

THE SIN OF ACHAN

What does the entire procedure tell us about both God and Achan?

Joshua 7:16-25 (NKJV) “(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 Zarahites; and he brought the family of the Zarahites 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. (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.” (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.”

Instead of **unveiling the identity of the transgressor**, God **sets up a procedure that reveals both His justice and grace**. After explaining the reason for Israel’s defeat and calling for the sanctification of the people **He allows a time span between the announcement of the procedure and its application**, which **gives Achan time to think, repent, and confess his sin**:

1. Sin Cannot Be Hidden From God:

- Achan's attempt to hide his sin was futile as God exposed it
- The story demonstrates the illusion of hidden sin
- Self-deception doesn't protect us from consequences

Hebrews 4:13 (NKJV) “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must* give account.”

2. Sin Has Collective Consequences:

- Achan's sin affected not just himself but the entire community
- Sin corrupts and destroys people's lives beyond the individual
- His actions impacted his entire family and the nation of Israel

Exodus 34.7 NKJV “keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.””

3. God Requires Accountability:

- The importance of taking responsibility for one's actions
- Achan was held directly accountable for his disobedience
- There is a clear cause-and-effect relationship in sin

James 4.17 NKJV “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.”

4. God's Holiness Demands Justice:

- God will not tolerate disobedience among His people
- While God is loving, He is also just
- Though punishment may not be immediate today, it will come in due time

Romans 3.23-26 NKJV “**(3.23)** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **(3.24)** being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **(3.25)** whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, **(3.26)** to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

This story serves as a powerful reminder of the serious nature of sin and its consequences in God's eyes, while also emphasizing the importance of integrity and accountability in leadership.

Joshua 7:13 (NKJV) “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.’”

God gives sinners time to think of their path so that they can choose to repent, turn and live:

Ecclesiastes 8:11 (NKJV) “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

Similarly, his family (if they knew what happened) has the opportunity to decide whether they want to be involved in the cover-up or refuse to be accomplices, like the sons of Korah, who avoided destruction by refusing to side with their father:

COMPARE:

Numbers 16:23-33 (NKJV) “(23) So the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (24) “Speak to the congregation, saying, ‘Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.’ ” (25) Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. (26) And he spoke to the congregation, saying, “Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins.” (27) So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and

Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children. (28) And Moses said: “By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. (29) If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. (30) But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD.” (31) Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, (32) and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. (33) So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly.”

Numbers 26:11 (NKJV) “Nevertheless the children of Korah did not die.”

The solution to the predicament follows the opposite direction to how it entered and plagued Israel: corporate guilt is eliminated and narrowed down from Israel to one tribe; from tribe to family; from family to household; and from household to individuals. **Besides revealing the offender, the investigative process also cleared the innocent.** This was an equally important aspect of the meticulous juridical procedure, where **God Himself acts as witness to the unseen acts of Achan.**

God sees all:

The reader can almost feel the tension as God zeroes in on Achan. Who cannot wonder at the man’s obstinacy in hoping that he could go undetected? Nothing is concealed from the penetrating eyes of the Lord:

Psalms 139:1-16 (NKJV) “(1) O LORD, You have searched me and known me. (2) You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. (3) You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. (4) For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. (5) You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. (6) Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. (7) Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? (8) If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. (9) If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, (10) Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. (11) If I say, “Surely the darkness shall fall on me,” Even the night shall be light about me; (12) Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You. (13) For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. (14) I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. (15) My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. (16) Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.”

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NKJV) “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.”

God knows what is hidden in the heart:

1 Samuel 16:7 (NKJV) “But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Jeremiah 17:10 (NKJV) “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

Proverbs 5:21 (NKJV) “For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths.”

The Requirements of God to prosperity:

James 4:8 (NKJV) “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.”

How does the realization that God knows all that you do, even your hidden things, impact how you live? How *should* it impact how you live?

1 John 3:22 (NKJV) “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

Hebrews 13:20-21 (NKJV) “(20) Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, (21) make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.”