

Jesus our Joshua (9)

The Treasury of the Lord. Joshua 6:12-21.

“All the silver and the gold... are sacred to the Lord and must go into his treasury” (v19)

Jesus said, **“You cannot serve God and wealth” (Luke 16:13)**

Darkest Conquest

Henry Halley suggests that at the time of the initial exodus nearly 3 million people had left Egypt. Only two of that number, Caleb and Joshua entered Canaan. Others were **‘overthrown’** in the wilderness. Alan Redpath in *‘The Royal Route to Heaven ,’* points out that the same word is used in that graphic incident when Jesus entered the Temple and confronted people exchanging money and selling goods. Both the Temple money changers, and the first encounter on the edge of Canaan led to the Israelites being *scattered, overthrown* because of their unbelief. Instead of taking Canaan, the next generation would become the instrument of judgement.

In spelling out the tragedy of Israel Paul points out four things. Lust, idolatry, fornication, and unbelief. These same characteristics still trouble the church and believers in our time. (I Cor 10:1-14)

In some respects, the campaign in Canaan was the dark ages of the Old Testament. It was a ‘holy-war’ marked by the extermination of a pagan culture. The evil temples of Baal and Ashtroreth involved idolatry, prostitution, brutality, and child sacrifice. The city, its inhabitants and all that it contained were treated as accursed because the people were addicted occult idolaters given to another deity. It was a sort of Sodom and Gomorrah on a national scale.

In its advance Israel was to keep itself from lust, coveting and anything that would contaminate them. (Joshua 6:17-18). The city and the vices of its people were accursed (v 26) and were to be utterly destroyed. (Duet 7:25-26, 12:1-5) Joshua explained that there was to be no looting at all. This was not a matter of plunder and booty for Israel. Everything belonged to and was to be devoted to Jehovah who gave the victory. Gold, silver, bronze was to be collected and put in the Holy treasury.

This was not simply a lust for blood or a ruthless savagery. It was as if the city and all its people were contaminated. So, it became sacrilege for anything to be taken from the ruins. Everything taken from Jericho had to be utterly devoted to the Lord.(v 17). Daily contact with Canaanite culture would threaten their faith in a unique, all-powerful God and their moral position.

Rahab the Spy

As heathen people Rahab and her family were ceremonially unclean. They were placed outside the Israelite camp so they could be cleansed from the defilement of their idolatries and superstition which she had renounced (See Joshua 6:25, Num 31 v 19)

Illuminating Worship

Just being obedient followers of Joshua did not bring victory or wealth. God was at the head of the army (Joshua 5:13) Alongside of awesome devastation and judgement

all the wealth of Jericho was claimed and went into the Lord's treasury. While today the nations of the world harvest the bounty of the natural world, this goodness and people everywhere rightly belong to God. Therefore, it was always expected that God would receive the first fruit of the land, of each family and of the mind and body (Ex 23:16-19, Mark 12:29-30)

When the Lord conquered Jericho, Israel was there to gather into God's treasury those things that rightly belonged to him. So, Jericho completely belonged to God, everybody, and soul in life and in death.

By the terrible atrocity and judgement of his death Jesus Christ brings us and the people of God into God's treasure house. (John 19:28-30, Rom 5)--- Yet as Christians we don't just give the Lord the first fruits of what we have and are, *but everything*--- our lives, our thoughts, our youth, our loves, our wealth, our old age, **all belong to the Lord's treasury**. We totally belong to him totally.

Being made one with Christ, belonging to him may not make us wealthy, but it opens us to a new, rich dimension of life. We have moved from being those under condemnation and judgement to those who share in the Lord's treasury. We belong to him in totality. This becomes the rich evidence that God fulfils his Covenant even to us (Deut 7:7-9)

We give you but your own, what ever that gift may be. All that we have is yours alone, a trust, O lord from Thee. M.H.B.>923. William Walsham How 1823-97.

Discussion and Reflection.

(1) Why does the church still become self-indulgent, tolerant, comfortable with sin ? Paul called the Corinthians to triumphant discipleship. 'They had been---- idolaters, fornicators, etc --- *'But you were washed,' etc.* There was transformation, a clear line of demarcation. **Where is that line in our lives? How can we celebrate and remember who we are in Christ?**

(2) In an age of hunger, the God revealed in Scripture is always at work seeking to 'set at liberty those who are oppressed.' **Discuss:** (Luke 4:18) *'Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger,' p31. Ronald J. Sider.* Only if we are thoroughly grounded in the spiritual view of possessions, wealth and poverty will we adopt an obedient lifestyle!

(3) If Israel had a *price to pay* and a *harvest to reap* how much more will this be true of us? Our victory is the gift of God. It is not something we win, but something we *receive* as a gift from God. **See 2 Peter 1:4. Discuss:** "Being good followers of Jesus may not make us wealthy, but it brings us into the Lord's treasury so that we own 'the cattle on a thousand hills.'" "

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