

Fall of Jerico

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[0 : 00] As you know, we are in Joshua, chapter 6, that's actually the end of chapter 5, and then chapter 6, the battle of Jericho. I got probably the most familiar battle in the Bible.

We'll look at it and see if we can learn something new from it. Let's pray before we get started. Father, I thank you for this opportunity to stand before your people, Lord, people that you love, people that you died for, people that you're taking care of, Father.

And I ask you, Lord, to please open our eyes to truths in your word, Lord, that will prick our hearts and cause us, Lord, to humble ourselves before you and serve you with all our might.

Please help me, Lord, not stumble over words, but just proclaim your word boldly and clearly in Jesus' name. Amen. So, I'm going to be reading, and I'll probably be reading from the NIV.

I was going to do the net, and I did that for John's sake, but it ended up not being as good as the NIV, I think. Amen. Starting in chapter 5, verse 13.

[1 : 23] Now, when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, Are you for us or for our enemies?

Neither, he replied, but as commander of the army of the Lord, I am now come. Then Joshua fell face down on the ground in reference and asked him, What message does my Lord have for a servant?

The commander of the Lord's army replied, Take off your sandals for the place where you are standing is holy. And Joshua did so. So, this is probably what a lot of Bible scholars believe. A pre-incarnate Christ. Christ himself has taken on the form of a man here and is standing before Joshua. This is one of a few times that we see this in the Bible.

Another time was when the three angels came and visited Abraham when they gave him the message that Sarah was going to have a child. One of those, Abraham called Lord.

[2 : 27] So, the Lord was probably in that group. The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon one time. I'm not sure if that was Christ or not. And Jacob wrestled with a man all night.

We believe that was Christ as well. But Joshua recognized him. As soon as he said he was the commander of the Lord's army, Joshua recognized him.

And Joshua called him Lord. What does my Lord want to tell us? So, he was probably pretty happy. I'm sure that Joshua and his men had already probably come up with some plans as to what they're going to do.

After all, he sent spies already. You know their story. Rahab hit them. And they ended up getting back safely.

So, I'm sure that they probably, you know, whatever reconnaissance they did and whatever intelligence they got, they were probably already deciding how are we going to do this.

[3 : 36] And now, here's the commander of the Lord's army here. And Joshua, you know, is ready to listen to him. Then, let's go to chapter 6 now.

Now, the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went in and no one came out. Why? Why did they do that?

Well, Rahab had already told them, told the spies, we are terrified. We have heard of what your God has done for you, how your God has parted the sea, what they did to the Egyptians.

And we see your God and we're terrified of you. And now, they know they're on their way, but the Jericho, you know, was flooded.

It was at flood stations. So, they figured, well, we've got time before they can cross over here. But, in a miraculous way, God parted the, you know, stopped the river.

[4 : 40] Did I call the river the wrong river? What did I call it? Call the river Jericho? The Jordan River. I saw John.

Keep me straight, John. The Jordan River. So, they, the Lord we know, stopped the Jordan River. And they crossed on dry ground. And then, the other night, there was some thoughts going out. Somebody said something about, well, you know, they were talking about landslides in that area. So, it could have been a landslide or something that dammed up the river, you know, just that quick. But, what's, what's interesting was that they walked across on dry ground. I don't know what a, a landslide would cause the ground to dry up as well. It was, it was a miracle.

All right. God, God stopped the Jordan River so that they can walk across. Well, the people of Jericho knew this, too. They're not, you know, they're, they didn't get mighty for no reason.

[5 : 41] They had, you know, they, they knew what was going on out there. Somehow, they found out that the spies had come to the city, too. You know, they had intelligence going out. So, that's just like a little side note in here, the first verse.

Now, the second verse goes on with the instructions that the, the commander of the Lord's army has given them. Then the Lord said to Joshua, See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands along with its king and its fighting men.

March around the city once with all the armed men. So, Joshua's thinking, okay, here we are. He's giving us a strategy. March around the city.

Yeah, that's a good idea. We'll march around the city. They'll look at our numbers. They're already scared of us. And when they see how mighty we are, that's, this is a good idea. Yeah, this is good. And then he says, do this for six days. And Joshua's probably, okay. Okay, we'll do it for six days. Yeah, that's good. Well, you know, we can do this for six days.

[6 : 49] And he says, have seven priests carry trumpets of ram's horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times with the priests, blowing the trumpets. So, Joshua's probably thinking, what kind of a battle plan is this?

This is, this is ludicrous. This is crazy. I can't, you know, like I say, he's probably already been making plans. Why would they send the spies in otherwise?

So, he's probably thinking, I don't, I don't, this doesn't make sense. And now I've got to go tell my commanders and all this stuff. Hey, here, hey guys, here's what we're going to do.

Doesn't sound like a very good plan. But this is what the Lord's telling us. And it says, you know, on the seventh day, you march around seven times with the trumpet blowing.

When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout. Then the walls of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in.

[7 : 54] So, Joshua, the son of Nun. I don't know if you guys are reading in your Bibles or not, it's spelled N-U-N. It's pronounced noon, not nun.

It would open a whole new can of worms if it was the son of a nun, right? We'd have to figure out what's going on. But the son of Nun, I lost my voice.

Where's that music coming from? What verse am I on? Six.

Six, thanks. So Joshua, the son of Nun, called the priest and said to them, Take up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it.

And he ordered the army, advance, march around the city with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the Lord. When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the Lord went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the Lord's covenant followed them.

[9 : 02] The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. But Joshua had commanded the army, Do not give a war cry.

Do not raise your voices. Do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout. So he had the ark of the Lord carried around the city, circling it once.

Then the army returned to camp and spent the night there. So I can, can you imagine the people of Jericho, they're, you know, they've been dreading this day that these people will come.

They're scared to death of them. And can you imagine they probably had lookouts and they saw them coming. And they were like, it's starting. It's time. Battle. Battle stations, everybody.

Get ready. Because here they come. And then they just marched around the city. And I can imagine they were, you know, the army inside was following as they were going around. You know, there's

their fighting men.

[10:02] They're going, they're over here. You know, as they marched around the city, they're following those guys. And then the lookout says, they're leaving. So what, that probably, what in the world was that about?

So on the second day, they marched around the city once and returned to camp. And they did this for six days. On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except on that day, they circled the city seven times.

Now, from what I understand, this city was about nine square acres, is what the archaeologists and all of them are saying.

That's about the size of the city. So it wasn't a really long march. And I'm not sure if it's square, you know, more square, elongated or whatever, but about nine acres.

Those of you that have nine or ten acres, you know, it's a pretty good piece of property. But it's not a really, really long march. They've been used to marching, right?

[11:10] They've been doing it for 40 years through the desert. But on that day, after they did it seven times, on the seventh time around, when the priest sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, shout, for the Lord has given you the city.

The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who were with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent.

But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise, you will make the camp of Israel liable to the destruction and bring trouble on it.

These are instructions that they kept. And we're going to see later on that they did not follow these instructions. And it's not going to go too well for them.

And he says, All of the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the Lord and must go into his treasury. When the trumpet sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed.

[12:26] So everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it, men, women, young, old, cattle, sheep, and donkeys.

Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out, and all who belong to her in accordance with your oath to her. So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, her brothers and sisters, and all who belong to her.

They brought out the entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel. Then they burned the whole city and everything in it. But they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the Lord's house.

But Joshua spared Rahab, the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her because she hid the men Joshua has sent as spies to Jericho. And she lives among the Israelites unto this day. That was when this was written. And at this time, Joshua pronounced this solemn oath, Cursed before the Lord is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho.

[13:43] At the cost of his firstborn son, he will lay its foundations, and at the cost of his youngest, he will set up its gates. So the Lord was with Joshua and his fame spread throughout the land.

We're going to see later, well, if you study that someone does rebuild Joshua, and this very thing comes true. I forget the guy's name, Elim or something.

He tries to rebuild Joshua, and he loses his firstborn son, and it's the last one. So that is the story of the battle of Joshua.

So what can we learn from it? These guys, well, first off, what's different now in Jericho, in the land of Canaan, than it was 40 years previously?

You know, 40 years ago, they were there. They were ready to come in and take it, but they didn't because there were giants in the land. The cities were too fortified.

[14:46] It was too hard for us. So is now, maybe all the giants are gone. Maybe the cities aren't as strong. Maybe the armies are weaker. I don't think so.

I think that they now are realizing, they finally have come to realize that our God is bigger than these problems. Our God is bigger than any of these obstacles that we face.

And I wonder sometimes how long it'll take for us to realize that God is bigger than our problems. How long are we going to worry over the same things and fret over stuff that God wants to give us victory over?

All we have to do is do what He says. But we're going to continue to have our problems as long as we don't realize that God is bigger than our problems.

You know, God, if you think about it, He created the universe and He sustains it. He knows how many hairs are on your head.

[16:05] And some of you have less than others. It's not too hard for you, Philly. He has numbered the star.

He knows how many stars there are and He calls them by name. He tells us that in Psalm 147. That He has a name for all the stars. He's a great big God.

Much bigger than our problems. And the more you look at Him, the more you realize how massive, how strong, how powerful He is, the smaller your problems should look.

We're focusing on the wrong thing. We should focus on God and the greatness of God. And our problems will just start shrinking away. Because we have the promises as well that it's going to be alright.

You know, what we have to look forward to is heaven. There's nothing better than that. I mean, that's worst case scenario. Is, you know, we'll go to heaven.

[17:12] So, we worry too much. I know that, you know, some of us have, like, marital problems.

But God is bigger than that. We have relationship issues with other people. You may have a job or something that is really bothering you that, or, you know, you feel you can't do for whatever reason. You may have a terminal illness. But Romans, in Romans it says, for I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not able to be compared to the glory that should be revealed in us.

God is bigger than all these problems. So that's one lesson we can learn. God is bigger than our obstacles. Another lesson that we can learn is God's instructions don't always make sense.

You know, for these battle guys to say, well, you're just going to march around the city 13 times.

And that's how we're going to win this battle, just by marching around the city.

[18:27] It doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense at all. And just like other people are saying, well, maybe it was a landslide that caused the Jordan River to stop.

Because they want to try to make sense of it. Instead of giving God his due and saying, God, you're big and I know you can do it. We want to try to make sense of stuff.

God says in 1 Corinthians 1.27, God chose the things that the world considers foolish to shame those who think they're wise and the things that are weak to shame those who are powerful.

So when God gives you instructions, you may ask like, you want me to do what? You know? You want me to go where?

You really? You want me to? Do you really think I should give that much? I don't know. The thing to do is just obey. Just obey and trust.

[19:39] Just trust what he does. I was thinking about the song Trust and Obey. It should be the other way around. Obeying and just trusting for the results.

Even when you don't understand why you're doing what you're doing, it doesn't make sense. Just obey because he has a plan. And then you need to be consistent with your obedience.

You know, after two or three days of marching around, you know, it could have been some of them were saying, this is crazy. You know, this is crazy what we're doing, guys, right? You understand that marching around this city, I've been looking as we're marching, I don't even see a cracker, anything starting.

You know, there's nothing going to happen that makes no sense. And that's what some people want to say, just the marching of million plus people around the city caused the ground to shake and caused the walls to crack and all this stuff.

That's ludicrous. And then, of course, the sounds did it, but that's, you know, again, trying to not give God is due. But I can see them saying, you know, we should just stop because marching around the city is not going to do anything.

[20:58] Be consistent with your obedience. You know, you might be inspired at some point, say, oh yeah, yeah, just trust God on this. Trust God. I trust God. God, I give this over to you.

I trust you. I'm going to do what I'm going to do. And then, as time goes on, you don't see any results. You think. Just continue. Just be consistent.

Continue to obey. And, as they were continuing in their obedience, God rewarded their obedience with the walls falling down.

And then, in other words, is recognize. Recognize. Recognize the working of God. You know, it's funny to me that, like I said, they had been marching in the wilderness for 40 years.

God used something that they were good at as a tool to make the walls fall down. Just walk around the city.

[22 : 00] I know you can do that. And, but one thing that did is, there's no way scientifically or humanly possible that marching around that city and blowing the trumpets would make the walls fall.

There's no way that they can take any credit for what they did. They just obeyed God, and God's the one that made the walls fall. So, recognize when God is doing, don't trade credit for yourself of something that goes on in your life that's good.

Recognize that all good things come from God and give Him the recognition and the honor for it.

You know, we talked earlier about the spies going in and Rahab hiding them.

when you, when you look at it, you're like, okay, so whatever plans Joshua and them made based on the spies report weren't used because they would never would have made that plan to just march around the city.

So what good was it then for the spies to go into Jericho? Well, God's plan was to rescue Rahab.

[23 : 19] Rahab was a believer. Rahab had seen what the God of the Israelites could do and she wanted to be part of that.

So God used what Joshua and them were trying to do it on their own power. I'm going to send spies in there. We're going to figure this thing out and we're going to do it. But God used that to save Rahab.

It's interesting. Where was Rahab's house? On the wall. What happened to the wall? It fell down.

Well, then how do they go in the house?

You know, a lot of people say, well, I have serious problems with this whole story. How can that be?

Well, they don't understand that God is as big as our God.

God can make that happen. I don't know how He did it, but He did it. It's right there in the book. It's history. It's a history book. It's told us. So, well, that's all in my story.

[24 : 31] The lessons we learned from Joshua, I hope these things have opened your eyes to something. and I pray that you'll just obey.

Obey. That's all they had to do is obey what Jesus or what God told them to do. And they were rewarded. And like I say, we'll see some more times where they're going to falter, where they're not going to obey and see what happens.

Anyway, let's pray. Father, we thank You for Your Word. I thank You for Joshua, Lord, even though what You were telling them to do didn't make sense.

But Lord, I don't see any place in here where Joshua questioned it or hesitated to obey. May we, Lord, be like Joshua and that we're quick to listen and quick to obey what You have to say to us.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.