

Joshua 7:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

God's indictment uses emphatic, repetitive language revealing sin's severity. The statement 'Israel hath sinned' (chata Yisrael, חָטָא יִשְׂרָאֵל) treats the entire nation as corporate unity—though Achan sinned individually, God holds Israel corporately accountable. The phrase 'transgressed my covenant' (avru et-beriti, אָוְרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי) indicates covenant violation, not merely moral failure. The listing of specific sins creates mounting emphasis: 'taken of the accursed thing' (sacrilege), 'stolen' (theft), 'dissembled' (kicheshu, כִּיחֶשׁוּ—lied or deceived), and 'put it among their own stuff' (integration of stolen goods with possessions). Each verb intensifies guilt. The phrase 'they have even' (vegam, וְגַם) appears repeatedly, emphasizing compounding transgressions. This demonstrates that hidden sin never remains isolated but spawns additional sins: covetousness leads to theft, theft to lying, lying to hiding. From a Reformed perspective, this reveals sin's progressive nature and deceptive power—one compromise opens doors to multiple transgressions. The corporate language warns that tolerating sin within the covenant community brings corporate judgment, requiring church discipline to maintain holiness.

Historical Context

God's revelation of Achan's sin came through direct divine communication to Joshua after Israel's defeat at Ai. The defeat shocked Israel—expecting easy victory

after Jericho, they instead suffered humiliating retreat with 36 casualties. Joshua's anguished prayer (7:6-9) questioned whether God had abandoned them, revealing how quickly confidence can turn to despair when divine blessing withdraws. God's response reveals that defeat wasn't divine abandonment but judgment for covenant violation. The specific accusation 'transgressed my covenant' refers to the cherem command regarding Jericho's spoils (6:17-19). Ancient Near Eastern covenant relationships involved stipulations, blessings for obedience, and curses for violation. Israel experienced covenant curse—military defeat and divine disfavor—until they purged the sin. The compounding nature of Achan's sin (coveting, stealing, lying, hiding) illustrates sin's progressive enslavement. What begins as temptation becomes action, then concealment, each step further entangling the sinner. This pattern appears throughout Scripture: David's adultery led to murder, then coverup (2 Samuel 11-12); Ananias and Sapphira's greed led to lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'small' sins in your life are spawning additional transgressions through lies, concealment, and self-justification?
2. How does God holding all Israel accountable for one man's sin inform church discipline and corporate responsibility for tolerating sin?
3. What would it look like for your church to take corporate sin as seriously as God took Achan's trespass?

Interlinear Text

חָטָא	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	וְגַם	עָבְרוּ ו	אֶת	בְּרִיתִי י
hath sinned	Israel	H1571	and they have also transgressed	H853	my covenant
H2398	H3478		H5674		H1285
אֲשֶׁר ר	צִוִּיתִי	אֹתָם	וְגַם	לָקְחוּ	מִן
H834	which I commanded	H853	H1571	them for they have even taken	H4480
	H6680			H3947	
הַיָּדָה	וְגַם	גָּנְבוּ	וְגַם	כָּחֲשׁוּ	וְגַם
of the accursed thing	H1571	and have also stolen	H1571	and dissembled	H1571
H2764		H1589		H3584	
שֶׁ מִן	בְּכֵלֵיהֶם:				
also and they have put	it even among their own stuff				
H7760	H3627				

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 4:13 (Parallel theme): Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Acts 5:9 (Parallel theme): Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.