

ISRAEL AND AI

Destruction comes upon those who do not follow the Word of God.



THE STORY: JOSHUA 7:1-9

MONDAY

Israel was defeated at Ai due to Achan's sin at Jericho

Israel was defeated at Ai due to Achan's sin at Jericho. In Joshua 6, Joshua commanded Israel to destroy everything in Jericho except the silver, gold, iron, and bronze, which were to be declared holy and deposited in the treasury of the Lord. However, not everyone obeyed—specifically a man named Achan. As a result of Achan's sin, God did not give Israel victory over Ai. In fact, Joshua 7:5 explains that, as a result of the defeat, the hearts of the Israelites “melted and became as water.” This description of the Israelites' fear is similar to the description of the people of Jericho when they heard that Israel had crossed the Jordan (see Joshua 5:1).

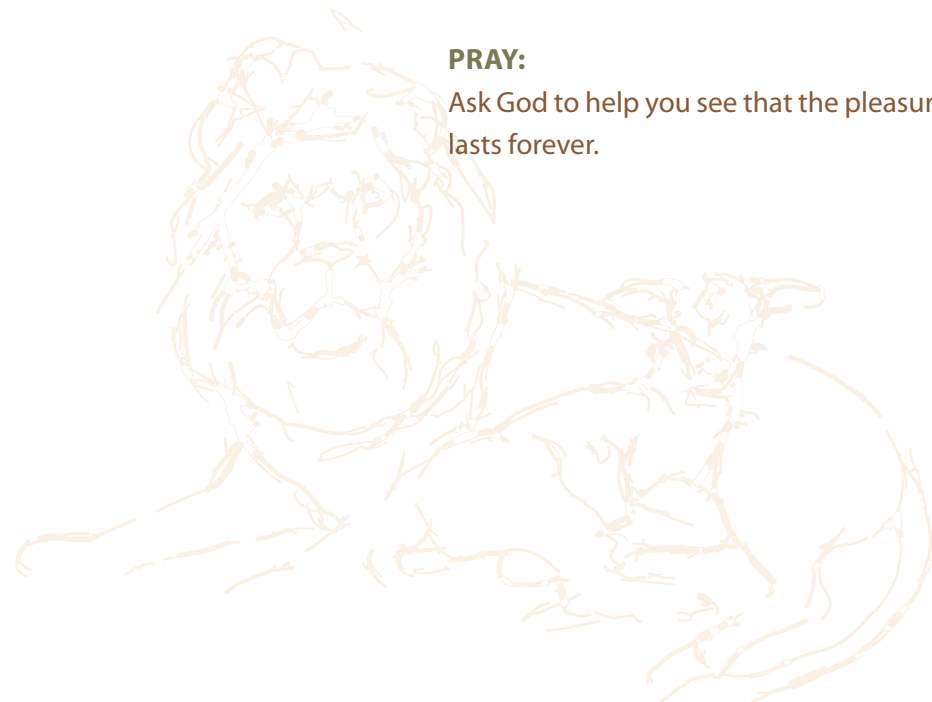
TALK ABOUT IT:

What tempted Achan? *(When Achan saw how beautiful and valuable the things were from Jericho, he coveted—sinfully desired, those things. Instead of being grateful for the Lord's miraculous deliverance, Achan was led astray by objects and wealth.)*

Could Achan enjoy the items he coveted? *(No, he had to bury them because they were forbidden. Achan's sin brought him no joy. Sin will only give us a short-term pleasure that quickly fades. After that, sin will destroy us. If, however, we love the Lord and long after Him, our joy will last forever.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you see that the pleasures of sin pass quickly but the joy in the Lord lasts forever.





Achan's sin was found out and judged

Achan's sin was found out and judged. God directed Joshua to call Israel before Him so that those guilty of taking the devoted things could be judged. He instructed Joshua to have the people come forward as tribes, then as clans, then as households, then as men, with the Lord choosing each by lot and eventually revealing the man who was responsible for taking the devoted things (see Joshua 7:14). When Achan was the man who was finally taken, Joshua appealed to Achan without hesitation to confess. Achan, affected by the way he was found out, immediately confessed to taking a cloak, some silver and a bar of gold. He and his entire family were then taken to the Valley of Achor where they and their possessions were stoned and burned with fire. Just as God's mercy came to an outsider (Rahab and her entire family), God's judgment came to an Israelite's entire family. Rahab shows us that the Lord's mercy is not only for those inside the camp and Achan shows us that the Lord's judgments are not only for those outside the camp. The Lord in His holy judgment will not compromise.

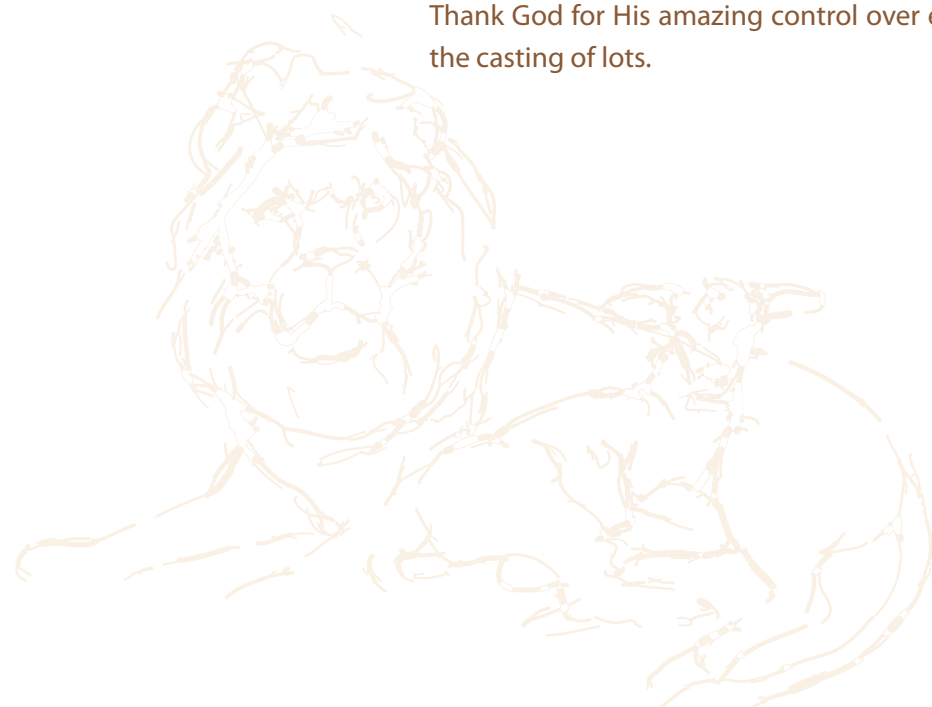
TALK ABOUT IT:

What is a lot? (*Parents, you might do well to demonstrate by using plastic soda straws. Gather one straw for each member of your household and cut one of the straws about an inch shorter than the others. Allow each person to pick and then see who was selected by lot in drawing the shortest straw.*)

What does God's ability to control the outcome of lots tell us about God? (*God is in control of all things [See Proverbs 16:33]*).

PRAY:

Thank God for His amazing control over every detail in the entire world, including the casting of lots.





Where is Jesus?

Take time to remind the children that God always punishes sin. The penalty for even one sin is death. Achan deserved to be punished for his sin and was killed for taking the gold and silver. We also deserve to be punished for our sin; however, Jesus took the punishment for our sin at the cross so we could be forgiven.

All those who trust in the Lord enjoy the forgiveness that Jesus obtained through his death on the cross. The Bible says, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21) After God judged Achan, he delivered Ai into Israel's hand and Joshua offered a peace offering sacrifice to God afterwards. This is a foreshadowing of the fact that, one day, 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." With the sacrifice of Jesus, there is no longer a need to offer peace offerings because we have peace with God through Jesus Christ (see Romans 5:1).

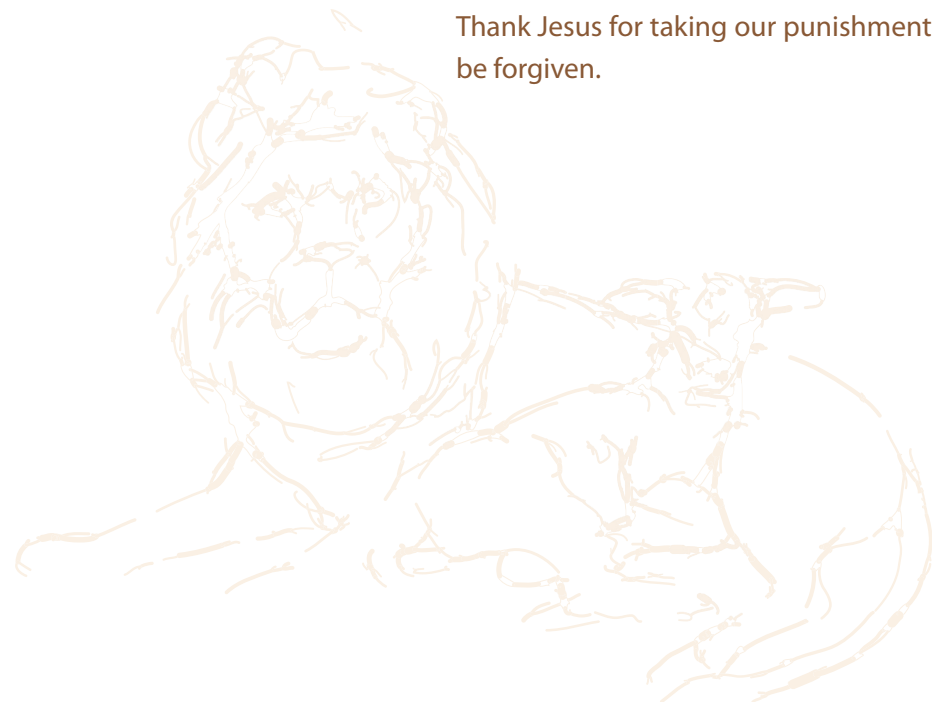
TALK ABOUT IT:

How were Joshua and Achan different? *(Joshua obeyed the Lord but Achan did not.)*

Because we all sin against God like Achan did, we all deserve a similar judgment but God doesn't seem to be judging people like that anymore. Do our sins go unpunished? *(No sins go unpunished. Apart from the saving work of Christ we would all spend eternity in hell as punishment for our rebellion against God; however, Jesus took God's wrath upon Himself for our sin. The punishment we deserved was given to Jesus instead.)*

PRAY:

Thank Jesus for taking our punishment upon the cross, making it possible for us to be forgiven.





THE STORY: JOSHUA 8:1-29

THURSDAY

Israel defeated Ai and enjoyed the spoils

Israel defeated Ai and enjoyed the spoils. In God's kindness He gave Ai into the hands of Israel and rewarded them by allowing Israel to keep the spoils and livestock of this war for themselves. Prior to the battle, Joshua warned them to "do according to the word of the Lord." Reminiscent of the day Moses held up his hands during the battle against the Amalekites (Exodus 17:9-13), Joshua held up his javelin until Israel's victory was secured.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What would Achan have received if he had only trusted God? *(If Achan had trusted God he would have received some of the spoils from the city of Ai. Instead, he took some of the spoils from Jericho and was judged for taking it.)*

What lesson should we learn from this story? *(We can trust God, worship Him alone, and He will provide for us. If we seek after the pleasures or possessions of this world, we will learn that they will not provide anything for us.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you seek after the Lord, not the pleasures of this world.



THE STORY: JEREMIAH 33:14-15

FRIDAY

On the road to Emmaus.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise written in this passage. He is the righteous Branch for David; He is a righteous judge. Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience in our place, as our representative before God. Because of His death on the cross, where He took the penalty for our sin, we can be forgiven. His perfect righteousness as our representative before God can be given to us. That is why we say that the Lord is our righteousness.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What is the promise that God made to the house of Israel? *(The promise goes back to Abraham's time when God said that He would bless all nations of the earth through Abraham. [See Genesis 17:5 and 18:18])*

How are we included in God's promise? *(We are among the peoples of the nations that God blessed. He did this through the righteous branch—Jesus.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for His wonderful plan to save us through Jesus the Lord, our righteousness.