

## Sermon Outline

### **“AND THE LORD GAVE THEM REST”: A CHRISTIAN READING OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA**

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#### THE LORD WAS WITH JOSHUA (JOSHUA 6:26-27)

#### **I. Reading Joshua in Light of the Ascended Son**

- A. We have just completed a series on the life of our Lord Jesus, ending on the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ and on the pouring of the Holy Spirit respectively.  
—The whole life of Christ fulfils the Old Testament.
- B. That truth has implications for how we interpret the Old Testament.
  - 1. As Christians, we do not read the Old Testament simply as Jews would.
  - 2. We read with the recognition that Christ is the great Conclusion to the Old Testament.
  - 3. All the grand themes of the Old Testament—prophetic leadership, the importance of covenant obedience, salvation—come together in the person of our Lord Jesus.
  - 4. Thus, all our readings in the Old Testament must be guided by that truth.  
—In other words, when we read a passage in the Old Testament, especially the major texts and episodes, we must recognize that somehow, someway, it points us to look to Christ.
- C. This is why I have entitled our study in Joshua, “A Christian Reading of the Book of Joshua.”  
—We must read Joshua as one step of that ladder that brings us closer to our Savior, Jesus.
- D. It is also worth noting that the name “Joshua” (*Yehoshua*) is one variation of the name “Jesus” (*Yeshua*)
  - 1. Both names mean “YHWH Is Salvation.”
  - 2. Jesus is the ultimate Joshua.
    - a. Unlike the Old Testament Joshua, Jesus doesn’t bring a temporary salvation from earthly enemies.
    - b. Jesus brings ultimate and final salvation—salvation from guilt, from sin, from the righteous anger of God, and from the very powers of evil.
- E. We must see Joshua for who he is.
  - 1. He is one of many heralds of the Lord Jesus.
  - 2. In Joshua as well as every great leader of God’s people, we see something of who Jesus will be.
- F. The final question at the back of our minds is: How does Joshua show us Jesus?

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Since Jesus is the Fulfilment of the hopes of Israel, how are Christians to read the Old Testament? (2) How is Joshua a herald of Jesus Christ?

#### **II. Cursed Be the Rebuilder of Jericho (Joshua 6:26)**

- A. We now find ourselves at the end of the Jericho campaign.
  - 1. God has kept his promise to Israel.
  - 2. He has broken down the walls of Jericho.
  - 3. In so doing, God has shown his people that he will always come through for them if they would trust in him.

- B. In the fall of Jericho, we are treated to a glimpse of the Day of Judgment.
1. God will come with his holy ones, and judge the evil nations of the world.
  2. Just as God led Israel against Jericho, the Lord Jesus will lead us against the World in the final conflict.
  3. But just as God brought down the walls of Jericho without Israel's help, the Lord Jesus who bring the judgment, not we ourselves.
  4. In the end, the battle is ultimately always the Lord's, not the Church's.
- C. So, now that we have some understanding of the main truths embedded inside this episode of history, let's see how this episode ends.
- D. Right after we are told in verse 25 that Rahab and her family were saved, we come to 3:26.
1. Joshua imposes an oath on Israel: "Cursed before the LORD be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho."
  2. A curse is "a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something" (Oxford Dictionary).
  3. In Israel, a curse is a form of divine punishment.
  4. So when Joshua pronounces a curse in 3:26, he is not acting superstitiously.
    - a. Joshua is speaking as God's prophet.
    - b. Thus, the curse he pronounces is not his own curse, but *God's*.
- E. To whom does this curse apply?  
—"the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho."
- F. And the punishments are severe indeed.
1. "At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation..."
  2. "...and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates."
- G. But why such harsh measures? There are two factors that go into this.
1. There is the issue of the ban (*herem*).
    - a. God had placed Jericho under the ban of his condemnation.
    - b. Therefore, any attempt to rebuild Jericho immediately falls under the terms of the ban.  
—The person will share in the punishment that God has placed on this city.
  2. Secondly there is the issue of what Jericho actually represents.
    - a. It represents the World that is in rebellion to God.
    - b. For this reason, to rebuild Jericho is really to an attempt to reverse God's judgment and raise up Satan's kingdom.
    - c. So we can see why God takes rebuilding Jericho so seriously.  
—God is stating firmly that he will not tolerate evil.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How does the Jericho campaign show us the Day of Judgment? (2) What is the significance of the curse in the context of Israel? How does the curse relate to God? (3) To whom does Joshua's curse apply? (4) Why is the curse so harsh?

### III. Stand With God Against Sin and the World

- A. What can the Church learn from this decisive act on the part of God?
1. We learn that God wants us to stand very firmly against the evil of the World.
    - a. God wants us to distance ourselves from and stand against the evil ways of the World.
    - b. Where we find ourselves following the World, God wants us to repent and separate ourselves from such actions.
  2. 1 John 2:15 is appropriate here: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."
- B. But there lies the struggle, does it not?

1. Our struggle against the World is truly a complex and lifelong battle.
    - a. This is because God has not yet removed us from the World.
    - b. This is because the evil World permeates most of human culture.
  2. But without ever denying the complexities involved with struggling against the World, there is still such a thing as the Kingdom of God and the regime of Satan.
- C. Therefore, there is still a place for separation from sin.
1. Christians must make sure that the World does not gain a place in our hearts.
  2. Although we may be exposed to the wicked ways of the World, that does *not* mean we have to love the World or do what it tells us to do.
  3. One passage that helps us understand how Christians should relate to the World is John 17:15.
 

—Jesus prays: “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.”
  4. Jesus’ words help us to understand 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 (quoting Isaiah 52:11): “Therefore go out from their midst, and *be separate from them*, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing...”
    - a. For now, the separation God requires of us is not a separation of physical locality.
    - b. But we can, by the power of his Holy Spirit, be separated from evil ways and attitudes of the World.
- D. So the oath that Joshua imposes on Israel is a call to the Church of Christ to continue standing against sin, against the rule of the Evil One.
- Just as our Israelite forefathers resisted Canaan, we Christians today will continue to resist the World.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How is the curse on Jericho instructive for the Church today? (2) What makes the struggle against the World so difficult and complex? (3) How does the evil of the World show up at your workplace?

#### IV. The Lord Was with Joshua (Joshua 6:27)

- A. But what gives us the strength to resist the World?
1. The clue is in 6:27: “So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.”
  2. The “secret” of Joshua’s success was not just a principle, or a moral code, but a Person, the Lord God himself.
- B. Who is the Lord?
1. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth.
  2. He is the rightful Landlord of all lands.
  3. He is the divine Patron of Israel—Israel’s very own covenant God.
- C. It is because of the Lord that Joshua is virtually indestructible.
1. With the Lord behind him and before him, Joshua has become a regional superpower!
 

—Romans 8:31: “If God is for us, who can be against us?”
  2. God has been true to the promise he made to Joshua at the very start: “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses” (Josh 1:3).

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Who gives us the strength to resist the World? (2) Who is the Lord God of Joshua? (3) How does Joshua 1:3 relate to Joshua 6:27?

#### V. Christ Jesus, Our Greater Joshua

- A. But standing on this side of the cross, we also know that an even greater Joshua has come.
1. Our Joshua is the Lord Jesus Christ.
  2. Christ is the perfect Son of God, the ultimate prophet King who has fulfilled all of God's Law, who has died for the sins of his people, and who has been raised to the right hand of God the Father forever.
  3. For this reason, the fame of Jesus Christ is greater than even the Joshua of old.
    - a. While Joshua was famous "in all the land," our Lord Jesus is famous in both the earth *and* in the heavens.
    - b. This is what we learn from Philippians 2: God has exalted Jesus and crowned him with the title that is above every title, God's very own special Name, "the Lord."
    - c. Jesus Christ is now known as *the Lord* Jesus Christ, because the holiest Name in the universe has been placed on him.  
—For that reason, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil 2:10).
- B. The exaltation of Jesus to the Father's right hand is not merely the promotion of Jesus' human nature.  
—It is also the full revealing of who Jesus really is: He is the Lord himself.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Who is the Joshua of the Church today? (2) How is Jesus greater than Joshua? (3) How does Jesus' exaltation to the right hand of God reveal who he really is?

## VI. We Are Victorious Because of the Lord Jesus Christ

- A. How should all of this affect us?
1. The implications cannot be clearer: *Because God will never leave our Lord Jesus, we, the people of Jesus, will also share in his victory.*
  2. Unlike the old Joshua who was sinful, our Lord Jesus is perfect.
  3. This means we have an even greater salvation waiting for us.  
—Our victory cannot be lost because Jesus has completed everything that God gave him to do and has overcome the world.
- B. To assure us of this, listen to two promises of our Lord.
1. John 16:33: "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; *I have overcome the world.*"  
—If Jesus has overcome the world along with the evil cosmic powers that rule it, those who believe in him will do so as well.
  2. John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me *shall never die.*"  
—Just as Jesus conquered death, we who believe in him will conquer death as well.
- C. We find that we cannot look at Joshua without being directed back somehow to the Lord Jesus and to God the Father himself.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) "Because God will never leave our Lord Jesus, we, the people of Jesus, will also share in his victory." Discuss. (2) What promises from the Lord assure us that we will overcome the World as well? Do you accept these promises?

## VII. Courage! The Lord Is with Us!

- A. But I want to end today's message by applying this Scripture to another challenge that the World places on the Church—*discouragement*.

- B. How does the World discourage us?
  - 1. It discourages us by not listening to what the Church of Christ has to say.
  - 2. It discourages us by picking at the faults of the Church.
  - 3. It discourages us by intimidation.
- C. The Adversary is behind this discouragement.
- D. What is our only hope? It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Because Jesus has lived his life for us, died for our sins, and been raised from the dead to sit at God's right hand, God will always be with us and for us. He will always be with us because he is always with our Lord Jesus, his perfect Son. That is why we can lift up our heads and take courage. That is why we can think, talk, and live differently than the World. That is why we can try to lead the World back to God, and not simply follow it around.**

“Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me.”  
(from “The St. Patrick’s Breastplate Prayer”)

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Aside from temptation to sin, what is one other weapon the World deploys against the Church? (2) How does the World discourage the Church? How does the World discourage *you* as a Christian? (3) Who is really behind the discouragement and intimidation? (4) How does the Good News of Jesus Christ put courage into our hearts? (5) As you examine your own heart, do you discern this Gospel courage there? What can you do to be more strengthened and encouraged by the Gospel?