

Joshua 6 - Thursday, April 5th, 2012

(1) Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. (2) And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, *and* the mighty men of valor. (3) You shall march around the city, all *you* men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. (4) And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.

- It's important to know right out of the shoot, that this is Jesus Himself that's giving Joshua his marching orders, literally, as it relates to Jericho.
- This will be germane to our understanding shortly by virtue of how this nonsensical battle plan actually, prophetically, paints a picture of Christ.
- Be that as it may, there's a couple of things that we need to take a closer look at here, before we go on, in order to fill in some of the blanks.

- First, notice how that Jericho, in anticipation of the coming of the Israelites, is on "high alert." In other words, this will not be a surprise attack.
- Not only will it not be a surprise attack, it won't really even be an attack. There really won't even be a battle, because the victory is already won.
- If you were to put a caption under this so-called "Battle of Jericho," it would have to be along the lines of; "When God Doesn't Make Sense."

(5) It shall come to pass, when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him." (6) Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." (7) And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD."

- Without exception, everything they're commanded to do in order to take Jericho, not only goes against logic and reason, it's against their law.
- It's against their law concerning the Sabbath, yet Jesus is commanding them to march on the seventh day when their not to do any work at all.
- Furthermore, the priests were not to enter into battle, yet here they are, and the Ark of the Covenant was never to be taken into battle, yet it is.

- Why? I believe that this was done in this way to teach them then, what the Lord wants to teach us now namely, to march by faith and not by site.
- If the truth be known, and we addressed this in part last week, the Israelites sort of had to trust God, by faith, to deliver Jericho into their hands.
- If you really think about it, the only thing they had in site, were impenetrable forty-five foot walls, which represented an impossibility to conquer.

- While this may answer that question, we still have the matter of God seemingly commanding them to do that which would be against His law.
- In order to reconcile this we must put the person of Jesus Christ in His rightful place at the helm of this battle as the commander of the Israelites.
- In so doing, we fulfill the law, but not do away with the law, in that the supremacy of Jesus Christ related to the law, is the fulfillment of the law.

- Jesus Christ is our Sabbath, Jesus Christ is our High Priest, and Jesus Christ is our Ark of the Covenant, thus Jesus Christ fulfills the law for us.
- This is both why it is, and how it is, that the Israelites are able to take the city of Jericho. Simply put, there is and was no other way to do it.
- So too is this true for us, the only way we'll ever drink from the cup of a fulfilling and victorious Christian life is when Jesus Christ is at the helm.

(8) So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. (9) The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. (10) Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout." (11) So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around *it* once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp. (12) And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. (13) Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. (14) And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days. (15) But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times.

- As I was reading, studying and preparing to teach this, I was struck by something very odd, and it's not how odd it is that the Israelites do this.
- By that I mean, its not so much what the Israelites do, it's what Jericho doesn't do. I find it odd that Jericho doesn't strike them as they march.
- They would have arguably been easy targets for a total of one week. So why didn't they try to kill them? The answer to this is that they feared.

- They were in such fear that they were paralyzed by that fear. The fact of the matter is that fear is paralyzing, and conversely faith is tantalizing.
- Let me explain, if faith is the antithesis of fear, and it is, then it stands to reason that so too would the results of faith also be the opposite of fear.
- Here's how I get there, by faith the walls of Jericho fell resulting in victory for Israel and by fear the walls fell, which resulted in defeat for Jericho.

Hebrews 11:30-31 NKJV By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. (31) By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

- There's another question that comes up in all of this, and it's one for which the answer reinforces how that by faith the walls of Jericho fell down.
- The question is; "why are they forbidden to shout or even make a noise, let alone speak a word while marching, until God said that they could?"
- Here's what I'm thinking; their faith was to be demonstrated in their deeds not their words in the sense that they were to put their faith to action.

- At the risk of sounding blunt and brash, they were to put their faith where their mouth was. Perhaps by now you see where I'm going with this.
- Faith without works is dead James writes, which means that unless we put feet to our faith and put our faith where our mouth is faith won't work.
- I'm of the belief that this only worked by the faith that was combined with the action of what they did by way of their deeds in lieu of their words.

Hebrews 4:2 NIV For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

K.P. Yohannan in his book "Living by Faith not by Sight" illustrated it beautifully this way; "...There's a chemistry to take place. For example, when hydrogen is mixed with oxygen in the presence of heat, a chemical reaction takes place and water is produced. Two separate elements, when combined, yield an entirely different result than if they were never mixed. This is true in life as well. There's a chemistry that needs to occur in our lives in what we see, hear and know being mixed with faith. You may have needs or promises from God, but if they are never mixed or combined with the element of faith, you will never see the reaction take place to bring those to fruition.

- I'm learning in my own life, that often times my seeking and praying can become an excuse for inaction. One called it the "analysis paralysis."
- If there's no combining or mixing with the element of faith that takes place, then I need look no further as to why it is nothing happens in my life.
- I think of Moses in a rather astonishing verse in Exodus 14:15-16, where God basically tells him to stop seeking and praying and get moving.

Exodus 14:15-16 NIV (15) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. (16) Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

- I would suggest, had Moses not done this, the Red Sea wouldn't have parted, and had Israel not done this, the walls wouldn't have come down.
- In order for God to have permission to do the miracle of drying up the sea, and crashing down the walls, they had to move, step, march by faith.
- It's been said God can't move a parked car, so get it in gear and get a move on! The story is told about an elderly lady who moved a parked car.

James 2:17 NIV In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:26 NIV As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Hebrews 6:10-12 NKJV (10) For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. (11) And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, (12) that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

(16) And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! (17) Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who *are* in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is how that Rahab, the prostitute was saved by faith, just as the spies had said.
- What's so interesting about this is not so much "that" she's saved, it's "how" she's saved, and maybe more importantly, "where" she's saved.
- Her house just so happened to be located close in proximity to the wall, and was actually part of the wall. This isn't a good place to be right now.

- I suppose you could say that of all the places to be, anywhere near the wall would be the most dangerous place of them all, yet Rahab is saved.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment as I share with you something that the Lord ministered to me as it relates to God saving Rahab.
- I believe this speaks to how it is that God is able to save anyone no matter where they're at, especially those loved ones in a dangerous place.

(18) And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. (19) But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

- There's something here that I need to point out before we move on. It's vital we know that God isn't arbitrarily giving Jericho to the Israelites.
- By that I mean, there is a just cause in doing so in that they had already become accursed in their demonic practices and idolatrous worship.
- In effect, they were already doomed in the sense that they had already sealed their fate as it were, and now God was meting out just judgment.

(20) So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

- This is what they call a miracle. Not only is there no explanation for it conspicuously absent from the narrative is their getting an explanation of it.
- Nowhere here-to-fore does Joshua tell the Israelites that after their shouting and blowing of the trumpets on the seventh day the wall would fall.
- This implies that the Israelites would've been just as shocked as the people of Jericho when those walls came a crashing down around them.

- Here's my point, sometimes, God may want to surprise us and do a miracle in a way in which we could have never thought or even imagined.
- You've got to know that the Israelites had to be wondering what they were going to do about those walls, which were forty-five feet in height.
- I almost imagine the Lord chuckling knowing that He is going to absolutely blow their minds with the incredible surprise He has in store for them.

(21) And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. (22) But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." (23) And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. (24)

But they burned the city and all that *was* in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. (25) And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. (26) Then Joshua charged *them* at that time, saying, "Cursed *be* the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates." (27) So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

- It's important to note that this was literally fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34. A man by the name of Hiel actually went against God and rebuilt Jericho.
- The problem is that in his laying of its foundation, and setting up of its gates with his firstborn and his youngest a curse came down upon him.
- The curse came by way of both his sons dying in the process. This teaches us that what God puts asunder let no man put back together.