

## Joshua 7

Verse 1

**But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully regarding the things designated for destruction, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the designated things; therefore the anger of the Lord burned against the sons of Israel.**

**But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully regarding the things designated for destruction**

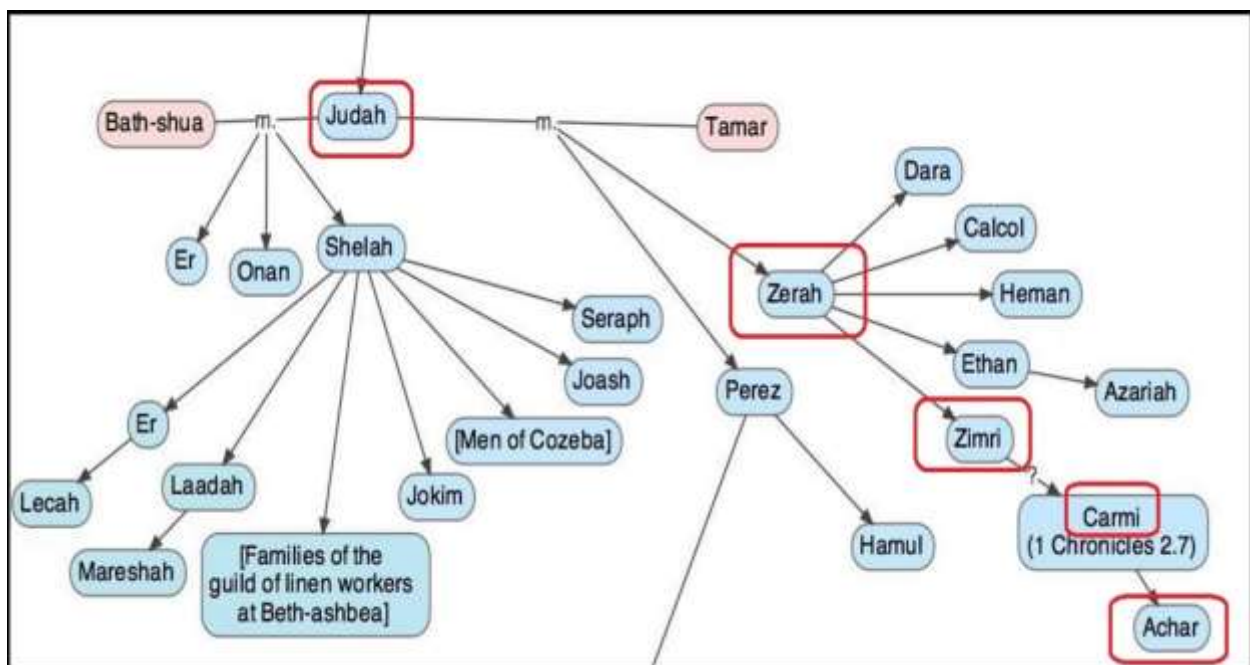
The sin of a SINGLE person was seen as an act of unfaithfulness by all of Israel

And 36 men will die because of Achan's sin

**For Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah**

The genealogy of Judah to Achan covers the period from 1725 to 1406 BC

See pic 705

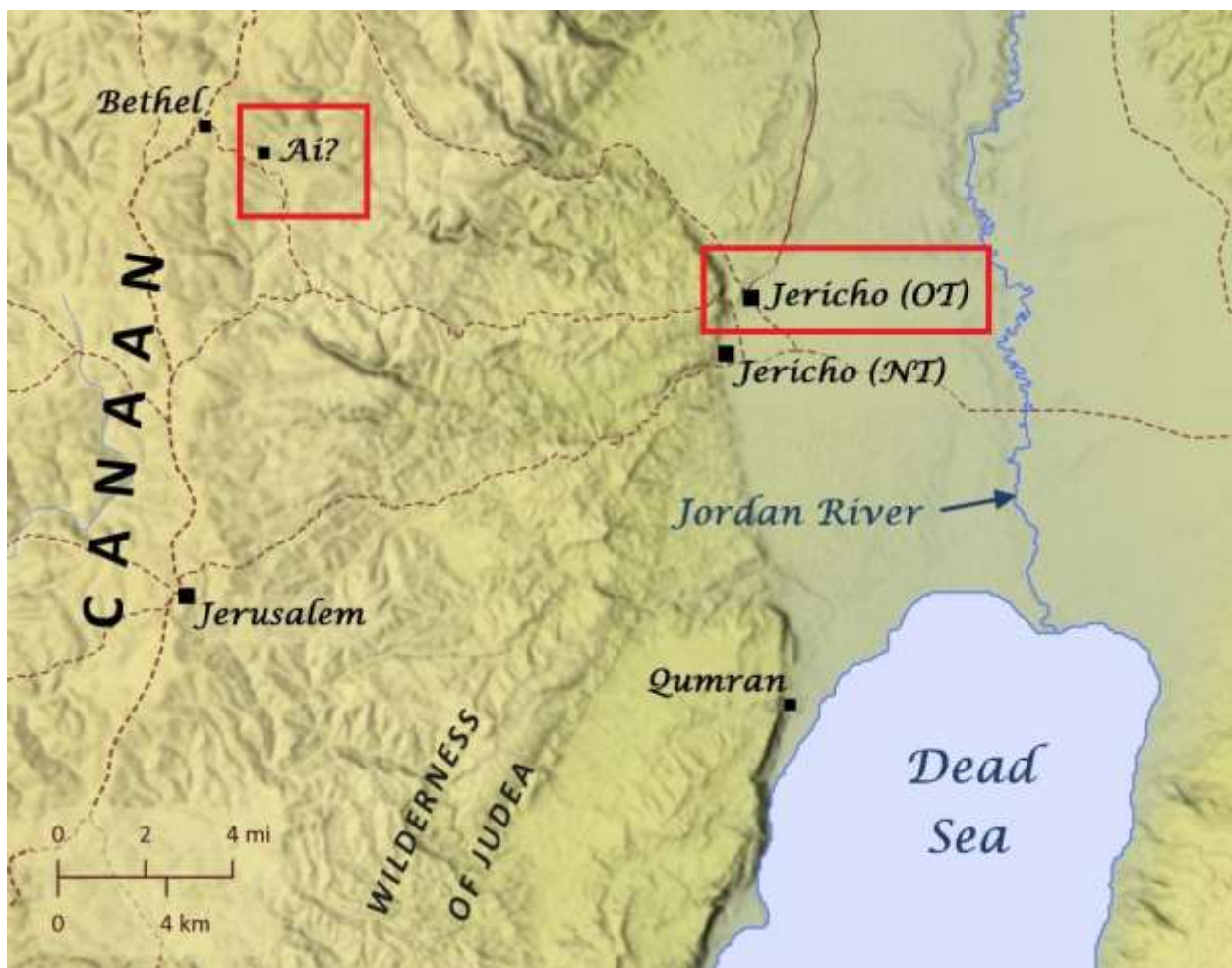


Verses 2 - 5

<sup>2</sup> Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, “Go up and spy out the land.” So the men went up and spied out Ai. <sup>3</sup> Then they returned to Joshua and said to him, “Do not have all the people go up; have *only* about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai; do not trouble all the people there, for they are few.” <sup>4</sup> So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. <sup>5</sup> And the men of Ai struck and killed about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them on the mountainside; and the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

<sup>2</sup> Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is east of Bethel

See map 710



The sight of Ai was not known with much certainty until about 30 years ago.

Then Archaeological excavations at Khirbet el-Maqatir led by Dr. Bryant Wood in 1995 found solid evidence this was the correct place.

**So the men went up and spied out Ai. <sup>3</sup> Then they returned to Joshua and said to him, have *only* about 2 or 3 thousand men go up and attack Ai; for they are few.**

The spies were right about their being few men.

See Joshua 8:25

This city of 12,000 would only consist of around 2,400 men.

**<sup>5</sup> And the men of Ai struck and killed about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them on the mountainside; and the hearts of the people melted and became like water.**

Israel was fortunate that only 36 men died, it could have been many more. But it was enough to get their attention.

Verses 6 - 9

**<sup>6</sup> Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the ground on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, *both* he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. <sup>7</sup> And Joshua said, “Oh, Lord God! Why did You ever bring this people across the Jordan, *only* to hand us over to the Amorites, to eliminate us? If only we had been willing to live beyond the Jordan! <sup>8</sup> O Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned *their* back before their enemies? <sup>9</sup> For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear about it, and they will surround us and eliminate our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?”**

**<sup>7</sup> And Joshua said, “Oh, Lord God! Why did You ever bring this people across the Jordan, *only* to hand us over to the Amorites, to eliminate us?”**

Rather than questioning Gods motives, perhaps Joshua should have asked God why Israel had been defeated.

**For the Canaanites will hear about it, and they will surround us and eliminate our name from the earth**

Joshua realized the effect that this could have on their enemies. Instead of being steeped in fear about Israel the Canaanites spirit could be renewed.

Verses 10 - 15

**<sup>10</sup> So the Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? <sup>11</sup> Israel has sinned, and they have also violated My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things designated for destruction, and have both stolen and kept *it* a secret. Furthermore, they have also put *them* among their own things. <sup>12</sup> Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand against their enemies; they turn *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become designated for destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you eliminate from your midst the things designated for destruction.**

**<sup>13</sup> Stand up! Consecrate the people and say, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, because the Lord, the God of Israel, has said this: “There are things designated for destruction in your midst, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you have removed the designated things from your midst.” <sup>14</sup> So in the morning you shall come forward by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the Lord selects by lot shall come forward by families, and the family which the Lord selects shall come forward by households, and the household which the Lord selects shall come forward man by man. <sup>15</sup> And it shall be that the one who is selected with the things designated for destruction shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has violated the covenant of the Lord, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.’”**

**So the Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? <sup>11</sup> Israel has sinned, and they have also violated My covenant**

God instructed Joshua to get up because he was not to blame for this tragedy.

But why would Joshua think he was the one that had done something wrong?

1. Had he been over-confident by only sending 3000 men.
2. Maybe he had failed to consult with God.

His only failure was not going to God to find out what had gone wrong.

**I will not be with you anymore unless you eliminate from your midst the things designated for destruction**

The only items to be saved from destruction belonged to God so this was a matter of theft and deception.

It may seem odd that the sin of one man could break the covenant with all of Israel but most people would agree that one bad apple can spoil the whole barrel.

**<sup>14</sup> So in the morning you shall come forward by your tribes, by families, by households, by man.**

The casting of lots was used to determine who was guilty.

See Proverbs 16:33

**<sup>15</sup> And it shall be that the one who is selected with the things designated for destruction shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him**

He was not burned to death. Rather he was stoned to death and then burned.

See Joshua 7:25

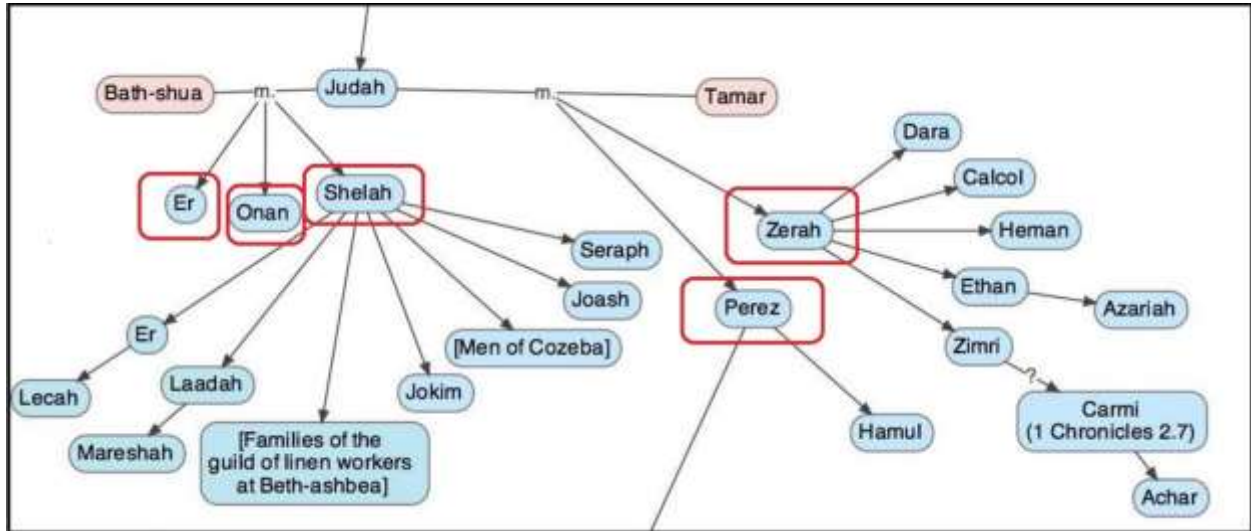
Being burned to death may have been seen as cruel and unusual punishment.

Verses 16 - 21

**<sup>16</sup> So Joshua got up early in the morning and brought Israel forward by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was selected. <sup>17</sup> So he brought the family of Judah forward, and he selected the family of the Zerahites; then he brought the family of the Zerahites forward man by man, and Zabdi was selected. <sup>18</sup> And he brought his household forward man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was selected. <sup>19</sup> Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me." <sup>20</sup> So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: <sup>21</sup> when I saw among the spoils a beautiful robe from Shinar, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I wanted them and took them; and behold, they are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."**

<sup>16</sup> So Joshua brought Israel forward by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was selected. <sup>17</sup> So he brought the family of Judah forward, and he selected the family of the Zerahites

See chart 715

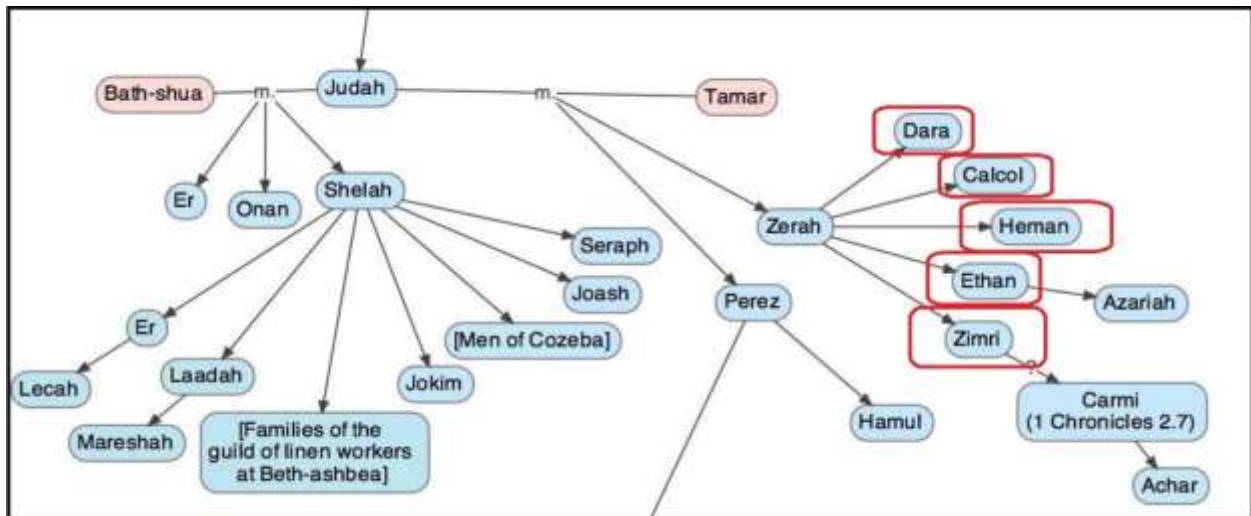


Judah had 5 sons but 2 of his sons (Er & Onan) had died in Canaan.

See Gen. 46:12

**Then Zabdi was selected**

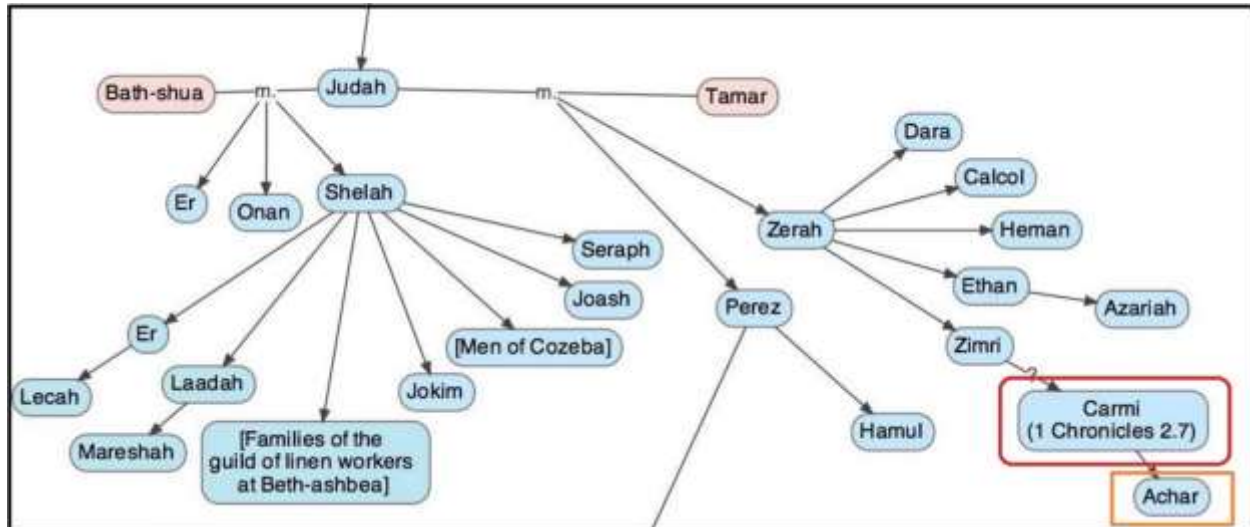
See chart 720



Most likely Zabdi is another spelling of Zimri

<sup>18</sup> And he brought his household forward man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was selected.

See chart 725



The odds of Achan being picked out of all of Israel would be 1 out of 2.5 million

But when God is directing it the odds become 1 out of 1.

**So Achan answered Joshua and said, “Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel**

It is good that he repented of his sin before his death and it appears that it was an honest and heart felt confession.

But just because a sin is forgiven doesn't mean it goes unpunished. King David repented of his sin with Bathsheba and was forgiven by God but he still suffered the consequences for that sin.

**When I saw among the spoils a beautiful robe from Shinar, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I wanted them and took them; and behold, they are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”**

He saw, he wanted, he took.

These were the same steps taken by Eve in the Garden of Eden.



## **A beautiful robe from Shinar**

Shinar is the name given to Babylon by the Hebrews.

It was probably the robe of the king or a high official.

Achan is called Achar in 1 Chronicles 2:7

This may be a deliberate play on words since Achar means trouble.

Verses 22 - 26

**<sup>22</sup> So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath it. <sup>23</sup> So they took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel; and they laid them out before the Lord. <sup>24</sup> Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup> And Joshua said, “Why have you brought disaster on us? The Lord will bring disaster on you this day.” And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. <sup>26</sup> Then they erected over him a large heap of stones *that stands to this day*, and 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.**

**<sup>24</sup> Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the Valley of Achor**

It is difficult to read this account and not feel somewhat sick to your stomach because of the incredible loss.

This judgment included his children (at least 4 and possibly more).

His wife is not mention, but if she was still alive, she would be included.

If he had been just a little more patient this judgment could have been avoided because in the following battles God granted the Israelites the spoils of war.



**<sup>25</sup> And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. <sup>26</sup> Then they erected over him a large heap of stones *that stands to this day***

Under normal conditions this was against the law.

See Deuteronomy 24:16

**<sup>16</sup> “Fathers shall not be put to death for *their* sons, nor shall sons be put to death for *their* fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin *alone*.**

However, in this particular case, God had specifically commanded the execution.

It is also possible that the family was in agreement with their father and had participated in the deception.

Some people struggle with the punishment not fitting the crime but God may have done this to teach them a lesson at a critical time.

There were other situations that would fit under this kind of action.

1. The man put to death for collecting wood on the Sabbath

See Numbers 15

2. When Uzzah touched the Ark to steady it and was put to death.

See 2 Samuel 6

3. When Ananias and Sapphira lied about their giving.

See Acts 5