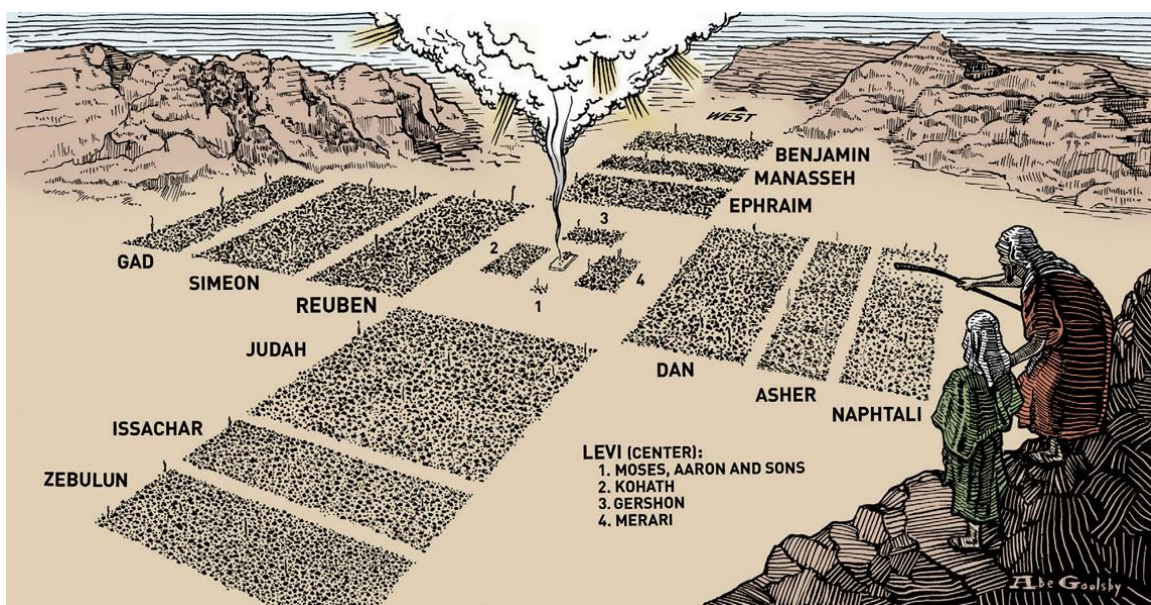


Last week we read the account of Joshua receiving the instructions for the conquest of Jericho from the Commander of the hosts of heaven. It was a strange plan that sounded impractical. Joshua certainly needed faith to obey, but after that supernatural encounter, his faith was surely bolstered. Joshua relayed the strange commands to the people, and in our passage today they set out following his orders that came from the ultimate Commander.

⁸ And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them. ⁹ The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually. Joshua 6:8,9 We get a few more details about how the procession was formed in these verses. The army went first, then the seven priests with the shofars, and then the ark of the covenant, followed by a rear guard. The Lord, represented by the ark, is in the middle. The trumpets blew the entire time they circled the city.

I want us to pay attention to a point barely mentioned but that we see throughout Scripture. The ark of the covenant represents the Lord in the middle of the procession. When we look at how they were to camp as they went through the wilderness, the tabernacle was in the center of the camp. In the Garden of Eden, the tree of Life was in the midst of the Garden (Genesis 2:9ⁱ). Jesus promised if two or more are gathered in His name that He is in their midst (Matthew 18:20ⁱⁱ). The closest one can be to every person is in the center of the group. I think the language is telling us that God wants to be as close as possible to every one of His people (Zephaniah 3:17ⁱⁱⁱ). Were there individual soldiers who requested to be on the back of the column that went before the ark or did some in the rear guard ask to be at the front so they could be close to the ark? Were there those in the wilderness camp who asked to be able to put their tents as far as possible from the tribe of Levi that surrounded the tabernacle?



God tells us that if we draw near to Him that He will draw near to us (James 4:8a^{iv}). But there is a respectful fear of Him. He is after all, a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24^v). He purifies and refines (Deuteronomy 23:14^{vi}; Isaiah 4:4^{vii}). Surely there were those who wanted to be as far as possible from Him. Others may have been comfortable in the middle somewhere. But some souls wanted the refinement, the purifying, that comes from drawing near (Hebrews 10:22^{viii}). Where do you want to be?

¹⁰ But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout." ¹¹ So he caused the ark of the LORD to circle the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp. Joshua 6:10,11 There was one more command. They were not to say a word as they marched. No songs! No chit chat! Not a noise was to be heard from their mouths until Joshua told them to shout. It represented the solemnity of impending judgment.

I can imagine the conversations around the campfire that night. "Why aren't we building a battering ram and ladders?" "Are we going to do this tomorrow too?" "What in the world is Joshua up to?" "What does he think will happen when we shout?"

¹² Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³ And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually. ¹⁴ And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days. Joshua 6:12-14 Day after day for six days it was the same routine. First thing in the morning they persistently obeyed the command. That required patient trust that Joshua had heard from God. It took faith that the God of their fathers was protecting them and had a plan they didn't understand.

What would you have said? What do you say when you obey the Lord and nothing seems to be different? He says you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17^{ix}), but you keep doing battle with the flesh. He says He will finish the work He started in you (Philippians 1:6^x), but at the rate you are going, you think you would have to live as long as Methuselah. Study your Bible, pray, fellowship, day after day after day. When do we get to shout? When will the walls fall down? The Lord says the victory is ours for He has conquered, but we are still in the battle. Do you see the parallel? But the final day is coming. If we will trust, obey, and patiently persevere, we will see the promises of God come to pass. God cannot fail. The work He started in you will be completed.

¹⁵ On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶ And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city. ¹⁷ And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. Joshua 6:15-17 Finally, at the end of the seven rounds on the seventh day... but first more instruction. The city is to be utterly destroyed. Only the useful metals are to be retrieved for the future temple. This is because the wickedness of the people has reached such a state over the last 400 years that God commanded that nothing in Jericho remain (Genesis 15:16^{xi}). The metals can be purified by fire. What harmful viruses and bacteria were in the clothing and other things in the city? They

represent the sin that permeated the culture. The entire city was hardened beyond repentance except for the family of Rahab. It was therefore to be destroyed.

Only Rahab and her family were to be saved. This means they were considered sanctified by faith (Acts 26:18^{xii}; Ephesians 2:8,9^{xiii}). That is the only way to escape the wrath of God. She already acknowledged that the LORD was God in heaven and in earth (Joshua 2:11^{xiv}). This is one of the many examples that God was not just randomly picking the Jewish nation alone but working through the nation to draw people from every culture to Himself (Acts 10:34,35^{xv}).

¹⁸ But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. ¹⁹ But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD."

Joshua 6:18,19 I encourage you to mark these two verses. This is a major theme in the Law/Torah and the New Testament. There are two kinds of salvation. There is salvation of the soul, when we look to Jesus to forgive us and accept the forgiveness merited when He took our punishment upon Himself on the cross. The Israelites looked forward to this in their daily sacrifices and especially on the Day of Atonement.

The other kind of salvation is a result of being a child of God who yields to the lordship of Jesus. Paul calls it salvation from this present evil age (Galatians 1:4^{xvi}). It is pictured in the Israelites deliverance and separation from Egypt.

The Laws of Moses have many instructions for not mixing things, a picture of not being entwined in this fallen world. Here in this passage, we see it in the instructions to totally destroy Jericho. Moses had told them that was the way they were to conquer the land so that the pagan influences did not draw them from the Lord (Deuteronomy 7:1-5^{xvii}). Only that which could be sanctified by fire was to be kept for the treasury of the LORD (Numbers 31:23^{xviii}).

In the New Testament we are told that in the end our works will be tested by fire as well. The wood, hay, and stubble will burn up. Only the precious metal will remain and are dedicated to the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:12,13^{xix}). It is describing the meaningless works of the flesh that have nothing to do with spiritual life. It is like building a house in Sodom or Jericho. It will pass away with those cities. That which remains is that which belongs to God. **Do you belong to God?** Do your actions come from His life in you? Do you live to glorify Him? That is precious, golden, and not of this passing world. (2 Corinthians 6:17^{xx}; Revelation 18:4^{xxi} from Isaiah 52:11^{xxii}).

We used to say, "Only one life, will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last." I change that to say, "only what is done *by* Christ will last." We do a lot of things for the Lord that are not at His instruction and without His power - wood, hay, and stubble. But when He leads us and we look to His inspiration and power, then there is fruit that remains. In other words, it is golden, for it is for the glory of God.

Sin, which is disobedience to our good God, caused us to be ejected from a perfect world and into a cursed one. We gave up our authority over the world to Satan, and that is why he is called the ruler of this world (John 12:31^{xxiii}). Nature is not evil, but it is under a curse. Our old desires and Satan's temptation is to worship the world and the things in the world (1 John 2:15-17^{xxiv}). We want the gold for ourselves, in other words for our glory and not God's. That is the problem we will see in the next chapter. But then it is not

sanctified. Sanctified means for God's use alone. And by our taking the cursed things for our use alone, we then bring that curse upon ourselves.

Set your hearts on things above and not on things of the earth (Colossians 3:1,2^{xxv}). Lay up your treasures in heaven, not on the earth where moth and rust corrupt it (Matthew 6:19,20^{xxvi}). Do not conform to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds (Romans 12:2^{xxvii}). I could go on and on with verses that tell us to be saved from this present evil world. It is walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh, which is the old fallen nature that included your passions before you came to Christ. We live in Christ or we live in the world. We can't straddle the two. If we are in Christ, we serve Him continually and enjoy the good gifts of God and give Him thanks for them. In the world we try to satisfy our emptiness with the things of the world and always think we need just a little more. God ordains us to be stewards over some of this world's things so we can use them for His glory. But we can only do that when we put Him first.

²⁰ So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. ²¹ Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword. Joshua 6:20,21 The army was to let out a shout along with the long trumpet blasts (Isaiah 58:1^{xxviii}). When they did, the walls fell down flat. That they collapsed all at once is a miracle. That it did not end up as a pile to climb over was another miracle. They charged in and took the city. Now that is shock and awe! Every animal and everyone who was not killed in the collapse of the walls were killed.

That is shocking to us today, but I want you to remember that it was God's judgment not man's. God put up with their increased wickedness, their slaughter of babies, the sexual worship of demons, the centuries of provoking God, until the degree of wickedness was like that of the world before the great flood (Genesis 15:16^{xxix}; Deuteronomy 9:5^{xxx}). If any survived who did not honor the God of Israel, they would soon be leading people to their seductive idolatry (Leviticus 18:24,25^{xxxi}). And in fact, that is what would happen in the future because Israel did not remove all the people from the land. The compromise ended in the captivity of the people of Israel. God knew the condition of every heart, their potential future, and what they would become had they survived. God is always just in all His decrees because He knows every detail. Judgment only comes when all else has failed to turn a people from their descent into depravity.

The only way this could happen in our day is by natural calamities or what insurance companies rightly call "acts of God." Do good people perish with the wicked? Yes, and we see that several times in the Bible. The wicked often kill the messengers who are warning them. But for us, death is only a graduation into glory. When ISIS would destroy a Christian village because it refused to convert, God knew. He welcomes the martyrs home and wipes the tears from their eyes (Revelation 7:17^{xxxii}). God rarely directly intervenes in judgment like this, but it does happen in our day as well.

I read an account of an ISIS group that was planning an attack on a city. They were in a pit on a hill overlooking the city and making their evil plans when a herd of wild boars attacked and killed them. To Muslims, that is the worst possible way to die as they see pigs as unclean animals. I have also read of firsthand accounts of Jesus

appearing to members of ISIS leading to their conversion. Those individuals were like Rahab in Jericho. God knows the hearts that are truly seeking Him.

²² *But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her."* ²³ *So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel.* Joshua 6:22,23 Joshua sent the two spies who had made the pact with Rahab to bring her and her family out. It would be easy to see where they were, as it was the only part of the wall left standing, which was another miracle. Faith rescued them from the judgement of God on the city.

I want to emphasize this point because people often ask about the innocent people who never heard of Jesus. Rahab only knew of what the God of Israel had done for Israel. She heard testimonies as news and her heart began to wonder about a God who could do those things. Then she committed herself to Him and even risking her life to hide the spies. God used the news that traders brought to touch her heart. Why didn't it touch the hearts of others in the city? It is the same reason people hear of what Jesus has done for us and how He conquered the grave and yet refuse the drawing of the Holy Spirit. Mankind does not want to give up his ways, pride, or independence.

They put Rahab and her family outside the camp. Before we are welcomed into the family of God, we need to put away all the impurity, renounce the old gods we worshiped, and understand what it is we are becoming a part of. We often try to bring in our old ideas that we had before and try to blend them with the revelation of Scripture. There may be a nugget of truth in what we once believed, but we must allow the Word of God to interpret what is true and separate it from what is not.

²⁴ *And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.*

²⁵ *But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.* ²⁶ *Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho. "At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates."* ²⁷ *So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.* Joshua 6:24-27 Everything that could burn was burned. Only Rahab and her family were spared because of her faith in the God of Israel demonstrated in hiding the spies. Rahab is welcomed into the nation as Gentile convert. She even becomes one of the ancestors of David and of our Messiah, Jesus (Matthew 1:5^{xxxiii})! This emphasizes God's heart to bring into the family of God all who will come to Him in faith, regardless of their past. They are the true descendants of Abraham, the father of the people of faith (Romans 4:16^{xxxiv}).

There is a town called Jericho today. It is not the city Joshua conquered, for that city is still a massive pile of rock and bricks. It was rebuilt and Joshua's curse came to pass (1 Kings 16:34^{xxxv}). If the people of Canaan feared the Israelites because of what they heard about them leaving Egypt and events in the wilderness, now they would be trembling as the news of the annihilation of the walled city of Jericho reached them. God was preparing the way for the conquest of the entire land He had promised to Abraham's descendants.



In our day, the Commander has given us quite a different set of instructions. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against evil in the heavenly realms, in our hearts, and the hearts of others (2 Corinthians 10:3-5^{xxxvi}). Our weapons are not physical things but love, prayer, and faithful obedience to our Commander's instructions. We are not taking a piece of land and setting up an earthly kingdom, for our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20^{xxxvii}). We are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Ephesians 6 tells us our defense is faith, the helmet of salvation, the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and our offensive weapon is the Word of God. Our feet are always to be fitted with the gospel of peace.

In the spiritual realm we tear down strongholds and take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ. We devote our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God because of Jesus' sacrifice for us. Our Commander is leading us to take a spiritual promised land where we desire the sincere milk of the Word and find it sweeter than honey (Psalm 19:10^{xxxviii}; 1 Peter 2:2^{xxxix}). Christ our King goes before us and our shouts of praise bring down walls opposition and set the captives free (Matthew 16:18^{xl}). Are you engaged in the battle, suited up, and ready for the Commander's instructions?

Questions:

- 1 How did Joshua get this command?
- 2 Why did the people obey what sounded crazy?
- 3 What were the details of the plan?
- 4 What is significant about the ark in the middle of the army?
- 5 What would you have thought after three or four days?
- 6 How does that relate to our routines and obedience?
- 7 What was an additional miracle in the way the walls fell?
- 8 Why did everything need to be destroyed? Analogy?
- 9 How was Rahab and family saved?
- 10 How do we do battle today?

ⁱ **Genesis 2:9 (ESV)**

⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

ⁱⁱ **Matthew 18:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

ⁱⁱⁱ **Zephaniah 3:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

^{iv} **James 4:8 (ESV)**

⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

^v **Deuteronomy 4:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

^{vi} **Deuteronomy 23:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ Because the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you.

^{vii} **Isaiah 4:4 (ESV)**

⁴ when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.

^{viii} **Hebrews 10:22 (ESV)**

²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

^{ix} **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

^x **Philippians 1:6 (ESV)**

⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

^{xi} **Genesis 15:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

^{xii} **Acts 26:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

^{xiii} **Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)**

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

^{xiv} **Joshua 2:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

^{xv} **Acts 10:34-35 (ESV)**

³⁴ So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

^{xvi} **Galatians 1:4 (ESV)**

⁴ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

^{xvii} **Deuteronomy 7:1-5 (ESV)**

¹ “When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. ³ You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. ⁵ But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire.

^{xviii} **Numbers 31:23 (ESV)**

²³ everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean. Nevertheless, it shall also be purified with the water for impurity. And whatever cannot stand the fire, you shall pass through the water.

^{xix} **1 Corinthians 3:12-13 (ESV)**

¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

^{xx} **2 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

^{xxi} **Revelation 18:4 (ESV)**

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;

^{xxii} **Isaiah 52:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.

^{xxiii} **John 12:31 (ESV)**

³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

^{xxiv} **1 John 2:15–17 (ESV)**

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

^{xxv} **Colossians 3:1-2 (ESV)**

¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

^{xxvi} **Matthew 6:19-20 (ESV)**

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

^{xxvii} **Romans 12:2 (ESV)**

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

^{xxviii} **Isaiah 58:1 (ESV)**

¹ “Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins.

^{xxix} **Genesis 15:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

^{xxx} **Deuteronomy 9:5 (ESV)**

⁵ Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but

because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

^{xxxix} **Leviticus 18:24-25 (ESV)**

²⁴ “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, ²⁵ and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

^{xxxvii} **Revelation 7:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

^{xxxviii} **Matthew 1:5 (ESV)**

⁵ and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,

^{xxxv} **Romans 4:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

^{xxxvi} **1 Kings 16:34 (ESV)**

³⁴ In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

^{xxxvii} **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (ESV)**

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

^{xxxviii} **Philippians 3:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

^{xxxix} **Psalms 19:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

^{xl} **1 Peter 2:2 (ESV)**

² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

^{xli} **Matthew 16:18**

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.