

A Significant Encounter.
Joshua 5:10-15.
Sunday evening, November 15, 2009.

I. The manner of Joshua's encounter.

A. Joshua was by Jericho.

Jericho would be the first city Israel would conquer in the promised land.

B. This would be the fourth significant event to take place in the short time that elapsed between the day they crossed the Jordan River, and the time when they would conquer Jericho.

1. The rite of circumcision was re-instated.

2. The feast of Passover was re-instated and celebrated even as the men were recovering from their wounds made by the circumcision.

By the restoration of Circumcision and Passover God's covenant with His people was once again fully restored, and the full blessing of the covenant

once

again was enjoyed.

3. The manna ceased on the day following Passover, for God was now giving the produce of the land of Canaan to His people. Israel was brought into the promised land in the spring time; at the time of the beginning of the grain harvest. Israel inherited a cultivated land with cities, roads, water wells, orchards and vineyards and cultivated fields.

4. And now the encounter with a stranger who as it turned out was none other than the Lord Himself.

C. Joshua was out by himself surveying the scene surrounding the city of Jericho. Two reasons may account for Joshua being out alone in a hostile land.

1. All the men had been circumcised and were still recovering. Joshua would have been circumcised with the old generation to which he belonged.

2. A man of God needs time alone with the Lord. Joshua's eyes were not merely looking at Jericho; they would also have been looking to the Lord so as to gain godly wisdom and insight as to how the Lord would have him go about taking this city. He does not merely sit back and waits on the Lord, but he actively waits on the Lord by surveying the scene.

3. It is in this context of active waiting that the Lord meets him.

Application:

It is still in the context of "active waiting" that the Lord meets His people. The Lord meets us when we seek Him while actively surveying the scene of the circumstances we are up against.

II. The Person Joshua encountered.

A. Joshua comes upon a man "with His sword drawn in His hand." This at first glance might be interpreted as a hostile disposition.

B. Joshua asks the man's intentions: "Are you for us or for our adversaries?"

C. Both possibilities are denied; He has come as the commander of the Lord's

army; that is the heavenly commander as Joshua was the earthly commander.

D. Removing any doubt as to His identity the man duplicates the scene under which Moses was called: "Remove your sandals because this is holy ground."

Application:

1. Things are not always what they appear at first glance: Meeting a man with a drawn sword in his hand can be rather threatening and intimidating. This heavenly Messenger had His sword drawn to show Joshua His readiness to lead the Lord's army in victory.
2. The Lord will always meet us, and be to us, that which our faith needs most. Joshua must have felt the weight of responsibility of leading the Lord's people in a battle against the inhabitants of Canaan which were far stronger than He. Here he receives great encouragement.

III. The significance of this encounter.

A. For Joshua and the people of Israel.

1. This was an enormous encouragement for both. They just had restored the full covenantal bond with the Lord by way of circumcision and Passover. And now the Lord Himself meets them under the figure of a warrior; the Commander of the Lord's army.
2. This showed them that joined to their earthly commander, Joshua, there was the heavenly commander, the Lord Himself; and that they were not out on their own, but that their army now had become the Lord's army.

B. For the Lord's people of all time.

1. Here we are shown the union between the Lord and His people; the union between heavenly and earthly things..
2. That behind the feeble earthly existence of God's people and church, there is an invisible hand joined to them that will assure victory for them.
3. This is what the apostle Paul alludes to in 1 Cor. 10:3,4 when he speaks of spiritual food and drink and a spiritual rock from which they did drink. This food and drink and rock were all tangible entities to the Israelites. Why then does the Apostle call them spiritual entities? It is because in partaking of the tangible food and drink and rock they were partaking of the spiritual entities

of

the Lord's grace and goodness, and provision and care; and guidance and protection. In summary, under these elements they were partaking of the Lord Himself. The manna and the rock were Christ. John 6:31-35; 1 Cor 10:4. Consider here the implications for the Lord's supper and for all our works done in the name of the Lord.

C. Eschatological significance.

In Revelation 19:7-21 we have the fulfillment of this prophetic scene.

1. Israel had made herself ready to fully follow the Lord by circumcision. Here the Lamb's wife has made herself ready. Rev. 19:7
2. Israel's Passover celebration has graduated into the Lord's supper, which finds its final form here in the marriage supper of the Lamb. Rev. 19:7,9
3. Following the supper the Lord goes out at the head of, and in union with heavens armies, to strike the nations and to tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. Rev. 19:15.

Here once more the Lord's people will inherit their Canaan.