

Jericho (Hebrews 11:30)
By Pastor Jeff Alexander (9/10/2017)

Introduction

1. Hebrews 11 ignores the events in the wilderness: Mount Sinai and the giving of the Law, the tabernacle and worship practices, fear to enter the Promised Land, and the forty years of unbelief and wandering.
 - a. Only the events relevant to the author's purpose in recounting the faith of the faithful are included.
 - b. In the verse before us, we move from Moses to Joshua (not mentioned by name).
2. The book of Joshua provides an abundance of fascinating events relating to faith.
 - a. Joshua records Israel's conquest of the land promised to the patriarchs (Josh. 1:1, 2).
 - b. Joshua records a miracle in the crossing of the Jordan like to that of crossing the Red Sea (Josh. 3:13–17).
 - c. Joshua records the "sanctification" of the new generation—circumcision (rolling away the reproach of Egypt—Josh. 5:9) and the first Passover in Canaan (Josh. 5:10, 12) like to that of Israel at Mount Sinai.
 - d. Moses met the preincarnate Christ before the Exodus; Joshua met the preincarnate Christ before the conquest.
 - e. In addition to crossing the Jordan (ch. 3), Joshua records the miracles of the defeat of Jericho (ch. 6), and in stopping of the sun for one whole day (10:1–15; note vv. 12–15).
3. With all the marvelous things that Joshua records in the conquest of Canaan, Hebrews cites only the walls of Jericho falling down.
4. One other curious fact of note is that Hebrews mentions Rahab after Jericho's fall (ch. 6); yet her faith story is told first in Joshua 2.
5. Joshua is not named in Hebrews 11 because the focus is not on Joshua's faith but on the believing remnant of Israel whom Joshua commanded.
 - a. It was the first believing-remnant generation under Moses who crossed the Red Sea (v. 29).
 - b. It was the second believing-remnant generation under Joshua who saw Jericho's wall fall down (v. 30).

I. The Importance of Jericho

1. Jericho was the oldest walled city in history, dating to antediluvian times.
 - a. Located at the ford of the Jordan (5 mi. west of the Jordan and 7 mi. north of the Dead Sea).
 - b. Capturing this fortress city was crucial to the division and conquest of whole land of Canaan.
 - c. Jericho was inhabited by Canaanites, being a stronghold for the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings (1750–1580 B.C.—the same Hyksos that ruled Egypt, 1656–1556 B.C.).
 - d. The name for the city is derived from the worship of the moon goddess; although some suggest it reflects its location in an oasis of very fragrant plants.
 - e. Jericho had an abundance of water due to a gushing spring, Ain es-Sultan, aka Elisha's Fountain (2 Kings 2:19–22).
2. This event illustrates the enemy's efforts to complicate Bible truth—questioning the Bible's historical accuracy.
 - a. "The lack of conclusive evidence for a city of any substance destroyed in the fourteenth-thirteenth centuries or a subsequent Late Bronze (Israelite) occupation thus supporting Joshua's conquest continues to perplex scholars" (*Eerdman's Bible Dictionary*, Logos edition, pg. 567).
 - b. How do we respond to this discouraging issue?
 - 1) We can begin to doubt the Scripture.
 - 2) We can ignore the problems and just "believe."

3) We can hold the truth of Scripture and search for better answers to the problem of lack of verification.

II. A Spiritual Conflict

1. The conquest of Jericho gives us a clear example of the spiritual warfare in which modern Christians are to be engaged (Eph. 6:12).
 - a. Strongholds are not conquered by natural means (2 Cor. 10:4). God wanted Israel to know that He alone would give them victory over Jericho.
 - b. God is independent of all natural laws and often uses miraculous means to accomplish His purposes.
2. It is for the Israelites to trust God and obey His clear instructions, even when these tactics appear incredible and strain all logic.
 - a. It is exactly this that real faith requires—trusting a God who is able to do the impossible.
 - b. The seven-day procession around the walls is the kind of obedience God requires as well. It placed the people in the way of both ridicule and harm.
3. The city of Jericho was long known as a cult center for peoples fully under the dominion of the evil one.
 - a. What better lesson could there be than to see the inability of Jericho's false gods and religious powers to save their stronghold?
 - b. The whole book of Joshua is God's witness to every age that those who walk in the true Gospel faith must live it in the supernatural power of God (Zech. 4:6).

III. A Strategic Conflict

1. The conquest of Canaan was to fulfill the promise that God gave the Patriarchs concerning the land (Gen. 17:8; Josh. 1:3; 23:5).
 - a. Israel's belief in that promise was tested when Moses sent the twelve spies into Canaan (Num. 13, 14), but what they witnessed (vv. 32, 33) provoked their rebellion and refusal, which God judged.
 - b. Joshua sent two spies into Jericho, and what they witnessed (Josh. 2:8–13) encouraged their obedience (v. 24) and prepared them for conquest.
2. Their resolve was further strengthened by the events leading up to their march on Jericho (Josh. 1:6–9):
 - a. The miracle of their crossing Jordan at flood stage (ch. 3) with the memorial placement (ch. 4)
 - b. Their obedience to covenant requirements (ch. 5)
3. Why do we not experience supernatural Gospel triumphs in our generation? Why are there growing numbers of intimidating "Jerichos" in our path?
 - a. Is the Lord's arm too short? Are the Scriptures no longer sufficient to the need? Is the Spirit crippled?
 - b. Is it that, like Israel in Numbers 13, we have grieved the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19), abandoned God's ways, and substituted our own human devices?

Application

1. Do your preparations for covenant obedience strengthen your faith and resolve to trust God in all circumstances of your life?
2. Are you more willing to lean on natural and temporal means to realize your needs and goals?
3. Do you find yourself fearing the giants and walled cities in your life that tempt you to stay put?
4. Do you really understand the supernatural reality that exists all around you?