

## The Destruction of Jericho

Speaking of the coming day of Judgment, Yahweh spake through his prophet:

***“a noise*** shall come even to the ends of the earth; for Yahweh ***hath a controversy with the nations***, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith Yahweh” (Jer. 25:31).

At this time of the “noise”, we are told of the European political and religious system falling:

***“there were voices***, and thunders and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the face of the earth, so mighty and earthquake and so great: and the great city was divided into three parts, ***and the cities of the nations fell***” (Rev. 16:18-19)

This day is characterized by the “noise” and “voices” that vocalize the wrath of the Almighty, with “the cities of the nations” – specifically the symbolic city of Babylon the Great – falling under His Judgments. In our readings for the day, we are taken to Jericho, and the fall of this city under divine judgments as Israel went forth to take up the inheritance promised to them. As we yearn for the time when we shall be given our inheritance, we can learn much from Israel of old, and the circumstances surrounding the destruction of Jericho under the “voice” of the people. As we prepare ourselves for the coming day of judgment, we, like the Gentile Rahab, can rest assured that we will be delivered from the “wrath to come” (1 Thes. 1:10), and be granted a place in the Kingdom that will replace the dominions of man.

Exodus chapter 23 contains an assurance that when the people were to contend against the nations, they would not do so alone. An Angel was appointed to go before them, and bring them into the land:

“Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared ... for mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off” (Exo. 23:20, 23).

There is a principle here: we cannot successfully war against the flesh with our own power: we need a deliverer to help us, and obtain the victory for us. So, it is that in the passage that forms part of our readings for the day, Joshua – the captain of Yahweh’s Host on earth – is brought face to face with the Angel - the captain of Yahweh’s Host in heaven, who identified himself thus:

“as the captain of the host of Yahweh am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant” (Josh 5:14).

So it was that Joshua humbled himself before the Angel, and would come against the nations under his command.

In a similar way, we shall also obtain our inheritance by obeying the voice of our Captain. For the believers, the Lord Jesus Christ is “the captain of their salvation” (Heb. 2:10), and he has gone before to prepare a place for us:

“... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ...” (Jno. 14:3)

The Angel, we are told, would not speak of himself, but would speak the words of the Almighty:

“... my name is in him ... if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries” (Exo. 23:21,22)

Even so, Messiah declared:

“... the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (Jno. 14:10).

Returning to the example of Jericho as a city destined for destruction, we are told that the city “was straitly shut up because of the Children of Israel: none went out, and none went in” (Josh. 6:1). The city was “shut up” for seven days, before the walls fell, and the people of Israel would destroy it. Interestingly, under the Law of Moses, a leprous house was likewise shut up for 7 days. After inspecting the house, it is written that “then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, **and shut up the house seven days:** And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look ...” (Lev. 14:38-39), and if the plague had spread, the diseased stones would be removed. Then, if the plague continued, the entire edifice would be utterly destroyed. Jericho was, as it were, a diseased house, with all of the stones affected – except the house of a certain harlot. But whereas in the case of a diseased house, the diseased stones were removed for the rest of the house to be kept whole, in the case of Rahab, her family were removed from the city devoted to destruction, that they would be spared. The entire city was spiritually leprous, and so the clean stones were taken, and brought without the camp, to be spared in that day.

For six days, the priests and the mighty men of war were to march around the city in silence:

“Joshua commanded the people, saying, ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day that I bid you shout; then shall ye shout” (Josh. 6:10).

The first six days were days of silence. Interestingly, the prophet Ezekiel was also to keep silence, until commanded to speak God’s words. The days in which we live are days of silence: where the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. “these things hast thou done, **and I kept silence;** thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself” (Psa. 50:21).

But the days are coming when the voice God shall sound out in judgment, to vindicate His People: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him” (Psa. 50:3).

In that day, it is written that:

“the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with *a shout*, with *the voice of the Archangel*, and with *the Trump* of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first ...” (1 Thes. 4:16).

Notice these three points: a shout and a voice – like the people’s shout against Jericho, the Archangel – like the Captain of Yahweh’s Host that would give thee victory, and the sounding of the Trumpet – like the priest’s sounding the trumpet 7 times before the walls collapsed. So, the overthrow of Jericho foreshadows the judgment to come upon the nations.

Joshua chapter 6 describes the way in which the walls of the city would fall – and in a very interesting way:

“when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat ...” (Josh. 6:5, see also vs 20). Notice, the marginal rendering of the words “shall fall down flat”: as “fall down under it”. Under what? Under the shout of Israel against the city!

Here we have the principle established, that “... we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4). Notice the allusion: the pulling down of the stronghold of sin – Jericho – was not accomplished through the use of carnal weapons. It was the Word spoken, the cry of Israel against that city, that effected it’s destruction.

### ***RAHAB THE HARLOT***

In the days to come, the city to be destroyed is described as: “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5). But ironically, in the case of Jericho, it was a harlot that was saved in the day of destruction. It is written:

“the wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand” (Prov. 12:7).

So it was that the house of a repentant harlot stood tall, whilst the rest of the walls fell down.

The record in Hebrews recounts how that the walls of Jericho collapsed through the faith of those who shouted:

“by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she received the spies with peace” (Heb. 11:30-31).

The expression “them that believed not” implies that they had the opportunity to believe, but did not. Rahab herself demonstrates that the inhabitants of Jericho had heard of the God of Israel, and His mighty power:

*“we have heard* how Yahweh dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed” (Josh. 2:10).

Beholding the power of Israel’s God, the people of Jericho should have believed, and submitted themselves to Him, yet the only ones who had faith were Rahab – of the vilest kind of woman - and her household.

James chapter 2 speaks of the faith of Rahab, along with the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Here we see both extremities of humankind, a supremely faithful and rich man, and a common prostitute - illustrating the point that Yahweh is no respecter of persons. Verse 25 reads:

“Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she had receive the messengers, and had sent them out another way?” (Jas. 2:25).

Rahab was justified through manifesting faith in works. She believed in Israel’s God, and so when the “messengers” came, she hid them in faith, rather than to turn them over to the authorities of Jericho. In human terms, what she did was treason: to sympathize with the enemy, and the power of the enemy’s Deity to destroy the city. But in divine terms, she showed no allegiance to the kingdom of sin, and instead trusted that she would have an inheritance with Israel – and how interesting it is then, that she became a mother of Jesus Christ, having married into the nation! Also interesting are the words of Messiah to the leaders of his day: “Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and *the harlots* go into the kingdom of God before you” (Mat. 21:31) – and here, Christ was going from Jericho to Jerusalem!

### ***ACHAN THE THIEF***

By contrast to the faithful harlot, Achan was a man of Israel, yet one who was covetous. Yahweh through Moses had given the command concerning Israel as they went into the land:

“He shall deliver their king into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven ... the graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: *thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them*, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snare therein: for it is an abomination to Yahweh thy God. *Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house*; lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing” (Deut. 7:24-26).

These proscribed things match the example of Achan. He stole from that which was to be used in the service of Yahweh. Purified by passing through the fire, the silver and gold were to be used in the Tabernacle service, as described in Joshua 6:24. But he “desired” it for himself. Giving a confession before Joshua, he said:

“When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it” (Jos. 9:21).

The spoils of war were given to Israel later, but the principle to be observed in the overthrow of Jericho is similar to that of the firstfruits. The overthrow of Jericho marked the beginning of their possession of the land, and so the spoils of war went to Yahweh first – so it was that Achan stole from Yahweh. The punishment is described in verses 24 & 25:

“Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and his daughters, and his oxen and his asses, and his sheep and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them into the valley of Achor” (Josh. 7:24).

The valley of Achor became the place of execution for Achan, who was stoned with his family, and all that appertained to him. Interestingly however, this verse does not mention Achan’s wife, although he had sons and daughters. Could it be that she separated herself from his crime, and so was spared?

The valley of Achor is a subject of prophecy elsewhere, speaking of the future blessing of the land:

“and I will give her her vineyards from thence, **and the valley of Achor for a door of hope**: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt” (Hos. 2:15).

The place of Achan’s theft will no longer be a place of cursing, but of blessing. Achan confessed his sin, and so gave glory to God (see Josh. 7:19), and whatever may come of Achan in terms of his ultimate salvation, Israel as a nation were in a similar state. They sought the things that they lusted after, and not the glorification of their God. Yet they shall be brought to repentance and confession, and it is written of that day that “then shall Yahweh go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle” (Zech. 14:3). When Israel repents, then Yahweh will fight for his people as at the first, and the valley of Achor shall be the scene of national blessing, rather than the place of execution for the troubler.

As we have already seen, the time of judgment was also a time of faith, salvation, and inheritance to a certain one who had committed herself to Israel’s God. We find then, that:

“Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her fathers’ household, and all that she had, and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho”

The book of Hebrews speaks of our salvation in terms reminiscent of that of Rahab:

“for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb. 13:14).

Rahab recognized that her city was not to “continue”, but would be destroyed, and she trusted in Israel’s God for her salvation, and married into the nation of Israel.

There are many points of exhortation we can learn from these things. As we began by saying, we are living in the days when Yahweh shall have a controversy with the nations, and with a particular symbolic city – latter day Babylon the Great. The walls of that city, and all of the cities of the earth shall fall at the command/shout of the Lord, the captain of our salvation. We are, as it were, in Rahab’s situation. We have no continuing city in this dispensation, and we long for the heavenly Jerusalem to come. As Gentiles, we have no natural inheritance of Israel, yet we become joined to Israel’s hope, by becoming a bride, to share the inheritance of her lord and husband. We long for the time when the kingdoms of this world shall fall, commencing with the destruction of the catholic harlot-city and look forward to the days that lie beyond the judgments, to the blessings of the kingdom age. In that day, our voices will sound out loudly, and joyfully with great joy that the walls of the latter day Jericho shall fall. We ought not to be like Achan who sought after the prosperity of this life, but we should serve Yahweh, and devote our entire selves to the glorification of His Name. Then, when Messiah comes, he shall lead us to take up our inheritance with him in glory, in Jerusalem.

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