

ACHAN'S SIN AND THE DEFEAT OF AI

JOSHUA 7-8



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 24:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Achan disobeyed the command of God, and his punishment was death. We also deserve the punishment of death for our sin. Jesus, God's sinless Son, was punished in our place for our sin. Those who trust in Him are forever forgiven of their sin.

STORY POINT: God desires obedience and punishes disobedience.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Joshua's account of Achan's sin and Ai's defeat serves as a "part two" of the Israelites' time in Jericho. Immediately following Israel's victory over Jericho, we read of disobedience and God's declaration to no longer be with Israel unless they removed what was set apart for Him (Joshua 7:12). God demonstrated His holiness by punishing sin, and through this story, we see the reality of God's judgment and our need for a Savior.

What does this passage teach us about God? How do we see God's faithful deliverance in this story despite His people's sin?

First, we witness God's justice and holiness in this passage. Before entering Jericho, God gave His people these instructions: "But keep yourselves from the things set apart, or you will be set apart for destruction. If you take any of those things, you will set apart the camp of Israel for destruction and make trouble for it" (Joshua 6:18). God had already spoken about the consequences of disobedience. Because He is holy and likewise calls His people to pursue holiness, the Israelites were to purge the sin from among them.

The Lord had promised victory to His people if they would walk in His ways. The Israelites, however, were unfaithful regarding God's command to set Jericho's spoils apart for destruction. Sadly, their disobedience led to punishment.

Lead boys and girls to see that this story does not end with dismal destruction; rather, we see the Lord faithfully keep His promise to deliver His people from their enemies. God set Achan apart for destruction, just as He said He would. Destruction, however, does not have to be our end. By placing faith in Jesus, the punishment we deserve has been placed on God's Son instead. Remind kids of God's faithfulness in providing a sacrifice on our behalf and an eternal victory secured in His Son—a victory that transforms hearts and frees people from the destruction they deserve.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Hidden Treasures" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ plastic bins, 1 per group
- ☐ dry rice or sand
- ☐ small treasures such as costume jewelry, wrapped candies, pennies



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ small cloak or wrap, fake silver, and a fake bar of gold (optional)

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 7, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Singing His Praises" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "Who Is (Psalm 24:8)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ ball



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ beach ball
- ☐ blindfold
- ☐ painter's tape
- ☐ hand held fan

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** 🗨️ Do you think it's OK to take something that doesn't belong to you? Why not? 🗨️

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete "Hidden Treasures" activity page.

| **SAY** 🗨️ God is King, and everything ultimately belongs to Him. Today, we will learn how a man named Achan took treasures that belonged to God. 🗨️

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: TREASURE HUNT

Before the session, fill a plastic bin with dry rice or sand for each group of four or five kids. Hide several small items, or "treasures," inside the sand such as costume jewelry, wrapped candies, and pennies. Tell kids that you only want them to find and collect one type of treasure such as the pennies.

Guide the groups to gather around their bin. Challenge kids to find and collect only the items you told them to. Conclude the activity once each group has collected the specified items.

| **SAY** 🗨️ Great work! Was it hard not to take the other items you saw? [Allow responses.] Today, we will learn how God commanded His people not to take the items in the city of Jericho because they were set apart for Him. However, we'll see that a man named Achan disobeyed this command. Let's get ready to learn how **GOD DESIRES OBEDIENCE AND PUNISHES DISOBEDIENCE.** 🗨️

☐ OPTION 2: HEY YO, LEADER!



Instruct the kids to line up shoulder to shoulder along one side of the room. Choose one kid to be the leader. Explain that the leader will stand at the opposite side of the room. Each kid will take turns asking the leader if they can do a certain activity to move closer to the leader by repeating the phrase, "Hey Yo, leader!" For example: "Hey Yo, leader! May I take five baby steps forward?" Or "Hey Yo, leader! May I take three jumps forward?" The leader can either say "yes" or "no." The first child to reach the leader wins.

| **SAY** 🗨️ Was it hard to accept the leader's decision? [Allow responses.] Sometimes a person may make a decision that seems unfair and makes us upset. But God always makes decisions for His glory and our good. We can obey God because everything He does or asks of us is right and good. Today, we will see that **GOD DESIRES OBEDIENCE AND PUNISHES DISOBEDIENCE.** 🗨️

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I am so happy to see you. If you have your Bible with you, go ahead and take it out where I can see it. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] God has given us His Word, the Bible. The Bible is true and helps us know God and how to live through His Son, Jesus. This means we should trust and obey what the Bible says.

Today, we will hear how the Israelites continued following God’s plan to take the land of Canaan. Let’s turn to the book of Joshua. [Assist kids in finding Joshua in their Bibles.] God gave Joshua and the Israelites specific commands to follow because He had a good plan for His people. **GOD DESIRES OBEDIENCE AND PUNISHES DISOBEDIENCE.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] But we will see that not all of God’s people obeyed Him. Let’s pray together as we prepare to read God’s Word. [Pray with the kids or ask a volunteer to pray.] ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Who can remind me of our big picture question? [Allow responses.] Our big picture question is, **why can we trust God?** [Allow responses.] The answer we learned is, **we can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.** Let’s say the answer one more time: **we can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.** ”

God had a plan to give the Israelites the land of Canaan just as He promised. He can be trusted because His plans are good. Yet, we’ll see how a man named Achan disobeyed God and showed he didn’t trust God. Unlike Achan, **we can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.** ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “We have learned how God miraculously made the way for His people to cross the Jordan River so they could begin to take the land God had given them. Last week, we heard how the Israelites conquered the city of Jericho. How many times did God command His people to march around Jericho on the seventh day? [Allow responses.] God told His people to march around the city seven times. God fought for His people and gave them victory. Today, we will learn about another battle the Israelites fought at the city of Ai. ”

*
Worship

*

*

* Battle Belongs
* Build My Life
* Offering

on wall



LEARN the Bible Story



1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Joshua 7-8. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Achan’s Sin and the Defeat of Ai.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

ACHAN’S SIN AND THE DEFEAT OF AI

“God gave victory to His people, and they conquered Jericho. But before the battle, God told His people, ‘Everything in Jericho is set apart for Me. If you take anything from the city, you will be set apart for destruction.’ During the battle of Jericho, a man named Achan disobeyed this command. He took some of the treasures of Jericho for himself.”

The Israelites moved on from Jericho to a city named Ai. Joshua again sent spies to the city. They said that the city was small and should be easy to defeat. Joshua sent soldiers to capture the city, but the men of Ai defeated them!

Joshua was devastated. He bowed before the Lord and said, ‘Why did you bring us here to be destroyed?’

The Lord responded and said, ‘The people were defeated because Israel has sinned. They have taken what does not belong to them. I will no longer be with you until you find what belongs to Me and was taken.’

Joshua went tribe by tribe, clan by clan, family by family, and then man by man until he discovered who had disobeyed God. Achan confessed: ‘It is true. I have sinned against the LORD. I took a beautiful cloak, five pounds of silver, and a bar of gold.’ Achan and his family died because of his sin.

Once Achan had been punished for his disobedience, God told Joshua to not be afraid because He would give Joshua the city of Ai. Joshua sent troops to Ai again. He made a plan: ‘I will take some of the troops to Ai. When the men of Ai come out to battle, we will run away, just like our troops ran away before. Only this time, they will chase us into a trap.’

Joshua and the men with him pretended to be beaten and ran toward the wilderness. When the men of Ai pursued them, the rest of the soldiers of Israel made a surprise attack. The men of Ai were trapped, and the people of God defeated them. Joshua built an altar to God, and the people worshiped God there.

Christ Connection: Achan disobeyed the command of God, and his punishment was death. We also deserve the punishment of death for our sin. Jesus, God’s sinless Son, was punished in our place for our sin. Those who trust in Him are forever forgiven of their sin.

STORYTELLING TIPS

Visual aid: Gather a small cloak or wrap, fake silver, and a fake bar of gold. As you read through the story, allow the kids to pass these items around and examine them.

Use movement: Copy the movements of the people in the story as you tell kids what happened.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY 🗣️ When the Israelites obeyed God, they were successful against their enemies. God gave them victory when they obeyed Him. Israel had defeated Jericho, and now they were ready to battle the city of Ai. But what happened when they fought against Ai? Did they win? **[Allow responses.]** No, they were defeated. Joshua cried out to the Lord to find out why they had lost the battle. God told Joshua that Israel was defeated because they had sinned.

Do you remember who sinned against God? How did he sin? **[Allow responses.]** Achan sinned against God by taking treasures that did not belong to Him. God told Joshua that He would no longer be with the Israelites unless Joshua found what was taken and returned it. It only took one sin for Israel to lose the battle. Let's think about that. Sin is anything we do that disobeys God. Does sin separate us from God? **[Allow responses.]** God calls all of us to obedience, but it only takes one sin to separate us from God. And the Bible tells us that everyone has sinned against Him.

Achan was punished for his sin. What happened when the Israelites gave the treasures back? **[Allow responses.]** When the treasures were returned, Joshua and the Israelites were able to defeat the people of Ai through the power of God.

Achan disobeyed the command of God, and his punishment was death. We also deserve the punishment of death for our sin. Jesus, God's sinless Son, was punished in our place for our sin. Those who trust in Him are forever forgiven of their sin. 🙏

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION



Gospel poster
SAY 🗣️ Achan's sin led the Israelites to lose the battle, and it led to Achan's death. We also deserve eternal death for our sin. But we can call upon the name of Jesus to be forgiven of our sin. Jesus took the punishment we deserve. God sees anyone who trusts in Jesus as now having His perfect obedience. If you'd like to learn about what it means to trust in Jesus and become a Christian, I'd love to talk with you. 🙏

(Tip: Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)



Show the "Unit 7, Session 3" Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why do people disobey God?
2. How does the Holy Spirit help Christians obey God?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Remind kids that missionaries in South Asia are sharing the gospel with those who have never heard about Jesus. Tell kids that missionaries often use various methods to share the good news about Jesus, such as music and digital Bible stories with people who speak another language or cannot read or write. Play the missions video.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

SAY 🗣️ In addition to using music as a way to share the gospel, missionaries Brooks and Julia West are sharing Bible stories through special digital cards that can be used in electronic devices, like phones. A South Asian woman received one of the digital cards and stored some Bible stories in her phone. One day at a well, she shared these Bible stories with six other women who listened from the woman's phone.

Missionaries like the Wests hope to help local believers share the digital cards with people they know. Sometimes the missionaries gather groups of believers with other villagers to listen to the Bible stories on the digital cards. After each story, the missionaries ask questions to get the believers to think about what they heard and understood about the meaning and importance of the story. Missionaries are excited that the phone cards allow people who may not be able to read or write hear about Jesus in their language. 🗣️

Pray for the missionaries and Christians in South Asia as they use music and phone cards with Bible stories to help more people know about Jesus. Pray that many will trust in Jesus and be saved from their sin.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 24:8 together.

SAY 🗣️ God is mighty in battle! God helped His people to win the battle at Ai. Jesus gives believers victory over sin and death. 🗣️

Guide kids to sit in a circle. Provide a kid with a ball. Challenge kids to say a word of the key passage and then toss the ball to another kid. Continue encouraging kids to pass the ball to someone new each time until the entire key passage has been said.

~~Lead kids to sing "Who Is (Psalm 24:8)." You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.~~

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY 🗣️ Dear God, we praise You for being the King of Glory, strong and mighty in battle. May we go forward in obedience to You as we share Your gospel with those around us. Amen. 🗣️

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Joshua 7. Explain that the book of Joshua is directly after the book of Deuteronomy, and it is the first book in the History division of the Old Testament. Remind the kids that the History division of the Old Testament includes all the books from Joshua to Esther.

Consider pointing out the location of Ai (G5) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Joshua 7:19 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY 🗨️ Joshua told Achan to confess his sin. This means that Achan needed to tell God what he did wrong. God receives glory, or praise, when we recognize our sin. The Bible tells us that our sin cannot be hidden from God. But it also tells us that when we repent of our sin and turn to Jesus, God will forgive us. Because Jesus lived a perfect life in our place, died a death we deserved, and rose again, we can be forgiven of our sin. 🙏

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY 🗨️ Why does God punish sin? 🙏

Tell kids that not only does God punish sin, He is right to do so. The Bible shows us that God is holy, meaning He is without sin. Because He is holy, God alone sets the standard for what is morally right and wrong. God is also righteous and just. To be righteous and just means doing what is morally right. Since God always does what is right, He must punish sin.

SAY 🗨️ Why do we need to obey God? 🙏

Remind kids that everything God does or asks of us is right and good. Discuss how God is King, and He has authority over everything, including our lives. Tell kids that obedience is a matter of trusting God and believing He will always lead us to what is best, even if we don't always understand His plans.

SAY 🗨️ Why do you think everything in Jericho was set apart for God? 🙏

Discuss how God didn't need the treasures of Jericho, because everything already belongs to Him. Share how He wanted the Israelites to obey Him by setting aside the treasures of this world in order to seek Him first. Remind kids that God is greater than any earthly treasure. When we trust in Jesus, we receive the greatest treasure there is: life with God forever.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: LISTEN CLOSELY

Before the session, use painter's tape to create a pathway through the classroom. Leave the pathway wide enough for a beach ball to pass through. Explain to the kids that they will be playing a game where they must listen closely. Choose one kid to complete the obstacle course and another kid to be the guide. Explain that he or she must use a fan to blow the ball down the obstacle course blindfolded. The guide will be able to give instructions to help keep the ball on course. Once they've started, invite the other kids to begin giving wrong instructions to the kid with the blindfold. Encourage the kid to listen only to the voice of the guide.

SAY Was it difficult to hear the voice of the guide when others gave wrong instructions? [Allow responses.] God has a plan for His glory and our good, and we need to listen to His commands. Sometimes the world will try to lead us astray, or our own sinful hearts will turn us away from God's good commands. We can remember that through faith in Jesus, we receive the Holy Spirit who helps us obey God.

☐ OPTION 2: GOOD COMMANDS



Form kids into groups of two or three and give each group a Bible. Guide kids to find and read each of the following Bible references one at a time: Exodus 20:3; Psalm 30:4; Isaiah 41:10; John 13:34; Colossians 3:13. Then ask groups to describe what command is given in the verse (i.e., don't fear, love one another, forgive one another, etc.). Write their responses on a dry erase board.

SAY Just as God gave Achan a good command to obey, God's Word has good commands He calls us to obey. **GOD DESIRES OBEDIENCE AND PUNISHES DISOBEDIENCE.** Obeying God's commands doesn't save us from our sin. We are only saved through faith in Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, God changes our hearts so we want to obey His commands. God knows what is best, and His commands help us live rightly as we love Him and love other people. When we read a command from the Bible, we can ask God to help us obey so that He is honored with our actions.

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.