

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying

Message Four : The Need for God's People to Seek the Lord's Direction and Have the Lord's Presence to Display His Victory for the Building Up of His Body and the Spreading of His Kingdom

I. Overview:

When the two spies came to Jericho, Rahab contacted them and was willing to receive them, hide them, and deliver them by acts that issued out of her faith. The sign for Rahab and her house to be saved was for her to hang a line of scarlet thread in the window of her house. Although Rahab was a condemned Canaanite and a prostitute in Jericho, a place cursed by God for eternity, she married Salmon after she turned to God, then she brought forth Boaz, out of whom Christ came. After the destruction of Jericho, the secret of Israel's defeat at Ai was that they had lost God's presence and were no longer one with God; after this defeat Joshua learned the lesson of staying with the Lord before the Ark. The Gibeonites were one of the nations in the land of Canaan that had to be exterminated by Israel; they went out as though they were envoys and pretended to have come from afar. The children of Israel were deceived because they were like a wife who forgot her husband; the result of Israel's not seeking the counsel of her Husband was to be deceived, and she lost protection. This is the intrinsic significance of Joshua 9.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound Joshua's real purpose in sending out the two spies.

Joshua sent the two spies to spy out the good land, especially Jericho. Joshua's real purpose in sending out the spies was to find Rahab. Rahab believed in the God of Israel. She told the spies that Jehovah had given the land to the people of Israel and that all the inhabitants of the land melted before them.

B. Explain what the meaning of the spies asking Rahab to hang a line of scarlet thread in the window of her house is.

According to their word in verse 21, "she tied the scarlet line in the window". The scarlet thread tied in the window of Rahab's house was hung out in the open; it was there for everyone to see. Thus, the scarlet thread tied to the window typifies an open confession of the redeeming blood of Christ. Rahab made such an open confession and believed that by this sign she and her household would be delivered.

Day 2 —

A. Explain what kind of result in the report from the spies is.

Joshua sent out spies for fighting. The spies returned to Joshua and said that because the enemies were few, not all the people needed go up. Because of their foolishness, pride, and blindness, they despised their enemy. Nevertheless, Joshua received the report from the spies and sent three thousand men of war against Ai. But when Israel was defeated by the people of Ai and thirty-six men were slaughtered.

B. Expound what the report of the spies to Joshua about Ai indicates.

The report of the spies to Joshua indicates that Israel had set God aside. They forgot God and knew only themselves. At that time they were not one with God but cared only for themselves. After this defeat, Joshua learned the lesson of staying with the Lord before the Ark. Eventually, the Lord came in to speak to him and to tell him what to do.

Day 3 —

A. Fellowship if we would possess the land, we must do so by the presence of the Lord.

If the presence of the Lord goes with us, we can enter and enjoy the land. You remember how the Lord promised Moses in Exodus 33:14, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest". This means that He would bring the people into the possession of the land by His presence. So Moses said to the Lord, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here".

B. Expound the presence, the smile, of the Lord being the governing principle.

We must be fearful of receiving anything from the Lord yet losing His presence. The Lord Himself may very well give you something, and yet that very thing will rob you of His presence. We must learn to be

kept, to be ruled, to be governed, to be guided simply by the presence of the Lord. We do not want His presence secondhand. Try to be governed by the direct, firsthand presence of the Lord.

Day 4 —

A. What was the sin which Achan committed?

Joshua 7:21 said, “When I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle of Shinar, I coveted them and took them” A Babylonian garment seduced Achan to commit sin. A beautiful garment is worn for the sake of appearance. When one puts on a beautiful garment, it means that he adorns himself to improve his appearance and to add a little luster to himself.

B. What was the sin that Ananias and Sapphira committed?

They lied to the Holy Spirit. They did not love the Lord very much, but they wanted to be looked upon as those who greatly loved the Lord. They were just pretending. They were not willing to offer everything cheerfully to God. Before man, however, they acted as if they had offered all. This is the Babylonian garment. The principle of Babylon, therefore, is hypocrisy. There is no reality, yet people act as if there is in order to obtain glory from man.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the intrinsic significance of Joshua 9.

In Joshua 9 we may see the intrinsic significance of this chapter. The children of Israel were deceived by the Gibeonites because they were like a wife who forgot her husband. What they did here was exactly the same as what Eve did in Genesis 3. The subtle serpent wanted to tempt, to seduce, Adam, yet he did not dare to go to him directly.

B. Expound that the Bible is the record of a romance of a universal couple.

The Bible is the record of a romance, in the most pure and holy sense, of a universal couple. The male of this couple is God Himself, and the female is God’s redeemed people as a corporate being. The Bible shows us that we, as God’s elect, are His wife and that between Him and us there must be a marriage union based upon mutual love.

Day 6 —

A. Explain that at Ai they were defeated and learned a lesson to be one with the Lord.

At Ai they suffered a defeat and learned the lesson to be one with the Lord, but they did not learn it fully. Whereas the people of Ai fought against Israel strongly, the Gibeonites came to them begging to be their servants. The result was that Israel, this independent, individualistic wife, was deceived. She had no protection, no safeguard. From this chapter we need to learn that, as the Lord’s wife, we should be one with Him all the time.

B. Expound that the normal Christian life is a life of fellowship.

This life of fellowship means that we cannot be separated from God; we cannot be independent from God. From the day of our salvation, we should no longer be independent. Therefore, a life of fellowship means that we have fellowship with God, are connected to Him, and have a mutual flow with Him in everything.

III. Conclusion:

When we read the history of the Israelites, it is as if we were reading ourselves. Look at the impregnable city of Jericho; they did nothing but rely on God as the Captain of His command, and with one accord they cried it down. But at the battle of Ai, they depended all on their own. It was estimated that they would only send 3,000 men; they despised the enemy and put God aside. They lost God's presence, so God let them fail. All together thirty-six people were slaughtered. Then Joshua realized that something was wrong with them. He tore his clothes and fell on his face before the Ark of Jehovah until night. He must have stayed pretty long time before God, being enlightened, repenting and confessing. He knew that without God's presence, everything was empty. He learned a lesson and knew to remain with the Lord before the Ark. Eventually, God appeared to him again.