

## Joshua 5:13-6:27—Joshua Did Not Fight the Battle of Jericho

- **Intro**
  - **This is a story about faith**
    - Hebrews 11:30—by faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.
    - We all live by faith—a hope that anchors and orients our lives—a matter of where!
    - Hebrews 11:1—faith is the assurance of things hope for; the conviction of things not seen
    - For Joshua, Israel and Rahab—faith was in their powerful, present and gracious God
    - For Jericho—faith was in their military prowess and their strong defenses
  - **This is a story and picture of the Christian life.**
    - We begin wandering faithlessly in the wilderness; we go from rightful objects of God's judgement to recipients of God's radical salvation; we embrace baptism and the Lord's table; we don't settle into lives of comfort but MARCH forward in new life for the glory of God in and through our lives!
- **God Delivers His Presence (5:13-15)**
  - **Joshua goes out as the LEADER**, feeling the weight of conquest to scope out Jericho and devise a plan! No doubt, Joshua could look back at the Jordan in thankfulness but NOW there was a NEW and HUGE obstacle standing in the way! **God finds him right there and steps in—it is ME who will lead this army and accomplish this!** The battle that Joshua had no idea how to fight and win (and was hopeless to do), God showed up to fight!
    - Joshua—“are you for us or against us?”
    - Commander's answer—“NO!” = “I”m not just for you to fight with you...I'm in charge!
    - **This is not Israel's battle that God is assisting but is God's work that Israel is joining in!**
      - What a good word for us—Christian life is not US doing the battle and hoping Jesus joins along but it's about letting Jesus take the lead and us joining Him where he is.
  - **This is not just an angel or vision but an appearing of Christ himself—Christophany—how?**
    - Joshua worships him and he accepts it—Law very clear to worship YHWH alone
    - The ground is declared HOLY, just like in Moses' story in Exodus 3
    - Joshua 6:2—we are told that it is the Lord who is speaking to Joshua!
  - **v.13-14—commander of the Lord's army (Christ himself) shows up with a drawn sword**
    - **Huge peace and confidence to Joshua and Israel!**
      - **God meets us where we are**—Examples elsewhere—Abraham, Jacob, Moses—in each instance, God's revelation is fit to the person and context (Abraham as a traveler, Jacob as fellow wanderer, Moses in a bush in the backside of the desert and Joshua as a man of war at the beginning of his own campaign into the Land).
    - **“where you are standing is holy ground”—this encounter was more about getting Joshua in a posture of submission than giving Joshua particular instruction.**
  - **Joshua went out to meet and inspect his problem and meeting his God!!**
    - **Salvation Order—God shows up, Christ saves, Christ gives his presence and that ALWAYS PRECEDES our lives of obedience and discipleship!! CRITICAL ORDER!**
- **God Demonstrates His Power (6:1-21)**
  - **v.1—“Jericho was shut up inside”—they had battened down the hatches. Shows 2 things:**
    - **The impossibility of this exploit for the inexperienced, unprepared Israelites.**
    - **The futility of the “refuges” and sources of hope of the world!** We insulate and encapsulate ourselves in lives and pursuits we think make us safe, secure and prosperous, yet they are futile and pathetic before the God of Creation!
  - **v.2-3—promises always precede commands; indicatives always precede imperatives; I have given you the land precedes the marching tactics!**
    - **“see”—focus on this—this promise is the HINGE of the whole operation—I have given Jericho into your hand.**
  - **The story of Jericho is a story about worship and faith and glory!**

- Underneath the “shutting up” of their gates wasn’t just a “fear” of Israel but also a rejection of their God! They could have surrendered (both to Israel and to its God but instead they anchor in, in resolute rejection of God!
- God get’s glory by using weak people—This battle and victory belongs to God! God uses the instruments of people and, many times, he chooses to act in spite of rather than because of them, to show his power and glory!
- Imagine Jericho watching this mass of military men on either side of a bunch of preachers and worship leaders walking with this wooden box and blowing loud trumpets, in complete SILENCE, marching around! For 6 straight days!
  - Why these 6 days and why the silence?
    - A sign of God’s patience and mercy, giving an opportunity for repentance! WARNING!!
- Obedience in response to God’s promises and presence is the channel by which the grace of God is experienced in the lives of his people!
  - Luke 5—Jesus was about to provide a miraculous catch of fish yet he still commanded Peter to set out and cast his nets! There is an active obedience to the Lord that positions us and prepares us to be USEFUL! Standing and just waiting on God to work isn’t faith but presumption—we move out in faith and obedience INTO what God has called us to!
- How actually did this “wall come tumbling down?”
  - v.5 and 20—literal translation, “the wall of the city will fall under itself”
    - The wall will collapsed from pressure from ABOVE not from the OUTSIDE!!
  - “Joshua fought the battle of Jericho”—that song gets this story COMPLETELY WRONG!
    - At every turn this is the point that God is getting across!
- God Displays Gracious Salvation and Just Judgement (6:22-27)
  - At a high level, the story of Jericho is really a picture of God’s judgement and salvation!
    - v.10—Joshua tells them not to speak a word...v.16—Joshua tells them, “shout!”
      - You would expect v.20 to immediately follow where they shout? Why not!?
        - The writer is delaying the climax to show what is the most important part of this story —what happens in v.17-19 is more important than Jericho’s walls falling!
        - God is more concerned with obedience and holiness than he is about this particular victory—only 1.5 verses given to the actual taking of Jericho!
    - v.22-23, 25—in between v.21 and v.24 (the descriptions of Jericho’s destruction as a sign of judgement) comes this blazing story of God’s scandalous, saving grace!
      - Interesting note—we are told in Joshua 2 that Rahab’s house was IN the wall. Joshua and Israel shout and the “wall falls flat”. God, in his sovereign POWER crushes the entire wall yet spares the part of it where Rahab’s family was! Unreal!
        - Can you imagine this moment where the shout happens, the entire city wall crumbles to the ground and there standing in the midst of the chaos and rubble is this tower of rock where Rahab’s house is.
          - In the gospel, God offers a tower of refuge amidst the devastation of his judgement! Like the house of Rahab, Christ stands as the TOWER of grace amidst the rubble of judgement beckoning ALL WHO WILL to come and hide there!
    - v.25—Rahab is not distinguished from but is PART OF Israel. Rahab and her family HAVE CEASED TO BE CANAANITES AND ARE NOW ISRAELITES—definitive identity change!
      - Gospel glory—God makes us NEW regardless of where we came from!ahh
    - v.26—Curse on Jericho—just as it was said of Rahab that she has lived in the land until this day, the curse says that the city should never be rebuilt. Rahab’s faith had generational and lasting effects and, as the curse makes clear, so does disobedience and lack of faith! (1 Kings 16)

- Close
- Evil is still rampant, so what do we do:
  - We start with hating it and repenting of it in OUR OWN HEARTS! If anything, Israel's history is a testimony to us that we need not only occupy ourselves with blowing the warning trumpet of the gospel to OTHERS but to OURSELVES also—forgetfulness!
  - We pick up the weapons of truth, righteousness, the Word of God and the gospel of peace to wage warfare for the hearts and minds of men and women around us! (2 Cor. 10—our weapons are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds, destroy arguments and oppositions to the reign, rule and salvation of Jesus!)
  - We cling to Jesus, not jihad, as our hope for victory! If we are to see our Jerichos conquered it will be on the terms of Jesus, our Commander, and by his power! Jericho WILL NOT YIELD to any power except the sovereign authority of the Lord of all the earth, carried out on the earth by his people, walking in obedience with the loud shouts of faith!