

# Do You Want to Die?

**JOSHUA MANIFESTED** a true zeal for the honor of God, yet his petitions were mingled with doubt and unbelief. The thought that God had brought His people over the Jordan to deliver them up to the power of the heathen was a sinful one, unworthy of a leader of Israel. Joshua's feelings of despondency and distrust were inexcusable in view of the mighty miracles which God had wrought for the deliverance of His people, and the repeated promise that He would be with them in driving out the wicked inhabitants of the land.

But our merciful God did not visit His servant with wrath because of this error. He graciously accepted the humiliation and prayers of Joshua, and at the same time gently rebuked his unbelief, and then revealed to him the cause of their defeat. {The Signs of the Times, April 21, 1881}

Here the Lord gave expression to His abhorrence of idolatry. Those heathen nations had turned from the worship of the living God, and were paying homage to demons. Shrines and temples, beautiful statues, and costly monuments, all the most ingenious and expensive works of art, had held the thoughts and affections of the veriest slavery to Satanic delusions.

The human heart is naturally inclined to idolatry and self-exaltation. The costly and beautiful monuments of heathen worship would please the fancy and engage the senses, and thus allure the Israelites from the service of God. It was to remove this temptation from His people that the Lord commanded them to destroy those relics of idolatry, on penalty of being themselves abhorred and accursed of God. {The Signs of the Times, April 21, 1881}

The history of Achan teaches the solemn lesson that for one man's sin the displeasure of God will rest upon a people or a nation till the transgression is searched out and punished. Sin is corrupting in its nature. One man infected with its deadly leprosy may communicate the taint to thousands. Those who occupy responsible positions as guardians of the people are false to their trust if they do not faithfully search out and reprove sin. Many dare not condemn iniquity, lest they shall thereby sacrifice position or popularity. And by some it is

considered uncharitable to rebuke sin. The servant of God should never allow his own spirit to be mingled with the reproof which he is required to give; but he is under the most solemn obligation to present the Word of God, without fear or favor. He must call sin by its right name. Those who by their carelessness or indifference permit God's name to be dishonored by His professed people, are numbered with the transgressor, —registered in the record of heaven as partakers in their evil deeds....

The love of God will never lead to the belittling of sin; it will never cover or excuse an unconfessed wrong. Achan learned too late that God's law, like its Author, is unchanging. It has to do with all our acts and thoughts and feelings. It follows us, and reaches every secret spring of action. By indulgence in sin, men are led to lightly regard the law of God. Many conceal their transgressions from their fellow men, and flatter themselves that God will not be strict to mark iniquity. But His law is the great standard of right, and with it every act of life must be compared in that day when God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. Purity of heart will lead to purity of life. All excuses for sin are vain. Who can plead for the sinner when God testifies against him? {The Signs of the Times, April 21, 1881}

There are many professed Christians whose confessions of sin are similar to that of Achan. They will, in a general way, acknowledge their unworthiness, but they refuse to confess the sins whose guilt rests upon their conscience, and which have brought the frown of God upon His people. Thus many conceal sins of selfishness, over-reaching, dishonesty toward God and their neighbor, sins in the family, and many others which it is proper to confess in public.

Genuine repentance springs from a sense of the offensive character of sin. These general confessions are not the fruit of true humiliation of soul before God. They leave the sinner with a self-complacent spirit to go on as before, until his conscience becomes hardened, and warnings that once aroused him produce hardly a feeling of danger and after a time his sinful course appears right. All too late his sins will find him out, in

that day when they shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever. There is a vast difference between admitting facts after they are proved, and confessing sins known only to ourselves and God. {The Signs of the Times, May 5, 1881}

That which was esteemed by Achan as a very little thing was the cause of great anguish and sorrow to the responsible men of Israel, and this is always the case when it is manifest that the Lord is angry with His people. It is the men upon whom rests the burden of the work, who most keenly feel the weight of the people's sins, and who pray in agony of soul because of the rebuke of the Lord. Achan, the guilty party, did not feel the burden. He took it very coolly. We find nothing in the account to signify that he felt distressed. There is no evidence that he felt remorse, or reasoned from cause to effect, saying. "It is my sin that has brought the displeasure of the Lord upon the people." He did not ask, "Can it be that it is because I stole that golden wedge and Babylonish garment that we have been defeated in battle?" He had no idea of making his wrong right by confession of sin and humiliation of soul. {Letter 13, 1893}

There are many in this day that would designate Achan's sin as of little consequence, and would excuse his guilt; but it is because they have no realization of the character of sin and its consequences, no sense of the holiness of God and of His requirements. The statement is often heard that God is not particular whether or not we give diligent heed to His Word, whether or not we obey all the commandments of His holy law; but the record of His dealing with Achan should be a warning to

us. He will in no wise clear the guilty...

The controversy for truth will have little success when sin is upon those who advocate it. Men and women may be well versed in Bible knowledge, as well acquainted with the Scripture as were the Israelites with the ark, and yet if their hearts are not right before God, success will not attend their efforts. God will not be with them. They do not have a high sense of the obligations of the law of heaven, nor do they realize the sacred character of the truth they are teaching. The charge is, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." {2 BC 998.2}

It is not enough to argue in defense of the truth. The most telling evidence of its worth is seen in a godly life; and without this the most conclusive statements will be lacking in weight and prevailing power; for our strength lies in being connected with God by His Holy Spirit, and transgression severs us from this sacred nearness with the Source of our might and wisdom. {The Review and Herald, March 20, 1888}

Have you considered why it was that all who were connected with Achan were also subjects of the punishment of God? It was because they had not been trained and educated according to the directions given them in the great standard of the law of God. Achan's parents had educated their son in such a way that he felt free to disobey the Word of the Lord, the principles inculcated in his life led him to deal with his children in such a way that they also were corrupted. Mind acts and reacts upon mind, and the punishment which included the relations of Achan with himself, reveals the fact that all were involved in the transgression. {Manuscript 67, 1894} ■

# Message Notes
