

## SOME LESSONS FROM JERICHO

### Joshua 6

Tonight, I want to revisit a familiar account that those raised in the church probably heard early on – the fall of Jericho as recorded in Joshua 6ff.

#### I. The Account

- a. Background - Entering the land of Canaan. Israel had been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years as a result of punishment for their rebellion including a refusal to enter the land some 38 years earlier. Now, as they approach Canaan again, it seems they have learned their lesson. Moses has died and Joshua has become their leader. They have miraculously crossed over the Jordan river into the promised land. They have prepared themselves to follow God including keeping the Passover. Now it is time to begin conquering the land. 2 spies had been sent into the land and were hidden in the city by a woman named Rahab (Joshua 2), who also helped them escape. For her help, she was promised that she would be spared and was given specific instructions. The LORD gives Joshua instructions to begin with Jericho.
- b. The miraculous conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6:1ff). The LORD gives very peculiar instructions – march around the city silent each day for 6 days. Then on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, they were to march around the city 7 times. When they completed that, the priests were to blow their trumpets and the walls of the city would fall down. But they were also given further final instructions – all that was accursed was to be utterly destroyed - none spared (6:17), AND all the spoil of that city, because it was the first, belonged to the Lord (6:18-19).  
Israel obeyed and it happened just as had been promised by the LORD. They were given the city and spared Rahab and those with her (6:22-23)
- c. The conquest of Jericho is sometimes used as an analogy of our salvation – we find grace, faith and obedience all present. We will see this as we notice some lessons.

#### II. Some Lessons to Consider

- a. ***It was a gift from God.***
  - i. The city was a gift. Joshua 6:2, and vs. 16.
  - ii. This is true of our salvation. One of the ways our salvation is described is as a gift. Ephesians 2:8 – we are saved by grace... with grace being the unmerited (undeserved) favor of God. What this describes is God's part in our salvation – He does what we cannot do. An example – John 3:16 – God so loved the world that He GAVE His only begotten Son... Romans 6:23 tell us that eternal life is the gift of God.
- b. ***Gifts can come with conditions***
  - i. While God had given them the city, they were given specific instructions to receive that gift. Joshua 6:3-5. Israel was given very specific instructions to receive the city.
  - ii. We actually understand this in life.  
For example: Someone who wins a prize might have requirements to receive it. But that doesn't change the fact that it is a gift.  
One might offer to help you with a gift, such as paying off debts, but they place conditions upon that (you stay out of debt, etc.). The conditions have nothing to do with earning the money, but are simply requirements requested.
  - iii. Similarly, while our salvation is a gift, we are given specific instructions to receive it. God offers salvation to all, but He tells you WHAT you need to do to receive that gift –

Ephesians 2:8-9 – we are saved by grace THROUGH faith! Faith is our part!  
Consider John 1:12, as many as RECEIVED Him, to them He GAVE the right to become children of God, to those who BELIEVE in His name...

- iv. What has God required? We call it the plan of salvation. Mark 16:16, Romans 10:10, Acts 2:38, 22:16, etc. That is OUR part. When we obey God, He GIVES us what He promised!

**c. The nature of true faith**

- i. Hebrews 11:30 tells us that by faith the walls of Jericho fell after they were encircled for seven days.

NOTE that militarily, the instructions given were “foolish” (from man’s standpoint) given, but to receive the city, they had to BELIEVE God to follow His instructions.

- ii. That is the nature of TRUE faith. Faith, as we have defined it on many occasions, is about believing God (not merely believing IN God), and trusting Him, especially when we don’t understand everything.

This faith is understood by the numerous examples in Hebrews 11 – Noah believed and built an ark; Abraham believed and left his homeland not knowing where he was going because God told him to; When he got there, he continue to trust God over and over, never owning a piece of land, except for a burial plot for his wife Sarah and it is where he would be buried (along with others).

By faith, having received a promised son at 100 years of age, Abraham is ready to offer him as a sacrifice because God told him to – of course, God spared Isaac but in that He knew the greatness of Abraham’s faith.

We could go on, but time will not permit.

- iii. That is the type of faith we need – we will obey Him regardless of whether we understand or even agree with what He tells us to do. The fact that He gives us commands – we must obey them.

1 Peter 3:21 – why be baptized? Because He tells us to do so and we believe Him – the answer of a good conscience toward God.

And it continues to apply as children of God.

**d. The foolishness of God is wiser than men**

- i. 1 Corinthians 1:25 says this. Be careful when using that type of language. But it is what the text says. The text is dealing with the wisdom of man that rejects God. And the point is that God’s “foolishness” is greater than man’s greatest wisdom. It would do us well to remember that. Consider Isaiah 55:8-9, “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,*” says the Lord. “*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*”

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- iii. We see that demonstrated in the fall of Jericho. One might ask WHY did God give them the city that way? I may not know exactly why, but it DID instill faith in the people that God was with them.

- iv. Let us learn to be careful before we question God – Roman 9:20 warns us against this.

**e. We also see the power of God at work**

- i. What happened to the city was a miracle. There is no denying it was the hand of God. And I believe that was the point! YHWH wanted them to trust Him and know He could do for them what needed to be done. Prior to Israel crossing the Jordan to inherit the promised land, Moses said to them, “*Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to*

*heaven, a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you heard it said, 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?' Therefore understand today that the Lord your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the Lord has said to you. (Deuteronomy 9:1-3)*

- ii. A lesson we need to be reminded of is that God is in control. That is ever so true today as well in these troubling times.

With God all things are possible – Matthew 19:26 – as Jesus spoke about the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom of heaven.

When the LORD told Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:14 who at age 90 and barren that she was going to have a son. She laughed. And was lovingly rebuked - *Is there anything too hard for the LORD?*

Jeremiah 33:3 says, *"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"* (cf. Deuteronomy 9:1-3)

- iii. This is why we can trust Him. – God is "almighty God". Never forget that. As Paul said in Romans 8:31, "If God is for us, who can be against us."

**f. The Goodness and Severity of God**

- i. In the account of Jericho we see the goodness of God in giving them Israel as He did, and then we read of the sparing of Rahab who was blessed (mentioned for here faith and works in both Hebrews 11:31, James 2:25).
- ii. We also see His severity – sadly, Joshua 7 records a trespass committed in the taking of Jericho. A man named Achan coveted several items and took them and hid them (Joshua 7:1). The Lord was angry, and as a result they were defeated by a much smaller city called Ai. Recall that God had given specific instructions that all the spoils of Jericho belonged to Him. THAT MEANT ALL! Not some or most! There were severe consequences to disobeying God, some that others pay the price for.
- iii. WE must never forget as we read in Romans 11:22, *Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.*
- iv. This is just another lesson to be taken from the fall of Jericho.

And thus we can see some lessons from the taking of Jericho. It is an analogy we can compare to our relationship with God. God has done His part to make salvation available to us. Have we done our part? Are we giving God the honor and respect He deserves? Think about it!