

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[Jos 6:1-27 NKJV] 1 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."

The city of Jericho is on high alert.

When we studied chapter two a few weeks ago, it was Rahab the harlot that revealed to the spies - that the hearts of the people had already melted.

They didn't have the will to fight after hearing the countless stories of what God had done on behalf of the Israelites.

And now, all of the Amorites and the Canaanites are fully aware that the God of Israel has held back the waters of the Jordan - to allow the Children of Israel to cross on dry land.

So Jericho shuts down –

No one can come into the city and no one can go out.

It is protected by an impenetrable wall.

We learned in chapter two that the walls were so thick that people lived within the walls that surrounded the city.

There was no way that the Children of Israel were going to break through the walls – after all, they didn't have canons or catapults or battle rams. All they had was small swords and knives.

Actually, they did have something else – they have the All Powerful, All Knowing, and Almighty God.

At the end of chapter 5, while Joshua was scouting Jericho – wondering, how in the world was he ever going to lead the Israelites into victory over Jericho – he has this encounter with the Commander of the Army of the Lord – and I pointed out that this was an example of a theophany or Christophany – that is Jesus Christ manifesting Himself in the Old Testament.

And here in chapter six, we have this ongoing conversation between Jesus and Joshua – you see,

He is the one that is going to give Joshua instructions on how the Children of Israel will conquer Jericho.

Now, I asked you to make a note of verse two –

Because I want you to notice that the Lord is speaking to Joshua in the **past tense**.

He is telling Joshua – I have given you – not I will give.

It is a done deal Joshua.

The Lord is also making it clear that He is the one that has already provided the Israelites with victory – they haven't done anything yet.

As believers, we have also have been provided victory as well.

And that victory is given to us – not because of something we did – but because of what Jesus Christ did for you and me on the cross.

[1Co 15:57 NKJV] 57 But thanks [be] to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

He has given us victory over death and over sin.

So after telling Joshua that they have been giving victory – He provides Joshua with a detail plan on how that victory is going to be achieved.

So He provides Joshua with a plan that absolutely makes no sense.

The plan included the priests - Priests were not supposed to be called into battle – they were supposed to dedicate their time to serving the Lord.

The plan included the ark - The Ark of the Covenant was not supposed to be taken into battle either. The only other

instance in scripture, where we see the Ark taken into battle, we saw the Israelites not only suffer mass casualties, but they also loose the Ark – we saw this a few weeks ago in our study through Samuel.

The plan consists of Joshua and his men marching around Jericho

Once a day for six days and then seven times on the seventh day – 13 times.

If that is not strange enough – on day seven, after marching around Jericho the seven times – they are supposed to shout and the walls will fall down flat.

Now, upon being given the instructions – Joshua still has a choice to make.

He could either follow the instructions that the Lord has given him or he can conclude that these instructions make absolutely no sense.

So let's see what Joshua does.

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.

So it appears that Joshua was obedient to instructions given to him by the Lord.

He commands his people to march around Jericho once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. Just as the Lord had instructed him to.

Now, let's talk about the Lord's instructions.

What is the purpose or the strategy behind the plan?

What does God want to teach us from this event?

I believe that the purpose behind the instructions was for the Lord to prepare the Israelites in various ways.

And I will go through the different ways that they were being prepared.

1. By marching around the city of Jericho, the Israelites were going to eventually come to the realization of the impossibility of the task that stood before them. Day 1, they march around Jericho – they see the enormous walls. Day 2, the walls look even bigger. Day 3, even bigger and so on.

You see, I believe that the reason God commanded the Israelites to march around Jericho 13 times was that this

is how long it took for every single person to concluded that victory was not going to come by their own might but by God might.

[Zec 4:6 NKJV] 6 So he answered and said to me:

"This [is] the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

And I believe church that this is one of the biggest obstacles for us to overcome in our walk as believers.

We all have Jerichos in our lives. It could be a sin, it could be a relationship issue, it could be trials or tribulations and we march around them trying to find ways of conquering them.

Maybe I will try this, maybe I will try that and we can never conquer them because we refuse to realize that God is the One who will do it – if we allow it.

And when we do allow it – when we do come to that realization, whether it takes 6 days or 6 months or 6 years, God will do something earthshattering in our lives and bring those walls down for us.

2. Another way that God was preparing them was through discipline. I asked you to note verse 10, you see as the Children of Israel marched around Jericho – they were commanded to keep silent. For seven days as they marched around Jericho – no talking. When they got back to camp every day after the first six days – no talking. Why??? Because if they were allowed to talk,

they would have resorted to complaining about the plan.

Complaining about the impossibility that stood before

them and their complaining and murmuring would

eventually start to bring discouragement to the camp.

This is what the Children of Israel did for 40 years in the wilderness. This is what they were good at –

complaining. God delivers them from Egypt – they

complain they had no food. God gives them manna –

they complained they were tired of eating manna. As we

walk in Christ, we have to disciple ourselves into not

allowing our tongue to discourage others as well.

Sometimes the best thing to do is to not say anything. If

we are not encouraging one another – then maybe we

should be saying it. James warns about the tongue in his epistle - James 3

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.

I have already given you guys two ways God prepared the Israelites through His instructions, here is the third.

3. God prepared the Israelites to be a witness before the people of Jericho. You see as the Israelites marched around Jericho for seven days. God was giving them an

extra seven days of grace – waiting to see if any of them would repent.

This judgment against the Canaanites was 400 years in the making – Gen 15:16 God told Moses that the Amorites were going to be judged.

So no one can make the statement that the God of the Old Testament is an angry God because we see that even in the Old Testament – He wasn't willing that any shall perish – Jericho will perish because of the decision they made to not come to repentance.

Rahab as we discussed a few weeks ago, is exempt from destruction because of her demonstration of faith, both in her deeds and in the words that she spoke.

Remember she professed the God of the Israelites to be the One true God but she also hid the spies as the king and his men were looking for them.

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.

Here in verse 18, we have a play on words. The Hebrew word for accursed is the word Akar – it is the word for trouble.

And in the very next chapter we will find out that Achan – whose name is derived from the word Akar – he is the one that brings trouble into the camp because he took from the accursed things.

The name Achan means troubler.

So what are the accursed things???

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."

The entire city was supposed to be destroyed.

Not only the inhabitants but also all of their possessions.

There were to be no spoils from this victory.

The only thing that was to be salvaged was the metal and all the metal was supposed to belong to the Lord.

It is He alone that would get the spoils of the first victory.

This is the principal of the first fruits – and the Children of Israel were given the command of the first fruits back in the book of Deuteronomy 26.

Turn with me there.

[Deu 26:1-10 NKJV] 1 "And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you [as] an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, 2 "that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and put [it] in a basket and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. 3 "And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the

country which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.' 4 "Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God. 5 "And you shall answer and say before the LORD your God: 'My father [was] a Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. 6 'But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. 7 'Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. 8 'So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. 9 'He has

brought us to this place and has given us this land, "a land flowing with milk and honey"; 10 'and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me.' Then you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God.

Jericho is the first fruits of Canaan. The children of Israel will get the opportunity to get the spoils of victory – but not the first victory because those belong to the Lord.

And we will see next week that the reason that Achan took of the accursed things was that he didn't want to wait upon the Lord for his blessing – so he decides to take matters into his own hands and he takes from what belongs to 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. 21 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.

So on the seventh day – after marching around seven times, the trumpets blew – the people screamed and the walls fell flat.

Now, it wasn't the screams or the trumpets that flattened the walls.

What brought down the walls???

We are given the answer in the NT in the book of Hebrews.

[Heb 11:30 NKJV] 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

It wasn't until all the Israelites placed their trust in God that the walls came tumbling down.

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.

As the walls of Jericho were collapsing – one would think that this is probably the most dangerous place to be.

However, Rahab lived in the walls –

but because she knew God,

because she had faith in God Almighty

the most dangerous place for her to be in the city actually

became the safest place for her to be in.

I can imagine the spies coming to look for her – they probably didn't have to look carefully for the scarlet chord – all they had to look for was the portion of the wall that was still standing – that is where they would find Rahab and her family.

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.

Joshua pronounces a curse on anyone who would rebuild the city of Jericho.

This was a bad place and God didn't want it rebuilt.

The people of Jericho were wicked people. That is why judgment came upon them.

Joshua's curse came true 500 years later during the days of Ahab, Jezebel, and Elijah.

(1 Ki 16:34 NKJV) 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.

Until that time the city of Jericho had not been rebuilt.

Apparently Mr. Hiel didn't pay attention to Joshua's curse and he paid dearly for it. He lost two sons with the rebuilding of the city.

So what is our application from our text this morning,

Well, we see the importance of faith in this chapter.

The faith of Joshua to be obedient to the commands of the Lord, the faith of the Israelites to walk in faith and not complain for seven days, the faith of Rahab.

This faith is all about placing our trust in God.

And we cannot partake of the abundant life / the life of contentment with Jesus Christ without first placing our trust in Him.

And just like the Israelites, we all have to come to the point where we say it's not about what we can do on our own but what He can do through us.

Amen.

Let's pray....

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

