

Joshua 7:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Joshua's address to Achan combines pastoral tenderness ('My son') with moral urgency, creating a model for confronting sin with both grace and truth. The phrase 'give glory to the LORD God of Israel' (ten-kavod laYahweh Elohei Yisrael, תְּנַכְּבֹד לְיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) uses an idiom meaning to acknowledge God's justice by confessing sin truthfully. This same formula appears in John 9:24 when Pharisees interrogate the healed blind man. Confession doesn't earn forgiveness here but publicly vindicates God's holiness and justice before the community. The command 'make confession unto him' (ten-lo todah, תְּנַלֵּן תְּזַהַדֵּה) uses todah (תְּזַהַדֵּה), which can mean thanksgiving or confession—acknowledging God's right to judge sin is itself an act of worship honoring His holiness. Joshua's threefold command—'tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me'—demands complete disclosure, not partial admission. The urgency 'now' (na, נָא) allows no delay. Achan's sin had brought defeat at Ai (7:4-5), corporate judgment (7:1), and threat to the entire conquest. His taking devoted items (herem, חֶרֶם) from Jericho violated God's explicit command (6:18-19) and stole what belonged exclusively to God. This narrative establishes principles of corporate responsibility, the seriousness of hidden sin, and the necessity of dealing thoroughly with sin before God's blessing can continue.

Historical Context

This confrontation occurred after Israel's humiliating defeat at Ai, where 36 Israelites died and the army fled in panic (7:4-5). God revealed that someone had violated the herem (devoted ban) by taking consecrated items from Jericho. The investigation proceeded systematically: tribe by tribe, clan by clan, family by family, man by man (7:14-18), until Achan was identified. This methodical process allowed time for voluntary confession and prevented false accusation, yet also increased communal awareness of sin's gravity. Achan's confession (7:20-21) revealed he took a Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing 50 shekels—valuable items representing greed and covetousness. Archaeological excavations at et-Tell (possibly Ai) show destruction in the Late Bronze Age consistent with Joshua's conquest. The Babylonian garment (adderet Shinar) indicates international trade connections and Canaan's luxury goods markets. Achan buried the stolen items under his tent (7:21), believing he could hide sin from God and community. The subsequent judgment was severe—Achan, his family, possessions, and livestock were stoned and burned in the Valley of Achor (7:24-26). This harsh penalty reflected the covenant community's need for purity and the seriousness of sacrilege. The Valley of Achor ('trouble') became a memorial warning future generations. Later prophets use Achor symbolically as a place of judgment transformed into blessing through divine grace (Hosea 2:15, Isaiah 65:10).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Joshua's combination of tenderness ('My son') and firmness ('tell me now') model biblical confrontation of sin with both grace and truth?
2. In what areas of your life might you be hiding sin like Achan, assuming you can conceal from God what affects the entire community of faith?
3. What does the severe judgment on Achan's sin teach about God's holiness and the corporate impact of individual sin within covenant communities?

Interlinear Text

כֹּבֶד וְדָבָר יְהוָשָׁעַ יְיָ אָמַר
said And Joshua H413 unto Achan My son give I pray thee glory
H559 H3091 H5912 H1121 H7760 H4994 H3519

וְבִגְדָּךְ תֹּזֶעַ הַלְּזָה וְתַּמְּנָא לְאֱלֹהָה יְהוָה הַלְּזָה
to the LORD God of Israel and make confession unto him and tell
H3068 H430 H3478 H5414 H0 H8426 H5046

מִתְפִּינָה תְּכַחַד אֶל שְׁעָשָׂה יְתַחַת
me now what thou hast done hide H4480 H3582

H4994 H0 H4100 H6213 H408

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 6:5 (Glory): Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

Jeremiah 13:16 (Glory): Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

John 9:24 (References God): Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

2 Chronicles 30:22 (References God): And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

1 Samuel 14:43 (Parallel theme): Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die.

Daniel 9:4 (Prayer): And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;