

SONG: I'll Live For Him (My life, my love, I give to Thee)  
CLOSE:

## **Hidden Sin**

Joshua Series: 9 of 18

**TEXT: Joshua 7:1-9**

**AIM: Serve as a warning to help keep us right – show no sin is hidden from God.**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Chapter 6 *closed* with **TWO OMINOUS WARNINGS** being given to Israel — i.e. dire consequences were in store for Israel, if God's directives were not obeyed after the fantastic defeat he gave Israel over the city of Jericho. Amazing, as it may sound, the walls of that city came tumbling down flat – as if a giant hand squashed them – in response to Israel's obedience in marching around, while blowing trumpets and shouting – *"the LORD hath given us the city!"*

**God cautioned Israel with two warning in 6:26 << READ**

- 1.] Don't **REBUILD** the city
- 2.] Don't **REMOVE** anything from the city as spoil of the battle

Chapter 7 *opens* with the OFFENSIVE word **"BUT."** >> **READ 7:1**

The **gladness** of victory over Jericho was soon to be replaced by the coming **gloom** of defeat at Ai. Over-shadowing this failed conquest of Ai was the sin in the life of ONE family—namely the disobedience of ONE man— **ACHAN! Achan had a Hidden Sin!**

In order to understand Achan's sin, we must bear in mind the absolute nature of God's decree to Israel. Jericho and everything in that city was placed under God's *"ban for destruction"* and was to be devoted to God as the first fruits of conquering of the land.

- Every living thing was to be put to death
- All valuable objects were to be dedicated to the Lord's treasury
- No Israelite soldier was to help himself to the booty >> **READ 6:17-19**

Achan's sin wasn't because he didn't know better—He knew what he was doing! Achan's sin therefore was not just an oversight, indiscretion of ignorance, but he deliberately and defiantly disobeyed God's command, and brought a curse upon the nation, as well as, upon himself – **NOTICE >> 7:11-12.**

LIKEWISE, when you and I sin, we usually do it deliberately and with full knowledge—we know what we are doing. It is possible to commit acts, construed as sin and not know we are doing wrong, but in most cases, the sin we involve ourselves in is sin we have been properly instructed in & warned of before we indulge in it!

Though we might wish to give credit to the discipline of Joshua's army because only one soldier sinned, this sin **was the major reason** for the defeat of Israel by Ai.

- God considered this sin a national transgression against Him – **Vs. 7:1 – "The children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing."**
- Therefore, God held the nation collectively responsible and withheld His blessing from them until the matter was made right.

No greater example can be given for the necessity of enforcing discipline in the N.T. local church concerning its members.

Achan's sin clearly reveals that the personal *'HIDDEN SIN'* of one individual contaminates the whole.

- The Apostle Paul tell us in **Gal. 5:9** that *"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."*

- Hidden sin in lives of members in the local church erupts into spots creating blemishes and flaws in the purity of the body of God's chosen people *"Christ...loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"* (Eph. 5:25-27).

Whether we are talking about "Old" or New Testament saints, God wants His people to be holy in all aspects of life, even those areas of our lives that no one else knows about.

The sin of Achan was not just an oversight or ignorance, nor was it an indiscriminate decision that God arbitrarily became displeased with, but it was a **deliberate act** of disobedience to the revealed will of God.

Often people try to defend their sinfulness and say it was just a "little white lie," or "I only took a small amount, that no one will miss," etc. We try to excuse many wrong actions by comparison saying they are trivial, frivolous or insignificant.

**Trifling**, as the offence may seem, if we were to view it superficially, we must remember that **God does not trifle with sin – no matter how insignificant.**

Let's not forget the cost of sin—**ANY SIN**. Jesus sacrificed Himself to redeem our souls from the penalty of **SIN**—which penalty is an eternal death, separated from God and all that is good. Israel's offence contained the **essential elements** of ANY and ALL transgressions that any of us commit!

Achan's sin was the sin of Israel.

So the sin of one person in the local church is still the sin of the whole church. According to **vs. 11**, Israel collectively was guilty of the transgression of the sin of one among their numbers.

Because of this...

1. **They – as a nation – had broken a solemn vow** – All of Israel did agree to God's covenant, by the fact of conquering Jericho.
2. **They had stolen from God.** – They took what was not theirs.
3. **They acted deceitfully – Secret Sin** – Achan tried to hide the deed from the eyes of God. The word *"dissembled"* (vs. 11) means "to disguise the action, to conceal." In so doing, they faked their relationship with God as if nothing had happened. Others in his company or at the least some members of his family had to know the things were hid in the tent.  
**Vs. 11 – "they have put it even among their own stuff!"**
4. **They appropriated to themselves, that which belonged to God** – This was probably, the gravest feature of their crime.
5. **They subverted the truth** – They did so by putting the accursed things among their own things and lied about it! They made it to appear that the things were actually their own.

Anyone who has read or studied the Bible for even a brief time should know the **MAJOR attribute** of our Creator is that He is Holy; The **2<sup>nd</sup> major attribute** is that He is righteous.

- If God is to maintain His holy and righteous characteristics, He must judge Israel's sin and make no mistake, He will judge it.
- How unjust would it be for Him execute judgement on the wicked Canaanites or the unsaved of today, while allowing Himself to be dishonoured and disobeyed by those who claim to be His own people?

Therefore, **1 Pet. 4:17 warns** – *"For the time is come that judgement MUST begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?"*

#### **Four thoughts Concerning Achan's - Hidden Sin**

1. The *Cause* of that sin
2. The *Confrontation* that followed that sin

3. The *Confession* of that sin
4. The *Consequences* of that sin

## I. THE CAUSE OF ACHAN'S SIN – TWO SUGGESTED

### 1<sup>st</sup> Cause – **Carnal Heart**

Long before the battle of Jericho, long before he ever climbed over the rubble of the flattened walls of that city, Achan had sin in his heart before God. It is obvious he had a carnal heart.

1. There is little doubt he PREMEDITATED this sin.
  - a. Undoubtedly, he had to have thought out what he was gonna do when he entered Jericho. You don't devise this kind of plan in the heat of battle.
  - b. It seems he considered, in the carnality of his heart, that there was no doubt that there was wealth in side those walls, riches to be gained.

#### **You can hear him now:**

*"May be I will be fortunate enough to be in the group that enters the city opposite the 1st Nat'l Bank of Jericho, or maybe I'll be lucky to break through the wall at a jewellery store or an expensive clothing store. You know, there's a certain Babylonish garment Mrs. Achan has always wanted that I would like to get her."*

Maybe this woman's garment was a figure enhancing pair of slacks or the latest hip hugging, belly-button revealing designer jeans. His daughter wanted one of those shrunken bare midriff tops and was just is dying to have the latest nude, I mean bikini swimwear, Even though she says she doesn't have the legs for a miniskirt, nevertheless she would love some hot-pants.

**WHAT IS a Babylonish garment? Glad you asked! It is a worldly sensuous type of clothing!**

I don't know if these are the reasons he looked around and took what he took, but I do believe that Achan premeditated in his heart long before Jericho what he intended to do once in that city.

2. His appetite was controlled by the desire of the flesh. *What kind of appetite do you have today?* Do you hunger after righteousness? Is it your desire to serve your carnal nature or is it to be and look like a servant for the One you call Lord?
  - a. It seems Achan's appetite had a consuming passion for materialism – money, possessions, and fashion.
  - b. He was in love with this world. He had a consuming passion for carnal, i.e. material things – he was in love with things!
3. *What is the passion of your heart today?*
  - a. God said to the church at Ephesus. *"I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love"* (Rev. 2:4) Where is your love today?
  - b. Your love should be in the Lord Christ Jesus, His Word, His Church, and His Cause and in His Service.

**1 John 2:15-16 Warns** – *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. 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."*

A great body of professing Christendom who are in love with the world—i.e. in love with things—are in love with sin In the premeditation of their heart they involve themselves, as Achan was involved in himself. Achan had a carnal heart! He esteemed the things of this world more than his God and the things of God.

*What is it that fills your heart today?*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Cause For Achan's Sin – **He Did Not Fear God!**

1. This is probably THE VERY REASON for our sinning. For some strange reason we think we can get away with it and NOBODY, not even God will know.

- a. God is not blind nor does He wear glasses to help His eyesight! It is impossible for an ALL-SEEING an all-knowing God not to **witness** every act and deed of life.
- b. Maybe we assume God doesn't care or He couldn't be bothered with our little sins. The heavenly Father did not overlook His sinless Son on the cross when He bore YOUR sin and mine, nor will He overlook them now!
2. Achan went into sin with his eyes wide open—he knew better! God's instructions from the Lord had been clear! **DON'T TOUCH IT!** They are *accursed things*—They are devoted to Me!
  - a. The instructions were detailed; His eyes were wide open—so what other conclusion can we draw other than that he didn't fear God?
  - b. Joshua spoke from God, the warning was clear, but Achan said in his heart, *"Who is he kidding? This is my chance. When I go into that city, I am gonna take what I want!"*
3. As He secretly stuffed the Babylonish garment that was banned by God into his gear, He never considered that the all-seeing God was peering from heave right down on his very act.
4. When he walked into the bank and into the jewellery store, picking up those accursed precious stones, taking the banned silver & gold he must of thought God would be looking the other way or maybe taking a nap!
5. He evidently didn't take into account that what he doing the CANDID CAMERA eye of the all-seeing God was recording his every move!
6. Evidently He didn't think much **OF God, or think much ABOUT God.** WHY do I say this? Well, if he did he would have FEARED GOD!
  - a. This is what is wrong with Christians who deliberately sin—they don't fear their God! *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Heb. 10:31).
  - b. A thinking person knows that as a holy, just God, one who is a God of love, **MUST** by nature, also be a God of righteousness and is bound to bring His wrath down upon sin. A holy, just God cannot allow sin to go unchecked and remain holy or just.

**One of the smartest things you could ever do is to have a healthy fear of the Almighty God!**

**Prov. 9:10** – *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*

Since God from heaven didn't give out a roar or a bolt of lighting didn't strike, Achan must have assume God was blind and he had gotten away with his thievery when He took of the accused thing. Let us not kid ourselves; God saw **every movement He made!**

As amazing as it may seem, out of all the billions of people in the world, God sees and **takes record of every one and everything we do.** Out of all the millions of Jews in Israel at that time, God saw each individual and the **hearts of everyone.** He saw Achan take of the accused thing in secret and then try to hide it. **Please take note. Num. 32:23 warns, "And be sure your sin will find you out!"**

Achan sinned because he had a carnal heart and didn't fear God.

We ought to remind ourselves as we leave here today, that not only will God see and know **ALL** the things **WE** do, **ALL** the places **WE** go and **ALL** the things **WE** say, **GOD WILL TAKE NOTE OF EVERY THOUGHT THAT CROSSES OUR HEARTS.**

**FOR THE ALMIGHTY GOD SEES EVERYTHING!**

**We have examined the "CAUSE OF ACHAN'S SIN" now let's look at . . .**

**II. THE CONFRONTATION FOLLOWING ACHAN'S SIN – 7:10-19.**

**A. To Achan's DISOBEDIENCE, God gave Joshua DIRECTIONS (vs. 10 ff.), which would lead to DETECTION.**

1. *Have no doubt, God would revealed the sin!* It had to be revealed—God had to expose that sin.
  - a. Achan may have thought, he may have hoped that no one would ever know and that it would never have been disclosed—BUT IT WAS KNOWN AND HAD TO BE EXPOSED!
  - b. All of God's plans, intents and purposes for Israel were halted because of it. **READ >> 7:12-13**
2. If you want to know what it feels like to be run over by a steamroller, JUST get in front of God when you're in the way of His will.
  - a. Achan was in the way of God's will.
  - b. He was inhibiting the working of God's plan.
  - c. God could not and would not give victory until that sin was exposed.
  - d. NO MATTER how secretive Achan may have been, God would reveal the *HIDDEN SIN!*
3. There is no sin that can be committed; none devised by man in such a secretive manner, that God will not know about it. There are none He won't reveal, and none that will escape His judgement! Maybe not today, but some day, one day will be payday.
4. LIKEWISE sinning church members will be revealed. God's purpose in the New Testament Church is just as real for us as it was for Israel.
  - a. Israel couldn't go ahead and possess the land, they couldn't realise their intended purpose; they wouldn't be able to defeat their enemies with hidden sin in the camp!
  - b. What was true for Israel is just as true for the N.T. Local Church!
    - 1) Neither this church nor ANY church can be victorious; nor can they move forward; nor can they serve God; nor can they really get a job done for God – **as long as sin exists** in the lives of its members.
    - 2) Just as surely as God revealed the sin of Achan, God will reveal your sin! If sin is allowed to rest in your heart or in your life it will **STOP** your growth, it will **STOP** your walk with God dead in its tracks.

**ILLUSTRATION**

I read where D.L. Moody, who was a great evangelist of the last century, while crossing a busy Chicago City street with a friend, stopped in the middle of the street and briefly prayed. His friend commented "I know we should pray at all times, but don't you think that if you ever want to pray again that you should wait until you get to the curb." Moody graciously replied, "While we were talking, a wicked thought came to my mind and I knew it came between me and my Lord. I didn't want to take another step without Him."

Apostle Paul said in **1 Cor. 5:6** – *"Know ye not a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"*

5. Sin corrupted the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians chap. 5. **WHY?**
  - a. Because ONE individual was corrupt.
  - b. Because ONE family was corrupted by this person and allowed sin to go unchecked.
  - c. Our church also can also be corrupt because of one family or one member.
  - d. This church can be stopped, just as Israel was stopped at Ai. ALL BECAUSE one family allowed sin to pollute the camp, because ONE person had **HIDDEN SIN!**



God MUST, God MUST and will reveal sin in your life! God will not allow one individual to stop His work. *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (Heb. 10:31). **Num. 32:23** – *“And be sure your sin will find you out!”* >> **TURN Lk. 12:2-3 – Be sure, it Will Be Revealed!**

### **B. After God Revealed The Sin, Joshua Confronted the Sinner – 7:19.**

1. If God reveals sin to you or to me, it is our responsibility to confront the sinner.
2. **Principle of the Word of God** – If a member in a body of believer’s sins and stymies the work of God and that sin is revealed to you, it is your responsibility, since God sought fit to reveal it to you, to confront the sinner with the fact of their sin. **TURN >> Gal. 6:1**
3. If one does not repent and make the proper response then Church Discipline must be enforced – **TURN >> Matt. 18:15-18.**

### **Example**

After David’s awful immoral relationship with Bathsheba, he thought no one knew about sinful conduct. He even went so far as to have her husband, Uriah, murdered to keep things quiet, **BUT** the all-seeing, all-knowing God revealed the sin to the prophet, Nathan, and that prophet had the responsibility to confront the king with his sin.

If you choose to violate God’s instructions and get involved in sin, thwarting God’s work, God will reveal your sin and somebody is gonna come along and confront you with that sin – that’s God’s plan.

## **III. AFTER THE CONFRONTATION, CAME THE CONFESSION – 7:20-21**

### **A. Classic History of Sin – I SAW, I COVETED, I TOOK, and I HID.**

1. It is not clear whether Achan truly repented, or if he just confessed because he got caught.
  - a. It is possible that he really repented, but it doesn’t seem to be so.
  - b. It seems he’s not broken hearted and disturbed because he sinned against God, as much as it seems he is mighty sorry that he got found out!
2. **True repentance** – is be sorry you sinned. To **confess** of that sin means to agree with the accuser vowing by God’s grace not to do it again.
3. Has it been true of you that you were sorry you sinned OR sorry you have been caught in it?
4. The question goes begging if Achan had not been found out, who knows what else he may have gotten involved in?

### **B. Check Out The Steps He Took**

1. **“I SAW”** (vs. 21) – Reminds us of the sin of Eve & King David.
  - a. Eve *“SAW that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes...she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat”* (Gen. 3:6).
  - b. King David was out on the rooftops one evening and SAW Bathsheba bathing. *“It came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king’s house: and from the roof he SAW a woman washing herself; and the woman [Bathsheba] was very beautiful to look upon”* (2 Sam. 11:2).
  - c. Achan, when inside the walls of Jericho said, *“I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, ...silver, and ...gold...then I coveted them”*

## **APPLICATION**

You can’t help what your eyes see as you walk up the aisles in a shop, along the roadside or on billboards or other advertisements. Nor is it sin to have a bird to light on your head, but it is strange if you to allow him build a nest there. The bird may have landed without warning, but

you can shake him off! He doesn't have to hang around. If he were to build one on my head, he'd have to bring his own materials! But some people could have a rookery in theirs.

2. **"I COVETED"** (vs. 21) – Eve & David SAW and both COVETED—they wanted what they saw.
  - a. Eve coveted the fruit, she **"SAW that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be DESIRED to make one wise."** **"To make one wise"** that would make her as a God, to know both good and evil" (Gen. 3:5-6).
  - b. David saw a woman—one that was not his wife. *"David sent and enquired after the woman...and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her"* (2 Sam 11:3-4). He SAW and COVETED her. He wanted to know her intimately.
  - c. Achan SAW the goodies in Jericho and COVETED these treasures—riches that had been dedicated to the Lord.
    - 1) How terrible thing it is to steal from Almighty God.
    - 2) Is his sin any worse than those who will take God's tithe and spend it for their own purposes?
    - 3) **Mal. 3:8 asks – "Will a man rob God? God says, 'Yet ye have robbed Me.'" You ask, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" God replies "In tithes and offerings."**
  - d. In essence many professed Bible-believing church members are committing the same sin that Achan committed—stealing from God money that is His.
  - e. What was COVETED? In **vs. 21** – besides silver and gold there was **"goodly BABYLONISH GARMENT."**
    - 1) **"Goodly"** – this word's meaning ranges from being of good, pleasant, of rich, excellent value of its kind – to being pleasant and agreeable to the senses, i.e. sensuous in nature.
    - 2) Every time the styles change people today have to run out and buy them.
      - a) Teens have to have the latest €100 sport shoes; while men's ties and women's dresses have been exchanged for tracksuits; women's skirts have been replaced with slacks or jeans.
      - b) The Babylonish Garment means we MUST be sure to have the designer logo or label. **Why?** Because of lust in the heart and carnality of the soul to look like the world.
    - 3) It is not wrong to be in style, **BUT** it is wrong if style means immodesty.
      - a) Altering the way I dress is one thing, but sacrificing modesty to become more acceptable to the world is another.
      - b) My worth as a person is not to be found in clothes and the approval of the world, but in Christ!
    - 4) God's purpose for man is to fashion him into the image of Christ – NOT to keep him in the latest fashions of the world. Jesus said in **Matt. 6:32 – "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek."**
3. Achan SAW the spoils—he COVETED after them and deliberately **"TOOK them."**
  - a. It was that way for Eve. She liked what she SAW—she DESIRED what the fruit offered and deliberately **TOOK IT!** She gave not a thought of the awful consequences to her children or to you and me. Her actions plunged man into the perpetual state of sin.
  - b. Likewise, David liked what he saw in Bathsheba—he WANTED her and deliberately **TOOK** her in adultery. He seemingly gave no thought to the disgrace he would bring unto the nation and to his God—no less giving thought of taking the life of her husband Uriah.
  - c. Achan SAW, he COVETED and deliberately **TOOK** of the **"accursed thing."** He gave no thought of the consequences to the nation. God said in **7:15 – "He wrought folly in Israel."**

*Have you this week seen, coveted, and partaken of that which God has forbidden?*

4. Ultimately, Achan **HID** (vs. 21) what he took.
  - a. Adam & Eve covered their nakedness and HID in the bushes.
  - b. David HID behind his position trying to cover his deeds with murder and deceit.
  - c. Achan took his secret sin and HID it under the ground in his tent.

### **APPLICATION**

What sin is it that you have hid? Maybe you haven't literally hid something, but you are hiding something in you heart that is apart of you life today? It may be a bitter spirit, resentment, jealousy, filthy habits, immorality, dirty books, videos, or T.V.? Whatever it is, as God's child, God will reveal it! God didn't say he *MIGHT* reveal it, but He *WILL* reveal it. He MUST reveal it to be faithful to His Word.

### **ILLUSTRATION**

An American syndicated writer, Ann Landers, published the story of a daughter who thought very highly of her father. He was well respected in the community, a fine citizen, and a churchgoer and idolised by his daughter. He unexpectedly died and after his funeral she went to his clean study where she found a box of pornography. She was shattered to learn that her father had secret sins. *"Be sure your sin will find you out!"* – Num. 32:23

### **ILLUSTRATION**

Before I first came to Ireland as a missionary, I made a phone call to a missionary pastor in Northern Ireland (Freeman Goodge). Not finding him home a started ring around some contact numbers I had, looking for him. In so doing, God revealed to me a plan by a group of disgruntled power-hungry people wanting to take control of the church and removing their pastor. *"Be sure your sin will find you out!"* – Num. 32:23

### **ILLUSTRATION**

Another pastor friend in America (John Halsey) related how he lifted the phone in his city to make a call, there was no dial tone and the line seemed dead. Just before he hung up he heard his name mentioned, so he listened. It was a crossed line and two women were gossiping about him. They were telling slanderous lies and making plans to smear him. With this knowledge, he was able to protect himself and avoid the trap these wicked women had laid. *"Be sure your sin will find you out!"* – Num. 32:23

## **IV. CONSEQUENCES – VS. 23-26**

The experience of Achan in his temptation provides a remake able parallel to the assault of temptation upon each member of the human race. **NOTE the following:**

1. Achan SAW that which had appeal to him BUT was forbidden.
2. He then COVETED the possessions.
3. Giving in to his desires he TOOK them.
4. After doing so, he discovers he had to HIDE them. The final result is that the coveted treasures were worthless to him.

### **A. Instead of pleasure, he reaps humiliation and punishment.**

1. Achan confessed his sin, but he paid for it AND his family paid for it.
2. Adam and Eve paid for theirs AND the world now suffers.
3. David paid a penalty—death of his baby, the rape of a daughter and the rebellion and murder of his son, Absalom.



4. Israel paid for Achan's sin! **Josh 7:5** – reveals 36 men shed their blood because of one man's sin.
5. Sin will always cost you something!

Once you embark down the path of life with sin as your travel companion, you will find that SIN will **take** you down the road *further* than you want to go, **keep** you there *longer* than you want to stay and **cost** you *more* than you want to pay.

**B. Achan hid his sin, yet he was found out.**

1. Achan was CONFRONTED with his sin, He CONFESSED his sin, but it was too late for restoration as suffered the CONSEQUENCES of his sin! **Vs. 25-26**
2. The word "*Achor*" means "trouble, or disturbance." Achor is know as the valley of trouble where Achan and his family were stoned.

For our own sakes and that of those we hold dear, it would be best that none of us every enter into this valley. BUT if we should have the misfortune of finding ourselves in it, the way out is to by *repentance* and *restitution* BEFORE we are found out!

**1 John 1:8** tells us *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* **BUT** in the next verse we are told *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

4 Aug. 1984 – Lifegate Bible BC – Dublin  
 27 Oct. 1991 - Calvary B. F. – Cork  
 20 Oct. 2002 – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare  
 31 May `09, Eve – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare  
 15 Jun `14, Eve – River Valley BC – Leixlip, Co. Kildare