

Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 9: Conquered (6:1-27)

Inside the city walls, the beating of their hearts seemed to keep pace with the pounding of their enemies' feet. For days, the Israelites, too numerous to count, had circled their city. Every blast of the ram's horns further unnerved Jericho's inhabitants and paralyzed its leaders. But worse than their steady march was their silence. No shouts of mockery fell from their lips; no cries of vengeance or promises of recompense spilled forth. There was no boasting of their purpose, no hinting of their plans. They simply returned to their camp and let fear have its way.

No god, no force of nature, no people had prevailed against Israel's God, but they had made their choice, and now He dwelt just outside their gate.

"Wicked men think God in jest when He is preparing for their judgment; but they will be convinced of their mistake when it is too late."ⁱ

Read Joshua 6:1-2.

1. What precautions did the inhabitants of Jericho take to defend themselves? (v.1)
2. What three things were promised to Joshua before the battle began? (v.2)

Continue reading: Joshua 6:3-14.

3. What specific instructions were given to Joshua?
4. Who was to participate and what was their role?

5. Joshua withheld God's full plan from the people and instead chose to impart daily instructions. Why might he have done this? How might this have tested their faith?

6. By adhering to Joshua's instructions, to what did the Israelites expose themselves each day?

7. What realization must the Israelites have had as they circled the city?

"The greatest difficulty in the Christian life is to get to the place where one is prepared to admit that the whole thing is too big for him, and that the power of the enemy is too great for him, and if his Jericho is to fall, then, somehow, God must bring it about. I believe that before God entrusts any of His people with a real measure of spiritual power, victory, and blessing, He brings them to a place from where they have surveyed Jericho so long that they have come to see that its conquest is absolutely hopeless. God expects nothing more from us than failure, yet we spend years trying to make ourselves something other than a failure. So long as we think we can do it alone, the omnipotent resources of God in Jesus Christ our Risen Lord cannot help us."ⁱⁱ

8. What were the people to refrain from doing? For how long? Why would this increase in difficulty as time passed? (v.10)

9. How might this have affected the inhabitants of Jericho?

Read Joshua 6:15-19.

10. Upon entering the city, what was to be destroyed? (v.17; see also v.21) What sort of things would prove to be a temptation to the Israelites?

11. From what were the people instructed to abstain? (v.18) According to Deuteronomy 7:25-26, what was considered accursed?

12. What *were* they to gather? To whom did it belong? (Joshua 6:19)

13. The bounty of Jericho served as "first fruit" unto the Lord. (See Proverbs 3:9-10.) Why is giving God the first and best of your increase difficult?

14. What does such an offering declare to God as Provider?

15. Now read Numbers 33:50-56. What were the Israelites to accomplish upon entering Canaan? Note the six "Ds" (NKJV).
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.

16. According to this passage, what would occur if they failed to carry out God's instructions? (vv.55-56; also, Deuteronomy 18:9-14.)

17. Return to Joshua 6. Who would be consequently affected if the Israelites chose to disregard Joshua's instructions? Why? (v.18)

Continue reading Joshua 6. verses 20-27.

18. What did the sounding of the trumpets (*shophar*) signify to the Israelites? To the Canaanites?
19. What occurred when the people shouted?
20. Per 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, of what future event does Joshua 6:20 speak? Also consider Joshua 6:24.
21. For what reason was the city to be eradicated?ⁱⁱⁱ Why couldn't it be partially preserved or maintained? What does this reveal about the nature of sin?
22. Who was to be spared from annihilation and why? (vv.17, 22)
23. Had the true God concealed Himself from the Canaanites? In what ways had He revealed Himself to them? Think on 2 Peter 3:9.

24. Back to Joshua 6. What action was taken on Rahab's behalf? How must she have felt as she considered her salvation and her countrymen's destruction?
25. Where was she and her family left? Why? (Consider Joshua 5:7.)
26. Read Hebrews 11:30. What does this verse reveal about the way God delivers His people?
27. How do 2 Chronicles 20:15 and Zechariah 4:6 apply?
28. What curse was pronounced upon Jericho in verse 26?^{iv}
29. What mattered most to Joshua? How did God honor him? (v.27)

ⁱ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 300). Peabody: Hendrickson.

ⁱⁱ Redpath, Alan. 96.

ⁱⁱⁱ In Genesis 15, God confirms His covenant with Abraham while revealing future events. In verse 16, Abraham is told that his descendants' return to Canaan would coincide with His judgement upon the Amorites and other exceedingly wicked Canaanite nations. Their iniquity "*not yet complete*", God continued to withhold His wrath for 400 years. But rather than turn from their wicked ways, they stubbornly continued in their sin and rejected His mercy. Now their iniquity was "full", and they were to be utterly destroyed (Deuteronomy 20:17). (See Leviticus 18 for a partial list of their practices.)

^{iv} Although the city was "occupied for brief periods (18:21; Judges 3:13; 2 Samuel 10:5) the prohibition against the rebuilding was not violated until the days of King Ahab, 500 years later. Then, as an indication of the apostasy of that period, Hiel the Bethelite attempted to rebuild Jericho's walls, but it cost him the lives of his two sons Abiram and Segub (1 Kings 16:30-34)". (Campbell, D. K. (1985). *Joshua*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 343). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.)