

Joshua 7:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Finally: 'Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.' The full genealogy emphasizes individual responsibility within communal identity. Achan is simultaneously an individual and a member of multiple corporate structures—tribe, clan, family. His full identification shows that no one is anonymous before God—He knows not just our names but our lineage, context, and choices. The phrase 'was taken' reaches its climax—the guilty party is definitively identified. The genealogical recitation also highlights the tragedy: Achan descended from an honorable line within Judah, the premier tribe. His sin shamed not just himself but generations of faithful ancestors and descendants. This illustrates how sin dishonors not only ourselves but those connected to us—family, church, community. The identification also meant Achan could no longer hide behind collective identity—the corporate ('Israel has sinned') must become personal ('I have sinned'). Both realities coexist: sin is corporate problem and personal responsibility.

Historical Context

The specification of four generations (Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah) follows standard ancient Near Eastern genealogical practice. Genealogies established identity, inheritance rights, and social standing. Zerah was Judah's son through Tamar—the line from which Achan descended had complex origins involving Judah's failure and Tamar's righteous subterfuge (Genesis 38). The irony:

Tamar risked death to preserve Judah's line; Achan brought death upon himself through greed. The identification process likely took the entire morning, creating mounting dread throughout the camp. By the time Achan stood identified, all Israel knew that one man's sin had caused their defeat and thirty-six deaths. The historical lesson proved unforgettable—the generation that conquered Canaan would remember Achan's folly and its consequences. Indeed, Achan is referenced later as warning (Joshua 22:20). His name became synonymous with covenant violation and its devastating effects.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

James 2:17 – Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does being known by name and lineage before God comfort or challenge you?
2. What does Achan's full identification teach about the impossibility of hiding from God?
3. How might considering the effect of your sin on family, church, and community influence your choices?

Interlinear Text

בְּ	שָׁכֵן	בֵּית	וְ	אַתָּה	לְקַחַת	בְּ
And he brought	H853	his household	by man	was taken	and Achan	the son
H7126		H1004	H1397	H3920	H5912	H1121
בְּ	פְּרַמְּ	בְּ	בְּ	בְּ	לִמְطֵה	יְהוּדָה:
of Carmi	the son	of Zabdi	the son	of Zerah	of the tribe	of Judah
H3756	H1121	H2067	H1121	H2226	H4294	H3063

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 32:23 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

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