

# Joshua 7 Commentary

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Paul J Bucknell - Biblical Foundations for Freedom

LAND ALLOTMENTS  
(Joshua 13-21)  
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Click charts to enlarge Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission

| JOSHUA                               |                |                                  |                           |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST |                |                                  |                           |
| HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS      |                |                                  |                           |
| CONQUEST<br>OF THE PROMISED LAND     |                | DIVISION<br>OF THE PROMISED LAND | CLOSE OF<br>JOSHUA'S LIFE |
| ACTION                               |                | ALLOCATION                       | APPEAL                    |
| Josh 1:1-5:15                        | Josh 6:1-12:24 | Joshua 13:1-21:45                | Josh 22:1-24:33           |

| WARLORDS IN CANAAN |                   | LANDLORDS IN CANAAN |              |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| ENTERING CANAAN    | CONQUERING CANAAN | DIVIDING CANAAN     |              |
| SECURING THE LAND  |                   | SETTLING THE LAND   |              |
| Preparation        | Conquest          | Possession          | Consecration |
| ca. 1 Month        | ca 7 Years        | ca. 18 Years        |              |

[See also more detailed Chart by Charles R Swindoll](#)

**Joshua 7:1** But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

- **acted unfaithfully** : Jos 7:20,21 22:16 2Ch 24:18 Ezr 9:6 Da 9:7
- **for Achan**: Jos 22:20 1Ch 2:6,7, Achar, Zimri
- **took**: Jos 6:17-18
- **the anger**: Jos 22:18 2Sa 24:1 1Ch 21:7 Ec 9:18 Jon 1:7 1Co 5:1-6 Heb 12:15,16
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Luke 12:15+ Then He said to them, **'Beware**, (perceive with your eye, [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) and **be on your guard** ([phulasso](#) in [present imperative](#)) against every form of greed ([pleonexia](#)); for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

1 Corinthians 12:26+ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Joshua 6:17-18+ "The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18 "But as for you, **only keep yourselves from the things under the ban**, so that you do not **covet** them and **take** some of the things under the ban, and **make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it**.

### THE "RIPPLE EFFECT" OF ONE MAN'S SIN

[Don Anderson](#) divides the chapter with descriptive "D" alliterations...

1. **DISOBEDIENCE** - Joshua 7:1
2. **DEFEAT** - Joshua 7: 2-5
3. **DISMAY** - Joshua 7:6-9 -
4. **DIRECTIONS** - Joshua 7 : 10-15
5. **DISCOVERY** - Joshua 7:16-21
6. **DEATH** - Joshua 7:22-26

**Adrian Rogers' Outline-** [The Key to Unbroken Victory](#)

#### I. Great Victories Are Often Followed by Great Defeats

- A. Israel's Sin: Carelessness
1. Pride
  2. Presumption
  3. Prayerlessness

B. Achan's Sin: Covetousness

1. He Saw
2. He Coveted
3. He Took
4. He Covered It Up

**II. Private Sin Is Never Really Private**

- A. Sin Brings Dishonor to God
- B. Sin Brings Defeat to Your Brother
- C. Sin Brings Disgrace to Your Family
- D. Sin Brings Destruction to Your Loved Ones

**III. Every Sin That You Cover, God Will Uncover**

**IV. Every Sin That You Uncover, God Will Cover**

**Paul Apple** entitles this chapter " SIN SNATCHES DEFEAT FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY"

**Alan Carr's** sermon title is "[God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#)"

- 2–3 Israel Was A Confident People
- 4–5a Israel Was A Conquered People
- 5b Israel Was A Confounded People
- 6–15 A PAINFUL DISCOVERY
- 10–15 God Rehearses The Problem
- 16–18 The Sinner Discovered
- 19–21 The Sin Discussed
- 22–26 The Sinner Destroyed

**But** - This **term of contrast** is striking (and ominous) in context for here we see a complete "reversal of direction" going from Israel's incredible victory to Israel's [ignominious](#) defeat, from a supernatural success to a natural (fleshly) disaster! **NET** = "**But** the Israelites disobeyed the command about the city's riches."

We are never in greater danger than when we have a high opinion of ourselves

-- James Smith

God's people are never more vulnerable, never in greater danger,  
than right after they have won a great victory.

-- Donald Campbell

It is interesting to read a similar statement in In The Screwtape Letters, C. S. Lewis telling of Satan warning one of his junior demons, "We are never in greater danger than when they look around and all traces of God have forsaken them, yet they still choose to obey Him!" Well, in this chapter, the devil wins, because Israel disobeys!

And for completeness let me give you one more "greater danger" quote from James M Boice - "We are never in greater danger than when we assume that He will always forgive us as long as we go through the outward forms of repentance."

**THOUGHT** - Be especially sober, alert (1Pe 5:8+) and prayerful (cf Mt 26:41+) to the wiles and snares of the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#) after you have experienced a spiritual victory or a "spiritual high!"

"A good Conscience is better than the largest Gain."

-- Isaac Watts

**Hampton Keathley** - The distance between a great victory and a great defeat is only one step, and often only a short one at that. One sad truth of reality in a fallen world is that we can be riding high on the cloud of some great spiritual success and the very next moment find ourselves in a valley of spiritual failure and despair. One moment we can be like Elijah standing victoriously on Mount Carmel and the next shriveled up under a juniper tree or hiding in a cave in deep despair complaining to God: "... I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too" (1 Kings 19:10). ([Joshua 7:1-26 Defeat at Ai and the Sin of Achan](#))

**The sons of Israel acted unfaithfully** ([maal](#)) in regard to the things under the ban ([herem](#)) - **Acted unfaithfully** is more literally "prevaricated a prevarication" or "were unfaithful with unfaithfulness." **NET** - "disobeyed the command about the city's riches." The Hebrew word for **acted unfaithfully** ([maal](#)) describes a conscious act of treachery or unfaithfulness against the Lord. Although only one man was treacherous and disobeyed the clear prohibition of the **ban** ([herem](#) - everything living to be killed and valuable objects go to the LORD), the entire nation was held culpable for his sin! In other words the sin of one man was imputed to the entire nation! Be aware that private sin can have public consequences!

**THOUGHT** - Achan took something that did not belong to him and we can do that with anything, from silver to sex! And the consequences may end up being "[communal](#)" or familial! Beware!

**Utley** - "**the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully**" The VERB "acted unfaithfully" (BDB 591, KB 612, Qal IMPERFECT) means "to act under cover" or "trust-breaking." Although this was only done by one soldier it was seen as an unfaithful act on behalf of all the people. This illustrates the Hebrew concept of corporality. As Adam sinned, all mankind sinned; as one animal dies, humans are forgiven; as Jesus gave Himself to die, all mankind is potentially saved (cf. Isaiah 53; Rom. 5:17–19). The one affects the whole, either negatively or positively! In the Hebrew text the NOUN form of the VERB "acted unfaithfully" is repeated, which intensifies the scandal of the act of rebellion.

Joshua's instructions had been crystal clear in Joshua 6:17-19, so Achan's sin seems to fall into the category of presumptuous sin. In Dt 17:12-13 we read Moses' warning to the second generation (which would include Achan) "The man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest (cf Achan refused to listen to Joshua.) who stands there to serve the LORD your God, nor to the judge, that man shall die; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel. Then all the people will hear and be afraid, and will not act presumptuously again."

**Bush** explains it this way " This is on the ground of the constituted oneness of social and ecclesiastical bodies. A people, properly speaking, is but one moral person."

**Bishop Hall.** 'So venomous is sin, especially when it lights among God's people, that one drachm of it is able to infect the whole mass of Israel.'

**THOUGHT** - This is a frightening truth **I wish I had heard 36 years ago when I was first saved!** Beware when you sin, for your sin may have an unexpected "ripple effect!" (cf Nu 32:23+)

**Paul Enns** - One man sinned; the whole nation suffered. The concept of imputation is a principle of Scripture concerning sin for the entire human race (through Adam) and concerning righteousness for those who believe (through Christ) (cf. Ro 5: 12-21)

**For** - Term of explanation, explaining the unfaithful act.

**Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban** ([herem](#)) - Achan's genealogy is recounted with four generations, which again come into focus when his sin is revealed in Joshua 7:16-18, the lineage there going in the opposite direction (begins with Judah). Achan's theft was not from another Israelite. **Achan** literally stole from the LORD what was set apart for the LORD! Woe! His tribe, his clan, his family is all mentioned here with his name. One writer said finding Achan in Israel is like discovering Judas among the disciples! This chapter begins with Achan's sin and ends with the punishment for his sin.

**Woudstra** - The purpose of this chapter, to be read in close conjunction with ch. 8, is easy to recognize . The Lord, who "gives" the promised land to his people, and who has just furnished a striking instance of this in the capture of Jericho, demands of his people loyalty to the covenant He has made with them. When the covenant is violated (see Josh 7:11), Israel receives a setback before Ai, God's wrath blazes, and His pardon must be gained. Only then will Israel again be assured of victory (Joshua 8:1) . ([The Book of Joshua The New International Commentary on the OT](#))

**A W Pink** has a pithy note on Achan's lineage - It is to be carefully noted that the Holy Spirit has furnished us with the genealogy of the offender, and since there is nothing meaningless or unimportant in the Word of Truth, it behoves us to attend to this detail. **Achan** was the immediate descendant of "**Zerah**" and he was the son of Judah's whoredom (Ge 38:15-30). What a solemn example of the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children! Significant indeed is the name of this disturber of the nation's peace and prosperity, for Achan means "Trouble."

**Note** - Zerah's twin brother, [Perez](#), was an ancestor of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:3–17). Zerah reminds us that God doesn't overlook anyone because of their parentage or the circumstances of their birth. Every person holds a unique place in God's order and plan, and each individual is responsible to God for what he does with what he is given. ([Gotquestions.org](#))

**Therefore** - A tragic term of conclusion!

**The anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel**- God's anger blazes like the fury of a fire, "for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb 12:29) Note again the emphasis on the ramifications of sin by one individual. **NET** says "The LORD was furious with the Israelites." The Lxx uses [orge](#) to translate [aph](#) in Joshua 7:1 and it describes a vigorous upsurge of one's nature against someone, a divine reaction against evil, bringing judgment and punishment (as described in Joshua 7:25+).

**Utley** - "the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel" The Bible that speaks of the tremendous love of God is the same Bible that speaks of the burning (BDB 354, KB 351, Qal IMPERFECT, e.g., Exod. 4:14; 22:24; 32:10; Num. 11:1, 10; 12:9; 22:22; Deut. 6:15; 7:4; 11:17; 29:27; 31:17) anger of God. They are both anthropomorphic phrases (from Greek terms "man" and "form"). However, they both speak of the true nature of a personal, holy God.

**Campbell** points out that "it is apparent that Israel's history would have ended here if God's anger had not been turned away!" ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**NET Note** - This incident illustrates well the principle of **corporate solidarity** and **corporate guilt**. The sin of one man brought the LORD's anger down upon the entire nation.

**Anger of the LORD burned** - same phrase 11x in the OT - Ex 4:14; Nu 12:9; Dt. 29:27; Jos. 7:1; Jdg 2:14; Jdg. 2:20; Jdg. 10:7; 2 Sam. 6:7; 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chr. 13:10; 2 Chr. 25:15

**Believer's Study Bible** - The sin of Achan is regarded not only as his personal sin, but also as a trespass for all Israel (cf. v. 11). Because of him, 36 men died (v. 5; cf. Rom. 5:12, 18, 19). This story teaches the serious effects sin can have on God's people. It is important, then, for blatant sin to be disciplined (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-8; Acts 5:1-11; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15). Achan's sin is called a "trespass" (ma'al, Heb.) in v. 1, which refers to treachery, a breach of trust, such as refusing to pay a vow, adultery, or idolatry (Lev. 5:16; Num. 5:12, 27; Josh. 22:16; Ezra 9:2-4). It is called a "disgraceful thing" (nevalah, Heb.) in v. 15, a term usually used of sexual perversions (Gen. 34:7; Judg. 19:23, 24, translated "outrage" and "vile thing"). ([The Believer's Study Bible](#))

**Hess** points out that Achan's sin "occupies so much space because the first breach of Israel's purity as a holy nation before God brings the harshest judgment and punishment. This also serves as a warning against yielding to future temptations." (TOTC)

**Alan Carr** - Israel did not realize it, but they were living through one of the most dangerous times of life. You see, the time just after a great spiritual victory is a dangerous time. Often, like Israel, we will be over confident and believe that we can handle any battle that comes our way, Pr 16:18. When we believe like that, then is usually when we suffer our greatest defeats. Now, don't misunderstand me. Confidence is a good thing as long as one's confidence is in the right place. When we are walking with our hope and our confidence in the Lord, we will win the victory, but when we are walking with our confidence in the power of our ability and in our flesh, then we are destined to fail! ([God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 1-5. Achan took some of the spoil of Jericho. The love of the world is that root of bitterness, which of all others is most hardly rooted up. We should take heed of sin ourselves, lest by it many be defiled or disquieted, Hebrews 12:15; and take heed of having fellowship with sinners, lest we share their guilt. It concerns us to watch over one another to prevent sin, because others' sins may be to our damage. The easy conquest of Jericho excited contempt of the enemy, and a disposition to expect the Lord to do all for them without their using proper means. Thus men abuse the doctrines of Divine grace, and the promises of God, into excuses for their own sloth and self-indulgence. We are to work out our own salvation, though it is God that works in us. It was a dear victory to the Canaanites, whereby Israel was awakened and reformed, and reconciled to their God, and the people of Canaan hardened to their own ruin.

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**Rod Mattoon** points out that "the names in verse one reveal some interesting insights. The meaning of the names are a table of contents of Achan's life in this chapter.

\* **Achan**= Troubler, Taboo. Achan is going to bring trouble to his people by taking that which is taboo, only belonging to God.

\* **Carmi**= My Vineyard. A picture of God's people who are called His vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7. God's vineyard will be affected by Achan.

\* **Zabdi**= Gift of the Lord. The spoils of Jericho belong to the Lord.

\* **Zerah**= A Rising of Light. Achan's theft will be brought to light and discovered.

\* **Judah**= Praise or Giving Thanks. God's people are victorious again after they deal with the sin in the camp. They praise the Lord for victory. ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

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**Alan Carr** - My desire in preaching this message is that we would examine our hearts and our lives. If there is anything in any of us

that we think we have hidden away; anything that we think is covered, I want us to get that issue settled with the Lord before we leave here today. We can and this passage tells us how.

The fact is, there are some things you just can't hide. If you eat raw onions or garlic, others will know about. If you stop bathing or using deodorant, you won't hide that for long. If you eat Cheetos, your orange fingertips will give you away. If you try to hide sin in your life, your secret will eventually get out, because your sin will affect you and all those around you. Ill. Num. 32:23b, "...and be sure your sin will find you out." Ill. Ps. 90:8, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance."

We might not want to admit it, but we all know that sin causes problems. It causes problems for the one sinning and it causes problems for everyone around them. It's like throwing a pebble into a pond. Ill. Song 2:15

"Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom."

Most of us are just like Achan from time to time. We allow sin into our lives; we try to hide those sins; and we try to cover them up. When we do, we bring pain and trouble into our lives. These verses teach us that Some Things Can't Be Hidden. Notice with me the truths revealed in these verses. ([Some Things Can't Be Hidden](#))

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**Unfaithful** (be or act unfaithful) ([04603](#)) **maal** means to act unfaithfully, to trespass, to violate one's duty, to break faith, to commit a violation, to act in a manner which is untrustworthy or unreliable in relation to an agreement or relationship. The idea of **maal** is that of a conscious act of treachery or unfaithfulness against the Lord. In fact in Ezek 39:23 and Da 9:7 **maal** describes the sin which resulted in Judah's exile to Babylon! They were unfaithful to their covenant with Yahweh. Maal describes the horrid sin of Achan (Josh 7:1) in which he took "the things that were under the ban." (Josh 6:18) In Joshua 7:1 the Septuagint translates **maal** with the verb **plemmeleo** which means to make a false note in music and metaphorically to offend or sin against.

**Ban** (devoted, destruction, utterly destroy) ([02764](#)) **herem** it is something devoted unto divine service, and is under a ban. In some context as the present use, it describes a curse or extermination which implies total destruction (see Dt 7:26; 1Sa 15:18; Zech 14:11). MacKay says "The 'curse' is the ban, the utter devotion to destruction (Isa. 43:28 — and NIV footnote; Jer. 25:9) of what is an abomination in the LORD's sight."

**Herem** "conveys the "basic meaning is the exclusion of an object from the use or abuse of man and its irrevocable surrender to God. The word is related to an Arabic root meaning "to prohibit, especially to ordinary use." The word "harem," meaning the special quarters for Muslim wives, comes from it. Usually **āram** means a ban for utter destruction, the compulsory dedication of something which impedes or resists God's work, which is considered to be accursed before God. The idea first appears in Nu 21:2–3, where the Israelites vowed that, if God would enable them to defeat a southern Canaanite king, they would "utterly destroy" (i.e. consider as devoted and accordingly utterly destroy) his cities. This word is used regarding almost all the cities which Joshua's troops destroyed (e.g. Jericho, Josh 6:21; Ai, Josh 8:26; Makkedah, Josh 10:28; Hazor, Josh 11:11), thus indicating the rationale for their destruction. In Dt 7:2–6, the command for this manner of destruction is given, with the explanation following that, otherwise, these cities would lure the Israelites away from the Lord (cf. Dt 20:17–18). Any Israelite city that harbored idolators was to be "utterly destroyed" (Deut 13:12–15; cf. Ex 22:19). A man who was the object devoted to God came under the same ban." (Leon Wood - TWOT)

Lev. 27:21; Lev. 27:28; Num. 18:14; Deut. 7:26; Deut. 13:17; Jos. 6:17; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 7:1; Jos. 7:11; Jos. 7:12; Jos. 7:13; Jos. 7:15; Jos. 22:20; 1 Sam. 15:21; 1 Ki. 20:42; 1 Chr. 2:7; Isa. 34:5; Isa. 43:28; Ezek. 44:29; Zech. 14:11; Mal. 4:6

**Anger** (nose, nostril, wrath) ([0639](#)) **aph** from **anaph** = to breathe hard, to be angry) is a masculine noun meaning nose, nostril, snout (pigs - Pr 11:22), face (2Sa 25:23) and anger. Both senses are found in Proverbs 30:22 - "For the churning of milk produces butter, and pressing the nose (aph) brings forth blood; so the churning of anger (aph) produces strife." In the first use God "breathed into (man's) nostrils the breath of life." (Ge 2:7) To have length of nose is to be slow to wrath (Pr 14:29, 16:32). To have shortness of nose is to be quick tempered (Pr. 14:17; Jer. 15:14, 15). Often speaks of divine anger or wrath (Ps 2:5, 2:12, 6:1, 30:5, 74:1, 77:9, 78:21) and thankfully is "Slow to **anger**." (Ps 103:8; 145:8, both Lxx = makrothumos = long-suffering)

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**1. Committed a trespass.** Heb. יַמְעִלוּ מַעַל yimmēlū maal, had prevaricated a prevarication. The sin of an individual is imputed to the whole people. This is on the ground of the constituted oneness of social and ecclesiastical bodies. A people, properly speaking, is but one moral person. See note on ch. 1:12. In like manner, Mt. 26:8, it is said, that 'the disciples had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?' Whereas from John, 12:4, 5, it appears that it was Judas only who made this remark.—No man, in sinning, can be sure that the consequences will stop with himself. For aught he knows, they may affect the whole extent of his relations; and this ought to make us watchful both over ourselves and others, that we neither commit nor countenance deeds that may spread

desolation over the bosom of a whole community. Joshua 22:20, 'Did not Achan, the son of Zerah, commit a trespass on the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel?'

**In the accursed thing.** In respect to the accursed, or devoted, thing; in taking a portion of the spoils of the city, the whole of which God had commanded to be either destroyed or dedicated to the sanctuary. Gr. καὶ νοσφίσαντο πρὸς τὸ ναθέματος, and have set apart for themselves some of the anathema.

**Achan, the son of Carmi.** This Achan is elsewhere called Achar, trouble or the troubler, undoubtedly in allusion to the effect of his conduct on this occasion. See on v. 25 and ch. 6:18. In like manner Bethel, house of God, is called Bethaven, house of vanity, Hos. 4:15, on account of the idolatry practised there. Nothing is more common in the Scriptures, than for the names of persons and places to be changed in consequence of, and in allusion to, certain remarkable events by which they may have been distinguished.

**Son of Zabdi.** Called also Zimri, 1 Chron. 2:6. The line of his parentage is thus recited, among other reasons, that the discredit of such a foul deed might be reflected back upon those of his ancestors who, by being remiss in their duties as parents, had been, in one sense, the procuring cause of his sin. This is not an uncommon occurrence in the sacred writings. It seems to have been with a similar design, that the genealogy of Zimri is given, Num. 25:14. In like manner the praise of the excellence of a son redounds to the honor of the line from which he springs. A warning is hereby administered to parents, to give the most diligent heed in training their offspring in the fear of God, lest they be a reproach to their memories when they themselves are no more.

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**Robert Foster** - "Notice that, and be on your guard against ) " covetousness in any shape or form. For a man's real ~'J life in no way depends upon the number of his possessions." (Luke 12:15) Achan, the actor, is a good example. The loot of battle was before him and with bulging eyeballs he coveted in his heart! He was hungry for spoil. His appetite grew by indulgence. He fanned the flame. "Starving men may think about food but so do the gluttons: the gorged as well as the starved like to be fed to the full." ) So Achan acted in direct disobedience to this 10th Commandment. Greedy, envious and lustful he ends up being a thief. A. W. Tozer has laid it straight on the line: "At the root of all growth is a set of right desires. Wrong desires stop that growth. Wrong desires pervert the moral judgment so that we are unable to appraise the desired object at its real value. However we try, still a thing looks morally better because we want it. As Christians our only safety lies in complete honesty with ourselves. "To want a thing, or feel that we want it, and then to turn from it because we see that it is contrary to the will of God is to win a great battle on a field larger than Gettysburg or Bunker Hill. To fight and to win in the Name of Christ is always better than to have known no conflict." (Secrets for Successful Living)

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## **James Smith - THE FAILURE AT AI; OR, THE POWER OF SECRET SIN Joshua 7**

"Shine on, thou bright beacon, unclouded and free,  
From thy high place of calmness o'er life's troubled sea.  
But, barque of eternity, where art thou now?  
The wild waters shriek o'er each plunge of thy prow,  
On the world's dreary ocean, thus shattered and tossed—  
Thou, lone One, shine on, 'If I lose Thee, I'm lost.' "

The fall of Jericho was followed by the temporary fall of Israel. We have much need to beware of the dangers of success. When Uzziah was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction (2 Chron. 26:16). The seed of pride and self-confidence is often sown in the joyful but unguarded hour of victory, or amidst the dangerous applause of men. There are still Achan desires lurking in the heart, just waiting a chance to enrich themselves with the things that are to be wholly devoted to God (chap. 6:17, margin). Sin always brings failure. To lose fellowship with Christ is to lose all power for testimony for Him. There are two intensely solemn thoughts here

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### **I. The Shameful Defeat of Israel, OR THE BELIEVER'S FAILURE. It was—**

1. **UNEXPECTED.** They said: "Let not all the people go up" (chap. 3). They were very confident of success, but very ignorant of their own condition in the sight of God. Confidence and earnestness in a Christian worker will never stand in the stead of holiness. Our power lies not even in our past experiences. Is thy heart right with God? Even unexpected failure has its tap-root of evil somewhere.

2. **COMPLETE.** "They fled before the men of Ai" (v. 4). Why did they flee? Because the Lord was not with them. There is none so helpless as the Samsons when their strength is gone. The man whose strength God alone is must ever be a helpless object without Him (John 15:5). But ask them: Do you believe God is with you? They say: Yes. Look how He helped at Jericho. But the past is not the present. All our efforts will be as completely abortive unless the presence and power of God is in it. We don't win the victory simply because we are Christians any more than the children of Israel did because they were Israelites. We must be Christians after the holy mind and will of God if we would be overcomers.



3. **HUMBLING.** “O Lord, what shall I say?” etc. (v. 8). Israel’s failure brings dishonour upon Israel’s God. How keenly our failures should cut us to the heart when we know that by them our Master is dishonoured. How we should bow our heads to the dust, confounded and ashamed, saying, like Joshua, “O Lord, what shall I say?” etc. If past failure does not bring humbling and self-searching before God we will never find out the true source of power. Those who expect failure are never humbled because of it, and by them the Lord is not magnified in the sight of the people. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

4. **NEEDFUL.** “Wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Israel hath sinned. Neither will I be with you except ye take away the accursed thing” (vv. 10–13). Many are mourning over their failure who have more need to mourn over their sin. The Lord cannot use us at times because of secret sin. Although we may be ignorant of it, God is not. He cannot treat sin lightly because we don’t realise it. If they had not failed here they would just have gone on in their sin. God can have no fellowship with unrighteousness. The accursed thing must be taken away or His presence will be taken away. Our failures should set us also a searching of the tent of our heart. “Search me, O God!”

**II. The Sin of Achan, OR THE SINNER’S DOOM.** His history is very short and very sad. Four thoughts include all. His—

1. **DESIRE.** “I saw, then I coveted them” (v. 21). Sin often begins with a look. Eve saw the fruit. Lot saw the well watered plains. Ahaz saw an altar and copied it (2 Kings 16:10). But Achan’s sin lay not in seeing the gold, etc., perhaps he could not help that, but he “coveted them.” He loved the forbidden gain, until desire moved his hand. The pleasures of sin will always attract the more when one looks on them with a desire. Christians have much need to watch their hearts. Certain circumstances might bring ruinous results if every thought is not led captive to Christ.

2. **DISOBEDIENCE.** “He took of the accursed thing” (v. 1). God had warned them in any wise to keep themselves free from the accursed (devoted) thing (chap. 6:18). He sinned willingly, not ignorantly. The fact that he hid the goods proves that he was conscious of his wrongdoing. Just as many still willingly disobey God by preferring the world to Christ, and oftentimes keeping up the appearance of godliness to deceive men. Achan’s hypocrisy is not uncommon in these days, even among professedly workers for Christ. Although the Lord has clearly said, “Love not the world,” alas, how much of it is hid in the heart!

3. **DETECTION.** “And Achan was taken” (v. 18). Be sure your sin will find you out, whether you be saint or sinner, Christian or not. Amongst all the thousands of Israel he was found out, because nothing is hid from the eye of God, with whom every sinner has to do. How solemn the discovery, exposed to the eyes of all the people, and every hidden thing brought to light. What a forecast of the Great Judgment! He that covereth his sins shall not prosper.

4. **DESTRUCTION.** “And all Israel stoned him with stones” (v. 25). There was no way of escape. How shall ye escape? What a contrast between Rahab’s house and Achan’s. The one saved, the other lost (chap. 6:25). The faith of the one and the disobedience of the other made all the difference. As parents, are you acting the part of Rahab or Achan? What will the end be, salvation or destruction? There is sin in the camp. “Is it in me, Lord?” What the law could not do God can now accomplish through the sending forth of His Son.

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## Joshua 7:1 No Loose Laces

The children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan . . . took of the accursed things. —Joshua 7:1

Today’s Scripture: Joshua 7:1-12

One person’s actions can affect an entire group. This truth became clear to journalist Sebastian Junger as he followed a platoon of soldiers. Junger watched a soldier accost another soldier whose bootlaces were trailing on the ground. He didn’t confront him out of concern for his fashion. He confronted him because his loose laces put the entire platoon at risk—he couldn’t be counted on not to trip and fall at a crucial moment. Junger realized that what happens to one happens to everyone.

Achan’s “bootlaces were loose,” and we learn from his story that sin is never private. After the great victory at Jericho, God gave Joshua specific instructions on how to deal with the city and its loot (Josh. 6:18). The people were to “abstain from the accursed things” and to put all the silver and gold “into the treasury of the Lord” (vv.18-19). But they disobeyed his command to them (7:1). The interesting thing is, not all of Israel sinned; only one person did—Achan. But because of his actions, everyone was affected and God was dishonored.

As followers of Jesus, we belong to one another and our individual actions can impact the entire body and God’s name. Let’s “tie up our laces” so that we may individually and together give God the honor He deserves. By: Marvin Williams ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Lord, we know our sin is never private, though we may try to hide it. Help us to remember that we belong to You and to one another and that what we do individually grieves You and impacts fellow Christians.



Private sins will inevitably have public impact.

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## **Joshua 7:1-13 What's The Trouble?**

Be sure your sin will find you out. — Numbers 32:23

Today's Scripture: Joshua 7:1-13

There was something wrong with my lawn. I couldn't see what the trouble was, but I knew something was causing damage.

After investigating, I discovered the problem: moles. Those voracious little bug-eaters were crawling around just under the surface of my previously well-groomed lawn looking for food and wreaking havoc on my grass.

The children of Israel also had a problem with a hidden cause (Josh. 7). They were experiencing trouble, and they couldn't figure out why. There was something hidden from their view that was causing serious damage.

The trouble became noticeable when Joshua sent 3,000 troops to attack Ai. Although that should have been a sufficient army to defeat Ai's small force, the opposite happened. Ai routed the Israelites, killing 36 of them and chasing them back where they came from. Joshua had no idea why this trouble had come. Then God explained the hidden problem: One of his men, Achan, had violated a clear command and had stolen some "accursed things" from Jericho (Josh. 7:11). Only when that hidden sin was discovered and taken care of could Israel have victory.

Hidden sin does great damage. We need to bring it to the surface and deal with it—or face certain defeat. By: Dave Branon [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Dear Lord, I don't want anything in my life to hinder my fellowship with You. You know what's in my heart. Reveal any areas of my life that are not pleasing to You and forgive me. Amen.

Confession to God ensures forgiveness.

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## **Joshua 7:1,19-26 The Deadliest Disease**

[Jesus] was wounded for our transgressions, . . . and by His stripes we are healed. — Isaiah 53:5

Today's Scripture: Joshua 7:1,19-26

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was identified in 2003 in Vietnam. By the time it was brought under control, SARS had spread globally and killed nearly 800 people. One reason for the high mortality rate was that the virus was not recognized initially. But once recognized and understood, SARS was contained.

An even more dangerous disease is on the loose in our world—sin. It too is difficult to bring under control because many people do not recognize its deadliness. And many dispute the Bible's diagnosis of sin.

In Joshua 7, we read the tragic story of Achan. We may recoil at the extreme way God dealt with him. Against God's command, he had taken some of the spoils from Jericho and hid them in his tent (v.21). He and his entire family paid with their lives (v.25).

Thankfully, God does not deal with us in that way. If He did, none of us would remain alive. Yet we must never underestimate sin's deadliness. It sent Christ to the cross for us.

Like SARS, the first step to deal with sin is to recognize it for what it is. Receive with gratitude the gift of eternal life. Then "put to death your members which are on the earth"—the selfish things that displease God (Col. 3:5). That's the way to deal with our deadliest disease. By: C. P. Hia ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Remedy for Sin Have you received Christ's gift of salvation? He died for your sins and rose from the dead. He offers forgiveness to all who believe in Him (Rom. 10:9).

Sin is a heart disease that can be cured only by the Great Physician.

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## **Joshua 7:1-6,19-26 Confession & Consequences**

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. — Psalm 32:5

Today's Scripture: Joshua 7:1-6,19-26

She brutally murdered two people in 1983, but in prison Karla Tucker confessed her sins to God and became a vibrant Christian. Many people hoped her transformation would persuade legal authorities to change her punishment to life imprisonment. But the courts rejected all appeals, and her execution was carried out in 1998.

I thought about Karla as I was reading the tragic story of Achan. I was impressed by his confession: "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done" (Joshua 7:20). Those words make me think it possible that he, like King David many years later (Psalm 32:5), was forgiven by God. But Achan's sin had caused the death of 36 Israelites (Joshua 7:5), and he had to pay the penalty for his actions.

Even after we have received God's forgiveness, we may still have to face the consequences of our sin. If we have lied, mistreated someone, behaved irresponsibly, damaged someone's property, or broken a law of the land, we still must do our best to make right any wrongs we have committed.

Yes, it's wonderful to know we're forgiven when we confess our sins to God. But that doesn't mean we're exempt from all of sin's consequences. That's why confessing sin is good, but saying no to sin is even better. By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We love You, Lord, and want to do  
What's pleasing in Your sight;  
Help us to fear sin's consequence,  
So we will do what's right.  
—Sper

Sin brings fear, but confession brings freedom.

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#### QUESTION - [What is the significance of Ai in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Ai was a place in central Canaan. It is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 12:8 as a place where Abram camped during his journey toward the land God promised in Genesis 12:1: "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you." When Abram reached Ai, he built an altar and "called upon the name of the Lord." The name *Ai* means "heap of ruins" (Joshua 8:28).

According to Joshua 7:2, Ai was a Canaanite city located approximately two miles east of Bethel (Joshua 10:1). The ruins of the city now lie beneath the modern archaeological site of Et-Tell on a slope leading from the Jordan Valley to Bethel. Ai is notable for being the scene of a humiliating Israelite defeat as the small city of Ai routed the Israelites and inflicted three dozen casualties. The loss at Ai was due to the sin of Achan (Joshua 7:1–5). In direct defiance of God's command to keep nothing for themselves from the wicked city of Jericho (Joshua 6:19), Achan had kept a robe, two hundred shekels of silver, and a fifty-shekel bar of gold and hid it all in a hole he had dug within his tent. Achan kept his theft a secret until Israel was defeated at Ai. God then revealed to Joshua the cause for this defeat, and Achan, his family, and everything he owned was destroyed at God's command (Joshua 7:25–26).

Once the sin had been purged from the camp and Achan had been punished, God gave Joshua victory over Ai (Joshua 8:1–29). After drawing the men of Ai out of the city and ambushing them, Israelite warriors captured the king and brought him to Joshua (Joshua 8:23), who impaled him and left his body on public display as a testament to Israel's great triumph over the enemies of the Lord. The body of the king of Ai was left hanging until evening, at which time it was thrown in the gate of Ai and piled over with rocks (verse 29). After first tasting terrible defeat at Ai due to hidden sin, Israel learned about the power of purging sin from their midst so that the Lord could fight for them (see Joshua 23:3).

The region around Ai became part of the land given to the tribe of Benjamin in the distribution of the Promised Land (Ezra 2:28). Ai was the second Canaanite city taken by Israel in its conquest of the Promised Land, the first being the great victory at the [battle of Jericho](#).

The prophet Isaiah mentions a rebuilt Ai in Isaiah 10:28, calling it Aiath. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 7:2** Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, 'Go up and spy out the land.' So the men went up and spied out Ai.

- **to Ai:** Jos 12:9 Ge 12:8, Hai, Ne 11:31, Aija
- **Beth-aven:** Jos 18:12 Ge 28:19 Ho 4:15
- **Go up:** Jos 2:1 Pr 20:18 24:6 Mt 10:16 Eph 5:15
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SPYING OUT THE LAND

**Now** - This conjunction marks continuation and connects us with the closing events of chapter 6.

**Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near [Beth-aven](#) ("house of evil") east of [Bethel](#) ("house of God") and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." So the men went up and spied out [Ai](#) - Go up** was meant literally to go up in elevation as Ai was some 2,600 feet above sea level. Their journey would have most likely been about 10 miles to the northwest (approximations because archaeology has not definitely identified the site of Ai). Sending spies had been successful the first time.

**Spy out** in the Sept is [kataskopeo](#) which means to view closely, spy out, learn about by secret observation as in Gal 2:4

The irony of [Ai](#) is it means "ruin" (or "heap of ruins") and was the "ruin" of Israel when sin slipped into the camp. Confession and purging sin from the camp allowed the Israelites to bring Ai to "ruin," thus living up to its name. The victory at Ai (Joshua 8:1 ) frightened the other Canaanites (Joshua 9:3; Joshua 10:2 ) and helped Israel to further victories. Israel learned to live with a punishing as well as a promising God.

**THOUGHT** - Do you need to confess and purge sin (cf repent) in order to have victory over the "Canaanites" in your life?

**Paul Enns** notes that "Although the march from Gilgal westward to Bethel represented only about 15 miles of travel, it was a difficult one. Gilgal was 900 feet below sea level, while Ai was about 2,600 feet above sea level; so the march was a tedious uphill trek.

**Donald Campbell** explains the strategic importance of [Ai](#) - Ai was the next objective on Israel's path of conquest. It was smaller than Jericho but was at a strategic junction of two natural routes ascending from Jericho to the hill country around Bethel. Defeating Ai would also lead to the ultimate control of the main "ridge route" running from north to south along the central highlands. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#).)

**Believer's Study Bible** - Israel's sin was not overconfidence or forgetting to pray. Their defeat was evidence of God's wrath because of Achan's sin. ([The Believer's Study Bible](#))

**Paul Apple** sees 3 signs of confidence in the flesh (vv 2-3) - (1) Self-Willed -- Not seeking the Lord's will up front (2) (v2) Natural Perspective -- Evaluating the situation from the perspective of the externals alone (3) (v3) Overconfident -- Imagining that superior numbers equates to a favorable outcome

**Roper on Ai** - Ai was a little town about twelve miles west of Jericho, up in the central highlands--a very important strategic objective, from the standpoint of the conquest of the Land. Ai, along with its sister -city, Bethel, straddled the north-south caravan route through Canaan. This was the only way armies could travel north and south in Canaan at the time, so it was very important that the Israelites take this place. This was also Abraham's second campsite when he came into the Land from Haran. Thus this particular location was not only strategic from a military standpoint; it also held rich historical associations. So the Israelites were eagerly anticipating victory as they marched toward the city from Jericho.

**Utley** - "Ai" This seems to be a name to describe "a heap" or "ruin" (BDB 743). It always has the DEFINITE ARTICLE in Hebrew, which implies a previous destruction (possibly a former large fortress). Archeology is not sure whether Ai was settled during the time of Joshua's conquest. However, (1) we are not sure of the date of the conquest and (2) archeology is a rather imprecise science and we cannot base interpretation solely on inconclusive evidence. Because of the use of the terms "Beth-aven" (BDB 110) and "Bethel" (BDB 110) in this verse, many have assumed that Ai is somehow connected with the city of Bethel for the following reasons:

1. the term "Beth-aven" is often used of Bethel in the Bible (cf. 1 Sam. 13:5; Hos. 4:15; 5:8; 10:5; Amos 5:5)
2. the two sites are linked in this account (cf. 8:9, 17)
3. although Bethel's king is listed with the defeated kings in 12:16, the destruction and capture of Bethel is never mentioned
4. there seems to be some confusion in chapters 7–8 of Joshua sending two different groups of men for an ambush; one possible explanation for this is that they ambushed both Bethel and Ai at the same time.

The exact relationship between Bethel and Ai is uncertain. Some have said that it was a military camp or some type of outpost but we are simply not certain.

There are several commands given in vv. 2–3:

1. "go up," v. 2, BDB 748, KB 828, Qal IMPERATIVE

2. "spy out," v. 2, BDB 92, KB 1183, Piel IMPERATIVE
3. "go up," v. 3, Qal JUSSIVE (negated)
4. "go up," v. 3, Qal IMPERFECT, but in a JUSSIVE sense
5. "attack" (not in NASB), v. 3, BDB 645, KB 697, Qal IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
6. "toil," v. 3, BDB 388, KB 386, Piel IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense

There are many "doublets" in OT narrative literature. The literary purpose of these is unknown to modern interpreters. We must be careful not to project current literary models onto ancient Near Eastern texts.

**Utlley** - "Beth-aven, east of Bethel" The term "Beth-aven" means "house of vanity" (cf. Josh 18:12; 1 Sam. 13:5; 14:23). The term "vanity" was used in the sense of "nothingness" and was often used to describe idolatry. The term "Bethel" means "house of God" because it had holy and sacred associations with the life of Jacob in Genesis 28. Hosea seems to put the two names together (cf. 4:15; 5:8; 10:5).

### **Spy out...spied out** (07270)

Ragal slander(1), slandered(1), spied(3), spies(11), spy(9), taught to walk(1). Gen. 42:9; Gen. 42:11; Gen. 42:14; Gen. 42:16; Gen. 42:30; Gen. 42:31; Gen. 42:34; Num. 21:32; Deut. 1:24; Jos. 2:1; Jos. 6:22; Jos. 6:23; Jos. 6:25; Jos. 7:2; Jos. 14:7; Jdg. 18:2; Jdg. 18:14; Jdg. 18:17; 1 Sam. 26:4; 2 Sam. 10:3; 2 Sam. 15:10; 2 Sam. 19:27; 1 Chr. 19:3; Ps. 15:3

### **GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**2. Sent men from Jericho to Ai.** Called also Hai, Gen. 12:8, and Aija, Neh. 11:31, a city near the northern limit of the tribe of Benjamin, about ten miles north of Jerusalem, and nearly two east of Bethel. After its destruction by Joshua, it was again rebuilt by the Benjamites and inhabited by them till the captivity. Sennacherib at length destroyed it, but though it was rebuilt after the Babylonish captivity, there is no vestige of it to be found at the present time. Even in the fourth century, the ruins of this city were scarcely visible. The spies sent on this occasion were not to go into the city, but merely into its vicinity, for the purpose of reconnoitering.

**Beside Beth-aven** This was a city of Benjamin, about three miles north of Ai, and nearly six miles east of **Bethel**, which gave name to the wilderness adjoining, Joshua 18:12. It was not the place called Beth-aven, Hos. 10:5. See on v. 1.

**Go up and view the country.** Heb. עלו ורגלו *alu veraggelu*, go up and foot the country. So afterwards 'and viewed,' Heb. ירגלו *yeraggelu*, and footed.

### **QUESTION** - [What is the significance of Ai in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** -Ai was a place in central Canaan. It is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 12:8 as a place where Abram camped during his journey toward the land God promised in Genesis 12:1: "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you." When Abram reached Ai, he built an altar and "called upon the name of the Lord." The name *Ai* means "heap of ruins" (Joshua 8:28).

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#### Related Resource:

- ["The Problem of Ai," Biblical Archaeology Review 11:2 \(March-April 1985\):58-69](#)

**Joshua 7:3** They returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up; only about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few."

- **only about two or three thousand men** r 13:4 21:25 Lu 13:24 Heb 4:11 6:11,12 2Pe 1:5,10
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SPIES RETURN WITH GOOD REPORT

They returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up; only about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few." - This reminds me of the statement I hear some people say "Don't worry, I've got this one!" It is like saying Ai will be a [pushover](#) or a [slam dunk](#)! Could it be the dramatic victory over Jericho led to a touch of conceit and confidence (as if the stunning victory was due to Israel's military prowess - pride is a funny thing. It creeps into the hearts of the most spiritually minded people!) The Israelites seem to have forgotten that while they were beneficiaries, ultimately the victory belonged to the LORD.

**Goin**s on **do not make all the people toil up there**- The march from Jericho to Ai is over very difficult terrain. The elevation gain in fifteen miles is about twenty-five hundred feet, because Jericho is eight hundred feet below sea level, and Ai is about seventeen hundred feet above sea level. That's why in verse 3 the spies say, "Don't make the whole army toil up there." It's really a hard march.

Note that the spies gave an inaccurate report, for from Joshua 8:25 we know that there were at least 12,000 men and women (thus probably about 6,000 men). Their advice to Joshua not to take the entire army was countered by Yahweh who told Joshua to take **all the people of war** (Joshua 8:1).

**THOUGHT** - No matter how great "our" victories have been over the world, the flesh or the devil, on any given day we are vulnerable to abject defeat, especially when we let pride or forgetfulness or apathy seep into our heart!

As **Jon Bloom** rightly warns "We are never more vulnerable to sin than when we are successful, admired by others and prosperous, as King David tragically discovered!"

**Campbell** points out that " Israel was guilty of **underestimating the strength of her enemy** and of **overestimating her own strength**. On this occasion there is no mention of prayer and no evidence of dependence on God." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - "It is a deadly error to underrate the enemy's power. Christians often fail to realize that their enemies are powerful (Eph. 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8). So believers suffer the consequences in ignominious spiritual defeat." (Campbell)

**Utley** - "Do not let all the people go up ... toil up there" The ADVERB "toil up" (BDB 1027) has very distinct topological associations. It is interesting in these two chapters how much eyewitness evidence from geography and topology is apparent in the account. From the place of encampment at Gilgal the land rose 3,400 feet in the space of sixteen miles to this small city of Ai.

**Rod Mattoon** - The spies in their overconfidence underestimate the strength of the enemy and overestimate their own strength and ability. They thought, "We are INVINCIBLE!" Their attitude made them VULNERABLE. Their overconfidence led to presumption which is a form of pride. They feel they don't need God's leading or help. How can we tell that they have this attitude? Well, they scouted the land and now are preparing to attack. What is missing? The same procedure was used in chapter six except for one important element.... prayer. They are about to fail because of their prayerlessness. Overconfidence says....

\* I don't need to pray about it. (If Joshua had prayed, he would have realized there was a problem in the camp.)

\* I don't need to read the Bible each day or study God's Word.

- \* I don't need God's help.
- \* I don't need godly counsel.
- \* I'll do it my way. I don't need anyone's help or advice.
- \* I don't need my husband, my wife, or my parents.
- \* I don't need to give 100% or do my best. I'll just get by! [Treasures from Joshua](#)

**F B Meyer - do not make all the people toil up there-** But this recommendation went on the supposition that Jericho had been overthrown by the attack of the hosts of Israel; whereas, in point of fact, they had had singularly little to do with it. They had walked around it, and shouted--that was all. It had been taken by their great Captain and Leader, and by him given into their hands. The silence that reigned over its site was no criterion of their might, but of his. To speak as they did was to ignore the real facts of the case, and to argue as though the victory were due to some inherent qualities in themselves; with the inference that because they had conquered at Jericho they must therefore necessarily conquer at Ai...

There is nothing small in Christian life- -nothing so small that we can combat it in our own strength. Apart from God, the smallest temptations will be more than a match for us. So weak are we, that occasions of sin, which are perfectly contemptible in themselves, will overthrow our most confident resolutions. The victories which we have won in fellowship with God have imparted no inherent might to us; we are as weak as ever; and directly we are brought into collision with the least of our enemies, apart from him, we shall inevitably go down before the shock. The faith, watchfulness, and fellowship with God, which availed before Jericho, can alone serve as the key to Ai.

#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**3. Let not all the people go up, &c.** The easy conquest of Jericho had probably rendered the people **presumptuous**. They concluded that God would of course interpose for them just as he had done before. The counsel here given was based, as it would seem, upon a culpable assurance of success in the neglect of the proper means. To confide in God was right; but to expect his aid while they neglected to use their own endeavors, was nothing short of downright presumption. So prone is human nature to extremes. The first spies that were sent out by Moses brought back the most disheartening report. The Canaanites were invincible, and they would surely fall before them. Those sent to Ai were as much on the other extreme. Their enemies are contemptible, and they can easily carry all before them. Even Joshua himself seems to have formed his measures without taking the usual precaution of consulting God as to his duty (**ED: "PRAYERLESSNESS"**). The result showed that they should at least have had some intimation from heaven, that a part of the force was to be dispensed with in this instance. But the truth is, they were now under the Divine displeasure; **sin unrepented had interrupted the communications of God's will** (cf Ps 66:18, Pr 28:9, Isa 1:15), and where that is the case with a people or an individual, all goes wrong. **No one can have security that he is planning or acting right, while the light of the Lord's countenance is hidden by sin. The pledge of the Divine blessing is wanting, and he is not to be surprised if all his counsels are carried headlong.**

**Make not all the people to labor thither.** That is, to labor and fatigue themselves by going thither, probably implying the ascent of a mountainous region; an advice by which they obviously consulted the ease rather than the safety or glory of the people. It is perhaps in allusion to this incident, that Solomon says, Eccles. 10:15, 'The labor of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.'

**For they are but few.** On which Henry well remarks, that 'few as they were, they were too many for them.' It appears from Josh 8:25, that Joshua slew in one day, twelve thousand of the citizens of Ai, and yet the spies reported the place slightly garrisoned, and proposed to send against it only a detachment of two or three thousand!

**Joshua 7:4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai.**

- **but they fled from the men of Ai:** Lev 26:17 De 28:25 Dt 32:30 Isa 30:17 59:2
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 26:17 **'I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies** and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you (COMPARE THE



PHRASE IN Josh 7:6 "THE HEARTS...MELTED...").

Deuteronomy 28:25 **"The LORD shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies;** you will go out one way against them, but you will flee seven ways before them, and you will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

Deuteronomy 32:30 "How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, **Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had given them up?**

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.

## **JOSHUA TAKES TO THE SPIES' ADVICE**

**So** - This marks a conclusion based on the information Joshua had been given from the spies, but not from the sky! There is no evidence Joshua sought the counsel of the LORD! Oh yes, he did pray, but sadly AFTER the battle rather than BEFORE the battle! (Been there, done that!) Had Joshua prayed before the battle, God would have revealed the guilty stash in Achan's tent! Believers will always reap the consequences of not staying in close contact with God! Joshua's orders to march on Ai remind me of Samson in Judges 16:20...

She (Delilah) said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." But **he did not know that the LORD had departed from him** (AND NEITHER DID JOSHUA!!!)

**About three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai-** NLT = "they were soundly defeated." NIV = "they were routed." This passage indicates that Joshua heeded the advice of his spies, and also implies that he did not seek the counsel of the Captain of the LORD's host.

Notice carefully that it does not say three thousand men followed the Ark of the Covenant into battle! The truth is they did not take the very thing that symbolized the power of Jehovah. They went into the battle depending on their own power (thinking "we whipped Jericho, so Ai is nothing!")

**THOUGHT** - Whenever we try to live the Christian life (a supernatural life) in dependence on our own natural power, the inevitable results will always be failure, futility, frustration, etc. The battle was the LORD's in the Old Testament (David's testimony against Goliath - 1Sa 17:47, cf 2Chr 20:14, 15, 2Chr 32:8) and it is still the LORD's in the NT believer's life! We must learn to daily be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18+) so that we might be supernaturally enabled to walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16,17+) and only then can we defeat the desires of the flesh. Only by the Spirit can we put to death the deeds of the body (Ro 8:13+). Only by the Spirit can we be strong in the Lord and put on the full armor of God (Eph 6:10-18+). Believe it! Live it out! Walk by faith, not by sight (2Cor 5:7+)! Experience victory over sin! Bring great glory to your Father in Heaven (Mt 5:16+)!

**Paul Apple** - The Failure of the Flesh Can Be Just as Dramatic as the Victory of the Spirit. We think something is a snap because we have experienced success earlier in a similar realm. God will surprise us if we are not depending on Him.

**Alan Redpath** - One of the greatest temptations that can come to you after you have proved that God is able to give you victory, is to neglect to pray. When you think that you are strong and don't need to pray any more, then you will have dulled your sensitiveness to sin. It is only prayer in the hour of victory that makes a man of God realize that he will face defeat again unless he maintains continuous contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment of victory is the moment for humiliation. When one experiences the excitement and thrill of God giving him a new deliverance from sin, that should be the moment, not for pride, but for humility.

**F B Meyer** - The defeats that we incur in the Land of Promise are not necessary. They are due entirely to some failure in ourselves, and they cause grief to the immortal Lover of our souls. There is no reason for defeat in the Christian life; always and everywhere we are meant to be more than conquerors. The course of the Christian warrior should be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength, and in regular gradients drives his chariot from the eastern wave up the steep of heaven. Child of God, never lay the blame of thy failure on God; seek for it within!

**Joshua 7:5** The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

- and pursued them: Dt 1:44



- **so the hearts of the people:** Jos 2:9,11 5:1 Lev 26:36 Ps 22:14 Isa 13:7
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A BITTER DEFEAT DEMORALIZES ISRAEL

**The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent** - There were no casualties reported in the battle of Jericho, and while the number of fatalities was small, the effect on morale was great.

The hour of greatest danger is when flushed with recent victory.

-- J Oswald Sanders

Don't miss this - one man's sin resulted in the loss of the lives of 36 men! At the very least Achan would seem to be guilty of [Manslaughter](#).

**Alan Carr** paints an even more poignant picture - Because there was sin in the camp, thirty-six men died. Thirty-six sets of children lost their fathers. Thirty-six mothers lost their sons. Thirty-six wives became widows. It was a very high price to pay for sin. ([Some Things Can't Be Hidden](#))

**So the hearts of the people melted and became as water** - Not exactly "strong and courageous" as was repeated in Joshua 1! That is, were utterly discouraged. The irony is seen in a striking reversal - the very effect which was to be produced on the pagan nations by the approach of the Israelites, was now a "righteous judgment of God wrought in the hearts of his own sinning people." (Bush) Earlier Rahab had told the 2 spies how the hearts of the citizens of Jericho **melted** (Josh 2:11, cf Josh 5:1), but now the **"tables were turned"** and the same description was used of the defeated Israelites. The presence and power of God had clearly departed and they had reason to be fearful like the godless pagans.

**THOUGHT** - You see, this is one of the problems with sin. It defeats you and leaves you feeling just like a lost man. Nothing is right in the life of a believer while there is sin in his midst! ([God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

**Alan Carr** - This is one of the major problems with sin. It defeats you and leaves you feeling broken, used and confused. Nothing is right in the life of a believer while there is sin in his heart! ([Some Things Can't Be Hidden](#))

**Utley** - "Notice the VERBS used to describe Israel's defeat.

1. "struck down," Hiphil IMPERFECT
2. "pursued," Qal IMPERFECT
3. "struck down," repeated
4. "the hearts of the people melted," Niphal IMPERFECT
5. "became as water," Qal IMPERFECT

The absence of YHWH's blessing makes all the difference in effect and attitude!

**Utley** - "Shebarim" This is a proper name in both the English and Latin translations. However, in Greek it means "to break," while in Hebrew it seems to imply "a stone quarry" (BDB 991, cf. New Berkeley Version) or ravine. The exact location of it is uncertain, but this is another eyewitness account. One wonders if the form of Achan's death (stoning) is a play on Israel being chased to the stone quarry.

**Campbell** suggests that "Israel was suddenly filled with terrible misgivings that the Lord's help had been withdrawn." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**J Sidlow Baxter** - It must have been a sorrow to Jehovah to inflict the Ai reverse upon His people; yet Israel must learn by necessary pain that both for their own sake and the sake of Jehovah's holy name sin must be judged and put away. Any defeat which we sustain in the land of blessing is due entirely to some such failure within ourselves. It need never be; and our great Captain grieves over it more than we do ourselves. We must learn the lesson of this seventh chapter--that parley with sin, or permitted compromise, cuts the vital cord of communion and disables faith.

**Alan Redpath** - There were three reasons for defeat at Ai: self-confidence, prayerlessness, and disobedience.

**F B Meyer** - The experience of defeat is far too common to the majority of Christians. They are constantly turning their backs before their enemies. They are defeated by indwelling sin and the assaults of Satan, and by the mighty evils which they assail in the name of God. But instead of taking their defeats to heart, they become [inured](#) to them. For the time they are filled with mortification and chagrin, but the impression soon wears away. They do not lie on their faces before God, eager to discover the cause of failure, to

deal with it, and to advance from the scene of defeat to wider and more permanent success. If we but carefully investigated the causes of our defeats, they would be only second to victories in their blessed results on our character and lives.

**Mattoon** - The hearts of the people were melted or liquefied. When something takes liquid form it ...Is Unstable ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

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**Alan Carr** - When Israel went up to Ai in they suffered a terrible defeat and 36 of their number were killed. This must have been very devastating to the Israelites. However, when one takes the time to look more closely at their actions, it is easy to see that they made several mistakes. Mistakes that, I feel, many of us are guilty of making as well.

1. Nowhere in this passage does it even hint that Joshua and the people of Israel sought the will of God for dealing with Ai. They didn't even pray about the matter. If they had, God would have revealed the problem before people died.

(III. How many times are we guilty of jumping ahead of the Lord and His will? We will rush headlong into life and trust the Lord to bail us out of the messes in which we find ourselves. It is far better to consult God before we make the mistake than it is to expect Him to clean up our messes afterwards.)

2. They didn't take the Ark of the Covenant into the battle. The Ark symbolized the presence and power of God. They went into the battle in their own strength and they failed!

(III. Again, here is an area where we could all use help. We try to live the Christian life, fight the flesh and the devil in our own power and we fail time after time. The reason? We do not take the time to strengthen our walk with God! When we are walking with the Lord and in His Word as we should be, He will go with us into the battle and face our enemies on our behalf. Who killed the giant, David or God? David himself holds the answer to that question, 1 Sam. 17:47.)

3. Finally, Israel had their confidence in their own power and not in the Lord. They were not walking by faith, but they were guilty of trusting what they could do.

(III. How many times have we suffered defeat at the hands of our enemy because we too believed we were able and that we could get the job done. Well, the bottom line is this: I can't do the job and neither can you! We all need the Lord is we are to walk in spiritual victory in our lives, Phil. 4:13+ [I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.]; John 15:5.) ([God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

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**Paul Toms** - I do not know of any more sad or depressing experiences in the Bible than the times when men who had enjoyed the blessing of God discovered to their great sadness that that blessing had been lifted. Remember Saul and those awful words, "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him." (1Sa 16:14). That is a "terrifying";- frightful prospect.

There were times in the history of these people when Moses said, "Go not up (to fight), for the Lord is not among you." (Nu 14:42). It is a good thing to be aware of that before you launch yourself into a battle where your only hope is the Lord. Moses apparently was sensitive to the presence of God in such a way that he could say to the people, "Don't go now; this is the wrong time for you to start a battle, for God is not in your midst."

Perhaps the clearest and most sobering illustration of this is the story of Samson. Here was a man who was given unusual strength and an important mission by God . But he let himself be sidetracked by his fancy for Delilah . She wormed his secret out of him after several efforts, and then she let the Philistines shave his head and thus deprive him of his strength. When he woke up, he said, "I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist [knew] not that the Lord was departed from him" (Judg . 16:20). He did not know that God had lifted His blessing.

To be doing God's work is no guarantee of having God's help . There is a principle for us here--do not move until God says so. Yesterday's blessings are not enough for us today. Stay close to the Lord, so that you can sense His presence. (This Land Is Your Land)

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## **GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**5. Chased them—even unto Shebarim.** Heb. השברים hash-shebârim, to the breaches, breakings, or shiverings; so called probably from the event, because the ranks of the Israelites were utterly broken and the people, panic-struck, fled in the utmost confusion.

**Smote them in the going down.** That is, in the descent or declivity of the hill on which the town stood. The effect of this defeat would naturally be (1) to serve as an evidence of God's displeasure, and a solemn call upon them to humble themselves under his mighty hand, and institute a rigid self-examination to discover if possible the cause of so sad a reverse. (2) To harden the Canaanites and make them more secure than ever in their sins, prompting them to say of Israel, as the enemies of David said of

him, Ps. 71:11, 'God hath forsaken him; persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him.' Thus their ruin, when it came, would be the more dreadful. The Christian may derive some profitable hints from this narrative as to the conduct of the warfare in which he is engaged. Notwithstanding the Canaan which he seeks is the gift of God, yet it must be obtained by a manly and continued conflict with our spiritual enemies. He must not despise any as too weak, nor fear any as too strong. As to the weak especially, he should remember that there is none so weak but he will be able to overcome us if we indulge a careless habit, or confide in an arm of flesh.

**Joshua 7:6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.**

- **tore his clothes:** Ge 37:29,34 Nu 14:6 2Sa 13:31 Ezr 9:3-5 Es 4:1 Job 1:20 Ac 14:14
- **fell:** Nu 16:22,45 2Sa 12:16
- **until the evening** Jdg 20:23,26 21:2 2Sa 1:12
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Job 1:20; Then Job arose and **tore his robe** and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

Job 2:12 When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them **tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads** toward the sky.

### JOSHUA IN DEEP DISMAY AT DEFEAT

**Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads** - This is the second time he had been on his face, the first time when confronted with the Captain of the Lord's host (Josh 5:14) and he bowed in humility. Now he bows in humiliation at defeat of the army under his command. Joshua responds to the defeat with the wrong diagnosis and starts to question the plan of God.

**Utley** - "Then Joshua tore his clothes" In this text there are three typical signs of Hebrew mourning: (1) the tearing of the neckpiece of a person's clothing (cf. Gen. 37:29, 34; 44:13; Job 1:20; 2:12); (2) the putting on of dust on one's head (cf. Job 2:12; Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 27:30); similar signs of mourning can be seen in the face of death in 1 Sam. 4:12; and 2 Sam. 1:2; and (3) prostration before God (cf. 7:10).

**Apple** calls this "Misdirected Mourning – should have been directed towards the cause (the sin of the people) rather than the effect (the defeat itself)

**Mattoon** - The magnified leader is now mortified. This is the first military defeat in Canaan. The gladness of victory has been replaced by the gloom of defeat. ABC Sports would say, "The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

**TSK** - Rending the clothes, beating the breast, tearing the hair, throwing dust upon the head, and falling prostrate, were usual signs of deep affliction and distress among the ancient Israelites. In illustration of this custom, see 1 Sa 4:12, when the messenger brought tidings to Eli of the discomfiture of the armies of Israel by the Philistines; again, in the case of Tamar, 2 Sa 13:19, and in Ne 9:1, when a whole nation, "assembled with fasting, and with sackcloth, and earth upon them." See also the case of Mordecai, Es 4:1, and Job 2:12, where his friends abased themselves to comfort him; refer also to Eze 27:30. Jon 3:6. Mic 1:10. In each of these instances it is worthy of remark, that putting dust on the head generally follows rending of the clothes, and was the usual mode of evincing poignant sorrow.

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** -Verses 6-9. Joshua's concern for the honour of God, more than even for the fate of Israel, was the language of the Spirit of adoption. He pleaded with God. He laments their defeat, as he feared it would reflect on God's wisdom and power, his goodness and faithfulness. We cannot at any time urge a better plea than this, Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great name? Let God be glorified in all, and then welcome his whole will.

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GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**6. Joshua rent his clothes.** A usual mode, among the ancients, of expressing the highest degree of sorrow or grief. See my Illustrations of the Scriptures, p. 156. It was not so much the defeat itself as the undoubted though unknown guilty cause of it that

distressed Joshua. It showed evidently that, for some reason or other, the Lord's hand was turned against them, as otherwise it would not have been possible for the enemy to have prevailed.

**Until even tide.** Thus spending the whole day in fasting and prayer. We cannot but highly applaud the conduct of Joshua on this occasion. The concern he expressed for the loss of so many lives evinced a heart full of tender and generous sympathies. Common generals would have accounted the loss of thirty-six men as nothing; but the blood of Israel was precious in the sight of Joshua. We might have expected, too, that he would have blamed the spies for deceiving him in relation to the strength of the city; and have punished the soldiers for cowardice; but he viewed the hand of God, rather than of man in this disaster; and this led to what all must admire, his deep humiliation before God. But his tender regard for the honor of the Divine name was that which eminently distinguished him on this occasion; 'O Lord, what wilt thou do unto thy great name?' This was the plea which Moses had often used, and to which God had paid especial regard; and the man that feels it in his soul, and urges it in sincerity and truth, can never be ultimately foiled.

**Put dust upon their heads.** Rending the clothes, beating the breast, tearing the hair, putting dust on the head, and falling down prostrate, have always been among Eastern nations the usual marks of deep affliction and distress.

**Joshua 7:7** Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord GOD, why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan!"

- **why did You ever bring this people:** Ex 5:22,23 Nu 14:3 2Ki 3:10 Ps 116:11 Jer 12:1,2 Heb 12:5
- **to deliver:** Ex 14:11,12 17:3 Nu 20:4,5 Mt 17:17,20 Mk 8:17,18
- **If only we had been willing** Ex 16:3
- **to dwell beyond the Jordan** Jos 1:2-4
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DON'T BLAME GOD**

**Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord GOD, why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?"** - He seems to be pointing the finger of blame at God. Blaming God is never the right approach. Notice how Joshua's words are eerily similar to the words of the unbelieving spies

All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! **"Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword?"** Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"(Num. 14:2-3+)

**McGee** - We have heard this song before. Joshua is singing the blues. He learned the lyrics in the wilderness with the children of Israel. Joshua did not sing this song in the wilderness, but he is singing now. He cannot understand why he lost the battle. So he tears his clothes and cries out:

**If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan!** - Here Joshua lowers his expectations and this is also the wrong response.

**Utley** - 7:7-8 "and Joshua said" These verses reveal Joshua's doubts. Some of these phrases imply (1) dramatic unbelief in the purpose and power of the covenant of God or (2) language he had heard Moses use in prayer during the wilderness wandering period.

**Alan Carr** - After the tragedy happens, Joshua finds himself before the Lord in prayer. His prayer is from a broken heart, v. 6. However, there is also a hint of anger and accusation against the Lord. Joshua is going to learn that prayer is the correct recourse in a time of trouble, but that prayer will avail nothing until sin has been dealt with, Psa. 66:18! Joshua wonders why Israel was powerless in the battle, the answer wasn't to blame God, or to dispute His will. The answer was in their own camp! After we have made decisions that brought with them terrible consequences, it's too late to play the blame game. (WHICH BEGAN IN THE GARDEN! Ge 3:9-13+) Also, it is never the right time to accuse God of anything. When there is a tragedy in our lives, we need to look within and see where the problem is. You see, when there is a lack of power in my life, the problem is not with God, nor is it with others, the problem is always with me! The same is true in the church. When there is defeat in the church and souls aren't being saved and the services are dull and lifeless, we need not blame the Lord! He is doing His part. The problem is always a problem within! ([God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

**Mattoon** - Israel has sung this song before (Exodus 14:12; 16:3; Numbers 14:3). Joshua blames God for the nation's mistakes. In essence, he is saying that all their troubles are the result of obeying the Lord. To believe that obedience to the Lord is the source of your problems is an inaccurate assessment of your problems. People have a tendency to blame their problems on the wrong things and ignore the true source of their trials. Thus, their problems never get solved. ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

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**GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**7. Wherefore hast thou brought this people, &c.** Heb. העביר העברת הַעֲבָרָה *hēabartâ haabir*, passing, caused to pass, i. e. by a most stupendous miracle. This prayer of Joshua appears at first view to have been prompted by a murmuring, complaining spirit very much akin to that manifested by the children of Israel on several occasions, in the wilderness. Ex 14:11, 12; 16:3; Num. 14:3. Taken according to the letter it has an air of bold and rather irreverent remonstrance, which would not have been expected from the pious Captain of Israel, especially in a season of fasting and prayer, when he appears to have been most profoundly humbled. But much of this, undoubtedly, arises from the difficulty of transfusing the precise import of the original into English. The expressions 'to deliver,' 'to destroy,' according to a very common idiom, imply not the design, but simply the event. Joshua would not intimate that God had led the people into Canaan with the express intention of delivering them into the hands of their enemies, but he humbly inquires why he had permitted an occurrence that seemed likely to issue in such an event, one entirely foreign to the original purpose. Before the phrase 'would to God,' &c., the word 'and' occurs in the Hebrew, which is totally disregarded by our translators, requiring the sentence to be filled out by some such addition as this:—'to destroy us, and (to cause us to say) would to God we had been content,' &c. It is as if he should say;—'should thy promises, O Lord God, now fail of accomplishment on account of our sin, the great miracle thou hast wrought in bringing us over Jordan would seem to be unavailing, and all thy past mercies abortive. To all human view it would have been better for us to have remained on the other side of Jordan, and we shall be strongly prompted to wish that that had been the case, for it will be inferred from the event, that thy sole purpose in bringing us hither, was to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites for our destruction, rather than to deliver them into our hands.' This we have no doubt is the real drift of Joshua's expostulation, and as nothing in the answer which God makes to him carries the air of reprehension or rebuke, we see no reason to think that any thing of the kind was merited. His words were evidently prompted by the most commendable feelings. He felt for the thousands of Israel whom he considered as abandoned to destruction. He felt, too, for the glory of God, for he knew that should Israel be destroyed, God's great name would be blasphemed among the heathen. He therefore uses an argument based perhaps on the very words of God himself, Deut. 32:27, 'Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say,' &c.

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**Joshua 7:8 "O Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned their back before their enemies?"**

- **what:** Ezr 9:10 Hab 2:1 Ro 3:5,6
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**ISRAEL'S RETREAT  
SIGNALLED DEFEAT**

**O Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned their back before their enemies?** - NET = "O Lord, what can I say now that Israel has retreated before its enemies?"

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**GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**8. What shall I say, &c.** Heb. 'what shall I say after (i. e. since, or seeing that) Israel hath turned the neck before his enemies.' What construction shall I put upon it, or how shall I answer the reproaches and taunts of thine enemies, when Israel, thine own people, for whom thou hast done such great things, and to whom thou hast made such glorious promises, when they turn their backs in ignoble flight before their enemies! He speaks as one at a loss what to think of the unhappy event that had just occurred; as if nothing more strange or marvellous could have happened than the defeat of the chosen people.

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**Joshua 7:9 "For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?"**

- **will hear of it** Ex 32:12 Nu 14:13
- **and they will surround us and cut off our name:** Ps 83:4 124:2,3

- **what will You do for Your great name:** De 32:26,27 Ps 106:6-8 Eze 20:9 36:22,23 Joe 2:17 Joh 12:28
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 32:12 "Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people.

Numbers 14:13 But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from their midst,

### JOSHUA'S THIRD QUESTION CONCERN FOR GOD'S NAME

**For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?"** - In fairness to Joshua, here his is "jealous" for the Name of the LORD. Moses had based his prayer on a similar foundation, that the reputation of God was at stake if Israel were annihilated. And so Joshua emphasizes God's Name is more important than Israel's name.

Notice that in Joshua's question to God, he leaves out one item. He fails to seek a cause for Israel's defeat at Ai!

**Utley** - "cut off our name from the earth" This is a Hebraic idiom of the death of all of a family line. No descendant remained alive! **"and what will Thou do for Thy great name"** This is the same approach that Moses took in praying to God. God's character (as well as His plan for redemption) was involved in what happened to the people of Israel (cf. Josh. 5:9; Exod. 32:12; Deut. 9:28; Ezek. 36:22-38).

**Don Anderson** - Joshua must be falling swiftly into the pit of depression because he can only see the worst as a result of what has taken place. The Canaanites will gain fresh courage and wipe them out after what has happened at Ai.

#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**9. What wilt thou do to thy great name?** i. e., What wilt thou do in respect to thy great name? How wilt thou preserve its glory unstained when such a flood of obloquy shall be poured upon it by the scoffing heathen? The cutting off of our name, though that would vastly disparage thy power and faithfulness, yet that is a matter of less consequence; but, O Lord, how wilt thou consult the honor of thine own blessed and glorious name, were such an advantage to be given to the adversary? Comp. Ex. 32:12; Num. 14:13; Joel 2:27.

**Joshua 7:10** So the LORD said to Joshua, **'Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face?**

- **Why is it that :** Ex 14:15 1Sa 15:22 16:1 1Ch 22:16
- **have fallen on your face** Jos 7:6
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### YAHWEH COMMANDS JOSHUA TO STAND UP

**So the LORD said to Joshua, 'Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face?'** - NIV = ""Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?" The Hebrew ("falling on your face") indicates Joshua is falling again and again. God says this is not the time to pray (as noted earlier he should have prayed before Ai, not after it). It is as if God said "Get your face off the ground, because its time to **"face the music!"** Joshua was beseeching God to act, but God is saying in so many words, it is you, not I who must act!

**Utley** - **so the LORD said to Joshua, 'Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face'"** This is very similar to God's words to Moses (cf. Exod. 14:15-16) when he was confronted with the Egyptian army. There is a time to pray, but there is also a time to act ("rise up," BDB 877, KB 1086, Qal IMPERATIVE). Joshua had been told what to do and now he should act on it. At this point it is uncertain whether Joshua knew that sin was the problem.

**McGee** - He says to Joshua, "Get up off your face, and cut out all this whining in sackcloth and ashes." There are Christians who



spend their prayer time whining before the Lord. It won't do any good, friend. We need to get at the root of the problem.

**Henry Morris** - God is not pleased or placated by prayer--no matter how piously offered--when those praying have not first faced the possibility of sin and corrected it. Unanswered prayer may not usually be caused by sin. Yet this possibility should always be first considered, especially before complaining to God about it, as Joshua was doing.

**Lange's Commentary** - Jehovah is a prayer-hearing God--blessed be His name!--but with what impatience He listens to the cries of those, however proper the matter of their petitions, who have need themselves to act in order that their wishes may be granted! "Up! sanctify thyself," we may hear Him saying to many an earnest suppliant; "put away thy sins, supply thy own deficiencies, and do thy part to remove the stumbling-blocks from among thy brethren; then expect my help towards what thou desirest further." Happy for us if we get even this answer to our mistaken prayer!

**William Blaikie** - Now it is God's turn to speak. "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?" Why do you turn on Me as if I had suddenly changed, and become forgetful of My promise? Alas, my friends, how often is God slandered by our complaints! How often do we feel and even speak as if He had broken His word and forgotten His promise, as if He had induced us to trust in Him, and accept His service, only to humiliate us before the world, and forsake us in some great crisis! No wonder if God speak sharply to Joshua, and to us if we go in Joshua's steps. No wonder if He refuse to be pleased with our prostration, our wringing of our hands and sobbing and calls us to change our attitude. "Get thee up ; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?"

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 10-15. God awakens Joshua to inquiry, by telling him that when this accursed thing was put away, all would be well. Times of danger and trouble should be times of reformation. We should look at home, into our own hearts, into our own houses, and make diligent search to find out if there be not some accursed thing there, which God sees and abhors; some secret lust, some unlawful gain, some undue withholding from God or from others. We cannot prosper, until the accursed thing be destroyed out of our hearts, and put out of our habitations and our families, and forsaken in our lives. When the sin of sinners finds them out, God is to be acknowledged. With a certain and unerring judgment, the righteous God does and will distinguish between the innocent and the guilty; so that though the righteous are of the same tribe, and family, and household with the wicked, yet they never shall be treated as the wicked.

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**10. Get thee up.** Heb. קום לך kūm lak, rise, or stand up for thyself.

**Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?** Heb. 'wherefore this, (that) thou art falling down upon thy face?' i. e. continuing to fall, doing it again and again. Not the language of rebuke, as though God were displeased with Joshua for prostrating himself in this humble posture, and bemoaning in bitterness of soul the disaster that had befallen Israel; but merely implying that it was now enough; that God would not have him any longer continue that mournful posture; that he had other work to do than to spend time in grieving and afflicting himself in view of what was past; that he must arise and set about discovering the accursed thing, and casting it out; in a word that he must lay aside his mourning weeds, and enter upon that which was especially and pre-eminently at present incumbent upon him. 'For every thing there is a season, and it behoves us to see that the time is not spent in empty lamentation which God would have devoted to vigorous action in reforming what is amiss.' Henry.

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**F B Meyer** - There was something very beautiful and impressive in that prostrate form. And as the awed people gathered around in silence to contemplate their leader thus prone upon his face, it must have greatly touched them.

There was cause for soul-anguish. Joshua had counted on unbroken victory through the might of his covenant-keeping God; but here it appeared, either that God had deserted his people, or that He could not cope with the gods on which the Canaanites depended. In either case, Israel was in awful peril; obviously she had not strength sufficient to cope with the seven nations of Canaan. If left to herself, she must inevitably be cut off. But even this prospect alarmed Joshua less than the discredit that would attach to the name of Jehovah.

There are hours in our life when we are called from the exercises of devotion, good and God-honoring though they may be, to deal with the sin of our people, or to cut out some source of failure and defeat. Our place then is no longer before the ark; but arraigning the people by their tribes, casting lots for the offender, or consigning the accursed thing to fire. Child of God, do not be content with weeping and praying before God; diligently ascertain and put away the accursed thing which has hidden his face from you. When defeat befalls you at the hands of Satan, you may always be sure that there is some flaw in your consecration. You have taken some of the devoted thing back from God. The course of the Christian warrior should be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength, and in regular gradients drives his chariot from the eastern wane up the steep of heaven.



**Joshua 7:11 "Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things.**

- **Israel:** Jos 7:1,20,21
- **transgressed:** Jos 23:16 De 17:2 Jdg 2:20 2Ki 18:12 Isa 24:5 50:1,2 Jer 31:32 Ho 6:7
- **under the ban:** Jos 7:21 6:17-19
- **stolen:** Mal 3:8,9 Mt 22:21
- **and deceived:** 2Ki 5:25,26 Joh 12:5,6 Ac 5:1,2,9 Heb 4:13
- **put them among their own things:** Lev 5:15 Hab 2:6 Zec 5:4
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

Joshua 6:18 - "But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not **covet** them and **take** some of the things under the ban, and make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it.

### **GOD'S STINGING INDICTMENT OF ISRAEL'S SIN**

Don't miss God's stinging barrage of 6 verbs - **sinned...transgressed** (violated)...**taken...stolen...deceived** (lied)...**put** (hidden)!  
Joshua must have been reeling after this divine declaration!

**Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them** - Immediately God declares to Joshua that it is not His (God's) fault, but the **"buck stops"** with the nation of Israel! Note the entire nation is held guilty for one man's sin. These initial words must have surprised or even shocked Joshua, for he was unaware of sin in the camp. (See devotional [Sin in the Camp](#))

**Utley** - "Israel has sinned" God revealed to Joshua that both theft and deceit had caused the whole nation to suffer. This is a balance between the Old Testament emphasis on individual responsibility (cf. Ezek. 18:32; Deut. 24:16) and corporate responsibility (cf. Num. 25 and Deut. 5:9).

**McGee** makes an interesting comment - Joshua did not know that Israel had sinned. He did not have the spiritual discernment that was in the early church. When Ananias and Sapphira lied about their property in Acts 5, the Holy Spirit brought it out immediately. The early church was sensitive to sin. God told Joshua that sin was in the camp and he would have to deal with it.

**And they have even taken some of the things under the ban ([herem](#)) and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things** - NLT "And they have not only stolen them but have lied about it and hidden the things among their own belongings." Now Jehovah explains the sin of stealing from Him, then acting in deception and hiding the purloined pieces.

**Henry Morris - the things under the ban** - The "accursed thing" was anything in Jericho other than the metallic vessels, which were to be taken "into the treasury of the LORD" (Joshua 6:19). All else was to be "accursed," literally "devoted" to God--that is, offered up to the Lord rather than kept for personal gain (Joshua 6:17). This was accomplished by burning the city to the ground--a great burnt offering. Achan, however, "coveted" and "took" some of the valuables for himself (Joshua 7:21), thus inhibiting God's continued blessing on the Canaanite campaign until the sin could be eliminated from the camp.

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**Mattoon** - Notice the pronoun **"they"** in verse eleven. One person sinned and all were held responsible. The whole nation was considered one body. Infection affects the whole body. This truth is taught in the New Testament as the New Testament church is called a body. Whether you like it or not, your life affects someone else. We affect and infect one another for good or for bad.

- \* No Christian can sin without affecting other Christians or pagans.
- \* You can't grow cold without lowering the temperature of others.
- \* You cannot be lost in a crowd and be forgotten.
- \* The testimony of the church is reflected in the lives of every believer in the church.

Through Achan's sin, we should learn to never underestimate the amount of damage one person can do outside the will of God.

\* Abraham's sin in Egypt almost cost him his wife. (Genesis 12)

\* David's disobedience in the unauthorized census led to the death of 70,000 people. (2 Samuel 24)

\* Jonah ran from God's will and almost sank his ship.

\* Here, Israel is aching because of Achan.

\* Ecclesiastes 9:18—Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good. ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**11. Israel hath sinned.** For a view of the reason why this is spoken of as the act of the whole body of Israel, see Note on v. 1.

**Have also transgressed my covenant.** That is, have broken the conditions of the covenant or agreement of general obedience into which they had before entered, Ex. 19:8; 24:7; or, have transgressed the particular precept relative to the accursed thing, ch. 6:19. Covenant, in the Scriptures, often has the sense of command, precept, ordinance.

**Have also stolen.** Have sacrilegiously taken and appropriated to their own use the portion which I had reserved to myself, and ordered to be brought into the treasury.

**And dissembled also.** Have covered the deed with deep dissimulation; instead of ingenuously confessing the sin and imploring pardon, have studiously endeavored to hide it, as if by concealing it from their brethren they had concealed it from me also. The crime is recited with the utmost particularity, in order that its various aggravations may be more impressively set forth.

**Have put it even among their own stuff.** Among their own goods.

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## Joshua 7:11 - A Winning Strategy

Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant. — Joshua 7:11

Today's Scripture: Joshua 7:1-13

During my days as a high school basketball coach, I made a huge mistake. I sent some of my players to scout an opponent. They returned with this report: We can take those guys easily. Overconfident, we lost to that team. Does that sound familiar? To me, it sounds like the situation at Ai when Joshua sent out his scouts, who misjudged their opponent's strength.

But there was more to the defeat at Ai than bad scouting. Israel lost the battle and 36 soldiers for several reasons that I think we can learn from.

Shortly before the loss at Ai, Joshua led his army successfully against Jericho because he knew God's plan of attack. But there is no mention of Joshua consulting God before Ai. Prior to the battle of Jericho, the men had consecrated themselves to God (Josh. 5:2-8). Before Ai—nothing is said about Joshua's men preparing themselves spiritually. The reason the Bible gives for the Israelites' loss is sin in the camp. Achan had stolen from the spoils of Jericho (7:1). They could not defeat Ai until the sin was confessed and the people had consecrated themselves (7:16-26). Then God gave them a plan for victory (8:1-7).

A winning strategy for our daily battles: confessing our sin and living in the power that God provides. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Dear Lord, before I go off into the battle today, forgive me of my sin and lead me in the path You want me to go. I want to serve You. Empower me to live for You and Your will. Amen.

Purity in the heart produces power in the life.

**Joshua 7:12** "Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst.

- **the sons of Israel:** Jos 22:18-20 Nu 14:45 Jdg 2:4 Ps 5:4,5 Pr 28:1 Isa 59:2 Hab 1:13
- **they have become accursed:** Jos 6:18 De 7:26 Hag 2:13,14

- **I will not be with you anymore:** Jer 6:8 23:33 Ho 9:12
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Joshua 6:18 "But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not covet them and take some of the things under the ban, and make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it.

### DISOBEDIENCE BRINGS TROUBLE ON THE CAMP

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion and what a tragic conclusion it was! God will fulfill his promised punishment.

**The sons of Israel cannot** (see [yakol](#)) **stand before their enemies** - Sin in the camp makes them unable to stand. The presence and power of God have been removed.

**They turn their backs before their enemies for they have become accursed** ([herem](#)) - They will "[tuck their tail between their legs](#)" and "[turn tail](#)" That is, they would be forced to retreat because they are in danger of being annihilation, **accursed** ([herem](#))!

What a difference one chapter (and one sin) makes! We had just read in Joshua 6:27 that **the LORD was with Joshua**, and his fame was in all the land."

[Utley](#) - The results of this intentional rebellion against the clearly stated will of YHWH.

- "can not stand," v. 12, Qal INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT (negated)
- "turn their backs before their enemies," v. 12, , intensified by the use of the Qal ACTIVE PARTICIPLE and a QAL IMPERFECT of the same VERB
- "become accursed," v. 12, Qal INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
- "I will not be with you anymore," v. 12, Hiphil IMPERFECT and BDB 224, KB 243, Qal INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT

**I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban**([herem](#) - the devoted things) **from your midst** - **NET** = "I will no longer be with you, unless you destroy what has contaminated you." This is a frightening threat but praise God for the word "**unless**" which gives a ray of hope from the merciful God. Yahweh's message seems to be destroy the things under the ban before they destroy you! This is a frightening warning from the One who said "I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you." (Joshua 1:5+).

You open yourself up to judgment when you are disobedient,  
and this is what has happened here.  
-- Don Anderson

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**12. Because they were accursed.** In exact accordance with the threatening before denounced against them, Joshua 6:18. Joshua was thus informed that this, and nothing else, was the ground of the controversy which God now had with his people. They had, by their iniquity, put themselves out of the range of his protection and blessing, and unless summary punishment was executed upon the offender, they would transfer upon themselves the very curse denounced against their adversaries.

**Except ye destroy the accursed.** The accursed person with all that pertains to him, v. 24.

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Joshua 7:12 Destroying the Divides

I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction. Joshua 7:12

Today's Scripture: Joshua 7:1–12

A writing deadline loomed over me, while the argument I had with my husband earlier that morning swirled through my mind. I stared at the blinking cursor, fingertips resting on the keyboard. He was wrong too, Lord.

When the computer screen went black, my reflection scowled. My unacknowledged wrongs were doing more than hindering the work before me. They were straining my relationship with my husband and my God.

I grabbed my cell phone, swallowed my pride, and asked for forgiveness. Savoring the peace of reconciliation when my spouse apologized as well, I thanked God and finished my article on time.

The Israelites experienced the pain of personal sin and joy of restoration. Joshua warned God's people not to enrich themselves in the battle for Jericho (Josh. 6:18), but Achan stole captured items and hid them in his tent (7:1). Only after his sin was exposed and dealt with (vv. 4–12) did the nation enjoy reconciliation with their God.

Like Achan, we don't always consider how "tucking sin into our tents" turns our hearts from God and impacts those around us. Acknowledging Jesus as Lord, admitting our sin, and seeking forgiveness provides the foundation for healthy and faithful relationships with God and others. By submitting to our loving Creator and Sustainer daily, we can serve Him and enjoy His presence—together. By: Xochitl Dixon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, please help us recognize, confess, and turn away from our sin, so that we can nurture loving relationships with You and others.

God can purge our hearts of the sin that destroys our intimacy with Him and others.

**Joshua 7:13 "Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the LORD, the God of Israel, has said, 'There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst.'"**

- **Consecrate:** Jos 3:5 Ex 19:10-15 La 3:40,41 Joe 2:16,17 Zep 2:1,2
- **under the ban:** Jos 7:11 2Ch 28:10 Mt 7:5
- **until you have removed:** 1Co 5:1-6,11-13
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 15:3+ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

2 Timothy 2:21 (PURIFICATION FROM SIN) Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

### THE "CURE" FOR DISOBEDIENCE

**Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow** - Purification must precede the return of the presence and power of the LORD.

[Utley](#) - Notice there was a procedure by which Israel could be restored. YHWH provided a way back!

[Don Anderson](#) - There will be no victory until you deal with it. Fellowship breaks and growth stops until sin is confessed and fellowship restored. The lights go out because t

he power ceases to flow. You must deal with the offense before there will be further victory over your enemies.

**For** - Term of explanation. Explains why the preceding command to **consecrate yourselves** must be obeyed immediately.

**Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, has said, "There are things under the ban([herem](#)) in your midst, O Israel** - The **things** may be "under" cover but not hidden from omniscient eye of Yahweh (Pr 15:3+)

**You cannot** (see [yakol](#)) **stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban([herem](#)) from your midst** - Unconfessed, unrepented sin saps spiritual power, whether it was in Joshua's day with literal warfare or in our day with spiritual warfare!

**THOUGHT** - If this statement by Yahweh does not prompt an "**O my**" out of you, they you are either deceived or dead! We all sin. We all have in effect "*taken things from under the ban.*" Could this be why we are not able to totally eradicate the "*enemy*" that continually harasses us. Do you have a recurrent, recalcitrant sin that seems to rear its ugly head and strike when you least expect it? As Paul says in Colossians 3:5KJV+ we need

to "kill sin" or like the old Puritan said "lest it be killing you!" What is the secret from cutting the head off of the "snake?" Trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey! But be encouraged for God has not left us alone, but given us His omnipotent Spirit and Word to eradicate the banned thing from the midst of our camp!

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**Can** (not) (prevail, overcome) ([03201](#)) **yakol** means to be able, to have power, to prevail, meaning "can" (can do something). The Septuagint translates here with [dunamai](#) which in context describes God's provision of power, power to accomplish supernaturally that which cannot be accomplished naturally!

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#### **GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**13. Up, sanctify the people.** That is, command and see that they sanctify themselves. Cause them to purify their persons by legal washings, but more especially to put themselves into a suitable frame of mind to appear before God, and submit to the Divine scrutiny. Although the act of Achan had been perpetrated with so much caution that it was unperceived by any human being, yet the eye of God had been upon it, and he declared to Joshua the true reason of his displeasure, and of Israel's defeat. But, though he revealed the fact, he did not name the person that had committed it, but left that to be discovered in a way more impressive to the nation, and more merciful to the offender, inasmuch as it gave him time for repentance and voluntary acknowledgment.

**There is an accursed thing, &c.** The crime of sacrilege has been committed in the midst of thee, O Israel.

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#### **With Loins Girded - Until Ye Take Away the Accursed Thing      Joshua 7:13**

What was the cause that Israel by the grace of God saw the mighty Jericho collapse before its eyes, while it was defeated shamefully before the much more insignificant city of Ai? That cause lay in the curse that was in the midst of the people. The spoil of Jericho had been dedicated to the Lord, but Achan had embezzled something that had been dedicated to God. A beautiful Babylonian garment, a golden wedge that was worn as a piece of jewellery, and two hundred shekels of silver he had, without any one knowing it, taken from the spoil; and this treasure stolen from God, he had secretly buried in his tent. However, one Eye had watched him. When Joshua questioned the Lord concerning Israel's defeat before Ai, he received this answer: "There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you!"

A **secret evil** that weakens us in the struggle against the Evil One, that makes us completely powerless even against the most insignificant enemy of our soul, and makes us to be subdued,—who does not know these things from his immediate surroundings, yes, who does not know them from his own experience?

Our life is, like that of Israel, a continuous struggle to possess Canaan, a continuing battle for that great good, that was given us in Christ, but that we have to own in the way of a much and bitter contested faith. Now it should go from victory to victory, from triumph to triumph, from glory to glory. However, it often goes from victory to defeat, from strength to weakness, from Jericho to Ai, from honour to shame: first there is a brave rejection of a greater sin, to continue in being overcome by a much lesser enemy; yes, it is sometimes that our whole life becomes one long series of defeats rather than one long series of victories.

Oh, you can be sure that in such a case there is an accursed thing in our life. A secret sin, that nobody knows except God and we ourselves, and by which our inner strength is broken. Whoever stands before the Lord his God with a blemished conscience, how shall he have the liberty to beg for His support? And whoever is left to his own weakness in the battle, how shall he ever become more than conquerors in Him who has loved us? The accursed thing must be taken away, the secret evil must be confessed, the hidden sin must be eradicated in God's strength. There can be no common cause with the enemy of our soul, no matter how hidden it is kept. Let us rather listen to the faithful word of the Lord's servant: "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him!"

**Joshua 7:14** 'In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes by lot shall come near by families, and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households, and the household which the LORD takes shall come near man by man.

- **the tribe:** Jos 7:17,18 1Sa 10:19-21 14:38-42 Pr 16:33 Jon 1:7 Ac 1:24-26
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages;**

1 Samuel 14:41-42 Therefore, Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. 42 Saul said, "**Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son.**" And Jonathan was taken.

Jonah 1:7 (**THIS IS A CLOSE PARALLEL WITH WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO ISRAEL**) Each man said to his mate, "Come, **let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity has struck us.**" So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

Proverbs 18:18 The **cast lot puts an end to strife** And decides between the mighty ones.

## **GUILTY PARTY CHOSEN BY LOT**

**In the morning then you shall come near** (presumably to Tabernacle or Ark) **by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes by lot shall come near by families, and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households, and the household which the LORD takes shall come near man by man** - Divine sifting by tribe then family then household then individual.

There is no such thing as secret sin,  
for it is always "open scandal" in Heaven!

**Utle** - which the LORD takes by lot The phrase "by lot" is not found in the Hebrew text, but it implies the use of the [Urim and Thummim](#)? (cf. Nu 27:21). This method of knowing God's will is also found in 1 Sam. 10:20 and will be the means by which the Promised Land will be divided among the tribes (cf. 18:6, 11; 19:1).

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### **GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**14. Ye shall be brought.** Heb. נִקְרַבְתֶּם nikrabtem, ye shall come near, i. e. to the tabernacle, or to the ark, wherever that might now be deposited. Persons deputed from each tribe, to represent it, shall successively come to appear before me, and receive my orders.

**The tribe which the Lord taketh** That is, the tribe which shall be discovered or declared guilty by the lot. The tribe thus indicated is said to be 'taken by the Lord,' because the lot was disposed of by him, according to Prov. 16:33; the transaction was specially overruled by him in his mysterious providence for the detection of the guilty. Of the sacred use of lots, see 1 Sam. 10:20, 21; 14:41, 42; Acts 1:24, 26. The original for 'take' has the import of arresting, seizing, being the appropriate term for the apprehension of criminals.

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### **QUESTION** - [What was the practice of casting lots?](#)

**ANSWER** - The practice of casting lots is mentioned seventy times in the Old Testament and seven times in the New Testament. In spite of the many references to casting lots in the Old Testament, nothing is known about the actual lots themselves. They could have been sticks of various lengths, flat stones like coins, or some kind of dice; but their exact nature is unknown. The closest modern practice to casting lots is likely flipping a coin.

The practice of casting lots occurs most often in connection with the division of the land under Joshua (Joshua chapters 14-21), a procedure that God instructed the Israelites on several times in the book of Numbers (Numbers 26:55; 33:54; 34:13; 36:2). God allowed the Israelites to cast lots in order to determine His will for a given situation (Joshua 18:6-10; 1 Chronicles 24:5,31). Various offices and functions in the temple were also determined by lot (1 Chronicles 24:5, 31; 25:8-9; 26:13-14). The sailors on Jonah's ship (Jonah 1:7) also cast lots to determine who had brought God's wrath upon their ship. The eleven apostles cast lots to determine who would replace Judas (Acts 1:26). Casting lots eventually became a game people played and made wagers on. This is seen in the Roman soldiers casting lots for Jesus' garments (Matthew 27:35).

The New Testament nowhere instructs Christians to use a method similar to casting lots to help with decision-making. Now that we have the completed Word of God, as well as the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide us, there is no reason to be using games of chance to make decisions. The Word, the Spirit, and prayer are sufficient for discerning God's will today—not casting lots, rolling dice, or flipping a coin. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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**Joshua 7:15** 'It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that



belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel."

- **the one who is taken** : Jos 7:25,26 De 13:15,16 1Sa 14:38,39
- **he and all that belongs to him** : Jos 7:11
- **he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel**: Ge 34:7 Jdg 20:6 1Sa 26:21 2Sa 13:13
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THIEF TO BE PUNISHED BY FIRE

**It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban([herem](#)) shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him** - Note that not only the guilty person but **all that belongs to him**.

**Utley** - "shall be burned with fire, and all that belongs to him" Notice that there are two methods of judgment in this account of Achan. First of all he will be stoned and then all that he has will be burned (cf. v. 25). Achan's family and animals were destroyed with him. This is another example of Hebrew corporality.

**Because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing** (an outrageous thing, an infamy) **in Israel** - God gives two reasons for punishment.

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**Disgraceful Thing** (05039) [nebālāh](#) A feminine noun meaning folly, a disgraceful act. "foolishness; senselessness; impropriety; stupidity." It refers to deeds that are especially serious, grave, sinful, arrogant: rape, harlotry (Gen. 34:7; Deut. 22:21); breaking of Israel's covenantal laws (Josh. 7:15); sodomy (Jdg. 19:23, 24); offering incorrect or vain advice in an arrogant way (Job 42:8); foolish talk (Isa. 9:17[16]); spiritual adultery (Jer. 29:23). Its use in 1 Sa. 25:25 signifies "disregarding God's will." Nebalah is most often used as a word for a serious sin (Gen. 34:7—the first occurrence).

**DBL Hebrew** - 1. disgraceful thing, wicked thing, i.e., what is in defiance of moral or social standards and so considered outrageous, and brings a resulting disgrace (Ge 34:7; Dt 22:21; Jos 7:15; Jdg 19:23, 24; 20:6, 10; 2Sa 13:12; Jer 29:23); 2. folly, foolishness, i.e., that which is senseless and so shows a lack and even capacity for understanding, implying moral failure (1Sa 25:25; Job 42:8; Isa 9:16; 32:6); 3. female fool, i.e., a woman that lacks understanding or even the capacity for understanding (Job 2:10), man having sex with another man's wife (Dt 22:22)

**Utley** - **a disgraceful thing** This term is used of several actions.

- A. related to sexual promiscuity
  1. Shechem's violation of Jacob's daughter, Dinah, Gen. 34:7
  2. extra-marital affairs, Deut. 22:21
  3. the rape of the Levite's concubine, Jdgs. 19:23; 20:6
  4. Ammon's rape of his half sister Tamar, 2 Sam. 13:12
  5. Israel's adultery, Jer. 29:23
- B. related to people's foolish actions and speech
  1. Nabal's folly in rejecting David's request for help, 1 Sam. 25:25
  2. those who speak foolishly, Isa. 9:17; 32:6
- C. Achan's violation of YHWH's words, Josh. 7:15

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### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**15. He that is taken with the accursed thing.** Heb. בחרם ba'herem, in the accursed thing. That is, he that is divinely pointed out as being involved in the guilt of the accursed thing.

**Shall be burnt with fire.** The doom expressly appointed for persons or things accursed, Deut. 13:15, 16. In addition to this, and previously to it, the culprit, as appears from Josh 7:25, was to be stoned to death at the hands of the congregation. This was the punishment ordained for blasphemers and presumptuous offenders, Nu 15:30, 35. We do read that Achan verbally blasphemed, but all high-handed, deliberate transgression is virtual blasphemy, and is so regarded in the judgment of heaven.

**He and all that he hath.** His sons, daughters, cattle and goods, &c., all being in the Divine estimation, in consequence of their connexion with him, considered as infected with the taint of his guilt, and therefore exposed to share with him in his condemnation. This may appear to human view a severe, if not an unjust sentence, but we can only say it is in strict accordance with the general analogy of God's providence in this world, and as such is to be unhesitatingly acknowledged as bearing the impress of perfect equity



and justice.

**Hath wrought folly in Israel.** That is, a base, foolish and sinful deed, such as every wise and well principled man would utterly condemn. In this sense the term 'folly' frequently occurs. See Gen. 34:7; Deut. 32:21; 2 Sam. 13:12. It was a conduct that brought shame and disgrace upon a nation, sustaining the reputation of a wise and understanding people.

**Joshua 7:16 So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken.**

- **arose early:** Jos 3:1 Ge 22:3 Ps 119:60 Ec 9:10
- **and brought:** Jos 7:14
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentary

## TRIBE OF JUDAH TAKEN BY LOT

**So Joshua arose early in the morning** - Another **early morning** by this man of action on a most fateful day (in contrast to rising early in Josh 3:1 for a pleasant duty)!

**Alan Carr** - God knew who was guilty, why didn't He just tell Joshua who they were looking for? In my opinion, He was giving Achan time to repent and to confess his sins. Be that as it may, the finger of God was getting closer and closer and finally landed on Achan. ([God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

**THOUGHT** - The lesson for us needs to be learned well! God already knows your sins and His finger is getting closer and closer to your life. One day soon, He will point out those things in your life that need to be revealed! It is only a matter of time sir, Ma'am, young person until the finger of God lands on your life and you are exposed in your sins! It will not and cannot be hidden forever! One day, your sin will find you out—Num. 32:23; Luke 12:3. You may try, but you cannot hide your sin! ([God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

**And brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken** - All the nation was assembled for the ritual of selection by lot. **Was taken** signifies the tribe that **the LORD takes by lot** (Josh 7:14).

**Donald Campbell** has an interesting question and comment - since God knew who was guilty, why did He not simply reveal his identity to Joshua? The answer is that this dramatic method would impress on the nation of Israel the seriousness of disobeying God's commands. Since the method took time it would also give the guilty person an opportunity to repent and confess his sin. If Achan had responded in this way and thrown himself on the mercy of God no doubt he would have been pardoned as was the guilty David centuries later (Ps 32:1–5; Ps 51:1–12). There was a grim silence as the process narrowed from the selection of the tribe of Judah to the clan of the Zerahites, to the family of Zimri, and finally to the trespasser himself, Achan. This was no quirk of fate; it was the direction of God's providence. Solomon described the process well: "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD" (Prov. 16:33). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 16-26. See the folly of those that promise themselves secrecy in sin. The righteous God has many ways of bringing to light the hidden works of darkness. See also, how much it is our concern, when God is contending with us, to find out the cause that troubles us. We must pray with holy Job, Lord, show me wherefore thou contendest with me. Achan's sin began in the eye. He saw these fine things, as Eve saw the forbidden fruit. See what comes of suffering the heart to walk after the eyes, and what need we have to make this covenant with our eyes, that if they wander they shall be sure to weep for it. It proceeded out of the heart. They that would be kept from sinful actions, must mortify and check in themselves sinful desires, particularly the desire of worldly wealth. Had Achan looked upon these things with an eye of faith, he would have seen they were accursed things, and would have dreaded them; but looking on them with an eye of sense only, he saw them as goodly things, and coveted them. When he had committed the sin, he tried to hide it. As soon as he had got this plunder, it became his burden, and he dared not to use his ill-gotten treasure. So differently do objects of temptation appear at a distance, to what they do when they have been gotten. See the deceitfulness of sin; that which is pleasing in the commission, is bitter in the reflection. See how they will be deceived that rob God. Sin is a very troublesome thing, not only to a sinner himself, but to all about him. The righteous God will certainly recompense tribulation to them that trouble his people. Achan perished not alone in his sin. They lose their own, who grasp at more than their own. His sons and daughters were put to death with him. It is probable that they helped to hide the things; they must have known of them. What fatal consequences follow, even in this world, to the sinner himself, and to all belonging him! One sinner destroys much good. What, then, will be the wrath to come? Let us flee from it to Christ Jesus as the sinner's Friend. There are circumstances in the confession of Achan, marking the progress of sin, from its first entrance into the heart to its being done, which may serve as the history of almost every offence against the law of God, and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

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**Tabletalk** - This initial warning to the people should have made Achan come forward on his own and repent of his sin. Unfortunately, this is not what occurred. Instead, he waited for God to identify him before he confessed his sin (vv. 16–21). Lest we think the Lord unjust to destroy Achan and his household even after they “repented” (vv. 22–26), we should note how Achan’s failure to confess on his own and the failure of his family to do the same reveals a lack of true contrition. John Calvin comments that Achan gave no “sure indication of repentance; being, as it were, overcome with terror, he openly divulged what he would willingly have concealed.” God always forgives the penitent, but the absence of true repentance will ultimately bring condemnation.

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### Joshua 7:16-22 Here Comes The Boss!

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. — 1 John 1:9

Today's Scripture: Joshua 7:16-22

A number of computer games come with a special feature called the “Boss Key.” If you’re playing a game when you’re supposed to be working, and someone (like the boss) walks into your office, you quickly strike the Boss Key. Your computer screen changes immediately, hiding what you’ve been doing.

Trying to hide from others when we’ve done something wrong comes naturally. We may feel guilty, but our desire to avoid admitting our responsibility is often stronger than our guilt.

Achan tried to hide his sin. He had stolen silver and gold and hidden it in his tent (Josh. 7:20-21). But when the Israelites were defeated in battle, the Lord told their leader Joshua that the loss was due to sin in the camp (vv.11-12). The Lord identified Achan as the one who had sinned. And even though Achan confessed, he and his family were executed (v.25).

We may not understand why God dealt so harshly with Achan’s sin, but we do know He was instructing His people in His holiness and their need for obedience to His commands (Ex. 20:17).

If you’ve been disobedient, it’s time to come out of hiding. God is lovingly calling you and offering His cleansing, forgiveness, and restoration. By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Lord, help me to come to You  
When I would rather hide my sin;  
Give me the courage to confess  
So I can be made clean within.  
—Sper

Confession is the key that opens the door to forgiveness.

**Joshua 7:17 He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken.**

- Ge 38:30, Zarah, Nu 26:20 1Ch 2:4-7
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FAMILY OF ZERAHITES TAKEN BY LOT

**He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken** - There is no escaping the "long arm" of the LORD.

**Bush** describes this awesome "divine courtroom" scene - At first Achan might stand enwrapped in security, and little fearful that among the mighty multitude assembled around him, he alone should be detected; but this groundless confidence could not long abide. The tribe of Judah, to which he belonged, is taken; and the probabilities of discovery are vastly increased. Some rising fear begins to struggle with his self-possession, and now his heart throbs with a quicker and louder alarm; for the family of the Zerahites, of which he was a member, is selected, as containing the guilty man. That family comes now by its households, and lo, the household of Zabdi is taken. Whither now shall Achan flee, and where is the hope of concealment with which he lulled his soul to

sleep in its guilt and crime? The family of Zabdi advances, and the last lots are given forth; and behold, Achan, the son of Carmi, is found and stands among the many thousands of Israel, pointed out by the unerring finger of God, as the man who had taken the accursed thing, and made himself a curse by this presumptuous act of sacrilege.—'

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**17. And he brought the family of Judah.** That is, the several families, the collection of families, collect. sing, for plur.

**He brought the family of the Zarhites, man by man** It was ordered, v. 14, that all Israel should come near by tribes, and one tribe was to be fixed on; then that tribe came by its families, and one family was fixed on; then came that family by its households, and one household was fixed on; and finally that household coming man by man, one man was fixed on. In the present passage there appears to be some confusion in this prescribed order of selection. In speaking of Zarhi the phrase 'by households' is left out, and 'man by man' expressed twice. The probability is that a slight error has crept into the original text; instead of לגבירים laggebârim, man by man, v. 17, the true word is undoubtedly לבתים lebottim, by households, and this reading, according to Kennicott, is preserved in six Hebrew copies, and in the Syriac version.—The Israelites are summoned before the Lord, and the hour of recompense is at hand. The lots are gone forth.

**Joshua 7:18 He brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken.**

- **was taken:** Nu 32:23 1Sa 14:42 Pr 13:21 Jer 2:26 Ac 5:1-10
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Nu 32:23+ But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.

Proverbs 13:21 Adversity pursues sinners, But the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity.

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD. **(GOD'S PROVIDENCE CONTROLS THE LOT SO THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "CHANCE"!)**

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Proverbs 15:3+ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

Hebrews 4:13+ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT).

Amos 9:3 "Though they hide on the summit of Carmel, I will search them out and take them from there; And though they conceal themselves from My sight on the floor of the sea, From there I will command the serpent and it will bite them

Jeremiah 16:17 "For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity concealed from My eyes.

## THE FOOLISH FOLLY OF SECRET SIN

**He brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken** - Achan's lineage is carefully recounted. There will be no question as to who is the guilty party.

We read a similar story in Acts 5:1-11+ at the early beginnings of the church. Sin is severely judged in the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira because they lied to the Spirit of God.

**Matthew Henry** - We may well imagine how Achan's countenance changed, and what horror and confusion seized him, when he was singled out as the delinquent, when the eyes of all Israel were fastened upon him, and every one was ready to say, Have we found thee, O our enemy!'

**Joseph Parker** - THERE is nothing old in these words. Achan is "taken" every day. Achan is sure to be "taken." If we are practising the policy of Achan, the fate of Achan we can never avert; the detail will be different the mere map and plan but the issue will be the same, because God's throne is the same, and there is no change in his righteousness. So this is not ancient history, but a line taken out of this day's record a line we would gladly not read; but why should we spoil our schooling because we are eclectic, reading a line here and there just as it may please us, instead of reading straight through, solemnly, minutely, and fearlessly? We do not like to look into perdition we are afraid of being scorched! But whatever we find upon the way of life and in the discipline of life, it will be well to look at steadfastly and reverently, and ask God for that apt mind and interpreting faculty which can seize meanings and secure them and hold them as spiritual riches.

**Joshua 7:19** Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, **give** glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and **give** praise to Him; and **tell** me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me."

- **My son:** 2Ti 2:25 Tit 2:2 Jas 1:20 1Pe 3:8,9
- **give:** 1Sa 6:5 Isa 13:12 Jer 13:16 Lu 17:18 Joh 9:24 Rev 16:9
- **make:** Nu 5:6,7 2Ch 30:22 33:12,13 Ezr 10:10,11 Ps 32:5 51:3 Pr 28:13 Jer 3:12,13 Da 9:4 Ro 10:10 1Jn 1:8-10
- **tell me:** 1Sa 14:43 Jon 1:8-10
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CONFESSION OF SIN

**Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you** - Joshua portrays that phrase we have all heard "God hates the sin, but loves the sinner." Joshua shows a touch of tenderness, compassion and love (even as does God - Jn 3:16+) calling him **My son**.

**THOUGHT** - In this, Joshua is a picture of God. While God hates sin with His entire being, He still loves the sinner, John 3:16+. Even though man is the enemy of God, God still wants man to repent and to come to Him for salvation, 2Pe 3:9+ (cf 1Ti 2:4). If you have sin in your life this morning, you need to remember that God is a loving and gracious God Who exhibits His greatness by cleansing sinners. You need to come to Him before it is too late! (Alan Carr - [God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

**Utley** - It is interesting that Achan did not voluntarily confess his sin until it was obviously pointed out by God (lot) that he was the one in the wrong. This was a Hebrew idiom of telling the truth. The rabbis say that because of the phrase in v. 25, "the LORD will trouble you this day," Achan did not lose his eternity with God, but was condemned to death for his acts. (**ED**: WRONG!!!)

**Matthew Henry** observes "Adopting this affectionate style of address (**my son**) to show that the present severe proceedings against him were not prompted by any personal ill will, or an angry spirit of revenge. Though he was obliged to act as a magistrate, yet he was willing Achan should know that he felt as a father, and in so doing proposed a noble example to all who have the administration of justice, 'not to insult over those who are in misery, though they may have brought themselves into it by their own wickedness, but to treat even offenders with the spirit of meekness, not knowing what we ourselves should have done, if God had put us into the hand of our own counsels.'"

**Give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel - Give glory to God** because He is a righteous judge, from Whose eyes not a single sin is hidden or concealed.

**Warren Wiersbe** adds that "the phrase "Give glory to God" was a form of official oath in Israel (John 9:24NIV). Achan had not only sinned against his own people, but also he had grievously sinned against the Lord, and he had to confess it to Him. When he said "I have sinned," he joined the ranks of seven other men in Scripture who made the same confession, some more than once, and some without sincerity: Pharaoh (Ex. 9:27; 10:16), Balaam (Nu 22:34), King Saul (1Sa 15:24, 30; 26:21), David (2Sa 12:13; 24:10, 17; Ps. 51:4), Shimei (2Sa 19:20), Judas (Mt. 27:4), and the prodigal son (Luke 15:18, 21)." (See context in [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**and give praise to Him** - KJV renders **give praise to him** as "make confession unto Him." NLT has "make your confession." The English of the Septuagint has "make confession."

**And tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me** - God knew, but now Joshua serving as magistrate desires to know the truth of the matter. He calls for confession before the entire nation, for such would also serve as a warning to others who might consider breaking the ban thinking they could do so without being caught. This was vital that the nation see the importance of obedience to God's command of the ban, so that they might assure future victories over enemies, many of who were surely much

stronger than those in Ai.

**THOUGHT** - This section reminds me that without God's power, we as followers of Christ are powerless against our mortal, vicious enemies the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). Secret sin will make us especially vulnerable to spiritual defeat (not to mention incurring divine discipline - Heb 12:5-11+). And since our spiritual power is provided by the the indwelling Spirit, we must constantly endeavor to bring our sins to the light and confess without hesitation (1Jn 1:9+, Pr 28:13+), lest we quench or grieve the Holy Spirit and suffer disastrous defeat. Some other passages related to confession - Ps 32:5 Lev 5:5,16:21 Lev 26:40;Jer 3:13 Dt 30:1,2; Nu 5:7 Ezra 10:11 Job 33:27 2Sa 12:13;Ps 38:18

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**Hide** (conceal; Lxx has [krupto](#)) ([03582](#)) (**kachad**) to prevent something (or someone) from being seen or discovered. To cut off, to destroy. It has the basic idea of hiding or destroying by various measures: by cutting off or destroying Pharaoh and his people in plagues (Ex. 9:15); or by the Lord's destroying angel (Ex. 23:23). It has the meaning to make something disappear, to destroy or to efface it, such as the dynasty of Jeroboam (1 Kgs. 13:34). It has the sense of hiding or not revealing something in Job 20:12 (Ps. 139:15; Hos. 5:3). In other contexts, it means for something to be hidden (2 Sam. 18:13; Ps. 69:5[6]); or kept hidden (Gen. 47:18; 1 Sam. 3:17, 18; Ps. 78:4). It is used of persons being effaced, destroyed (Zech. 11:8, 9, 16) by the Lord, or even scattered. ([The Complete Word Study Old Testament](#))

**Kachad** - 33x - annihilated(3), blot(1), completely destroy(1), conceal(4), concealed(2), cut off(2), denied(1), desolate(1), destroyed(2), hid(1), hidden(4), hide(7), hides(1), perishing(1), wipe(1). Gen. 47:18; Exod. 9:15; Exod. 23:23; Jos. 7:19; 1 Sam. 3:17; 1 Sam. 3:18; 2 Sam. 14:18; 2 Sam. 18:13; 1 Ki. 13:34; 2 Chr. 32:21; Job 4:7; Job 6:10; Job 15:18; Job 15:28; Job 20:12; Job 22:20; Job 27:11; Ps. 40:10; Ps. 69:5; Ps. 78:4; Ps. 83:4; Ps. 139:15; Isa. 3:9; Jer. 38:14; Jer. 38:25; Jer. 50:2; Hos. 5:3; Zech. 11:8; Zech. 11:9; Zech. 11:16

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**19. Give glory to the Lord God of Israel.** Heb. שִׁים כְּבוֹד sim kâbod, put, appoint, ordain, glory to the Lord God. That is, by confessing the truth, by honestly pleading guilty to the charge, by ingenuously acknowledging the sin and the justice of the punishment which it incurred. By so doing he would not only ascribe to God the glory of his omniscience, from which no secrets are hid, in detecting and exposing the crime, but also of his justice in punishing it. He would in fact thereby most effectually give Him the praise of all his perfections, and consult the best interests of his soul in the world to come. **It appears from a similar usage in several other instances, that God regards the confession of the truth as very intimately connected with giving him glory.** 2 Chr 30:8. Thus, Luke 23:47, 'Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God (i. e. gave him glory), saying, certainly this was a righteous man.' Jn 9:24, 'Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner;' on which passage Barnes remarks, 'The meaning here is not, "give God the praise for healing you," but confess that you have declared to us a falsehood; and that you have endeavored to impose on us; and by thus confessing your sin give praise and honor to God, who condemns all imposture and falsehood; and whom you will thus acknowledge to be right in your condemnation.' Nothing should be more deeply impressed upon the mind of the sinner, than that the humble and penitent confession of guilt tends directly to the glory of God, and that withholding confession is robbing him of his right, as well as incurring his displeasure.

**Tell me now what thou hast done.** The testimony of God would have been sufficient, who could neither deceive nor be deceived. Joshua also, who was now knowing to his crime, might have declared it, but he could not prove it; and as it was intended that the offender should be made a public monument of justice, and be held up as a warning to the whole nation, it was desirable that the most indisputable evidence of his guilt should be adduced. He is made therefore himself to supply a testimony which none could controvert or doubt; even to bear witness against himself. Joshua requires this confession to be made to him, because he stood, both to Achan and to the people, in God's stead. It was in effect the same, therefore, as making it to God himself.

**Joshua 7:20 So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did:**

- **Truly:** Ge 42:21 Ex 10:16 Nu 22:34 1Sa 15:24,30 Job 7:20 33:27 Ps 38:18 Mt 27:4
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Proverbs 28:13+ He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper (UNDERSTATEMENT IN CASE OF

ACHAN!), But (PRAISE GOD FOR THIS MERCY FILLED "TERM OF CONTRAST"!) he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

**Alan Carr** comments - God's way is for His people to throw the covers off their sins and tell God the truth that He already knows. He can bless a person who handles sin the Biblical way. However, the person who tries to hide his sins will never prosper, but will face God in judgment. You see, you will confess your sins one way or another. You can confess them where the confession will make a difference, or you will do it when you face the Lord in Judgment. Either way, you will confess your sins—Phil. 2:11.)

## ACHAN TESTIFIES AGAINST HIMSELF

Yes Achan confesses but he does not repent! He got caught and really had no choice but to confess! Achan reminds us of our confessors who were not repenters - Pharaoh, Balaam, Judas.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, may God's Spirit grant each of us the desire and power to confess our sin(s) before it is too late and also to repent or turn from that sin or sins! For Jesus' sake. Amen

**So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did-** Achan's first recorded words were "It is true" (NET) Achan expresses good theology in acknowledging his sin is against Yahweh, as is ALL sin. Achan's theology was correct but unfortunately not "corrective" as it had been centuries earlier in the life of a young man named Joseph. He could have confessed when he heard Joshua's plan to determine the sinner. When confession is delayed or put off, the heart tends to get hard. There is no sorrow for his sin, disobedience, betrayal of his nation for booty or for the cause of the deaths of 36 people. The Lord was also giving the guilty person time to repent if he wanted too. David did repent of his sin and was pardoned (Psalm 32:1–5; 51:1–12). The Ninevites repented of their sins and were spared.

Genesis 39:9 (**JOSEPH SAW BUT WAS RESTRAINED BY A HOLY FEAR OF GOD**) "There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. **How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"** (See also David's words in Ps 51:4 AFTER he had sinned with Bathsheba).

**See Related Resource** - [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)

2 Timothy 2:22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

**Campbell** - Achan's response was straightforward and complete. He confessed his sin and gave no excuses. But neither did he express sorrow for disobeying God's order, betraying his nation for booty, and causing the defeat of Israel's troops and the death of 36 men. Any remorse he may have felt was probably only because he got caught. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Mattoon** - Achan had five opportunities to repent when you think about it. Five is the number of grace in the Bible. According to verse 16–18, he could have spoken up when these groups were confronted ... Israel, Judah, Zarahites, Zabdi, and Carmi. ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

Achan's response also reminds me of two other less than stellar Old Testament characters...

Exodus 10:16 Then **Pharaoh** hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, '**I have sinned against the LORD your God** and against you.

Numbers 22:34 **Balaam** said to the angel of the LORD, '**I have sinned**, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back."

**Alan Carr** - Some confessed their sins and were forgiven. David – He was confronted with his sins, he confessed afterwards and he was forgiven, 2 Sa 12. So did Nineveh, Jonah 3. What's the difference? David and Nineveh were sincere in their repentance. They were sorry for their sins. Achan was only sorry that he got caught!. This is not God's method for handling sin! God's way is for people to be open and honest about their sins and for them to confess those sins to the Lord, Pr 28:13. God's way is for His people to throw the covers off their sins and tell Him the truth that He already knows. He can bless a person who handles sin the Biblical way. ([Some Things Can't Be Hidden](#))

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GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**20. Indeed I have sinned &c.** The confession, though not made till it was extorted, was finally made with great frankness and



ingenuousness. He recites the circumstances of the act in all their particulars, and with all their aggravations; attempts no excuse or extenuation; complains not of the severity of the sentence, nor seeks to prevent or delay its execution; from which we may indulge the hope, however feeble, that the poor culprit found mercy for his soul.

**Joshua 7:21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."**

- **I saw:** Ge 3:6 6:2 2Sa 11:2 Job 31:1 Ps 119:37 Pr 23:31 28:22 Mt 5:28,29 1Jn 2:15,16
- **beautiful mantle from Shinar** Ge 10:10
- **I coveted:** Ex 20:17 De 7:25 1Ki 21:1,2 2Ki 5:20-27 Hab 2:9 Lu 12:15 Ro 7:7,8 Eph 5:3 Col 3:5 1Ti 6:9,10 Heb 13:5 2Pe 2:15
- **took them:** Pr 4:23 Mic 2:1,2 Jas 1:15
- **they are concealed:** 2Sa 11:6-17 2Ki 5:24,25 Isa 28:15 29:15 Lu 12:2
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Luke 11:34+ (**ACHAN'S EYE WAS BAD**) The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. (NLT = Your eye is a lamp for your body. A pure eye lets sunshine into your soul. But an evil eye shuts out the light and plunges you into darkness.)

Luke 12:2+ (**ACHAN'S FAILED COVERUP**) "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

Colossians 3:5KJV+ (**ACHAN WAS AN IDOLATER!**) Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and **covetousness, which is idolatry:**

James 1:14-16+ But each one is (present tense - continually) tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own **lust** (ENERGIZED BY the [flesh](#)) . 15 Then when **lust** has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. 16 **Do not be deceived** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) = STOP BEING DECEIVED BY YOUR FALLEN FLESH!) my beloved brethren.

**Comment** - Note the pattern - See the "lure" (implied) > Take the bait (AND THE BAIT TAKES YOU!)

Psalms 101:3 (**GOOD ANTIDOTE AGAINST AN "ACHAN" HEART**) I will set no worthless thing before my eyes (INSTEAD PRACTICE Heb 12:2); I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me.

1Ti 6:8-10 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 **But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.** 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and **pierced themselves with many griefs.**

Malachi 3:8+ "Will a man rob God? (**WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT ACHAN DID!**) Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.

Achan Hides Sin

Achan conceals the evidence of his sin

### THE CRUCIAL STEPS OF HIS SIN - SEE - COVET - TAKE - HIDE!

When I **saw** among the spoil ([shalal](#)) a beautiful ([tob](#) - same word used in Ge 3:6 "good for food") mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels (see [Ancient Near East Weights and Volumes](#)) of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I **coveted** them and **took** them; and behold, they are **concealed** in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it- There is probably not a better description of the deceitfulness and seductive effect of sin in all the Bible. **Saw, coveted, took and concealed.** Notice he calls the LORD's goods, "spoil," which normally referred to the booty that a conquering army can could after a



victory. His thinking was already perverted and poised for commission of sin! Had he looked and saw it not as booty but as ban, he may have been less likely to covet. But he basically "lost his mind," (that is the deceitfulness of sin), and completely discounted the warning of a flashing red light saying "Stop!" in Joshua 6:18! He either forgot it, did not believe it or selfishly ignored it!

The eye saw; the heart desired; and the will took.

**Utley** - In the ancient world wealth was accumulated by (1) expensive clothing; (2) weights of precious metal; and (3) food stuffs.

**Carr** remarks that "Had Achan been patient for just a few more days, he could have satisfied his needs and his greeds, Josh. 8:2.! This is where we all get into trouble. We want what we want, and we want it now. We never stop to think that God might have something far better for if we would just patiently wait for His timing." ([Some Things Can't Be Hidden](#))

We see (pun) eye problem surface in the time of Judges (Jdg 21:25)

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right **in his own EYES**.

They are concealed - Achan possessed wealth he could not enjoy because he has to hide it now. The sweetness of sin soured quickly.

Does Achan's confession sound familiar? It should because it goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden and also touched the life of a man after God's own heart...

Genesis 3:6+ When the woman **saw** that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was **desirable** to make one wise, she **took** from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

2 Samuel 11:2-4 Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he **saw** a woman bathing; and the woman was **very beautiful in appearance**.

3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4 David sent messengers and **took** her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.

Achan's confession reminds me of Paul's words on the difference between fleshly remorse and godly sorrow and repentance...

I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but **the sorrow of the world produces death** (AS IT DID WITH ACHAN!). 11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. (2Co 7:9-11+)

**Lewis Smedes** - We would all stay out of a lot of trouble if we always acted where people could see us. Or if we were at least willing for them to see us. Cover-ups are always the strategy of the irresponsible. So one way of testing the responsibility of what we are doing is to ask, "Would I be willing to let people I care about know what I am doing?" (Choices: Making Decisions in a Complex World)

**Alan Carr** makes a fascinating point - Notice this: Achan had things buried in his tent that he could not use! To use them would be to reveal his character to the entire nation of Israel. In other words, Achan sinned and died for nothing! The things he stole were no good to him at all! ([God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

**Francis Schaeffer** has an interesting comment - What Achan took is also instructive. He took two kinds of things. First, he took two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight. We can understand easily why he took something which had monetary value. But he also took a "goodly Babylonish garment." Why did he bother with this? The Hebrew literally calls it "**a mantle of Shinar**." Because Shinar is Babylonia the Authorized Version translates it "Babylonian garment." Babylon was one of the great cities of the world. Babylon became the cultural leader of Mesopotamia. It was the mark of success and power. Anything from Babylon was "chic". . . So this mantle of Shinar was not just an old shepherd's cloak, but a very stylish garment. It marked somebody as being "in," as really being "a man of the world." Achan wanted to be marked with success, to be chic. Achan's sin, then, had two parts: simple theft and prideful desire deep in his heart.

**George Bush** gives a sobering insightful comment - The inward corruption of the heart is first drawn forth by some enticing object. The desire of gratification is then formed, and the determination to attain it fixed. Then comes the act itself, followed by its bitter and fearful consequences. In this instance the temptation entered by the eye; he saw those fine things as Eve saw the forbidden fruit;

and he allowed his eyes to gaze and feast upon the interdicted objects. The sight inflamed his desire; and he coveted them. The next step was to carry out the feeling into act; the desire prompted him to take them, as he actually did, and thus accomplished the fearful deed. So naturally does lust, when it hath conceived, bring forth sin, and sin when finished bringeth forth death. The only way to avoid sin in action is to quench its incipient workings in the heart, to mortify sinful desires, especially the desire of worldly wealth, the source of such untold evils in the world. We are ever in this world surrounded by incitements to sin, but we are to pass in the midst of them, like the Israelites among the spoils of Jericho, under the abiding impression that the interdict of Heaven is upon the least forbidden indulgence. And as the eye is the great inlet to that mischief which works upon the heart, our only safety is in making, with Job, a covenant with our eyes, and continually uttering the prayer of David, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way.'

### "A goodly Babylonish garment" (Josh 7:21KJV)

**TSK - beautiful mantle from Shinar** {Addereth shinar,} "a splendid or costly robe of Shinar," the plain in which Babylon stood. Bochart and Calmet have shewn at large, that Babylonish robes were very splendid, and in high reputation. Calmet says, they are generally allowed to have been of various colours, though some suppose they were woven thus; others, that they were embroidered with the needle; and others, that they were painted. Silius Italicus seems to think they were woven. Martial supposes them to have been embroidered with the needle; and Pliny and Apuleius speak of them as painted. Ge 10:10 \*marg:

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the significance of the land of Shinar in the Bible](#)

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**Spoil** (07998) **shalal** is a masculine noun which means spoils, plunder, booty, all referring to what is taken by force or violence usually in the context of war and taking spoils was sometimes one of the principle motivations for going to war. Military raids were sometimes ill-disguised plundering expeditions, such as the ill-fated Amalekite raid against Ziklag described in 1 Samuel 30:16, 19, 20, 22, 26. Sometimes shalal was seized as an act of political aggression (Esther 3:13; 8:11). Taking plunder or spoil was an act of aggression by the wicked on the weak or righteous (Pr 1:13).

**Coveted** (02530) **chamad/hamad** means to take pleasure in something, and even to lust for it or covet it. This verb focuses not on an external act but on an internal mental activity behind the act, the motivation for it.

**Comment** - Here in Joshua 7:23 the Septuagint uses the verb **enthumeomai** (from **en** = in + **thumos** = mind, thought) which means to ponder or reflect on, deliberate, think about, contemplate, process information by thinking about it carefully. **Liddell-Scott** = to lay to heart, consider well. To think out a thing, form a plan. Only 2 times in Nestle-Aland - Mt 1:20, Mt 9:4. One addition use in Textus Receptus of Acts 10:19 (where NAS has the related word **dienthumeomai**). Uses in the Septuagint - Gen. 6:6; Dt. 21:11; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 7:21 ("**coveted**"); Isa. 10:7; Lam. 2:17 ("what He **purposed**"); Da 1:8 ("Daniel **made up his mind**") -- what a difference between the life of Daniel and the life of Achan -- it all stems from how you begin to **THINK**!

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**Dave Roper** on Achan's response to exposure of his sin - Re Now Achan is found out. I really believe that had he repented earlier, he would have been forgiven. The Scriptures say that if we judge sin in our lives, then we will not have to be judged. But if we do not put to death sin in our life, then sooner or later God, in his mercy, will have to "find us out" in that area. Sin must be brought out into the light. God is committed to bringing us into the fullness of our inheritance in Christ. Anything which impedes that program must be dealt with. So if we do not judge it, he will have to judge it in some other way --not in any eternally condemning way, because that sort of condemnation was paid for when Christ died and rose for us. But he will have to find out the sin. It is interesting to me that throughout this entire process, even through the loss of life, Achan does not respond. This indicates something of the hardness of his heart. He was committed to rebellion. And now these few trinkets are brought out. They are certainly insignificant when compared with the loss of thirty-six of Israel's fine young men. I am certain that Achan now saw the paltriness of those articles.

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### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**21. A goodly Babylonish garment.** Heb. אדרת שׁנר addereth Shinar, a splendid or costly robe of Shinar, rendered 'Babylonish garment,' because Babylon or Babel was situated in the plain of Shinar. Bochart and Calmet have shown at large that Babylonish robes were very splendid and in high repute. Ezek. 23:15. Josephus calls it 'a royal garment woven entirely of gold.' The word signifies such a robe or mantle as princes wore when they appeared in state, Jon. 3:6, and this probably belonged to the king of Jericho.

**Two hundred shekels of silver.** In weight, not in coin. Its value in our currency was a little upwards of one hundred dollars.

**A wedge of gold.** Heb. לשון זהב leshōn zahab, a tongue of gold, i. e. what we understand by an ingot of gold, a corruption, according to A. Clarke, of the word lingot, from the Lat. lingula, signifying a little tongue.

**I coveted them and took them.** The three words occurring in this narrative, **1 saw—I coveted—I took,** strikingly express the rise, progress, and consummation of crime. The whole process is here laid open.

**And the silver under it.** That is, under the Babylonish garment; covered with it, concealed by it, or wrapped up in it.

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#### John G Butler - THE PATH OF EVIL - [Sermon Starters, Volume 1](#)

Joshua 7:21 “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 hid in the earth in the midst of my tent.” (Joshua 7:21).

When Israel warred against Jericho, Achan, one of the Israelite soldiers, made himself quite notorious, by disobeying the orders given by God through Joshua and stole some things in battle. This caused great problems for Israel’s army in their next battle, for they suffered a very humiliating defeat. Joshua was told by God that he should find the culprit and have him confess his evil deed and then punish him. Joshua was successful in ferreting out Achan from among the Israelites and in our text is Achan’s confession, a confession which shows the steps, the way and path of sin. There are four definite steps in this sin of Achan which are duplicated time and time again in every age.

#### FIRST—THE SEEING

“I saw.” Achan’s sin began with seeing. That’s why the Hollywood movie is condemned and that’s why TV needs to be condemned, too. Experts tell us that 85% of our learning comes through the eyes. The eye gate has been used by Satan to cause the down fall of many a soul. The vile effects of movies and TV have been the curse on many. If you do not protect your eye gate, you will defile your life.

#### SECOND—THE COVETING

“I coveted them.” From seeing, Achan went to coveting. His affections for the forbidden were allowed to overcome him. We must guard our affections and not allow them to be set on the things of this world, or we will corrupt our lives. The Apostle Paul said, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). Many tragic romances have occurred because God’s people allowed their affections to be set on the forbidden.

#### THIRD—THE TAKING

“Took them.” The next step in the path of sin is the taking. If we let the eyes dwell on the forbidden and then allow our affections to do the same, the next step will be to take, to embrace. Many folk think that when someone falls into great sin it is a spur-of-the-moment thing. But unfortunately, it is not. The eyes and affections have long betrayed virtue before the outward act of “took them” occurred. There is no unpremeditated crime, for crime is simply the result of the corruption that has been going on in the heart for some time.

#### FOURTH—THE HIDING

“They are hid in the earth.” It is the habit of sin to try to hide it from others. Achan tried to hide his sin, Adam and Eve “hid” after they had sinned (Genesis 3:8). But sin is very hard to hide, in fact it cannot be hid well. “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23) tells us the impossibility of hiding one’s sin for long. God sees all and if He sees our sin, He can reveal it to the world and often does.

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#### The Progression

- Temptation “speaks to us in our heart,” and we choose to enter into a sin.
- Once in, we have two options: We must rationalize what we have done, or see it for what it is and repent.
- The sin (and our Enemy) “speaks” to us, deep in our heart, calling us to go further.
- If we do not resist and repent, we begin to rationalize that we will not be found out, that it is good, that it is not despicable and deadly, etc.
- We run from God so that we will not have to deal with Him, and we lose the fear of the Lord.

- Such self-deceit and rationalizations make us more and more foolish and deceived.
- We now begin down a path that is “not good,” not just a momentary sin. It begins to become habitual.
- We increasingly lose sight of the evil of our sin. It becomes more and more rationalized and more and more acceptable. And we get to places we never, ever dreamed we could go, spiraling downward. ([Life Action Ministry](#))

**Alan Carr** - Allow me to share with you these seven observations concerning sin and its effects in our lives.

1. **God knows about our sins**—Joshua 7:11 (Pr 15:3; Heb. 4:13) We aren’t hiding anything from Him!
2. **God hates our sins**—Joshua 7:11—(Pr. 6:16–19) It offends Him and He will not simply look the other way!
3. **God has a plan for our sins**—Joshua 7:14–15—(1Jn 1:9; Ps. 32:5) He wants us to get honest about our condition. He expects confession and repentance.
4. **God will punish our sins**—Joshua 7:15—(Gal. 6:9) There is **always** a price to pay for rebellion and disobedience!
5. **Sin affects those around us**—Joshua 7:1–12—As I said at the beginning, we cannot sin in a vacuum. Your sins and mine have the ability to drastically lower the spiritual temperature of the church. We are all one body and what affects you affects me! No one sins in a vacuum. Your sins and mine have the ability to drastically lower the spiritual temperature of the church. We are all one body and what affects you affects me and vice versa! Eccl. 9:18, “**one sinner destroys much good.**”
6. **Sin hinders God’s work**—Joshua 7:12—(Mt. 13:58) When we allow sin to rule in our hearts, God will not move among us in freedom and power.
7. **Sin must be dealt with**—Joshua 7:13—Either you and I will deal with our sins, or God will deal with them. Either way, they will be handled!—(1Co 11:31)

Often, the greatest problems faced by the church come from within and not from without. You see, it’s not the water on the outside of the boat that causes the problem, it’s the water on the inside of the boat that causes trouble! The same is true for the church. The world and the devil really can’t do a lot of damage to the church, but you let someone inside the church get out of line and there is a problem! More often than not, when there are defeats and trouble down at the house of God, you can bet that there is someone in the church who is out of God’s will! ([God’s Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

**Alan Carr in another sermon -**

If a business suffers too many losses, it closes its doors. If a company suffers too many losses, it lays off employees. When a church suffers too many losses, people go to Hell! We must have God’s power if we are going to see any spiritual successes! If we are going to have His power, we must be a clean people!

**We should never underestimate the amount of damage one sinner can cause.**

- Abraham nearly lost his wife when he went to Egypt, Gen. 12.
- The boat Jonah was riding in nearly sunk when he ran away from God in disobedience, Jonah 1.
- Seventy thousand people died in Israel because David disobeyed God by numbering the people, 2 Sam. 24.
- One sinner nearly destroyed the church at Corinth, 1 Cor. 5.

You might think your sin is insignificant, but it can ruin your church and sap it of its power. It can devastate your family and leave totally ruin in its wake. It can destroy your life and leave you broken and defeated! III. Eccl. 9:18.

No Christian can sin without affecting other Christians or even lost sinners.

**You can’t grow cold without lowering the temperature of those around you.**

The testimony of the church is reflected in the lives of every believer in the church. [Some Things Can’t Be Hidden](#)

**Seven Steps Of Sin TEXT: Joshua 7:21**

INTRODUCTION:

The story of the progress of sin is the old, old story that is told over and over again. Let us trace these steps of sin:

#### **I. A GLANCE OF LUST**

- A. “I saw”—Joshua 7:21. A wrong look.

#### **II. A GLARE OF GREED**

- A. “I coveted”—Joshua 7:21. A wrong look.

#### **III. A GAME OF SIN**

A. "I took"—Joshua 7:21. A sinful act. The sin follows in natural consequence the first two steps in the progress of wrong doing.

#### IV. A GOAD OF GUILT

A. "I hid"—Joshua 7:21. Sin makes cowards of us all. Sin can only be covered by the blood of Christ, then only after it has been confessed in repentance.

#### V. A GLOOM OF DISCOVERY

A. "Laid them out before the Lord"—Joshua 7:23. Discovery comes ultimately.

Sin may be kept hidden for a time, but eventually it will come out!

#### VI. A GRIEF OF REMORSE

A. "I have sinned against the Lord"—Joshua 7:2.

#### VI. A GRAVE OF DISHONOR

A. "They raised over him a great heap of stones"—Joshua 7:26.

#### CONCLUSION:

This is the usual end of those who disobey the word of the Lord to indulge their own desires.

Joshua 7:22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and **behold**, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it.

- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE TREASURE RECOVERED

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and **behold**, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it - Achan's "[jig is up](#)" now! Here was the evidence that demanded a verdict. Achan's souvenir from Jericho surface! Achan's coveting these worldly things reminds me of the admonition in James 4:4+ and Paul's warnings...

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (aka "Achan"!)

Now these things happened as examples for us, so that **we would not crave evil things as they also craved.....**<sup>11</sup> Now **these things happened to them as an example**, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1Cor 10:6, 11+)

**Utley** - "poured them out before the LORD" This is literally the term "poured," but it can mean "cast" or "to set before" ( Hiphil IMPERFECT).

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GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

22. So Joshua sent messengers. To put to the test the truth of his confession.

**And they ran unto the tent.** Ran, not only to show their alacrity in obeying Joshua's orders, but to show also how uneasy they were till the camp was cleared of the accursed thing, and the Divine favor regained.

**It was hid.** That is, the parcel of things mentioned v. 21, 24

Joshua 7:23 They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the LORD.

- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### STOLEN BOOTY SPREAD OUT BEFORE THE LORD

They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the LORD - ESV - "And they laid them down before the LORD" The stolen items were returned to their Owner.

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**23. Laid them out before the Lord.** Heb. יצקום לפני יהוה yatzikūm liphnē Yehovah, poured them out before the Lord. That is, before the ark of the covenant, the hallowed sign of the Lord's presence, where Joshua and the elders were awaiting the issue of the transaction.

**Joshua 7:24** Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor.

- **took Achan:** Jos 7:1 Job 20:15 Pr 15:27 Ec 5:13 Eze 22:13,14 1Ti 6:9,10
- **his sons:** Jos 6:18,21 Ge 18:25 Ex 20:5 Nu 16:27-31 Job 20:23-28
- **the valley:** Jos 7:26 15:7 Isa 65:10 Ho 2:15
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE INCALCULABLE "COST" OF THREE STOLEN ITEMS

**Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him** - Notice who is missing from the list of the persons on "death row" awaiting execution? Achan's wife! Interesting. Achan's sin could be likened to a cancer and as a pathologist I knew that the best hope for complete cure was complete eradication! The family must have been guilty of sin as knowing accomplices, because of passages like

"Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin. (Deuteronomy 24:16+; see also Nu 16:28-35+)

**And they brought them up to the valley of Achor** - **Achor** is derived from the root ([akar](#)) which means "to disturb, to trouble." It is always used with the word emeq "valley," indicating a geographic location.

**Achor** - 5v in OT - Jos. 7:24; Jos. 7:26; Jos. 15:7; Isa. 65:10; Hos. 2:15

**Bush** - Whilst they learned from his mercies how greatly he was to be loved, they needed also to learn from his judgments how greatly he was to be feared.

**Warren Wiersbe** adds this comment on why [Achan's](#) (means "troubler"! ) entire family was judged by God (Joshua 7:24-26+) - "Since a law in Israel prohibited innocent family members from being punished for the sins of their relatives (Deut. 24:16), **Achan's family must have been guilty of assisting him in his sin.** His household was judged the same way Israel would deal with a Jewish city that had turned to idols (Josh. 13:12-18+). [Achan](#) and his family had turned from the true and living God and had given their hearts to that which God had said was accursed—silver, gold, and an expensive garment. It wasn't worth it!" At the beginning of a new period in Bible history, God sometimes revealed His wrath against sin in some dramatic way. After the tabernacle had been set up, [Nadab](#) and [Abihu](#) invaded its holy precincts contrary to God's law; and God killed them. This was a warning to the priests not to treat God's sanctuary carelessly (Lev. 10+). When David sought to restore the ark to its place of honor, and [Uzzah](#) touched the ark to steady it, God killed [Uzzah](#) (2Sa 6:1-11); another warning from God not to treat sacred things carelessly. At the beginning of the Church Age, when Ananias and Sapphira lied to God and God's people, the Lord killed them (Acts 5:1-11+). The death of Achan and his family was certainly a dramatic warning to the nation not to take the Word of God lightly. The people and the animals were stoned, and their bodies burned along with all that the family possessed. The troubler of Israel was completely removed from the scene, the people were sanctified, and now God could march with His people and give them victory. (See context in [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**24. And his sons and his daughters.** As no intimation is given that Achan's sons or any of his family were accessory to his crime, we are not warranted, perhaps, in supposing that they were now condemned to suffer on that account; although it may be admitted that he could not very easily have concealed the articles in the midst of the tent without some of its inmates being privy to it. But the supposition of their guilt we do not deem necessary to vindicate the equity and justice of the sentence. As all lives are really forfeited by sin; as the ungodly deserve worse punishment than temporal death, and as God, the supreme arbiter of life and death, may exact the debt which all owe in any way or time that seemeth to him good, we know not who can question the righteousness of his



judgment on this occasion. If evil, no injustice would be done them, and if good, they would the sooner be taken to their reward; and we can easily conceive that the death of a few persons at this particular juncture, and under the solemn circumstances in which they now stood, might be attended with the happiest results. They were now in the commencement of their national existence in Canaan. It was necessary that the people should know, by a fresh demonstration, what a God they had to do with. Whilst they learned from his mercies how greatly he was to be loved, they needed also to learn from his judgments how greatly he was to be feared. This lesson would be effectually taught them by the present act of severity, and the death of a single individual might, by its admonitory influence, be the means of afterwards preventing the death of many thousands.

**His oxen, and his asses, and his sheep.** Brute beasts are of course incapable of sin and so of punishment, properly so called, but as they are made for man's use, and are daily killed for food, there seems no impropriety in taking away their lives for moral purposes, to show us more impressively the destructive and detestable nature of sin. The truth is, the animal world being originally formed for the service of man, is to be considered as a kind of appendage to him and so is made to share in his lot, whether of weal or wo. On this principle the earth with its various tribes felt the effects of the curse when Adam sinned, and the whole creation has groaned in bondage ever since. Occurrences like that mentioned in the text are merely illustrations of this general law.

**And they brought them unto the valley of Achor.** Heb. וַיַּאֲלֻּ vayaalū, brought them up, made them go up or ascend. Persons are generally said to descend to a valley, but the phraseology here is probably founded on the relative situation of the valley and the camp. In going to it they may have been obliged to travel some distance over the hilly country, towards the interior. This would be ascending from the Jordan, and that such was the fact is to be inferred from Joshua 15:7. The valley is called Achor by anticipation. It was so named from the event.

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#### **Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) - JOSHUA 7:15, 24—Was God just in punishing Achan's family along with him?**

**PROBLEM:** When Achan committed a capital crime against God, the Bible says the children were stoned along with their parents, and then "they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones" (v. 25). Yet the Scriptures insist that God does not punish the children for the sins of their parent (Ezek. 18:20), nor destroy the righteous with the wicked (Gen. 18:23).

**SOLUTION:** There are two responses to this problem.

Some have argued that Achan's children were not given capital punishment with him, but merely brought along so that the event could be an example to them. In favor of this, several things are offered.

First, it is noted that nowhere does the text say anyone beside Achan committed the crime. God speaks of the guilty as "he who is taken with the accursed thing" (v. 15). Also, Achan confesses alone: "I have sinned" (v. 20) and "I coveted" (v. 21).

Second, the text declares that "Israel stoned him" (v. 25). The reference to "burning them" (v. 25) alludes to the silver, gold, and garment he had taken (see vv. 21 and 24).

Third, stoning Achan's family for his crime would be a clear violation of the OT law which says emphatically that "the son shall not bear the guilt of the father" (Ezek. 18:20).

The most serious problem with this position is that verse 25 says, "they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones." Stoning an inanimate object does not seem to make good sense. Rather, it seems to be a reference to Achan and his family.

Another view acknowledges that Achan's family was stoned with him, but argues that they were complicit with his crime, so they were being punished for their own sins, not his. This position notes the following:

First, it is argued that it is unlikely that Achan could have accomplished this deed and hidden the stolen material in the family tent without their knowing something about it.

Second, the guilt of the family is implied in their very punishment. Since it was forbidden to punish someone for another's sin, the family must have sinned with him or else they would not have been punished with him.

Third, God had the right to take life, since it is He who gave it (Deut. 32:39). Job rightly declared: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

Fourth, there is no reference to small children in the family, but even if there were, God has the sovereign right to take them and sometimes does in sickness without implying their guilt. Further, if the parents were killed, then there would be no parents to care for them. It would be more merciful for God to take them into His direct care. This is so because children who die before the age of accountability are saved (see comments on 2 Sam. 12:23); there is no problem about their eternal destiny.

**Joshua 7:25** Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

- **Why have you troubled** Jos 7:11-13 6:18 Ge 34:30 1Ki 18:17,18 1Ch 2:7 Hab 2:6-9 Ga 5:12 2Th 1:6 Heb 12:15
- **all Israel:** Lev 20:2 24:14 De 13:10 17:5 21:21 22:21-24
- **burned:** Jos 7:15 Ge 38:24 Lev 20:14 21:9
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Proverbs 15:27 He who profits illicitly troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.

Achan Stoned

## JEHOVAH'S DAY OF TROUBLE

**Joshua said, "Why have you troubled ([akar](#)) us?"** - The Septuagint reads "destroyed (olethreuo from [olethros](#)) us, utterly destroyed us ([exolethreuo](#))"

**The LORD will trouble ([akar](#)) you this day."** - This is probably one of the greatest understatements in the Bible!

**And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones** - Not only did they remove their lives, but completely purged all the elements associated with the sin.

Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to stray!  
Cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay!  
Keep you longer than you ever thought you would stay!

**Utley** - Basically there are two Hebrew words for "stone." The first (ragam - Qal IMPERFECT) is used in the beginning of v. 25 and refers to the use of stones for capital punishment. The second term (caqal) is used at the end of v. 25 and means to raise a pile of stones over a dead person and his possessions as a memorial of the crime and its judgment. Obviously Achan was killed, and then he and his possessions were burned (because they were under the ban), and on top of them a great heap of stones was raised.

**Utley** - "burned them with fire" The VERB (BDB 976, KB 1358, Qal IMPERFECT) was used of destroying the golden calf of Exod. 32:20 (cf. Deut. 9:21). It could be used (1) positively (ashes of the Red Heifer), Num. 19:5 and means of sacrifice, Lev. 23:25 (2) negatively (Asherim), Deut. 7:5; 12:3 (see special topic [Fire](#))

**Carr** - When Achan brought that sin into his tent, he brought suffering and affliction upon the people he loved the most in this world. At the end of the day, however, the reason Achan did this was because he loved himself even more than he loved his family. ([Some Things Can't Be Hidden](#))

**Bush on stoned them with stones** - This was the punishment ordained for blasphemers and presumptuous offenders, Nu 15:30, 35. We do read that Achan verbally blasphemed, but all high-handed, deliberate transgression is virtual blasphemy, and is so regarded in the judgment of heaven.

**Trouble** (Lxx = ektribo = rub out, destroy, ruin) ([05916](#)) **akar** is a verb meaning to cause trouble, stir up resentment, cause hatred. It usually describes the trouble brought upon one from another person. The first use is by Jacob addressing his sons Simeon and Levi declaring "You have brought **trouble** (Lxx = [miseo](#) = to be hated) on me." (By killing Hamor and his son Shechem who had defiled their sister Dinah - Ge 34:26-27). (Ge 34:30) In Pr 11:17 "the cruel man does himself **harm** (Lxx = exollumi - to destroy utterly in the present tense = continually destroys himself!)" In Pr 11:29 Solomon warns that "He who **troubles** his own house will inherit wind," which "refers to actions which make life difficult for one's family." His reward is "empty air," nothing that can be grasped, nothing he can put his hands on. In 1Sa 14:29 Jonathan (son of Saul) declared that Saul had "**troubled** the land" by telling the soldiers none could eat food (1Sa 14:28) Ahab called Elijah a "**troubler** of Israel." (1Ki 18:17, 18).

13x bring trouble(1), brought trouble(1), does...harm(1), grew worse(1), trouble(3), troubled(3), troubler(2), troubles(2). - Gen. 34:30; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 7:25; Jdg. 11:35; 1 Sam. 14:29; 1 Ki. 18:17; 1 Ki. 18:18; 1 Chr. 2:7; Ps. 39:2; Prov. 11:17; Prov. 11:29; Prov. 15:6; Prov. 15:27

## QUESTION - [Why did God judge the sin of Achan so severely](#)

**ANSWER** - The story of Achan's sin and God's punishment is found in Joshua 7. [Achan](#) was an Israelite who fought the battle of Jericho with Joshua. God had commanded the Israelites to destroy the entire city of Jericho because of its great sin. Only [Rahab the harlot](#) and her household were spared because she had hidden the Israelite spies (Joshua 6:17). God further commanded that, unlike most victories when soldiers were allowed to take the spoils, the Israelites were to take nothing from Jericho. Everything in it was "[accursed](#)" or "devoted to destruction." God warned that anyone taking spoils from Jericho would "make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it" (Joshua 6:18-19). The Israelites obeyed, except for Achan, who stole a beautiful robe and some gold and silver and hid these things in his tent.

His sin was discovered, of course (Numbers 32:23). God commanded that Achan and his entire family and all his possessions be destroyed, a punishment that seems overly harsh to us today. How are we to understand this dire act of God? There are several reasons for the severe penalty God inflicted upon Achan. For one thing, Achan's sin affected the entire nation of Israel. In Joshua 7:1 God says that "the Israelites" acted unfaithfully and that His anger burned "against Israel." The nation as a whole was in a covenant relationship with God and, when one member transgressed that covenant, the entire nation's relationship with Him was damaged. Achan's sin defiled the other members of the community as well as himself. A similar situation is seen in the sin of Adam and Eve and its effect on the whole of mankind. Adam and Eve's rebellion destroyed the perfect communion the human race would have enjoyed with God.

Further, Achan's sin caused God's blessing upon the Israelites to be withheld in their subsequent battle against the city of [Ai](#), and the Israelites "were routed by the men of Ai, who killed about thirty-six of them" (Joshua 7:4-5). Thirty-six innocent men died because of Achan's sin. He stole that which was "devoted to destruction" and so brought destruction on others. God explained to Joshua, "That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction" (Joshua 7:12; see also 22:20). We fool ourselves if we think that our sin affects only us. Disobedience brings ruin even upon the innocent. Sin's effects go beyond the initial sinner.

Also, the gold and silver Achan stole was stolen from God Himself. The precious metals were to be added to the treasury of the Lord, and, in stealing them, Achan robbed God directly. Achan's disobedience was also an insult to God's holiness and His right to command His people in the manner He sees fit. Even so, God gave Achan a night to consider his sin and come to Him in repentance (Joshua 7:13). Achan did not avail himself of God's mercy and patience, however. The gold and silver Achan coveted had a stronger pull on his allegiance. Is it any wonder that, in the face of such insult, God would choose to destroy him?

But why, we might ask, did God destroy Achan's family as well? The Bible doesn't give us God's exact reasons for destroying Achan's family, although Proverbs 15:27 does say that "a greedy man brings trouble to his family." In the case of Achan, all we can do is speculate. Perhaps it was an object lesson to the rest of the nation, a lesson they learned after Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16) but which needed to be reinforced. Perhaps Achan's children had already begun to exhibit their father's traits of covetousness, disobedience, and disrespect for God's commands. Most likely, they had actually helped Achan hide the stuff and were, in fact, accomplices to the crime.

There is no way to know all of God's reasons for what seems to us His harsh punishment of Achan and his family. He doesn't always explain His reasoning to us, nor does He have to. The story of Achan and many other biblical narratives give us sufficient information to understand that God is holy and that He is not to be disobeyed without risking dire consequences. [Gotquestions.org](#)

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**25. Why hast thou troubled us?** the Lord shall trouble thee this day. This is said in allusion to the words of the warning, ch. 4:18, 'Lest ye make the camp of Israel a curse and trouble it.' From this circumstance his name Achan seems to have been changed to Achar, trouble, i. e. troubler. 1 Chron. 2:7. See on ch. 6:18. How strikingly did Achan's conduct verify the saying of Solomon, Prov. 15:27, 'He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house;' and how clear from this instance, is it that sin is a very troublesome, as well as a very wicked thing, and that not only to the sinner himself, but to all around him. When Ahab met Elijah, he cried, in the consciousness of his own offences, 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?' 'I have not troubled Israel,' answered the indignant prophet, 'but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord.' such was virtually the language of Joshua to Achan on this occasion.

**And all Israel stoned him with stones.** The burning therefore commanded, v. 15, must have reference to the dead body. He was first stoned, and his carcase then consigned to the flames, himself and all his sharing the same fate. 'He perished not alone in his iniquity.' The punishment is said to have been executed by 'all Israel,' not because every individual without exception had a hand in it, but because all were present as spectators, all were consenting to the act, and as many as could be were active agents in it in the name of the rest. This showed the universal detestation of the deed, and their anxiety to avert from them the Divine displeasure.

**Doug Goins** - Let me say this in conclusion about the story. The temptation to sin is an ever - present danger in the life of every Christian. At the heart of the story of Achan and Ai is this crucial spiritual issue: Sin will either master us, or we will master sin. The Lord himself first said this in Genesis 4 in the story of Cain and Abel. God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but he did not accept Cain's, because Cain's heart was not right. Cain grew to hate his brother. So God showed up and confronted Cain: "Sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Ge 4:7). In essence, sin is like a lion waiting to devour you. It will control you and destroy you unless you gain mastery over it. God also promised Cain in that passage that if he did master the sin, he would be lifted up; he would have God's resources. In Romans 6:15-23 Paul says that we were created to be slaves, to be mastered by something, either sin, which leads to death, or obedience to Christ, which leads to righteousness. We gain mastery over sin by obeying Jesus.

There cannot be any ground of neutrality toward sin for us. Our problem is that we don't believe that. We think that we can play with sin just a little, with just certain sins -nice, agreeable, likable, pleasurable sins that won't really hurt anybody. We think that we can keep sin under control, limit its influence or our involvement. But we don't realize that in reality we will fall under its control little by little, and it will master us. . .

The Valley of Achor in the memory of the nation Israel became a proverbial expression for the good results of discipline in the life of the people.

Israel went on from the Valley of Achor to conquer Ai. We'll see that in chapter 8. And then it took only seven short years to complete the conquest of Canaan. Continuing victory grew out of the difficult experience they had at Ai and then at Achor. What appeared to be a great disaster was a learning experience for the whole nation. In Hosea's words, it became a door of hope, a door of expectation. They entered into a renewed relationship with God.

**Joshua 7:26 They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day.**

- **raised:** Jos 8:29 10:27 2Sa 18:17 La 3:53
- **the Lord:** De 13:17 2Sa 21:14 Isa 40:2 Joe 2:13,18 Joh 3:9,10 Zec 6:8
- **The valley:** Jos 7:24 Isa 65:10 Ho 2:15
- **Achor:** Jos 7:25
- [Joshua 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Joshua 8:29 (**ACHAN'S "BURIAL" WAS LIKE A PAGAN KING!**) He hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at sunset Joshua gave command and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the city gate, and **raised over it a great heap of stones that stands to this day.**

2 Samuel 18:17 They took Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest and **erected over him a very great heap of stones.** And all Israel fled, each to his tent.

Isaiah 65:10 (**IN THE FUTURE ACHOR WILL BE ASSOCIATED WITH A NEW BEGINNING**) "Sharon will be a pasture land for flocks, And the valley of Achor a resting place for herds, For My people who seek Me.

Hosea 2:15 "Then I will give her her vineyards from there, And the valley of **Achor as a door of hope.** And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

### A HISTORICAL MARKER

**They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day** - It is a bit ironic that a heap of stones would stand as a reminder of a sin purged by stoning. How would you like to be "memorialized" like Achan by a pile of rocks? Or more to the point, what legacy are you leaving? Are you making disciples which was the only command in Mt 28:19+? [Play and ponder](#) Steve Green's sobering vocal version of [Find Us Faithful](#).

**Alan Carr** remarks that "The tower of stones stood as a reminder to all who passed by that a criminal was buried there. It was common as late as the 1800's for passersby to throw stones on the graves of criminals, thus adding continually to the heap of stones over the grave!"([Some Things Can't Be Hidden](#))

**Rod Mattoon** - A heap of stones was raised up over them for a memorial and a reminder of the consequences of sin. Passer by's would throw rocks on the heap year after year to show their hatred of the crime. Why was this so severe? The Jews are at a beginning of a new period in Bible history. God would sometimes reveal His wrath against sin in some dramatic way. When the Tabernacle was erected, Nadab and Abihu invaded holy precincts contrary to God's law. Leviticus chapter ten warns that you don't treat the sanctuary carelessly. David tried to restore the Ark to a place of honor. Uzzah touched the Ark to steady it and God killed Uzzah. (2 Samuel 6:1–11) In the Church Age ... Ananias and Sapphira lied to God and His people and they were smitten by the Lord (Acts 5). ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

**And the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger-** The consecration, confession and completion of the punishment propitiated or satisfied Jehovah.

**Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day-** A heap of stones and this name would serve thereafter as poignant reminders of the danger of stealing from the Lord. Achor means "trouble" conveying the idea "to stir up" and here is a poignant reminder of sin which stirs up troubling waters! If you are going to sin, you need to know that you are headed for trouble (Pr 13:15)!

**Utley** - "**called the Valley of Achor**" This means "the valley of trouble" (BDB 770 CONSTRUCT 747) and refers to the fact that one man's sin brought failure, reproach, and condemnation to the entire nation. However, this same valley is mentioned in Isa. 65:10 and Hos. 2:15 as a source of hope.

**Alan Carr** - Joshua 7:25-26 give us the sad conclusion to this tragic tale. Achan and all that he had were taken out and stoned to death by the people of Israel. It didn't have to end this way! However, these verses demonstrate the horrible end that all sinners who refuse to repent will come to. The name of the valley is called "Achor". This word means trouble. If you are going to sin, you need to know that you are headed for trouble, Pr 13:15. If you are God's child, and you have unconfessed, unrepented of sin in your heart and life, you need to know that your life can be a hindrance to this church. You also need to know that God will chasten you to bring you back in line with His will, Rev. 3:19. My advice to you is that you need to get right with God this morning! God knows what it will take to touch your heart, and He isn't afraid to touch that heartstring if He knows it will bring you to repentance. Years later, the prophet Hosea mentioned this same valley. He said, "And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the **valley of Achor** for a **door of hope**: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." (Hosea 2:15) The promise is that this **place of trouble** could become a **door of hope**. It will be when Israel returns to the Promised Land during the reign of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The same is true concerning your sins. If you will come to the Lord this morning, those sins that are going to cause you lots of trouble can be taken care of. This altar can literally become a door of hope for you right now, if you will come to Jesus for the cleansing you need. If you have an Achan kind of heart this morning, there is help in Jesus if you will come to Him.

Some Things Can't Be Hidden! If you have an [Achan heart](#),  
God has the cure.  
If you have sin hidden in your life,  
the Lord can forgive you and restore you for His glory.  
([God's Prescription For An Achan Heart](#))

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#### QUESTION - [What is the significance of the Valley of Achor in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Valley of Achor, situated northwest of Jericho on the northern border of the tribe of Judah, is the place where the Israelites executed [Achan](#) and his household. *Achor* means "trouble," "affliction," or "taboo" and implies a severe kind of trouble. To understand how the "Valley of Trouble" received its name, we turn to the book of Joshua and the story of Achan's sin.

After Israel experienced a great victory at the battle of Jericho, Achan, a member of the tribe of Judah, directly disobeyed the Lord's command and kept some of the spoils from Jericho for himself. God had ordered all the spoils to be consecrated to the Lord (Joshua 6:17–19).

Next Israel fought against Ai, a much weaker city than Jericho, but the battle ended in terrible humiliation and defeat (Joshua 7:2–5). The Lord revealed to Joshua the reason Israel had lost the battle: God's anger had been provoked because of Achan's act of disobedience (Joshua 7:10–23). Achan, "the troubler of Israel," brought trouble on the whole nation: "Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions" (Verse 11).

Israel stood guilty before God because of the sin of Achan. Only one person had acted in disobedience, but all Israel was held responsible. Why would God fault the whole nation for the transgression of one man? Because Israel was one people in the Lord.

Today, God's children are one body in Jesus Christ. We belong to each other, we need each other, and our actions affect one another (1 Corinthians 12:12). Achan's sin had a profound impact on the whole community as our sin today affects the entire body of Christ.

Achan's crime was the first recorded act of disobedience after Israel had crossed the Jordan, and his death was the first divinely commanded punishment in the new land. God made it clear that corruption in His family is damaging and disastrous. He would not tolerate disobedience. The sin had to be identified, judged, and purged, and the [punishment](#) in the Valley of Achor was severe.

Achan and his family were stoned to death and burned in the Valley of Achor: "Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold bar, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. Joshua said, 'Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today.' Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since" (Joshua 7:24–26).

Once Achan's sin had been dealt with, the Lord turned from His anger, and the people were restored to His favor. Later, the Valley of Achor, the scene of Israel's trouble, is called "a door of hope" to the future restored nation: "There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt" (Hosea 2:15).

When communion with the Lord is restored, there is hope for the future. The troubles of the past are reversed and replaced with blessings: "Sharon will become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a resting place for herds, for my people who seek me" (Isaiah 65:10). [Gotquestions.org](http://Gotquestions.org)

#### Related Resources:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Achor](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Achor](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Achor](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Achor](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Achor](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Achor](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Achor](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Achor](#)

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 7](#)

**26. Raised over him a great heap of stones.** As a monument to perpetuate the memory of this transaction, and to serve as a warning to all future generations to beware of presumptuous sin. The burying place of Absalom was distinguished by a similar erection, as a monument of his disgrace to future ages. 2 Sam. 18:17.

**Unto this day.** That is, that remaineth unto this day. In a parallel passage, ch. 8:29, the supplementary words 'that remaineth' are inserted in the text.

**Was called the valley of Achor.** Or, Heb. עמק עכור *ēmak akōr*, the valley of trouble, from the event. In Hos. 2:15, the valley of Achor is said to be given to Israel as a 'door of hope,' in allusion to the transaction that now occurred here, and implying, perhaps, that when they had repented and put away the accursed thing, then there would begin to be a door of hope concerning them, and that the very places, which had before been the scenes of troublesome judgments and the memorials of wrath, should henceforth become only the mementos of the most signal mercies. Compare Ezra 10:2. Where sin is seen and lamented, and decisive steps taken towards reformation, there are tokens for good, and even gross offenders may receive encouragement. God is always pleased to have the monuments of his displeasure converted, by the conversion of sinners, into the remembrancers of kindness.—From the foregoing narrative we may deduce the following reflections.

##### (1) The deceitfulness of sin.

Achan, at first, had in mind only the satisfaction he should feel in possessing the Babylonish garment and the wedge and shekels of gold and silver. The ideas of shame and remorse and misery were hid from him. But ah! with what different thoughts did he contemplate his gains, when inquisition was made to discover the offender! How would he begin to tremble when he saw that his own tribe was selected as containing the guilty person! How would his terror be increased when he saw his own family pointed out! and what dread would seize upon him when the lot fell upon his household! What a paleness would spread over his cheeks, and what a



trembling would take hold of his limbs! What now becomes of all his expected enjoyments? What beauty does he now see in the splendid garment, or what value in the shining metals? Ah! could he but recall the act, which has thus brought him to shame and ruin! But it is too late! The deed is done, and the sense of guilt, as with the fangs of a serpent, has fastened itself upon his inmost spirit! Thus too with the transgressor of every name. The thief, the adulterer, the seducer, in the commission of crime, thinks only of the pleasure the gratification of his lusts will afford. But he has no sooner attained his object than his before blinded eyes are opened, and the enormity of his sin stares him full in the face. Then he finds that it stings like a serpent and bites like an adder.

## **(2) The certainty of its exposure.**

Achan took great precautions to conceal his iniquity, but it was unavailing. Men may hide their wickedness from their fellow men, but not from God. His providence will sooner or later bring the hidden iniquity to the light, and for the most part in this world. But certainly in the great day of the revelation of all things. To every sinner therefore may the solemn warning be addressed, 'Be sure your sin will find you out.'

## **(3) The awfulness of its reward.**

Who does not shudder at the thought of that vengeance which was executed on Achan and his family? Who does not see how fierce the indignation of God against sin was, when the sin of one single person prevailed more to provoke him against the whole nation, than the innocence of the whole did to pacify his wrath against the individual; when in fact nothing but the most signal punishment of the individual could reconcile him to the nation to which he belonged? Yet was all this but a faint shadow of the indignation which he will manifest in a future world. We should profit from such a history as this. We should learn to dread the displeasure of the Almighty, and to glorify him now by an ingenuous confession, that he may not be glorified hereafter in our eternal condemnation.

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### **Adrian Rogers - excerpt from his sermon "The Key to Unbroken Victory" - Joshua 7**

The very first thing, the very first principle, I want to lay on your heart is this: that great victories may be and are often followed by great defeats—great victories are often followed by great defeats.

Now, what caused this defeat? Well, there were two that sinned that day—two categories: There was Israel itself. And then, there was this man in specificity, whose name was Achan.

#### **A. Israel's Sin: Carelessness**

Now, what caused Israel's sin? Well, look, if you will, in this passage of Scripture, and you're going to find out that Israel's sin was carelessness—are you listening?—just sheer carelessness. Now, how was their carelessness shown?

##### **1. Pride**

Well, first of all, when they went out to conquer and they looked at Ai, they said, "Hey, we don't need to pray. We don't need to find God's will. We don't need a spiritual plan. We have done it before, and we can do it again. You don't need to send a whole army, Josh; just send a handful. Send two—maybe three—thousand, because they are insignificant, and we can do it." You can see here that there was pride in their hearts. And the Bible teaches—does it not?—that pride goes before destruction. So, first of all, there was pride. I wonder if today God has blessed you; spiritually, you're coasting. You say, "Well, God has given me a blessing yesterday; God has helped me yesterday. I did this yesterday, and so I can do it today." "Pride goeth before destruction." (Proverbs 16:18)

##### **2. Presumption**

And the child of pride is what? Presumption. They presumed that God was with them. They never stopped to check; they never looked. They never sought out to see if there was any unconfessed, unrepented-of sin in the camp. After pride comes presumption.

##### **3. Prayerlessness**

And if the child of pride is presumption, what is the grandchild of pride? Prayerlessness—they didn't pray. We're going to find out later that Joshua prayed. He prayed after he got in trouble; he prayed a whole lot. And God said, "Joshua, get up: you're wasting your breath. Why are you praying to me now?" I wonder today if there are some of you who are about to fall—and you've been great Christians—because now you're coasting, now you're filled with pride. You think you are a wonderful, Spirit-filled, godly person, because you can look back to a string of victories. And now you're presuming that everything in the future is going to be just like it was in the past. And you've stopped praying. You've stopped seeking the face of God. You've stopped asking God to guide you and

lead you. And you are guilty of the same three things that Israel was guilty of when little Ai defeated them: pride, presumption, and prayerlessness.

## **B. Achan's Sin: Covetousness**

All right now, what about this man, Achan, that I just described a little while ago? We said that the sin of Israel was carelessness. What was the sin of Achan? His sin was covetousness. And that also is something that will cause you to fall and to stumble: when you're not satisfied with the lot that God has given you, when you want that which does not belong to you. Nothing wrong with having gold, or silver, or a Babylonian garment, except when it's something that belongs to Almighty God and you are coveting that which belongs to Almighty God.

Look, if you will, beginning in verse 19 here of this passage of Scripture: "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:"—now, watch this—"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." (Joshua 7:19–21) Now, just underscore that. If carelessness was Israel's sin, covetousness was Achan's sin. He said, "I saw these things, and I coveted them."

What is covetousness? You know, you never hear anybody confess the sin of covetousness, and yet it was the sin that brought the great Apostle Paul to his knees before God and showed him the wickedness of his heart. What is covetousness? It is an unlawful desire that grows in the soil of an unsatisfied heart, a heart that is not finding what we've been singing about—what this trio just sang about: the glory of His presence. And we're thinking now that we need something else to satisfy us, something else to make us whole, something else to give us joy; and covetousness becomes an octopus that comes around our souls and cannot be shaken off. The Bible calls it in the New Testament "the love of the world." And the Bible says in 1 John chapter 2, verses 15 and 16, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)

Now, notice it doesn't say that the love of the Father is not in you because you love the world; it's just opposite of that. If you love the world, it is because the love of the Father is not in you. That's the reason that I said covetousness is an unsatisfied, unlawful desire that grows in the soil of an unsatisfied heart. The things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of God's glory and God's grace. And I can tell you that both Israel as a nation, and Achan as an individual, had taken their eyes from the Lord. With Israel, it was pride, presumption, and prayerlessness. With Achan, it was covetousness. And I want you to see the evolution of this sin.

### **1. He Saw**

Listen to this man as he's confessing now, and look in verse 21. First of all, what's the first step? "I saw." Look at it: "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment ..." (Joshua 7:21) You see, he saw something that he ought not to have been looking at. Now, had he been in the right place, he would never have been looking at all of that at that time. Many of you are going to get in trouble simply because of what you have put before your eyes. Some of you men are staying up late at night watching ungodliness on television while your wife has already gone to bed. Some of you businessmen are looking at things in a hotel room that you have absolutely no business looking at. Some of you are watching things now in cybersex on the Internet that you have absolutely no business looking at. You say, "Well, I just want to see." You feed your mind on these dirty movies and filthy magazines, you get your recreation in a nightclub atmosphere, and you're setting yourself up for a fall.

### **2. He Coveted**

Now, notice, first of all, he said, "I saw." Then, look at this thing. He said, "I coveted." Now, a desire—an unlawful desire—is beginning to build in his heart. This octopus is beginning to wrap its tentacles around his soul. This was the time when he should have confessed. This was the time when he should have said, "O God, there's something growing in my heart that is wrong. It's unclean; it's impure." But he doesn't do this. You see, Achan was a thief in his heart, first. A man is not a thief because he steals; he steals because he's a thief. It began in his heart. "Out of the heart these things come." (Matthew 15:18) It is covetousness that the Bible calls idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

### **3. He Took**

Now, watch this: "I saw"; "I coveted." Now, watch: "I ... took." Do you see that? He probably never would have thought at another time he would have done such a thing. There are some of you who feel, "I would never do such a thing." You put yourself in that situation; you begin to look at unlawful things; you begin to let that thing brood in your heart until it becomes covetousness, and then at that moment when that opportunity comes, you're going to take it.

Remember what I told you sin was? An undetected weakness, an unexpected opportunity, and an unprotected life—an undetected weakness, an unexpected opportunity, an unprotected life. Here he was—he had an undetected weakness: he was not satisfied with

the things of God. An unexpected opportunity: "There it was; I saw it." An unprotected life: he was not praying; he was not seeking God's covering. And so, "I saw." "I coveted." "I took."

#### 4. He Covered It Up

And now, continue to read this. Look at it again. And he said, "And I coveted them. I took them"—"and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it"—"I hid." This is the worst thing of all. The next step is to hide; to cover it up; to say it never happened.

There are some of you right now who don't want to think about what I'm talking about, because in your heart, in your life, in your tent, there's buried some unclean thing. And the worst thing of all is to hide it, to deny it, to alibi, to excuse, to keep it hidden. So he digs down into his tent and he hides it and smoothes the dirt over it. Are you trying to do that today? Is there in your life an unconfessed, unrepented-of sin that is hidden? I'm telling you that Achan could not have dug deep enough into the molten core of this earth to hide that sin. And yet he tried—and yet he tried.

Now, put it down: Many times your greatest defeats are going to come after your greatest victories if you begin to coast and take your eyes off the Lord, and get presumptuous, or fail to be satisfied with God.

## II. Private Sin Is Never Really Private

Here's the second principle—the second principle is this: that private sin is never really private—private sin is never really private. Now, the Bible called this thing that Achan did "the accursed thing." Why? Because the curse of God is upon sin, and sin that is hidden will bring you to ruin; it will keep you from victory—that unbroken victory that God wants you to have. But now, listen to me very carefully: If you are bound to sin, you're bound to suffer. Just as surely as you put your uncovered hand on a hot stove, you're going to be burned. If you're bound to sin, you're bound to suffer. But you will not suffer alone. The Bible says, "No man lives unto himself, and no man dies unto himself." (Romans 14:7) **Your sin, my friend, will affect other people. Private sin is never really private.**

### A. Sin Brings Dishonor to God

Let me show you what Achan's sin did. Look, if you will, in verses 8 and 9 of this same chapter. Joshua is praying and he says, "O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and shall cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" (Joshua 7:8–9) Joshua said, "Look, we're defeated; O God, disgrace to your name!" Do you care about the name of your God? I had rather die by torture than to bring disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ. If there's hidden sin in your life, you're going to cause the people of God to stumble and to fall, and you're going to bring disgrace to Almighty God. That's the reason that David prayed. He said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." (Psalm 51:4)

I think, Brother Jim, about the scandals that were in the church with some they call televangelists. Can you imagine how much fodder that was for the late-night obscene talk-show people as they laughed and joked and ridiculed the things of God, and the name of our great God was dragged through the dust and the mire and the filth because of hidden sin?

### B. Sin Brings Defeat to Your Brother

What does it do? Friend, I want to tell you, it brings dishonor to God. But I'll tell you what else it does: It brings defeat to your brothers. Look, if you will, in verse 12 of this same chapter: "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed." (Joshua 7:12) You see, don't tell me it's none of my business what you do, and I can't tell you it's none of my business what I do. Folks, we are in this together. And when your heart is not right with God, when there's unconfessed, unrepented-of sin in your heart and in your life, not only do you dishonor God and bring dishonor to God; you bring defeat to your brothers and your sisters. The Bible says, "When one member suffers, every member suffers with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26) One drop of poison hurts the whole body.

### C. Sin Brings Disgrace to Your Family

I'll tell you what else he did: Not only did he bring dishonor to God; not only did he bring defeat to his brothers; he brought disgrace to his family. Notice in chapter 7, verse 1: "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing:"—that's the entire nation; but watch this—"for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing." (Joshua 7:1) Do you see how his family's dragged into this thing? I'm not a perfect man, but I would hate to bring disgrace to my parents, and I would hate to bring disgrace to my children. But here was a man who sinned. He might have thought, "I'm doing this all by myself," but he dishonored God; "I'm doing this all for myself," but his brothers were defeated; "I'm doing this all to myself," but he disgraced his family. Some of you are giving your dad gray hairs. Some of you are pinching wrinkles into your mother's face. Some of you kids, some of you teenagers, there's sin in your life, and you're disgracing your parents. Your mother, your dad, would

die for you, and yet you've got this sin in your heart and in your life.

#### **D. Sin Brings Destruction to Your Loved Ones**

I'll tell you what else it did: It brought destruction to his loved ones. Look, if you will, in verses 24 and 25: "And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." (Joshua 7:24–25) Not just the man, but his sons, his daughters, his wife: they're all stoned and burned with fire.

You say, "That's not fair! That's not right!" Well, you see, what happened is, he corrupted his family. Where did he hide this? Not outside the tent; in the tent. They had become partakers of this crime, and now his children are destroyed because of his lie. And, mister, if you go to hell, that's one thing; but God have mercy upon you if you drag your sons and daughters into hell, too, because of your sin! Hidden sin—wicked sin, vile sin—destroys loved ones.

A soul winner was going out to speak to a man about Jesus Christ. That man was a man like so many modern sophisticates today. He was in the living room; he was acting icily nice to that man who was witnessing for Jesus, and he was, you know, coy as some people. If you've ever witnessed much, you can see this man in your mind's eye. He just said to the man, "Well, thank you. I appreciate your coming. Thank you for giving us those things to consider. Good day. We may come down there to the church sometime," and so forth. A little guy who had not yet even started into school was watching this whole episode. The father was not even aware that the little boy was watching. He saw his dad and saw the soul winner and all of that. He saw the soul winner with his shoulders humped over, walking out in seeming defeat. That little boy jumped up into his daddy's lap, rubbed his daddy's beard, and said, as he looked into his daddy's face, "Dad, we don't want to be an old Christian, do we?"—"Dad, we don't want to be an old Christian, do we?" They can read you like a book. They know what's important to you.

Here was a man that drug so much down with him. Your greatest defeats may come after your greatest victories, when you get careless and dissatisfied. I'll tell you something else: Private sin is never private. None of us live to ourselves; none of us die to ourselves.

#### **III. Every Sin That You Cover, God Will Uncover**

Here's the third thing—and I want you to listen very carefully to me, dear friend: Every sin that you cover, God will uncover. Have you got it? Every sin that you cover, God will uncover. Look, if you will now, in verse 16 of this same chapter here. And the Bible says, "So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: and he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarahites: and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: and he brought the household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." (Joshua 7:16–19)

Now, if one sin goes uncovered, Satan has conquered. Listen to me: Every sin that you cover, God will uncover. There is the ultimate revelation of that sin—the ultimate confession of that sin—when Joshua said, "Give glory to God. Now, confess." (Joshua 7:21) He wasn't giving glory to God so that he could get mercy; he didn't get mercy—he didn't get any mercy. He was stoned. And yet Joshua said, "Confess it; give glory to God." Did you know that every sin you cover will be uncovered to the glory of God? Every sin you cover will be uncovered to the glory of God. You know, that's what the Bible says: "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God." (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10–11) One of these days, if God does not get glory in mercy, God will give glory in judgment. Are you listening? Every sin that you cover, God will uncover; and that which is done in secret will be shouted from the rooftop. Things that you've done in your bedroom, things you've done on business trips, things that you have done that you think nobody knows about—one of these days, it will be totally revealed. Everything you cover, God will uncover.

Can you imagine: "Give glory to God"? I can see Judas as he stands before the Lord: "Judas, you denied Him. You sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Deny Him now." I can see the blasphemer. Those of you who take God's name in vain and curse Him, I wonder when you stand before Jesus Christ, will you curse Him to His face? Those of you who have made your obscene jokes, you blasphemers; those of you who may be listening on this television program as a joke—you don't even know what you're tuned to—when you stand before Him, your obscene jokes are not going to be so funny. You're going to meet the Lord. I'm telling you, "Every knee shall bow ... and every tongue shall confess."

There is the ultimate revelation of that sin, the ultimate confession of that sin, and the ultimate retribution of that sin. Here was a man who was judged, who was stoned, who was put to death: "For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23) "The soul that sinneth, it shall [surely] die." (Ezekiel 18:4, Ezekiel 18:20) And if any sin—one-half of one sin—ever goes by unpunished, Satan will have

won.

#### IV. Every Sin That You Uncover, God Will Cover

I must go to the last and final principle very quickly. I've given you four. Your greatest defeats may come after your greatest victories. Private sin is never really private. Every sin that you endeavor to cover, God will uncover. That which is done in secret shall be shouted from the housetop. A newspaper had this motto: "If you don't want it printed, don't let it happen." Now, here's the final thing—and I love this: Every sin that you uncover, God will cover—every sin that you uncover, God will cover.

I want you to imagine a scene that did not happen. I want you to see Achan as he plants all of that in his tent there and covers it up, rolls out his bed mat over it, and tries to sleep, and then he says, "My God, what have I done? How could I have been so foolish? Wife, wake up! Children, get up! Pray! Look what we've done! How could we do such a thing? Dig it up! Give it to me! Where's Joshua's tent? Joshua, get up! Get up! Joshua, Joshua, let me tell you what I've done! Oh, Joshua, I was a fool! God said not to do this, but I've done it! Joshua, here's the silver. Joshua, here's the gold. Here's the garment. Pray for me, Joshua. I've sinned against God. Pray for me, Joshua. I've sinned against God. Joshua, let's get an animal. Let's make a blood sacrifice. I need to be forgiven."

Let me tell you what the Bible says in the book of Proverbs—and listen carefully: "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Proverbs 28:13) Would God have forgiven him? Absolutely! "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Justice is God giving us what we deserve; mercy is God not giving us what we deserve. We don't need justice; we need mercy. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Now, let's come back to where we started. I said to you, unbroken victory is God's plan for you. The key to unbroken victory is not perfection; it is continual, perpetual confession; keeping your heart right, where there is no unconfessed sin, no private sin, no buried sin.

#### Conclusion

I'm going to give you a testimony—you might think I'm bragging, but in my heart there's no hidden sin. You see, I would be a sheer fool to try to minister and preach with sin in my heart. I'd hurt you. I would hurt this church. I would hurt my family. I would hurt my parents. I would hurt my children. I would disgrace my God. But when we walk in the light as He is in the light, God blesses us. Your greatest failure may come after your greatest victories. Private sin is never really private. What you cover, God will uncover; but what you uncover, God will cover. And that's the reason Paul says in Romans chapter 4, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." (Romans 4:7) "Whose sins are covered." How? By the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

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#### F B Meyer The Valley of Achor (JOSHUA 7)

"No cloud across the sun  
But passes at the last, and gives us back  
The face of God once more."  
KINGSLEY.

WAS it a sudden gust of temptation that swept Achan before it when, with the rest of the host, he entered Jericho? or was it that some long growth of unjudged evil flowered into that act which has made his name a reproach to all after-time? It is impossible to say. Only the terribleness of his fate seems to indicate something more than a transient yielding to sin. This, at least, is clear, that in the late afternoon of the day of Jericho's capture, and before the lurid flames of its conflagration rose to heaven, he had pilfered one of those robes of exquisite texture for which the plain of Shinar was famous, together with gold and silver—the latter coined, the former in a wedge, and had borne them surreptitiously away.

We can imagine him bringing them into his tent, where he probably found it necessary to acquaint his children with his deed; for if they had not been party to the crime and its concealment, they could hardly have been involved in his terrible fate. With their help he dug a hole in the sand and hid the spoil, which by the special ban of Joshua had been devoted to Jehovah.

The whole proceeding had been conducted in such absolute secrecy, and he was so confident of the collusion of the inmates of his tent, that, amid the general inquiry for the thief, he braved detection, and held his peace until the unerring finger of God pointed him out, as if he had said, "Thou art the man!"

But what anguish he must have suffered in the meanwhile! Long before his deed was unmasked, conscience had borne witness against him; and the lot had been cast within the circle of his heart. The scene in which he played so prominent a part on the plains of Jericho was rehearsed where no crowds of awestruck spectators gathered round, no blanched faces looked upon his, and no

horror-stricken messengers ran to the tent to unearth the hidden treasure.

When the first excitement of his new acquisition had passed, and the fever had subsided, the dull, heavy sense of wrong-doing began to gnaw at his heart. In the lull of reaction, conscience spoke; and when he marched with the rest up the long ravine to Ai, when he saw his comrades turn to flee, when he joined in the breathless rush back to the camp, when he met the relatives of the six-and-thirty men who had fallen in the battle, when he saw the dismay beneath which Joshua and the elders of Israel were overwhelmed—he knew, by an unerring spiritual perception, that it was his sin that was bringing shame and disaster to Israel. It must have been a positive relief to him when his secret was torn from his breast, and there was no need to preserve longer the appearance of comparative unconcern. Let us turn aside and study this scene in which Achan's sin was detected and dealt with; for whilst we do so, we may learn something of the action of that sharp, two-edged sword which pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart.

I. WE SHOULD GRIEVE MORE FOR SIN THAN FOR ITS RESULTS.—Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening; smarting from the disgrace inflicted upon his people, and aghast at the results which would probably ensue so soon as the tidings had been bruited abroad. Judging simply by human standards, the very worst consequences might be expected when the nations of Canaan suddenly discovered that the Israelite hosts were not invulnerable. This was Joshua's fear, that the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land should hear of it, and compass them round, and cut off their name from the earth.

As soon as we have committed sin, we look furtively round to see whether we have been watched; and then we take measures to tie up the consequences which would naturally accrue. Failing this, we are deeply humiliated. Saul was much more moved by his desire for Samuel to worship the Lord with him, and so honor him in the presence of the elders of Israel, than by his disobedience to the divine will. We dread the consequences of sin more than the sin itself; discovery more than misdoing; what others may say and do more than the look of pain and sorrow on the face that looks out on us from the encircling throng of glorified spirits.

But with God it is not so. It is our sin, one of the most grievous features in which is our failure to recognize its intrinsic evil, that presses him down, as a cart groans beneath its load. The boy grieves because sickness shuts him away from his companions—the excursion on the river; the game in the woods; the swift gliding over the deep blue ice on the ringing skate; but the mother grieves over the disease, of which the burning fever or the labored breath is the symptom. In the heart of the mother, sorrow for the disappointment of the child is almost obliterated by the eager anxiety that bends over his bed.

Very few of us realize what sin is, because we have had no experience of a character without it, either in ourselves or in others. People speak of being entirely delivered from sin, but they know not what they say, or whereof they affirm. None that has been born of woman, save One, has ever had the experience of a perfectly sinless character. Babies seem pure as the unfolding lily, which has not been freckled or soiled by contact with earth-stains, but they had been purer; Christian maidens are sweet and lovely, but they had been lovelier; saints seem blameless and harmless, but they had been saintlier—if they had not been originally connected with a fallen race.

It is, of course, possible to learn something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin by viewing the agony, heart-break, and shame, of the dying Lord; by remembering its infinite cost to the love of God; by recalling the comparisons of Scripture, in which the most loathsome forms of disease are its chosen types; or by considering the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched. And yet the true way to a proper realization of sin is to cultivate the friendship of the Holy God. The more we know him, the more utterly we shall enter into his thought about the subtle evil of our heart. We shall find sin lurking where we least anticipated—in our motives; in our religious acts; in our hasty judgment of others; in our want of tender, sensitive, pitying love; in our censorious condemnation of those who may be restrained by the action of a more sensitive conscience than our own, from claiming all that we claim to possess. We shall learn that every look, tone, gesture, word, thought, which is not consistent with perfect love, indicates that the virus of sin has not yet been expelled from our nature; and we shall come to mourn not so much for the results of sin, as for the sin itself. This is the godly sorrow that needs not to be repented of. Here are tears which angels catch in God's tear-bottles. In hours like these we approach most nearly the world where sin is hated; not because it cost us Paradise, for that has been more than replaced—but because it is sin.

II. WE SHOULD SUBMIT OURSELVES TO THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.—“And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?” It was as if he had said, “Thou grievest for the effect; grieve rather for the cause. I am well able to preserve my people from the assaults of their foes, though all Canaan beset them; and I am equally able to maintain the honor of my name. These are not the main matters for concern: but that a worm is already gnawing at the root of the gourd, and a plague is already eating out the vitals of the people whom I have redeemed. With my right arm I will screen you from attack, whilst you give yourselves to the investigation and destruction of the accursed thing.”

Whenever there is perpetual failure in our life, we may be sure that there is some secret evil lurking in heart and life. It may not always be possible for us to go direct to the spot where the evil has made its lair. But we may be sure that there is an accursed thing



somewhere in our midst, and that therefore we cannot stand before our enemies. Somewhere there is a fault in the insulation of the wire through which the currents of divine power and grace come to us; and it is useless to pray that they may be renewed until we have repaired the defect. Much of the time spent in public and secret prayer would be better employed by subjecting our dealings with each other and our walk before God to a searching scrutiny. It is a mistake to be on the face pleading with God for a blessing—and especially for the blessing of Pentecost—whilst there is some evil thing in our hearts needing to be dealt with ere the divine energies can come to us. It is not a question of God's willingness or unwillingness; but of the laws of the spiritual world, which make him unable to ally himself with consciously permitted sin.

Hast thou, reader, been beaten back in thy Christian work, or exposed to perpetual defeat by some petty temptation? Then it would be well to call a halt: not to hold a prayer-meeting; but to order thy heart-life before God, that, if thou canst not discern the evil thing that lies at the root of thy trouble, he may discern it for thee, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and in his hand a sharp sword.

(1) In searching out the causes of failure, we must be willing to know the worst; and this is almost the hardest condition. Ostrich-like, we all hide our heads in the sand from unwelcome tidings. It is the voice of an iron resolution, or of mature Christian experience, that can say without faltering, "Let me know the worst." But as we bare ourselves to the good Physician, let us remember that he is our husband; that his eyes film with love and pity; that he desires to indicate the source of our sorrow only to remove it; so that for him and for us there may be the vigor of perfect soul-health and consequent bliss.

He will communicate the result of his search by methods which are known to his delicate tenderness. Do not get into a fever. Do not rush from one to another for advice. Do not bewilder yourself with trying to detect his voice amid the tumult of voices that are sure to clamor for hearing when you bend down your ear to listen. "Be still and know." The responsibility of showing you your mistake is wholly with him, if you have placed all in his hands. Leave it there and wait. If he has anything to say, he will say it clearly, unmistakably, and certainly. If he says nothing, it is because the set time has not come. But to-morrow, in the morning, it may be, he will speak to you and tell you all. In the meanwhile, wait and trust.

(2) When God deals with sin, he traces back its genealogy. Notice the particularity with which, twice over, the sacred historian gives the list of Achan's progenitors. It is always, "Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah" (1:16–18).

There, in the early morning, Joshua and Phinehas stood to discern the transgressor with the aid of the Urim and Thummim of Judgment. The princes of Israel passed before them first; and the prince of Judah was taken. Then the families of Judah; and that of the Zarhites was taken. Then the Zarhites, and Zabdi was taken; then Carmi; then Achan. How his heart must have stood still, as he saw the inevitable closing in of his destiny!—like the contracting walls of a chamber of horrors on a hapless victim.

But sin is sporadic. To deal with it thoroughly, we need to go back to its parentage. All who have carefully watched the processes of the inner life bear witness, that a long period will often intervene between the first germ of sin, in a permitted thought or glance of evil, and its flower or fruit in act. We generally deal with the wrong that flames out before the sight of our fellows; we should go behind to the spark as it lay smoldering for hours before, and to the carelessness which left it there. We only awake when the rock disintegrates and threatens to fall upon our cottage roof; God would lead us back to the moment when a tiny seed, borne on the breeze, floating through the air, found a lodgment in some crevice of our heart; and, although the soil was scanty, succeeded in keeping its foothold till it had struck down its tiny roots, and gathered strength enough to split the rock which had given it welcome. And by this insight into small beginnings, our God would fore-arm us against great catastrophes.

What we call sin is the outcome of sin permitted, days—perhaps weeks—before; which, in the meanwhile, had been gathering strength within the heart. An avalanche is the result of the dislocation of a few flakes of snow, which had fluttered from their place weeks before the villagers were overwhelmed and smothered in their beds. There is reason therefore for the advice of the wise man: "Keep thy heart above all that thou guardest; for out of it are the issues of life" (R.V. marg.). If we would be kept clear from great transgression, we must see to it that we are cleared from hidden faults, so subtle and microscopic that they would elude any but a conscience kept sensitive by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

In the light of these thoughts we shall better understand what is meant by one of the deepest passages in the Epistles. James tells us—and none could better discourse on such a theme than the saintly president of the Apostolic Church—that "Each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed." A word which surely suggests that temptation is not wholly a matter without the soul, as some think! And he goes on to say, "The lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death." Mark those words, when it hath conceived, beareth—they are very deep. In nature there is an interval, a period of incubation.

If, therefore, you have fled before Ai, do not be content when you have discovered Achan; but continue your search till you have learned what gave him power to hurt you, and so work your way through the links in the long chain till you discover his remote ancestor in something which you did not suspect for the moment, but which was the guilty progenitor. Achan's own words shall

enforce the necessity: "I saw ... I coveted ... I took."

(3) It is a good thing at times to muster the clans of heart and life. We must make the principal tribes of our being pass before God—the public, and private; our behavior in the business, the family, the church—until one of them is taken. Then examine that department, going through its various aspects and engagements, analyzing it in days, or duties; resolving it into its various elements; and scrutinizing each. The auditor of accounts in some great business house, called in to discover the source of leakage, will for obvious reasons eliminate from his inquiry certain of the ledgers representing the more prosperous branches of the trade; and thus he narrows his inquiries within a smaller and yet smaller range.

This duty of self-examination should be pursued by those who have least relish for it, as most likely they really need it; whilst those who are naturally of an introspective disposition will probably apply themselves to the task without being reminded of the necessity of so doing, and should guard against its excess and abuse. Whoever undertakes it should do so on reliance on the Holy Spirit; and give ten glances to the Blessed Lord for every one that is taken at the corruptions of the natural heart. It is "looking off unto Jesus" which is the real secret of soul-growth.

III. WE SHOULD HOLD NO PARLEY WITH DISCOVERED SIN.—"And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the mantle, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had. And they brought them up unto the Valley of Achor. And all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones." Then Jehovah repeated the words which had preceded the capture of Jericho, "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not!... see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land."

Then up the long defile Joshua marched with thirty thousand men—the mighty men of valor. There was a sense in every breast of an integrity which had put away all cause of failure and defeat. The preparations were skillfully made; the appearance of flight on the part of Israel drew forth the men of Ai to headlong pursuit; and the city was left at the mercy of the ambush, which at the sign of Joshua's uplifted javelin arose, entered the city, and set it on fire. And in that very place where Israel had met with so disastrous a defeat, the people took great spoil, specially of cattle, which they drove down in triumph to the camp at Gilgal.

God never reveals an evil which he does not require us to remove. And if heart and flesh fail, if our hand refuses to obey our faltering will, if the paralysis of evil has so far enfeebled us that we cannot lift the stone, or wield the knife, or strike the flint-stones for the fire, then he will do for us what must be done, but which we cannot do. Some are cast in a mold so strong that they can dare to raise the hatchet, and cut off the arm just madly bitten, and before poison has passed from it into the system; others must await the surgeon's knife. But the one lesson for all the inner life is to be willing for God to do his work in us, through us, or for us.

So the Valley of Achor becomes "the Door of Hope." From that sterile, mountain-guarded valley, Israel marched to victory; or, to use the highly colored imagery of Hosea, it was as though the massive slabs opened in the cliffs, and the people passed into cornfields, vineyards, and oliveyards, singing amid their rich luxuriance as they sang in their youth in the day when they came up out of Egypt. Ah! metaphor as true as fair! for all our inner life, there is no Valley of Achor where the work of execution is faithfully preformed, in which there is not a door of hope—entrance into the garden of the Lord; and a song so sweet, so joyous, so triumphant, that it would seem as if the buoyancy of youth were wed with the experience and mellowness of age.