

The Walls of Jericho Fall

Joshua 6:1-20

Joshua 6:1-20 - *"Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in.² And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.³ You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days.⁴ And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.⁵ It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him."*

⁶ Then 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, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD."

⁸ So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.⁹ The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets.¹⁰ Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout."¹¹ So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.

¹² And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.¹³ Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets.¹⁴ And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days.

¹⁵ But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times.¹⁶ And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!¹⁷ Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.¹⁸ And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.¹⁹ But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

²⁰ So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."

Background Notes

What a great victory! No battering rams. No catapults. No scaling ladders. No flaming arrows. Just walking around the walls for seven days, and then shouting. The walls were not only destroyed, but it appears that they fell down in such a way that they formed a kind of stair-like ramp that enabled the Israelites to climb up into the city!

How did God accomplish this miracle? Some people say that God used an earthquake, and maybe He did. If He did, it was still a miracle because of the precise timing, as well as the fact that a particular part of the wall did not fall — the part of the wall where Rahab's house was located. In any case, it was a great miracle.

Have these fallen walls of Jericho been found? Yes! Here's a little background about the walls of Jericho. Back in the 1930s an archaeologist, John Garstang, excavated Jericho and found some fallen walls. He said that the walls dated to the time of Israel's conquest of Canaan, about 1400BC. However, in the 1950s another archaeologist, Kathleen Kenyon, did further excavations and said that the walls that Garstang found were not from the time of Joshua's conquest, but they actually dated earlier.

More recently another archaeologist, Dr. Bryant Wood, has re-examined the archaeological finds of Jericho. He has definitely confirmed the biblical account, dating the conquest of Canaan at about 1400BC. Dr. Bryant Wood has shown that there were actually two walls around Jericho, which contributed to the confusion with the dating.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. "Jericho's" are conquered by following the Ark.

The book of Joshua is the inspired record of the military conquest of Canaan, and it is also a handbook for Christian spiritual warfare. In other words, all the tactics of the enemy in Joshua, the tactics to keep the people from possessing the Promised Land, are illustrations of the tactics Satan uses today to keep God's people from possessing the spiritual land that God has given us.

The land of Canaan was the Promised Land that God promised to the descendants of Abraham -- a land "*flowing with milk and honey*." It represents or pictures the land of spiritual blessings that God has given to believers today. However, Satan wants to prevent us from moving forward in the Christian life and enjoying our spiritual blessings. That's why we're involved in spiritual warfare! So all the principles of victory that we see in the Book of Joshua are principles of victory for spiritual warfare today.

The epistle to the Ephesians is the New Testament parallel of the Old Testament book of Joshua. In Ephesians 1 we learn about our spiritual blessings in Christ. Ephesians 1:3 - "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...*" In Ephesians 6 we read about our

spiritual battles. Ephesians 6:11-12 - *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

Notice that our spiritual blessings and the spiritual battles are both found in the “heavenlies” or in “heavenly places.” Once again, let’s remember that the “heavenly places” is not our future home, “heaven,” because there are no spiritual battles when we get to heaven. The “heavenlies” is now. It is most concisely defined as that sphere or realm of spiritual realities -- it is the unseen world of spiritual realities. Unseen, but real! Our spiritual blessings in Christ are unseen, but real. Spiritual warfare is real as well. In the spiritual picture that God has given us in the book of Joshua, the Promised Land represents the “heavenlies.” That’s where the blessings are -- and that’s where the battles are.

What does Jericho represent, in this spiritual picture that God has given us in the book of Joshua? Jericho was a major stronghold of the enemy. Jericho blocked the entrance into the central part of the land. There was no way that Israel could have moved on to possess the land until Jericho was conquered.

Jericho represents those major blockades that Satan puts up to keep us defeated and standing still in our walk with the Lord, and to prevent us from moving on to enjoy the blessings of the land that God has given us. A major doubt about your salvation can be a Jericho. A secret sin can be a Jericho. Anger and a root of bitterness can be a Jericho. The Jericho’s in our lives must go before we move on in the land, and before we can enjoy our spiritual blessings in Christ, and before the Lord can live His life through us.

Here’s the good news: there are no Jericho strongholds whose walls are too high or too thick for our God -- but to be victorious, we must follow the Ark in faith and obedience! Jericho strongholds are conquered by following the Ark. The Ark of the Covenant is a type, or spiritual picture, of the Lord Jesus. A type is an Old Testament person, place, thing, event or other item that pictures New Testament truth. The Ark of the Covenant was the meeting place between God and man. The Ark was kept in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. The blood of the atoning sacrifice was put on the mercy seat of the Ark once a year to maintain the relationship between God and His people. The Ark went into the Jordan River ahead of the people to open up the way into the land.

In all these ways, the Ark of the Covenant pictures our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He is the only Mediator between God and man. He is the Savior whose blood has atoned for our sins. He is the One who has opened up the way into the land of blessings. He is our Lord who can conquer the Jericho strongholds in our lives -- but we must obediently follow the Ark.

Notice that the Ark was the focal point of the march around Jericho. The priests blowing the shofars, the ram’s horn trumpets, went before the Ark. An armed guard went before and after the Ark, and then the people came behind, following the Ark. The Ark was the central focus of the fall of Jericho. In the same way, we must keep our eyes on Christ if we’re going to experience victory over the Jericho strongholds in our lives.

2. “Jericho’s” are not conquered overnight!

The fall of Jericho took seven days, and right up until the last minute it looked just as strong as it had always been. The spiritual lesson is that Jericho strongholds are not conquered overnight. Patient faith and obedience are involved in seeing God remove Jericho strongholds from our lives. Up until the moment the people shouted and the wall fell, they marched around Jericho in obedience and patient faith, day after day, without saying a word. God had said, *“I have given Jericho into your hand”* -- and they believed it!

“Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!” What faith! The people of Israel are a great picture of faith here. They marched in patient faith, and they shouted in faith -- and the walls fell! We, too, can see those major blockades to spiritual growth in our lives removed, but obedience to God’s Word and patient faith in the Lord are required. Remember, “Jericho’s” are not conquered overnight.

Practical Application

Are you an early riser, like Joshua?

Verse 12: *“And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.”* Joshua rose early in the morning to prepare for the march of the day. Now rising early in the morning doesn’t mean that you’re more spiritual, and the idea that you must have your personal devotions or quiet time before breakfast is not commanded in the Bible. “No Bible, no breakfast!” is not a verse in the Bible!

However, getting up early to commune with the Lord in prayer and reading His Word is a great way to start each day. Joshua got up early to get ready and to prepare for the day’s work and walk. He didn’t start the day without some good “prep” time.

It would be a good idea for us to follow Joshua’s example! Are you an early riser, like Joshua?