

The Testament Spectator

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Scriptural Stories Published in Newspaper

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Moses' aide becomes Israel's new leader

Joshua son of Nun
commissioned by
the Lord God Almighty

After the death of Moses, the Servant of the Lord, Joshua son of Nun was commissioned by God Almighty to assume the role of Israel's leader.

The Lord God Almighty commanded Joshua not to be terrified of the path ahead nor be discouraged by what enemies or other challenges he and the people would face.

"Be strong and very courageous," the Lord God told Joshua, assuring that He
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Jordan River ceases flowing as Israelites cross on dry land

Miracle of miracles
resembles Red Sea
crossing 40 years earlier

Ushered by the Levite Priests holding the Ark of the Covenant, the Israelites walked on a dry Jordan River bed into Canaan.

The Levite Priests, who after setting their feet on the water's surface while holding the Ark of the Covenant all day on their shoulders, caused the Jordan River to solidify.

This miracle of miracle's resembled the Israelites crossing the Red Sea on dry ground. Although this time there was no army pursuing the Israelites, like the Egyptians did approximately 40 years earlier, just the methodical march of the masses who, as instructed by the Lord God Almighty, consecrated themselves on the eve of the crossing.

The waters of the mighty Jordan River, which were already at flood stage during the harvest season, backed up to the north about 20 miles, according to eyewitness reports from residents of the city Adam which is adjacent to Zaretan.

And from the other side of the Jordan the Levite Priests, clad in their long white linen gowns and hats, could be seen holding the gold Ark of the Covenant, overlaid with acacia wood.

The chest-shaped Ark, as well as the gold Cherubim with their heads bowed and their wings overshadowing them on the mercy seat, glistened intently in the bright sun, making it difficult for anyone to directly gaze on it.

This obedient act would stop the waters of the Jordan river from flowing, thus allowing the people to cross the dry river bed.

"Tell the Priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant, 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'" The Lord God told them.

Joshua obeyed. He assured the people that this obedient act of faith

'Tell the Priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant, when you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river'— The Lord God Almighty

All day long as the Israelites crossed the dry Jordan River bed into Canaan, the Levite Priests held The Ark, supported by two acacia wooden poles which was overlaid with pure gold. Even though the hot sun and the day long crossing was a physical challenge to the Levite Priests, they maintained their strength.

The Lord God had instructed Joshua son of Nun and the people that The Ark, which symbolized the presence of God, was to lead the Israelites' advance into Canaan.

would demonstrate to them that "the living God is among you" and the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Gergashites, Amorites and Jebusites would be driven from them.

"See, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into Jordan ahead of you," Joshua said, symbolizing that it would go before Israel to defeat her enemies.

After all of the people completely left Shittim and crossed the Jordan River, they were instructed to pitch their tents and set up camp at Gilgal.

Jericho walls crumble down to the ground

Conquest of Canaan
begins with victory
over fortified city

The Israelites short and silent siege of Jericho reached an abrupt climactic end when the city's formidable walls suddenly crumbled and fell down flat to the ground.

Canaan's largest and most fortified city was conquered in a most unusual military tactic.

Joshua son of Nun ordered the armed men, followed by seven Levite Priests and then bringing up the rear Bearers of the Ark of the Covenant, to march around Jericho for six straight days.

"Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not even say a word until the day I tell you to shout," Joshua said. "When the time comes, you will then shout with all your might."

No one questioned Joshua's orders. Strictly obeying their commander-in-chief, they arose every morning for six days and marched once around Jericho, then returned to the camp.

After the Israelites awoke early on the seventh day, Joshua ordered that Jericho's broad perimeter was to be encircled by the religious and military contingent not once, but seven times. They obeyed.

"Shout," Joshua commanded them after the seventh march around Jericho.

"For the Lord has given you the city!"

Suddenly the mighty walls of Jericho crumbled and fell down flat to the ground. The people who were watching and/or making fun of them from the walls just moments before died instantly.

"Charge," the armed men shouted as they quickly ran from all sides into the exposed city, stepping over the rocks, rubble and debris which was once the mighty walls of Jericho.

'Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not even say a word until the day I tell you to shout'
— Joshua son of Nun

No individual was spared except for Rahab, the Jericho prostitute who saved the Shittim spies, and those who sought sanctuary in her house. All the buildings, temples and houses of the city were completely burned.

Keeping any loot was strictly prohibited, Joshua told them. The silver, gold, vessels of brass and iron, which were consecrated unto the Lord, were sent to His treasury.

"Cursed before the Lord is the man who attempts to rebuild Jericho," said Joshua, who became famous in the region. The Israelites sustained no casualties during the seven-day Jericho march and ensuing attack.

Heavenly visitor appears to Joshua

On the eve of the siege and fall of Jericho, Joshua son of Nun revealed that the Commander of the Army of the Lord appeared to him.

"Are you for us or for our enemies," Joshua said he asked the strange man, who approached him near Jericho with a drawn sword while the leader was alone, perhaps meditating on God's law as he had been instructed.

"Neither," answered the imposing man before revealing Himself to Joshua, probably poised to engage Him in combat. "But as Commander of the Army of the Lord I have now come."

Upon being told that startling revelation, Joshua said he immediately fell to his knees, lowered his face to the ground and worshipped the Lord.

"What message does my Lord have for His servant," Joshua asked reverently to the Commander of the Army of the Lord.

Possibly the Lord had no message for His servant. If a conversation had taken place between him and the Commander of the Army of the Lord, Joshua kept it to himself. Perhaps the Lord just wanted Joshua to worship Him.

"Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy," the Lord said. Unlatching his sandals, Joshua said he totally prostrated himself before the Commander of the Army of the Lord in worship.

Spies' secret mission accomplished

Two Shittim men sent on covert operation

Before the fall of Jericho, Joshua son of Nun secretly dispatched a small squad on a reconnaissance mission, *The Testament Spectator* learned.

Unlike the 12 men Moses the Servant of the Lord dispatched to explore the land 40 years earlier, the son of Nun chose a small, covert force.

It was no doubt that Joshua, one of the very few alive from the generation who initially surveyed "The Promised Land," remembered all too well the rebellion at Kadesh, and he certainly didn't want history to repeat itself.

Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua were the only two of the 12 spies who guaranteed to Moses that Israel could conquer the territory God promised their forefathers.

"We should go up and take possession of the land," Caleb said. "For we can certainly do it."

Even though so many years transpired, those six words: "For we can certainly do it" still echo in Joshua's ears, as if Caleb uttered them just yesterday.

But the other ten spies gave a grim picture, and Caleb's positive report fell on deaf ears. Trying to allay the people's hesitation was difficult. Joshua recalled how the people cried, wept and constantly murmured to Moses and Aaron about their predicament.

The ten spies told of "a land flowing with milk and honey," but those stories of plenty and prosperity were precluded by their cowardly pessimism.

Joshua can still recall his disappointment. Such negativity was an affront to what God promised them. A disciplined follower who even at a young age exhibited the traits of a fearless leader, Joshua was particularly angry and upset that these brave men of valor viewed themselves and God's people as mere "grasshoppers."

And then giving such a civil report about a covert reconnaissance mission in such a public way was indeed a mistake. Perhaps if the ten spies had expressed their trepidation to Moses privately, it wouldn't have caused so much confusion and commotion in the camp. As a result, the people, threatening to revolt against Moses and Aaron, talked about choosing a captain to lead them back to Egypt.

That was the past and this is the present, Joshua reminded *The Testament Spectator*. The Lord charged him "to be strong and courageous," and that directive was to be obeyed, the son of Nun said in an interview after Israel's victory over Jericho.

That's why no large reconnaissance force was dispatched to explore the land. This could have caused history to repeat itself. Two spies were all Joshua needed — for it was two spies who gave a favorable report to Moses — to "look over the land, especially Jericho."

Rahab saves spies and aids Israel's success at Jericho

At the risk of not diminishing the divine instruction, involvement and intervention of the Lord God Almighty, the success of the two Shittim spies and Israel's victory over Jericho is partly attributed to Rahab, a prostitute and madam of "The Parlor."

'Yes the men [spies] came to me, but I did not know where they had come from'
— Rahab,
the prostitute

Rahab hid the spies on her rooftop from the searching eyes of the Jericho Police Department (JPD) and lied to protect them.

"Yes, the men came to me," she acknowledged to the JPD. "But I did not know where they had come from."

Rahab told the King's men that the two spies left "The Parlor" at dusk, during the time the city's gate was being closed as a precautionary measure to protect themselves from a possible Israelite attack.

"I don't know which way they went, but if you go after them, you might be able to catch up with them," Rahab said.

Reacting to Rahab's tip, the JPD squad pursued the covert intruders on the way that leads to the fords of the Jordan River.

Assured that the Lord God Almighty had already given Jericho to Israel, Rahab approached the spies — hiding under the stalks of flax on her roof — with a denial.

"Please show to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family because I have shown kindness to you," Rahab told them.

"Our lives for your lives," the spies assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land."

Rahab lowered the spies with a scarlet cord from the roof. She told them that they could better avoid the JPD if they went to the hills and hide there for three days.

The spies, swearing an oath to Rahab which would be binding should Israel enter the land, told her to tie the same scarlet cord which saved them to the window. This scarlet cord would protect all of Rahab's family who sought sanctuary in her house, they assured her.

"If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible," the spies said. "As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head."

The spies warned Rahab that they will be released from the oath if she told the

JPD their mission. "Agreed," she said. "Let it be as you say."

The spies laid low for three days. Afterwards, they emerged out of the hills, crossed the river and when they eventually came to Joshua son of Nun, they told all that had transpired.

'If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully'

— The Shittim spies

"The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us," they told Joshua what he probably already knew.

Joshua listened intently to their report. He was especially appreciative of a new ally, whose unsavory reputation in the region seemed to be an unlikely candidate. It's amazing who the Lord uses to accomplish His will, Joshua thought.

"We were impressed with how much Rahab knew about the Lord God Almighty's exploits," they told Joshua. "It was almost as if she was one of us already."

Blown cover at 'The Parlor'

Testament Spectator Analysis

'Look! Some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.'

One of the men at Rahab the prostitute's house must have told the King of Jericho that Israel sent undercover agents to spy on them, surmised the two Shittim spies after the fall of the great city.

"After Joshua son of Nun gave us our orders 'to look over the land, especially Jericho' we went right to Rahab's Parlor," one of the pair told *The Testament Spectator*. "Everyone in the region knew of Rahab's Parlor — the food, the wine and especially, the women."

Many men of the city and visiting merchants alike frequented Rahab's establishment. That's why the Shittim spies thought "The Parlor," as it was called in the region, would be just the ideal place to lay low.

But the King of Jericho, who had ordered the closure of the city's gates as a precautionary measure to protect themselves from a probable Israelite attack, sent a message to Rahab, ordering her to identify the spies.

Rahab's debriefing after the miraculous fall of Jericho revealed that the King of Jericho must have been

irritated that the harlot didn't voluntarily go to him with information that would prove beneficial to the security of Jericho, sources close to Joshua surmise. Instead of Rahab going to the King to tell him about the covert incursion, he was forced to send a courier, jeopardizing his counter surveillance operation.

"Look! Some of the Israelites have

'After Joshua gave us our orders to look over the land, especially Jericho, we went right to Rahab's Parlor — the food, the wine, and especially, the women'

— The Shittim spies

come here tonight to spy out the land," a recovered excerpt of the King's note read before it was destroyed.

Rahab intuitively felt that the King was annoyed that she didn't fully appreciate the severity of the situation. She did, although the King never knew it. In retrospect, the spies' presence confirmed her initial suspicions that an Israelite attack was indeed imminent.

On the surface Rahab, a carefree yet

very practical and astute business woman, portrayed herself to her clients as oblivious to Jericho's external threat. Everyone knew that the madam of "The Parlor" liked to work hard and she definitely enjoyed playing hard. This work/play ethic was reflected by those employed by her and the clients who frequented Rahab's business.

But there was also her serious side,

the two Shittim spies confirmed. After knowledgeably recounting to them the Red Sea miracle and Israel's victory over the Amorites, the two Shittim spies said Rahab informed them that everyone was afraid.

"The Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below," Rahab told the spies, impressing them with how much she knew about the exploits of Israel's Lord God.

The Lord puts curse on Jericho

But Rahab and her family spared

Jericho, a religious center for idolatrous sacrifice and worship, was accursed by the Lord God Almighty, Joshua son of Nun informed the people before entering the city.

Aside from Rahab, the prostitute who hid the Shittim spies under the stalks of flax on her rooftop and lied to protect them, every living thing was to be killed.

"Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her in accordance with your oath to her," Joshua told the Shittim spies after the mighty walls of Jericho suddenly crumbled and fell down flat to the ground.

Like everyone else, the Shittim spies charged into the city, stepping over the rubble and debris that was once the mighty walls of Jericho.

Even though Rahab's house was part of the city wall, miraculously no one was

injured or hurt when Jericho's walls collapsed. It was easy to spot the scarlet cord Rahab tied in her window, and upon finding it, they rescued her father, mother, brothers and all who sought sanctuary with her.

"The same scarlet cord that was used to lower you from the rooftop was tied in my window so you could easily spot me," Rahab told the Shittim spies after rescuing her.

"When you guys kept marching around the city day, after day, after day,

I knew that the Lord God Almighty had already delivered Jericho to Israel and was prepared for what was to follow," she said.

Every living thing was destroyed and burned. But all of the silver, gold, vessels of brass and iron were consecrated unto the Lord and sent to the Lord's treasury.

Joshua warned the people to keep away from the consecrated things. "Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it," he said.

How did the mighty walls fall?

To minimize confusion and dissent in the ranks, a gag order was imposed

The walls of Jericho fell flat to the ground after the Israelites marched once around the perimeter for six straight days and encircled the city seven times on the seventh day.

The armed men led the Israelite march, followed by seven priests holding their rams' horns and bringing up the rear, Bearers of the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark symbolized the presence of God.

To minimize confusion and dissent in the ranks, Joshua son of Nun imposed a gag order. The seven Levite Priests, continuously blowing their rams' horns, were the only ones allowed to make any noise. The armed men as well as the Ark Bearers were told to march silently.

After the sun rose on the first day, the company assembled and marched once

around Jericho. Then they returned to camp. Jericho's residents were baffled and humored at what they saw and felt secure. How could the military tactics employed by the Israelites threaten them? The second day, the Israelites repeated themselves, marching once around the city again.

During the next four consecutive days, more and more people gathered on

around Jericho. Then they returned to camp. Jericho's residents, locked inside the city's gate for protection from the Israelite siege, it initially must have been amusing to see this silent parade.

To some onlookers it appeared that a circus was coming to Jericho, not an army besieging the mighty city. Others, uninvolved and irritated by the continuous drone of the rams' horn and perhaps even fearful of the impending

round and around the Israelites marched around the walls in silent procession, causing some on the walls to ridicule, jeer and joke at God's chosen people.

The continuous drone of the rams' horns changed its pitch. This time the seven Priests sounded their trumpets like a loud blast. Then with all of his vocal might, Joshua son of Nun commanded the people to "shout." It seemed like being quiet for seven days caused the men to shout more enthusiastically and uproariously.

Then suddenly the formidable walls crumbled and crashed to the ground. The people who had been ridiculing, jeering and joking at them just moments before were instantly killed. No barriers prevented the soldiers' entry into Jericho. The armed men were able to charge the city from all sides.

The walls of Jericho had been reduced to rubble by the hand of the Lord and an obedient people who silently encircled it's broad perimeter a total of 13 times.

The armed men led the Israelite march, followed by seven priests holding their rams' horns and the Bearers of the Ark of the Covenant.

the wall and peered below at the silent procession. What they heard was the continuous drone of the rams' horns by the Levite Priests. They saw the disciplined armed men, muted by Israel's commander-in-chief per Providential precept. They saw the gold Cherubim glistening in the bright sun atop of the chest-shape Ark of the Covenant.

Oh the attention such a silent march

attack, viewed the spectacle a little more seriously.

When the seventh day came, the people of Jericho expected to see and hear what they had seen and heard for the previous six days. But what they saw and heard was more, more, and more of the same. Instead of marching around the city walls just once as expected, the Israelites kept on going. Round and

Israelites routed by Ai forces, 36 killed

None had died during Israel's conquest of Canaan, until today.

The men of Ai killed 36 Israelite soldiers, members of a small military expeditionary force dispatched by Joshua son of Nun to attack them near Beth Aven east of Bethel.

The rest of the men made a frantic, frozen and frightened retreat from the city gate as far as the stone quarries. There were an unknown number of injuries.

This disturbing defeat distressed everyone, from Joshua son of Nun who rent his clothes and prostrated himself before the Ark of the Lord in prayer, to the people whose fearful hearts became like water forgetting what the Lord did for them at the Jordan and Jericho.

The Elders of Israel, sprinkling dust on their heads to mourn the loss of 36 Israelite soldiers, also joined Joshua son of Nun as he fell facedown to the ground, seeking answers from the Lord God Almighty.

"What went wrong," Joshua inquired of the Lord as he, in an act of penitence, continued all night prostrating himself before the Ark of the Covenant, which symbolized the presence of God.

The commander-in-chief reflected on the events which caused this military catastrophe. Spies were sent to Ai on what appeared to have been a routine reconnaissance mission.

"Not all of the people are needed to go up against the men of Ai," the members of the recon mission recommended to Joshua after returning to the camp. "Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary all of the people for only a few men are there."

Joshua listened to the members of the recon mission. It seemed like a good plan. Taking their advice, he dispatched the 3,000 soldiers to fight the men at Ai.

But apparently their report underrated the Ai forces because they overpowered the Israelites, killing 36 soldiers and chasing the rest like a herd of stampeding sheep.

"Ah, Sovereign Lord, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us," Joshua lamented before the Lord God Almighty.

Joshua mourned the death of the 36 men and grieved for their loved ones. For the first time since Joshua was commissioned by the Lord God Almighty to be Israel's leader, he feared that there could be more fatalities associated with their conquest of Canaan.

"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," Joshua told the Lord. "What then will you do for your own great name?"

Stolen loot from Jericho causes Israel's first military defeat

The men of Ai defeated Israel because someone took loot from Jericho, Joshua son of Nun revealed to the congregation.

Mourning the dead soldiers and seeking answers from the Lord God Almighty, Joshua prostrated himself all night before the Ark of the Covenant.

"Stand up," the Lord God Almighty told Israel's leader, probably wondering why Joshua was in this prolonged penitent posture.

"Israel has sinned, they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep," the Lord said, explaining why the 3,000 men turned their backs and ran in fear from the men of Ai after seeing 36 of their comrades die in battle.

To expose the culprit the Lord instructed Joshua to have the people consecrate and present themselves to him tribe by tribe.

"He who is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him," the Lord God Almighty told Joshua. "He has violated the covenant of the Lord and has done a disgraceful thing in Israel."

The tribe of Judah was presented first. When Achan, grandson of Zimri and son of Carmi, went before Joshua, he confessed.

"It is true, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel," acknowledged Achan.

"This is what I have done: When I

saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylon, the 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of 50 shekels weight, I coveted the items, took and hid them," he said.

Achan's family must have assisted him in hiding the forbidden items, because messengers, dispatched by Joshua after hearing Achan's voluntary confession, found the loot buried underground in their tent.

The items which Achan stole and his family hid were unearthed and exhibited publicly. Achan and his family were found guilty for disobeying God and disregarding Joshua's warning not to take loot from Jericho.

"Why have you brought this trouble on us," Joshua asked Achan and his family, whose action caused the death of 36 soldiers and made the camp of Israel vulnerable to its enemies. "The Lord will bring trouble on you today."

Achan and his family were stoned and their bodies cremated. Even their livestock was destroyed.

Aside from the Babylonian garment, which had idolatrous figures weaved in it according to some who saw it when it was publicly displayed, the monetary amount Achan and his family stole from Jericho amounted to \$612.75.

Surely, Joshua son of Nun must have thought, the lives of 36 men, in addition to Achan and his family, were not worth such a price of disobedience.

Editorial

By Ronald Owens Jr., Editor/Publisher
The Testament Spectator

God rewards obedience and punishes our disobedience

The reward for Rahab's obedience was life and the punishment for Achan's disobedience was death.

Rahab, the Jericho prostitute who hid the two Shittim spies on her rooftop and lied to protect them, acknowledged the preeminence of God, made a conscience decision to be obedient to Him and submitted to His laws.

"For the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below," Rahab declared to the two Shittim spies.

Rahab made a deal with the Shittim spies that if she helped them, she and her house would be spared after Jericho fell. The agreement was honored and before Rahab's family became part of Israel, they had to be quarantined outside the camp until the men became circumcised and the rest were considered clean. This was accomplished.

Eventually Rahab married Booz of the tribe of Judah, becoming King David's great, great grandmother. Rahab is one of four women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, along with Ruth, Tamar and Queen Bathsheba, King Solomon's mother.

In contrast Achan, grandson of Zimri and son of Carmi of the tribe of Judah, coveted and took a beautiful robe, 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of 50 shekels weight. His family collaborated with Achan in burying those forbidden items underground in their tent.

Achan made a conscious decision to be disobedient to the Lord and by doing so, did not submit to His laws.

"It is true, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel," Achan confessed to Joshua son of Nun, acknowledging his disobedience to the Lord God Almighty.

Achan's disobedient act caused the deaths of 36 Israelite soldiers, members of a small military expeditionary force which had attacked the men of Ai. As a result of Achan's disobedience he was also executed, and so was his family, who collaborated with him. Achan and his family were cut off from Israel forever.

When Israel obeyed God, as shown in voluntary consecrations or Jericho marches, the nation enjoyed success, God's protection and

prosperity. The Jordan River was solidified, enabling the whole nation to cross.

When Israel obeyed God, the walls of Jericho fell down flat to the ground, enabling the men to make an easy, unobstructed advance into the city, sustaining no casualties in the process.

When Israel obeyed God, even the sun stood still and the earth ceased revolving for a day, providing Joshua and his forces more daylight to fight the five Kings of the Amorites — the

When Israel obeyed God, the nation enjoyed success, God's protection and prosperity. The Jordan River was solidified, Jericho's walls fell, the sun stood still.

Kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon.

Yet when just one disobeyed, everyone — man, woman, child and even the livestock — was considered unclean by the Lord God Almighty.

The Lord would not, could not nor (as He probably thought) should not (because of His forewarning) bless his people because one family disobeyed Him.

Disobedience, like a cancer, became contagious and spread throughout the camp of Israel.

This is what Achan became in taking and hiding the forbidden items. He affected or infected, if you will, everyone.

Like a cancer, Achan's action affected or infected the judgment of Joshua, who probably erred when he again, sent another reconnaissance mission to obtain information about the men of Ai, rather than trust the Lord God Almighty.

the nation "in possessing the land."

Responding to Israel's commander-in-chief, the fighting men of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh said they would obey Joshua just as they too obeyed Moses.

"Whatever you have commanded us, we will do, and wherever you send us we will go," they told Joshua, groomed as Israel's leader while he served for so long as Moses' aide.

"Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses," the people said.

The people acknowledged that Joshua was no longer Moses' second-in-command. Before his death, Moses laid his hands on Joshua, and he was filled with the spirit of wisdom. The son of Nun was the undisputed, Provisionally-appointed second Leader of Israel, a capable successor to Moses.

Just as everyone had recognized Moses as the Servant of the Lord, Joshua's Providential commission too guaranteed him the total support of the people.

Like a cancer, Achan's action affected or infected the men who spied on the men of Ai, vastly underrating their forces when they recommended sending only 3,000 men to fight them rather than mobilizing a larger force.

Like a cancer, Achan's action affected or infected the 3,000 men who after seeing 36 of their comrades die in battle, became like a herd of stampeding sheep, making a frantic, frenzied and frightened retreat from the city gate of Ai as far as the stone quarries.

Like a cancer, Achan's action affected or infected the way Joshua sought answers from the Lord. In an act of ritualistic humbleness, Israel's commander-in-chief rent his clothes and prostrated himself before the Ark of the Covenant all night.

To the Lord, Joshua's humbling act was totally unnecessary.

"Stand up," the Lord God Almighty told Israel's leader and commander-in-chief. "Israel has sinned."

That was the problem, which wasn't as obvious to Joshua as it certainly was to God.

After the Lord God Almighty made the diagnosis, treatment was prescribed. The Lord told Joshua to sanctify the people, expose the culprit and publicly exhibit the forbidden items taken from Jericho.

The punishment for Achan's disobedience, which affected or infected Israel's commander-in-chief, military leaders, the soldiers as well as the general populace, was death by stoning.

Such a sentence is perhaps a cruel method of executing someone — especially for Achan's wife and children, who received the same sentence because they too collaborated with their father in sinning.

Disobeying God is a grave sin. Such wrongdoing can cause our death and the deaths of those around us.

It was unfair to the 36 armed men and to their families that Achan's disobedience, tantamount to an act of greed and selfishness, caused their deaths. Those three dozen men unknowingly charged the city of Ai and died because of another's sin, someone who they probably didn't even know.

It took the Israelites a second military campaign before the city of Ai was taken. Eventually the Israelites were victorious but at a great cost to the nation, 36 fallen dead, their families and friends as well as Achan and his family.

If a few jeopardized the fate of a whole nation, what makes us think that our misconduct does not affect or infect those whom we don't even know? Individually, we cannot continue relentlessly disobeying God without consequences to ourselves and others.

There are many Achans among us, including the person reflected in the mirror. But Jesus Christ's redemptive blood cures the Achan infection — only if we like Achan, acknowledge our sin, seek His forgiveness and accept Him as Lord and saviour.

New leader...

(Continued from Page 1, Column 1)

would indeed be with him. This Heavenly command from the Lord God also came with a caveat. "Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you," the Lord God said.

The Lord God told Joshua that following the letter of the law can be accomplished by him meditating on it day and night and the people "not turning from it to the right or the left."

In a related matter, before his death Moses commanded that Israel's tribes of Reuben, Gad and half-tribe of Manasseh were to occupy the land east of Jordan.

Honoring that Mosaic directive, Joshua told the fighting men from those three tribes that they could return to their families after they assisted the rest of

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