

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7
Copyright 2018 T. M. and Susie Moore
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All psalms for singing adapted from The Ailbe Psalter. All quotations from Church Fathers from Ancient Christian Commentary Series, General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press).

Joshua 7: Introduction

Joshua 7 provides a grim reminder that God has not changed His view of sin. He hates it, and where it exists, He will bring His wrath to bear against it.

The sin of Achan imperiled the entire nation, threatening to leave them stranded on the plains of Jericho, there to be destroyed by their enemies. On top of that, Joshua compounded Israel's troubles by presuming on the Lord rather than seeking Him concerning the assault against Ai. In His grace, however, God did not leave His people to languish, but called them to face up to and eradicate the sin that had been their undoing at Ai.

God is glorified when sin is exposed and judged and when His people are sanctified and renewed. This is why the death of Jesus is as glorious as His resurrection and ascension.

Please visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to subscribe to our thrice-weekly devotional newsletter, *Crosfigell*, or our daily *Voices Together* devotional and prayer guide.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Trespass

But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerab, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.
Joshua 7.1

Reflect.

1. One sin, and all this trouble? Is sin really that big a deal?
2. What made this sin particularly heinous?

Think about it.

We should note that, even though Israel was the people of God, and even though He had abundantly blessed them, His anger could quickly flare against them (cf. Ps. 2.12; Heb. 12.3-11). Just because we believe in God doesn't mean we're immune from His wrath, and, this being the case, we do well to make sure we understand what ticks God off.

We can assume that Achan said to himself that his transgression was "no big deal." Perhaps he even reasoned that God would not see it (had he forgotten about the Jordan stones?). Or he might have considered that the camp of Israel could tolerate a little transgression, as long as no one found out – or maybe even if they did.

But, as we shall see, we never sin alone. That is, our sin never ends with us alone, but always affects others. When temptation presents itself, we should remember that if we give in and fall through temptation into sin, we will betray others and possibly bring them with us under the wrath of God (cf. Ps. 73.15).

Meditate and discuss.

1. Looking at what Achan did, in the light of what Joshua had commanded (6.18, 19), how would you define the word *trespass* (Hebrew: *תעל* an unfaithful, treacherous act)? Is all sin a trespass? Explain.
2. Should our attitude toward sin be the same as God's attitude toward sin? What should that attitude be?
3. Meditate on Psalm 97.10. Would you say that you hate sin?

"Where then there is such impiety as this going on, what dreadful calamity must we not expect? And to be assured how severe vengeance they incur who are guilty of such sins as these, consider the examples of old. One single man, a common soldier, stole the sacred property, and all were struck." John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)

Help me to hate all sin, Lord, and guard me against...

Pray Psalm 97.

Thank and praise God for His sovereignty and His salvation. Call upon Him to light your way today and to give you gladness and rejoicing in obeying Him.

Psalm 97 (*Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King!*)

Rejoice, the Lord is King! O earth, lift up your voice;
Be glad, you islands, shout and sing: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Refrain v. 9

Beyond, above

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7

All gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

His just and righteous throne 'mid clouds and darkness stands;
His fiery wrath consumes His foes in every land.

Refrain

Earth trembles at the sight of Jesus' holy face;
The mountains melt before His might and praise His grace.

Refrain

The heav'ns above declare His glorious righteousness;
And tribes and peoples everywhere His Name confess.

Refrain

While Zion gladly sings, let all be brought to shame
Who to vain idols worship bring and scorn His Name.

Refrain

All you who love the Lord, despise sin's wicked ways!
Praise Him Who guides us by His Word through all our days.

Refrain

2 Overconfident

Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few." So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water. Joshua 7.2-5

Reflect.

1. The assault on Ai began well, following the pattern Israel had used in besieging Jericho. Then it all went bad. Why?
2. Notice the specific use of that phrase *the hearts of the people melted and became like water*. Where have we heard that before? What was happening among the people of Israel?

Think about it.

While the expedition against Ai began well, with spies sent out to gather information, the breakdown occurred when Joshua listened to his spies rather than wait upon the Lord. Heretofore, God had given specific step-by-step instructions as to how Israel should proceed. Joshua, famous "throughout all the country," judged that his spies' report sounded reasonable.

But what sounds reasonable to men may not be what God wants. Better to seek Him before taking matters into our own hands.

We note also that the spies suggested it was not necessary to "weary all the people." In fact, God had made a point of wearying all the people at Jericho, precisely so that they would see His power at work within them. The conquest of Canaan was an "all Israel" project (recall 3.17, 4.1). Joshua showed that in this instance he was not relying on the Lord but on the strength of human forces, since the people of Ai were few. It's as if they were saying to the Lord, "We can handle this one."

But, no, they could not. And not just because they failed to seek the Lord, and were beginning to rely on the arm of flesh rather than the Word of God. An even more serious problem was the cause of their humiliation.

Meditate and discuss.

1. Those thirty-six or so who died fleeing the people of Ai were the first to perish on Canaanite soil. How do you suppose that report was received in the camp at Gilgal?
2. The Lord says, "without Me, you can do nothing" (Jn. 15.5). How much does "nothing" include? Do we act as if we need the Lord for *everything* in our lives? Explain. How can we make sure that we're trusting the Lord for everything?
3. Why is it important always to check our thoughts, ideas, and plans against what God has revealed in His Word (2 Cor. 10.3-5)? How should we do that?

"In the camp itself, such was the trepidation that all hearts melted. I admit, indeed, that there was cause for fear when, after having gained so many victories as it were in sport, they saw themselves so disgracefully defeated. In unwonted circumstances we are more easily disturbed. But it was a terror from heaven which dismayed them more than the death of thirty men and the flight of

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7

three thousand.” John Calvin, Commentary on Joshua (1509-1564)

Without You I can do nothing, Lord – nothing! Help me always to remember this, so that...

Pray Psalm 33.13-22.

Today, where might you be tempted to trust the arm of flesh rather than the Lord? Prepare for the temptation now, and you'll be more likely to overcome it later.

Psalm 33.13-22 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

God from His throne looks down on men;
He knows our works and made our hearts.
Let not Your Church, let none depend
on strength or skill or human arts.

God watches those who fear His Name,
who hope upon His grace and love;
He keeps their souls from death and shame
who trust in Him Who reigns above.

God is our Helper and our Shield;
upon us let Your grace descend!
We hope in You; to You we yield;
we trust in Jesus to the end.

3 Not the Lord's Fault

Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?"
Joshua 7.6-9

Reflect.

1. How like Joshua we are! Something goes wrong, and immediately we want to blame the Lord. Have you ever done this?
2. Do you detect a little distance from God in Joshua's use of "Lord GOD" and "Lord" in addressing Him, instead of "LORD"? Explain.

Think about it.

Well of course *Joshua* couldn't have done anything wrong. He was famous! And of course the problem wasn't with Israel. They followed Joshua, who was famous.

So it must be *God's* fault that the wheels were coming off.

Just for good measure, though, Joshua "tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face" before the Lord. He would rebuke the Lord honorably, at least.

Notice also the self-protectiveness: "O Lord, what shall *I* say...?" Joshua was fearing that *he* would look bad! Thirty-six people were dead, the expedition was coming apart, the people's hearts were melting like water, and Joshua is trying to save face!

And so, Lord, when we're all lying here on the plains of Gilgal, broken and dead, "what will You do for Your great name?" Joshua is indignant at the Lord. He is convinced that God has let them down. Here we see none of the humility of Moses or Daniel. Joshua's neck is on the line. His fame is in jeopardy. And he wants to know what God is going to do about it. He has become so consumed with himself, that he can't even pray civilly to the Lord.

Joshua sounds a lot like some of us, doesn't he?

Meditate and discuss.

1. It's very easy to allow our walk of faith to become clouded with self-importance and self-interest. How can we tell when this is beginning to happen?
2. To his credit, Joshua came to the Lord. God wants us to come to Him in prayer regardless of how we're feeling or what our concerns may be. Apply this lesson to your own prayer life.
3. Notice the hubris of that "our name" and "Your great name" (v. 9) – as if God's greatness and glory depended on them! Do Christians sometimes fall into this trap? Explain.

Joshua oversteps the bounds of moderation when he challenges God for having brought the people out of the desert; but he proceeds

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7

to much greater intemperance when, in opposition to the divine promise and decree, he utters the turbulent wish, Would that we had never come out of the desert! That was to abrogate the divine covenant altogether.” John Calvin, Commentary on Joshua (1509-1564 AD)

Keep me, Lord, from presumptuous thinking and ways, and help me always to depend on You, look to You, and...

Pray Psalm 51.1-13.

Listen for the Lord to convict you of any sin, and pray for the humility and repentance of David.

Psalm 51.1-13 (*Passion Chorale: O Sacred Head Now Wounded*)

Be gracious to me, Savior, according to Your love!
According to Your mercy, my sins, my sins remove!
O wash me, precious Savior, and cleanse me from all sin;
Look on me with Your favor, and cause my grief to end.

Against You only, Savior, have I become unclean;
Thus just the condemnation which You pronounce on me.
Lord, I was born to sinning, while You seek truth within;
To wisdom my heart winning, release me from my sin!

In Jesus' blood and mercy, Lord, cleanse my evil heart!
Let me washed, cleansed, renewed be and pure in whole and part.
Bring joy again and gladness; look not upon my sin.
Deliver me from sadness; renew me yet again!

Create in me a clean heart, renew me from within!
Take not Your Spirit from me because of all my sin.
Salvation's joy restore, Lord, and keep me in Your hand;
Thus shall I tell Your strong Word to sinners in the land.

4 Sin in the Camp

So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. Get up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you." In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man. Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel." Joshua 7.10-15

Reflect.

1. Someone had stolen from the Lord, and all Israel was made to suffer. What does this suggest about sin?
2. God connects sin with breaking His covenant. Why do we not want to break God's covenant?

Think about it.

God is clearly angry here, and justifiably so. Not only has someone stolen from Him and tried to deceive Him, but Joshua has put the blame on God for Israel's defeat at Ai. Instead of whining and complaining before God, Joshua should have been looking for the source of Israel's problem elsewhere.

We may think we can sin without repercussions, but this is only because we don't understand the corrosive power of sin. Our sins, though we indulge them privately, will affect the people around us. When we harbor sin in our lives, we put ourselves outside the protections and promises of God's covenant, and we set ourselves up for His chastening (Heb. 12.3-11). This is what Joshua should have been doing, and not lying here on his face accusing God of wrongdoing.

God could have told Joshua who was at fault here and how to deal with the matter privately. But the sin of the one had already brought humiliation to the nation, and God wanted the entire nation to participate in this rite of cleansing and renewal. It would be an important lesson for everyone.

We notice a subtle correction on God's part, to remind Joshua of His nearness and covenant. Joshua had referred to Him as *Lord GOD* – literally, *Lord LORD*. This seems a bit formal and distant, God's role as *Lord* preceding His Name. God referred to Himself as *LORD God of Israel*, His covenant Name first, and His uniqueness as God – and not some Canaanite *baal* – emphasized second. This is more covenantal, personal, immanent, and even gracious. God had come to judge His people, but He was still their covenant God and Redeemer, not some impersonal, distant, vengeful deity, like the gods of Canaan.

Meditate and discuss.

1. Meditate on Psalm 66.18. How important is it that we not harbor sin in our lives?
2. What was God expecting the people to do in sanctifying themselves (v. 13)? Is it a good idea for us to sanctify ourselves from time to time? Why?
3. How should this incident affect our view of sin? What can we do to keep sin from ruining our lives and

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7

the lives of those we love?

“Although the word שָׁטָט has a more extensive meaning, yet as the subject in question is the expiation of the people, I have no doubt that it prescribes a formal rite of sanctification. Those, therefore, who interpret it generally as equivalent to prepare, do not, in my judgment, give it its full force. Nay, as they were now to be in a manner brought into the divine presence, there was need of purification that they might not come while unclean.” John Calvin, Commentary on Joshua (1509-1564 AD)

Search me, Lord! Search me continuously, and show me any hidden sins, so that I can repent and...

Pray Psalm 139.23, 24.

Memorize these two verses, and add them to your prayers each day.

Psalm 139.23, 24 ([Ripley: Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul](#))

Search my heart, O Lord, and know me,
as You only, Lord, can do.
Test my thoughts and contemplations,
whether they be vain or true.
Let there be no sin in me, Lord,
nothing that Your Spirit grieves.
Lead me in the righteous way, Lord,
unto everlasting peace!

5 Sin Exposed

So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarahites; and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. 18 Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerach, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me." And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it." Joshua 7.16-21

Reflect.

1. What is covetousness? Why might it be considered the gateway to all sin?
2. This could have been considered a "private" sin, but it was very publicly exposed. Why?

Think about it.

The entire nation is involved in this drama of cleansing Israel from a heinous sin. The sanctifying of the people would be completed by this, and they would know their guilt had been removed. From the assembled tribes, "the tribe of Judah was taken." We're not sure how (possibly by casting or drawing lots), but Joshua received some indication that this was the tribe, then the family, then the household, and finally, the man.

Joshua does not accuse; he calls on Achan to give glory to God by owning up to his transgression. We note that Joshua uses *the LORD God of Israel*, God's preferred way of being known. This shows that he is indeed acting as the Lord's agent in this situation.

Achan makes no attempt to deny or justify his behavior. We note his awareness of the process leading to his transgression: "I coveted them and took them." The coveting came first, then the stealing and deceiving. Covetousness is very often the gateway to other sins, when our desire for something or someone exceeds the bounds of righteousness. Unchecked, it can lead us into transgression. Achan knows that his sin is ultimately against God, as is all sin, no matter who gets hurt in the process.

God is glorified in Achan's confession, because in confessing he was *agreeing with* God's judgment and thus reasserting the truth of God's Law. This public confession would instruct the people in two ways: first, in not sinning, so that they might avoid such humiliation; and second, in knowing what to do when caught in a sin (1 Jn. 1.8-10). Achan's confession has a twofold effect: Israel is cleansed, and he is condemned.

Meditate and discuss.

1. How did this situation bring glory to God? That is, how was God glorified in the destruction of this man and his household?
2. Why is it necessary to confess our sins? What should follow confessing sins?
3. Should churches be more active and consistent in helping their members to deal with temptations and overcome sin? Explain.

"But there was a special reason why Joshua exhorted Achan to give God the glory, because by denying or equivocating he might have impaired the credit of the decision. The matter had already been determined by lot. Joshua, therefore, simply orders him to subscribe to the divine sentence, and not aggravate the crime by vain denials." John Calvin, Commentary on Joshua (1509-

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7

1564AD)

Search me, O God, and know my thoughts. Try me and see my ways. And show me any lingering sins, that I may...

Pray Psalm 32.1-7

Here is a psalm you can use to confess your sin and to rest in God's deliverance.

Psalm 32.1-6 (*Hendon: Take My Life and Let It Be*)

Blessed are they whose sins the Lord has forgiven by His Word!

Pure their spirits are within; them He charges with no sin;

them He charges with no sin!

When in silence I remained, groaning in my sinful pain,

You Your hand upon me lay; all my strength You drained away,

all my strength You drained away.

I confessed my sin to You; You forgave me, ever true!

Let confession's pleading sound reach You while You may be found,

reach You while You may be found.

6 Sin Eradicated

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day. Joshua 7.22-26

Reflect.

1. How had Achan "troubled" Israel?
2. What is suggested about the nature of sin that Achan's guilt was somehow attached to all his household and possessions?

Think about it.

This is a terrifying scene. A man's sin and rebellion bring him to a horrible end, and not just him, but "his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had" (v. 24). Was his wife spared? We do not know. Were his sons and daughters in on this deception? Possibly. Everything he owned was tainted by Achan's sin and was destroyed in the most terrible way. Then a memorial was erected over the scorched bodies and possessions, and a solemn name attached to the site of this horrible event. Who would want to remember this?

Everybody should.

We note the return of the phrase "and all Israel with him" (v. 23). The nation is getting back on track with its purpose by uniting together in their campaign against sinful peoples and for the promises of God.

Achan's sin presented in many ways a microcosm of Canaanite life. The worship of self and things, plunder and deception, and overall scorning the God of heaven and earth – these were features of Canaanite life throughout the land of promise. Achan threatened to bring that way of life into the people of God, and God insisted in the harshest of terms that this must not be so. Alas, Israel would not long remember the "fierceness" of God's anger but would compromise with their pagan neighbors over and over again.

Perhaps they should have visited the Valley of Achor more often. Perhaps we should, too.

Meditate and discuss.

1. We might consider this "great heap of stones" a negative memorial. Is there a place for such memorials in the life of faith? Explain.
2. Achan's punishment seems extreme. But why was it necessary at this time in Israel's history? If we are horrified by this account, how should we feel about the cross?
3. God is glorified both in the *expression* of His wrath against sin and in the *satisfaction* of His anger. How was God glorified in Jesus' death on the cross?

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7

“...the evil consequences of his sin would presently have spread like fire over his nation—and this, too, although the people did not know what had occurred and had not excused the sinner—unless his people, sensing the anger of God from the destruction of the men who were slain, had promptly been struck with fear, and unless Joshua, son of Nun, sprinkling himself with dust, had prostrated himself together with the ancients, and unless the culprit, discovered thus by lot, had paid the penalty mentioned above.”
Basil the Great (330-379 AD)

Thank You, Lord, that Jesus has borne Your anger toward me. In gratitude for His sacrifice and Your grace, I...

Pray Psalm 44.9-19.

Can you see how this psalm speaks to the state of the Church today? Pray for the churches of the land, that God would bring us to repentance, restore our steps to His path, and remove our reproach.

Psalm 44.9-18 (*Faithfulness: Great is Thy Faithfulness*)

Ah, but for now in dishonor we languish.
Our armies quail while our enemies boast.
We are as spoil to our foes who despise us;
God has forsaken those He loves the most.

Refrain vv. 23-26

Rise up, awake, O Lord! Hide not Your face from us,
See our affliction, our suffering and pain!
See how our soul is sunk down with oppression;
Rise up and help and redeem us we pray!

Sold into sin and reproached by our neighbors,
You do not profit from our woeful state.
Shame and dishonor o'erwhelm and consume us;
Mocking and scorn for our sin is our fate.

Refrain

All this has come on us, but we remember:
You are our covenant God and our King!
Turn back our hearts to adore and extol You;
Lord, keep our steps as Your praises we sing.

Refrain

7 The Anger of the Lord

Read Joshua 7.

Reflect.

1. Do you suppose the Lord still gets angry with His people? Why would He? How would that anger be expressed?
2. How do you see the glory of God in the situation reported on in Joshua 7?

Think about it.

Joshua 7 begins and ends with the anger of the Lord. He is angry with Israel at the beginning of the chapter, and His anger is satisfied and turned away from His people at the end. In between, sin is discovered, exposed, and eradicated, all as God leads and according to His Word. Lessons abound for us in Joshua 7.

First, we do well to remember that God is not only sovereign but omniscient and omnipresent. He sees us when we sin, even though no one else does. Sin is always offensive to God, especially on the part of those He has chosen, called, and blessed. Unless we discipline our hearts to hate sin as much as God does, we run the risk of finding ourselves from time to time in the crosshairs of divine anger.

Second, sin has consequences that we cannot anticipate, and very often those consequences break bad on people other than ourselves. All Israel suffered because of Achan's sin. Thirty-six men died. His sons and daughters suffered. The entire nation was humbled and chastised because one man did not hate sin enough to obey the explicit instructions of the Lord. We never sin alone; that is, when we sin, we are never alone in it. By sinning we show that we not only do not love God as we should, we don't love our neighbors, either.

Finally, sin cannot prevail. Sin will be eradicated both to satisfy God's anger and to renew His grace. But they who would know the benefit of God's work in overcoming sin must "sanctify themselves" (v. 13) by setting themselves apart from all known sin and obeying the Word of the Lord. Jesus has overcome sin and death by becoming sin for us and taking the wrath of God upon Himself. But the benefits of His saving work come only to those who believe, repent, and obey His Word.

Meditate and discuss.

1. Sin troubles God, others, and ourselves. How can we keep this in mind, to help us in resisting temptations to sin?
2. As long as we harbor sin in our lives, the promises of God will elude us. Rather, God will prevent us from realizing those precious and very great promises by which we partake of His presence and power (2 Pet. 1.4). How can focusing more on the promises of God help us to resist temptations to sin?
3. What symbols can you identify in this chapter? What role do those symbols fulfill? Would having symbols like this in your life help to keep you from sinning?

"The throwing of stones by the whole people was a general sign of detestation, by which they declared that they had no share in the crime which they thus avenged, and that they held it in abhorrence. The heap of stones was intended partly as a memorial to posterity, and partly to prevent any one from imprudently gathering particles of gold or silver on the spot, if it had remained unoccupied. For although the Lord had previously ordered that the gold of Jericho should be offered to him, he would not allow his sanctuary to be polluted by the proceeds of theft." John Calvin, *Commentary on Joshua (1509-1564 AD)*

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7

Lord, give me wisdom to recognize temptation and strength to resist it, so that...

Pray Psalm 103.

Psalm 103 reminds us of God's many benefits as well as of our tendency to drift from Him. Find a verse to memorize to help you in resisting temptation.

Psalm 103 (*Old 100th: All People That on Earth Do Dwell*)

O my soul, bless the Lord's great Name! His many benefits proclaim:
He pardons sins and heals disease, and from the pit grants us release.

With mercy rich and steadfast love He satisfies us from above,
Revives our youth, works righteousness, and justice serves for the oppressed.

His ways to Moses He made known; to Israel His great works were shown.
The Lord is full of mercy sweet, and with His favor does us meet.

To anger He but slowly goes; abounding love to us He shows.
He will not always scold nor chide; His anger will not e'er abide.

Our sins He casts from us away; He shows compassion every day.
He knows our frame, that we are dust, so on His goodness let us trust.

Now as for us like grass we fail, though for a time our flesh prevail.
God's Spirit blows across our face and withers sinners in their place.

But evermore to those who fear the Lord brings loving kindness near;
His righteousness to them extends and to their children without end.

He rules upon His throne in heav'n; His sovereign rule o'er all is giv'n.
You angels, bless the Lord, rejoice, who live in strength to heed His voice.

All you who serve Him, bless the Lord, all you who heed His righteous Word!
Let all throughout the cosmos whole unite to praise Him, with my soul!

Sin and Judgment
Joshua 7

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Why does God hate sin? How can we learn to hate sin?
2. What forms might the anger of God take against those who are harboring sin in their lives?
3. What is our responsibility toward one another in the household of faith, both in helping us to resist temptation, and in dealing with sin?
4. How does Joshua 7 point us toward Jesus?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Joshua 7? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.