

#12 - Joshua at Jericho - Joshua 6

Engage:

- Congratulations! This lesson will put you just over 1/3 of the way through your journey through the Bible in our study of God's Redemption Story. We will continue to see the demonstration of God's plan and power to provide redemption for His people. The power is not based on human ability, other than to accept His plan and follow His prescribed way.

- This story follows the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness and the beginning of the conquest of the promised land through God's leading and help. The Israelites had just experienced another miracle as they crossed the Jordan River on dry ground during a time when the water was at flood stage (Joshua 3-4).

- The city of Jericho was the first major conquest to remove pagan influence and give the land to Israel. Even though there was excitement as they crossed the Jordan, this was quickly tempered with the realization that many battles (more than 30) still needed to be fought.

Thoughts about the story:

1 – The Strategy of the Conquest of Jericho (6:1-7) Note: The three part outline used for this study was taken from The Bible Knowledge Commentary.

- 6:1 – The people of Jericho must have feared the invasion of the Israelites. They certainly knew about Israel's history with Egypt, plus they should have known that God helped them cross the Jordan River. Otherwise, why would they have closed all of the gates?

- 6:2-7 – The messenger of God (or "the LORD") said: "I have delivered . . ." Since God declared it – it would certainly be accomplished. Even though God was giving Israel the land, they still had to make it theirs by obeying faithfully His plan to conquer it. See Hebrews 11:30.

Note: The "weapons" to fight the battle were not what you would expect: 7 trumpets of ram's horns carried by 7 priests, the ark of the covenant and armed men. Joshua did not question what he was told. He just did it. This reminds us of how Abraham met the supreme test of offering Isaac as a sacrifice. He didn't question God, he just did as he was told. This would have seemed to be a foolish plan to an outsider. Yet it was the perfect strategy in God's eyes. Note: The number 7 is often used to symbolize completeness or perfection in the Bible (in this case there were 7 priests, 7 trumpets, 7 days and 7 times around the city on the 7th day.)

Note: In Numbers 10:9-10 trumpets were used to remind and announce to the people the presence of God as their source for guidance, authority and protection.

2 – The Sequence of the Conquest of Jericho (6:8-21)

- 6:8-14 – The order of the procession was: 1st - the armed men; 2nd - the 7 priests carrying the 7 trumpets; 3rd - the ark of the covenant; 4th - followed by the "rear guard". The emphasis was on the ark of the covenant, pointing to the LORD as the one who would bring victory!

They were to march around the city 1 time each day for 6 days. They were not to shout or say anything. Only the trumpets were heard (6:12-14). After each trip, the Israelites were to return quietly to camp. Question: Could God have defeated Jericho the first day? Certainly, but God seemed to have a plan to help Israel see that He is God - and that people who follow Him need

to demonstrate faith in His plan to see His work accomplished. Faith and patience go together.

How strange do you think this must have seemed to the people of Jericho? We don't know, but can you imagine the people of Jericho thinking – they do not frighten us with the sound of their trumpets. They may even have laughed at the Israelites as they marched around the city.

How much of a test of faith must this have been for Joshua and the people of Israel? It is possible that Joshua did not tell them about what the next day would bring until it was time. Their faith must have been stronger than their fear of attack from the people of Jericho. If they were being laughed at, their sensitivity to ridicule must have been diminished.

- 6:15-21 - The 7th day was different! They marched around the city 7 times, instead of once. After the 7th time around, the trumpets were blown and all of the people shouted: "For the Lord has given you the city!" When this happened, the wall of the city "collapsed".

The city was "devoted" (given or dedicated) to the LORD. This included killing the people, both men and women, the cattle, sheep and donkeys. This sounds extremely severe, but the people of Jericho had to be killed to keep Israel from being influenced by the Canaanite pagan practices (See Deuteronomy 13:12-18; 20:16-18). The city was also burned (6:24).

Note: God's plan was equal to a text book way of achieving military victory – divide and conquer. Jericho was located right in the middle (from north to south) of the promised land.

Note: No city or people can prove to be a match for God's unorthodox way of using obedient people to accomplish His purpose. God used this way to make sure that no other explanation could be given for the defeat of Jericho other than – He did it!

3 – The Sequel to the Conquest of Jericho (6:22-27)

- 6:22-25 – They were told to spare Rahab the prostitute and her family for the way she treated the two spies when they visited Jericho earlier (cf. 2:8-13). They also put the silver, gold and articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD'S house before they burned the city.

- 6:26 – A curse was pronounced on the city. The person who would try to rebuild the city would lose his firstborn son. The curse was fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34. During the reign of wicked King Ahab, a man named Hiel of Bethel sought to rebuild Jericho. When he laid the foundation, he lost his firstborn son. When he set up the gates, he lost his youngest son. Note: How foolish can people be to defy God's Word and rebel against His will!

- 6:27 – Note the key phrase: "the LORD **was with** Joshua." The secret to this great victory for Israel was not because of the military genius of Joshua, but because the people faithfully trusted God's way and obeyed His commands. See 1:6-9. Note: Jesus taught His disciples by being "with them" (Mark 14:33). Picture all of the times the disciples spent with Jesus – and what they experienced..

Lesson: When we follow God's "foolish" methods, He wins the battle and He gets the glory – and we receive the blessing. When we use our methods to win a battle, the glory from the battle will be short lived if it is not of God.

Lesson: Unbelief looks at the walls as giants, but faith looks to the Lord. We must always keep our eye on the goal – God and His ways!