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Section title: Tuesday - Fateful Choices

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John Dinzey.2025.Q4.L06. Fateful Choices

]]> Emphasize this

Question:

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*****READ*****

NIL: Not in Lesson

Lesson 6

**November 1–7*

The Enemy Within

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: 1 Pet. 1:4, Joshua 7, Ps. 139:1–16, Ezra 10:11, Luke 12:15, Josh. 8:1–29.

Memory Text: “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds” (*Jeremiah 17:10, ESV*).

TUESDAY

November 4

Fateful Choices

Read Joshua 7:19–21. What is Joshua asking Achan to do? What is the significance of such a request? How do we understand his confession?

Joshua 7:19–21 **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.”

20 And Achan answered Joshua and said, “**Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel**, and this is what I have done:

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. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.”

Joshua asks Achan to do two things: first, to give glory to God and honor Him. Second, to confess what he has done without concealing it. **Achan was supposed to give glory to God by admitting what he had done.** The term used here (*todah*) can refer to thanksgiving (*Ps. 26:7, Isa. 51:3, Jer. 17:26*), but also to the confession of sin (*Ezra 10:11*).

Unfortunately, the biblical text gives no indication that Achan showed any sign of real repentance. He hoped until the end to remain hidden. His defiant attitude qualified him to be regarded as a high-handed offender, for whom there was no atonement according to the law of Moses (*compare with Num. 15:27–31*).

READ

The words of Achan in Joshua 7:21 are reminiscent of the fall of Adam and Eve. Eve saw (*ra'ah*) that the tree was desirable (*khamad*) and finally took (*laqakh*) from its fruit (Gen. 3:6). In his confession, Achan admits that he saw (*ra'ah*) in the plunder a beautiful mantle of Shinar, 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold. He then coveted (*khamad*) and took (*laqakh*) them. **Just as in the case of Adam and Eve, the choice of Achan reveals that the sin of covetousness is the sin of unbelief.** It suspects God of not wanting the best for His creatures and of hiding some exquisite pleasures from them, which belong to the realm of divinity only.

Besides the allusion to the primordial human fall, the text highlights a stark contrast between the attitudes of Rahab (*compare with Josh. 2:1–13*) and that of Achan. The one took the spies to the roof and hid them from the soldiers; the other took forbidden things and hid them from Joshua. The one showed kindness to the Israelite spies and helped them secure victory; the other brought trouble on Israel by his greed and secured defeat. The one made a covenant with the Israelites; the other broke the covenant with Yahweh. Rahab saved herself and her family, and they became respected citizens in Israel; Achan doomed himself and his family to death and became an example of ignominy.

Think about the sin of covetousness. How can we avoid succumbing to it, no matter how much we have or don't have? (Compare with Luke 12:15.)

]]> The sin of covetousness can lead to other sins

Joshua 7:21 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.** And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.”

]]> Notice the steps:

1. Achan saw
2. He coveted. - that sin
3. He took them.

Achan's guilt increased

>> His guilt increased when inquiry was made and he did not come forward. He could have come forward when the process was announced, when his tribe was identified, and when the search was started by family, then it was man, by man - he waited until he was personally identified.

Question: What does it mean to covet?

Answer: Cambridge dictionary: to want to have something very much, especially something that belongs to someone else:

Webster's 1828 dictionary: 1. To desire or wish for, with eagerness; to desire earnestly to obtain or possess; in a good sense.

>>> covetousness is something that originates in the mind. It can involve sight, hearing, touching, smelling.

>>> Coveting is something that can take place in the mind. It is a sin that can be committed with no necessary outward display that you are committing such a sin. It was the sin of covering that helped the apostle Paul to realize that he was a sinner. Notice what he said before he had this experience:

Philippians 3:5-6 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; **concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**

Romans 7:7 7 What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. **For I would not have known covetousness** unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

There are many Achans among the professed people of God today. **They have become so familiar with sin that they no longer perceive its heinous character.** If just retribution should be visited upon all who are guilty of sins similar to that of Achan, how would the numbers in our churches be lessened! God's eye is upon the sinner, and a righteous Judge will in no case clear the guilty.
ST April 21, 1881, par. 16

Luke 12:15 And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

[illegible]

Additional Notes

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22, 23.

“The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” James 3:18.

Paul says that as touching the law—as far as outward acts were concerned—he was blameless [Philippians 3:6]; but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, when he looked into the holy mirror, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by a human standard he had abstained from sin; but when he looked into the depths of God’s law and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation and confessed his guilt. He did not go away from the mirror and forget what manner of man he was, but he exercised genuine repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He was washed, he was cleansed. He says, “I had not known lust, except the law had said, ‘Thou shalt not covet.’ But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive with the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” Romans 7:7-9.

6LtMs, Lt 1c, 1890, par. 21

Sin then appeared in its true hideousness and his self-esteem was gone; he became humble. He no longer ascribed goodness and merit to himself. He ceased to think more highly of himself than he ought to think and ascribed all the glory to God. He was no longer ambitious for greatness. He ceased to want to avenge himself, and was no longer sensitive to reproach, neglect, or contempt. He no longer sought earthly alliance, station, or honor. He did not pull others down to uplift himself. He became gentle, condescending, meek and lowly of heart, because he had learned his lesson in the school of Christ. He talked of Jesus and

His matchless love, and grew more and more into His image. 6LtMs, Lt 1c, 1890, par. 22

From the pillar of cloud Jesus spoke to Joshua, **condemning Israel because of the sin of coveting and of taking the accursed things of the heathen.** This was written for our admonition, and we are to take a lesson from this circumstance. **We are not to covet the goodly Babylonish garments and the things which God has appointed to destruction, for they are not to be desired. They are cursed of God; they are a snare to the soul, for they lead to vanity, pride, and self-exaltation.** They are not the goods which the Lord can bless, for He has specified them as accursed. They are the idols of the people who have estranged themselves from God and have corrupted their ways before Him. God has borne long with them, has given them advantages of light and knowledge; but their attitude toward Him is, "We want not thy way, but our own way, O God." 8LtMs, Lt 13, 1893, par. 26

In Achan's case we have an example of a man sinning in the very presence of God, in the consequences of this man's sin. How fearful the work wrought upon his family through his example and influence. He had developed a character that was entirely unsound, and had manifested his rebellion in the very presence of God when He was working mightily for His people. It was in a time of this kind that Achan exhibited his weakness of character which had been developed by taking steps in what he thought minor matters of transgression, by repetition of what he regarded as little sins. 8LtMs, Lt 13, 1893, par. 32

Yet in spite of all this, and upon the very occasion of a most glorious victory, one man in Israel ventured to transgress the command of God. When Achan saw among the spoils a magnificent Babylonish robe, his cupidity was aroused. Conscience was silenced with the plea that the richly adorned garment was too costly to be consumed, and he hastily rescued it from the flames. One step in

transgression prepared the way for another, and he next appropriated the gold and silver which should have gone into the treasury of the Lord. The things which God had cursed, Achan eagerly gathered as a precious treasure, and secreted them in his tent. No human eye saw the act, but the eye of God was upon the sinner, and marked his transgression. No human voice was raised to testify against him, but God became his accuser, and appointed him to utter destruction. ST April 21, 1881, par. 14

Achan had fostered covetousness and deception in his heart, until his perceptions of sin had become blunted, and he fell an easy prey to temptation. Those who venture to indulge in a known sin will be more readily overcome the second time. The first transgression opens the door to the tempter, and he gradually breaks down all resistance and takes full possession of the citadel of the soul. Achan had listened to oft-repeated warnings against the sin of covetousness. The law of God, pointed and positive, had forbidden stealing and all deception, but he continued to cherish sin. As he was not detected and openly rebuked, he grew bolder; warnings had less and less effect upon him, until his soul was bound in chains of darkness. ST April 21, 1881, par. 15

There are many Achans among the professed people of God today. They have become so familiar with sin that they no longer perceive its heinous character. If just retribution should be visited upon all who are guilty of sins similar to that of Achan, how would the numbers in our churches be lessened! God's eye is upon the sinner, and a righteous Judge will in no case clear the guilty. ST April 21, 1881, par. 16

The confession of Achan, although too late to be available in bringing to him any saving virtue, yet vindicated the character of God in His manner of dealing with him, and closed the door to the temptation that so continually beset the children of Israel, to charge upon the servants of God the work that God <Himself had ordered to be done.> It was the Lord Jesus Himself that specified what should be the punishment of Achan, or there might have been murmuring in the camp of Israel, even though the stolen goods were found in his tent. 8LtMs, Lt 13, 1893, par. 22

For a Babylonish robe and a paltry treasure of gold and silver, Achan consented to sell himself to evil, to bring upon his soul the curse of God, to forfeit his title to a rich possession in Canaan, **and lose all prospect of the future, immortal inheritance in the earth made new. A fearful price indeed he paid for his ill-gotten gains.** ST May 5, 1881, par. 4

Shall man declare the judgment upon Achan too severe? God himself pronounced the sentence, and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Achan's confession was made too late to be of any value. He saw the armies of Israel return from Ai defeated and disheartened, with thirty-six valiant men sacrificed; yet he did not come forward and confess his sin. He saw Joshua and the elders of Israel bowed to the earth in grief too great for words, their heads covered with dust in token of self-abasement. Had he then made confession, he would have given some proof of true penitence; but he still kept silence. He listened to the proclamation that a great crime had been committed in the camp of Israel, and even heard its character definitely stated. But he had not the honor of God or the good of Israel at heart, and his lips were sealed. Then came the solemn and searching investigation. How his soul thrilled with terror as he saw his tribe pointed out, then his family, and his household! But still he uttered no confession, until the finger of God was placed upon him. ST May 5, 1881, par. 5

So great had been his hardihood and persistence, that even at the last Joshua feared he would assert his innocence, and thus enlist the sympathy of the congregation and lead them to dishonor God. He would not have confessed, had he not hoped by so doing to avert the consequences of his crime. It was this hope that led to his apparent frankness in acknowledging his guilt and relating the particulars of the sin. In this manner will confessions be made by the guilty when they stand condemned and hopeless before the bar of God, when every case has been decided for life or for death. Confessions then made will be too late to save the sinner. ST May 5, 1881, par. 6

Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of His creatures, **it was Lucifer's endeavor to win their service and homage to himself. And coveting the honor which the infinite Father had bestowed upon**

His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield. GC 494.1