

### 113.5 The Sin at Ai

(This is spelled A-I, and I do not mean artificial intelligence).

The children of Israel unusually defeated the city of Jericho. The LORD told them to march around the city once each day for six days. On the seventh day, they would march seven times, the priests would blow their shofars (rams horns), and the people would shout. Just as God said, the walls came tumbling down so that the people could enter the city from any point and gather the valuables in His name. The warriors only spared Rahab, her family, and their belongings. They destroyed or confiscated the rest for the LORD's treasury.

After the conquest of Jericho, Joshua sent two spies to the small town of Ai for their next military venture. Joshua only sent a few soldiers there because of the great Jericho victory and the relatively small city of Ai. The Hebrews lost the second battle. Not only did the small town stand, the people counterattacked and drove the Israelites off the field in a humiliating defeat. As a result, the people lost courage quickly.

**<sup>4</sup>So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>1</sup>**

The situation reminds me of me. Joshua was openly distressed when he received word of the defeat. He had not asked the LORD for direction before the fiasco. He did inquire of Him in the aftermath. We often think we do not need the LORD's direction and are wise enough or well-equipped to handle it ourselves. Then, when things do not work out, we approach Him with our need for His guidance. Joshua found out why the people failed but could have eliminated a defeat and loss of life if he had asked first.

**<sup>10</sup>So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>**

Achan's lust of the eye and pride of life got the better of him, and he stole from the LORD. As a result of his sin in the camp, Israel lost the battle, and Achan and his family lost their lives. God is serious about sin and reminds us of our actions' consequences. We quickly forget Paul's words:

**<sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. <sup>8</sup>For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. <sup>3</sup>**

We do not really believe this biblical principle. We bypass God and His teachings and then wonder why everything is amiss. Let us take a moment and look at the condition of America. We face the current crisis because we have not held sin in check.

Knowing that our forefathers and mothers knew the Bible intimately, we are assured they knew the account of Ai. They saw the results of unrestrained sin in the actions of the King and the lives of some of their neighbors. As a result, the Continental Congress and Colonial Governors often called citizens to days of humiliation, fasting, and prayer. In his diary on June 1, 1774, **George Washington** wrote, "Went to church, fasted all day."

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua 7:4-5 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> Joshua 7:10-11 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> Galatians 6:7-8 (NKJV)

**John Adams** understood the seriousness of sin in connection with facing the British. He knew to place the contest on a spiritual level. Adams drove home the point in this familiar quote from a conversation with his friend **Dr. Benjamin Rush**.

Upon my return from the army to Baltimore in the winter of 1777, I sat next to John Adams in Congress, and upon my whispering to him and asking him if he thought we could succeed in our struggle with Great Britain, he answered me, “Yes, if we fear God and repent of our sins.”

Our Founders knew our success could come, but not in human terms or wisdom. Victory over the British would come when Americans first personally defeated sin and depended entirely on God. Strong alliances and accurate weapons were secondary to the cause.

We are in the same proverbial boat today. We are as outnumbered and outgunned as the Hebrews were at Jericho and our forefathers in 1776. Despite setbacks, they prevailed, and we can, too, “if we fear God and repent of our sins.”

We are not automatically sin-free when we follow Jesus. Our ancestors knew it and made every attempt to move the nation closer to God. If we Christian Americans realized our sins, confessed and repented, God would do some incredible things on our behalf.

**<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.<sup>4</sup>**

Success in our crisis will not come with a better President in office or a better political party in power. It will only happen when we come clean with God and stop hiding our sins. Think of all the hidden sins we have discovered in the past two or three years. The FBI’s Russian hoax, crimes of the current regime, details of the Plan-demic, the crimes of the Clintons and Bushes, and the details of the Patriot Act make it legal to spy on any American. In light of the atrocities we see in our government, we owe Richard Nixon an apology for his treatment for such a minor offense by comparison.

Despite all our unsavory discoveries, the responsibility to reform America begins with us, and it begins now. Paul wrote, “**Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**”<sup>5</sup> God always blesses humility and faith. He will give us victory if we trust Him, and He won’t if we don’t.

Keep The Light of *Depending on God* Burning!

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<sup>4</sup>1 John 1:8-10 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:2 (NKJV)