

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

YEHOSHUA

Chapter 7

& *Va'era*

The story of Achan is connected to the preceding conquest of Jericho, where Achan violated the “cherem,” and to the subsequent conquest of Ai, which can succeed only once the perpetrator is caught and punished. Achan is the only Israelite character besides Joshua to appear with a name (and even with developed lineage), in the first part of the book. A Judahite, he is the only sinner in this golden age of promise fulfillment, and his sin is disobedience.

Joshua Discussion Questions:

1. How can Adonai be angry with all of Israel for the sin of one Israelite?
2. Knowing that the battle of Jericho is the standard for how Israel is to defeat its enemies, compare and contrast it with the first attempt to conquer Ai. What stands out to you?
3. Adonai’s punishment of Achan seems harsh, but review how He described the offense and discuss how it was, in fact, the appropriate punishment.
4. In verse 26 we see that Adonai “vayashav (turned) from the fierceness of His anger”. This word shares the same root as teshuvah, repentance. What can be said about the relationship between our turning and Adonai’s turning?
5. Discuss the differences between Achan and Yeshua and how an individual can curse a nation while another individual can redeem it.
6. Where in the book of Acts do we see a similar account of someone misappropriating things devoted to God? What happened to them?

Va'era Discussion Questions:

7. In what sense is "death" (or just "separation") something to be embraced in our lives? How can we understand the root of "Shaddai" meaning "to devastate, to utterly destroy?"
8. How is it that we are often drawn closer to God by a test?
9. What can a religious community do to increase its unity?

