

Joshua Series “Jericho”
Joshua 6
May 9, 2021

Chapter 5 - Joshua has gone out to survey the Jericho. He has gone out to think through the military strategy. For this is a city they are attacking and siege warfare is a different kind of fight.

And what Joshua encounters is the commander of the Lord’s army. Joshua isn’t recruiting God for battle but that Joshua is being recruited to worship and takes off his sandals.

Joshua 6:1-27

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 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.”

8 When 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. **9** The 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. **10** But 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!” **11** So 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.

12 Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. **13** The 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. **14** So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

15 On 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. **16** The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, “Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! **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.”

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.**

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.**

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.

Joshua implements the strategy of God. March around the city for 6 days. On the seventh, march around the city seven times, hear the trumpets blast, and then shout and when they did the walls of the city fell in on themselves.

Israel has fighting men and yet their strategy is strange and peculiar for sure. What does it mean to march around day after day and the shout and yell?

What would you have been thinking if you are part of Israel?

What is this/

What would you have been thinking if you are inside Jericho?

Ridiculous - armed men. priests. Blowing horns.

Jericho had to laugh. Had scratch their heads.

“Now go away or I shall taunt you a second time”

The strategy is so bizarre that what becomes clear is that Joshua didn't really win the battle of Jericho but the battle is the Lord's.

Joshua 6:2

Then the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.

God declares that he has done something even before Joshua receives it. God has already secured the victory before Joshua and the armies have taken a step. “See” - The emphasis is not on the fighting men but on the ark of the covenant, the symbol of the divine presence. God is with his people.

Moments that can take us backward into the kinds of things that God has already done.

- “As I was with Moses so I will be with you Joshua.”

- Israel walks through the Jordan on dry ground much like the Red Sea.
- Joshua finds himself on holy ground, sandals off, worshipping much like Moses did at the burning bush.
- And now this battle, that really wasn't a battle is something that God is clearing accomplishing much like when Egypt was swallowed up by the Red Sea.

Exodus 14:13-14

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. **The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.**"

"Be Still" - It takes an a great degree of faith to be still when there are enemies, problems and battles all around. And it's faith that is in play at Jericho. Hebrews 11:30 says it was by faith that the walls of Jericho fell.

Being still. Marching around in silence and then shouting. These are unusual strategies for sure.

Clarifying that our weapons and our strategy are different.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **5** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Is there a more peculiar strategy than that of prayer. To stop when there are battle all around. To speak to an unseen and invisible God when enemies and challenges are in our face. To be still. To sit. Illus. Coming to church on Sunday. When there is so many other things to do. You could be out producing. Accomplishing. But being here right now is an expression of faith that the battle is the Lord's. God has more at his disposal than we do. God has better strategies than we do. God has more abilities, more power than we do.

The whole account of this dramatic sixth chapter centers on the gracious gift of the sovereign Lord. That the Lord as the hero.

God's Judgment

Joshua 6:20-21

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.

If you didn't tense up when we read this passage a few moments ago, you may have not heard it. Every living thing destroyed. We are going to see this in different ways throughout the conquest of the Promise Land. And with it comes some tensions we feel. Criticisms we hear about God, Christianity. Stories and passages are what some hold out as their reasons for unbelief. For others it creates a gap in the way we think about God - an O.T. God and then a New Testament God- one full of wrath and judgment and one full of love and grace. It is an unnecessary gap - and so I want to try to bring the Old closer to the New and the New closer to the Old. God's justice and God's love.

Let's look at Deuteronomy 7, in which God gives Israel instructions about conquering the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 7:1-6

When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and **drives out** before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you— **2** and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must **destroy them totally**. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. **3** Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, **4** for they will turn your children away from following me **to serve other gods**, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. **5** This is what you are to do to them: Break down their

altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. **6** For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

We read it in passage - “destroy them totally.” And then “make no treaty” and “do not intermarry”. Why talk about treaties and marriage if the command is simply destroy. There is a religious priority and religious purity that is most significant. There will dilution of the faith, a turning to other gods that is the greatest concern.

So, **The cleansing that God is engaged in is religious more than it is ethnic.** It isn't the people the group so much as it is the false religion. God ordered them to devote the Canaanites to complete destruction, but then he forbids them from intermarrying with them. It seems obvious that whatever “utterly destroy” means, it doesn't mean genocide.

Dueteronomy 20:16 However, in the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. 17 Completely destroy them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the Lord your God has commanded you. 18 Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the Lord your God.

The command to kill the nations of the land, then, “does not appear to be concerned with eliminating them so much as keeping Israel at a distance from them.” The point is **expulsion as opposed to extermination** and it is directed **primarily against the rulers and the cities** as the main representatives of the Canaanite religious-political system

There was also something else God was addressing through Promise Land conquest - Back in Genesis. God is telling Abraham where God's people will settle but there is a timeline and that timeline is connect to something....

Genesis 15:16

In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

God will send Israel into the Promise Land to bring a certain judgment on the people for their sins on an that had been long established. The Cananites were notorious for temple prostitution, incest, and bestiality, perhaps their worst crime was their practice of child sacrifice. it was their practice to burn babies alive in the outstretched arms of their god Molek. In 1 Samuel 11, a treaty was proposed by an Ammorite which the right eye of every Israelite man would be gouge out. Amos 1 says that one of the transgressions of the Ammorites was to rip open pregnant women in the lands they conquered.

All sin has fallen short of God’s glory and deserving of death, so what are we asking God to **overlook**?

Can God be a good and leave sin unpunished?

Illus. Melissa Harrison’s story.

God can’t be good if he is also not just. If he leaves sin unaddressed. Rebellion and Evil go unchecked.

The lives lost at Jericho - is that different than a life lost to cancer, a car accident?

Illus. Dentist office with the Ark motiff.

It feels a little different, its more morally complex because God’s people are being used to administer the judgment. It gets difficult when he uses others.

It is inconceivable that human sin could receive such judgment. Rather, if that is the judgement of God how inconceivable is the sin that brings such judgment down.

We argue with God about evil in the world if he is good. And then in passages in which God bring judgment, we argue that it is too harsh. At Jericho - God turns on a light and lets us see the severity of sin.

Jesus will do the same when he returns to restore all things.

2 Thessalonians 1:9 - when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.

Jesus will destroy everything that stands in his way. There is a kind of undoing as God makes all things new.

Perhaps this is what is connected with 6 days of marching and then on the 7th God moves. Is there an echo of new creation happening. God bringing a restoration of life and faith into the Promised Land. And there is an undoing of strongholds as God makes all things new.

v.1 of ch 6 also reveals something. “Now **the gates of Jericho were securely barred**’

Deuteronomy makes an interesting statement about gates being closed and open.

Deuteronomy 20:10-11

When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you.

So when v.1 open with the observation that the gates are barred, there is an understanding of resistance. Ch 2 - Rahab the prostitute, within the city of Jericho said, *“all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. 10 We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea[a] for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.[b] 11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.”*

It wasn’t that Jericho needed more information. They knew. But they weren’t interested. It is not that God only saved Rahab, but that she was also the only one open.

What if the gates had been through wide, would there have been a different outcome? What if this was one of the reasons Israel waited and marched seven days, was God giving Jericho, even in all its sin an opportunity to repent.

Through all of this, God is ready to include.

Joshua 2:25

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.

With the scarlet cord in the window, Rahab's house would have been easily recognizable, but now that the walls have collapsed it is presumably more so in that her house is still standing. Because of her faith in Yahweh as the true and living God, she and all who belonged to her are "saved alive". She lives among them to this day.

In the midst of judgement there is salvation.

Jericho takes us to the cross. The cross is the place where God's judgment fell in a greater degree than what happened on Jericho. Jesus provided salvation by enduring and submitting to the violence. At evil's height, the creation crucified the Creator. The most damnable offense became the place of protection and provision for anyone who calls upon the name of Jesus.

Illus. Hunters stand in the place where the fire has already burned.

The one who was eternal and perfect, absorbed that judgment and wrath. The creator entered creation and took unto himself what we should have experienced.

Do not bar the door of your heart. Don't close the gate. But open your heart so that Christ might come in and fellowship with you.