

Questions God Asks

What are You Doing Down on Your Face?

But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things^[a]; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri,^[b] the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel. 2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So the men went up and spied out Ai. 3 When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there." 4 So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, 5 who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water. 6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, "Alas, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! 8 Pardon your servant, Lord. What can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? 9 The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?" 10 The Lord said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? 11 Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. 12 That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction. 13 "Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, 'Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.

Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. 2 You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city." 3 So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night 4 with these orders: "Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on the alert. 5 I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them. 6 They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, 'They are running away from us as they did before.' So when we flee from them, 7 you are to rise up from ambush and take the city. The Lord your God will give it into your hand. 8 When you have taken the city, set it on fire. Do what the Lord has commanded. See to it; you have my orders."

So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land. (Joshua 6:27)

"What are you doing down on your face?"

We see a confidence (vv. 1-3)

When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there."

We see a consequence (vs. 4)

So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, 5 who killed about thirty-six of them. (Josh 7:4)

We see a consecration (vv. 6-13)

Alas, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us?

“Israel has sinned, and they have transgressed My covenant which I commanded them” (Josh. 7:11).

They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. 12 That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.

We see a confession.

“Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them. (Vs. 13)

Firstly, his sin arose from discontent.

Secondly, God’s rebuke is not, ‘Achan has sinned’ but ‘Israel has sinned’.

“What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?” 1 Cor 5:12

Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw I coveted them and took them. (vv. 20-21)

For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. (1 Jn 2:16)

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (1 Pet 3:13-17)

Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. (Gal 5:19)

“It does us no good to spend hours crying out to God for a greater manifestation of His presence if we are not willing to do the simple things He commands. There is no use in praying for greater power or answers to prayer when we are offending the God we claim to serve. Repentance starts with us. Sin isn’t merely “out there” somewhere. It is specific and it needs to be dealt with in specific ways. Let’s deal with our sins before they not only contaminate our lives, but affect other people as well.” Israel Wayne

We see a confirmation

Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. (Josh 8:1)

8 When you have taken the city, set it on fire. Do what the Lord has commanded. See to it; you have my orders.”

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Ps. 139:23-24)