

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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The “Accursed Thing” of Jericho

There was an “accursed thing” in the city of Jericho. Therefore, with the exception of a helping harlot named Rahab and her family, Yahweh cursed and condemned the entire city. Before Israel could enter any further into the “Promised Land,” they first had to destroy Jericho. Yahweh instructed them to march around the walls of the city for seven days, carrying the ark of the covenant. He finally told them to utter a great shout at the sound of the blowing of trumpets and the walls of the city miraculously fell, allowing Israel to conquer the city (see Joshua 6).

Before Israel took the city, however, Yahweh warned them about the “accursed thing.” He told them to stay away from it! He said if they took of it, then the entire camp of Israel would become a curse and be troubled:

18 And you, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest you make yourselves accursed, when you take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. -Joshua 6

He told Israel that, as long as they stayed away from the “accursed thing,” they could freely take of the spoils of the city, such as silver, gold, brass, and iron, for His treasury:

19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto Yahweh: they shall come into the treasury of Yahweh. -Joshua 6

While Israel was utterly destroying Jericho, something of great significance happened. Someone among them had committed a great sin. In direct disobedience to the word of Yahweh, Achan had taken of the “accursed thing:”

1 But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of Yahweh was kindled against the children of Israel. -Joshua 7

Unaware that Israel was now under a curse because of the “accursed thing,” Joshua sent spies to the next city they were to conquer. It appeared that the city of Ai was weak and easily conquerable by only a portion of the mighty army of Israel. However, Israel’s army became scared and fled:

2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

3 And they returned to Joshua, and said to him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labor there; for they are but few.

4 So there went up there of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. -Joshua 7

Yahweh had withdrawn His protection from Israel because the “accursed thing” was now in the midst of them:

11 Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and deceived also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. -Joshua 7

Through Yahweh’s careful instructions, Joshua finally learned who among Israel had taken of the “accursed thing.” It was Achan, of the tribe of Judah:

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against Yahweh God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. -Joshua 7

What was the “accursed thing?” Achan described it by its components. He said it was a “Babylonish garment,” a “wedge” of gold,” and some silver. Did Yahweh put a curse upon Israel because Achan had selfishly taken these things for himself instead of putting them into Yahweh’s treasury? Perhaps it was that simple.

On the other hand, the description given by Achan suggests that there may be even more significance to the “accursed thing” than coveting, stealing, and hiding valuable goods. The word “Babylonish,” as in “Babylonish garment,” is translated from the Hebrew word שִׁנְעָר (Shinar), which was the location of ancient Babel, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia. It is also the location of modern Iraq. The ancient city of Ur of the Chaldees was also located in Shinar, which

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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was also called the land of two rivers, which were the Tigris and the Euphrates. Yahweh had removed Abraham from this place before giving him the “Promised Land.”

7 And he said to him, I am Yahweh that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it. -Genesis 15

As Joshua explained, this land on the “other side of the river,” was the place where Israel’s ancestors had served gods other than Yahweh:

2 And Joshua said to all the people, Thus says Yahweh God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the river in old times, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.

3 And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the river, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. -Joshua 24

What were these other gods? Historical evidence tells us that Ur, which means “flame” or “light,” was of great religious importance. It was the center for worshipping the moon god, whose name was “Sin” and was represented by the symbol of the crescent moon. Also called Nanna, the moon god was eventually displaced by the moon goddess, under names such as Ashtaroth, Astarte, and many others. The goddess was also called the “queen of heaven” (see *Sacred Geography, and Antiquities...*, E. P. Barrows, 1872).

Like Ur of the Chaldees, Jericho was also the center for worshipping the moon god. The city was even named after the moon! The name Jericho is written in Hebrew as ירִיחוֹ (yrcho), which is based on the word יָרַח (yrch), meaning “moon.” Therefore, the moon god was of supreme importance in both Ur in Shinar and in Jericho.

Because the “Babylonish garment” of the “accursed thing” was associated with Shinar, it connected Jericho with the place where moon god worship began. According to *Strong’s Concordance*, the “Babylonish garment” was actually a mantle, or a prophet’s cloak, from Shinar. Therefore, it is quite likely that the “accursed thing” was somehow connected with worshipping the moon god.

The “wedge of gold,” another component of the “accursed thing,” was not in the form of coins or bars, as for

money. The Hebrew word that is translated as “wedge” is לָשׁוֹן (lashown), which is most often translated as “tongue.” Therefore, the gold wedge of the “accursed thing” was likely to have been formed in the shape of a “tongue,” which could have represented the shape of a crescent moon or some other object of veneration.

Whatever the “Babylonish garment,” the “wedge of gold,” and the silver of the “accursed thing” were, they appear to have been connected with the moon god. Yahweh cursed and condemned those who were associated with the “accursed thing” (see Joshua 7:24-26). Nevertheless, moon god worship continued, particularly through the worship of the moon goddess.

For example, when the people of Ephesus were worshipping the goddess Artemis, which the Romans named Diana, they were worshipping the moon goddess. She was believed to have fallen from heaven, from the presence of the Greek god Zeus (called Jupiter by the Romans):

35 And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, *You* men of Ephesus, what man is there that knows not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana [Artemis], and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter [Zeus]? -Acts 19

Even today, great world religions either knowingly or unknowingly continue to worship or venerate the moon god in the form of the “great goddess” which “fell” from heaven. Daniel prophesied of a powerful end-time king who will worship such a diety. He will honor this god (or goddess) in his estate, perhaps meaning his place of power, with gold, silver, and with other precious and pleasant things, just as the people of Jericho did with the “accursed thing:”

38 But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. -Daniel 11

Zechariah describes a “woman” called “Wickedness,” which, like the “accursed thing,” is also connected with Shinar. She will be carried in a basket called an “ephah” by two other “women” which have wings of a stork containing wind (or spirit). The Hebrew word for stork, which is an unclean bird, is translated as the feminine of חַצִּיִּד (chacyd), meaning “saints” or “holy.” The “two women,” which could represent two religions possessing unclean spirits, will take “Wickedness” to the seat of the moon god/goddess, which is in the land of Shinar. They will then set her upon her own base, meaning her own “pedestal” or “fixed resting place:”

10 Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Where do these bear the ephah?

11 And he said to me, To build it a house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base. -Zechariah 5

Yahweh cautions His people to “...in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing.” -Joshua 6:18

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Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies
Kerby F. Fannin, Ph.D., Director
P.O. Box 260, 114 East Main Street
Addison, Michigan 49220 U.S.A.
biblical@ibiblical.org
517-547-7494

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