

Church of God Sunday School

THE SIN OF ACHAN

Joshua 7:1 — 8:2

Rules and laws are for the good of all of us. God has many dos and don'ts in the Bible. God's rules help us learn to honor Him. They teach us to have self-control and to have consideration for the rights of others.

Mother and Father have rules for you to obey too. When they tell you to do something or not to do something, they want you to obey them. You will either obey or disobey, because you have a will; but you will reap according to your actions.

It is possible for you to be outwardly obedient by your actions but still be disobedient inwardly, in your attitude. For example, a little boy, who wanted to stay in his seat after his mother had asked him to stand, stood up; but on the inside—in his heart—he stayed seated! He minded on the outside, but he rebelled on the inside. He was wrong.

It is also wrong to feel that your choice to obey or to not obey God's rules is your own business. What you do or do not do can affect your family and your friends.

Before the walls of the mighty city of Jericho fell, Joshua had given the Israelite people definite rules to follow. Those rules were really God's rules. *Because the people obeyed God's rules exactly*, the huge stone wall that enclosed the city crumbled and came down. The Israelites then went into the city and took over.

The Israelite people had rules to follow when they entered Jericho too. Joshua had warned them that they were not to take anything for themselves. All the silver and gold and the vessels of brass and iron were to be given to God, to be placed in His treasury.

Joshua said, ". . . keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it" (Joshua 6:18).

Just one man, Achan, thought he could disobey what Joshua said and get by.

Achan knew there was a penalty to pay for not obeying the rule Joshua had given, but he chose to ignore it. Achan chose to disobey God's leader.



Achan did what *he wanted to do* instead of being obedient.

When Achan saw some things that he wanted for himself—a wedge of gold that weighed fifty shekels, two hundred shekels of silver, and a royal Babylonian piece of clothing, woven of gold—he took them and hid them in the dirt under his tent. (Did he think that even God could not see them there? Wasn't that foolish? God sees everything.) Achan must have thought no others would get hurt by what he did, since no one knew of his sin; but he was wrong again.

After Israel defeated the city of Jericho, Joshua sent part of Israel to defeat the little town of Ai (*AY-i*). Instead of winning the battle with the smaller city, the Israelites were defeated. They lost thirty-six men! When Joshua went before God to find out the reason for Israel's failure, he said, "O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!"

God told Joshua Israel had sinned. God was not pleased. He said: ". . . they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen . . . and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."

God told Joshua to bring Israel before Him by tribe, by family, and then by household to find the guilty person. The guilty one's punishment was that he would be put to death, and his *entire* family would have to die too!

When Joshua had brought all Israel before the Lord by tribe, by family, and by household, Achan was found out. He confessed his sin then, but it was too late. Men went to Achan's tent and found the items he had stolen. Achan was killed; so was each



member of his whole family. They perished, even though they had not disobeyed the law; so Achan's sin *did* affect them.

Once more, the Israelites went out against Ai. God gave Ai into the hands of the Israelites that time. The Israelites ambushed the city and won the battle. As God had commanded, the Israelites destroyed all the people of Ai but took the animals and the *spoil* (loot taken from the enemy) for themselves (Joshua 8:27).

God will not put up with sin in any person's life. It is always best (for you and for others) if you obey God. Remember, God always sees what you do. Numbers 32:23 says, "Be sure your sin will find you out." God will bring your hidden sin out in the open, somehow and sometime. If you have any sin in your life, it is better to admit your guilt to Jesus now, while you can, instead of having to confess it to Him later, on the Judgment Day.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Achan . . . took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel."
—Joshua 7:1
