Joshua - Commentaries by Charles Stanley

Pamphlets, Shiloh

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The land had now rest from war. Israel were in the land. The Jordan had been crossed, the victory had been won. Surely this points to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He was risen from the river, from among the dead, but all believers are risen with Him, as all Israel passed over dry shod. It is as risen with Christ that we are in possession of the heavenlies, the true Canaan. The risen Christ is Shiloh.

Pamphlets, Rahab: Or, the Siege of Jericho

“Now Jericho was straitly shut up” (Josh. 6).

The iniquity of the Amorite was now full (Gen. 15:16). The time of righteous judgment had arrived. As this was the first of the doomed cities to be destroyed, God has been pleased to give us most interesting details, in which we shall find Himself revealed, both in grace and in judgment. The natural mind may in all this see only wrath and destruction; but the Spirit can reveal God in the richest display of grace. Yea, even in this scene of judgment.

If we turn to Joshua 2 we find Joshua sending two men to spy out the land. He may have had only thoughts of judgment; but God had thoughts of mercy, and the two spies are turned into evangelists. And now to show out the riches of the grace of God, and that no person can be found beyond the reach of mercy, a harlot is selected as the object of that grace. “They went, and come into an harlot’s house and lodged there.” There may have been no better place in that wicked city in which they could lodge. Who can tell the moral condition of that city, and of all the cities of Canaan? For four hundred years had God borne with the ever-increasing iniquity of the Amorites. This woman’s full character by nature comes out: not only is she a harlot, but it seems natural for her to lie. She deceived the king of Jericho, who sent to inquire after these men. Such is the sinner whom God in His grace delights to take up. Divine faith is communicated to her soul and repentance is wrought in her heart. She has self-judgment, and faith in God. She said to the men, “I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord 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 He utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Josh. 2:9-11). This was very striking, for at that moment Jericho abode in its strength. But faith knew, and the heart did utterly melt. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” “For the Lord your God,” said she, “He is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath.” Now is not this beautiful, such faith given to a lost sinner, in a city doomed to destruction?

And now her faith rises higher; she regards the two men as the servants of Jehovah, who cannot lie. Faith claims the kindness of Jehovah, “That ye will also show kindness unto my father’s house, and give me a true token: and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.” Faith seems to say, there is nothing too much to claim from God. Father, mother, brethren, sisters, and all that they have. Do you not think that that ancient faith of Rahab puts many of us to shame? Think of the grasp of that faith — there too in the city of destruction.

Well, God is equal to the utmost demand. He now responds to this noble faith, through His two evangelists, “And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.” She then let them down by a cord through the window. And they said, Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father’s household, home unto thee (vs. 18). Not only so, but pray note the two whosoevers. “And it shall be, that WHOSOEVER shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless; and WHOSOEVER shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And she said, According unto your words, so be it.” Is not this a wondrous display of grace which God pledges to whosoever takes refuge in the house of faith, in this doomed city of wickedness? Not a soul shall perish that takes refuge beneath the shelter of the scarlet line. This is very simple. Judgment is the certain doom of whosoever is found in the street of Jericho. Life and salvation, the assured portion of whosoever shall be found in the house of faith.

We will now pass on to the siege of Jericho. “Now Jericho was straitly shut up.” Is not this a striking figure of man’s present condition? What has been the state of this world for eighteen hundred years? Is it not guilty of the greatest possible sin — the rejection, and murder of the Son of God? What a vast Jericho this is, shut up in unbelief, and under judgment! “Every mouth stopped and all the world guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19), or “subject to the judgment of God.”

Has God ever opened your eyes, as He opened the eyes of Rahab? Has your heart ever melted at the thought of the certain judgment that is hastening? Let us return to Jericho shut up. There was no escape but through the house of faith. Every gate was closed, none went out, and none came in. It is so now, every gate is closed, law-gate, ritual-gate, works-gate, merit-gate — all are closed. Man is a sinner without strength. There is only one way of escape. What is it? For the king and all the mighty men of valor were given up to Joshua.

But what is the meaning of this compassing the city with trumpets of rams’ horns? “And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams’ horns; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they

make a long blast with the rams' horn, and 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, and the people shall ascend up before him. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord. And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord. And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. And Joshua had 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 I bid you shout: then shall ye shout. So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city. And the city shall be accursed, even it and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent" (Josh. 6:3-17). Is not this the long-suffering of our God, not willing that any should perish. Long had He borne with the wickedness of this city while Israel was in Egypt; and now the whosoever principle of divine grace must be fully tested. Rahab sees the destroying host approach the city. But what a strange sight — what can that object wholly of blue be? If we turn to Numbers 4:5 we shall learn: "And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it: and shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue."

It is the ark of the Lord with its blood-sprinkled mercy-seat covered with a cloth wholly of blue. Blue is the heavenly color. And was it not wholly of God that mercy should compass the city of destruction? Does not this seem to speak to us? "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now Rahab hears the sound of seven trumpets of rams' horns: from seven priests walking before the ark, as they pass on before the ark of the Lord. To her faith these would be the soft sweet sounds of mercy.

See her there persuading her old father to take shelter beneath the scarlet line. No sooner is he in, than that sweet word "whosoever" cheers her on; a mother — ah, it is not always the work of a moment to persuade a mother and a father to believe the bare word of God! and now, brothers and sisters.

The trumpets still sound; and the city is compassed the first day. I do not know how many are housed the first day; but not one of that household must be lost. Another day that ark of the Lord, with its covering of blue, and those seven trumpets sweetly sounding, must surround the doomed city. Oh, how our God delights in mercy! Now brother, now sister, now "whosoever"; oh, hasten to the house of safety! Blow, ye priests, blow softly and sweetly; it is our God that welcomes the sinner in. Do not shout or make a noise yet, these are days of mercy; count them one to seven; oh, how perfectly welcome all ye whosoevers, welcome every one. Blow, ye priests, for God is glorious in His mercy, heavenly and righteous all the city round.

Oh, how cheered is believing Rahab! See her gathering in the crowd. All are welcome, whosoever, everyone. Early in the dawn of the morning, they take the ark, and sound the trumpets, wakening notes of threatening judgments to the ears of unbelief. Continually they blow the trumpets; God would have it so. Oh, the heart of God! not a child of faith should perish, not one be left behind. Six days did they thus compass the devoted city — not one day, but seven days, did the ark, emblem of God's throne of mercy, compass the city.

But this is not enough. The mercy of God must be manifested to the utmost. On that seventh day, that last day of long-suffering, forbearance, and mercy, those trumpets must sound the blasts of judgment, and strains of mercy, seven times around the city. And now the last trumpet must sound. The last soul is gathered to the place of safety. The great shout is heard, and then the sudden crash of judgment comes, and not one found in the streets of Jericho escaped. Where now is Rahab, and all that took shelter beneath the shadow of the scarlet line? Will God fail to fulfill the word of His servants, that they would deal kindly and truly with her?

In God's dealing with her kindly and truly, two things must be observed. She was brought out; and she was brought in. Out from the city of destruction — in to the privileges of Israel. "And the young men went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had, and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein." Kindly and truly as God did thus deal with this child of faith, and all with her, yet if this had been all, it would come far short as a picture of the exceeding grace of God to us. "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's 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." Thus was she brought out, and thus was she brought in. Saved out of, and from the doom of Jericho; brought into all the royal privileges of Israel. Grace translated the harlot of Jericho into the most honored mother in Israel — a mother in that royal line from whom David, and David's greater son was born. She became the wife of Salmon, the father of Boaz. (Matt. 1:5). Kindly and truly did God deal with her, and, to all in that city of wickedness who believed the word of Jehovah.

I would now ask my reader to notice in this beautiful history, four things, which strikingly illustrate the sinner shut up under judgments; the sinner brought into the place of safety; the saint brought out of the place of judgment; the saint brought into the privileges of the church of God.

We have seen Jericho straitly shut up. And though the trumpet of warning and mercy blew long, yet the terrible crash of judgment came at last. It was similar in the days of Noah, when the long-suffering of God waited one hundred and twenty years. But at last the flood came and destroyed them all. Again in the days of Lot, what a night of wickedness; and though the sun arose once more in all its eastern splendor on the doomed city; yet when Lot was out of Sodom, God rained fire and brimstone and destroyed them all.

Is there not equally distinct testimony in the Word of God as to the end of this age? Men may no more believe it than they did in the days of Noah, but Jesus has said, "Now is the judgment of this world." The Holy Spirit sent down consequent on the death, resurrection, and ascension

of Christ convicts the world of the awful sin of the murder of Christ. Yea, that all have sinned, and are under the judgment of God.

Nothing can be more clear and certain than the teaching of Christ, that the end of the age will be as it was in the days of Noah, and of Lot. Read Matthew 24; and Luke 17:24-32: “Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” In Luke 21 you may trace from the past destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, to the coming again of the Lord Jesus, with power and glory, and you will find that just as the destruction of Jericho came like a snare, so shall the judgment of this world come, “For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.” I know Satan has persuaded men, there is no truth in these scriptures; that they need not fear — a good time is coming. But the apostle says, “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety: then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” Will not this be as it was in Jericho? There was no escape. Though long delayed, the crash of judgment came at last. And “the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1:7). Now read 2 Peter 3 Are we not assured by this scripture of truth, that though scoffers shall come, questioning and denying all these things; yet the heavens and the earth are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men? But just as the Lord was longsuffering in the days of Jericho, so again, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up,” etc. No doubt this takes in the day of the Lord in its fullest sense; but I ask, God having thus spoken, is it reasonable to doubt His word, or explain it away? Surely not.

Now have you ever been really awakened, like Rahab, to believe the Word of God? What a grave position this really is! A sinner in a world under judgment — a judgment from which there will be no escape. You may say, but will there not be a millennium of blessing to this earth? Certainly! But did the millennium hinder the destruction of Jericho? Neither will it hinder the judgments coming on this world. It will come in its place. But judgment is the end, and doom, of the present age.

Such then is the condition of every soul in the world that has not passed from death unto life. Shut up, waiting the judgment of Christ. Oh, think of everlasting destruction from His presence. What would you feel if the dearest friend you have on earth, had committed some crime against the law of the land; and was at this moment in the condemned cell, waiting execution? But what is this compared to everlasting punishment? And how terrible, when the longsuffering of God only hardens the heart! It is an undeniable fact, God hath said it, “The whole world lieth in wickedness.” Rahab was deeply convinced of the condition and doom of Jericho; are you as deeply convinced of your own condition and everlasting doom, unless saved in pure undeserved love?

We will now look at the second point illustrated, the sinner brought into the place of safety. There was faith in Rahab: “I know that the Lord hath given you the land.” There was repentance, self-judgment: “As soon as we heard these things our hearts did melt.” And there was prayer: “I pray you swear unto me by the Lord.” Blessed marks of the work of the Holy Spirit in the sinner! And is it not to be noted that every desire the spirit prompts, is answered to the utmost? Did not God give her a true token? Did He not deal kindly and truly with her? Did He not save alive her father and mother, brethren and sisters, and all that they had? Did He not fulfill to the utmost bounds of “whosoever?” Ah, will not this once-lost harlot rise up in judgment against thousands who have rejected the kindness of God?

And is there not something very beautiful in the way in which the priests compassed the city of destruction? I am struck with the position of the ark. Before they had crossed the Jordan they were to go after the ark, even in the very last march into Jordan. “When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it” (Josh. 3:3, 4). And there was to be a space between it and them of two thousand cubits. But now they are in the land, blowing the rams’ horns, the ark must be behind them. They must be in the land to surround Jericho, and sound the trumpet. No person can sound the true gospel of God to a lost world until he knows his standing through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and sees himself dead with Him, and risen in Him. Redemption is not a thing before him now; once it was, when a seeking soul; now it is behind him accomplished once, and forever. It is important to be quite clear about this before sounding the trumpet to others. Is the passage of the Jordan before you, or behind you? And more, is the ark before you, or behind you? Is the propitiatory, the mercy seat before you, or behind you? Truly with us, but not before us. The propitiatory sacrifice once offered, finished, accomplished. When that work was before the soul, and Jesus had not been offered up, the true expression of the heart was prayer: “Forgive us our trespasses.” Now that work has been accomplished, and we have passed with the true ark through Jordan, as it is written, “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Our joy now is to give thanks and to rejoice in Christ “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Thus now the true expression of the heart is praise and thanksgiving.

Let then the servants of the Lord who know that they have crossed the Jordan; who know that they are dead and risen with Christ; who know that God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven their sins; let such compass this whole world of sin and judgment, and sound aloud the trumpet of salvation.

God is pledged to deal kindly and truly. He hath given a sure token. He hath given His only-begotten Son. What the scarlet line was as a figure to “whosoever” believed the Word of God in the city of Jericho, such and much more so, is the precious blood of the Lamb: It was fastened in the window — He was nailed to the cross. He died for our sins according to the scriptures. “The just for the unjust to bring us to God.” God was pledged in that wicked city to whosoever. God is pledged to this wicked world, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. If the heart of God lingered then for four hundred years, it has now waited in long-suffering grace for eighteen hundred years.

Oh, let us compass this wide world with sounds of mercy; blow continually; blow softly, the household of faith is being gathered in. Have you a father, a mother, brothers, sisters, yet under judgments? for he that believeth not, is condemned already.

Oh, call them in.

The poor and wretched.

God is waiting,

Call them in.

When that believing company was gathered into the house on the wall, they were safe beneath the scarlet line. It was not a question how vile they had been, but giving up all other hope of escape, they were brought in faith to take refuge beneath the scarlet line. There and there alone they were safe. The trumpet blast of alarm to all beside, was the soft strain of mercy and safety to them.

Now, I ask, is this not a stupendous fact, that God is pledged to deal kindly and truly with whosoever, amongst the lost and guilty, shall take refuge beneath the blood-stained cross of Christ? But those evangelists preach a very defective gospel who would only bring the sinner to the cross and leave him there. This is not deliverance. All this — the scarlet line, the true token, the gathering them to the house of Rahab — all this was but preparatory to two things. The purpose of God was to bring them out, and to bring them in. It is all important to notice this. The same thing may be seen in Israel's redemption from Egypt; Israel, in the house sheltered by the blood sprinkled on the door-post, was just like the elect company in the house of Rahab, sheltered by the scarlet line; both pointing to the sinner brought to take shelter beneath the cross of Christ. But the judgment on Egypt, the death of the paschal lamb, the blood that shut out the avenger — all this was preparatory to two things, as Moses says, "He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us the land that He swore to our fathers (Deut. 6:23). In like manner the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, and the work of the Spirit in bringing the sinner by repentance and faith, to take shelter beneath the precious blood of Christ, all this is preparatory to these same two things; to bring us out, that He may bring us in. The passage of the Red Sea was the bringing them out, the passage of the Jordan was the bringing them in. Just so, according to the word of Joshua. The young men "brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had, and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel." Thus the deliverance from the scene of judgment was complete. They were now saved alive; not a stroke of judgment fell on them. See them there outside the camp in perfect safety. The crash of destruction falls upon the doomed city, upon whosoever believeth not, but not one of the whosoevers perished who believed the glad tidings of shelter in the house of Rahab. So far, then, God dealt kindly and truly with her; and all that believed. But God's kindness went far beyond this; as we have seen, she was brought INTO all the privileges and heirship of the house of Israel.

Have you ever thought of what the believer is not only brought out of, but brought into? He is indeed sheltered by the blood: "When I see the blood I will pass over." Oh, depth of mercy! the blood of Jesus shelters my soul from every stroke of deserved wrath. And more, we are not left in Egypt beneath the sprinkled blood, blessed as that blood is; but He "hath delivered us from the power of darkness" (Col. 1:13). Sheltered and delivered. Read on: "And hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."

Now, what are we brought into? We have seen Rahab the harlot brought into joint heirship with Israel; a joint partaker of their hopes and inheritance. Can you take in this marvelous translation? From the depths of sin, in that city of iniquity, to joint heirship in the future throne of the Israel of Jehovah? And the word says there she dwelleth to this day. Such grace must be permanent and everlasting. What a figure or type of the riches of the glory of His grace! Surpassingly strange as this is, it is no less strange than true. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be glorified together." We must not for a moment judge of our destiny by our present condition; it may be suffering and deep sorrows here. If Rahab became a joint-heir in Israel's earthly inheritance, all God's "whosoevers" now are made joint-heirs with Christ; one with Him in all that awaits him, as heir of all things. Do not forget that it is His own work that fits us for this; we can only bow the heart, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." When Israel were buried unto Moses in the Red Sea, they were out of Egypt; when they came our of Jordan with Joshua, they were IN the land. We are not only buried with Christ, but risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, "who raised Him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). Thus God reckons us dead with Christ, and risen with Christ. "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Through His death we have passed out of the place of judgment. With Him in resurrection we have entered into joint-heirship with Himself. Everlasting life our portion, joint-heirship our everlasting destiny. Was not this what the Lord meant in His commission to Paul, "To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me?" (Acts 26:18).

Oh yes, not only deliverance from Satan, but the bright inheritance of the sanctified, by faith in Him. And is not this what the Father hath begotten us unto, according to His abundant mercy by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4). Calm and certain hope, amidst the trials of the wilderness! And was not this very dear to the heart of Paul, in that parting scene with the elders from Ephesus, knowing as he did how everything in the professing church was coming to the bad? "And now, brethren I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). I beg of you then, do not for a moment suppose that deliverance from wrath by the precious blood of Christ, is the whole gospel of God, blessed as that is; neither allow the thought, that the inheritance was an after-thought, or attainable by a few of the children of God, by some work or effort of their own. No, joint-heirship with the risen Christ, is the predestined inheritance of every member of the body of Christ, of every child of God, from the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) to the taking of the church to be with Christ (1 Thess. 4).

To the glory of His grace be it known, that during this unexampled period of wickedness, God has no less, no other favor to bestow, than the predestined inheritance of the saints. What then is the believer's inheritance? This can only be answered as you would answer the question what is the believer's justification, in its completest sense? He stood in the believer's stead, bare his sins in His body on the tree, as his Substitute bare the wrath due to him (Isa. 53). In His resurrection the believer is justified from sin, and sins once charged to and borne by Him, as He says, "He is near that justifieth me; who shall condemn me?" (Isa. 50:8-9). All this is reckoned to the believer. "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." What could not be done by me as a sinner, is done by Him for me, and reckoned to me. So that if you ask, What and where is my justifying righteousness? I point to the risen Christ, my representative in the glory. Who can condemn Him, therefore, who can condemn me? What is my justification then? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again. Look not at self; look off to Christ. What He is, is the completeness of our justification. Just as truly as what He was on the cross was our complete condemnation. In like manner whatever is the inheritance of Christ is the inheritance of every child of God now, co-heir, joint-heir with Christ. To use a legal term, we are tenants in common with Christ over the universe (His own essential glory as God of course excepted) Immense and glorious as it is, yet how fully and how simply this is revealed in scripture! What could be more simple in the case of Rahab? What was the inheritance of this poor sinner? Whatever was the inheritance and destiny of Israel? What is the inheritance of every sinner saved by grace now? Whatever is the inheritance of Christ.

Now do not misunderstand, let us not be occupied with a mere doctrine, however true: but with the fact that this inheritance is predestined. “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them he also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Rom. 8:29). There is no break in the golden links from predestination to glory. There can be no separation between Christ and the co-heirs. Precious Jesus! Has he not said it? “And the glory that Thou hast given Me, I have given them” (John 17:22).

Now turn to Ephesians 1:11. Do you see this tracing of the plan drawn (eternal purpose) in eternity? God has dealt kindly and truly with us. We are not viewed here as still in Egypt, beneath the shelter of the blood: or in the house of Rahab, sheltered with the scarlet line; all important in their place. Here we have entered into our heavenly land. “Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Here all is of God; like the ark behind us, all covered with blue. It is God that hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, “having predestinated us unto the adoption of children.” Here we are accepted in the beloved; “in whom we have redemption, through His blood the forgiveness of sins.” Follow the tracing: “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1). We are also here sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, “which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.” Well might the apostle so earnestly pray that they might know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Now Christ is revealed to the soul in the high heavenly places, “Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:20-21). Think of being a joint-heir in all this! What a tracing of the eternal plan! At present we can scarcely bear the thought, destined to dwell one with Him, above all principality and power. All things put under His feet: Thrones and crowns, and royal scepters, around that throne in unclouded light await the redeemed of the Lord. Surely Moses and Elias speaking with Him in glory in the mount, was a bright figure of our co-heirship with Christ. What holy scenes of power, and love, and service, await us in the joint reign with Christ!

Satan may here suggest that though grace did bring the harlot Rahab, and whosoever believed the reports, into the blessing and privileges of Israel: yet surely, none but the most worthy of mankind can be thus associated with Christ, over all things. But as it was then, it is even so now, as grace compassed the city of iniquity ripe for judgment, and brought out every sinner that believed, so now grace has surrounded this world, ripe for judgment, ever since it rejected and murdered the Son of God. And this is the character of those grace now gathers to be the joint-heirs of Christ. “And you who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time passed ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in time past, in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph. 2:1, 2). Oh, the greatness of that love of God, the riches of that mercy who takes up such lost sinners, and raises them up with Chris, even into joint-heirship with Him! and thus shall the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness to us be shown in the ages to come. Surely He hath dealt kindly and truly with us, as well as with Rahab of old.

I have only a few words to add. Our adorable Lord is waiting there on the Father’s throne, until the last co-inheritor is gathered from this city of Jericho. It is not until the church is complete, that He takes His place in the midst of the throne (Rev. 5). Until then He says, “Let not your heart he troubled, neither be afraid! ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again to receive you unto Myself; that where I am there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3). My fellow believer, are not these words true? Do they not come from the very heart of Christ? Joshua sent the spies to take out Rahab; Christ Himself will come and take us out of this doomed world. “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. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16-17). But if this is the blessed hope of the children of God-the Rahab household of faith; all that are Christ’s at His coming — the crash of judgments on the rejectors is not less certain. “For then they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child: and they shall not escape.” The coming of Joshua to Jericho had two very distinct characters: The salvation and entrance of Rahab into the joint privileges of Israel; and the terrible fiery destruction of all that were found outside the household of faith. Just so, the coming of the Lord has two distinct characters: First, He comes to take His own without sin unto salvation. They enter into rest and glory. They see Him as He is and are like Him; forever with the Lord. Then after that when the now hated and persecuted saints are in rest, “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess. 1:7). The scriptures are largely occupied with these two aspects of the coming of the Lord. Which is before my reader? Have you been brought as a lost and ruined sinner like Rahab to take shelter beneath the blood of Jesus? Do you believe God in His kindness and love, nay more in His righteousness, has provided that place of shelter? Has He in pure grace delivered you from the wrath to come? Then can you not trust with child-like certainty His word? Are you waiting for Him from heaven, to come and introduce you into that home of love and holy delight, the unclouded presence and glory of God? A little more conflict. And those who walk before the ark do indeed need to be armed with the whole armor of God. The better we know our destined place in the heavens, the more will wicked spirits in the heavenlies dispute it.

Rise up, my brethren, and, fully armed, march on before the ark of the Lord. Sound the gospel trumpet loudly, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. It is our Master’s voice who says, “Surely I come quickly.” Do not grieve the Spirit by half-hearted doubts. Do not say, If I may but be just saved. No, no, none will be merely just saved. If saved at all, you will be brought into all that Christ is; as surely as you have borne the image of the earthy, you shall bear the image of the heavenly. Without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Unblamable in holiness, in His presence with exceeding glory. Thus our God and Father speaks to us, and shows us the riches of His grace in the history of Rahab and the siege of Jericho. And soon shall we say, One half has not been told us, of His boundless love. To Him all praise. Amen.

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