

Lessons of Faith from Joshua The Enemy Within

Lesson #6 for November 8, 2025

Scriptures: Joshua 7; 8:1-19; 1 Peter 1:4; Psalm 139:1-16; Ezra 10:11; Luke 12:15.

1. Was there an enemy within the ranks of Israel? Is there an enemy in our ranks? Our church?

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] Joshua 7 is the first instance where, through a tragic experience, the people of Israel learned the far-reaching consequences of the covenant and its deep meaning. **While obedience to the stipulations of the covenant secured victory, disregarding the terms of the covenant brought defeat. Israel's military success depended not on their numbers, battle strategy, or clever tactics but on the presence of the Divine Warrior with them.**

During the appropriation of the Promised Land, the Israelites had to learn the difficult lesson that **their most dangerous enemy was not outside their camp but within their own rank** and file. The **greatest challenge** that stood before them was neither the fortified walls of the Canaanite cities nor their advanced military technology but **the obstinate will of individuals within their own camp to ignore the instructions of the Lord.**

Waiting for our heavenly inheritance (*1 Pet. 1:4, Col. 3:24*), **we face similar challenges.** While we are on the border of the Promised Land, our faithfulness is tested, and we can be victorious only through surrender to Jesus Christ.—BSG* for Sabbath Afternoon, November 1.^{†‡§}

The Battle for Ai and the Fallout

Joshua 7:1: The LORD's command to Israel not to take from Jericho anything that was to be destroyed was not obeyed. A man named **Achan disobeyed** that order, and so the LORD was furious with the Israelites. (Achan was the son of Carmi and grandson of Zabdi, and belonged to the clan of Zerah, a part of the **tribe of Judah**.)—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*^{®*} [GNT] (*Today's English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition, Joshua 7:1). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV** or *GNB-TEV**].^{†‡}

2. ***What was the sin of Achan? Did any of the children of Israel know that he had sinned? Did they have any idea that the sin of Achan would cause so much trouble?***

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] The utter destruction of the people of Jericho was but a fulfillment of the commands previously given through Moses concerning the inhabitants of Canaan: "Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them." Deuteronomy 7:2. "Of the cities of these people, ... thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth." Deuteronomy 20:16. To many these commands seem to be contrary to the spirit of love and mercy enjoined in other portions of the Bible, but they were in truth the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness. God was about to establish Israel in Canaan, to develop among them a nation and government that should be a manifestation of His kingdom upon the earth. They were not only to be inheritors of the true religion, but [also] to disseminate its principles throughout the world. **The Canaanites had abandoned themselves to the foulest and most debasing heathenism,**

and it was necessary that the land should be cleared of what would so surely prevent the fulfillment of God's gracious purposes.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 492.1.[†]

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.2263&index=0>][†]

Joshua 7:2-5: ² Joshua sent some men from Jericho to Ai, a city east of Bethel, near Bethaven, with orders to go and explore the land. When they had done so, ³they reported back to Joshua: “There is no need for everyone to attack Ai. Send only about two or three thousand men. Don’t send the whole army up there to fight; it is not a large city.” ⁴So about three thousand Israelites made the attack, but they were forced to retreat. ⁵The men of Ai chased them from the city gate as far as some quarries and killed about thirty-six of them on the way down the hill. **Then the Israelites lost their courage and were afraid.**—*GNB-TEV*.^{*†}

3. Try to imagine Joshua's feelings when the word came to him that the army of Israel had been defeated at Ai!

Joshua 7:6-9: ⁶ Joshua and the leaders of Israel tore their clothes in grief, threw themselves to the ground before the LORD's Covenant Box, and lay there till evening, with dust on their heads to show their sorrow. ⁷And Joshua said, “Sovereign LORD! Why did you bring us across the Jordan at all? To turn us over to the Amorites? To destroy us? Why didn't we just stay on the other side of the Jordan? ⁸**What can I say, O LORD, now that Israel has retreated from the enemy?** ⁹**The Canaanites and everyone else in the country will hear about it. They will surround us and kill every one of us! And then what will you do to protect your honor?**”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

[BSG:] At first, Joshua sounds like the children of Israel in the midst of their hardships after leaving Egypt: “ ‘Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger’ ” (*Exod. 16:3, NKJV*).—*BSG** for Thursday.^{‡§}

4. ***Surely, God could have arranged plans so that the children of Israel would not have been defeated at Ai; but, He did not. Why do you think God did it that way? Were there lessons that needed to be learned? Soon, Joshua changed his tune and agreed to follow God's plans. As he did that, he was concerned about God's reputation!***

[BSG:] **This reveals a theme and principle that was central to God's purposes with Israel.** Though He wanted the pagan nations around them to see what great things God would do for His people who obeyed Him, they could also, as Rahab did, learn about Israel's God by the power of His people's conquests. On the other hand, were things to go badly, as they did here, the nations would deem Israel's God weak and ineffective (*see Num. 14:16, Deut. 9:28*), which could embolden Canaanite resistance.—*BSG** for Thursday.^{†‡§}

Deuteronomy 9:28: “**Otherwise, the Egyptians will say that you were unable to take your people into the land that you had promised them. They will say that you took your people out into the desert to kill them, because you hated them.**”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

5. The important point to recognize is that even as the children of Israel managed to conquer the land, God wanted everyone to understand exactly what His attitude was, and that He loved everyone. It was important that the Israelites carefully and strictly follow His guidance if they were to continue receiving God's blessing.

Joshua 7:10-19: ¹⁰ The LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying on the ground like this? ¹¹**Israel has sinned!** They have broken the agreement with me that I ordered them to keep. **They have taken some of the things condemned to destruction.** They stole them, lied about it, and put them with their own things. ¹²This is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. **They retreat from them because they themselves have now been condemned to destruction! I will not stay with you any longer unless you destroy the things you were ordered not to take!** ¹³Get up! Purify the people and get them ready to come before me. Tell them to be ready tomorrow, because I, the LORD God of Israel, have this to say: 'Israel, you have in your possession some things that I ordered you to destroy! You cannot stand against your enemies until you get rid of these things!' ¹⁴So tell them that in the morning they will be brought forward, tribe by tribe. The tribe that I pick out will then come forward, clan by clan. The clan that I pick out will come forward, family by family. The family that I pick out will come forward, one by one. ¹⁵The one who is then picked out and found with the condemned goods will be burned, along with his family and everything he owns, for he has brought terrible shame on Israel and has broken my covenant."

¹⁶ Early the next morning Joshua brought Israel forward, tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was picked out. ¹⁷He brought the tribe of Judah forward, clan by clan, and the clan of Zerah was picked out. Then he brought the clan of Zerah forward, family by family, and the family of Zabdi was picked out. ¹⁸He then brought Zabdi's family forward, one by one, and Achan, the son of Carmi and grandson of Zabdi, was picked out. ¹⁹Joshua said to him, "My son, tell the truth here before the LORD, the God of Israel, and confess. **Tell me now what you have done. Don't try to hide it from me.**"—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

[BSG:] Instead of unveiling the identity of the transgressor, God sets up a procedure that reveals both His justice and grace. After explaining the reason for Israel's defeat and calling for the sanctification of the people (*Josh. 7:13*), **He allows a time span** between the announcement of the procedure and its application, which **gives Achan time to think, repent, and confess his sin**. [But, Achan did not repent or confess.].—BSG* for Monday, November 3.^{†§} [Try to imagine yourself as Achan!][‡]

6. Notice how Joshua dealt with the sin of Achan.

[BSG:] It is important to notice the way Joshua addressed Achan: "My son." This expression shows not only the age and leadership role of Joshua but also reveals the spirit in which this great warrior approached justice. His heart was full of compassion for Achan, even though he was called to execute judgment on the offender. Through his attitude, Joshua was again foreshadowing the sensitivity, kindness, and love of the One [and then the BSG quotes a portion from *The Desire of Ages* which is expanded below].—BSG* for Monday.[‡]

[EGW:] “Behold,” said Jesus, “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” Christ Himself did not suppress one word of truth, but He spoke it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact, and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse [interaction] with the people. **He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul.** [However, consider John 8:44!] He did not censure human weakness. **He fearlessly denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes.** He wept over Jerusalem, the city He loved, that refused to receive Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. They rejected Him, the Saviour [sic-British spelling], but He regarded them with pitying tenderness, and sorrow so deep that it broke His heart. Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He always bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 353.1.†‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1698&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1698&index=0)†

7. God's process rapidly narrowed the focus to the guilty and cleared the innocent.
8. Psalm 139:1-16 tells us that **God is fully aware of every thought, action, and detail of our lives.** Compare 2 Chronicles 16:9; 1 Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 17:10; and Proverbs 5:21.

Joshua 7:20-21: ²⁰ “It’s true,” Achan answered. “I have sinned against the LORD, Israel’s God, and this is what I did. ²¹Among the things we seized I saw a beautiful Babylonian cloak, about five pounds of silver, and a bar of gold weighing over one pound. I wanted them so much that I took them. You will find them buried inside my tent, with the silver at the bottom.”—*GNB-TEV*.*

[BSG:] Unfortunately, **the biblical text gives no indication that Achan showed any sign of real repentance.** He hoped until the end to remain hidden. His defiant attitude qualified him to be regarded as a **highhanded offender**, for whom there was no atonement according to the law of Moses (*compare with Num. 15:27–31*).—*BSG** for Tuesday, November 4.†‡§

[EGW:] The deadly sin that led to Achan’s ruin had its **root in covetousness**, of all sins one of the most common and the most lightly regarded. **While other offenses meet with detection and punishment, how rarely does the violation of the tenth commandment so much as call forth censure.** The enormity of this sin, and its terrible results, are the lessons of Achan’s history....

Achan acknowledged his guilt, but when it was too late for the confession to benefit himself. He had seen the armies of Israel return from Ai defeated and disheartened; yet he did not come forward and confess his sin. He had seen Joshua and the elders of Israel bowed to the earth in grief too great for words. **Had he then made confession, he would have given some proof of true penitence; but he still kept silence.** He had listened to the proclamation that a great crime had been committed, and had even heard its character definitely stated. But his lips were sealed. Then came the solemn investigation. How his soul thrilled with terror as he saw his tribe pointed out, then his family and his household! But still he uttered no confession, until the finger of God was placed upon him. Then, when his sin could no longer be concealed, he admitted the truth. How often are similar confessions made. There is a vast difference

between admitting facts after they have been proved and confessing sins known only to ourselves and to God. Achan would not have confessed had he not hoped by so doing to avert the consequences of his crime. But his confession only served to show that his punishment was just. There was no genuine repentance for sin, no contrition, no change of purpose, no abhorrence of evil.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 496.2-498.0.††

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.2288&index=0>]†

9. **Achan confessed only after he was identified as the guilty one.** What was the result?

Joshua 7:22-26: ²² So Joshua sent some men, who ran to the tent and found that the condemned things really were buried there, with the silver at the bottom. ²³They brought them out of the tent, took them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and laid them down in the presence of the LORD. ²⁴Joshua, along with all the people of Israel, seized Achan, the silver, the cloak, the bar of gold, together with Achan's sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys, and sheep, his tent, and everything else he owned; and they took them to Trouble Valley. ²⁵And Joshua said, "Why have you brought such trouble on us? The LORD will now bring trouble on you!" **All the people then stoned Achan to death; they also stoned and burned his family and possessions.** ²⁶They put a huge pile of stones over him, which is there to this day. That is why that place is still called Trouble Valley. **Then the LORD was no longer furious.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*†

[BSG:] [Achan's] family (if they knew what had happened) has the opportunity to decide whether they want to be involved in the cover-up or refuse to be accomplices, like the sons of Korah, who avoided destruction by refusing to side with their father (*compare with Num. 16:23–33, Num. 26:11*).—BSG* for Monday, November 3.‡§

10. **In this story and the rest of history, has God been arbitrary, cruel, and unforgiving as Satan has charged? How do you feel about the story of Achan? Does God seem harsh and vindictive? Do you feel like this is an important lesson for us? Are we taking that lesson seriously and obeying God to the letter so that we may soon enter the kingdom of heaven?**

[EGW:] Satan deceives many with the plausible theory that God's love for His people is so great that He will excuse sin in them; he represents that while the threatenings of God's word are to serve a certain purpose in His moral government, they are never to be literally fulfilled. But in all His dealings with His creatures God has maintained the principles of righteousness by revealing sin in its true character—by demonstrating that its sure result is misery and death. The unconditional pardon of sin never has been, and never will be. Such pardon would show the abandonment of the principles of righteousness, which are the very foundation of the government of God. It would fill the unfallen universe with consternation. God has faithfully pointed out the results of sin, and if these warnings were not true, how could we be sure that His promises would be fulfilled? That so-called benevolence which would set aside justice is not benevolence but weakness.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 522.2.††

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.2420&index=0>]†

[BSG:] **There were two main reasons for Israel's defeat by the inhabitants of Ai: Achan's sin and the Israelites' overconfidence in their own strength. The latter resulted in their neglecting to consult the will of the Lord before the attack against Ai and their underestimating the force of the enemy....**

The covenant between Yahweh [*sic*] and Israel involved the people at both individual and corporate levels. In the light of the covenant, Israel is treated as an indivisible unity of the chosen nation of God; therefore, the sin of one, or even some, of its members incurs guilt upon the whole covenantal community. As the Lord said, " 'Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them' " (*Josh. 7:11, NKJV*).—BSG* for Sunday, November 2.^{†‡§}

Deuteronomy 29:19: "Make sure that there is no one here today who hears these solemn demands and yet convinces himself that all will be well with him, even if he stubbornly goes his own way. That would destroy all of you, good and evil alike."—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

11. ***What does the sin of Achan teach us about God? And about Achan? Could any of us cause problems as Achan did?***
12. ***How would you compare the sins of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and their associates with the sin of Achan? Whose sin was greater?***
13. ***Are we ever tempted to ignore God's directions? Or, maybe not follow them exactly? Compare the sins of Ananias and Sapphira with the sin of Achan.***

[EGW:] Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. Their numbers were rapidly increasing. The church would have been endangered if, in the rapid increase of converts, men and women [like Ananias & Sapphira] had been added who, while professing to serve God, were worshiping mammon. This judgment testified that men cannot deceive God, that He detects the hidden sin of the heart, and that He will not be mocked. It was designed as a warning to the church, to lead them to avoid pretense and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God.—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles** 73.4.^{†‡} [Was their sin like Achan's?][†]

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p127.297&index=0>[†]

14. ***Do we realize daily and all day long that God is fully aware of everything that we are doing? And even what we are thinking? How do you understand these very stern words from Numbers 15?***

Numbers 15:27-31: ²⁷ If any of you sin unintentionally, you are to offer a one-year-old female goat as a sin offering. ²⁸ At the altar the priest shall perform the ritual of purification to purify you from your sin, and you will be forgiven. ²⁹ The same regulation applies to all who unintentionally commit a sin, whether they are native Israelites or resident foreigners. [Do we ever unintentionally misrepresent God? Lucifer's sin in heaven was misrepresenting God!]

³⁰ But any who sin deliberately, whether they are natives or foreigners, are guilty of treating the LORD with contempt, and they shall be put to death, ³¹ because they have rejected what the LORD said and have deliberately broken one of his commands. They are responsible for their

own death.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡} [Almost every sin has a death decree as the punishment noted somewhere in the writings of Moses!][‡]

15. ***How many of our sins are unintentional?***

[BSG:] The words of Achan in Joshua 7:21 are reminiscent of the fall of Adam and Eve. Eve saw (*ra'ah*) that the tree was desirable (*khamad*) and finally took (*laqakh*) from its fruit (*Gen. 3:6*). In his confession, Achan admits that he saw (*ra'ah*) in the plunder a beautiful mantle of Shinar, 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold. He then coveted (*khamad*) and took (*laqakh*) them. Just as in the case of Adam and Eve, the choice of Achan reveals that **the sin of covetousness is the sin of unbelief**. It suspects God of not wanting the best for His creatures and of hiding some exquisite pleasures from them, which belong to the realm of divinity only.—*BSG*^{*} for Tuesday, November 4.^{†§}

Rahab Contrasted with Achan

[BSG:] The text highlights a stark contrast between the attitudes of Rahab (*compare with Josh. 2:1–13*) and that of Achan. The one took the spies to the roof and hid them from the soldiers; the other took forbidden things and hid them from Joshua. The one showed kindness to the Israelite spies and helped them secure victory; the other brought trouble on Israel by his greed and secured defeat. The one made a covenant with the Israelites; the other broke the covenant with Yahweh [*sic*]. Rahab saved herself and her family, and they became respected citizens in Israel; Achan doomed himself and his family to death and became an example of ignominy [Merriam-Webster: “deep personal humiliation and grief”].—*BSG*^{*} for Tuesday.^{‡§}

Joshua 2:1-13: ¹ Then Joshua sent two spies from the camp at Acacia with orders to go and secretly explore the land of Canaan, especially the city of Jericho. When they came to the city, they went to spend the night in the house of a prostitute named Rahab. ²The king of Jericho heard that some Israelites had come that night to spy out the country, ³so he sent word to Rahab: “The men in your house have come to spy out the whole country! Bring them out!”

⁴⁻⁶ “Some men did come to my house,” she answered, “but I don’t know where they were from. [First lie.] They left at sundown before the city gate was closed. [Second lie.] I didn’t find out where they were going, but if you start after them quickly, you can catch them.” [Third lie.] (Now Rahab had taken the two spies up on the roof and hidden them under some stalks of flax that she had put there.) ⁷The king’s men left the city, and then the gate was shut. They went looking for the Israelite spies as far as the place where the road crosses the Jordan. [Was Rahab a professional liar?]

⁸ Before the spies settled down for the night, Rahab went up on the roof ⁹and said to them, “**I know that the LORD has given you this land. Everyone in the country is terrified of you.**” ¹⁰We have heard how the LORD dried up the Red Sea in front of you when you were leaving Egypt. We have also heard how you killed Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan. ¹¹We were afraid as soon as we heard about it; **we have all lost our courage because of you.** The LORD your God is God in heaven above and here on earth. ¹²Now swear by him that you will treat my family as kindly as I have treated you, and

give me some sign that I can trust you. ¹³Promise me that you will save my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families! Don't let us be killed!"—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡}

The Door of Hope, Ai Revisited

16. After dealing with Achan, YAHWEH instructed Joshua on how to approach Ai again.

Joshua 8:1-29: ¹ The LORD said to Joshua, "Take all the soldiers with you and go on up to Ai. **Don't be afraid or discouraged. I will give you victory** over the king of Ai; his people, city, and land will be yours. ²You are to do to Ai and its king what you did to Jericho and its king, but this time you may keep its goods and livestock for yourselves. Prepare to attack the city by surprise from the rear."

³ So Joshua got ready to go to Ai with all his soldiers. He picked out thirty thousand of his best troops and sent them out at night ⁴with these orders: "Hide on the other side of the city, but not too far away from it; be ready to attack. ⁵My men and I will approach the city. When the men of Ai come out against us, we will turn and run, just as we did the first time. ⁶**They will pursue us until we have led them away from the city.** They will think that we are running away from them, as we did before. ⁷Then you will come out of hiding and capture the city. The LORD your God will give it to you. ⁸After you have taken the city, set it on fire, just as the LORD has commanded. These are your orders." ⁹So Joshua sent them out, and they went to their hiding place and waited there, west of Ai, between Ai and Bethel. Joshua spent the night in camp.

¹⁰ Early in the morning Joshua got up and called the soldiers together. Then he and the leaders of Israel led them to Ai.... [Joshua and his men followed God's directions given the night before.] ¹⁵Joshua and his men pretended that they were retreating, and ran away towards the barren country. ¹⁶All the men in the city had been called together to go after them, and as they pursued Joshua, they kept getting farther away from the city. ¹⁷**Every man in Ai went after the Israelites, and the city was left wide open, with no one to defend it.** [What were the men of Ai thinking at that point?]

¹⁸ Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Point your spear at Ai; I am giving it to you." Joshua did as he was told, ¹⁹and **as soon as he lifted his hand, the men who had been hiding got up quickly, ran into the city and captured it.** They immediately set the city on fire. ²⁰When the men of Ai looked back, they saw the smoke rising to the sky. There was no way for them to escape, because the Israelites who had run toward the barren country now turned around to attack them. ²¹When Joshua and his men saw that the others had taken the city and that it was on fire, they turned around and began killing the men of Ai. ²²The Israelites in the city now came down to join the battle. **So the men of Ai found themselves completely surrounded by Israelites, and they were all killed.** No one got away, and no one lived through it ²³except the king of Ai. He was captured and taken to Joshua.

²⁴ The Israelites killed every one of the enemy in the barren country where they had chased them. Then they went back to Ai and killed everyone there. ²⁵—²⁶Joshua kept his spear pointed at Ai and did not put it down until every person there had been killed. **The whole population of Ai was killed that day—**

twelve thousand men and women. ²⁷The Israelites kept for themselves the livestock and goods captured in the city, as the LORD had told Joshua. ²⁸Joshua burned Ai and left it in ruins. It is still like that today. ²⁹**He hanged the king of Ai** from a tree and left his body there until evening. At sundown Joshua gave orders for the body to be removed, and it was thrown down at the entrance to the city gate. They covered it with a huge pile of stones, which is still there today.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡}

[BSG:] The strategy of Yahweh [*sic*] converts Israel's initial defeat into a tactical advantage, thus transforming the Valley of Achor (Hebrew word for "trouble") into a door of hope (*compare with Hos. 2:15*). Having gained too much self-confidence by their first victory over the Israelites, the citizens of Ai repeat their strategy in attacking the Israelites, who feign retreat and defeat. Once the inhabitants of Ai are lured out of their stronghold, the 30,000 Israelites, positioned not too far behind the city (*Josh. 8:4*), will capture the empty city by setting it on fire. **Joshua 8:7 makes it clear that it is not the strategy that brings victory, but it is the Lord Himself who will grant the victory** and hand the city of Ai over to the Israelites.—*BSG** for Wednesday, November 5.^{†‡§}

Joshua 8:7 [Reading again]: "Then you will come out of hiding and capture the city. The LORD your God will give it to you."—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡}

[BSG:] Even in a chapter in which the military aspects dominate the narrative more than in any other chapter of the book, the text highlights the underlying truth that **victory is the gift of Yahweh** [*sic*].—*BSG** for Wednesday, November 5.^{†‡}

[BSG:] The decisive moment of the battle occurs when the men of Ai leave the city and start pursuing the Israelites. This is the second time that God speaks in the whole chapter after He gave the strategy in Joshua 8:2, signaling that He oversees the battle. Until this moment, we don't know the outcome of the battle. From this point onward, it becomes clear that the Israelite army is victorious.

The weapon in the hand of Joshua was a **sickle sword, or scimitar**, rather than a sword or javelin. In the time of Joshua, it may not have been used as an actual weapon, but it had become a **symbol of sovereignty**. And, besides giving the signal for attack, it expresses God's sovereignty in the defeat of Ai. By stretching out the sickle sword until the full victory is won, Joshua is shown to have fully assumed the leadership role Moses exercised at the crossing of the Red Sea (*Exod. 14:16*) and in the war against the Amalekites (*Exod. 17:11–13*), where Joshua personally led the combat.—*BSG** for Wednesday.^{†‡§}

17. Compare the victory by Moses and Joshua over the Amalekites as recorded in Exodus 17 with the victory at Ai.

Exodus 17:11-13: ¹¹As long as Moses held up his arms, the Israelites won, but when he put his arms down, the Amalekites started winning. ¹²When Moses' arms grew tired, Aaron and Hur brought a stone for him to sit on, while they stood beside him and held up his arms, holding them steady until the sun went down. ¹³In this way Joshua totally defeated the Amalekites.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*}

[BSG:] This time there is no visible, miraculous intervention of God, yet the victory over Ai is no less divinely assisted than that over the Egyptians in the

first generation or in the recent victory over Jericho. The key to success is in Joshua's faith in the word of the Lord and his unwavering obedience to it. The principle seen in this story remains valid for God's people today, wherever they live and whatever their challenges.—*BSG** for Wednesday, November 5.[‡]

A Witness to God's Power

[*BSG:*] As we have learned, God had given the pagan nations an opportunity to know about Him and to turn from their evil ways (see Lesson 5). They, however, had refused and were ultimately facing the judgment of God.—*BSG** for Thursday, November 6.[‡]

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=*T-BSG:*] George Knight argues that sin and salvation are defined by the same word: *love*. **In his view, sin is directing love toward the wrong object, specifically, the self. Conversely, salvation is also love, but it is love directed to the proper object, namely, God.**—*T-BSG** 83.^{†‡§}

The Severity of Sin

[*T-BSG:*] “A flippant youth asked a preacher, ‘You say that unsaved people carry a weight of sin. I feel nothing. How heavy is sin? Is it ten pounds? Eighty pounds?’ The preacher replied by asking the youth, ‘If you laid a 400-pound weight on a corpse, would it feel the load?’ The youth replied, ‘It would feel nothing, because it is dead.’ The preacher concluded, ‘That spirit, too, is indeed dead which feels no load of sin or is indifferent to its burden and flippant about its presence.’ The youth was silenced.”—Michael P. Green, *1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), pp. 334, 335.

How does the habit of spending “a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ . . . especially the closing [scenes],” as proposed by Ellen G. White, help us to grasp the real nature of sin?—*T-BSG** 84.^{‡Ω§}

[*EGW:*] **It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ.** We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 83.4.^{†‡} [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.313&index=0>][‡]

18. How is Satan engaged to cause people to lightly regard sin? How can we avoid this trap?

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