



# **Aspects of Holiness**

**~ Corporate or Collective Holiness ~**

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# Let us start with some questions



- **In our series on the aspects of holiness we have dealt predominantly with individual holiness.**
- **Today, I would like us to consider holiness that goes beyond individual or personal boundaries.**
- **In simple terms, are there any consequences of an individual's actions on the collective?**
- **Bluntly put, can an individual's sin affect the family, the church or even the nation? This is what I mean when I refer to the corporate or the collective.**
- **Please remember that you cannot talk about holiness without talking of sin. There is no getting away from this and that is perhaps the reason some shy away from the subject or find it boring.**



# Corporate or collective



- **Corporate - done by or characteristic of individuals acting together; "a joint identity"; "the collective mind"; "the corporate good"**
- **The corporate is an identifiable group. For example:**
  - The family
  - The church
  - The nation
- **This is as opposed to the actions of one or few individuals.**



# Objective



- **We are supposed to be our brother or sister's keeper.**
- **If we are to be true to this, then we must bear in mind the consequences of our actions on others.**
- **These could be acts of commission or omission. (The evil one does or the good one fails to do.)**
- **No man is an isle land.**
- **My objective therefore is to remind us that our activities as individuals could adversely affect a lot more people than ourselves.**
- **This is therefore a call for us to act for the collective or corporate good.**



# Approach



- **We will look at a few examples in scripture and see what we can learn from them.**
  - 1. The sin of Achan**
  - 2. The rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram**
  - 3. The sins of Hophni and Phinehas and the failure of their father to restrain them**
  - 4. The letters to the seven Churches**



# Introduction to the story of Achan



- This happened under the leadership of Joshua.
- Let me remind you of the divine promise with which Joshua began his ministry in Joshua 1:5.
- "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.
- As we shall see later on, the greed of one man, Achan, caused bewilderment in the mind of Joshua and his elders.
- The promise of God seemed to have failed to work because Israel fled in the battle against Ai and 36 people were killed.



# Israel affected by the sin of Achan



- **Joshua 7:1**  
**1 ¶ But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.**
- **Please note these carefully:**
  - **Achan disobeys the divine order. He took of the accursed things.**
  - **And yet it is attributed or imputed to the whole nation. Wow!**
  - **Do you notice the drill down of Achan's lineage?**



# The accursed things



- **Joshua 6:17 - 19**

**17 ¶ "Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.**

**18 "And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.**

**19 "But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."**





# Joshua affected by the sin of Achan



- **Joshua 7:10 - 12**

**10 ¶ So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face?"**

**11 "Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.**

**12 "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you.**



# One man's action = National sin



- 11 "Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.
- When the actions of one man changes the personal pronoun "he" to "they" then we need to sit up!
- Israel has sinned, (But it was Achan)
- and they have also transgressed My covenant (but it was Achan)
- which I commanded them. (But it was Achan)



# Achan's family affected by his sin



- **Joshua 7:24 - 26**

**24 Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor.**

**25 And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.**

**26 Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.**



# Revolt of Korah, Dathan and Abiram



- This was internal strife that arose as a result of the organised challenge on the authority of Moses and Aaron.
- We will do well to note that one of the charges or assertions of Korah, the leader of the revolt, was to do with holiness and calling.
- This was organised revolt involving “representatives of the congregation, men of renown”.
- The revolt was masked as representing the rights of a people who had been disadvantaged by the position of Aaron. Terrible lies still being used.
- How lofty! A revolt, nevertheless.



# The public confrontation



- **Numbers 16:1 - 3**

**1 ¶ Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men;**

**2 and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown.**

**3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"**



# Further accusations and insolence



- **Numbers 16:12 - 14**

**12 ¶ And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up!**

**13 "Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us?**

**14 "Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!"**

- **Accusations galore!**



# Please note



- Often when the chosen of God are attacked it is also an attack on god Himself.
- Remember what the Lord said to Samuel when Israel asked for a King? “They have rejected me, not you”
- “You have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey.” This makes God a liar.
- You keep acting like a prince over us. Really?
- “Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey.” But the journey is not yet completed.



# Disassociate from the wicked ~ 1



- **Numbers 16:23 - 33**

**23 ¶ So the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,**

**24 "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'"**

**25 Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him.**

**26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins."**

**27 So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children.**





# Disassociate from the wicked ~ 2



- **Numbers 16:23 - 33**

**28 And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will.**

**29 "If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me.**

**30 "But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD."**



# Disassociate from the wicked ~ 3



- **Numbers 16:23 - 33**

**30 "But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD."**

**31 Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them,**

**32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods.**

**33 So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly.**



# A few sin the collective suffer



- The dissatisfaction of a group of influential people results in the death of their families and tribes.
- Where there is sin there is no holiness.
- Individual actions affecting the collective in a very devastating manner.
- What is the lesson there for you dear mother, father, church leader, young person, old person?
- Can you see the level of disaster that your actions can bring on those you profess to love?



# Do not forget the after shock ~ 1



- **Numbers 17:41 - 42**

**41 ¶ On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD."**

**42 Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.**

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# Do not forget the after shock ~ 2



- **Numbers 17:49**

**Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. Please read the rest of the story as home work.**



# Enter Hophni and Phinehas



- **1 Samuel 2:12 English Standard Version**  
Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD.
- Other versions render worthless as scoundrels, corrupt, sons of Belial, useless, sons of sin, wicked men, evil sons.
- Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. (1 Samuel 2:22)
- ‘Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honour your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?’ (1 Samuel 2:29)



# Hophni, Phinehas and Eli ~ 1



- 1. Hophni and Phinehas who were priests in Shiloh disrespected the Lord's sacrifice.**
- 2. They committed sexual immorality with the women who came to sacrifice.**
- 3. All Israel knew about it. Public shame.**
- 4. A prophet was sent to their father to warn him of the consequences of the sins of his sons who were also priests.**
- 5. He only spoke to them about it and left it there**
- 6. The Lord told Samuel what He was going to do.**
- 7. Eli's feeble response was "It is the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him."**



# Hophni, Phinehas and Eli ~ 2



- 8. Israel went out to battle against the Philistines and they lost.**
- 9. Their answer was to take the ark of the covenant to the battlefield for a rematch and the results were even worse; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. Horror of horrors, the ark of the covenant was taken.**
- 10. A messenger comes and reports the matter to Eli.**
- 11. Eli falls backwards and breaks his neck and dies.**
- 12. Phinehas' wife, was with child, due to be delivered; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and gave birth, for her labour pains came upon her. She dies in child birth.**





# Hophni, Phinehas and Eli ~ 3



- **The lessons:**
  - 1. The actions of two individuals proved to be catastrophic for many.**
  - 2. The inaction of Eli brought judgement on him. "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 1 Samuel 3:13"**



# The letter to the seven churches ~ 1



- **Let us briefly look at how the activities of individuals in a church can affect God's view of that church.**
- **It is interesting to note that the message to each of the seven churches makes mention of the fact that the Lord knows their works.**
- **It is equally interesting to note that particular activities, shortcomings, exaggerated opinions are brutally addressed.**
- **Of course divine appreciation is expressed with respect to location and the challenges they represent.**



# I know your works ~ 1



1. "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'I know your works, Revelations 2:1,2
2. "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'I know your works, Revelations 2:8,9
3. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos 13 I know your works, Revelations 2:12,13
4. "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'I know your works, Revelations 2:18,19
5. "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'I know your works, Revelations 3:1
6. "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'I know your works. Revelations 3:7 - 8



# I know your works ~ 2



**7. "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 15 "I know your works,**



# I have a few things against you ~ 1



- Thyatira
- Revelations 2:14 - 15

18 ¶ "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

19 "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

20 "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.



# I have a few things against you ~ 2



- Pergamos:
- Revelations 2:14 - 15

**14 "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.**

**15 "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**



# Conclusion



- **Achan's sin affected more than himself.**
- **The sins of Ophini and Phinehas brought family and national calamities.**
- **The activities of Korah, Dathan and Abiram had far reaching consequences.**
- **The activities of individuals in the seven churches affected the churches standing before the Lord.**
- **Let us be the keepers of our brothers and sisters by choosing to be holy.**





# Corporate or Collective Holiness

