

SIN AS A HINDERANCE

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Lamentations 4:1-3; Joshua 7:1-12

Prophet Jeremiah was one of those called at their tender age to God's service. During his time, the Israelites went into captivity. He wrote the Lamentations to express the devastation that was experienced by the country from the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon. Many souls have been devastated by the devil. Many strong Christians have become weak. Many warriors have abandoned their armor and have fled at the sight of the enemy. The question asked by Prophet Jeremiah now stares us in the face. Why has our goal become dim? Why have we cried and God did not answer? The answer is not farfetched. Isaiah 59:1-2 says "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy that he cannot hear; But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that He will not hear."

When God brought the children of Israel from the land of bondage, He made Himself real to them. He spoke with them from heaven and manifested Himself to these people in various ways. He was always with them in their camps. He directed their affairs. The relationship of God with the Israelites was unparalleled. I want us to examine one of the various incidents that took place when they were about to enter the Promised Land.

In Joshua 7, we were told, "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing...." The result of this trespass led to the loss of the battle and loss of thirty-six soldiers from the Israelite army. These people have fought wars in which no life was lost – Numbers 31:48-49..... these same people now lost 36 people to a less powerful nation. Why have they been put to flight by their enemy? As a result of this defeat, Joshua and the Elders of Israel rent their clothes and mourned (verse 6) before the Lord. Why were these Elders so shaken by the defeat?

Not quite long, before their defeat in Ai, the fortified city of Jericho was conquered. The way and manner this city was defeated was a miracle. God directed Joshua to lead His army to battle. When he looked up towards Jericho, he saw a man with a sword drawn. His question to the man was "On whose side are you?" Joshua 5:13-15. This simply shows us that when a battle line is drawn between the children of God and the devil, God himself directs His angels to lead their own troops too far for the same battle. I could now understand why Paul said in Romans 8:31 that "if God be for us, who can be against us." When the Lord leads His people to battle, victory is sure. This is because all power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth; and that at the mention of name, every knee must bow; be it principalities, powers and rulers of darkness of this world, they must bow.

The children of God marched out to war against Jericho and the Lord sent His troop also. The wall of this fortified city fell and the city was overrun. Those that conquered Jericho were defeated by a relatively small town of Ai. Why has sin become their hindrance and why has their gold become dim?

The Lord told Joshua, back to our text, Joshua 7:10-12, the people have sinned. If you diligently seek the Lord's face when things are tough, He will definitely tell what went wrong. The strong became weak because of sin. Verse 12 said, "therefore, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you anymore, except you destroyed that accursed from you." Many people could not stand their ground before the devil, because they have been accursed. Sin has separated Israel from God. God specifically told Joshua "neither will I be with you any more, EXCEPT YOU DESTROY THAT ACCURSED FROM YOU".

Ps 66:18 said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me". You have heard that due to the sour relationship between you and

God, the gold, incorruptible power has become dim. As a result, you have become weary and heavy laden. Jesus is calling you, he wants to give you rest and He is ready to come to your assistance. God wants to restore you to glory and He has given Jesus as a propitiation for your sins. Give your life to Him now, if you have not done so. If you have had a relationship with Him and have drawn back, you have a chance to reconcile

yourself to God. God said, "Come let reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"- Isaiah 1:18. If you are willing to be obedient, you will eat the good of the Land. Amen.

Salvation is free! Ayo ni o!