

The Sin of Achan

Part 1

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:01] Joshua, Chapter 7 The children of Israel committed a trespass in the church of Zing. For Achan, the son of Parmi, the son of Zadvi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the church of Zing, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-Avon, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up, and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai, and make not all the people go to labor thither, for they are but few.

So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men, and they fled before the men of Ai.

[00:01:03] And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men, for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shibboleth, and smote them in the going down, wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

And Joshua rent his clothes and salt of the earth upon his face, before the arm of the Lord, until the even time, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all sought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? But which to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan?

O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their back before that enemy? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, [00:02:03] and shall environ us around, and cut off our name from the earth. And what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them, for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen and disassembled it also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel should not stand before their enemy, but turn their backs before their enemy, because they were accursed. Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel, [00:03:01] Thou canst not stand before thine enemy until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning, therefore, ye shall be brought according to your tribe, and it shall be that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall

come according to the families thereof, and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by household, and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man. And it shall be that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, and he and all that he hath, because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath brought folly in Israel. So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. And he brought the family of Judah, and he took the family of Zerite. And he brought the family of the Zerites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. And he brought his household man by man, and Achan, the son of Parmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, was taken. [00:04:03] And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua and said, Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus, and thus have I done. When I was among the spoils, when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them.

And behold, they are hid in the earth, in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent. Behold, it was hid in the tent, and the silver under it. And they put them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, [00:05:03] and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his son, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had. And they brought them unto the valley of Achar. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stone, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stone. And they raised over him a great heap of stone unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger, wherefore the name of that place is called the Valley of Achar unto this day. This is one of the most grim chapters, I believe, that we have in the scripture. Grim for some two aspects.

[00:06:06] First, because of the offense to the holiness and the righteousness of God, and then for the result of the offense, which was necessary on the part of God.

This is a chapter which is often turned against by modernists and liberalists of our day, and pointed to, in order to degrade God, as being some sort of a bully.

One who would do what even a man wouldn't do for such a purpose. And as we look at the sin of Achan, that all he stole really was a garment of some Babylonian, and some gold, and some silver.

And surely soldiers that go to war always take somewhat of the loot.

[00:07:01] And when he comes back, to question him about what he did, and to call it a severe offense, so severe that the man himself, and his children, and his wife, his family, his assets, his cattle, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, should be stoned with stones, and then burnt with fire, certainly don't tell me that this is a God of love. This is one of the chapters that's pointed to in view of the offensiveness of the word of God to the human mind.

Now the word of God is an offense, we must remember this. It is an offense. The ways of God are offensive to the natural man. Many times believers are not moved.

Many times believers, on reading a chapter like this, are moved because of the severity of God.
[00:08:01] A chapter like this would cause a believer to fear God.

When I say fear, I don't mean to be frightened of him, but I mean in the sense that fear is used in the scripture, a godly reverential fear, an awesome fear, because of who he is, and what he is.

We will see that Achan was a part of the company of Israel. He was not only of the tribe of Judah, but he was a son of Israel, one of twelve tribes. Judah was one of the twelve tribes.

So we can see how God reckons.

We can see how God reckons with that which comes among his people that is not in consistency or in accord with his will or his word. God does not overlook offenses on the part of his dear people.
[00:09:04] But on the opposite, the offenses of the people of God stand out in more bold and sharp contrast than the offenses that would be caused by one who is yet in his sins. God recognizes all the offenses. There is no question about it. But one who has accepted the Lord Jesus as their Savior and is in the family of God has been put into the position of sonship by the new birth, being born into the family of God, and has been predestinated into the realm of sonship, bears a tremendous responsibility in our walk, in our conduct, our morals, our habits, and so forth, in this world, in connection with this world, to the point where our offense is far greater, far greater than the offense of one who knows not God and has ceased in his sins.

Simply because God has, by his mercy and by his grace, made known his mind and his will and his purposes to us. [00:10:08] In verse 1 it says, But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed scene. For Achan, the son of Parmi, the son of Thaddei, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. Now this verse alone stands out paramount in the fact of the principle of oneness among the people of God and of the association of one another among the people of God and our individual association, how it affects all of the rest of the people of God. It was Achan who had sinned, but God said, the children of Israel committed a trespass. [00:11:03] Now when God looked at the people of Israel, he saw that the people had committed a trespass.

The fact that Achan was a part of the assembly of the people of Israel brought his sin into reflection and in association with the rest of the people.

You will say, well, no, I don't know. Well, if we go to the New Testament, in the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, we have the story or the principle of the one body and the many parts. We know that one part of the body can't do without the other, and one part of the body can't say, why am I not this? And the other part can't say, why am I not that? The hand can't say to the foot, why am I not a foot? And you know as well as I that as we use the allegory of the body or the physical body in connection with the people of God, that there is a oneness in the physical body [00:12:03] that works in complete unison and coordination with every other part.

Without thinking, along time, if you sit down at the wrong place, you'll get up in a hurry. You won't have to stop and consider, now let's see, what should I do about this? No, it's like that, you'll get up. If you stumble, automatically your hands will go off the ground to catch something or to stop the fall or at least to check the fall and your arms will go out to check any hurt to the body.

The allegory of the body is used to show a oneness that there is among the people of God, whether it was Israel in the Old Testament or the Church in the New.

God points out to us the importance of our seeing and recognizing this and especially so when we see that if one part suffers, all the parts suffer.

[00:13:03] If you ever throw the nail and miss the nail and hit your finger, I don't know why it is but all of a sudden something comes out of something that wasn't hit, right down here and there's a noise comes up out of here, ouch. Why? And it happens awful fast as if by electricity. Awfully fast, I wonder why? It's because of the close coordination of all the parts of the body in response to everything that happens to the body, whether it be slight or not. When I'm stuck with a pin, pin point isn't very big, is it? And it doesn't do a whole lot of damage but if you would sneak up behind someone and stick them with a pin, I'm certain you'd get into trouble. Why? The whole body would respond to this.

And I use this true though it may seem to show how in the eyes of God, we as the body of Christ are one.

And what one member does affects what another member is [00:14:01] in connection morally before God and spiritually before God. Therefore the story of Achan comes out in very sharp contrast in relationship to the Church or Israel as against the world.

Israel were the people of God and he looked to them as one. He said he called his son out of Egypt. He said out of Egypt have I called my son and primarily that meant to Israel. Ultimately of course it meant Christ when he called them back out of Egypt when they had gone down there to escape Herod. His parents had taken them down by the word of the Lord.

So here we see how God looked at Israel. He says the children of Israel committed a trick path.

And as we read down a little farther, in the latter part of that verse it says And the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. [00:15:02] Against the children of Israel.

We must look at things the way God looks at things. You and I as Christians have no right to look at a principle or a situation as the world looks at it.

The old man is prone to look at it the way the world looks at it because he is of the world.

But the new man is responsible to look at the truth of God in the light that God has set the new man in and to see things as God sees them.

And to accept the word of God as God has given it. And not to use our own reasoning and our own thought to pitch against what God has said and then call God unreasonable.

Now this is done and it is very easy to do even with a Christian. Of course a Christian when he is away from God is prone to do this. The one who is walking with the Lord in fellowship and in communion with the Lord [00:16:04] never questions the word or the purposes or the ways of God. The one who is not walking in fellowship with the Lord often times is prone to wonder why God would do such a thing to one of his children. Well now we know that in the New Testament it says that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Well now we know that leaven is a type of sin.

And when you put a little leaven in meal and we must remember that meal is typical of moral perfection. Of moral righteousness.

That is according to man's righteousness or God's demand of man's righteousness. If we look back at the meal offering in the Old Testament the meal offering spoke of Christ in all of his moral perfection. And the meal offering was composed of fine flour, oil and frankincense.

No blood was in the meal offering [00:17:03] because there was no blood required in the meal offering. This had to do with the moral perfection of the Lord Jesus as he was in his life in all of his moral perfection before God and before man.

So therefore when we are thinking in terms of leaven being in a little flour or a lot of flour and you mix a little leaven in it it speaks of the righteous life of a believer as he is seen in Christ.

And this is what God attributes to him. But on the other hand there is a righteous requirement that God makes practically from the individual Christian. That we should not only be like Christ as he sees us in him and never will see us any other way but that we should express that righteousness [00:18:02] in a very practical moral way in all of our work before man.

So that God can be pleased with our behavior and our conduct and that we might live a life that will glorify the Lord Jesus. Well, God saw that Israel had committed a trespass and it also says that his anger was kindled against the children of Israel. As we look over the context of the scripture we find out that right after the victory of Jericho when the ark went up before the people of Israel and God gave them a great victory we find here that Joshua sent spies out and I think they were filled, it appears as though they were filled with the glories of the recent victory at Jericho.

[00:19:06] When he sent the spies out, in verse 2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai which is beside Beth-Avon on the east side of Bethel and spoke unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed it, and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said unto them let not all the people go up but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai. And make not all the people go to labor thither for they are but few.

One of the lessons that we have here is underestimating the enemy. This is one of the greatest failures of all military strategy down through the history of man, to underestimate the enemy. And we dare not underestimate our and our adversary, [00:20:01] our enemy, Satan, the devil.

As soon as we underestimate him this is a sign that we are depending on our own strength this is a sign that we are have a self-assurance that we can take care of him.

And the fact that we think it's going to be easy to take care of the enemy shows that we are overconfident in ourselves and have greatly underestimated the ability of the enemy.

And that's what happened here. They had a mighty victory at Jericho.

And so they were on their way now to begin to conquer the Canaanite tribe.

And God had given them promise, if we turn back to chapter 1 which is the kind of promises that we as believers can lay hold of [00:21:03] because we have promises equal to this in the New Testament verse 5, chapter 1 of the book of Joshua There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

What we have here is Moses has died. Joshua led the people over into the was about to lead the people over into the land and the mantle, so to speak, of Moses is now placed upon Joshua. God has turned over the responsibility of leading the people to Joshua and now he is encouraging his heart. He said, As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

Be strong and of a good courage.

For unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swear unto thy fathers to give them. [00:22:01] Only be thou strong and very courageous.

That thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant, commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left hand that thou mayest transfer whithersoever thou goest. How do you get strong?

What do you do when you're strong?

Well, you observe to do according to all the law of God.

That's what we do as strong Christians. We don't get strong by keeping the law of God. We get strong first by being in a state of fellowship and communion with God in our souls.

And then, with our strength, we can walk in a manner that pleases him. So, the context here bears this out. Only, verse 7, only be thou strong and very courageous. [00:23:01] That thou mayest observe. Be strong that thou mayest be able to observe.

To do according to all the law which Moses, my servant, commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left that thou mayest transfer whithersoever thou goest.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth that thou shalt meditate therein day and night that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success.

When? When? Then. Well, then what?

What's the word then come in after? Read it again. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth that thou shalt meditate therein day and night that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous [00:24:04] and then thou shalt have good success.

We cannot as Christians expect to be prosperous in our Christianity or in our testimony nor successful if we do not meditate in the word of God. This is a prerequisite to Christian success and prosperity.

This is a prerequisite to it.

And if we don't have this, we're not equipped to go out and face the opposition.

Well, verse 9.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage.

Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.

The Lord knew that they would be dismayed when they saw the things that he would do that were just ahead of them in the conquering of the land. Be not afraid, neither be dismayed.

Don't be afraid of the enemy, but don't be dismayed when you see how quick I am going to make a work of them [00:25:02] if you meditate in my law and keep our heart where the Lord would have it, have our heart. It is centered on himself. For the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest. Now, there's no condition to the Christian as to the fact of the presence of God.

The Christian is promised the presence of God forever. I will not ever leave thee, nor forsake thee. It's a double negative, I understand, and it could be said this way. I will never, never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Of course, no matter how many nevers you put on there, it won't increase the meaning of it because when the Lord says never, that's what he means. So that's the joy of us, of our hearts, when we can go to the word of God and see that he says to us, I will never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee. [00:26:16] Go on, it says, For the people are but few.

The people are but few.

The smallest things that are in opposition to the believer do not need half our spiritual efforts, do not need half of God's ability to deliver us or to give us a victory.

The smallest things need all of what God has for us.

We have it in Ephesians chapter 6 that we should put on therefore the whole armor of God. It never says we should just put on the helmet of salvation or the shield of faith or the breastplate of faith or the breastplate of righteousness or the shield of faith. [00:27:01] No, we are to put on the whole armor of God.

And unless we are armed with the whole armor of God, we're not able to withstand the enemy in any of the mild forms that he may approach us. You know the Christian is tripped up more in the mild forms of Satan's wiles than in his awful, wicked, iniquitous ways that he would have us to get into. Satan doesn't come to a believer with open iniquity. He comes to a believer with a very mild form, a very mild form. Something that when you consider it, you think, oh, well, there's nothing wrong with this. Or you might say, well, I wonder if this is right or is this wrong. Almost invariably you will find that this is wrong because it's the faithfulness of God that raises the question. When there's something so near or so close that we cannot make a discernment, [00:28:01] God gives us the discernment to make the choice by raising the question. And when God raises the question, it's best that we give God the advantage of the doubt or the benefit of the doubt and then withdraw or withhold ourselves whenever this project or activity may be.

It's the little things, it's the little things that bring defeat.

And they bring defeat because we think there's so little we can handle them ourselves. I'm sure that we all have experienced this as believers. They're so small we think, well, this is insignificant. Why bother the Lord about it? I'll just go ahead and I don't know what to do about this. I know right from wrong. We go ahead and we attack AI, little AI. And we only say, oh, just a few, just take part of my expense. Maybe I'll just take the sword of the Spirit. Maybe I think this will be sufficient. Well, the result is 36 men fell and they were chased.

And little AI chased the mighty men of Israel [00:29:02] in disgrace, into defeat.

And Israel was defeated, not the 3,000 men.

We must see here, all the way through Scripture, that God accounts any part as the whole, whether it be for blessing or whether it be in a sense of His judgment. God will count any part as the whole. Now, God deals individually. It wasn't all Israel that was judged. It was Achan and his family that the final judgment fell upon. What I'm trying to point out is that because of what Achan has done, brought a shadow and a cloud, not the Shekinah cloud, but a shadow and a cloud over the people of Israel, that God had to begin to bring on governmental judgments on His people so that their eyes may be opened that something is wrong. Something is wrong.

We'd better look about it when God does these things. We'd better examine ourselves. [00:30:01] And the speaker speaks to himself in particular when he says this tonight. I had better examine myself.

So there went up thither of the people, verse 4, about 3,000 men, and they fled before the men of AI.

And the men of AI smote of them about 30 and 6 men, for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shivarim, and smote them in the going down, wherefore the hearts of the people melted.

The hearts of the people melted.

Why? Now, I don't know how far through this chapter we're going to get. I know we're not going to get through the chapter. So when God brings upon us certain defeat in endeavors because of a condition in an assembly, when God brings upon an assembly this type of judgment, [00:31:03] then we had better, as an assembly of believers, begin to, each one of us, examine himself before the Lord.

As the hearts of the people melted.

There wasn't rejoicing here. There was no worship here. Their hearts melted.

There was another time we read about melted. Remember when...

Let me see if I can find it. In chapter 5, I see the word here in verse 1. Then it came to pass when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan, westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard [00:32:02] that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we were passed over.

Then their hearts melted.

Neither was there spirit in them anymore because of the children of Israel.

The hearts of the Canaanites and the hearts of the Amorites had melted when they heard that the Lord, the God of Israel, had parted the waters of the Jordan and led them over.

Their hearts melted.

Well, this is the whole land of Canaan whose hearts were melted.

And Israel goes up against a little bit of the town and they say, oh, this is Phoenix.

This is not going to be any trouble for us. So just a couple of us will go up and we'll take care of this as more or less of a side issue.

It's not going to be anything like Jericho.

We'll just go up and take care of this matter. [00:33:01] Well, because of this attitude, their hearts were melted.

And their hearts melted over a little handful of men from Ai. But because of the fear of God in their hearts and walking in the ways of the Lord and keeping the commandments of Moses, one nation, Israel, has put the fear into the people of the land of Canaan so that it says their hearts melted and there was no spirit in them anymore. So you see, no matter how strong we may be, how strong we may feel, without Him, we can do nothing.

Absolutely nothing.

Because when I am strong, Scripture says, then am I weak.

When I'm weak, then I'm strong.

And this simply means that when I feel strong that I can do the matter, then I am weak. Because when I feel my strength, then I am certain that I am not going to go forward in the strength of God.

[00:34:02] But when I am weak, when I am not feeling my strength, when I am feeling the strength of God and I am discerning the strength of God, then am I strong.

And so this is the contrast we have in connection with A.I.

Our hearts melted and became as water.

You know, there's no resistance in water. Water will level off itself no matter what kind of a shape you put it in. It will form itself, but it's bodily to whatever shape you put it in. It will have no resistance to anything, and so forth. Except, of course, that which has a density lighter than it. We won't go into that.

But if you drop something in water, water will wrap itself around it and absorb it. If you put it in a square pan, then the shape of the water body is square. Put it in round, the shape of the water is

round. Put it rectangular, it's rectangular. Do anything at all, but you do it.

[00:35:04] Now, when our hearts melt because of the world and because of the offenses of the world for the name of Christ, and we think we can do things on our own, this is the kind of people we become. Our hearts are like water, wishy-washy, no spirit, no strength, weak, spiritually emaciated, and certainly a very bad testimony.

And Joshua ran his clothes.

Back comes his 3,000, less 6, just less 36.

Their hearts are melted. They're in defeat. And little A.I.'s chasing them, a small army of A.I.

Joshua sees this, and he says here in verse 6, And Joshua ran his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord. You know, there's one thing I noticed here, that the ark of the Lord was not with them, like it was in Jericho.

[00:36:02] The ark of the Lord speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ in Pipe.

The ark, our ark, is Christ.

The ark in which we are, is our safety. That's Christ. We are in Christ, the ark, we're safe.

The only way we can be touched is if somebody touches the ark, and nobody can touch the ark. Because man has laid his filthy, wicked hands upon him for the last time, when they put him upon the cross. And we had this in Sunday school this morning, when the love he thought was brought out, that from the time he was taken, from the time that he expired upon the cross, when the spirit pierced his side, or whether the sponge touched his lips, this was the last touch of the wicked hands of man. From then on, only those whom God had ordained handled him from this moment on. But up to then, man was allowed to extend all of his wrath and hatred and insult to the blessed person of the Lord Jesus, [00:37:01] the eternal Son of God.

This is the ark.

Do we keep the ark before us?

Do we go about our daily chores with the ark before us? Because without the ark, the little men of Ai, the little army of Ai can chase us.

Without the ark. The little army of Ai can chase us.

We can run if we go up without the ark, there's only one place to go if we go up without the ark, and that's to go back to the ark, and that's where Joshua went.

But he went there under defeat, and in brokenness, and in shame, and in disgrace before God.

Let's never, dear believers, let's never turn away from the ark if we go out without Christ and we fail. Please, let's go back to the ark, get restored, and go on.

Don't allow Satan to do his worst, which is to discourage us to the point [00:38:02] that we'll stop going on, because we have a Lord that is always willing to receive us, and to restore us, and to strengthen us, and to arm us again for the fight.

While he was on his place before the ark of the Lord, until the even time, he and the elders of Israel and put dust upon their heads.

This is taking a place of lowliness, and humility, and shame before the Lord.

But they did it. They did it.

And this is honorable, and it's honorable in the believers. And Joshua said, and I marvel when I read Joshua saying this. One of the last people you would expect to say this would be Joshua.

But in verse 7 he says, And Joshua said, [00:39:11] Think of Joshua saying this. A mighty, mighty man of God.

The man that went up at Beersheba who went up and despised the land. And one of the two men that came back and tried to persuade the whole nation of Israel to go in that God was able, and that God would if they would but go.

But they would not. Here's one of these men.

This is one of the two men that lived throughout the wilderness journey to see the land. For all those that doubted over, I think it was over 20 years old, died and their carcasses fell in the wilderness. 40 years march and they all died in the wilderness because they would not go up at the command of God and at the request of Joshua and Caleb. This is one of those two men.

[00:40:01] And now we find him saying, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought us, brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the land of the Amorites to destroy us? Would to God we had been content as well on the other side of Jordan.

Much could be said about this verse. Time is now gone.

But read something else of what Joshua said. These are words that should burn into our hearts. O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turn at their backs before their enemies?

We can say, O Lord, what shall we say when we turn our backs upon our enemies?

When we turn our backs upon our enemies, this is a lack of faith in God.

This is a sure show of weakness and defeat.

Joshua is at wit's end.

[00:41:02] O Lord, what shall we say when Israel turn at their backs to their enemies? God has shown them nothing but success and victory from the time he began to lead them, from the time he brought them out of Egypt, throughout the 40 years of the wilderness, over the Red Sea, over the Jordan

River, into the land.

And first there's a battle, and it's a wonderful battle at Jericho, and now comes a little bit of a group, and they go down.

O Lord, what shall we say when we turn our backs upon our enemies in defeat, and our hearts melt within us, and our eyes water?

Well, each of us must answer these questions for ourselves.

Verse 9, For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land that hear of it, and shall environ us around or surround us, and cut off our name from the earth, and what wilt thou do [00:42:03] unto thy great name?

It seems here as if the Lord's name came last.

The last thing he says, and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

He mentioned just about everything else, didn't he? And finally he said, thy great name.

So we're glad that Joshua didn't forget about the great name of the Lord, and we're glad that he didn't forget about going to where the ark was, and getting before the ark, and crying to God.

But he goes back as if God was no longer a potential God, as if he were no longer the Almighty God.

He falls before the Lord on his face before the ark with the elders of the people as if there's no hope anymore.

Well, it's nice if we could prevail against all of our enemies while we did what we pleased to suit ourselves at the same time, but this isn't the way it's going to be.

[00:43:03] It seems that Joshua wanted to mix, and the people wanted to mix up with the words and the commandments of God and the ways and the instructions of God some of their own ways.

It seems that they would have forgotten quite a bit of what God had told them when they marched up to Ai.

I may be wrong, I don't recall, but it seems to me as I read through this that before every conquest they were to return to Gilgal. Can anybody confirm that?

Isn't that right, Frank? I don't know.

It seems to me that before every conquest, after they got into the land, they were to return to Gilgal, and from Gilgal, which is a place, as I understand, of self-judgment, and the rolling off of the world under self-judgment, this is where Christian victory begins.

And there's no record here that they did this. So that we can also include this thought that they went up without judging themselves [00:44:03] and attended to conquer an enemy, though he was small,

and without these requirements or prerequisites, we might say, of God, they failed, and we too failed.

If we do not go according to the word of God, according to the purposes of the plan and the law of God, we fail.

We have plans, we have a course to follow, we have a chart, we have a compass, and here it is.

And when we attempt anything for God and not consult the compass and the chart before we thrust out on this endeavor, we can expect what the men of Israel got when they went up against Ai.

So although we didn't get very far in the book, my heart was cured in the meditation that we had this evening, and I trust that God will speak to all of our hearts that as Christians, we should try to reflect more and more [00:45:01] day by day in these last terrible days. And I say last because this age is growing faster, so reflect the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives.

Cut off, cut off those things in which we would endeavor to do which would connect us with the world and all of its endeavors, and be a separated people that we may go out to our battle and come back victorious and not be ashamed.

Father, we bow before thee tonight to give thee thanks for thy precious word and ask that thou use it and impress it upon our hearts that in it and by it and through it we might go on to victory here and now and to the praise and the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ with whom we will be forever. So we ask it and give thee our thanks for it in his precious name. Amen.