

“LET THE WALLS FALL DOWN!”
Joshua 6:3-27

INTRODUCTION:

I. THE STRATEGY VV. 3-11

A. The Word of the Lord to Joshua (vv. 3-5)

- remember that Joshua, while he is hearing this, was barefoot before the Commander of the Lord's hosts, with his face to the ground
- seven is a number that symbolizes the work of God, starting with the work of creation, and stands for something that is complete, finished, or at rest
- the words 'seven', 'seventy', and 'seven-fold' occur 561x in NKJV
- marching during seven days straight implied that they would have had to march on a Sabbath day; the Lord among them was their Sabbath rest
- the ark had never been part of the army in any previous battle
- but here it was to be in the midst of the men of war
- this would emphasize that it was the Lord doing the real battle, not the Israelites
- the Lord was to be their focus, rather than the ominous wall before them
- v. 4: *trumpets of rams' horns*: Heb: 'shophars of jubilee'; these shophars were specially blown at the onset of the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year
- why not use the silver trumpets of the tabernacle? silver was the metal that represented redemption; and that was not what was happening here
- the shophar was blown at the onset of the year of Jubilee, the 50th year when all debts were to be forgiven, and all land sold must revert back to the original family
- this was the right representation for what God was about to do for Israel
- in effect He was reclaiming His rightful property, the land of Canaan
- in his commentary on the Bible, Albert Barnes estimates that it would have taken around 90 minutes to encompass the city of Jericho
- the average walking speed of an adult is 3 mph; so a 90 minute march would equal a city circumference of around 4.5 miles
- thus on the seventh day, it would have taken over 10 non-stop hours to fulfill the command, marching a total of 31½ miles!
- after seven days they would have marched 13 times around the city, covering 58½ miles!
- it is fascinating to me that there is no mention of the warriors in Jericho shooting arrows at the Israelites as they marched around the city
- just for the record, how far would Israel have had to be from the wall to keep from being hit by any arrows?
- a modern bow and arrow shot at just below a 45* angle upward would travel between 300-500 yds.; probably shorter distance in those days
- but the text gives no indication that the warriors of Jericho shot anything at all
- it is right here where we see the importance of the armies of the Lord fighting the battle, not merely the people of Israel
- the warriors were not to have their swords drawn; they were just to march in formation once a day for six days, then seven times on the seventh day
- not all 600,000 men were a part of the standing army
- 600K were the men numbered from 20 years and older up to 59 or 60 years old, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb who were in their 80's

- the wall would have been the most dangerous place in Jericho
- if the wall of the city was going to fall down flat, what about Rahab's house?
- it would have been easy to spot where she lived because it would have been the only part of the wall standing
- but it was the scarlet cord hanging out her window that was her real salvation
- other Bible commentators believe that only major sections of the wall collapsed giving entry of the Israelites into the city
- the opposite wall remained intact to block the people of Jericho in their town
- but the text DOES say THE wall of the city will fall down flat, not one or two walls
- it could have been that the size of the Israeli army marching around the city completely encircled the city as they marched forward
- so THIS was the strategy for conquering Jericho; it was indeed the strangest, most unlikely strategy ever in the history of warfare
- but it was the Lord's strategy, not man's; because it was the Lord's battle

Zec 4:6 NKJV *So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.*

B. The Word of Joshua to the People (vv. 6-11)

- Joshua received from the Lord the vision of how this battle should be fought
- then he carefully communicated that vision to the leaders and the people
- this is so important to consider, for without that clear communication, it becomes a breeding ground for speculation, distrust, and confusion
- it is interesting to me that this was such an orderly march
- in the wilderness, God gave them organization as a nation; but they didn't mix it with faith and obedience
- here we have organization with faith and obedience; this always leads to victory
- v. 6: priests were never involved in the battle like this before; here they were to be in the middle of the procession
- v. 7: what about the warriors at the back of the section just in front of the seven priests blowing those shophars?
- v. 9: the rear guard was probably a small detachment of warriors that possibly kept the supplies
- v. 10: no noise at all, not a word until the end of the seventh day
- the text doesn't say if Joshua told the people about the wall falling down flat
- these were just the marching orders; the outcome needed to be committed unto the Lord
- these verses just give the general picture of what was done before the actual account is described in the following verses

II. THE SIMPLE OBEDIENCE VV. 12-27

A. The Six Days of Marching (vv. 12-14)

- although it only took maybe 90 minutes to encircle the city, Joshua rises early in the morning to follow through with simple obedience
- these were their first steps of faith in following the command of the Lord
- it must have been an exciting, adventurous, yet daunting action for all involved
- here was this unusual sight of all the warriors, the seven priests with their shophars making all this noise, the ark that followed and the rear guard
- what must have been going through the minds of the warriors of Jericho?
- here we see perseverance on the part of Joshua and Israel

- they were taking these steps of faith with no proof of any movement or sign that what they were doing was having any effect
- as they came back to the camp each day, I wonder what was being said in their tents and among the warriors
- one thing to consider: there was no visible movement that indicated victory during each of these first six days
- they were to hang on to the Word and be obedient until the final outcome

B. The Seventh Day (vv. 15-21)

- there would have been no time to communicate all this while marching
- v. 20: God gave them the city, but they still had to take it
- this reminds us that there are promises of victory that God gives us over those areas of our lives that plague us
- but we still have to put off those deeds and put on deeds of righteousness
- judgment fell upon the families of Jericho with their animals
- why were the animals to be slain? they were the property of these wicked people and the repercussions of the wickedness fell upon them
- what does it mean that the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction?
- this first town was like an offering of firstfruits to the Lord out of all of Canaan
- the warriors were not to take anything from the town as spoils
- the rest of the towns they would conquer could be counted as spoils
- this town was to be the firstfruits unto the Lord; the people of Israel were not to take anything to themselves
- it wasn't their voices that brought the wall down; it was their faith in the Lord

Heb 11:30 NKJV *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.*

C. The Saving of Rahab's Household (vv. 22-25)

- Joshua not only kept the promise, he had the same two spies personally go and rescue Rahab and her relatives
- why were they initially left outside the camp of Israel?
- later we see them integrated into the nation, receiving the God of Israel as their god, went through circumcision, and the required ceremonial rites

D. The Special Curse upon Jericho (vv. 26-27)

- 550 years later this prophecy came to pass

1Ki 16:34 NKJV *In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.*