

06.19.11 / Joshua 2 and 7**Passage Insight**

In these two chapters of Joshua we see a stark contrast of the inclinations of the human heart – trusting God and trusting oneself. Both Rahab (from Chapter 2) and Achan (from Chapter 7) encounter God in very real and tangible ways, but their responses to these encounters are vastly different. Let's take a look.

Rahab is an outsider, a non-Israelite, who lives in a country that is, bit by bit, being overtaken by the Israelites. The Israelite victories have been simple, quick, and efficient, and their victories are due to one thing: God is leading them. Rahab hears the stories of their victories, and her response to these stories is actually a response to God. In 2:9, she says, "I know that the Lord has given you the land. . . ." In 2:10, she says, "For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea. . . ." She goes on to say in 2:11, ". . . our hearts melted. . . for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." Rahab's focus is on the Lord. She sees what He has done, and she is humbled by His power. The Lord's response to such humility is remarkable mercy. He ultimately uses His people to save her people – He saves her and all of her family when the rest of her city is destroyed. She sees God's power, she responds with humility, and she receives mercy.

Contrast this with Achan, an insider, an Israelite, who has been tasked with claiming the promised land for the Lord's people. He is on the inside, one of God's chosen people. He has not only heard of the Lord's work, but he has seen it firsthand. He has seen pillars of smoke and fire, he has seen the Lord's miraculous provision, and he has tasted victory in battle because the Lord has caused the Israelites' enemies to melt away before them. Yet, despite having encountered God and seen Him in action in these very tangible ways, Achan responds not with humility, but with pride. At the heart of humility is trust in God, a recognition that God is in control of all things, that He is sovereign, and that He will provide all that is needed at the proper time and in accordance with His perfect will. At the heart of pride, however, is a distrust of God and a trust of oneself instead. Despite having been provided for perfectly in all ways, Achan distrusts the Lord by seeking, on His own, his provision apart from the Lord. In short, Achan loves and trusts himself to provide more than he loves and trusts the Lord.

Seeking the desires of our hearts, the desires that are not God's desires, will lead us to destruction. Our prayers will be thwarted, as we see in James 4, which says in verse 3, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." We are tempted, as we see in James 1:14, which says, "But each person is tempted when is lured and enticed by his own desire." And ultimately, in one form or another, we taste death, as we see in James 1:15, which reads, "Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." So, we must ask ourselves, whose desires are we seeking? Are we seeking the Lord's desires, or are we seeking our own, veiled in some false religious piety?

James 4:4-7 says, ". . . Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. . . . But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" In this lies our hope. We should pray that the Lord would show us our sin, and when He does, we are to humbly repent and request His treasured forgiveness. When we are proud, we taste the Lord's opposition. When we are humble, we taste more grace. In this context, the marker of humility is this: a recognition that God is holy, set apart, and our Provider in every way, along with a corresponding recognition that as creatures we can neither see nor provide our deepest needs. This leads us to echo the words of Rahab, ". . . he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. . . ." and to receive, as she did, the grace and mercy of the Lord.

Application and Prayer

Two Responses

- 1) Which character do you most identify with, Rahab or Achan?
- 2) Why?
- 3) Where are you proud and tasting the opposition of the Lord?
- 4) PRAY
 - a. More grace is promised to those who are humble before the Lord. The more we know God is, the more we are humbled by His holiness and perfection. Thank God for revealing Himself in Scripture and in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - b. That Jesus would reveal the Father to us.
 - c. For humility.

Mercy and Grace

- 1) Where have you most tasted the Lord's mercy and grace (remember, grace follows humility)?
- 2) How can you treat others differently as a response to God's mercy and grace?
- 3) Where are you struggling to show mercy and grace to others?
- 4) PRAY
 - a. For the humility that leads to mercy and grace.
 - b. For the capacity to extend mercy and grace to others as the Lord extends it to us.

Sources

- Prayer
- Todd Perkins
- Tyler Jones