

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
1-25-23

Joshua 6

Instructions For The Battle – Verses 1-5

Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. ² Then the LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. ³ March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. ⁴ Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵ When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in.”

6:1 The city of Jericho, built thousands of years before Joshua was born, was one of the oldest cities in the world. In some places it had fortified walls up to 25 feet high and 20 feet thick. Soldiers standing guard on top of the walls could see for miles. Jericho was a symbol of military power and strength—the Canaanites considered it invincible. Israel would attack this city first, and its destruction would put the fear of Israel into the heart of every person in Canaan. 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. But the Canaanites did not consider him a fortress god—one who could prevail against a walled city. The defeat of Jericho showed not only that Israel’s God was superior to the Canaanite gods, but also that he was invincible.

6:2-5 God told Joshua that Jericho was already delivered into his hands—the enemy was already defeated! What confidence Joshua must have had as he went into battle! Christians also fight against a defeated enemy. Our enemy, Satan, has been defeated by Christ (Romans 8:37-39; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8). Although we still fight battles every day and sin runs rampant in the world, we have the assurance that the war has already been won. We do not have to be paralyzed by the power of a defeated enemy; we can overcome him through Christ’s power.

6:3-5 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 priests carrying the ark, not soldiers, led the Israelites into battle. (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. The blowing of the trumpets had a special significance. They had been instructed to blow the same trumpets used in the religious festivals in their battles to remind them that their victory would come from the Lord, not their own military might (Numbers 10:9).

Joshua Tells The Priests And The People – Verses 6-7

⁶ So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it.” ⁷ And he ordered the army, “Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD.”

6:6 Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests: Joshua had to tell the priests because what they were asked to do was unusual. Normally, priests and the ark of the covenant did not go with Israel to battle. Take up the ark of the covenant: The ark would be prominent in this victory, even as it was in the crossing of the Jordan River. Israel had to keep their hearts and minds on the Lord who was present with them, instead of putting their hearts and minds on the difficulty of the task in front of them.

6:7 And he said to the people: Joshua had to tell the people, because what they were asked to do was unusual. This was no customary way to conquer a walled, fortified city.

The March Of The First Six Days – Verses 8-11

⁸When 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. ⁹The 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. ¹⁰But 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!" ¹¹So 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.

6:8 When Joshua had spoken to the people: Joshua does not hesitate to do what the Lord has told him to do. Often, our delays to obey God show that we really don't believe Him.

6:11 So he had the ark of the Lord circle the city, going around it once: Jericho was not a large city; they could easily march around it in a day. As the people of Jericho saw the Israelites marching around their city, they probably had a sense of both awe and horror.

The March Of The First Six Days – Verses 12-14

¹²Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. ¹⁴So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

6:12-14 So they did six days: It took courage for Israel to do this; Israel was wide open to attack during this time, and it would have been easy for the people of Jericho to attack them from the high position of the walls. It took endurance for Israel to do this; the march was for six days, and they had to persist in something that didn't seem to make much sense.

6:12-14 So they did six days. In this, the helplessness of Israel was revealed; through six days of silent marching, they had a good look at the walls that seemed to be impenetrable — they knew that this was a battle bigger than they were.

The March Of The Seventh Day – Verses 15-16

¹⁵On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. ¹⁶The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!

6:15 On the seventh day: This march took place over a period of seven days, meaning that Israel had to have marched on a Sabbath; but this would be a work of God's sovereign grace and power, not of human works.

6:16 Shout, for the Lord has given you the city: The command was given for the people to shout. After the days of silence, this comes as a recognition that God would now give them what He had promised. The Lord has given you the city!

The command to destroy the city and to save Rahab is given – Verses 17-19

¹⁷ The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. ¹⁸ 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 destruction and bring trouble on it. ¹⁹ All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."

6:17 Only Rahab the harlot shall live: Joshua is careful to take care of Rahab. Her faith in the living God would find support from God's people.

6:18 By all means abstain from the accursed things: Joshua had to command the people of Israel to stay away from the accursed things. By this, he means the idols and things associated with the demonic and depraved worship of the people of Canaan. The severe judgment that is brought against Jericho, and all of Canaan didn't come because they were in the "way" of God's people. It came because this was a people who were in total rebellion against God and in league with the occult, as the artifacts recovered from this period demonstrate.

6:19 But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord: All the valuables belong to God; Jericho is the "first fruits" city of Canaan, and so the valuables are set apart for the treasury of the Lord.

The Walls Come Down And The City Is Destroyed – Verses 20-21

²⁰ When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. ²¹ They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

6:20 The wall fell down flat: This miracle was beyond normal expectation; no other city had been conquered this way. Israel couldn't depend on their prior experience or what had happened for others in battle. All they had was God's promise ([Joshua 6:5](#)), but they believed that promise and acted according to that belief. We shouldn't be surprised when God fulfills His promise, but we often are. We wonder if the Israelites were surprised when the wall fell down flat. The people of Jericho were no doubt surprised.

6:21 Why did God demand that the Israelites destroy almost everyone and everything in Jericho? He was carrying out severe judgment against the wickedness of the Canaanites. This judgment, or ban, usually required that everything be destroyed (Deuteronomy 12:2-3; 13:12-18). Because of their evil practices and intense idolatry, the Canaanites were a stronghold of rebellion against God. This threat to the right kind of living that God required had to be removed. If not, it would affect all Israel

like a cancerous growth (as it did in the sad story told in the book of Judges). A few people and some items in Jericho were not destroyed, but this was a special case. Rahab and her household were saved because she had faith in God and because she helped the Israelite scouts. The silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron were kept, not to enrich the people, but to beautify the tabernacle and its services (6:24).

6:21 God also wants us to be pure. He wants us to clean up our behavior when we begin a new life with him. We must not let the desire for personal gain distract us from our spiritual purpose. We must also reject any objects that are reminders of a life of rebellion against God.

Finishing Up The Battle – Verses 22-25

22 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.” **23** So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel. **24** 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. **25** But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

6:22 Bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her: Rahab and her household were saved. They coupled their faith in the God of Israel with a willingness to follow through on what God’s messengers told them to do: stay at the house with the scarlet cord hanging from the window (Joshua 2:17-19).

6:24 They burned the city and all that was in it with fire.... Joshua spared Rahab the harlot: In this, we see a contrast between judgment and salvation. All of Jericho heard about the God of Israel (Joshua 2:8-11), but only Rahab responded positively in faith towards God with that knowledge.

6:25 So she dwells in Israel to this day: This shows that Joshua was written at the time of Joshua; this was not the fanciful re-construction of an imaginative writer working centuries after the fact.

Joshua Curses The Man Who Would Re-Fortify Jericho – Verses 26-27

26 At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: “Cursed before the LORD is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: “At the cost of his firstborn son he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates.” **27** So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

6:26 This curse was fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34 when a man, Hiel, rebuilt Jericho and consequently lost his oldest and youngest sons. It is believed by some scholars that Hiel actually sacrificed his sons and placed them in the foundation and gate masonry to ward off evil.

6:26-27 This completes the story of Israel’s victory at Jericho. We can learn from the things that marked their victory. Faith: Joshua and Israel believed the battle plan - Obedience: Joshua and Israel followed the battle plan exactly - Courage: Israel followed the battle plan despite danger - Endurance: Israel followed the battle plan over a period of time, even when it seemed that nothing was happening. Trust: Israel did not rely on carnal scheming and worldly methods; their trust was in the Lord, not in human ingenuity.