

#4 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 9/13-19 **OL Summary:**

**I.** When the two spies came to Jericho, Rahab (who was both a harlot and a Canaanite) contacted them and was willing to receive them, hide them, and deliver them by acts that issued out of her faith; she believed in the God of Israel and declared, "Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above and upon earth beneath" (Josh. 2:11b):

**A.** Jehovah provided Rahab the harlot to Joshua for the gaining of the land; because of her faith in God, she "did not perish with those who were disobedient"; she turned to Israel and their God, and she trusted in Him and His people. **B.** 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; the scarlet thread tied in the window typifies an open confession of the redeeming blood of Christ; she believed that by this sign she and her household would be delivered. **C.** Although Rahab was a condemned Canaanite and a prostitute in Jericho, a place cursed by God for eternity, after she turned to God and to God's people, she married Salmon, the son of a leader of Judah, a leading tribe of Israel, and probably one of the two spies; then she brought forth Boaz, a godly man, out of whom Christ came, and she became associated with Christ in His incarnation for the fulfillment of God's eternal economy. **D.** This shows that regardless of our background, if we turn to God and His people and are joined to the proper person among God's people (not in a physical sense but in a spiritual sense), we will bring forth proper fruit and participate in the enjoyment of the birthright of Christ.

**II.** After the destruction of Jericho, Israel was defeated at Ai; at Jericho, according to God's economy, Joshua sent out spies, not for fighting but to gain Rahab; but at Ai, because Israel had lost the presence of the Lord, Joshua sent out spies for fighting:

**A.** The report of the spies to Joshua concerning Ai indicates that Israel had set God aside; instead of asking God what they should do against Ai, they forgot God and cared only for themselves; at that time they were not one with God but acted on their own, without seeking the Lord's direction and without having the Lord's presence; Israel was separated from God because of their sin. **B.** If we would enter, possess, and enjoy the all-inclusive Christ as the reality of the good land, we must do so by the presence of the Lord; the Lord promised Moses, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest" (Exo. 33:14); God's presence is His way, the "map" that shows His people the way they should take. **C.** When the Israelites entered into the land of Canaan and gained the victory over Jericho, the first person to commit sin was Achan; the intrinsic, spiritual significance and divine view of Achan's serious sin was his coveting a beautiful

Babylonian garment (Shinar is the area that was later called Babylon) in his seeking to improve himself, to make himself look better for the sake of appearance: **1.** Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit, sinned in the same principle—this is the principle of Babylon, which is hypocrisy. **2.** Everything done in falsehood to receive glory from man is done in the principle of the harlot, not in the principle of the bride; false consecration and spirituality are sins, but true worship is in spirit and truthfulness; may God make us true men. **3.** "It is not how man sees that matters; for man looks on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7); if we treasure up God's word in our heart and allow Christ to make His home in our heart, He will become the good treasure of our heart, and out of the abundance of our heart we can dispense Him as this wonderful, good treasure into others. **J**

**III.** After Israel dealt with their sin, the sin of Achan, they were victorious over Ai, but then there is a record of how the children of Israel were deceived by the Gibeonites:

**A.** The Gibeonites were Hivites—one of the nations in the land of Canaan that had to be exterminated by Israel because they were devilish and mingled with demons; the inhabitants of Gibeon deceived Israel with their craftiness. **B.** Because they had heard of Israel's defeating both Jericho and Ai, they wanted to make peace and a covenant with Israel so that Israel would let them live; they went out as though they were envoys and pretended to have come from afar; they went to Joshua at the camp of Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "From a faraway land we have come... We will be your servants; make then a covenant with us" (Josh. 9:6, 11). **C.** Joshua 9:14 is a very powerful portion of the Scriptures that shows us why the children of Israel were deceived by the Gibeonites—"they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah"; thus, Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them to let them live: **1.** The children of Israel were deceived because they were like a wife who forgot her husband; the entire Bible is a divine romance, a record of how God courts His chosen people and eventually marries them. **2.** 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 of mutual love; the universe, therefore, is a wedding place, the place where the Husband, the processed and consummated Triune God, is being joined in marriage to the redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, and glorified tripartite man; eventually, the Bible ends with the New Jerusalem as the ultimate consummation of God's elect in the new heaven and new earth, as the universal wife for eternity. **3.** A wife should never leave her husband; rather, she should always rely upon him and be one with him; when the Gibeonites came to Israel, as the wife Israel should have gone to her Husband and checked with Him about what to do.

**CPI:** After turning to God and His people, join to the proper leaders of the leading tribe to bring forth proper fruit

**OL1:** When the two spies came to Jericho, Rahab (who was both a harlot and a Canaanite) contacted them and was willing to receive them, hide them, and deliver them by acts that issued out of her faith; Rahab believed in the God of Israel and declared, "Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above and upon earth beneath" (Josh. 2:11).

Rahab told the spies that she knew that Jehovah had given the land to the people of Israel and that all the inhabitants of the land melted before them. She went on to say that they had heard how Jehovah had dried up the water of the Red Sea before Israel when they came out of Egypt and what they did to the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og, whom they utterly destroyed. Then Rahab declared, "Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above and upon earth beneath." (Josh. 2:11). Because of her faith in God, she "did not perish with those who were disobedient" (Heb.11:31)...Rahab married Salmon, a leader of the tribe of Judah, and through her union with this Jewish Leader she became a part of Israel and brought forth Boaz, the great-grandfather of David. What an honor it is that Rahab's name is included in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1!

The first principle is that, no matter what our background is, we must turn to God and to God's people. Second, we must marry the proper person, not in a physical sense, but in a spiritual sense. After we have turned to God and to God's people, we must be joined, built up, and involved with the proper person. Third, we must bring forth the proper fruit. Then we will be fully in the portion of the birthright of Christ. It seems that many Christians today have lost their birthright. They do not have Salmon and Boaz. If you would have a Salmon and a Boaz, you must become involved with the proper believers, with the proper leading ones in the leading tribes. Then you need to bring forth the proper fruit, Boaz, who will be a forefather of David. We must turn to the Lord, and we must turn to the Lord's people; we must also take care of how we become involved with others.

**OL2:** 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; eventually, the Lord came in to speak to him and to tell him what to do. **OL3:** The spiritual lesson to be learned from this account is that we, the people of God, should always be one with our God, who is not only among us but also in us, making us men with God.

**OL4:** As God-men, we should practice being one with the Lord, walking with Him, living with Him, and having our entire being with Him; this is the way to walk as a Christian, to fight as a child of God, and to build up the Body of Christ. **OL5:** If we have the Lord's presence, we have wisdom, insight, foresight, and the inner knowledge concerning things; the Lord's presence is everything to us.

Application to new ones, youth and college students

All the new ones and youth should learn three principles from the case of the harlot Rahab. **1** Regardless of our background, we must turn to God and His people: Regardless of what country the person is from, what religious background one has, whether the person has a high or low social status, whether the person has high or low academic background, that person must turn to God and His people. Now, you have already turned to Christ and the church by faith and baptism. Hallelujah! You have turned to the best family in the universe, the church, and have become a member of the Body. **2** Join to the proper believers, gifted members, and the leading ones: After turning to Christ and the church, you should join to the brothers and sisters of the Lord's Recovery. Heb. 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them. Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, 12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ, You have entered into the church life of the Lord's Recovery, and have been able to recognize God's eternal economy through the Ministry of the age of Brother Nee and Brother Lee. Furthermore, in the local church you need to recognize the Body of Christ, and join to the leading ones serving in the Body, who are for building up of the Body and submit to them. Ephesians 4 says that it is through gifts that the Lord perfects you for God's economy, and not directly through the Lord. You must always join yourself to the gifts.

**3** Bring forth the proper fruit, Boaz, the ancestor of David: Matt. 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 5 And Salmon begot Boaz of Rahab, and Boaz begot Obed of Ruth, and Obed begot Jesse, 6 And Jesse begot David the king. The descendants of Boaz gave birth to Jesus Christ. If you join to the proper people, you can bring forth proper fruit. It is the birthright of the first born which includes the double portion of the land, the priesthood, and the kingship. ...Furthermore, in Joshua 7, Israel failed at Ai after Jericho's victory. Due to their formalism, foolishness, pride, and blindness, they despised their enemies. Not being one with God was the cause of their failure. They did not fellowship with God, and did not seek His counsel. ...You should understand the three principles of Rahab's case and the cause of Ai's failure, and thoroughly fellowship with the Lord in His presence. Confess your sins enlightened by the light in the fellowship and fellowship more deeply. May these points of truth be your constitution and long-term nourishment. **Prayer:**

Lord, I've turned to Christ and the church through faith and baptism. Thank You for my turning to the best family in the universe, the church, the Body of Christ, and becoming a member of the Body. After turning to Christ and the church, I recognize the Body of Christ in the church and join to the leaders, who are for the building up of the Body, obey and submit to them. Then I'll have the birthright of the firstborn, and bring forth proper fruit.

**CP2: Deal with hypocrisy that desires glory from men and seek the Lord's direct presence according to the principle of the Bride**

**OL1:** If we would enter, possess, and enjoy the all-inclusive Christ as the reality of the good land, we must do so by the presence of the Lord; the Lord promised Moses, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest" (Exo. 33:14); God's presence is His way, the "map" that shows His people the way they should take. Although it may be with tears in our eyes, we must say day by day, "Lord, nothing but Your smiling presence will satisfy me. I do not want anything but the smile of Your glorious face. As long as I have this, I care not whether the heaven comes down or the earth falls apart. The whole world may rise against me, but as long as I have Your smile upon me, I can praise You, and everything is well." The Lord said, "My presence shall go with you." What a treasure! The presence, the smile, of the Lord is 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. This is not only a requirement and a qualification but also a power for you to go on to possess the land. The firsthand presence of the Lord will strengthen you with might to obtain the fullness, the all-inclusiveness of Christ. What a strength, what a power, is in the direct presence of the Lord! **OL2:** When the Israelites entered into the land of Canaan and gained the victory over Jericho, the first person to commit sin was Achan; the intrinsic, spiritual significance and divine view of Achan's serious sin was his coveting a beautiful Babylonian garment (Shinar is the area that was later called Babylon) in his seeking to improve himself, to make himself look better for the sake of appearance. **OL3:** Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit, sinned in the same principle—this is the principle of Babylon, which is hypocrisy. 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; God's children need to be delivered from pretending before men. **OL4:** Everything done in falsehood to receive glory from man is done in the principle of the harlot, not in the principle of the bride; false consecration and spirituality are sins, but true worship is in spirit and truthfulness; may God make us true men. **OL5:** "It is not how man sees that matters; for man looks on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7); if we treasure up God's word in our heart and allow Christ to make His home in our heart, He will become the good treasure of our heart, and out of the abundance of our heart we can dispense Him as this wonderful, good treasure into others.

**Application to business persons/graduate students**

Businesspersons and researchers should realize that

God does not look on outward appearance, but look on the heart of man. Achan pursued self-improvement by coveting a beautiful garment of Shinar (Babylon), trying to make himself look better. This was the cause of Israel's failure at Ai. This same sin can be seen in Ananias and Sapphira in Peter's days. Some people loved the Lord and gave all of their possessions. They pretended to love the Lord to the uttermost, saying that they had given everything, when they had only given part of it. This is hypocrisy in the heart. It is good and not wrong for them to give a part. But God saw the hypocrisy in their hearts and condemned them for it. Hypocrisy is a Babylonian principle, and God will thoroughly destroy what is of Babylon.

You just have to learn to be protected, controlled, managed, and guided by the Lord's presence. The Lord's direct presence will strengthen you with His might and make you acquire the fullness and all-inclusiveness of Christ. In order to have the presence of God, you must destroy the hypocrisy in your heart. Fallen people have a problem with *honne*, the honest intention, and *tatemae*, the official stance. The Japanese, in particular, culturally use both. However, not clarifying Yes or No in the light of God's Word is "wisdom of false". Since all New Testament believers are prophets, we should speak the truth and do the truth. If we confess and deal with our sins of false, we can restore the presence of God. **Testimony:** As I read the Bible and fellowshiped with the Lord, I realized that the words of my prayers were formal or pretentious, hypocritical rather than sincere. For example, when a coworker from Taiwan visited me, I was willing to accept fellowship that fit my concept, but I was not willing to listen to anything that did not fit my concept. But with my mouth, I said, "Amen. After many such incidents, I realized that it was hypocrisy to have both real intention and official stance inside me. And because of this hypocrisy, I realized that I was not able to be one with the Lord and was losing His direct presence and blessings. I have prayed many times, "Lord Jesus, You tell me to hate and utterly destroy the hypocrisy that is the principle of Babylon. There is hypocrisy in my old man. It is impossible for me to be one with the Lord unless I crucify the old man". Then, little by little, I was able to open up inside and leave behind the hypocrisy and pretense to have an honest fellowship with the Lord. Through personal and intimate fellowship with the Lord, hypocrisy of various kinds came to be exposed, and I was able to confess my sins and crucify the old man by the Spirit. As my fellowship with the Lord deepened, I was able to improve my relationships at work and my fellowship in the church life. **Prayer:** Oh Lord, in my old man, I see that there are elements of Achan and Ananias. I see that there is hypocrisy using real intentions and official stance in unconsciously with the sense of the old man, wanting to be seen well by others. Enlighten and expose the hypocrisy within me. Lord, help me to be in intimate fellowship with You in Your presence and to keep seeing Your smile. Let me be a honest man in the Lord.

**CP3:** Bring every matter to the Lord and consider, examine and determine things before Him and in the fellowship with Him

**OL1:** As believers who love the Lord and aspire to be constituents of His overcoming bride, we should consult God related to every problem that we encounter; we need to bring every matter to the Lord and to consider, examine, and determine things before Him and in fellowship with Him. 2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. **OL2:** In this respect, every believer needs to be weak to the extent that he does not have his own ideas, make his own decisions, or take any action related to what he encounters without contacting the Lord and consulting with Him, allowing Him to make the decisions; this is the sweetest living of a Christian.

Phil. 4:6-7 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

**OL3:** We have no alternative but to fellowship with God in all things, discuss all things with Him, and allow Him to handle all things, speak in all things, and make every decision; it is glorious for a Christian to be dependent on another One —God— at every moment and in every matter. **OL4:** If God lead you to take a way that you do not know, "this forces you to have hundreds and thousands of conversations with Him, resulting in a journey that is an everlasting memorial between you and Him". **OL5:** The result of Israel's not seeking the counsel of her Husband was that this independent and individualistic wife was deceived, and she had no protection, no safeguard; from this record in the Scriptures, we need to learn that, as the Lord's wife, we should co-live with Him, always relying on Him and being one with Him all the time; this is the intrinsic significance of Joshua 9.

Suppose I am a wife and a poor woman comes to me asking for some help. As a wife, should I do something directly, on my own, for this poor woman? Since this seems to be an insignificant matter, I might just give her a little money or some bread without asking my husband about it. This is what happened in Joshua 9. The Gibeonites came to Israel like a poor woman coming to a rich lady from a strong, high-ranking family. Israel, the wife, should have gone to her Husband and checked with Him. But Israel "did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah" (9:14). Instead, Israel was deceived by the Gibeonites and made a covenant with them. Once the people of Israel had made this covenant could not be altered, and the Israelites could not touch the Gibeonites.

Previously, he had his own point of view, method, and insight concerning everything. But from the day he becomes a Christian, he is changed and can no longer decide things on his own or be independent. He feels that

he needs to contact and consult God related to every problem he encounters, that is, to bring every matter to the Lord and to consider, examine, and determine things before Him. This believer is the best type of Christian.

### Application to the serving ones

Every nation has its own culture. We are not saying which culture is better or worse. No matter how good it is, when Christ comes to you, you no longer need to live the old man, following the culture, but the new man, following Christ. Brother Lee says, "Culture replaces Christ, and if you follow culture, you will not experience Christ." This is the problem. Gal.5:4 You have been brought to nought, separated from Christ, you who are being justified by law; you have fallen from grace. **Testimony:** As mentioned in the OL, "we should consult God related to every problem that we encounter; we need to bring every matter to the Lord and to consider, examine, and determine things before Him and in fellowship with Him," due to my natural and religious concept, I had fallen into unbelief, thinking that I should consult the Lord within my normal environment, but not when there are unexpected and sudden changes. For example, when the company I was working for was acquired by a competitor, or when the president of the Japanese subsidiary, who was opposed to the U.S. headquarters, disliked me, I thought, "There is no way to consult the Lord because He cannot change this situation either." However, this was my natural concept and my unbelief. ... After experiencing many of these failures, I prayed this prayer over and over again, "Lord Jesus, I treat You with a restricted and natural concept. Since You are the unlimited one, I cannot fellowship with You with my natural concept. I cannot love and remain in my unbelieving weakness forever. Lord, my old man cannot be improved, and I have no hope at all. But this realization is not a disappointment, it is a release. Hallelujah, my old man has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. I practice Galatians 2:20. Otherwise, I cannot be one with the Lord and have His presence and blessings. Amen! It's no longer I, but it's Christ." Gradually, I began to be blessed in the church life and business life in the presence of the Lord. Gal.2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

**Prayer:** Oh Lord Jesus, to become the overcoming bride who loves the Lord, I will fully open to the Lord and consult You related to every problem that I encounter. In all things, fellowship and talk with the Lord, let You handle, speak, and determine all things. If I am independent of the Lord and behave in an individualistic manner, there is no protection or security. As the Lord's wife, I learn to live with you, to always depend on You, and to always be one with You.