebrew word *tôwdâh* (תּוֹדָה) [pronounced *toe-DAW*], which means *thanksgiving; praise; a giving of praise to; a thanksgiving choir, procession, line*. Gesenius offers that this also means *confession*, noting both this passage and Ezra 10:11, and I didn't buy that at first, but the verb cognate seems to mean *to confess, to give praise* (the key to distinguishing these seems to be if the verb is followed by a preposition or not). This is a very tough word, because as soon as you allow both meanings, you allow a myriad of verses to be interpreted in two very different ways. For instance, is the offering in Lev. 7:12–15 an offering of thanksgiving or of confession? Ditto for II Chron. 29:31 33:16. One of the nice things about the 1997 edition of *The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament* is that in the back it has the English words and how many different Hebrew words match them. What I was expecting to find was several different Hebrew words for *thanksgiving* or for *confession*, but we do not. In fact, this is the word used for both of them and there are no other Hebrew words given, which surprised me. I think that with a longer time spent with the cognate verb, we could allow for both meanings, which, in turn, allows for both meanings here. In the Septuagint, the corresponding Greek word means *to confess* in this passage, so we will go with that. In this passage, the rendering of *confession*

appears to be the more apropos. Strong's #8426 BDB #392. Noting Num. 5:6–7: “When a man or a woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against Jehovah, and that person is guilty, then they will confess their sins which they have committed.” (Num. 5:6b–7a). This passage certainly makes it likely that *tôwdâh* means *confession*.²¹ “So it will come to pass when he become guilty in one of these that he will confess that in which he has sinned.” (Lev. 5:5).

Then we have the conjunction and the Hiphil imperative of *nâgad* (נָגַד) [pronounced *naw-GAHD*], which means *to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to declare, to inform*. Strong's #5046 BDB #616. This is followed by the particle of entreaty, and the prepositional phrase *to me*. So far, this gives us: “My son, place, I respectfully implore you, honor to Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, and give to Him a confession [or, thanksgiving] and make known, I respectfully implore you, to me...” This is a very accurate use of the word *nâgad* because Joshua already knows pretty much what Achan has done. He is simply asking Achan to confirm this.

This is followed by the interrogative particle *mâh* (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], which means *what, how*. Strong's #4100 BDB #552. Then we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of the verb *to do*, giving us *what you have done*.

The last sentence begins with the negative and the Piel imperfect of *hide*, and the phrase *from me*. This gives us: And then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, place, I respectfully implore you, honor to Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, and give to Him a confession [or, thanksgiving] and make known, I respectfully implore you, to me what you have done. Do not hide from me.” Like most of the translators, I want to at an *it* right after the verb, but *it* isn't there. *This phrase assumes that the glory of God is always promoted by the manifestation of the truth.*²²

And so Achan answered Joshua and then he said, “Indeed, I [even] I have sinned with respect to Y^ehowah, God of Israel and as this and as this I have done:

Joshua
7:20

And so Achan answered Joshua, saying “Indeed, I have sinned with respect to Jehovah, the God of Israel; accordingly and as follows, have I done:

Let's just examine the quote of Achan:

The Amplified Bible

The Emphasized Bible

NASB

Young's Lit. Translation

In truth I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this have I done:

Of a truth I have sinned against Yahweh God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.

“Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and thus and thus I did.

‘Truly I have sinned against Jehovah, God of Israel, and thus and thus I have done:

The first word is a real rarity; it is an adverb found only in the book of Joshua and in Gen. 20:12. It is the word *ʾâm^enâh* (אָמֵן) [pronounced *aw-m^e-NAW* or *om-NAW*], and it means *indeed*. Strong's #546 BDB #53. What follows is the 1st person personal pronoun, given here for emphasis; and the 1st person, Qal perfect of *châtâ'* (חָטָא) [pronounced *khaw-TAW*], which means *to sin, to miss the mark, to violate the law, to err*. Strong's #2398 BDB #306. What this verb does is validate our translation of *tôwdâh* in the previous verse. Achan is making his confession before Joshua and before God.

The rest is pretty easy until we come to the repetition of the conjunction, the kaph preposition and the demonstrative adverb *zeh* (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*], which means *here, this*. We have this repeated once or twice in Scripture, and it is rendered *and like this and like this*, literally. BDB suggests *thus and thus*; however, taking from other renderings, we might go with *accordingly and as follows*. Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260. In the next verse, Achan specifies what it was that he did.

²¹ See II Chron. 30:22 to see the verbal cognate, which certainly means *to give thanks* in that context and Psalm 32:5 and Prov. 28:13, where the verb cognate certainly means *to confess*. Keil and Delitzsch certainly disagree with this, as is stated in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 59; however, they base this on one verse, which is not enough for a word that is this difficult.

²² *Barnes' Notes*, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 367.

“And so I saw in the spoil a robe [of] Shinar—one good [robe]; and 200 shekels of silver; and a tongue of gold—one, fifty shekels its weight; and so I desired them and so I took them, and, behold, they are hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it.”

Joshua
7:21

“And I saw in the spoil an incredible overcoat made in Babylon; 200 pieces of silver (approx. 80 oz.); and a 20 ounce bar of gold. I desired these things and I took them. Now, they are hidden in the ground in the middle of my tent and the silver is underneath.”

The first item which was taken was an *addereth* (אֲדֶרֶת) [pronounced *ad-DEH-reth*], which is translated *garment, mantle, robe, goodly and glory* in the KJV. It appears to be a *cloak*, not unlike our overcoat. The implication is that this is a very nice overcoat. Strong's #155 BDB #12. This is followed immediately by the proper noun *shin^ear* (שִׁנְאָר) [pronounced *shin^e-AWR* or *shin^e-GAWR*], and means *land of Babylon*. Dan. 1:2, which identifies this with the place of exile makes that almost a certainty. Barnes refers to Shinar as the plain in which Babylon is located, citing Gen. 10:10. Strong's #8152 BDB #1042. This garment is further described with the numeral *one* and the adjective *ṭōw^bv* (טוֹב) [pronounced *toe^bv*], which means *pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good*. Strong's #2896 BDB #373. Achan is trying to give a reasonable appraisal of what he took. The robe was a nice, very functional overcoat. He wanted to take the money, needed something to carry it in, looked around, and found a very nice, but certainly functional, overcoat. Barnes: *the Assyrians were in early times famous for the manufacture of beautiful dyed and richly embroidered robes (cp. Ezek. xxiii. 15). That such a robe should be found in a Canaanitish city is natural enough. The productions of the far East found their way through Palestine both southward towards Egypt and westward through Tyre to the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. (Cp. Ezek. xxvii. 24 and the context).*²³

The gold here is called a *lâshōwn* (לָשׁוֹן) [pronounced *law-SHOHN*], which means *tongue*. Apparently here it means *tongue-shaped bar of gold*. Strong's #3956 BDB #546.

When this soldier discovered these riches, it was more money than he had ever seen before. It was like finding a suitcase filled with hundred dollar bills today. That was a 20 ounce gold bar and 80 ounces of silver. Today's value of these metals: less than \$10,000; however, to a person who had lived in poverty in the desert for a long time, this would have made him just about the richest man in Israel. Achan coveted these things. The word is the Qal imperfect of *châmad* (חָמַד) [pronounced *khaw-MAHD*] means *to desire, to covet, to take pleasure in*. Strong's #2530 BDB #326. **And you know that no fornicator or unclean, or greedy person, one who is an idolater, he has no inheritance in the reign of the Christ and God (Eph. 5:5). For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some, be desiring it, have wandered away from the faith, and have pierced themselves with many categories of pain (I Tim. 6:10).** There are a lot of women who are unhappy with their husbands because they do not perceive their husbands to be making enough money—they are covetous and greedy women who will spend their lives in misery because they will never have enough. There are men who forsake their families and their spiritual lives to make a great deal of money, and they will be miserable. There are families where both parents work, not because it is necessary, but for additional material things which they covet, and their children suffer for it, as does their marriage and spiritual life. There is nothing wrong with money or with having money; it is the desiring of it which is the root of many kinds of evil.

Achan ben Carmi had been found out and he knew it. He simply confessed. The amount here would be quite easy for one man to carry; however, 200 loose coins to be picked up in the midst of battle would not be easy. It is very likely that he saw the cloak, liked it as well, and used that as a means to hold the silver and gold. This certainly took some time to do (say, five minutes) and he was no doubt observed by others. Had he pockets, the precious metals could be carried in a pocket and not be any more obtrusive than a fat wallet. However, he liked the cloak, it was handy to wrap up the coins and bar with, and suddenly he had something which was easy to carry, something which could be stuffed under his own tunic, but something which would be noticeable to anyone who looked at him twice. That is, in a group, if you saw him walking, you wouldn't see it. However, if you looked at him carefully, you would see that he was carrying something under his own tunic and, during an invasion like this, it would be reasonable to assume that this was some of the plunder which they were not to take.

²³ Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 367.

After taking this home, he could not immediately display it, so he hid it in the middle of his tent in the ground. It sounds as though the silver was buried first, and then the cloak with the gold was on top of it, also buried. His family would have noticed what he did. I recall as a five-year-old going over to my best friend's house and finding no one home. The door was unlocked (no one locked their doors then), so I went inside and I had lusted after this toy plane and something else of his. I took these items and had to hid them behind some plants in front of my house. Of course, I couldn't just take them into my room and play with them, because it would be obvious that they were not mine. I felt a tremendous amount of guilt and felt relieved when I was found out and this stuff was returned to Eric. Achan certainly must have felt the same way. He knew that he had just disobeyed a direct command from God, the God of Israel Who had sustained him for the past forty years in the desert. He knew that there would be other towns which they would invade and the plunder from those towns would be theirs to take. In thinking this through (which probably occurred during and after his thievery), Achan probably decided to make known that he had these things after his next invasion of a Canaanite city. Unfortunately, he just could not wait, and, as a result of his sin, 36 of his fellow soldiers died in the next invasion.

And so Joshua sent messengers and so they ran [to] the tent and, behold, it [was] hidden in his tent and the silver under it.

Joshua
7:22

So then Joshua sent some of his men to his tent and they found these things hidden in the tent.

From what I can gather here, he boxed up the coat and the gold, buried the silver, and then buried the box (probably a vessel; I was being facetious about the box) on top of it. That is, there seems to be some kind of container that he placed the coat and gold in. He would not bury the robe in the dirt without some kind of protection. Either that, or the cloak and the gold were hidden somewhat and the silver was buried underneath it. What Achan did, did not go unnoticed by his family.

And so they took them out from a midst of the tent and so they brought them unto Joshua and unto all sons of Israel and so they emptied them down before faces of Y^ehowah.

Joshua
7:23

And so they took these things out from the tent and brought them to Joshua and before God and all the sons of Israel, revealed what had been taken.

The last verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *yâtsaq* (יָצַק) [pronounced *yaw-TSAHK*], which means *to pour, to cast, to flow, to empty(?)*. Strong's #3332 BDB #427. They brought much of this in some kind of container or wrapped in the robe, and then emptied it all out before God. For this reason, it seems as though the cloak and gold may have been placed inside a vessel container of some sort. Either that, or the servants of Joshua took something to carry these things in.

Now allow me to go off on a tangent. At this point in time, the Israelites had attacked but one city west of the Jordan and that was Jericho. God had promised that they would take the remainder of the land. Achan didn't necessarily believe this; or, even if he believed it, he did not see God as looking after him. He felt the best course of action was to take the coat and other items because, after all, it was all going to be burned anyway. Why not get his share now; what could it hurt. Obviously, hindsight is 20-20; we can look back disapprovingly and recognize that Achan and his family would have received gobs good things from the spoil of the conquering of the other cities. He didn't see it that way. Now, how does that apply to you? It applies in the area of spiritual giving. We give that which is first to God, as He has prospered us. We don't pay all the bills, spend money on ourselves, and then look at our account and decide if we have enough money as a cushion if perhaps a portion of the remainder could go to God. **Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you will do also. On the first day of every week, let each one of you set aside and save, as he prospers, so that no collections are necessary when I come (I Cor. 16:1–2). Now, listen to this: he who sows sparingly will also harvest sparingly and he who sows bountifully, will also harvest bountifully. Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart—not grudgingly or under compulsion, but God loves a given with the proper mental attitude (II Cor. 9:6–7).** I want you to understand that I have no ax to grind nor am I looking for a handout from anyone. I am typing and studying this at home, in no financial need, and doing this apart from any particular ministry or church on March 15th, year of our Lord, 1999. I do not know when you will be reading this nor do I know when I will be teaching it. At this point in time, I am not directly involved in any particular ministry; I am simply studying

God's Word and mere merely recording the principles of His Word as they come to me. You may read or hear this a day later or a hundred years later. The principle is that what God gives to us, we, while filled with the Spirit, give the first part back to Him. This is not the complete doctrine on giving, which is not what we are covering now. You certainly do not give so that your family is in need; you do not give in order to bribe God; you do not give apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit (and I am not talking about some holy roller experience). God has graciously given to us and we show our cognizance of His great gifts by supporting His work.

Allow me to go off on another tangent: I hope you don't think that I have done everything right in my life as a believer and that I am holding this over your head as just one more place where you have not met your spiritual obligations. Quite the contrary. For a great deal of my life, I have been the kind of person who is hard-headed and often learns things the hard way. Whereas, I am not a complete and total screw-up, I have made mistakes and errors of judgment and have committed sins and other acts which were in direct opposition to the plan of God. It is by God's graciousness that I am still here in good health and under relative prosperity with the strength and the ability to pursue the study of His Word. There are one or two areas where I have learned the easy way—I got the principle from God's Word first, and then went that direction. In case there is any doubt in your mind, you can't beat learning the easy way. If you honestly would like guidance in your spiritual walk, God will provide that for you. God has never deprived anyone of spiritual growth or spiritual direction. We do that to ourselves.

And so Joshua took Achan descendant of Zerah and the silver and the robe and a tongue of the gold and his sons and his daughters and his ox and his ass and his sheep and his tent and all which [was] to him and all of Israel with him; and so they brought them up [to] a Valley of Achor [or, trouble].

Joshua
7:24

And then Joshua took Achan, descendant of Zerah, along with the silver and the robe and the bar of gold, and his sons and his daughters and his ox and his ass and his sheep and his tent and all that belonged to him, and they were all brought to the Valley of Achor with all of Israel as a witness.

You may recall in v. 11, God enumerated the charges against Israel using the figure of speech called a polysyndeton [pronounced *PAUL-ee-SIN-de-ton*], which is a repetition of the word *and*. When listing what would be destroyed with Achan, Joshua uses that same figure of speech in this verse, repeating a conjunction over and over. Again, great emphasis upon these items brought with Achan is made. This indicates that more than Achan was involved with his sin and more than Achan will suffer the effects of the sin. There is not act of immorality or sin which affects only one person.

The final verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *ʿâlâh* (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *ġaw-LAWH*] and it means *to go up, to ascend, to rise*. In the Hiphil, it means *to cause to go up, to lead up, to take up, to bring up*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748. It is interesting that verb should be used because they are all brought up to *ʿemeq* (עֵמֶק) [pronounced *EH-mek* or *GEH-mek*], and it means *valley, vale, lowland, deepening, depth*. Strong's #6010 BDB #770. Apparently they went up to a plateau in the hill country, and placed Achan in the valley of that plateau. This might remind you of Korah's rebellion and how there was an earthquake which swallowed Korah and his family and his belongings up (Num. 16:32–33). We will alter see a similar incident in the book of Daniel (Dan. 6:24). And as most commentators will point out, it is highly unlikely that his family was not aware that Achan had taken something which was under the ban into their tent, thus placing them all in jeopardy.

The name, Valley of Achor, is a transliteration of the cognate of a verb which will be found twice in the next verse. This valley will only be mentioned again in Joshua 7:26 15:7 Isa. 65:10 Hosea 2:15.

And so Joshua said, "How you have troubled us! Y^ehowah troubles you the day the this." And so stoned him all of Israel a stone and then they burned them in fire and so they stoned them with the stones.

Joshua
7:25

And then Joshua said, "Why did you bring trouble upon us? Jehovah will now trouble you this day." Then all of Israel stoned him and his family, and then burned them with fire.

There are two principle ways in which this verse can be understood: as a personal question from Joshua to Achan or as Joshua pronouncing sentence over Achan prior to his execution. Here is what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And Joshua said, Why have you brought trouble on us? The Lord will trouble you this day. And all Israel stoned him and those with him with stones, and afterward burned their bodies with fire.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And Joshua said— Why hast thou troubled us? Yahweh will trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them up with fire, and covered them with stones;
Keil and Delitzsch	And Joshua said, How has thou troubled us! The Lord will trouble thee this day. And all of Israel stoned him and they burned them [the persons stoned to death, and their things] with fire, and heaped up stones upon them.
Owen's Translation	And Joshua said, "Why did you bring trouble on us? Yahweh brings trouble on you today!" And stoned him all Israel with stones; they burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. [punctuation added by me]
REB	Joshua said, 'What trouble you have brought on us! Now the LORD will bring trouble on you.' Then all the Israelites stoned him to death;
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And Joshua saith, 'What! thou hast troubled us!—Jehovah doth trouble thee this day;' and all Israel cast stones at him, and they burn them with fire, and they stone them with stones,...

In this verse, Joshua comes as close as he ever would to making a play on words. He first uses the word mâh (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], which can be employed in several different ways: (1) Mâh can be used as an exclamatory adverb *how*; as in "[How incredible is this place!](#)" (Gen. 28:17b). (2) Mâh can also be used as an interrogatory adverb *how* to express that which is impossible, as in "[How shall we justify ourselves?](#)" (Gen. 44:16b). These two uses are often followed by an adjective or verb. (3) Mâh can also be used as an adverb of interrogation, meaning *why, wherefore*. Strong's #4100 BDB #552. As you can see by the few translations Then Joshua uses the 2nd person masculine singular (referring to Achan), Qal perfect of 'âkar (אָכַר) [pronounced *aw-KAHR* or *gaw-KAHR*], which means *to stir up, to disturb, to cause trouble*. Strong's #5916 BDB #747. There is also a 1st person plural suffix, so have two ways that we can look at this: either Joshua is asking Achan "*Why have you troubled us?*" or Joshua is making a statement, "*How you have troubled us!*" The latter seems to be more in keeping with the circumstances and context.²⁴ Joshua is herein pronouncing public sentence over Achan, rather than soliciting information.

Then, without missing a beat, Joshua uses the same verb again, this time in the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with a 2nd person masculine singular suffix. Then Joshua follows with the subject of the sentence, Y^ehowah. This should be rendered: [And so Joshua said, "How you have troubled us? Y^ehowah troubles you..."](#) This is followed with *the day the this*. The masculine substantive cognate of the verb 'âchar is 'âkôwr (אָכַוֵר) [pronounced *aw-CORE*], which means *trouble, disturbance*. Strong's #5911 BDB #747. Achan is one of the first recorded people to worship money above God, and, as such, suffered as an idolater would. "[If there is found in your midst, in any of your towns, which Jehovah your God will give you, a man or a woman who does what is evil in the sight of Jehovah your God, by transgressing His covenant, and he serves other gods and worships them...then you will bring out that man or that woman who has done this evil deed, to your gates, and you will execute them by stoning.](#)" (Deut. 17:2–3a, 5).

Although the remainder of the verse is understandable, it was, at first, unclear why Joshua used this wording. There are two verbs in this verse, each of which is rendered by Owen *stoned*. The first verb is the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of rāgam (רָגַם) [pronounced *raw-GAHM*]. Gesenius gives the meanings as *to bring together, to heap up, to pile, to pile up stones, to cast stones, to stone, to colour, to paint* (in the sense of throwing something on paper). In the Bible, this appears to only be used to mean *to execute by stoning*.

²⁴ As an aside, by the time I have come to a conclusion like this, I have read twenty translations, have gone back to the original language, and have consulted several commentaries which deal with the original languages of the Bible. Prior to every session of study, I always ask for the guidance of God the Holy Spirit. It was a combination of Keil and Delitzsch's marvelous commentary and BDB which convinced me to take this position.

Strong's #7275 BDB #920.²⁵ The last verb in this verse is the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *çâqal* (צָקַל) [pronounced *saw-KAHL*], which means *to throw stones, to stone, to overwhelm with stones*. In the Piel, this seems to mean *to clear a field of stones* (Isa. 5:2 62:10). Although I would like to say that the second verb simply tells us that they heaped up stones over Achan and company, the other places where this verb is found do not sustain that meaning. I will offer you the opinion of Keil and Delitzsch: [The second clause]...*does not refer to the stoning as a capital punishment, but to the casting of stones upon the bodies after they were dead and had been burned, for the purpose of erecting a heap of stones upon them as a memorial of the disgrace.*²⁶ In examining the different places where these two words are found, I don't (other than the passages in Isaiah) see a dime's worth of difference between them. They're both found about twenty times in the Bible. *Çâqal* is found in Exodus and Isaiah while *râgam* is found in Leviticus and Numbers, Ezekiel and II Chronicles. They are both found in Deuteronomy, Joshua, I Kings. Strong's #5619 BDB #709. So, literally, what we have is: **And so stoned him all of Israel a stone [not, a stoning]. And so they burned them with the fire and so they stoned them with the stones.** The word for *stone* is the same each time it is used, being found first in the singular and then in the plural; being found first without a preposition and secondly with *bêyth*; being found first without a definite article and then with.

Joshua first tells us that the penalty for troubling Israel as he did, Achan would be stoned with stones; however, the second couple of phrases tell us that all of his family and all his possessions were stoned with stones and they were all burned with fire. They were all burned, not as additional punishment or that burning was somehow worse, but because they were now under the ban (along with all of the inhabitants of Jericho). It was as though those things under the ban which Achan took infected all that was Achan's and placed all of his possessions under that ban. The burning of all of these items is how the cancer was cut out of Israel.

There is also a wordplay here, with the use of *to trouble* and *Achan*. Although it is possible that they are the same word, that would require *Achan* to have been misspelled on several occasions, which is highly unlikely.

Certainly, many would object to this. Zodhiates gives the simplest explanation: *Since Deuteronomy 24:16 prohibited the execution of children for the sins of their fathers, it is evident that Achan's children must have condoned or assisted him in what he did.*²⁷ We already have the example of Korah who was executed directly by God along with all that he had; however, two of his sons were spared. God does not execute the innocent nor does He condone executing innocent people. Clearly, Achan's family was not unaware of what he had done and the penalty if they were caught.

Geisler and Howe give the longer answer, which they present as two-fold: (1) Some say that his family and their possessions were brought to the valley of Achor, but that only he and the stolen items were stoned and burned. This view has little merit—why haul all of Achan's family **and his possessions** to view his execution? It might make sense to haul his family there to witness the execution, but not his possessions. In v. 25, it will say that they stoned *him*, which, at first seems to imply that only Achan suffered any punishment; however, at the end of v. 25, it says that *they* were burned and that *they* were stoned. It seems needless to add that sort of phrasing unless it meant that Achan and all that he possessed, including his family members, were executed. This brings us to the second part of the answer: (2) If Achan and his family were all executed, how can that be right if it was only Achan who took the aforementioned items? The Bible says emphatically that a son will not bear the guilt of his father (Ezek. 18:20). These things taken together means that Achan's family shared his guilt as they certainly had knowledge of what Achan had done. However, no one of his family stepped forward, they became as guilty as he and shared his punishment. Geisler and Howe add that there is no mention of small children here, but add, had they been executed with Achan, that God is sovereign over all and has the right in this case. Without their family, there would be no one to raise them; they would bear a certain shame of Achan; they would be perhaps bitter against God; and, if executed, would be automatically saved, being taken before the age of accountability. I only mention this last aspect as an aside, and again point out that Scripture is not clear on if there were small

²⁵ For those who follow along in *Zodhiates Word Study Old Testament*, he seems to have gotten these verbs backwards, according to both Owen and *the New Englishman's Concordance of the Old Testament*.

²⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 61.

²⁷ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 589.

children and what happened to them if there were, so that we should not become overwrought about something which may or may not have happened.²⁸

A point which might be raised is that the Law was quite serious at that time. We're not talking grand theft, but petty larceny. To suggest today that such a violation of the law should be handled by the death penalty would be thought ludicrous. When beginning this nation, God sought to removed all sorts of evil. Israel had to last for another thousand years and there are few countries which can claim that kind of a length of history. This required a lot of purification. Another issue which should be considered is that God has dealt with people in different ways at different times. We might think that we would have been much more than mediocre Christians had we been alive during the incarnation of our Lord, or if we had seen the incredible miracles at the hand of Moses, but they were held to quite a high standard. In the angelic conflict, we (referring to mankind) live under a number of different governments, some strict, some lax, some with corrupt laws, some with very Biblically oriented laws. Some men have witnessed great miracles, some have seen little or nothing in their lives or in the lives of others. Man has remained corrupt and some have believed in Jesus Christ and some have not. The circumstances surrounding our lives allow us volition and our volition is what we are responsible for. Why someone choose Jesus Christ and some reject Him; why some thrive on God's word and some ignore it—apart from their volition, I don't have a clue. I do not know what one person will believe and why another will not. I can only assume that God is fair in this.

And so they caused to be raised over him a great heap of stones until the day the this. And so Y^ehowah turned from a heat of His anger; therefore, He called a name of that place Valley of Achor [or, trouble] until the day the this.

Joshua
7:26

And afterward, they raised a large pile of stones over him until this day. Also, Jehovah was turned away from the heat of his anger against Israel. Therefore, He called the name of that place the Valley of Achor, which remains its name until this day.

This was all written after the fact, so that where they took him was not named the Valley of Achor then but was given the name later, to commemorate the cleansing of Israel. He and his family were stoned to death; then all of his family and all of his possessions were burned with fire and they were buried under a large heap of stones. In case you were wondering from where we ever received the old Western ritual of burying a man under a mound of stones, it is actually a very old Eastern ritual.

This mound of stones was the second memorial in the Land of Promise. The first one was at Gilgal (Joshua 4:9) and the second one is here. The next will be one to commemorate the defeat of Ai in Joshua 8.

The next verb is the Qal imperfect of *shûw^bv* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*]; which means *to return, to turn, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to recover something, the make restitution*. Context can usually guide us in the actual meaning. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. What follows is the preposition *from* and the phrase *heat of His anger*. As Moses told Israel, **“Nothing from that which is placed under the ban will cling to your hand, in order that Jehovah may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion upon you and make you increase as He has sworn to your fathers (Deut. 13:17).**

To clean up some of the wording at the end. The last phrase begins with the preposition *al* (אֶל) [pronounced *al*], which means, among other things, *in the matter of, concerning, as regards to*. This is perhaps one of the most versatile prepositions in the Hebrew language. Strong's #5920 & #5921 BDB #752. This is followed by the adverb *kên* (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*] is generally rendered *so*. Together, *al* and *kên* take on a meaning of their own. They mean *upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account*. Strong's #3651 BDB #485. Then we have the 3rd masculine singular, Qal perfect of *qârâ`* (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*] which simply means *to call, to name something, to proclaim*. Strong's #7121 BDB #894. This verb is found in the Niphal (the passive stem of the Hebrew) and, had it been in the Niphal, the subject would have been *a name*. However, since this is in the Qal stem (the normal, generally active stem), we have the subject *he* (or, Young uses the subject *one*). Since our nearest masculine subject is Y^ehowah, He would be the subject of this verb.

²⁸ Most of this came from *When Critics Ask*; Geisler and Howe, ©1992, Victor Books, pp. 138–139.

The name of this valley is a play on words. The verb *to trouble*, found twice in the previous verse, revealing one of the few word plays ever uttered by Joshua, once in the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect; and then in the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, referring first to Achan and then to God. That verb is *ʿâkar* (אָכַר) [pronounced *aw-KAHR* or *gaw-KAHR*], which means *to stir up, to disturb, to cause trouble*. Strong's #5916 BDB #747. The noun is *ʿâkôwr* (אָכֹוֹר) [pronounced *aw-CORE*], which means *trouble, disturbance*. Strong's #5911 BDB #747. The proper noun here, a name given this place by God, is also *ʿâkôwr* (אָכֹוֹר). Achan's name is actually spelled *ʿâkân* (אָכָן) [pronounced *aw-KAWN* or *gaw-KAHN*]. Strong's #5912 BDB #747. Interestingly enough, it is spelled *ʿâkâr* (אָכָר) in I Chron. 2:7, which has the exact same consonants as the words for *trouble*. Strong's #5917 BDB #747. He became so identified with that valley that his name was altered somewhat in memory of what he did; that, or what we have here a simply two forms of the same name (like *Robby* and *Robert*). This valley makes up part of the northern border of Judah (Joshua 15:7), which would place it in the ridges which cross the plain to the south of Jericho, according to Barnes.²⁹ The implication of v. 24 is that this valley is at a higher elevation than Gilgal and Jericho; that Joshua and representatives of Israel escorted Achan and his family up to this area, which then sank into a valley. This area is mentioned again only in Hos. 2:17 and Isa. 65:10.

There is an addendum which I should pursue at this time. It seems to be a pattern in God's dealings with man that the closer man is to divine revelation, the more responsible God holds him. During this period of time, we have one man, observed by his family, who stole from that which was dedicated to God. A thousand years later, hundreds, if not thousands of men, false applied the concept of dedicating one's property to God in order to get out of supporting their indigent parents. That is, if one dedicated his property and substance to God (which meant that, at death, it might have to be handed on over to the Jewish religious order), they did not have to use their own substance to support their parents who were no longer able to support themselves. They could just simply say, *these things are dedicated to God*, thus discharging themselves of any responsibility in this matter. Surely, these people were every bit as guilty as Achan, yet we do not read of God demanding their execution. Similarly, in the early church, we have the example of Ananias and Sapphira, in Acts 5, who gave generously to the early church, but misrepresented this gift as the amount paid them for the land they sold, rather than just a portion of their profit. God summarily executed them. Today, we have thousands upon thousands of believers who do not see to their financial responsibilities with regard to their church or with regard to even their human responsibilities, and they are not put under the sin unto death. During the incarnation of Christ, discipleship seemed to require much more. The principal involved here is **"To whom much is given, much is required."** (Luke 12:48b). The Israelites had been brought up receiving each and every day bread from heaven. They all had witnessed the stopping of the Jordan in order that they may cross. Joshua was in direct and continual contact with God and he passed along this information to his cabinet which disseminated it to those under their command. Every believer in the time of Joshua had seen, first hand, miracles wrought by the hand of God. God had made it unmistakably clear what they were to do. Therefore, they had no excuse whatsoever. **The Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there violation** (Rom. 4:15). God gives us a great deal of latitude and when we look back upon the slack which he has given us, it is mind-boggling. I look back at the things which I have done, as both a believer and as an unbeliever, acts committed while knowing full-well that those things were unequivocally wrong, and I am amazed that God did not come down on me with both feet. On the other hand, blessing from God during those periods of time was scarce as well. The point is, we have a God Who is rich in mercy toward us (Eph. 2:4) and He has given all of us today a great deal more slack than we ever had in the past. **What shall we conclude, then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? Hell, no! How will we who have died to sin still live in it? Shall we continue to sin because we are not under law but under grace? Hell, no! Don't you know that when you place yourselves under orders to someone as slaves for obedience, that you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which results in death, or of obedience, which results in righteousness?** (Rom. 6:1–2, 15–16).

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²⁹ Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. II, p. 368.