

Joshua 7 “Sin = Tragedy”

God... not Joshua fought the battle of Jericho! both in verses 5 and verse 20: “the wall of the city will fall under itself”; that is, it will collapse as though from pressure from above rather than from outside.

God brought judgement upon the pagan and wicked city of Jericho... *Judgment is always God's final resort, and in this case it came after generations of provocation. That wickedness or uncleanness is graphically described in Leviticus 18, with its focus on sexual perversions, child sacrifice, and other “abominations” to the Creator:*

PRAY

Joshua 7 But **“But”**: an adversative connective. A warning signal for the discerning reader. But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, **Joshua commanded the nation in Joshua 6:18 that they should not take of any of the accursed things, those things that were associated with the demonic and debasing worship and practices of the Canaanites.** Israel obeyed God in His unconventional strategy of marching around the walls, but at the moment of victory Achan, son of Carmi, *“committed a trespass regarding the accursed things”* Woudstra points out the significance of the verb's literal meaning, frequently translated “trespass.” It “means ‘to act under cover,’” hence “‘treacherously,’ ‘secretly.’” It indicates a breach of trust (Leviticus 5:15), generally against the Lord, as here, by disobeying God's command that these items belonged to the Lord.”

for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, **Why the genealogy (both here and in v.16-18)? Zerah offspring of Judah's whoredom with Tamar, his daughter-in-law (Gen 38:15-30).** took of the accursed things; **accursed things** Jackman points out, “the whole idea of the “accursed or devoted things” was designed to teach Israel lessons of holiness and separation.

Holiness speaks of his sheer “otherness,” not only in moral perfection, but in all the divine attributes that separate the Creator from the creature.

Israel had to keep herself holy, pure and undefiled from all the contamination of pagan idolatry that surrounded her. That is why we have the record of Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16, when the Lord “creates something new” (Numbers 16:30) as “the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up.” That is why we are told of the plague of snakes in Numbers 21:4-9 as the Lord's response to impatience and ungrateful grumbling. That is why Numbers 25 recounts that when the people of Israel indulged in sexual relations with the people of Moab and “bowed down to their gods ... Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel” (Numbers 25:2, 3), and 24,000 died.

so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel. **Satan has no bullets in his gun we hand them to him.**

² Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, Ai: 15 miles from Jericho; about 1,700 ft above sea level. which *is* beside Beth Aven, *Beth-aven: "house of vanity."* on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. ³ And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for *the people of Ai are few.*" **Fear makes the enemy appear greater than he really is. Pride makes him appear less than he is. [Ai has 12,000 total population, 8:25.] Ai is not much of a place, and about 2,000 or 3,000 men will easily be able to deal with it.**

⁴ So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. ⁵ And the men of Ai struck down about 36 men, for they chased them *from* before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; **36 = 6² (6 = the number of man, squared, failure!)** therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water. *Expecting easy victory they received brutal defeat!*

➡ ***Though this number was small from a military standpoint, what it meant was staggering to Israel. It meant that Israel could be defeated in the Promised Land. The Jericho shout must have seemed a long time ago.***

➡ ***Now*** Verses 6-9 describe how Joshua and the elders reacted to this devastating news.

The content is instructive. (1) Why have you let this happen? (2) We would be better off where we were. (3) Now we are disgraced. (4) Our enemies will build on this to destroy us completely. (5) And then what will happen to your great name and reputation? It is a mixture of grief and petulance, perplexity and accusation.

Exodus 23:22 " But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries." Clearly the corollary is happening because God's word has either not been heeded or not obeyed.

Sin always blurs our vision and distorts our view of God, so that we become aggrieved and peevish.

⁶ Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. **To tear your clothes and to put dust on your head both displayed mourning. Joshua is not only mourning the death of 36 men, but more so, he and the elders of Israel mourn the loss of the blessing and guidance of God.** The time to humble oneself is before the battle, not after.

How could there be defeat? Didn't they have God's promises? ...the ark? ...the leader? ...weren't they circumcised? ...established commemorative stones? ...celebrated Passover? **Sin makes a mess!**

⁷ And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord God, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? The defeat at Ai showed that what mattered was not the strength of the opponent, but the help of God. Without God's help, all would be lost.

Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! ⁸ O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? ⁹ For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear *it*, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?" **This shows that Joshua's over-riding concern was for the glory of God. Our greatest disappointment when we stumble should be that we have possibly caused reproach on the great name of God.**

¹⁰ So the Lord said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? ¹¹ Israel has sinned, (**what one does effects the whole**) and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them.

That is why one man's actions could have such a devastating effect. The camp had become unclean in God's eyes due to Achan's disobedience, and the Lord would therefore no longer go out with them in their battles, until the matter had been settled. However, at this stage no one else is aware of it.

God's provision is for us to live a life of unbroken victory. But He will not make defeat impossible, taking away our ability to choose good or evil. He always makes it possible for us not to sin; here, Israel sinned, but they didn't have to.

For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff. God says that Israel had sinned, not only one man. It is staggering to think that the whole nation was found guilty, and 36 men were dead, all for the sin of one man and his family.



VIDEO on sin

Two important truths about sin.

1. Sin breaks relationships 2. Sin is so selfish... never considers how it will destroy others around us. Always affects the innocent **Paul speaks in similar terms concerning sin in the church; regarding sin among the Corinthian church, he says *Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*(1 Corinthians 5:6) A small amount of sin accepted and tolerated among believers can infect the whole group.**

One man's sin can damage many. Abraham's disobedience in Egypt almost cost him his wife (Gen 12:10-20); David's disobedience in an unauthorized census led to the death of 70,000 (2 Sam. 24); Jonah almost sank a ship (Jonah 1)

¹² Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. **Israel could not fight in God's power and presence unless they walked in obedience to God.** Israel was under a covenant with God that promised blessing on their obedience, and also promised curses upon their disobedience.

Our position before God is secure in Jesus; but our fellowship with Him is hindered by our own sin (1 John 1:6). This fellowship with God is our wellspring of power to live in the Spirit.

How can Pastor's still experience victory in ministry while yet living in sin?
When God deals with a particular area of sin, and when resist His work, His *mercy* makes us to fail in battle. We are most dangerous when we think we are "winning" battles with our own self-reliance.

If you join the side of the opposition to Yahweh and rejection of is covenant terms, you make yourself liable to his judgments, as do all his enemies.

¹³ Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: "*There is* an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you."¹⁴ In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be *that* the tribe which the Lord takes shall come according to families; and the family which the Lord takes shall come by households; and the household which the Lord takes shall come man by man. **Secret sin on earth is an open scandal before God.**¹⁵ Then it shall be *that* he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel."¹⁶ So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken.¹⁷ He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken.¹⁸ Then he brought his 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. ***All this time, Achan certainly remembered exactly what he had taken, and how he wished he had not taken it. But he - and we - should remember the regret of sin before we sin, not after.***

Sin does have its pleasures. Taking those things gave Achan a good feeling. But the penalty of sin, both within us and upon us, outweighs any of the fleeting pleasures of sin.

¹⁹ Now Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide *it* from me.” Hidden sin always has a special power over us. The power of sin is in the secrecy of sin. **Don’t try to cover sin...** A carpet layer had just finished installing carpet for a lady. He stepped out for a smoke, only to realize he'd lost his cigarettes.

In the middle of the room, under the carpet, was a bump.

"No sense pulling up the entire floor for one pack of smokes," he said to himself. He proceeded to get out his hammer and flattened the hump.

As he was cleaning up, the lady came in.

"Here," she said, handing him his pack of cigarettes. "I found them in the hallway." "Now," she said, "if only I could find my parakeet." **Don’t try to cover sin...**

²⁰ And Achan answered Joshua and said, “Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: Hughes states, He saw the inevitability of the process and certainly knew his guilt and yet there is no confession until it is wrung out of him and no apparent evidence or remorse, let alone repentance.”

Either he is paralyzed by the process or stubbornly hardened in his rebellion, but as the text stands, Achan comes out with his hands up (he hasn't gotten away with it), but this is an admission of guilt and nothing more.

His sin is against the Lord, even though tis consequences have been grievous for his countrymen. **Tragedy... innocent always suffer at the hands of another's sins! So selfish!**

²¹ When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them.

“When I saw... I coveted... I took...” Same order as Eve in Gen 3:6. Eye seems to be the portal to which Satan makes his attack, while God uses the ear. “Faith comes by hearing” (Rom. 10:17).

1 John 2:15-17 – *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

This is where the battle is joined against the world, the flesh, and the devil every day. It is what I see and desire that will determine what I do, and where that is contrary to God's revealed will in Scripture the Achan issue become our issue. Are we prepared to let God be God at this precise point in our lives? For Achan the answer was no. A Babylonian robe,

silver, and gold mattered more to him than the word of God and the glory of God. These were the objects of his desire, the idols of his heart – personal grandeur and wealth – and these are the things that he buried in his tent. **I wonder how many Christians, and families, and churches, and business ventures suffer from the same problem. You've been ache'n because like Achan there's sinful stuff buried in your tent.** What idol shrines would God find buried deep within us?

And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.” All sins will be found out. [1 Timothy 6:10](#) For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Verses 22-26 bring the whole story to its conclusion.

²² So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. ²³ And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. ²⁴ Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ And Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.” So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. ²⁶ Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. **Achan's sons and daughters had specific knowledge of the sin, because it is unlikely that he could bury so much under their tent without their knowledge. At the same time, they were not necessarily stoned with Achan. Instead of being killed with their father, Achan's children were probably called forth to witness the judgment against their father.**

We notice the use of the singular in [Joshua 7:25](#) and [7:26](#) (you ... you ... him ... him), in reference to a person being stoned. The use of the plural in [Joshua 7:24](#) and [7:25](#) (them ... them ... them) probably has reference to Achan's possessions, not his children.

So 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.

Here are the terrifying consequences of sin, and a great heap of stones is piled up over those who have been destroyed as a constant reminder and memorial to Israel of sin's outcome.

We dare not make God in our own image or downplay his holiness. Achan was not a poor man – he had oxen, donkeys and sheep. But he was a greedy man, and that poison was his undoing. It had to be ruthlessly exterminated from Israel. Yet that is true of all human sin, for the wage it pays is always death.

Forgiveness, restoration, cleansing and a clean heart for a fresh start Psalm
139:23 Search me, O God...

***CALL SIN SIN... NO EXCUSES

***CONFESS YOUR SIN... **THE POWER OF SIN IS IN THE SECRECY OF SIN... GET IT OUT...** **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness

***ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S FORGIVENESS... God can, will and does forgive.

***FORGIVE YOURSELF

***ENDEAVOR TO SHOW FORTH FRUITS OF REPENTANCE... STOP IT

GO TO OTHERS AND ASK FOR FORGIVENESS... LIVE WITH A CLEAN HEART!

CH Spurgeon... when we deal seriously with our sins God will deal gently with us. "What did you learn from that experience?" Henry Ford: "A mistake is an opportunity to begin again, more intelligently."