



## [Joshua 7:1-12](#)

(1) But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things ; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel. (2) Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So the men went up and spied out Ai. (3) When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary all the people, for only a few men are there." (4) So about three thousand men went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, (5) who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

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One man's [sin](#)! There were no accomplices. Nobody even saw him do it, yet Israel's army became paralyzed with fear. Joshua faltered and became confused. The whole nation was affected. Thirty-six men died. Thirty-six women became widows. And how many children no longer had a father?

One might say that the sin was somewhat atoned for. When they found out what Achan had done, Achan and his family (who were innocent of the deed) were put to death. When [God](#) saw it, however, He analyzed the sin according to different standards. He was dealing with His people, and He wanted to make sure that a witness was made—so that there would be information for those of His church in the end time.

God takes a personal interest in His people. Things happen out in [the world](#), and He seems to do nothing. But when things happen within His church, He is concerned for the well-being of His people, and He takes action.

What we see here is a clear beginning of "the body" analogy that later becomes so important to the church in the New Testament. He shows us plainly that sin has a

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natural *leavening effect*. It increases; it will not just lie there and die. Corrections must be made to ensure that it does not spread, affecting others.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

**To learn more, see:**

**[Every Action Has a Reaction](#)**



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