

LESSON 45

# Israel & Ai

JOSHUA 7–8



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**BIBLE TRUTH**

DESTRUCTION COMES UPON THOSE  
WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THE WORD OF GOD

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** . . . . . **5 MIN**  
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Read Joshua 7 from the Scriptures or read story 45, “Israel and Ai,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
You Can’t Hide Your Sin from God  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ red foam core board
  - ✓ red felt
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** . . . . . **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Justice Is Good  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ handcuffs with key (real or play handcuffs—if you have a police officer in your church, you could invite him or her to class)
6. **SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** . . . . . **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Coloring Activity  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ coloring page 45—one copy for each child
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** . . . . . **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Hide the Gold  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ gold foil-covered chocolates (the ones that resemble gold coins)
  - ✓ silky material cut into strips

**TOTAL 75 MIN**

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

**Israel's defeat is due to Achan's sin**—In Joshua 6, when the Israelites were preparing their assault on Jericho, Joshua gave clear instructions that they should destroy everything in Jericho except the silver, gold, iron, and bronze. These were to be declared holy and brought into the treasury of the Lord.

Not everyone obeys Joshua. A man named Achan keeps some silver, gold, and a fine cloak for himself (Joshua 7:21). Because of Achan's sin, God allows Ai to defeat the Israelites in their first actual battle in the Promised Land.

**Achan is discovered and judged**—God tells Joshua to call all Israel before him so that those guilty of taking the devoted things can be found out. Under God's instruction, Joshua uses "lots" to identify who is guilty. As Joshua does this, first a particular tribe is chosen by lot, then a clan, then a household. Finally, Achan is revealed to be the guilty one, and he and his entire family are judged for his sin.

Back in Jericho, God has mercy on Rahab and her family. This was because Rahab honored God. Today we learn how God judged Achan and his Israelite family because Achan disobeyed God. God's mercy is for those who fear and obey him no matter who we are.

**Israel defeats Ai and enjoys the spoils**—What Achan selfishly craved after the defeat of Jericho, God freely gives to the Israelites after the defeat of Ai. If Achan had only been patient and obeyed and trusted God, he and his family would have survived and been enriched honestly.

## WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Take time to remind the children that God always punishes sin. Achan was killed for taking the gold and silver. He deserved to be punished for his sin. We all deserve to be punished for our sin as well. The penalty for even one sin is death. Jesus took the penalty for our sin at the cross so we can be forgiven. All those who trust in the Lord had their sin paid for on the cross.

After Achan was found out and Ai was destroyed, Joshua offered a sacrifice to God for a peace offering (Joshua 8:31). That offering pointed to the day when God would offer up his Son, Jesus, as the ultimate peace offering. Jesus said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Today, after the sacrifice of Jesus, there is no longer a need to offer peace offerings because we have peace with God (Romans 5:1).

## THE LESSON

### OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

### BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN

Read Joshua 7 from the Scriptures or read story 45, "Israel and Ai," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

### OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 10 MIN

#### You Can't Hide Your Sin from God

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ red foam core board
- ✓ red felt

Purchase a large piece of red-colored foam core board at a local art supply shop or purchase a white piece and spray paint it red. Also purchase several sheets of red felt. Cut out at least

## ■ LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON 45

twelve letter S's of varying sizes from the felt. Draw a very large S on the foam core, and cut it out carefully with a razor knife. These letters represent sin.

Before class, hide the larger letter in the classroom.

Tell the class that Achan thought sin was easy to hide, but his sin was found out. Ask for four volunteers to help you.

Bring the volunteers up to the front of the class. Ask them if they have ever sinned. Of course they will say they have. Distribute the felt letters and tell them that these represent sins. Ask them to hide the letters while you turn your back and count to ten. The volunteers must hide the letters on their person. They can't give the letter to anyone else or get rid of it anywhere.

Turn away from the children and say, "Okay, hide your sins." Count to ten and quickly turn around. Carefully inspect for evidence of the red letters. If you see any red sticking out of a pocket look surprised and act like a prison guard looking for contraband.

Explain to the class that it is easy for us to hide our sin from other people, but it is impossible to hide our sin from God. Pick one of the volunteers and then pull out the large foam core S. Tell them you are going to turn your back and they need to hide this larger S. When they object, thank them for their participation, and move on to ask the following questions:

- **Can we hide our sin from God?**  
*(We cannot hide our sin from God. God not only knows what we have done in the past, but he also knows what we are going to do in the future. Nothing can be hidden from him.)*
- **What mistake did Achan make?**  
*(Achan thought he could hide his sin and get away with keeping the treasures.)*
- **In the end, who knew about Achan's sin?**  
*(Everyone knew in the end, and Achan and his family suffered the penalty for his sin.)*

### **TEACHING/DISCUSSION . . . . . 10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

**OBJECT LESSON 2** . . . . . **10 MIN**

Justice Is Good

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ handcuffs with key (real or play handcuffs—if you have a police officer in your church, you could invite him or her to class)

This lesson is designed to help the children understand that God’s judgments are good. If sin were allowed to continue unchecked, it would have destroyed Israel. When we read the story of Achan, we might be misled to believe that God’s judgment was harsh. It is important to remember that sin destroys and that it is God’s goodness that restrains sin.

This object lesson works well if you have a police officer in your congregation who can come to do a demonstration for the class.

Have the police officer (or do this yourself) explain what handcuffs are for (restraining a criminal suspect). Have the officer ask the class if handcuffs are a bit scary. The officer can allow the class to come forward and touch the handcuffs. Then ask for a volunteer to demonstrate how they are used. The officer should gently demonstrate the use of handcuffs and explain how they keep a criminal suspect from hurting anyone while he or she is being taken to jail. Thank the police officer for the demonstration.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **Do you think criminals like handcuffs? Why not?**  
*(Handcuffs restrain criminals from doing what they want, including escaping. After a while handcuffs hurt your wrists.)*
- **Are handcuffs good or bad?**  
*(It depends on how they are used. If you use them to restrain a criminal, they are good. If they are not used properly, for instance as a mean trick against your friend, they are evil.)*
- **How did God’s judgment of Achan restrain sin from invading Israel further?**  
*(God’s judgments against Achan were just. God judged Achan for his disobedience, theft, and lying. Achan’s punishment had two effects: first, God used it to remove sin from Israel, and second, it served as a warning for Israel to resist the temptation to sin.)*

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

Coloring Activity

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page 45—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- What happened to the Israelites the first time they fought the city of Ai?  
*(Because of Israel's sin, God was not with them. So, some of the Israelites were killed, and the others got scared and ran away.)*
- What happened to the Israelites when they fought the second battle with Ai?  
*(They had obeyed God, and so he helped them to win the battle.)*
- What do you think the men of Ai were thinking when their city was being destroyed?  
*(They were mad, scared, etc.)*
- What do you think the people of Ai were thinking about the God of Israel?  
*(That he was strong; no one could stop God; that God was really smart; etc.)*

**CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 10 MIN**

Hide the Gold

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ gold foil-covered chocolates (the ones that resemble gold coins)
- ✓ silky material cut into strips

Prior to class, hide strips of cloth and gold foil-covered chocolates around the room. After telling the story of Achan hiding the gold, the silver, and the beautiful cloak, tell the children that you've hidden some things around the room that represent what Achan hid. Show them an example of each, and tell them to look for them but not to eat the chocolate coins.

Send the children searching.

This is just a fun exercise that can get the children interested in the story. Afterward ask the children the following questions:

- How did you know I had hidden chocolates and strips of cloth?  
*(You told us.)*
- How did the Lord know that Achan had stolen and hidden gold, silver, and a cloak?  
*(God knows all things.)*
- Why can't we hide our sins from God?  
*(Since God knows all things he knows all of our sins and everything we do.)*

