



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

The Rescue of Rahab and the Burning of Jericho

Joshua 6:21-27

"And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

²² But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." ²³ And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴ But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. ²⁵ And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

²⁶ Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."

²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country."

Background Notes

Verse 21 says that the Israelites utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. Do you have a problem with God when you read this verse? A lot of people do, including Christians. How could a loving God tell His people to do such a thing? Even the children and the animals were killed!

Did you ever question God about this? What's the answer? Look back verses 17-18: *"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."*

Jericho was a pagan Canaanite city. We know from what has been found in archeology, including inscriptions such as the Ras Shamra tablets, that the

Canaanites were extremely gross in their immorality and idolatry. God didn't want His people polluted with the idolatry and immorality of pagans. For years Jericho had been a center of all kinds of demonic and occult Canaanite practices. Everything was contaminated. Therefore, before God everything in the city was banned and was to be destroyed. Everything in Jericho had to go!

It was the beginning of what was to be a clean sweep of the land. Unfortunately, as we know, the people of Israel failed in their responsibility to carry out God's command. They left many pockets of the pagan enemies throughout the land, and it led to their downfall. Think about how easy it is for us today to be contaminated by the gross evil in the culture that surrounds us!

God had been very patient with the sin in the land. God had given the Canaanites many years of opportunity to change their ways. In Genesis 15:6 God told Abraham that the reason the children of Israel would remain in Egypt for so many years was because "*the iniquity of the Amorites [that is, the Canaanites] was not yet complete...*" After making this statement to Abraham, God gave the Canaanites 400 more years to repent and respond to Him -- but they did not.

Now as far as killing the babies goes -- maybe we have a glimpse of the grace of God here. Let's put it this way: I'd rather be a baby who was killed in Jericho and end up in heaven forever than be an unbelieving multi-billionaire living today! Wouldn't you? By the way, I think you can see my position on the eternal destiny of children who die before the age of responsibility! I do believe they're all part of the elect company of believers -- but that's another lecture in itself!

The only items that were saved out of Jericho before they burned the city were the precious metals that went into the treasury of the Lord (v19), and of course, Rahab and her family. Rahab was not only brought into the covenant community -- she married within the covenant community! She married Salmon, and their son was Boaz. Boaz was the father of Obed, who was the father of Jesse, who was the father of the great King David. Rahab really became the great-great-grandmother of King David -- and thus an ancestor of the Messiah! (Read the genealogy of our Lord in Matthew 1.) What a wonderful story of the amazing grace of God!

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. God keeps His word of salvation.

Joshua 2:12-14, "*Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, ¹³ and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.*"

¹⁴ *So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."*

God kept His word of salvation to Rahab, given through the two Israeli spies. It took the miracle for that part of the wall connected to Rahab's house to remain standing, but God kept His word of salvation.

God's word of salvation is still true today, and means of salvation is miraculous! Romans 10:9 says, *"if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* And Romans 10:13 says, *"whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."* Do you believe this? If you're not a Christian yet, all it takes on your part for salvation is faith in the Lord. God has done all the work! Jesus died for your sin; it's just a matter of faith on your part.

Rahab believed. Listen to what we read in Hebrews 11:31 *"By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace."* Rahab believed the one true God, and God kept His word of salvation. All you have to do to receive salvation is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, and you can be sure that God will keep His word of Salvation!

2. God keeps His word of judgment.

Verse 26: *"Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."*

Jericho was an accursed city. God said that the walls of Jericho were not to be rebuilt. God kept this word of judgment given through Joshua. Over 500 years after this time, in the days of King Ahab, we read in 1 Kings 16:34, *"In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun."* In other words, Hiel's firstborn died or was killed when Hiel began to rebuild the walls of Jericho, and his youngest son died or was killed when Hiel set up the gates of the completed walls. God kept His word of judgment.

This is still true today. God keeps His word of salvation – and He keeps His word of judgment as well. John 3:36 says, *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* Do you believe this verse? Some people like the first part of this verse, but they don't like the second part. Well, the second part is just as true as the first part. People who refuse to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord have the wrath of God abiding upon them! Notice – the wrath of God is **already** abiding on them! According to the Word of God, if they refuse to believe they will end up in lost eternity -- in hell forever. **God** has said it! I wish that I didn't have to speak about this, but it's true. God not only keeps His word of salvation -- God keeps His word of judgment.

Practical Applications

1. Be faithful, and your fame will spread throughout the land!

Verse 27: "So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country." Because Joshua was faithful, he was not only well known in Israel, his fame spread throughout the entire country! All the Canaanites knew about Joshua. Do you want to be famous? Then be faithful to the Lord! Now you won't be famous like a rock star or an outstanding athlete, but you will be well known for fighting the good fight! Specifically, you will be known by the enemy forces in the land as one who stands for the Lord.

There's a lesson in spiritual warfare here. Do you remember how Job's faithfulness was well known by Satan and the fallen angels? (Read Job 1 and 2 in this connection.) God used Job's faithfulness as a testimony to the angelic hosts. In the same way, if you are faithful to the Lord, you will be known as one of God's military heroes both now and forever, in the land of spiritual realities! You will be well known among the principalities and powers of Ephesians 6:12: "*spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*" Be faithful, and your fame will spread throughout the land!

2. Let's not allow the walls of Jericho to be built again.

In the spiritual picture God has given to us in the book of Joshua, we've seen that the enemy's stronghold of Jericho represents a major blockade that Satan can use to keep us from possessing the spiritual land that God has given us. The "Jericho's" in our lives keep us from enjoying our spiritual blessings in Christ. "Jericho's" keep us defeated, and prevent us from moving forward in spiritual maturity. "Jericho's" limit the Lord in His desire to live His life through us.

A major doubt about the Lord or about the Christian faith that is keeping you in despair can be a Jericho. The fear of dying can be a Jericho. Fear for your financial security can be a Jericho. A certain temptation or secret sin can be a Jericho. A problem in your marriage can be a Jericho. An unforgiving spirit can be a Jericho.

But **there are no Jericho strongholds with walls too high or thick for our God!** Praise the Lord! If we practice the principles of victory that we see in the book of Joshua, such as trusting fully in God's promises and obeying His Word, the walls **will** fall!

And once those walls have fallen, don't let those walls be built again! The walls at Jericho were never to be built again, but unfortunately they were. In the same way, if we're not careful, the walls of Jericho in our lives can gradually build up again: a root of bitterness can spring up again, or certain doubts and fears that you thought were gone can raise their ugly heads once again. Satan knows where each one of us is especially vulnerable, and if we're not careful, all the old

blockades to spiritual growth can come back again to haunt us. The walls can be built again.

Let's practice the principles of victory that we see here in the book of Joshua. Let's not allow the walls of Jericho to be built again!