

Acts of Sin Joshua 7:21

Introduction:

Sin separates men and women from God.

If sin is not sincerely repented of from godly sorrow and put away, it will bring disaster to the sinner and those associated with them.

As the Israelites discovered through their defeat at Ai, the whole nation suffered because of sin that was charged to one man.

The lesson for us is that the whole cause of Christ can be injured by the unaddressed sin of one believer.

Follow along as I review Joshua chapter 7 verses 1-26.

Achan disobeyed God's command and took some of the spoils from Jericho for himself.

Israel was totally routed in their attempt to capture Ai (ay = eye), the next city of the conquest because of the Israelites' over-confidence and sin in the camp.

In great anguish, Joshua complained to the Lord concerning Israel's defeat.

The LORD responded to Joshua by telling him two things regarding their defeat.

One: Someone in the camp has both stolen and lied.

Two: The LORD told Joshua to find the sinner and burn him with fire along with his belongings.

The LORD gave Joshua specific instructions for determining who the guilty person was.

The LORD pointed out the tribe, the family, the household, and finally the person who had committed the sins resulting in their defeat.

Achan was found to be the guilty person.

Achan, his family members, and all his possessions were stoned, and were burned.

There are a few lessons we can learn about sin by the report of Achan's sin which is typical of all sin.

Joshua inquired; Joshua 7:19 "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.'"

"Give glory to the LORD" demands truth before God (John 9:24).

Notice Achan's response in verses twenty and twenty-one: "So Achan answered Joshua and said, 'Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: 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. Lust of the eyes.

When Achan saw a beautiful robe from Shinar, Babylonia (Genesis 10:10), he was impressed.

Garments from the Babylonians were noted in the ancient world for their beautiful and elaborate artistic weaving and materials.

Israelite warriors were allowed to take plunder from the Midianites in Numbers 31:11 and 12.

Half of the war spoils were kept by the soldiers and half were given to the people.

Divided among them were 675,000 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys, and 32,000 young girls (Numbers 31:31-35).

But when the enemy is placed under a ban, everything belongs to God.

Notice Joshua 6:16-20, “At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, ‘Shout! For the LORD has given you the city. **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. 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. But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD.’ So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city.”

What is devoted to God belongs to God alone.

Be careful little eyes what you see is not simply good Sunday school lyrics, but a principle to be lived by.

Achan saw the beauty of things as more beautiful than obedience to God.

II. Lust of the mind.

Achan wanted what he saw a robe, silver, and gold.

He coveted them, taking a high degree of pleasure or mental satisfaction in them.

Personal happiness and fulfillment should not override every other consideration.

Ephesians 5:5 warns, “For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, **who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**”

Do you remember 1 Timothy 6:10? “**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 through with many griefs.”

Since God has made His will known on a wide array of matters, we ought to fill our minds with godly things rather than with lust.

Achan coveted what he should not have.

III. Acts of the will.

Achan took the things his eyes and mind lusted.

He let his own desires and happiness crowd out obedience to God.

God still wants us to bring glory to His name by setting aside our will and obeying His commands.

His purpose or cause is larger than us, but when we act of our own will we disrupt the accomplishing of God’s purpose.

By our sin we may hurt ourselves, we may hurt others, but we definitely hurt God when we elevate our will above His.

Doing our will may bring momentary pleasure, but doing God's will brings eternal happiness.

Achan took what he wanted though it belonged to God.

IV. Acts of the hand.

Achan concealed in the earth a robe, silver, and gold.

Hiding evidence of sin indicates knowledge of doing wrong.

Hiding or covering up sin or the results of sin ought to be a red flag for servants of the LORD.

In a play on words, Achan hid the things he stole (v. 21), but Joshua instructed Achan not to hide anything from him when he confessed (v. 19).

Achan confessed the stolen items before Joshua, before the LORD, and before all Israel.

Talk about being caught red-handed—Achan concealed or hid what he stole in the earth.

Application:

James was informing us about sin when he wrote in chapter one verses fourteen and fifteen, "Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

Achan's acts of sin progressed: I saw, I coveted, I took, and I hid.

Eve's sin in the garden followed a similar progression: She saw, she desired, and she took (Genesis 3:6), as did David with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:2-4).

We often see what sin offers, covet the opportunity to have or gain, take hold of something other than God, and try to hide the evidence.

Sin brings more sin.

Achan's actions of sinning included several violations.

The violation of stealing (Exodus 20:15).

Violation of God's instructions (Deuteronomy 20:10-20).

Violations of lying (Leviticus 19:11), and idolatry (Exodus 20:3) with coveting (Exodus 20:17).

Why did no one step up to help Achan avoid these acts of sin?

Most of the people did not know about Achan's sins while he was committing them.

We do not know if Achan's household knew of his sin, nor his family, or his tribe, or any other Israelite.

We do know that God held all of Israel accountable (Joshua 7:11-12).

Conclusion:

Achan attempted to hide his sin from God, but we cannot hide our sin from God.

We must denounce and address sin to prevent the disease of disobedience from spreading.

First, in our own lives.

We must "be very careful to observe the commandment and the law...love the LORD...walk in all His ways...keep His commandments...hold fast to Him and serve Him with all [our] heart and with all [our] soul" (Joshua 22:5).

We must take heed to the cautions, the checkpoints of sin so that we stop sin at the earliest steps.

We must turn over to God what belongs to God, and this includes us if we are devoted to Him.

Then, in the lives of others.

We should sound the alarm when we are aware that a brother or sister is living with sin.

Joshua addressed Achan tenderly but firmly.

Disobeying God's commands is a serious offense.

Acts of disobedience are enough to pollute the purity of God's people at a time of great spiritual advance, so Adam with Eve, Achan, and David with Bathsheba, just like Ananias and Sapphira were made examples for us to learn from concerning sin.

Devoted believers become remorseful when their sin is addressed, so they confess their sin, straightforward and completely, along with their sorrow for the injustice to God and others.

When we fall into sin, we must deal with it quickly and completely.

Achan's confession identified the sin and how he fell into it.

The attractiveness of forbidden thoughts, items, and even people can be so easy to desire.

Condemnation came to Achan, "Joshua said, 'Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.'"

Because of Achan's injustice to God, he and his family were stoned, and his possessions were burned with them (Joshua 7:24 and 25).

The whole assembly of Israel participated in destroying what pertained to sin because they were all responsible for covenant holiness.

In a play on Achan's name, which means trouble or troublesome, the place was called the valley of Achor meaning trouble.

We see then that one man's sin can bring disaster upon many; these are the fruits of disobedience.

To avoid spiritual trouble, devote your eyes, your mind, your will, and your hand, indeed all your being to God.

The Good News is that we can prepare ourselves for the Lord's return so judgment will not be one of fearful condemnation but joyful salvation.

For Jesus will bring salvation to those who believe Him (Acts 16:30-31), those who have turned from sin in repentance (Acts 17:30-31), those who have confessed Jesus before men (Romans 10:9-10), those who have been baptized (immersed) in His name for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), and those who have "holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter 3:9-18).

If you are tangled in sin address it and deal with it immediately.

If you know of someone who is trapped in sin, go to them to address it and deal with it immediately.

Are you ready to devote your life to Christ? Come to be baptized.

Do you need to confess sin, seeking forgiveness? Come for prayers of the church.