



*Pointers and questions on*  
**JOSHUA 1-12**

**Session 5**

**7:1-26**

**The sin of Achan and defeat at Ai**

**Summary**

- 7:1-5** Because of Achan's disobedience in taking some plunder, Israel suffers a crushing defeat when they attempt to conquer the town of Ai.
- 7:6-15** God reveals to Joshua and the leaders of Israel the reason for the defeat, and gives instructions for discovering the guilty person.
- 7:16-26** Achan is found to be the guilty one. He and his family are stoned to death at God's command.

**Questions to get you thinking**

1. In this chapter only one man – Achan – sinned, but God's anger burned against *Israel* – the whole community. God viewed them as collectively responsible and thus they suffered collectively. Talk about this. Is it fair? Is it inevitable? Does the principle apply in the church today? If so, should you be paying more attention to your spiritual state?
2. In 7:2-3 there is no evidence that Israel sought God's direction and help in the plans to conquer the smaller town of Ai. Were the Israelites perhaps over-confident after the success at Jericho? How important is it to trust God for *every* step we take?
3. Look at verses 7-9. Whom does Joshua seem to be blaming for the defeat? Where *should* he have been looking instead? Who do *you* tend to blame when things go wrong?
4. Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? (v10). Isn't being before God in a place of worship and submission always appropriate, then? What in this case takes priority over it? Talk about how worship and prayer can, in some circumstances, be activities in which we hide to avoid having to *do* something.
5. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies (v12). What reasons exactly does God give. How does this apply to those Christians today who suffer constant defeat in their lives?
6. Are there any lessons for us as a church in v13? What are the enemies that we are up against? And what kind of thing, if found among us, will prevent us from standing up against those enemies unless we remove them? How would we remove them? Try to give some *practical* examples.
7. Look at verses 14-18. How do you think the selection process took place? Did it reveal the wrongdoer? What does the exposure of Achan tell us about the impossibility of hiding away in the crowd from God's all-seeing eye when we have sinned?
8. Which of the Ten Commandments did Achan admit to breaking in v20-21?
9. Is the breaking of that commandment as serious as the breaking of, say, the commandment not to murder or commit adultery? Are we right to categorise sins into degrees of seriousness? What does the punishment that God required say about *his* view of the seriousness of Achan's sin? (see v11-12, 24-26)
10. God could just have revealed the sinner's identity to Joshua, but instead he chose to take the people through this long selection process. Why do you think that was?

