

Joshua Chapter 07 Commentary

1 ¶ But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. **2** And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. **3** And they returned to Joshua, *and* said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they *are but* few. **4** So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. **5** And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them *from* before the gate *even* unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

From this passage we learn sin will weaken us, and our hearts will not be filled with the courage of the Lord, nor for courage to fight for the name of God's glory. Sin will cause doubt in our lives, and in the finished work of our Saviour. Therefore, we are to present ourselves faultless before God, as seen in: *Jude 1:20-25; 20 "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."* We understand, our faultlessness is because of the power of Christ. Sin in our lives is a fault and puts us in disfavor with God.

There is a lesson we should learn in this passage. Notice, it is the sin of one man that caused this disaster, just as, it was the sin of one man, Adam, who brought upon us, every person in the existence of time, the curse of death because of sin.

Understand, when you are born-again; you automatically become a part of the body of Christ. Therefore, it behooves you to live the Christian life in accordance with God's instructions, not according to your own will. Do you realize that if one person, who has eternal life and is a part of the body of Christ, sins; it effects the whole of the body? One church member, who does not live the Christian life, is a reflection upon the whole body, which discredits the holiness and purity of God. The sin, of one Christian, gives a bad name to the whole of the Christian church, and distresses the rest of the body.

Likewise, when one organized church body, or religious order, who call themselves Christians, departs from the true doctrines of the Word of God, they are a blemish and stain against the purity and holiness of the whole body of Christ, and they cause other churches, and religious orders, to be distressed. We are rightfully taught by the New Testament scriptures to adhere strictly to the teachings of Jesus Christ. You can easily see from this chapter the reason for doing what Jesus, the head of the church body, commands.

6 ¶ And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. **7** And Joshua said, Alas, O

Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! 8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! 9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

Notice, Joshua is greatly distressed and falls down in supplication to God. Today, when a child of God turns, from God to their own way; their pastor, and church leaders, will always fall before God in the distress of one loosing their way. Unless you have served in the pastoral, or leadership, position, and have experienced the loss of one turning aside, you cannot know how greatly it affects the pastor and church leadership. This is another reason to fully live the Christian life. This same principle will apply to church bodies and other churches with which they fellowship, in the same religious order.

Joshua, and the leaders of Israel, turn to God in great distress and supplication. Joshua tells God; he doesn't know what the problem is, but he does know they need God's help. He also knows; if the inhabitants, of the land of promise, hear of this debacle, they will gang together to annihilate them.

Notice, Joshua also reminds God; if he doesn't help them his name will suffer some loss of its greatness on earth. Are we striving to keep God's name in the highest place of honor in our lives, and in the world?

10 ¶ And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? 11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. 12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you anymore, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

God tells Joshua; there is sin in the camp, which the all-knowing God knows about, which is why I did not go to battle with Israel. Sin caused by the lust of the eye, which nurtured has turned into covetousness. Sin that has caused one to attempt to steal from God, forgetting that God knows even the intents of the heart of mankind. Sin which has led one to lay up riches of earth. A sin, which is described in the bible in: ***1Ti 6:10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*** We shall see this verse lived out in this chapter. Dissembled means to: *to be untrue, in word (to lie, feign, disown) or deed.* Wherefore, this sin has also caused this sinner to be a hypocrite.

I point out; one man has sinned and yet Israel is charged with sin, which is what they were warned of in: ***Jos 6:18 "And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it."*** Understand, one Christian's sin is a black mark against the whole body of Christ. Known sin allowed in a professed Christian, a Christian church body, or organized religious group, is defamation to the name of Christ, and it taunts defiance in the face of God, which makes the whole body to be in sin before God.

This is why: the church, and church membership, is to follow the course of disciplinary action as laid out in scripture. The organized body of believers cannot tolerate known sin among the flock. They cannot turn a blind eye to sin and get by with it. Remember, disciplinary actions are to be done in love and with compassion. One good example of this is found in: ***Mt 18:15-17; 15 ¶ "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."*** This action, of putting one out of the church, has the same effect of being put to death, as Achan will suffer for his sins. Notice also; it does not say to continue to treat the person, man or woman, as a part of the church. They are to be known to the church, and church members, as one who has defied God. God says: we are to not commune with them in any way. Understand, we are talking about a person who knew the right way, and they chose to go their own way, and live in sin. The church cannot be charged with continuing in sin, as long as they do what God says do. The church did not bring being and outcast on them, they brought it upon themselves.

"they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them:" Did you notice the clause "***my covenant?***" This was not a covenant that Israel agreed to; it was a covenant commanded by God. This covenant is God telling Israel what to do; just as, we are told what to do in the New Testament scripture. Our agreement with God's commandment is necessary, and it is to be followed as God directs. Disagreement with God's commandment is sin against God. When we are born-again, we become servant to our Head, Jesus Christ, not to do as we want, but to follow his commandment. After all, he is our owner; he bought and paid for us, by giving his life for us, and we are his slaves.

Some will say, this is Old Testament and has no application to us today. To which I reply: In the New Testament, we remember in ***Acts 5:1-11***; Ananias and Sapphira coveted, attempted to steal from, and lied to the Holy Ghost, which resulted in their death. They were slain by God for this sin. Now, we should all understand; God is very serious that we obey his commandments, and live the life of a Christian, as fully defined by the New Testament scriptures. Disobeying God's commandments is not a good thing and will bring great distress to the sinner's life and will have an affect on many others.

We often hear people say; my sins do not affect anyone else. I have been guilty of this myself, in times past, before God gave me a right understanding. As we are clearly taught, in this chapter of Joshua, our sin does affect everyone we are connected to in Christian fellowship, and our sin may even destroy our natural families. After all; if they watch us walk unfaithful to God, where is the incentive for them to walk faithfully in the way Christ has prescribed for his people?

Remember, thirty-six men have already lost their lives because of this sin before this sin was exposed. We cannot fully grasp, and understand, the vast effects of sin among God's people. We do know; our sins are so bad, in the sight of God, they required the death of Jesus for their remission. Oh, how careful we should be; to not take anything to ourselves which belongs to God. Taking glory, or honor, that belongs to God, to ourselves; is one of the greatest examples of stealing from God.

As I think about all this, I ask myself: Today, when there is trouble between Christians, or in the church, do we know the root cause? Do we know the cause, but fail to address it? If we don't know the cause: we have an example here of falling on our faces mourning and trembling before God: Praying

that he would make known the cause and the remedy, as we see in this chapter. Praying God to give us the faith, and strength, to address the problem as directed in the scriptures, and in accordance with God's will. Praying that he would restore the joy of our salvation. Oh, God! help us we pray!

13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *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.* 14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, *that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.* 15 And it shall be, *that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.*

God tells Joshua the problem and the remedy. God tells Joshua; I will choose the one who has done this by the process of elimination. God already knew who had sinned, so why go through all this process? I believe it is a teaching tool for Israel, and us; teaching that they, or we, cannot hide sin from God. This principle shows us; God searches each heart, and it should make everyone examine their own lives for sin, as seen in: **1Co 3:12-13; 12 "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."** Just a reminder to us all, God knows even the intents of our hearts and thoughts, wherefore we should not try to hide anything from him, because it will be exposed, either presently, or in time to come.

16 ¶ So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: 17 And he brought the family 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 And 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 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. 20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: 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, and the silver under it. 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. 23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

Notice how sin comes to fruition from the " *lust of the flesh*," the " *lust of the eye*," and the " *pride of life*," which is what scripture teaches us in: **1Jo 2:16 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."** Acting upon the temptation, which these lust have put before him; Achan demonstrates what scripture teaches in: **Jas 1:13-15; 13 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."**

Achan, knowing that God has exposed him, and his sin is not hidden, confesses, when he is named as the one who has defiled Israel. Notice: he confesses that his sin is against God. Why is it against God? Because he directly disobeyed the command of God; Because the things he took were either; to be destroyed (**a goodly Babylonish garment**) or collected (**two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight**) and put in the treasure of the Lord. Notice, the items of sin are laid out before all the people. This is a portrait of what we see in the New Testament in:

- **Mt 18:15-18; 15 ¶ "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."** When one must be brought before the church for sin, they are to be made an example, which will make others afraid to dabble in sin, fearing they will also be cast out.
- We have also in: **1Ti 5:20 "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."** This is in reference to an Elder in the church. Again, it is to be a lesson for all Christians, sin will out, and God's wrath will be satisfied.

Do not miss the fact; Israel used evidence, not hearsay, in this occasion. Therefore, there are to be two or three witnesses to confirm the evidence, or a confession from the accused.

24 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. 25 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. 26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

We see here the severe consequence of sin against God. Not only did Achan die; his whole family, all that his possessions, and the accursed things were all destroyed. This is to be a deterrent to us to keep us from sin. We are to be very careful how we live the Christian life, that we; lie not, covet not, nor steal from God. We have a similar example of this in the New Testament involving Ananias and Sapphira his wife, seen in **Ac 5:1-11**. Again, we see that there was an act of covetousness, and lying to the Holy Spirit, that was the cause of the deaths of these two.

The saddest part of these lessons, to me, is that the whole family died. Achan was the sinner, yet by his sin against God, he caused the death of his whole family, plus, the death of the thirty-six soldiers. In application; How do we destroy our whole families today? When parents reject Christ and turn to their own lust, they do several things:

- They don't teach their children and those around them, the bible truth, and the love of God.
- They teach their children and those around them, to not believe in God.
- They teach their children and those around them, to not believe in an eternity, to be spent in either heaven or hell.
- They teach their children and those around them, all manner of sin and ungodliness.

- They teach their children and those around them, God and Christ are nothing. You don't have to believe in them nor in all that bible stuff. And etc..

Thus, we see, and understand, they have carried their families to death with themselves. These thoughts should strike fear into our hearts. They should make us want to be very stalwart in living for God and Christ. After all, no person in their right mind, which is the mind of Christ, would want to be the cause of death of their whole family, or any part of their family.

We may lie and cheat one another, but we can hide nothing from God, not even the thoughts and intents of the heart. These hard lessons are to teach us; we be careful to give to God all his due, not trying to take any glory, or honor, to ourselves. Doesn't this make you very thankful, for the finished work of the remission of sins, for which Christ died upon the cross? Doesn't this make you want to give your all to God? May God, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, help us to serve the Lord in faithfulness, and to love one another as Christ has loved us. Amen!