

Study Guide



Joshua 7:1-8:35 – February 26, 2017

Israel Defeated at Ai

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

As we walk through Joshua we are going to see how Joshua relates to our everyday battle of faithfulness. **Our aim and our prayer for this study is to gain the wisdom we need for the battle of faithfulness.** During our time in Joshua we will be adapting our study guide from [Crossway's book, Knowing the Bible: Joshua, A 12-Week Study](#) by Trent Hunter. We recommend you purchase this book and use it in your Community Groups and for personal study as we go through Joshua. We have copies of the book available in our bookstore.

For this weeks study on Joshua please check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

March 25- April 4—South Sudan
For further information visit
norrisferrychurch.org or contact Jared
Clary (clary@norrisferrychurch.org)

Calendar

March 3rd-4th— [Marriage Conference](#)
March 5th-April 9th— [Connection Group](#)
March 5th-April 9th— Kid's Shine
March 17th-19th— [DNow](#)
April 14th-15th— [Men's Canoe Trip](#)
May 26th-31st— [Student Life Camp](#)

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[The Lion and the Lamb](#)":

He's coming on the clouds, kings and kingdoms will bow down
And every chain will break, as broken hearts declare His praise
Who can stop the Lord Almighty?

Our God is the Lion, the Lion of Judah
He's roaring with power and fighting our battles
And every knee will bow before You
Our God is the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain
For the sin of the world, His blood breaks the chains
And every knee will bow before the Lion and the Lamb
Oh every knee will bow before the Lion and the Lamb

So open up the gates, make way before the King of kings
Our God who calls the saved is here to set the captives free
Who can stop the Lord Almighty?

Our God is the Lion, the Lion of Judah
He's roaring with power and fighting our battles
And every knee will bow before You
Our God is the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain
For the sin of the world, His blood breaks the chains
And every knee will bow before the Lion and the Lamb
Oh every knee will bow before the Lion and the Lamb

Who can stop the Lord Almighty?
Who can stop the Lord Almighty?
Who can stop the Lord Almighty?
Who can stop the Lord Almighty?

Oh who can stop the Lord Almighty?
Who can stop the Lord Almighty?
Oh who can stop the Lord Almighty?
Who can stop the Lord?

Our God is the Lion, the Lion of Judah
He's roaring with power and fighting our battles
And every knee will bow before You
Our God is the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain
For the sin of the world, His blood breaks the chains
And every knee will bow before the Lion and the Lamb
Oh every knee will bow before the Lion and the Lamb
And every knee will bow before the Lion and the Lamb
Every knee will bow before the Lion and the Lamb

Read Joshua 7; 8:1-2, 28-35

Commentary

Chapter 7 comes as a shock. It opens with these ominous words: **“But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things” (7:1)**. This will be a more complicated journey than chapter 6 may have led us to expect. The complicating factor is sin in the camp. One man disobeyed Joshua’s instructions, the Lord burned with anger against the people, and the people bore the consequences. This story is tragic but yields important lessons for Israel and for us. **In chapters 7 and 8 we grasp the seriousness and consequences of sin, a prerequisite for grasping the gospel of grace.** The good news to which this story ultimately points.

The Lord’s slow but deliberate uncovering of Achan’s sin is a reminder of the way his perfect knowledge exposes our secret thoughts and deeds (Ps. 44:21; Heb. 4:12). It should sober us that the Lord saw Achan when no one else did, for indeed a day is coming when God will judge “the secrets of men” (Rom. 2:16). **It should sober us still more that Achan hid until his hand was forced. In love with darkness, men avoid the light; but on the promise of mercy and cleansing, the gospel invites Christian and non-Christian alike to confess sin and find forgiveness through the shed blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9-2:2).**

God’s anger burned toward his people for the sin of Achan (Josh. 7:1). **We should not be surprised that God would burn with anger toward all of his people for the sin of one man.** When Adam sinned, he plunged the entire human race into sin, with all of its guilt and death and condemnation (Rom. 5:12-14). This reality of corporate guilt is important to understanding how God relates to humanity. **In judgment, God curses his people because of the sin of one man; but by the same token, in salvation God makes many sinners righteous through the obedience of one man (Rom. 5:15-19; 1 Cor. 15:22).**

Chapter 7 is bookended with references to God’s anger, highlighting its centrality to this section. The wrath of God is one of his divine attributes (distinct characteristic), an emotion and action arising from his holiness and love for what is just and good. **Wrath is not intrinsic to God’s character, as love is, for without rebellion there is no wrath.** What Achan gets in a pile of stones is what we deserve as sinners like him. We are born “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3), and it is this fury of God’s anger against human sin that Jesus suffered for us on the cross.

After Israel did as the Lord commanded to Achan, “the Lord turned from his burning anger” (Josh. 7:26) and showed his grace by helping Israel defeat Ai. **With the power of God the great Jericho could be taken (ch. 6); without his power not even the smaller post could be overrun. How utterly dependent God’s people are upon God’s power for any success.** At the end chapter 8 we see Joshua gathering the people of Israel around God’s Word. Every feature of this scene (Josh. 8:30-35) contributes to a sense of solemnity and worship. And when Joshua read the law, “there was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel” (Josh. 8:35). Such devotion to the law demonstrates what was also true for Christ and for us: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that come from the mouth of God” (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4).

Discussion

1. Was Achan the only Israelite who disobeyed God's command to not take any of the "devoted things" from Jericho? Why was God angry with all the people of Israel? What was the content of his warning to the people before the walls of Jericho fell (Joshua 6:17-18)?
2. Compare the report of the spies who went to Ai (Joshua 7:2-3) with the report of the spies who went to Jericho (Joshua 2:24). What was the difference of tone and content in these two spy reports?
3. We are given the backstory of why Israel failed at Ai, but Joshua didn't have the whole story yet. What is your opinion of Joshua's response in 7:7-9? Was Joshua's confusion and despair justified?
4. Chapter 7 has a very clear structure, moving from setting, conflict, climax, and resolution. As the story grows in tension, what is its climax?
5. Achan's sin was actually several sins as described in 7:11 and 7:21. Looking at those verses what were the variety of sins that Achan committed?
6. Even if coveting isn't a regular part of our vocabulary, Achan's sin of covetousness is nonetheless a regular part of our lives. Recall again Hebrews 13:5-6; what is the deeper problem behind our covetousness? What sins of covetousness come to mind for you personally when reading this chapter?
7. Achan clearly confessed his sin, but what was wrong with the timing of his confession and the content of his confession?

8. Compare these instructions to Joshua concerning Ai in chapter 8:1-2 with the instructions to Joshua concerning Jericho in chapter 6:2. How are they similar to each other, and how are they different from the preparations to conquer Ai the first time in chapter 7:3-5?

9. What do you think are possible reasons why God permitted the people to take the spoils for themselves from Ai but did not permit them to take spoils from Jericho?

10. What do you think is the significance of the pile of stones made in chapter 7 at the place where Achan was buried and the significance of the pile of stones in chapter 8 where the King of Ai was buried?

11. In order to understand the ceremony described in Joshua 8:30-35, please read Deuteronomy 27 to 28:14 where Moses gave instructions concerning this ceremony. What were the main features of this ceremony? What was the purpose of this ceremony?

Application

1. Does it seem strange to you that the sins of one man, Achan, should cause the whole nation of Israel to be defeated by Ai? Think about God's warning to the people before the walls of Jericho fell (Joshua 6:18). Also read Romans 5:15-19 and consider what Paul says about Adam's sin affecting the whole human race and about Jesus' sacrifice on the cross affecting all who believe in him.
2. Think about the big picture message in these two chapters. What message do these two chapters bring about God's attitude toward sin and righteousness? What have these early chapters in Joshua taught you about the importance of obedience?
3. Feel free to take some time to confess in prayer to God any sins that you have been hiding, recognizing he knows all things and will judge even our secrets. Then praise him for the cross, where Jesus suffered that judgement for even the most secret sins of those who faith is in him. (This may be a good time to split up into groups of men and women.)

Note: This weeks questions are based upon questions in the Book entitled "Joshua" by Trent Hunter (available in the NFCC bookstore, at Lifeway Bookstore, or online.)

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Joshua to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased
Young life
Heart of hope
First priority
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center
Community renewal
Grief counseling
Celebrate recovery
Samaritan counseling
Last call ministries
Golden age ministries
Rescue mission
Luke's lighthouse
NOLA Baptist
FCA

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!