

Introduction: As we begin our new sermon series on Sunday afternoons in the book of Joshua, we cannot but marvel at the grace of God in those days of Israel's triumphant entrance into Canaan. This is a good lesson for us when we have days of success and blessing! Israel had waited through forty years of their parents' unbelief and disobedience, and now can enjoy this land flowing with milk and honey! But even in the Promised Land, their successes would need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, and their mouths were to avoid any of the boasting - as if they had earned this inheritance in Canaan. May God teach us much about such necessary humility in these Bible notes.

Mon/Tues/Weds: read Joshua 5:1-15. We begin this triumphant period of the Old Testament, in which God's people were finally given a place in this world where they could live safely in the midst of hostile surrounding nations, by focusing not on Joshua, *but on Christ*, who appears to Joshua at the end of Joshua 5 as the "commander of the armies of the Lord". When Christ reveals Himself there, Joshua fittingly obeys the summons to remove his sandals and worships this Divine personage (Josh 5:14-15).

Why did the Son of God appear in the book of Joshua? Well, because it was *He* who first appeared in the burning bush when the promises of God's covenant were renewed with Moses in Exodus 3 - including the promise to rescue the Hebrews from Egypt and bring them into the land God chose for them to inherit - Canaan. As Stephen tells us in *his* exposition of the burning bush in Acts 7:30-34, the One who appeared at the bush was "the Angel of the Lord" (v. 30), who speaks as the LORD *Himself*, and as the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (v. 31-33)! It is in this Angel's clearly identifying Himself as the LORD that we come to see that this visible revelation of God *could not be God the Father*. As Jesus says, "no one has seen the Father" (John 6:46), nor the Spirit, who with the Father must only be worshipped "in Spirit and in Truth" (John 4:24). Only the Son of God could be called the LORD and at the same time appear in visible form - not the other members of the Trinity - not the Spirit or the Father.

Meditate and Pray: Thank God the Father for giving us a Savior who keeps His covenant promises and who is Himself eternally co-equal with the Father and the Spirit! No other Savior would do. For God alone could bridge the gap between us in our sin, and God the Father in Heaven. This then is the GOD-man whom we worship as our Savior - the LORD Jesus Christ, who even in days of old condescended to redeem His people "from all evil" (Genesis 48:15-16)!

Thurs/Fri: read Joshua 5:13-15 and Hebrews 11:29-31. We continue to seek answers as to why the Son of God appeared to Joshua in chapter 5:13-15. The first reason is to renew the covenant with Abraham, in which God promised to give Abraham's descendants the Promised Land (Genesis 15:16). We saw yesterday how God *renewed* this promise of the land of Canaan at the burning bush, where, in the person of the 'Angel of the LORD', He assured Moses that He would indeed bring the Hebrews into that land, 'flowing with milk and honey' (Exodus 3:7-8).

But there's more. God's Son also had an interest in appearing here in Joshua 5 because *it is His special task* to judge the nations - including the Canaanites who would be destroyed under Joshua. As Paul declares in Acts 17:31, the message of the whole Bible is that God has "appointed a day in which He will judge the world by the Man from Heaven, Christ Jesus". So then, Christ *appeared in human form in the Old Testament to personally judge the wicked who rejected His Father and His work of salvation*.

If we need other examples of this, consider Genesis 18, where the "LORD" sends two angels to Sodom to rescue Lot from the wicked cities of the plain before He, as the 'Angel of the LORD' destroys them. Consider also how this same 'Angel' "looks down from Heaven" in Exodus 14:19-24, causing the chariot wheels of the Egyptians to sink in the mud of the Red Sea.

Our conclusion is that, *throughout* the Old Testament, the Son of God appears to redeem His own and judge His foes! Such judgement falls on the Amorites as Israel enters Canaan under Joshua – for it is the Amorites who dwell in the doomed city Jericho. Their cup of sin is now full, and the only Amorites who will be saved are Rahab and her family, since the rest for 400 years have been “disobedient” to God’s revealed glory, righteousness and grace (Hebrews 11:31).

Meditate and Pray: “*LORD God, forgive us that, as your church, we so often confuse the Old and New Testaments! We so often see only judgment in the Old, and therefore need to see your sovereign mercy to save sinners like Rahab. And we can fall prey to the Modernist’s view of the New, in which Jesus is flaccid, tolerant of wrongdoing and full of a worldly love which winks at sin. Thank you that in the New Testament, He is the One who will judge the world. There will be no excuses to which unbelievers can flee, when they see that they will be judged by the Man who understands them through and through!*”

Since such judgment under Christ’s piercing eyes is such a reality, we would with the Psalmist ask Him to, “search us and try us, and see if there by any wicked way in us” (Psalm 139:23-24)! Lord, cause us to be convicted of our soul-destroying sins now so that we do not suffer the terrible end of Jericho when exposed to your all-searching eye! We pray this in the name of the One whose ‘flaming eyes’ search all of us (Rev. 1:14), Amen.”

Sat/Sun: read Joshua 2:8-13 and John 20:24-31. Surely one of the most striking facts of Rahab’s conversion to saving faith in the God of Israel is that her faith was born solely by the Word of God, in the hands of the Holy Spirit. There were no miraculous appearances; no ecstatic religious experiences; no mere emotional crisis nor even any *human* exposition of the Word in her ears – as important as all such activities are, *in their proper place and time.*

It was *only* the simple yet awe-inspiring account of God’s mighty deeds of redemption and judgment which cut her to the heart with a holy fear and then moved her to bow the knee to the God of Israel. As she says to the spies in Joshua 2:10-11: “When we heard of God’s mighty judgments against Pharaoh king of Egypt and the Amorite kings Sihon and Og, our hearts literally ‘melted’ or ‘liquefied!’”

Meditate and Pray: Let us close this week’s notes, asking that in our day as in the days of Rahab, the power of God’s Word would again demonstrate itself, in the cutting to the quick, pagan, immoral sinners such as Rahab, so that they, along with us, confess the truth of her words, “For the Lord your God is God in heaven above and earth below.”

Further reflection: Isn’t it also beautiful that Rahab received the accolade which Jesus gives to those who “have not seen” yet have believed (John 20:29)? May God save us from the carnal demands which made Thomas so unbelieving until given the opportunity to touch Jesus’ wounds, and only when he saw Christ would believe! More about him in next week’s notes!