

Joshua

The LORD is Salvation

Chapter 6 *The Battle and Fall of Jericho (Central Campaign)*

6:1 Jericho was fortified by a double ring of walls (the outer wall 6 feet thick , the inner wall 12 feet), with houses built on timbers laid between the walls. The city's first line of defense was to secure all gates and stay inside the walls. In addition, being built on a hill gave the city a major advantage against enemies trying to attack uphill. The most successful military strategy against fortified cities was a long siege to force surrender through starvation (perfected by the Romans).

6:2 The LORD assured Joshua of the victory even before the battle. This victory was prophesied earlier ^{Deuteronomy 7:24} and guaranteed by the battle being led by the LORD Himself ^{Joshua 5:13-15}.

Joshua fought and Christians fight from a position of victory, when the proper preparations are taken (i.e., getting ^{John 3:16} and staying ^{1 John 1:9} in the center of the will of God).

Christians have victory in Jesus ^{1 Corinthians 15:57, Romans 8:37}, because He defeated all fleshly and spiritual enemies on the cross ^{Colossians 2:13-15} and through His resurrection ^{Ephesians 1:18-23}. When Christians are in God's will, they cannot be defeated ^{Romans 8:31, 1 John 4:4}.

6:3-5 The LORD conveyed His unusual battle plan to His field commander, Joshua: the armed men (a number less than 600,000 ^{Numbers 26:51}), seven priests blowing on *shofar* trumpets (rams' horns, used for religious and military signals, not the trumpets used for temple music) and the ark would march around Jericho for six days (assumed to be Sunday to Friday), but on the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times while the priests blew the trumpets (A violation of the Sabbath? ^{Exodus 20:8-11}). Finally, at the sound of a long blast on the trumpets ^{Exodus 19:13}, the men were to give a loud shout (a sign of trust in and agreement with God's promise ^{v.2, Ezra 10:12}), resulting in the wall's collapse followed by the warriors advancing.

The collapse of the wall would be complete, except for the part with Rahab's house ^{Joshua 2:14}.

Four "sevens" are mentioned in this chapter: priests, trumpets, days, times around the city. Biblically, seven is the principal number signifying completeness ^{e.g., 2 Kings 5:10,14, Revelation 1-22}.

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This "battle plan" devised by God is one of many examples of methods He uses that seem "foolish" (e.g., the cross ^{1 Corinthians 1:18}), but the "foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom" ^{1 Corinthians 1:25} because "[God's] ways are higher than [man's] ways" ^{Isaiah 55:8-9}.

6:6-15 Joshua conveyed the LORD's orders to the priests, next he instructed the people on what was to take place and then the process began. The plans stated that early on each of the first six days the "armed guard" (probably all of the fighting men, minus the rear guard), the priests and the ark (With a rear guard: the fighting men of Dan ^{Numbers 10:25} or the LORD ^{Isaiah 58:8} ?) would march once around the city with the only noise being the trumpets; however, on the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and all marched seven times around the city of Jericho.

The instructions in these verses were somewhat vague on who would be involved in marching. An earlier verse ^{v.3} seems to state only the fighting men would be involved; however, Joshua's directives here ^{v.8-11} were given to the "people", perhaps indicating they were all involved. A plausible interpretation may be that only the men of war would perform the marching around and the attacking of the city, while the rest of the Israelite people would merely be close observers, but would join the armed men in the loud shout when Joshua gave the command at the end of the long trumpet blast on the seventh day.

The silence of the people followed by seven trumpets preceding the judgement of God upon the Jericho pagans sounds very similar to the silence in heaven ^{Revelation 8:1} prior to the seven trumpet judgements ^{Revelation 8:6-9:21, 11:15-19} on the pagan world during the 70th week of Daniel.

6:16-19 At the completion of the seventh time around, Joshua gave the people five commands:

- (1) "shout" following the long blast of the trumpets;
- (2) "the city...is...to be devoted to the LORD" (a kind of firstfruits ^{Deuteronomy 26:8-10, 1 Corinthians 15:20});
- (3) spare "Rahab...and all...with her";
- (4) "keep away from the devoted things", otherwise the individual and the "camp of Israel" would face destruction ^{Joshua 7:1} and
- (5) "All the...silver and gold...must go into [the LORD's] treasury".

6:20-21 The people shouted after the long trumpet blast, collapsing the wall of Jericho ^{Hebrews 11:30}.

The warriors followed the command to devote the city to the LORD by righteously killing every living thing in Jericho with the sword ^{Joshua 5:13} (because their sin was complete ^{Genesis 15:16}).

The killing of all living things was the LORD's command for all cities in the PL ^{Deuteronomy 20:16}, but His rules were less severe when Israel attacked cities outside the PL ^{Deuteronomy 20:10-15}.

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6:22-23 Joshua chose the two men who risked their lives sometime earlier by going into Jericho as spies/messengers, for the task of retrieving Rahab & her family before the Israelites attacked and destroyed the city (a prerequisite to the attack ^{Genesis 19:15-22}). The two men were able to reap the reward of their labors ^{James 3:18} by getting Rahab & family to safety outside of the camp of Israel (where they must go, because they were unclean ^{Deuteronomy 23:9-14, Joshua 5:1-12}).

6:24-25 Joshua and the army obeyed the commands of the LORD by burning the city ^{Numbers 31:10} (a symbol of God's consuming fire ^{Deuteronomy 4:23-24, Hebrews 12:28-29}), by putting the spoils in God's treasury and by sparing Rahab ^{Hebrews 11:31}, who remained with the Israelites ^{Matthew 1:5}.

Note the "sacred" ^{v.19} things God told Joshua to keep ('gold, silver, bronze, iron' ^{v.24}) and the things that were to be destroyed ^{v.21} ("burned the whole city" ^{v.24}). These things seem to have a close relationship (a foreshadowing of) the materials associated with His judgement of the works of the believer ^{1 Corinthians 3:10-15}: the things of eternal value (gold, silver and costly stones ^{1 Corinthians 3:12}) will produce a "reward" for the follower of God ^{1 Corinthians 3:14}, while the things with no eternal value (wood, hay, straw ^{1 Corinthians 3:12}) are "burned up" ^{1 Corinthians 3:15}.

6:26 The LORD, through Joshua, put a curse on anyone who would rebuild Jericho ^{Deuteronomy 13:16}.

Five hundred years later, a fulfillment of that prophetic curse occurred during the reign of Ahab (a wicked king of Israel). A man named Hiel (God lives) rebuilt Jericho and experienced the full force of the curse by losing his eldest and youngest sons ^{1 Kings 16:34}. The Jericho of Jesus time ^{Matthew 20:29, Mark 10:46} and today is near, but not on, the ancient ruins of the city.

6:27 The LORD kept His promise to be with Joshua ^{Joshua 1:5-9}, resulting in his fame all over the PL.

The Lord's total destruction (through Joshua and the Israelites) of Jericho (one of the most important cities in Canaan) is a physical earthly example of "[demolishing] strongholds", which is how Paul described victories Christians gain in the spiritual battles of life ^{2 Corinthians 10:3-5}.

Closing: From the example of Joshua, Israel and Jericho, what is the correct way to serve God?

1. Make the best plans and carry them out as well as possible,
2. Make the best plans and ask God to bless them, or
3. Ask God about His plans and offer our services to Him.