

## QUESTION 6

- a) The importance of obedience to God's word.
- b) That sin has consequences; both for us and others around us.
- c) That we should always give God what is due to Him (e.g. tithes and offerings). To deny Him that is to steal from Him.
- d) We need to come before God with our concerns and be honest before Him.
- e) Our desire should be for God's glory and the honour of His name.

## GROUP LEADERS NOTES – STUDY 20

### QUESTION 1

- a) Verse 1 gives us the answer to this question; with the opening word 'but' changing the whole tone of the story.
- b) This was about disobedience to God's commands. We saw in **6:17-19** what was to be destroyed and why (refer to previous leaders notes). Achan evidently managed to hold some things back that should have been destroyed. No one else appeared to know about it.
- c) The people had already been warned of the consequences of disobedience in **6:18**. In effect, Achan was stealing from God. To deny God that which is His, is to steal from Him (see **Malachi 3:8-10**).
- d) Notice that what starts out as a 'secret sin' affects the whole camp (see **verse 11**).
- e) We should not overlook the response of God at the end of verse 1: "*the anger of the Lord burned against the people...*" If that anger or wrath had not been turned away, then the history of Israel could have ended there and then!
- f) This is a picture of the gospel. Just as the result of one sin caused condemnation for all (**Romans 5:18-19**); so that wrath was turned away by the coming of one man, Jesus.

## QUESTION 2

- a) They were certainly unaware of what Achan had done. They were still acting in response to the victory at Jericho.
- b) We discover in **8:25** that there were 12,000 men and women in Ai.
- c) The spies were confident of victory because of God's promises; as well as His action of their behalf back in Jericho.
- d) Was an army of 3000 against the greater number in Ai over confidence?
- e) There is no evidence that these were the same spies; but they would have remembered the experience and confidence of their predecessors.

## QUESTION 3

- a) How easy it would have been to have carried on in their own strength and according to their own wisdom.
- b) This incident proves that God is in control and that His way of doing things is always the best.
- c) On the other hand this setback is arguably minor in comparison with its effect on their morale. Verse 5 tells us that *"the hearts of the people melted and became as water"*.
- d) It is interesting to compare this description of the people with that of the Amorites back in **5:1**.

## QUESTION 4

- a) Joshua was clearly shattered by this catastrophe. The tearing of clothes before God was a customary expression of grief.
- b) Notice that he fell before the Ark of the Lord; the symbol of God's presence.
- c) He was right to lead the elders in going to the Lord. He was wrong however to suggest that the Lord had failed them and that Canaan was all but lost to them.
- d) Is Joshua doubting God's faithfulness when he suggests that they would have been better off back on the other side of the Jordan? This is reminiscent of the cry of the Israelites in the desert when the spies had returned in **Numbers 14:2-4**.
- e) We might however understand his doubts; especially as at this point he is still unaware of the reason why God had withheld victory.
- f) Indeed; that is a notable omission from his questions. He does not seek the reason for the defeat.
- g) We do need to be careful here not to slam Joshua too much. He was genuinely perplexed and examined the situation in a similar way we might approach an unexplained problem.

## QUESTION 5

- a) Joshua views it from a practical point of view in that now the other inhabitants might think that Jericho was a fluke and would now have more confidence in defending their own land and cities.
- b) He also sees it from a more concerning angle. If Israel is destroyed and its name cut off from the earth; it would dishonour God's name.
- c) God had invested a lot in these people. They were his chosen people (**Deuteronomy 7:6**). They were also the recipients and the channel of God's covenant promises for the nations.
- d) The final declaration *"And what will you do for your great name"* shows that Joshua has not abandoned his faith in God. His concern is for his honour.