

Joshua 7:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

Analysis

Achan's confession begins: 'Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel.' The Hebrew **וְאָחָן** (*omnam*—indeed, truly) expresses acknowledgment without excuse. Achan admits the sin, identifies it correctly as against God (not merely against Israel or Joshua), and uses the covenant name 'LORD God of Israel.' His confession is theologically accurate—all sin is ultimately against God (Psalm 51:4). The phrase 'thus and thus have I done' prepares to detail the specifics. Genuine confession requires particularity—naming what was done, not vague admission of 'mistakes.' Achan's willingness to confess publicly shows some degree of conscience or resignation. Yet the confession comes only after divine exposure, not from voluntary repentance. This raises questions about motives—is it genuine contrition or pragmatic admission when caught? The text doesn't indicate pleading for mercy or expressions of remorse, only factual acknowledgment.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern confessions often preceded execution, serving both religious and legal purposes. The confession validated the justice system, acknowledged the deity's righteousness, and theoretically allowed the guilty party to make peace with their god before death. Achan's public confession before all Israel served to educate the community and validate God's judgment. His use of the full title 'LORD God of Israel' showed orthodox theological understanding—he knew whom he'd sinned against. The contrast is tragic: Achan confessed correct doctrine while

violating it through greed. This pattern repeats throughout history—orthodoxy without obedience, profession without practice. James 2:19 later observes: 'the devils also believe, and tremble.' Achan's confession came too late for reprieve, illustrating that while confession is always right, consequences may remain. Church discipline literature notes this tension—restoration of relationship with God while temporal consequences continue.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between confession that comes from conviction versus confession that comes from being caught?
2. How does Achan's accurate theology combined with disobedient behavior speak to your own inconsistencies?
3. What does it mean that all sin is 'against the LORD,' not merely against rules or people?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַן	עַכְּ	אֶת	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	וַיֹּאמֶר	הָאִמֶּנָּה	יְאֹכֶזֶר
answered	And Achan	H853	Joshua	and said	Indeed	H595
H6030	H5912		H3091	H559	H546	
חָטָאתִי	לַיהוָה	אֱלֹהֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְכֹזַבְתִּי	אֶת	וְכֹזַבְתִּי
I have sinned	against the LORD	God	of Israel	H2063	H2063	
H2398	H3068	H430	H3478			
עָשִׂיתִי:						
and thus and thus have I done						
H6213						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 38:18 (Sin): For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.
