



7 | JOSHUA 6

JERICHO: TAKING DOWN STRONGHOLDS

To win life's battles we must believe and accept by faith that the Word of God is true.

Outline

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 - A Victory Costly to Jericho (6:21, 24-25)*
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Call to Worship

Romans 8:37-39, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Songs

O Praise the Name

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

He Will Hold Me Fast

Turn Your Eyes / Freely, Freely

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME: Welcome visitors

GIVING: You can still give over Zelle through your bank with no fees. We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center.

MEMORIAL: Service for David Beakey September 5, Saturday 10am.

DADDY-DAUGHTER BBQ: Sept 12, Saturday, 3pm.

Introduction

Key thought: Life is a battle. You are God’s instrument. If you want to win, you have to follow his voice. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice and they follow me” (Jn 10). In a battle, you have to listen to the general, not to your own ideas.

Today we continue in a series in the book of Joshua called “Footsteps of Faith.” Our title this morning is: “Jericho—Fighting Life’s Battles”.

“You are but a poor soldier of Christ if you think you can overcome without fighting and suppose you can have the crown without the conflict.” —John Chrysostom (347–407)

The courageous Syrian preacher and martyr John Chrysostom said that, and he was right; for the Christian life involves challenge and conflict whether we like it or not.¹

But just fighting isn’t enough. You have to fight the right way.

2 Corinthians 10:4, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.”

You will fight, but how? The message of Joshua 6 is about how we fight life’s battles. Will we come with our own plans and methods or will we hear from the Lord? We need to hear from God.

We all need a leader. The leader of the book of Joshua is not General Joshua, but King Jesus.

1. OUR CHAMPION (5:13-15; 6:1-5)

“Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, and the walls came tumbling down,” so the old spiritual says. True enough, but the real difference was not Joshua or Israel, but Jesus.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Strong*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 68.

The walls certainly collapsed but not inward, but outward, and “everyone charged straight in, and they took the city” (6:20). But how?

First, the Lord has to lead. God gave Jericho into Israel’s hands, and the whole account of this dramatic sixth chapter centers on the our glorious General: the Lord himself.²

WORSHIP HIM (5:13-15; 6:1)

I can imagine how Joshua might have studied the situation. The Bible does not tell us what he thought. But it could have been like this.

“I wonder what the best way would be to attack Jericho? The walls are high. The gates are huge and heavy—and well-guarded. The people are equipped for war. How can we conquer Jericho?”

Joshua surely remembered that God had promised to defeat the enemies of the Israelites. Do you think he asked God for help?

Suddenly standing before Joshua was a Man with a sword in his hand.

“Who are you?” Joshua asked. “Are you on our side or the side of our enemies?”

The man answered, “I am Captain of the Lord’s army.”

Immediately Joshua realized this was the Lord himself. Listen to what the Bible says.

Joshua 5:13-15 | When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” ¹⁴ And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” ¹⁵ And the commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

Joshua had read in the Book of the Law:

“If your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here”
(Exo 33:15).

The Lord had promised to be with Joshua just as he had been with Moses (Josh 1:5), and now he reaffirmed that promise in a personal way. Like his predecessor, Joshua refused to move until he was sure the Lord’s presence was with him.

This paragraph records one of the pre-incarnation appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in the Old Testament.

- To **Abraham** the sojourning shepherd, the Lord came as a **traveler** to share in a friendly meal (Gen 18:1-8).
- To **Jacob** the schemer, he came as a **wrestler** to bring him to the place of submission (Gen 32:24-32).

² David Jackman, *Joshua: People of God’s Purpose*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 67.

- The **three Hebrew young men** met him as their **companion** in the furnace of fire (Dan 3:25).
- And **Joshua** met him as the **Captain of the Lord’s armies**. Our Lord always comes to us when we need him and in the way we need him.

The point is: nothing significant happens in life until Jesus shows up: that’s true in both Old and New Testaments. He’s my Captain, and if you know him, he’s yours too.

In **John 15:5**, Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

It is a striking lesson. But it could easily be misinterpreted. This is not justification for inactivity. As we shall see, God’s people had a large part to play in the conquest and destruction of the city of Jericho. It was not delivered to them on a plate, as it were, by overwhelming supernatural intervention that required them to do nothing. But the way in which the victory came was chosen by the Lord, so that it would be ingrained in their memory that this first victory was the gift of their gracious, sovereign commander. What happened at the beginning was to be the pattern for all their future advance into this land of promise and rest.³

Israel feared the Lord, and Jericho feared Israel

Joshua 6:1 | Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in.

The citizens of Jericho were terrified of what the Lord had done with the Hebrews who had come from Egypt. Remember the waters of the Jordan were split for about twenty miles, from the Dead Sea to the city of Adam (near Shiloh). For twenty miles, the Jordan dried up, with all the water on a heap. Everyone saw this miracle. Even the citizens of Jericho, with their mighty walls, were terrified.

But the news of Israel’s exodus from Egypt and their recent victories east of the Jordan had already spread to Canaan and put the people in panic (Josh 2:9–11; cf Deut 2:25; 7:23; 11:25; 32:30). Then after seeing the Jordan River miracle, they were trembling with fear. This was just what God promised.⁴

“I will send my terror before you and will throw into confusion all the people against whom you shall come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you [*and run in retreat*]” (Exo 23:27).

Application: As your worship level goes up in your life, you become a more effective witness. People need to see the Lord in you. The people of Jericho feared and trembled as they saw the faith of the people of Israel and God’s manifest presence and miracles.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Strong*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 71.

TRUST HIM FOR VICTORY (6:2)

Where does victory come from? God had sent his Captain of the Lord’s armies to direct a hidden war. The Lord gave Joshua this encouraging promise: “This is My war, Joshua. I am going to win the battle against Jericho for you. Simply trust Me and do exactly as I say.”

Joshua listened carefully as God explained his plan.

Joshua 6:2 | And the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor”.

The victory had already been won! All Joshua and his people had to do was claim the promise and obey the Lord. Victorious Christians are people who *know* the promises of God, because they spend time meditating on God’s Word (1:8); they *believe* the promises of God, because the Word of God generates faith in their hearts (Rom. 10:17); and they *reckon* on these promises and obey what God tells them to do. To “reckon” means to count as true in your life what God says about you in his Word.

FOLLOW HIS INSTRUCTIONS (6:3-5)

“Joshua did not take the city merely by a clever, human military tactic,” wrote Francis A. Schaeffer. “The strategy was the Lord’s.”⁵

Joshua 6:3-5 | “You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. ⁴Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵And when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him” (6:3-5).

Early in the morning Joshua called the people together. “Today we shall begin our attack against Jericho,” he announced. “We are going to do it God’s way, not ours.”

Joshua continued, “Line up in this order: Armed soldiers first. Next, seven priests each with a trumpet. After the trumpeters will be the priests carrying the Ark of God. The rest of the soldiers and other people will follow the Ark.”

Everyone obeyed.

Joshua continued his instructions. “Now we shall march around the city of Jericho one time. The priests will blow their trumpets. Everyone else keep quiet. Do not say one word!”

“Ready? Forward march!” Joshua ordered.

Hearing the trumpets, the Jericho guards scurried to the top of the city wall. Wide-eyed, they watched the Israelites march around the entire city only one time. And then they all returned to their camp. How strange!

⁵ Francis A. Schaeffer, *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 102–3.

“What is the matter with that nation?” the people of Jericho must have wondered.

Early the next day Joshua gave the exact same strange order. Again, the Israelites marched around the city without talking. All that could be heard was the blowing of the trumpets. Then they went back to camp.

The Lord’s instructions don’t always make sense

For six days, seven priests were to be armed with shofars. They were to lead the people and march around the city once **without a word** – **without a sound**, **blowing the trumpets continually** as they marched once around the city, and then go home. They were to do this for six days.

On the seventh day, they were to march around without a sound seven times, and on the seventh time **the priests** were to make a **long blast of the trumpets**. At that time, **all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat**. That’s when God’s people were to invade the city.

Ok. That makes no sense. But they were to follow God’s instructions to the tee. God delights in using strange methods to achieve great things.

He enabled Samson to win a victory over the Philistines by wielding the jawbone of a donkey.

He enabled David to slay Goliath with a sling and a stone.

Centuries later, God selected an ordinary Jewish girl to bring his Son into this world, and he selected tiny Bethlehem as the place for him to be born.

The supreme example, of course, is the cross of Christ. It seems ridiculous to suggest that a Jewish rabbi dying on a Roman cross would provide eternal salvation for sinners. But that cross, so despised and scorned, is the means that God chose for saving sinners. That cross would prove to be a stumbling block to the Jews and a laughing stock to the Greeks, but to those who are saved, it is both the power and the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:18–25). Why did God choose such a strange means of salvation? It was so all the glory for the salvation of sinners would be given to him (1 Cor 1:26–31).⁶

An Important Question to Consider

How do you hear from God? If you are God’s child, you definitely will hear from him. But how do we hear from God? Of course, all Christians should say, “The Bible.” Just to push back a bit, what about all the Bible loving Jehovah’s witnesses or the Mary-worshipping Catholics? What makes us as evangelical or born-again Christians different? I believe the answer is by his Word and through his Spirit. God is interested in being personally involved in your life through his Word. God uses his Word to speak to you, but hear this: God does speak today. He may use a verse or a passage to directly guide you into the circumstances in your life. He promises that if we lack wisdom and ask, that he will give us wisdom without rebuking us (Jas 1:5).

2. OUR STRATEGY (6:6-19)

⁶ Ellsworth, *Joshua*, 69.

The strategy presented from the Lord through Joshua was to demonstrate the complete powerlessness of God’s people and the complete power of the Lord. We have an incredible illustration of walking in the Spirit.

FAITH DEFINED (6:6-7)

The obedience of the people was due to their faith in the Word of God. Faith is believing that which God tells us even when it seems ludicrous to do so.

Faith is Not Blind

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1).

There is a conviction or assurance of things that are hoped for. Hope in the Bible is not wishful thinking. Hope is a certain and settled expectation. Faith is trusting God based on evidence of unseen things. This is called by philosophers and theologians the *transcendental argument* for God. There are certain things that are settled realities that we cannot see, like the laws of science, laws of logic, and laws of morality and conscience. Faith, in other words, is not blind faith. It is based on settled evidence. God’s fingerprints are everywhere. “The heavens declare the glory of God...” (Psa 19:1). DNA is just one example of God’s mark of intelligence upon all living creatures.

Christian faith though goes beyond the transcendental evidence for God and looks to actual history when God became a human being. We as Christians believe that the true and living God has been revealed in his Son Jesus Christ of Nazareth who lived and died in Palestine around 2000 years ago.

Joshua had not yet seen the realities of the Gospel that we hold dear, but he was being led by the same Messiah that we are. The Captain of the Lord’s armies was leading him, and he and the army of Israel with the priests were following the Lord by faith.

Joshua 6:6-7 | So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the Lord.”⁷ And he said to the people, “**Go forward.** March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the Lord”.

Faith is not believing **in spite of evidence**, for the people of Israel had been given one demonstration after another proving that God’s Word and God’s power can be trusted. The Lord had opened the Red Sea, destroyed the Egyptian army, cared for his people in the wilderness, defeated great kings, given Israel their land, opened the Jordan River, and brought his people safely into the Promised Land. How could they do anything other than believe him!

They were given the instructions from the Lord through Joshua, and they obeyed. Although the strategy must have seemed to be utter nonsense to them, there is no record of the people questioning it or complaining about it. This generation had learned from the grumbling, unbelieving generation that had preceded them.

Peter Jeffery writes, ‘Faith is not an irresponsible step into the unknown, but a reasonable obedience to the will and word of a sovereign, almighty God.’⁷

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days” (Heb 11:30).

“And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 Jn 5:4).

Faith Has an Object

Faith always have an object. Faith is not just wishful thinking. You can’t just “have faith.” That’s wishful thinking. Biblical faith always has an object. The object of our faith is the triune God revealed in the Holy Scriptures. We trust in the God revealed in the Bible. Our object is the Lord. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you be saved” (Acts 16:31). There’s faith’s object: the Lord!

Faith is Trust

Faith is not just believing facts. Faith is a trust in someone or something. It’s a surrender of your mind, will, and emotions. Faith is demonstrated by actions. James said, “Faith apart from works is dead” (Jas 2:26). The evidence that a person has true faith is godly obedience from the heart. As Jesus said, “You shall know them by their fruits” (Mt 7:16).

FAITH SUPPORTED (6:8)

Joshua 6:8 | 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.

No one has perfect faith. We all look to the Lord, but we also all depend on each other. We see a beautiful pattern of growth. The Captain of the Lord of the Angel Armies (Jesus) is first. Amen! Then Joshua, then the soldiers, then the priests, then the people.

Paul said, “Follow me as I follow Christ.”

The Lord was at the center of everyone when they crossed. It was important that the ark of the Lord be in its proper place, for it represented the presence of the Lord with his people. When Israel crossed the river, the account mentions the ark sixteen times (Josh 3–4); and here in 6:6-15, the ark is mentioned eight times. Israel could march and the priests blow trumpets until all of them dropped from weariness; but if the Lord wasn’t with them, there would be no victory. *When we accept God’s plan, we invite God’s presence; and that guarantees victory (cf Exo 33:12-17).*

People are following you. But where are you leading them? Are you following Christ like Joshua was?

⁷ Peter Jeffrey. *Overcoming Life’s Difficulties: Learning from the Book of Joshua* (Welwyn Garden City, UK: Evangelical Press, 2007), 71.

FAITH OBEYS (6:9-19)

You can't say you have faith unless you obey the Lord. Trust and obedience go together. "Faith apart from works is dead" (Jas 2:26). The evidence that a person has true faith is godly obedience from the heart. As Jesus said, "You shall know them by their fruits" (Mt 7:16). What does obedience look like? Obedience is a total surrender. It's a walking in the Spirit, a yielding to God entirely.

Obedience of Self-Control (6:9-11)

Joshua 6:9-11 | 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. 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 (6:9-11).

Marching around the walls, they couldn't make a sound until the seventh day. The only sound was the trumpets the priests were blowing.

If the week's schedule was a test of their patience, the divine command of silence was a test of their **self-control**. People who can't control their **tongues** can't control their bodies (**Jas 3:1-2**), and what good are soldiers whose bodies are not disciplined? "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psa 46:10). In the Christian life there's "a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Ecc 3:7); and wise is the Spirit-filled child of God who knows the difference. Our Lord is the perfect example of this (Isa 53:7; Mt 26:62-63; 27:14; Lk 23:9).

Obedience of Self-Discipline (6:12-14)

They walked around the city walls once each day for six days straight and went home. The city of Jericho is about a mile around the entire city, which is around 8 acres in land mass. It isn't a massive city, but a military compound. The scary part was not the size of the city but the soldiers and weapons they had inside the double paned walls.

God did not tell them to build chariots, but **to be silent** and march while the priests **blew the trumpets continually** (6:13). They didn't necessarily understand, but they obeyed. Proverbs 3:5-6 says that our hearts are not always going to understand God's plans – that's why we can't lean to our own understanding.

Joshua 6:12-14 | 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.

Day after day, we are to seek the Lord. We are to do what he says. We may see no movement. But we need to surrender to the Lord and realize he knows exactly what he is doing.

Obedience of Self-Denial (6:15-19)

Their obedience included not taking what they wanted. Some things in the world need to be devoted to destruction.

Joshua 6:15-19 | 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.**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.**”

This meant that everything was dedicated to the Lord—the people, the houses, the animals, and all the spoils of war—and the Lord could do with it whatever he pleased. In this first victory in Canaan, Jericho was presented to God as “the firstfruits” of the victories to come. Ordinarily the soldiers shared the spoils of war (Deut 20:14), but not at Jericho; for everything there belonged to the Lord and was put into his treasury (Deut 13:16; 1 Kgs 7:51). It was this command that Achan disobeyed, and his disobedience later brought Israel defeat and disgrace and brought Achan and his family death.

Strongholds of the Flesh

Application: **Obedience** always looks like the fruit of the Spirit. It’s not just an outward compliance, but an inward surrender and joy in yielding to God!

Is there a lack of obedience in your life? Is there a stronghold of the flesh? The works of the flesh manifest our unbelief in anger.

Are you **angry**? Is their cursing in your heart or on your lips? That’s the flesh. Are you wanting to control things? The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God (Jas 1:19). God wants us walking in meekness, not anger.

Are you **foolish**? Do you turn to media, to porn, to worldly music to just check out? Instead of checking out, check in with the wisdom of Jesus.

Are you **despairing**? Depression isn’t a fruit of the Spirit. Nothing should rob you of the joy that comes from knowing Christ by faith. Put it away. Find the root. Put on hope!

Are you **worried**? Anxiety is also not a fruit of the Spirit. Worry displays unbelief in the heart. We serve a God who is all wise. Trust him. Be filled with the joy of trust.

Obedience puts off the works of the flesh and puts on the fruit of the Spirit!

3. OUR VICTORY (6:20-27)

A VICTORY FOR ISRAEL (6:20)

Joshua 6:20 | 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.

The people of Israel had a great victory. They devoted the entire city to destruction. For six days they walked around the city (about a one-mile radius). Each day they would walk once around the city blowing the ram’s horns (shofars) continually. After their one-mile, very noisy walk, they went home. They did this for six days. On the seventh day, they did the same thing, but walk around it seven times, blowing their horns continually. At the end of the seventh circuit around the city, after blowing the horns for so long, they were to give **a great shout**. At that moment, the double **wall barrier fell down flat**. The people easily **went up into the city**, and they **captured the city**.

What a victory this was. This is what we should expect in our Christian walk because of Christ. We may be called upon to do unusual things! I doubt we will be asked to blow any trumpets, but we are called to obey Jesus Christ no matter what. Jesus said, “If you love me keep my commandments” (Jn 14:15). He promises to answer if we obey. We ought to expect God to do great things. That does not mean that we will always see the victory in this life. The hall of faith in Hebrews 11 closes with these sobering words: “All these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised” (Heb 11:39). We may not receive it now, but we will have the victory when our faith is made sight at Jesus’ coming.

A VICTORY FOR RAHAB AND HER FAMILY (6:22-23)

Joshua 6:22-23 | 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.

Remember the words of Hebrews 11 about Rahab,

“By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies” (Heb 11:31).

How amazing that Rahab is found in Matthew 1, in the very genealogy of Jesus, where there are two are Gentile women: Rahab the Cananite from Jericho (who, according to Jewish tradition, apparently married one of the spies, Salmon); the other is Ruth the Moabitess.

Rahab and her family had a great victory as well. When the walls of the city Jericho fell down, it appears that the section of the wall that held Rahab’s house (2:17) *didn’t fall down!* It wasn’t necessary for the spies to look for a window with a red cord hanging from

it (2:18-19), because the only house that was preserved was the house in which Rahab and her family waited. When the spies made their covenant with Rahab, they didn’t know exactly how God would give them the city. The cord was there to preserve her and her family from destruction.

God saved and protected Rahab because of her faith (Heb 11:31); and because she led her family to trust in Yahweh, they were also saved. These Gentile believers were rescued from a fiery judgment because they trusted the God of Israel, for “salvation is of the Jews” (Jn 4:22). They were “afar off” as far as the covenants were concerned (Eph 2:11–12), but their faith brought them into the nation of Israel; for Rahab married Salmon and became an ancestor of King David *and of the Messiah!* (Mt 1:5).⁸

A VICTORY COSTLY TO JERICHO (6:21, 24-25)

Jericho could never be rebuilt. This is the Lord’s victory. They were to destroy the people (6:21).

Joshua 6:21, 24-25 | 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.

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.

Destroy the inhabitants (6:21)

Although God’s command meant total destruction for Jericho, this does not mean that there could not have been mercy. The command is only one aspect of God’s plans for nations. This in particular is a fulfillment of prophecy in Leviticus.

That wickedness or uncleanness is graphically described in Leviticus 18, with its focus on sexual perversions, child sacrifice, and other “abominations” to the Creator.⁹

“For by all these [things] the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants” (Leviticus 18:24, 25).

Elsewhere it is clear that nations do have a choice. Even a people whose wickedness is reaching the point of no return (like Israel and Nineveh, even Sodom and Gomorrah) can repent and find forgiveness and mercy from God (2 Chr 7:14; Jer 18:5–10; Jon 4:11).¹⁰ Why did all the inhabitants of the city have to die? Is it right that God could command Israel to kill everyone in Jericho, including women and children? J

⁸ Wiersbe, 78–79.

⁹ David Jackman, *Joshua: People of God’s Purpose*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 72.

¹⁰ Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 146.

Essentially, God prophesied the nations would be vomited out of the land because of their wickedness.

God, in another prophesy says, “Let the sins of the Amorites accumulate for 400 years so that they would be full (Gen 15:16), and then sends his own people in as instruments of judgment.

God is sovereign and has the right to choose when and how people die. 50,000 people die every day. Because this was a theocracy, God chose to use Israel.

So God has his times and seasons for when he shares his authority to take and give life. And the church today is not Israel, and we are not a political entity. Therefore the word we have from the Lord today is, "Love your enemy. Pray for those who abuse you. Lay your life down for the world. Don't kill in order to spread the gospel, but die to spread it."¹¹

Burn the city (6:24)

“God is a consuming fire” was spoken by Moses in Deuteronomy 4:24 long before it was quoted by the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 12:29. Moses was warning the Jewish people against idolatry and the danger of following the religious practices of the people in Canaan. Moses added a phrase that isn’t quoted in Hebrews but is still important for us to know: “even a jealous God.” God is jealous over his people and will not permit them to divide their love and service between him and the false gods of the world (Exo 20:5; 34:14). We cannot serve two masters.

Jericho was a wicked city, *and sin is only fuel for the holy wrath of God*. Jesus compared hell to a furnace of fire (Mt 13:42), fire that is eternal (25:41, 46); and John compared it to a lake of fire (Rev 19:20; 20:10, 14). John the Baptist described God’s judgment as “unquenchable fire” (Mt 3:12). The burning of Jericho, like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 7), is a picture of the judgment of God that will fall on all who reject the truth.¹²

A Curse

Joshua 6:26 | 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.”

Even after he had burned the city, Joshua put a curse on Jericho. This would warn any of the Jews or Rahab’s descendants who might be tempted to rebuild what God had destroyed.¹³ Many years later, this curse found a fulfillment when...¹⁴

Hiel, a man from Bethel, “rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of

¹¹ John Piper, “What Made it Ok for God to Kill Women and Children in the Old Testament?” Accessed July 11, 2018. <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-made-it-okay-for-god-to-kill-women-and-children-in-the-old-testament>

¹² Ibid., 81–82.

¹³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Strong*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 82.

¹⁴ David M. Howard Jr., *Joshua*, vol. 5, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 176.

his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua son of Nun” (1 Kgs 16:34).

A FAMOUS VICTORY (6:27)

All Israel rejoiced in what God had done through Joshua. Joshua did nothing except trust in the Lord. We can do that, can’t we?

Joshua 6:27 | So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

The statement here about the Lord’s being with Joshua and his fame spreading throughout the land echoes two earlier statements, where God promised Joshua his presence, just as he had been with Moses (3:7) and where God began to exalt Joshua in the eyes of the people (4:14). This statement builds naturally upon those, reiterating that God was with Joshua, but adding that his fame now spread throughout all the land.¹⁵

Joshua’s name was known for the right reasons. He loved the Lord. What are you known for?

Conclusion

The fight is upon us. Are you seeing real victory in your life? Is there a stronghold in your life? Are you following Christ, your Captain? Are you walking by faith? Are you experiencing the victory in your life?

When I think of tearing down strongholds, I think of my old heart of stone. Jesus went into my heart and tore down my heart of stone. He replaced it with a heart of flesh. My Jesus tells me that no enemy can defeat me. No weapon formed against me shall prosper. If I walk in him, I have total victory. He says, We are more than conquerors through him who loved us!

In all our trials, Pauls says:

Romans 8:37-39, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹⁵ Ibid.