



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

JOSHUA 6:2-4, 12-20a

LESSON: THE FALL OF JERICHO—September 17, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

¹Just as at the Red Sea, God parts the waters of the Jordan River for the Israelites, so that they cross over on dry ground into the Land of Promise. The Red Sea marked the beginning of Israel's journey in the wilderness of Sinai. The Jordan River marks the end and last boundary between the wilderness—where the Israelites have been wandering for forty years—and the land God had promised to Israel. As such, the crossing of the Jordan river is a momentous occasion, However, it's the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.

Also to mark the occasion, God instructs Joshua to build a memorial out of twelve stones taken from the riverbed and set up at Gilgal, where the Israelites camp after crossing the Jordan. **Joshua 4:9** states that Joshua set up a pile of twelve stones in the middle of the river, as well, which marks the place where the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant stood. **The Ark of the Covenant** led the people across the Jordan. In time to come, **the stones** are to serve as a teaching tool for the Israelites; that is, when children ask about the stones, their parents are to tell them the story of the river crossing (4:5-7; 20-24).

The end of the wilderness wanderings is marked by two other significant events in **Joshua 5**. The male Israelites are circumcised at Gilgal, in obedience to God's commands. The text states that this generation of Israelites, all born in the wilderness, was never circumcised. Then the community celebrates **Passover**, the commemoration of their liberation from slavery in Egypt. They eat the produce of the land of Canaan for the first time, and immediately the supply of manna—the food that sustained them in the wilderness for forty years—ceases. The time in the wilderness has ended, and their new life as a people of God in the Land of Promise has begun.

The conquest of the Promised Land begins with the battle of Jericho. Everything up to now has been preparation. Now real war begins. The first five verses focuses on God's direction to Joshua before the battle. The Lord gives His plan of attack.

Now, in **Chapter 6:1** **Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.** The text implies that the city was prepared for a siege; it was shut up completely. Jericho was roughly six miles from the Jordan. It was one of the oldest cities in the world; a heavily fortified city; walls up to 25 feet high and 20 feet thick. Jericho was a symbol of military power and strength.

The Canaanites saw Israel's God as a nature god because He parted the Jordan and as a war god because He defeated Sihon and Og (the two Amorite kings). But the Canaanites did not consider Him a fortress god—one who could prevail against a walled city. However, the people were afraid of the children of Israel. Gilgal was Joshua's headquarters and was probably about halfway to Jericho.

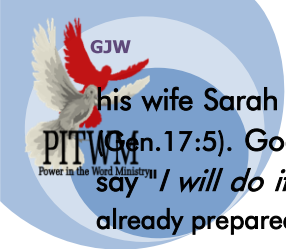
Jericho was shut up to keep the Israelites out. None went out and none came in.

LESSON: I. WHAT ISRAEL WAS TO DO JOSHUA 6:2-4

6:2 **And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.** Joshua had not even fought the battle of Jericho yet, the Lord appeared to him to say, *"I have given into thine hand Jericho; the king; and the mighty men of valour."* God was already telling Joshua that the enemy was already defeated. Now if that don't build your confidence up, I don't know what will. This is not the first time God has announced certainty before the fact. When Abraham was ninety years old and

¹ <http://www.enterthebible.org/oldtestament.aspx?rid=26>
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his wife Sarah had not borne him any sons, God said to him, "for a father of many nations have I made thee" (Gen.17:5). God is above time, and that which is yet future for us is present for Him. That's why God does not say "I will do it", but He says "I have done it!" All Joshua needed to do was to just walk in the instructions God had already prepared, in faith. Doesn't that just grab you?

6:3 And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus, shalt thou do six days. 6:4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

God speaks the instructions to Joshua:

1. The men of war shall walk around the city, once for six days (6:3).
2. The Levitical priests are always to carry the Ark. It didn't say how many, probably four (two in front; two on the end; only the Levite priests were allowed to carry the Ark of the Covenant) [1 Chronicles 15:2].
3. Seven priests shall go before the Ark, each carrying a ram's horn trumpet (6:4).
4. On the seventh day encircle (walk around) the city seven times (makes for a total of 13 times in seven days).
5. The priests will blow their trumpets (6:4).

This march was more than a military one, it was a spiritual march. There will be no trenches dug, no batteries erected, nor battering rams drawn up, nor any military preparations made. These are the bent or crooked trumpets with which the jubilee was proclaimed. Why did God give Joshua all these complicated instructions for the battle?

Several answers are possible:

1. God was making it undeniably clear that the battle would depend upon Him, and not upon Israel's weapons and expertise. This is why the priests who carry the Ark—God's presence, into battle as a spiritual weapon instead of a natural weapon.
2. God's method of taking the city accentuated the terror already felt in Jericho (2:9).
3. This strange military maneuver was a test of the Israelites' faith and their willingness to follow God completely.

You know how we question things that don't make sense, well Joshua and all the people followed all that God told Joshua to do.

II. WHAT ISRAEL DID JOSHUA 6:12-17

6:12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. Joshua had already called the people together and had marched out of Gilgal, after getting the instructions from God (6:6-11). Now he is ready to carry out the battle plan God had given him. Now in this verse, this is the second day because they have already gone around the city once in verse 11 and went back into their camp. He rises up early again in the morning and everyone is in their places to do the same thing again carrying the Ark of the Lord without uttering one word.

6:13 And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. These all of had a symbolic representation:

- "Seven" is the number for perfection; completeness.
- "Priest" is a type of Christ; Intercessor.
- "Trumpet" is a symbol of gathering; judgment.
- "Horn" is a symbol of power.
- The "Ark" represented the Lord's presence.

Can you see the representation here? And can you imagine the difficulty of this? Several hundred thousand

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people marching around the city without a word, no chants, not even a whisper! (6:10); just the sound of the trumpets. ²The trumpets the priests blew (6:4, 9) were not the long silver trumpets but rams horns (*shophars*). The blowing of trumpets in Israel reminded the people of God's activity for them. The priests used them to call the people to follow God who was going before them in the wilderness. Both functions were applicable on this occasion. The trumpet blasts signaled judgment to the Canaanites but victory to the Israelites (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-17). The line of march was as follows: soldiers, priests, the ark, and more soldiers. The armed men (soldiers) were those of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh who were to help their brethren conquer Canaan, and then they were allowed to go back east of the Jordan when the Israelites had conquered Canaan; the rearward came after the ark which were the tribe of Dan because it marched last and gathered up whatever was left of others (Num.2:31).

6:14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

This concludes from verse 12. To the Canaanites this was a strange way of fighting—marching around in silence except for the blowing of trumpets. There was no effort to scale the wall, no weapons were used, no engines of siege were brought up, and no other ordinary means of warfare were used in any degree. The Israelites did all of this and went back to their camp. God could have caused the walls of Jericho to fall upon the first go round, but they must go round them thirteen times before they fall, that they might be kept waiting patiently for the Lord.

6:15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times:—

Well, on this seventh day the Israelites completely went around the city seven times. The sight of armed men and priests blowing the trumpet thus marching day after day, and this time, 7 times in one day on this 7th day, must have been a hilarious spectacle to the inhabitants of Jericho. However, 7 meant completeness. They were about to see a mighty action take place! This waiting had to be hard on both sides of the wall. The fear was mounting inside Jericho. And the marching on the outside of the wall was teaching the Israelites to be obedient to the commands of God.

6:16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city. Both those that were armed, and those that were not; they were to make one grand and general shout at once. At the command of Joshua, this entire mass of people shouted in victory. The trumpets of the priests were blowing. This had to be an enormous sound all at once. The loud shout in unison expressed an expectation of God's action to fulfill His guaranteed promise.

- *"I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour"* 6:2.
- *"The wall of the city shall fall down flat and the people shall ascend up..."* 6:5.
- *"For the Lord hath given you the city"* 6:16.

Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! (My, My, My; Hallelujah)!

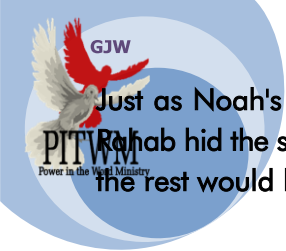
6:17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. "Accursed" (Heb *chērem*) means to "ban" or "devote." It may also mean to "seclude", as from society; meaning it is used of the utter destruction of the enemies of God. ³The entire city full of people will be destroyed, except for faithful Rahab and those of her household. Over and over, we have seen the faithful saved in the middle of the tumult. Rahab is no different. She believed in God, and it was counted unto her as righteousness.

² <http://net.bible.org/#!bible/Joshua+6:12>

³ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/joshua/06.html>

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Just as Noah's family was saved by Noah's act of faith, Rahab's family was saved by her act of faith. The fact that Rahab hid the spies is truly observed by Joshua as a reason for sparing her and those that were with her, when all the rest would be destroyed.

III. WHAT ISRAEL EXPERIENCED JOSHUA 6:18-20a

6:18 And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. ⁴The Israelites were to be a holy people separated from the idols of the world. They were not to desire anything of this city, because some of the sinfulness of the city would be on those things. These people had worshipped false gods and practiced all sorts of evil. The things of this city would need to be destroyed, to cleanse the city. Anyone who broke the Law of accursed things would not only be punished, he would bring a curse upon Israel. So therefore, it's saying, "*you will find yourselves inclined to reach towards it, but check yourselves.*"

6:19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord. Every good thing and valuable thing that is not accursed belongs to God; it must come to the treasury of the house of God. God wants all of what belongs to Him. God doesn't need anything, but it is always to benefit His children. And remember that whatever is in the House of God is for the glory of God.

- "Silver" is a symbol of strength.
- "Gold" is a symbol of kingship.
- "Brass" is a symbol of judgment against sin of disobedience.
- "Iron" is a symbol of strength.

These were the only objects they were to spare. Each of these metals, and whatsoever were made of them, were set apart for the Lord and dedicated to sacred use.

6:20 So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. It was at this time the signal was given to the people and they responded with a great shout! They shouted when the priests blew the trumpet with a long blast of the ram's horn. Can you imagine being at a football stadium and everyone shouting, and the horns sounding? I believe the sound was even greater when you can see and imagine the heavenly chorus sounding with them with exuberance. This was the signal after the final march! I knew their hearts were beating! And as they shouted, the walls fell flat. They entered it without any difficulty. Israel was at war with the Canaanites, but behind these human soldiers, God was waging war against sin.

SUMMARY:

Up to this point Jericho was locked up—none can go out and none can come in (**6:1**). everything had been more or less preliminary and preparatory. Now the real task before them must be faced and tackled God's Way. God began to tell Joshua that He had given Jericho into his hand, including the king and the mighty men of valor! ⁵Jericho was not an exceptionally large city; but it was an important, formidable fortress city. If Israel could defeat Jericho, they could defeat anything else that would face them in Canaan. Again we see the wisdom of God as opposed to human wisdom, in that Israel faces their most difficult opponent first. The method of warfare was one that made absolutely no sense according to military intelligence. It required total dependence on God.

⁴ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/joshua/06.html>

⁵ <http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/0606.htm>

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All they were to do was march around the city. Seven priests were to carry seven trumpets made from rams' horns before the Ark. As they had marched one time each day for six days, and on the seventh day, they were to march seven times, and the priests were to blow the trumpets (**6:2-4**).

12 that morning the second day, the priests took the ark of the Lord, along with 13 the seven priests carrying seven trumpets, and armed men, and rear guard after the ark. 14 Then they marched and returned back to the camp, doing this for six days. 15 The seventh day they marched around the city seven times. 16 However, on the seventh time the priests blew a long blast of the trumpet. Joshua told the people to shout: *"For the Lord has given you the city."* 17 The city and everything that's in it. Only Rehab, the prostitute and all her family that's occupying her house would be saved because she hid and protected the two spies (**6:12-17**).

18 Stay away from the accursed things or they would make Israel a curse by taking anything. 19 All the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord— set apart to the treasury of the Lord 20 The people shouted! It wasn't the shout of an attacking army; it wasn't a shout of fear, but it was a shout raised in praise to their God who had promised them the victory. God is truly victorious! That which the people of Jericho trusted to be their defense proved their destruction because when the people shouted, the walls could not stand. Walls are meant to fall in our lives so God can come in. And that's what Israel did as they shouted the battle cry when they heard the sound of the trumpet. They shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, and they ran into the city because the walls were utterly destroyed, and it was time to come in, and they took the city! (**6:18-20**).

APPLICATION:

Take a lesson from Israel and know whatever wall you want to go through it's not bigger than God. His promise can become real!