

# The Valley of Trouble

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Joshua 7

The “*thrill of victory and the agony of defeat*” was a line that my generation grew up with on Saturdays. It was in the introduction every week on ABC’s Wide World of Sports. It also featured the ski jumper doing horizontal somersaults off the ski ramp!

Israel is about to face the agony of defeat after the thrill of victory at Jericho. What are the lessons in this narrative for us today?

## I. What Happened at Ai? (Joshua 7:2-5a)

- A. The reasonable confidence of the spies (**Joshua 7:2-3**)
- B. The defeat of Israel (**Joshua 7:4-5a**)
  - 1. Three thousand Israeli men (text calls them men, not soldiers) went to battle.
  - 2. In the battle, the men fled (ran for their lives).
  - 3. In their flight, the men of Ai killed 36 of Israel’s men.
  - 4. Chased them from the gate of Ai to Shebarim.
- C. Though initially “unknown to Israel,” the resounding defeat at Ai will bring into focus a question:
  - 1. What happens when we violate God’s commands and defy His holiness?

## II. How Did Israel Respond? (Joshua 7:5b-9)

- A. Now, the insiders' hearts melt (**See 2:9,11**). (Metaphorically, a position of being “flat on your face.”)
- B. Joshua’s leadership response (**Joshua 7:6**)
  - 1. Before God’s presence with the elders (the Ark).
  - 2. Came in humility (torn clothes, dust on head, prostrate before the LORD)
- C. Joshua’s prayer (**Joshua 7:7-9**)
  - 1. The question of “Why?” (7)
  - 2. The unexplainable bewilderment (8)
  - 3. How will your name be glorified (9)?

## III. What Did God Require? (Joshua 7:10-15)

- A. Grief & lament are no substitute for obedience (**Joshua 7:10**)
  - 1. Similar situation in **1 Samuel 15:22**.
- B. The reality of sin: Hidden sin cannot coexist with blessing from God.
  - 1. The fly of disobedience makes all the ointment unusable (**Ecclesiastes 10:1**).
  - 2. Left unaddressed, sin will result in the downfall of our walk with God (**Joshua 7:12**)
- C. What does repentance look like in action? (**Joshua 7:13-15**)
  - 1. Get up (**13a**) – repentance results in change.
  - 2. Consecrate (**13b**) – remove the devoted things from yourself.
  - 3. Destroy (**14-15**) – the violators.

## IV. How Did Judgment Fall? (Joshua 7:16-26)

- A. The exacting process of consecration (**Joshua 7:16-18**)
- B. The confession required of consecration (**Joshua 7:19-21**)
  - 1. Confession gives glory and praise to God (He is right and I am wrong).
  - 2. Confession is complete, transparent, and specific.
  - 3. Confession reveals the pattern of temptation (**see Genesis 3:6 and 1 John 2:16**).
    - a) “I saw”
    - b) “I coveted”
    - c) “I took”
- C. What is the solution to this problem?
  - 1. Achan was brought outside the camp to the “Valley of Achor (Trouble)” to bear the penalty of his transgression. (Careful consideration to: verse 24 “them”- Achan, sons, daughters, household goods. Verse 25 – “you” “stoned him” “burned them” you-Achan; stoned him-Achan; burned them-Achan and his goods or Achan, his sons and daughters, and his goods?)
  - 2. Consider Deuteronomy 24:16; however, the text does not cleanly resolve this issue, but the Bible

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- does resolve the issue of God's perfect justice, and we can be assured of it.
3. The Gospel Picture (Hebrews 13:11-13). Christ as the innocent dying for the guilty, taken outside the "camp" and crucified

**V. What Principle Governs All of It? (Various Scripture)**

- A. Joshua 6:18-19
- B. Devoted things
- C. First Fruits of the Conquest
- D.