

And the walls come tumbling down...

Joshua 6

Context: 5:13-15 Joshua met the Commander of the LORD's army

Another major obstacle (v. 1)

Jericho is fortified tightly

Humanly speaking, this creates a very difficult task (walls were 6ft thick, perhaps up to 30 feet high, if you include a retaining wall)

Apparently had sufficient/plentiful spring water

Reminds us of the Israelites reaching the Jordan and needing to cross it. It is an obstacle that would test the people's resolve.

According to many scholars, the circumference of the city would have been approximately half a mile long (meaning that it would take an average human being somewhere around 10 minutes to walk around it)

Note: Apparently there was the upper city and lower city, perhaps even a two-tiered wall.

Regarding population, according to some scholars, there would have been approximately 200/acre. The upper city would have 6 acres which means 1,200 people living there. If the total area was 9-10 acres, it puts the count around 2,000 individuals total.

A reminder and a plan (v. 2-7)

But here's the thing... it isn't about Joshua nor the people of Israel, it is about the God of Joshua and His promises.

Emphasis: "I have given Jericho into your hand..."

Last chapter the people began their conquest by having all the *men circumcised*—not the most effective military strategy. This time, they are given **the battle plan**: walk around the city quietly (except for the priests who will be blowing trumpets).

Could the strategy have to do with giving Jericho a chance to repent?

Who? The men of war & priests

What? March around the city once per day for six days, then seven times the seventh day
Details:

Ark of the Covenant will be in the middle, priests with trumpets in front of it (trumpets announcing the arrival of the King?), armed men will be in front of the priests, others behind the Ark

Seventh day, seventh time around, the priests make a long blast from the trumpet, *then the people shout*, and the walls come tumbling down...

Joshua calls the people to obedience

Obedience and more details (8-11)

The people do as they are commanded

Note the silence they are called to and imagine how difficult this is. This is a real test of their faith and obedience.

Davis considers this an emphasis on the presence of God and a reminder of the passivity of the people in this victory. Perhaps we can see an emphasis on *grace* here and the power of God to save His people.

Count how many times the language of “the ark” is used in this passage.

Consider other accounts that are similar—Gideon’s army, Elijah alone versus 450 prophets of Baal, etc.

Cf. 2 Cor. 4:7

Battle cry or cry of praise?

The same word used as a war cry is also used in the Psalms and elsewhere as a cry of praise.

Psalms 28:7; Though the word is not used in this verse, it seems appropriate to see how God as our shield and our joy go hand in hand.

Consider how this heart attitude can help us in difficult and trying times. Knowing and trusting a sovereign God is not to be simply theoretical.

Daily obedience (12-14)

Obedience is not something that happens once. It is a lifestyle of faith, trust, and willingness to follow the lead of the Lord.

Perhaps the seemingly silly task of walking around the city once a day for six days was a test of the hearts of the people of God.

Boice notes that it appears the Israelites were not told how many days they were going to have to march around. They would simply receive their daily battle plan—what were they thinking when nothing happened?

Complete obedience (15-21)

All that is in the city is *devoted to the LORD* (for destruction)

These things were not to be taken for themselves, they were an offering of sorts to the LORD, an offering of obedience

Deut. 20:16-18—*utterly destroy so that you might not be turned away*

Lev. 27:28-29—*cannot be ransomed*

Genesis 15:16/Deut. 7:1-6

Note also that if Israel does not obey, they will be punished... they will become the very destruction offering they were supposed to offer. The ESV Study notes have a clear, important, concise statement: “Thus, the order (see v. 17) is not an instance of ethnic cleansing but of religious purification. Canaanites such as Rahab (ch. 2) and the Gibeonites (ch. 9), who devote themselves to the Lord are spared, while Israelites who defy the Lord, such as Achan (ch. 7), themselves become *kherem* (i.e., devoted to destruction).”

Note that the silver, gold, bronze, and iron vessels were to go to the treasury of the LORD

Only Rahab and her family were to be spared (see below). The people *obeyed* revealing a deep faith (cf. Hebrews 11:30).

Short description of the actual battle

Salvation (22-25)

Except for a promise...

Everything else destroyed, even by fire

Curse and redemption

Rahab, the prostitute—*focus on her unworthiness?*

Curse on Jericho, blessing on Joshua (26-27)

Cf. 1 Kings 16:34

Key Themes:

- This is God’s battle
- Obedience which follows faith
 - o Daily
 - o Complete
- Salvation for those who seek God’s mercy is secure

Mount Ararat Bible Church

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