

# Joshua 6 Commentary

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LAND ALLOTMENTS  
(Joshua 13-21)

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## JOSHUA A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS

CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND		DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND	CLOSE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE
ACTION		ALLOCATION	APPEAL
Josh 1:1-5:15	Josh 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:45	Josh 22:1-24:33

<b>WARLORDS IN CANAAN</b>		<b>LANDLORDS IN CANAAN</b>	
<b>ENTERING CANAAN</b>	<b>CONQUERING CANAAN</b>	<b>DIVIDING CANAAN</b>	
<b>SECURING THE LAND</b>		<b>SETTLING THE LAND</b>	
<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Conquest</b>	<b>Possession</b>	<b>Consecration</b>
<b>ca. 1 Month</b>	<b>ca 7 Years</b>	<b>ca. 18 Years</b>	

[See also more detailed Chart by Charles R Swindoll!](#)

**Joshua 6:1 Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in.**

- **tightly shut**, Jos 2:7 2Ki 17:4
- **because**: Jos 2:9-14,24 Ps 127:1
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Joshua 2:7 So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords; and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, **they shut the gate.**

Proposed Plan of Ancient Jericho ([see note](#))

**JOSHUA SEES  
JERICHO SHUT TIGHT**

Having just conquered one **obstacle** of an uncrossable river, now commander Joshua sees another significant **obstacle** of a seemingly impenetrable city.

**THOUGHT** - As an aside, is this not a picture of most of our lives? We seem to go from one obstacle to another. What's your "Jericho" as you study this chapter? Israel could not simply bypass Jericho for this obstacle had to be conquered before they could make progress in the land. They could not leave an unconquered stronghold. Similarly, believers must conquer their "Jericho" or further progress in the Christian life is virtually impossible. In describing the believer's warfare Paul describes our need to be "pulling down strongholds." (2Co 10:3-5KJV+). We need to learn to see our obstacles as opportunities to experience the power of Christ in our life as Paul did in 2Co 12:9-10+.

**Now** - In context of previous verses Joshua 5:13-15, this introduces a statement that in effect functions like a parenthesis, which separates the conversation between the Captain and Joshua in Joshua 5 and Joshua 6:2. You might take a moment to observe the overview charts above to help see that we are now entering into a new section for Joshua 1:5 has to do with "**Entering Canaan**" and Joshua 6-12 deals with "**Conquering Canaan**" which will take Israel about 7 years, first conquering the central area, then the southern area and finally the northern territory.

<b>CHAPTER 1-5</b>	<b>CHAPTER 6-12</b>
<b>ENTERING CANAAN</b>	<b>CONQUERING CANAAN</b>
<b>GET RIGHT</b>	<b>BEFORE YOU FIGHT!</b>

**Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in** Young's Literal - "And Jericho **shutteth** itself up, and is **shut** up". **Tightly shut up** in Hebrew is the verb **cagar** which is repeated twice for emphasis ([see note below](#)). A. W. Pink says this repetition "is an expressive emphasis in the Hebrew like..."in blessing I will bless thee" (Ge 22:17)". The fact that Jericho is tightly shut emphasizes the difficulty of the obstacle that was facing Israel. Based on conventional warfare wisdom, Jericho was not a "pushover."

**Alan Carr** adds - Jericho is known as the oldest city in the world, in Joshua's day, it was surrounded by a system of two massive stone walls. The outer wall was 6 ft. thick and about 20 ft. high. The inner wall was about 12 ft. thick and was 30 ft. high. Between the walls was a guarded walkway about 15 ft. wide. Israel's problem was that they had a city to conquer, but there were some extremely huge walls in the way. As we go through life, we have obstacles that we face as well. ([How To Make Your Walls Fall Down Flat](#))

As Rahab had explained to the two spies, "the terror of (Israel) has fallen on us" (Joshua 2:9) and this was even before they had crossed the Jordan River, which would have increased their fear for now the raging river was no protection for Jericho! Fear prompted the city to close the gates so that they might be safe behind their fortified walls (and as shown in the depiction above archaeology suggests Jericho actually had a double set of walls). The kingdom of **Og** had "cities fortified with **high walls**, gates and bars" (Dt 3:4-5+) but they were "utterly destroyed" even as were the cities in the kingdom of Sihon (Dt 3:6+). And Jericho knew of the fate of **Sihon** and **Og** (Josh 2:10+), which had contributed to their initial terror.

**NIV Study Note on Jericho** - Modern Tell es-Sultan ([see map](#)). Archaeological excavations have revealed that Jericho may have been the first site of village settlement in Canaan and one of the oldest cities in the world. (People who moved about and lived by hunting and gathering had been present in the area for thousands of years.) The earliest settled occupation dates from c. 7000 BC. By Joshua's day, more than two dozen cities had already been built and destroyed on the site, one above the other, over a period of more than 5,000 years. Many of them had powerful double walls. Jericho may have been a center for the worship of the moon god (cf Ge 11:31). Jericho probably means "moon city." If so, God was destroying not only Canaanite cities but also Canaanite religion.

To Joshua's eyes the tightly shut city and fortified walls presented an obstacle even as the raging river had presented an obstacle. At this point Joshua did not know how Jericho was to be conquered. But soon both Joshua and the city of Jericho would discover that high walls and shut gates are no match for the **Most High God (El Elyon - Sovereign Over All)**! [See the map of the military campaigns](#) above and note that campaign #1 includes **Jericho** and then into central Palestine. So clearly **Jericho** was a strategic city if Israel was to conquer the central kingdoms.

Keep the context in mind remembering the poor chapter break. Joshua with his sandals removed is on holy ground before the Holy One (Joshua 5:15+), in need of hearing His "military plan" to conquer Jericho. Clearly, a victory by Israel over this strategic stronghold would serve as a confidence (faith) building demonstration to Joshua and his army that the LORD was with them and that their enemies could be conquered.

**Tightly shut (cagar cagar)** is translated in the Septuagint with the verb **sugkleio** from **sun/syn** = together + **kleio** = to shut up, enclose) means literally to shut up or enclose together on all sides (there is "no escape"). The idea is to shut up securely, enclosing on all sides with no way of escape, as with fish "shut up" in a net (in Lk 5:6± = "they enclosed a great quantity of fish"), i.e., completely and without the possibility of escape. Also used in Gal 3:22+ to describe one of the important functions of the Law (not to save but to shut up and show the need for salvation!)

**Woudstra** - The purpose of this verse is to describe the seemingly hopeless situation confronting Israel, a people unskilled in the kind of warfare that was now required. Thus the miracle of God's giving of the city would stand out all the more clearly. ([The Book of Joshua The New International Commentary on the OT](#))

**Paul Enns** - From a human standpoint, the conquest of Jericho was impossible. The Lord had previously indicated He would lead them in battle (Deut. 9:1-6; 12 : 29; 18:9-14; Josh . 5 : 13-15), and that now became essential if Jericho was to be conquered. Jericho's defense was formidable.

**William Newell** - Jericho, "the fragrant place," represents our spiritual enemies as entrenched in that which is sweet and dear to the natural heart of man. Its fall before Israel is the first step in the conquest of the land of inheritance. Spiritually, its fall signified to us the utter wreck nature and the world become in the eye of the soul that has accepted for itself its position as "over Jordan"--dead and buried with Christ, and raised up with

**Matthew Henry Concise Commentary** - Verses 1-5. Jericho resolves Israel shall not be its master. It shut itself up, being strongly fortified both by art and nature. Thus were they foolish, and their hearts hardened to their destruction; the miserable case of all that strengthen themselves against the Almighty. God resolves Israel shall be its master, and that quickly. No warlike preparations were to be made. By the uncommon method of besieging the city, the Lord honoured the ark, as the symbol of his presence, and showed that all the victories were from him. The faith and patience of the people were proved and increased.

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**Shut up (05462) (cagar/sagar)** means 1) to shut, close 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to shut 1a2) to close, close up 1a3) closed up, closely joined, shut up 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to be shut up 1b2) to be shut or closed 1c) (Piel) to shut up, deliver up 1d) (Pual) to be shut up 1e) (Hiphil) 1e1) to deliver up 1e2) to shut up, imprison. This verb means "to close, to shut up; to stop: to close up a hole in one's flesh (Gen. 2:21); to shut, to close a door, etc. (Gen. 7:16; 19:6, 10); to shut, enclose something, e.g., Israel in the wilderness terrain (Ex. 14:3); to close the womb from being fertile (1 Sam. 1:5). In its passive uses, it means to be shut, shut up, closed (Num. 12:14, 15; Josh. 6:1; 1 Sam. 23:7; Neh. 13:19; Eccl. 12:4). In its intensive and causative stems, it means to enclose, to deliver over to someone or something (1 Sam. 17:46; 24:18[19]); to give into another's authority or power (Deut. 23:15[16]; 1 Sam. 23:11; Amos 1:6; Obad. 1:14). It is used of things tightly fitted together, closed in on each other (Job 41:15[7])." **Cagar is also a** "A masculine noun meaning the finest gold, pure gold. It was used for overlaying (1 Kgs. 6:20); for Temple furniture (1 Kgs. 7:49, 50); Temple vessels (1 Kgs. 10:21). It was especially valuable and used in wise comparisons (Job 28:15)." ([The Complete Word Study Old Testament](#))

**R D Patterson** - The primary meaning of the root, found in the basic stem, is also known in Ugaritic, Biblical Aramaic, and Ethiopic. The ideas "deliver up," "hand over," "abandon," found in the derived stems, are known in other West Semitic dialects (e.g. Syriac, Phoenician). The root has been related to Akkadian *sekēru* "stop," "dam up," "shut up/off," a word found

with similar meanings also in Hebrew. While J. V. K. Wilson (“Hebrew and Akkadian Philological Notes,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 7:179–80) may be right in insisting that the East Semitic skr “dam up” is to be separated from West Semitic sgr “close up,” it is interesting to note that in ancient Aramaic skr carries a similar range of meanings to Hebrew sgr and that Arabic sakara can be used both of shutting doors and damming streams. This root is to be distinguished from another sgr known in Arabic and lying behind the Hebrew sagrîr “steady rain.”

The root sgr is often employed for the act of shutting doors or gates (e.g. Gen 19:6, 10; Josh 6:1) or closing up a breach in a wall (I Kgs 11:27). It also has many specialized uses. Thus, the shutting of the womb pictures non-conception (I Sam 1:5–6; cf. Job 3:10). At times, it can portray a hostile, arrogant, greedy, or indifferent attitude. The Psalmist (Ps 17:10) prays for deliverance from his enemies whose insensitivity has shut them up to an arrogance that is bent on the destruction of others.

An individual or group of people can be shut up to unfortunate circumstances. For example, Saul believes that David has shut himself up within the easily besieged Judean town of Keilah (I Sam 23:7). The root then depicts the conditions or result of a siege (Isa 24:10; Jer 13:19).

The derived stems carry the idea of shutting someone or something into the hand of someone/ thing else (I Sam 23:20; Ps 78:48, 50). Even God’s own can, because of sin, be delivered over to the enemy (Ps 78:62; Lam 2:7; Amos 6:8).

The word is utilized in contexts which make it clear that God himself is in sovereign control of the circumstances of life (Job 11:10; 12:14), guiding the events of history (Isa 45:1) to their proper end, when his enemies will be judged (Isa 24:22) and a glorified and prosperous Zion will stand serenely secure with unclosed gates.

Accordingly, men ought to shut themselves up to God’s will and plan for their lives (Isa 26:20; Ezk 3:24). [Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament TWOT](#)

**Cagar/sagar** - 88v - battle-axe(1), close(2), closed(9), confined(1), deliver(5), delivered(6), gave over(2), given(1), given over(1), hand over(1), hands over(1), imprison(1), imprisons(1), isolate(7), locked(1), pure(9), quarantine(3), quarantined(1), shut(31), shuts(2), surrender(4), tightly shut(1). Gen. 2:21; Gen. 7:16; Gen. 19:6; Gen. 19:10; Exod. 14:3; Lev. 13:4; Lev. 13:5; Lev. 13:11; Lev. 13:21; Lev. 13:26; Lev. 13:31; Lev. 13:33; Lev. 13:50; Lev. 13:54; Lev. 14:38; Lev. 14:46; Num. 12:14; Num. 12:15; Deut. 23:15; Deut. 32:30; Jos. 2:5; Jos. 2:7; Jos. 6:1; Jos. 20:5; Jdg. 3:22; Jdg. 3:23; Jdg. 9:51; 1 Sam. 1:5; 1 Sam. 1:6; 1 Sam. 17:46; 1 Sam. 23:7; 1 Sam. 23:11; 1 Sam. 23:12; 1 Sam. 23:20; 1 Sam. 24:18; 1 Sam. 26:8; 1 Sam. 30:15; 2 Sam. 18:28; 1 Ki. 6:20; 1 Ki. 6:21; 1 Ki. 7:49; 1 Ki. 7:50; 1 Ki. 10:21; 1 Ki. 11:27; 2 Ki. 4:4; 2 Ki. 4:5; 2 Ki. 4:21; 2 Ki. 4:33; 2 Ki. 6:32; 2 Chr. 4:20; 2 Chr. 4:22; 2 Chr. 9:20; 2 Chr. 28:24; 2 Chr. 29:7; Neh. 6:10; Neh. 13:19; Job 3:10; Job 11:10; Job 12:14; Job 16:11; Job 28:15; Job 41:15; Ps. 17:10; Ps. 31:8; Ps. 35:3; Ps. 78:48; Ps. 78:50; Ps. 78:62; Eccl. 12:4; Isa. 22:22; Isa. 24:10; Isa. 24:22; Isa. 26:20; Isa. 45:1; Isa. 60:11; Jer. 13:19; Lam. 2:7; Ezek. 3:24; Ezek. 44:1; Ezek. 44:2; Ezek. 46:1; Ezek. 46:2; Ezek. 46:12; Amos 1:6; Amos 1:9; Amos 6:8; Obad. 1:14; Mal. 1:10

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

We fully assent to the remark of Dr. Adam Clarke, that there is scarcely a more unfortunate division of chapters in the whole Bible than here. According to the present arrangement, the reader is greatly at a loss to know what is intended by this extraordinary appearance of the Son of God, as it would seem that the whole account of his visit is closed with the foregoing chapter, whereas in fact it is continued in the present. The first verse of ch. 6, is a mere parenthesis, relating the state of Jericho at the time Joshua was favored by this encouraging vision. The thread of the narrative respecting this Divine personage, commenced in the preceding chapter, is then resumed, and continued to v. 5.

**1. Now Jericho was straitly shut up.** Strictly, closely shut up. Heb. סגרת ומסגרת sogereth u-mesugereth, did shut up and was shut up, or closing and was closed. The original expression is peculiar and emphatic, and was doubtless designed to imply the extreme care and vigilance with which the gates had been closed and were watched, not only by night, as when the spies came, ch. 2:5, but also by day. Accordingly the Chal. renders it, ‘And Jericho was shut up with iron doors and fortified with brazen bolts, so that none came out either to combat or to make offers of peace.’ The language also intimates, that the city was not only effectually shut up and made secure from within, but was also so closely blockaded by the Israelites from without, that there was no going out or coming in even to its own citizens.

Because of the children of Israel. ‘Methinks I see how they called their council of war, debated of all means of defence, gathered their forces, trained their soldiers, set strong guards to the gates and walls; and now would persuade one another that unless Israel could fly into their city, the siege was vain. (So) vain worldlings think their ramparts and barricadoes can keep out the vengeance of God; their blindness suffers them to look no further than the means; the supreme hand of the Almighty comes not within the compass of their fears. Every carnal heart is a Jericho shut up; God sits down before it, and displays mercy and judgment in sight of the walls thereof: it hardens itself in a wilful security, and saith, “Aha, I shall never be moved.”’ Bp. Hall.

**Warren Wiersbe** introduces Joshua 6 - You are but a poor soldier of Christ if you think you can overcome without fighting, and suppose you can have the crown without the conflict.”

The courageous Syrian preacher and martyr John Chrysostom (347–407) said that, and he was right; for the Christian life involves challenge and conflict whether we like it or not. Our enemies are constantly waging war against us and trying to keep us from claiming our inheritance in Jesus Christ. The world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1–3) are united against Christ and His people just as the nations in Canaan were united against Joshua and the Jewish nation.

It's unfortunate that many of the "militant songs" of the church have been removed from some hymnals, apparently because the idea of warfare disturbs people and seems to contradict the words and works of Jesus Christ. But these zealous editors with scissors seem to have forgotten that the main theme of the Bible is God's holy warfare against Satan and sin. In Genesis 3:15, God declared war on Satan, and one day He will declare the victory when Jesus comes as Conqueror to establish His kingdom (Rev. 19:11–21). If you eliminate the militant side of the Christian faith, then you must abandon the cross; for it was on the cross that Jesus won the victory over sin and Satan (Col. 2:13–15).

A pastor attended a court hearing to protest the building of a tavern near his church and a public school. The lawyer for the tavern owners said to him, "I'm surprised to see you here today, Reverend. As a shepherd, shouldn't you be out taking care of the sheep?"

The pastor replied, "Today I'm fighting the wolf!"

Too many Christians cultivate only a sentimental emphasis on "peace and goodwill" and ignore the spiritual battle against sin; and this means they've already lost the victory and are working for the enemy. We must never forget Paul's warning about the savage wolves that are ready to destroy the flock (Acts 20:28–29).

The Christian's warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against enemies in the spiritual realm (Eph. 6:10–18); and the weapons we use are spiritual (2 Cor. 10:3–6). Satan and his demonic armies use people to oppose and attack the church of God; and if we don't take our stand with Christ, we've already lost the battle. In the army of Jesus Christ there can be no neutrality. "He that is not with Me is against Me," said Jesus; and He spoke those words in the context of spiritual warfare (Matt. 12:24–30). Since the Apostle Paul often used the military image to describe the Christian life, we dare not ignore the subject (Eph. 6:10ff; 2 Tim. 2:1–4; Rom. 13:12; 1 Thes. 5:8).

Israel's victory at Jericho illustrates three principles of spiritual conflict and victory applicable to our lives today, no matter what challenges we may be called to confront.

1. Before the challenge: remember that you fight from victory, not just for victory (Josh. 6:1–5)
2. During the challenge: Remember that you overcome the enemy by faith (Josh. 6:6–16, 20)
3. After the victory: Remember to obey God's commands and give Him the glory (Josh. 6:17–19, 21–27) [Be Strong -- Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#)

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### **Rod Mattoon - There are three stages of a Christian's life.**

1. The Christian living in the bondage of worldliness as Israel was in bondage in Egypt.
  2. The selfish, carnal, Christian wandering in the wilderness.
  3. The productive Christian living in victory and conquering the enemy of his or her soul. This is where we find God's people in Joshua 6.... conquering, obedient, possessing God's blessings, and victorious.
- J. Hudson Taylor stated there are three different ways to serve the Lord!

1. Make the best plans we can and hope they succeed.
2. Make our own plans and ask God to bless them.
3. Ask God for His plan and do what He tells us to do.

In chapter six we find Joshua getting God's plan and doing what He says to do! This chapter demonstrates again that God uses foolish things to confound the mighty.

- \* With Gideon, He used torches and pitchers.
- \* With David, He used a sling and a stone.
- \* With Joshua, He used trumpets and a shout.

Beloved, there are three degrees of faith.

- \* Reposing Faith ... it rests upon the Gospel of Christ.
- \* Reckoning Faith ... it counts upon God's promises.
- \* Risking Faith ... it dares to do something for the Lord.

The book of Joshua is about these three degrees of faith as God's people rest upon God's Word, count on God's promises, and dare to do great things for God because they believe and obey His Word. God's people have dedicated themselves to serve God and "Boom," they were immediately confronted with a Jericho. If you dedicate yourself to be what Christ wants you to be, you are going to be faced with many Jericho's in your life. You will face....

- \* the Jericho of popularity with the world.
- \* the Jericho of sinful habits that need to be conquered.
- \* the Jericho of materialism and greed as money becomes the basis of your decisions instead of the will of God.
- \* the Jericho of paganism and persecution.
- \* the Jericho of apathy and indifference. The “I Don’t Care” attitude must be defeated.
- \* the Jericho of carnal Christians that might mislead or discourage you must be beaten.

Victory in the Christian life involves conquering these Jericho's! Israel could not leave Jericho in its rear. They had to confront it and conquer it. We must do the same with that which would hinder us. ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

**Bob Utley** has an interesting technical note -here is a distinct literary feature used throughout Joshua. Joshua regularly uses the same VERB twice, mentioned once and then acted on Notice the number of double VERBALS of the same root in this chapter. This is a characteristic of Joshua.

1. “tightly shut,” v. 1, , Qal PERFECT and Pual PARTICIPLE
2. “take up,” v. 6, Qal IMPERATIVE and Qal IMPERFECT
3. “blew,” v. 8, , Qal PERFECT and Qal PARTICIPLE
4. “walk,” v. 9, Qal PARTICIPLE and Qal INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE
5. “shout,” v. 10, Hiphil IMPERATIVE and Hiphil PERFECT
6. “took up,” vv. 12–13, , Qal IMPERFECT and Qal PARTICIPLE
7. “went,” v. 13, Qal PARTICIPLE and Qal INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE (twice)
8. “brought out,” v. 23, Hiphil IMPERFECT and Hiphil PERFECT
9. “was,” v. 27, BDB 224, Qal IMPERFECT and Qal IMPERFECT

This kind of repetition is common throughout the book.

Some years ago a spiritual became very popular with young children at summer camps and during Vacation Bible School. It was Joshua Fit[] de Battle of Jericho. The song went like this:

Joshua fit de battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho,  
 Joshua fit de battle of Jericho  
 and de walls came tumbling down....

Up to de walls of Jericho  
 He marched with spear in hand,  
 Go blow dem ram-horn,” Joshua cried,  
 “Cause de battle is in my hand.”

Then de lamp-ram sheep-horn begin to blow,  
 Trumpets begin to sound,  
 Joshua commanded de children to shout  
 and de walls came tumbling down....  
 Anonymous.

### **VICTORY AT JERICHO Joshua 6:1–27**

God wants man to put his faith into action. Trusting God to crumble the walls of Jericho seemed foolish, nevertheless, God would do it in answer to faith. Sometimes God uses the foolish things—1 Corinthians 1:18–27.

1. THE COMMAND—vv. 1–5
2. THE CONSECRATION—vv. 6–15
3. THE CRUMBLING CITY—vv. 16–27

Obedience to God’s commands always brings victory. When we obey His commands, we can expect Him to answer our prayers. Disobedience has no place in the life of a Christian.

### **Joshua 6 Believing God**

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.... Hebrews 11:30

In the story about Joshua and the city of Jericho, we have a most vivid illustration of faith. God commanded Joshua to gather all the men of war and have them march around Jericho once a day for six days. Then, on the seventh day, they were to compass the city seven times, after which the priests were to blow with the trumpets and all the people were to shout with a great shout. The Lord promised Joshua that if they did this, the walls of the city would fall down flat.

Have you ever tried to put yourself in Joshua's place, and imagine how you would have reacted to such a command? When the Lord gave him these instructions, do you suppose Joshua responded:

"Lord, that's a reasonable thing to do. In fact, I'm rather ashamed of myself that I didn't devise such a brilliant plan in the first place. It really makes a lot of sense."

Of course, he said nothing of the kind, simply because God's command was not a "reasonable" one to Joshua's mind. That is, he couldn't take out his "slide rule" and calculate scientifically that the predicted results would necessarily follow such actions. And yet, even though some would have ruled it an insane plan thus to attempt the conquest of Jericho, **Joshua obeyed God anyway, simply because he had faith!**

Yes, he was willing to rely on the word of the Lord, despite the fact that it seemed contrary to his own understanding of things.

That's what God expects of us today. He wants us to believe His Word — to accept the Bible record in its entirety — whether we can comprehend it or not. There is much in the Book we cannot explain: for example, the Trinity, the virgin birth, Christ's substitutionary death, His resurrection, and His coming again; yet we believe these things with all our heart just because God says so! Remember, without such faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### **Norman Geisler -JOSHUA 6:1ff—Hasn't archaeology shown that the account of the conquest of Jericho is inaccurate?**

**PROBLEM:** Joshua 6 records the conquest and destruction of the city of Jericho. If this account is accurate, it would seem that modern archaeological excavations would have turned up evidence of this monumental event. However, haven't these investigations proven that the account in Joshua is inaccurate?

**SOLUTION:** For many years the prevailing view of critical scholars has been that there was no city of Jericho at the time Joshua was supposed to have entered Canaan. Although earlier investigations by the notable British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon confirmed the existence of the ancient city of Jericho, and its sudden destruction, her findings led her to conclude that the city could have existed no later than ca. 1550 B.C. This date is much too early for Joshua and the children of Israel to have been party to its demise.

However, recent reexamination of these earlier findings, and a closer look at current evidence indicates that not only was there a city that fits the biblical chronology, but that its remains coincide with the biblical account of the destruction of this walled fortress. In a paper published in *Biblical Archaeology Review* (March/April, 1990), Bryant G. Wood, visiting professor to the department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Toronto, has presented evidence that the biblical report is accurate. His detailed investigation has yielded the following conclusions:

1. That the city which once existed on this site was strongly fortified, corresponding to the biblical record in Joshua 2:5, 7, 15; 6:5, 20.
2. That the ruins give evidence that the city was attacked after harvesttime in the spring, corresponding to Joshua 2:6, 3:15, 5:10.
3. That the inhabitants did not have the opportunity to flee with their foodstuffs from the invading army, as reported in Joshua 6:1.
4. That the siege was short, not allowing the inhabitants to consume the food which was stored in the city, as Joshua 6:15 indicates.
5. That the walls were leveled in such a way to provide access into the city for the invaders, as Joshua 6:20 records.
6. That the city was not plundered by the invaders, according to God's instructions in Joshua 6:17–18.
7. That the city was burned after the walls had been destroyed, just as Joshua 6:24 says. ([When Critics Ask](#))

### **Joshua 6:2 The LORD said to Joshua, 'See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors.**

- **The LORD** Jos 5:13-15
- **I have:** Jos 6:9-24 2:9,24 8:1 11:6-8 Jdg 11:21 2Sa 5:19 Ne 9:24 Da 2:21,44 Da 4:17,35 5:18
- **king:** De 7:24 Jdg 11:24
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **Related Passage:**

Joshua 5:13-15+ (**THIS MEETING OF JOSHUA AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE HOSTS CONTINUES**) Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" 14 He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" 15 The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

Deuteronomy 7:24 "He will deliver their kings into your hand so that you will make their name perish from under

heaven; no man will be able to stand before you until you have destroyed them.

## THE GIFT OF JERICO IS "A DONE DEAL!"

**The LORD said to Joshua** - The chapter break prevents one from readily discerning this is still the **Captain of the LORD'S host** Who is addressing Joshua. (see Joshua 5:15+). Some argue that is not the same person as in the previous chapter, but that highly unlikely for clearly Joshua had perceived the One in chapter 5 as worthy of worship and reverence because he was on holy ground.

**See** - The captain of the LORD'S host gives a command to Joshua to open his eyes, really the "eyes of his heart," to consider, perceive and understand. The Septuagint translates **see** with **idou** which is a command to "**Behold**" emphasizes the great importance of what He is about to relate. What did Joshua see at Jericho? A heavily fortified city! God was telling Joshua to look by faith, not by sight (cf 2Co 5:7+). And the following promise (cf Ro 10:17+) would give Joshua the assurance to see the invisible (cf 2Co 4:18+).

**I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors**- Notice first the past tense **I have given!** Strictly speaking it is a prophetic perfect tense. Victory was assured. (cf Ro 8:30+ where Paul says believers have been glorified so sure is that future event). This is not even an "I will give" but is so sure of coming to pass that it is as good as done! In a sense, the battle was over before it was started! And notice also that this declaration also addresses Joshua's original question "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" (Josh 5:13+) It is now clear that He is for Israel. To be given into one's **hand (yad)** was a figurative way of saying Jericho had been given over to the power and authority of Israel, for **hand (yad)** in Hebrew often depicted power (cf [The Hand of the Lord](#)). In addition the phrase **given...into** is translated in the Septuagint with **paradidomi** which means to give one over into the power of another (cf Jesus in Mt 26:2, Jn 19:11). The Canaanites were well-equipped and well-trained and **valiant (gibbor)** - root commonly associated w warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior) **warriors** (basic meaning = Might, strength, power, able, valiant) but their human prowess was not to intimidate Joshua or his forces, for they had God's "prowess" (power) at their side (cf Yahweh's promise in Joshua 1:5+ "I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.")

**THOUGHT** - This remains the pattern of spiritual conflict for the believer. It is a conflict in which faith is essential to lay hold of the promises of the Lord in spite of the evidence of the eye. The obstacles can be great and the enemies strong, but the believer can know victory and progress in spiritual experience when strength and succour are drawn from the Lord. When the apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians about spiritual conflict, he encouraged the believers to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph 6:10). (Stephen Grant - [What the Bible Teaches - Joshua](#))

In Joshua 6:2 we see the LORD's announcement of the gift and in Joshua 6:3-5 we see the process of acquisition. In this section we see again the immutable principle of the juxtaposition of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. God's sovereign gift had to be received by faith, but faith demonstrates it is genuine by its works.

**Cyril Barber** - True faith trusts God implicitly. The Lord did not say "I shall give Jericho into your hand," but "I have given it into your hand." He not only will do it, but as far as He is concerned it is as good as done. The outcome is sure. Our obedience is all that is required to make this promise a reality. ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

**Wiersbe** - When we accept God's plan, we invite God's presence; and that guarantees victory. (See Ex. 33:12-17.)... It's important that leaders receive their orders from the Lord and that those who follow them obey their instructions. As with the crossing of the Jordan River, so also the conquest of Jericho was a miracle of faith. Joshua and his people listened to God's orders, believed them, and obeyed; and God did the rest. When God's people rebel against spiritual leadership, as Israel often did in the wilderness, it leads to discipline and defeat. ([Be Strong -- Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

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### Related Resources:

- [Angel of the LORD](#) - Discussion of Theophanies in the Old Testament
- [The Hand of the Lord](#)

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**2. And the Lord said unto Joshua.** That is, after Joshua had loosed his shoes from off his feet, as commanded above, Joshua 5:15. He who was before called the 'Captain of the Lord's host,' is here called 'Lord,' or 'Jehovah,' thus clearly proving that it was a Divine personage; for who else could promise and perform what follows?

**I have given into thy hand Jericho.** Not I will do it, but **I have** done it; it is all thine own, as surely as if it were even now in thy possession.

**And the mighty men of valor.** The copulative 'and' does not occur here in the Hebrew. The proper rendering is, 'I have given into thy hand Jericho and the king thereof, (who are, or, although they are) mighty men of valor,' i. e. **experienced and powerful warriors, men with whom, if you were to contend on ordinary terms, you would be unable to cope, but whom, through my assistance, you shall utterly overthrow.** A city, in Scripture style, is often taken, not for a collection of houses and walls, but for the inhabitants, an assemblage of people dwelling together in a corporate capacity. The same

distinction holds between the Latin *urbs* and *civitas*. By Jericho and its king, is here meant the inhabitants and their king, and they are spoken of collectively as mighty men of valor.'

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**Alan Carr** applies this passage to the Christian life - As we face our obstacles, whatever they may be we can do so with confidence, because we have the Lord's promises as banners to march under:

1. We Have His Promise That Our Weapons Are Powerful Through God—2 Cor. 10:4–5.
2. We Have His Promise That Our Battles Have All Been Arranged By The Lord—Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 4:17.
3. We Have His Promise That Our Ability Is Limited Only By Our Faith—Phil. 4:13; Eph. 3:20.
4. We Have His Promise Of Power In The Day Of Battle—Eph. 6:10.
5. We Have His Promise Of Ongoing Victory—1 Cor. 15:57.
6. We Have His Promise That We Will Never Fight Alone—Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20.
7. We Have His Promise That When The Battles Are Ended, We will Celebrate The Victory In His Presence—John 14:1–3.

C. As we face the walled cities in our lives, we need to learn to believe the Lord, to take Him at His Word and trust Him for our victories! (Rom. 4:21; 2 Cor. 1:20)

I Jesus did not save you for you to be defeated! He saved you for the victory and He will be there all the way to help you secure it for His glory! Will there be trials? But, there will also be victory—Luke 22:31–32.) ([How To Make Your Walls Fall Down Flat](#))

**Joshua 6:3 "You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days.**

- ye shall: Jos 6:7,14 Nu 14:9 1Co 1:21-25 2Co 4:7
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PRELIMINARY PREPARATION  
FOR PLUNDERING PAGANS!

Notice that in Joshua 6:2 God says "I have given" indicating His sovereignty but here the focus is on Joshua's responsibility.

**You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days** These are quite likely the strangest [marching orders](#) in the history of military warfare, although [Gideon's instructions](#) come close (see Jdg 7:1-25+). Now think about this for a moment. On one hand put yourself inside the walls and what must have been going through the heads of the pagans. Initially they would have been puzzled which probably gave way to ridicule but after six days of silent marching they would be becoming fearful. On the other hand imagine six days of round and round and round and each time the walls are not getting any smaller. **It is as if the LORD is giving them a living illustration of walking by faith, not by sight. Faith obeys the LORD in spite of the consequences** (in this case nothing happening to Jericho). This reminds us of the nation camping at the eastern edge of the raging Jordan to get a good sense of how humanly impossible crossing would be. Similarly the obstacle of the high walls gives the soldiers plenty of time to ponder how humanly impossible it would be to take this city.

**THOUGHT** - Has God allowed (or sent) some "obstacle" (trial, difficulty, etc) into your life? Does it seem like it will be humanly impossible to overcome? While God may not remove the obstacle, He will provide a way of escape that you may be able to endure the obstacle/trial. (see 1Cor 10:13+). The purpose of the obstacle/trial is not to make you bitter but to make you better (see 1Pe 1:6+, James 1:2-4+).

The LORD's unusual instructions remind us of His words in Isaiah 55:8-9...

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares 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.

Based on archaeological findings the city of Jericho was only about 8.5-9 acres which would take approximately 20-30 minutes to march around.

**John Davis** - To say the least, the battle plan revealed to Joshua was most unusual. It was indeed an act of faith on the part of Joshua to propose such a plan to the seasoned generals representing the various tribes. There is no evidence of rebellion to the plan as presented by Joshua, however. This probably indicates the commitment of the military leaders under Joshua to the Lord. The march around the walls was to be characterized by silence (6:10) except for blowing of the rams' horns (6:8)....The march around the city in military formation, yet without any attempt to attack, must have sent "the Jericho commission on defense" into a number of special late evening sessions!

From this strange strategy for sacking Jericho, Joshua had to believe that it was God who was in control of this battle which reminds me of the song by **Twila Paris** - [God is in Control](#)

This is no time for fear  
This is a time for faith and determination  
Don't lose the vision here  
Carried away by emotion  
Hold on to all that you hide in your heart  
There is one thing that has always been true

It holds the world together

[God is in Control](#)

We believe that His children will not be forsaken

[God is in Control](#)

We will choose to remember and never be shaken

There is no power above or beside Him, we know

God is in control, oh God is in control

History marches on

There is a bottom line drawn across the ages

Culture can make its plan

Oh, but the line never changes

No matter how the deception may fly

There is one thing that has always been true

It will be true forever

[God is in Control](#)

We believe that His children will not be forsaken

[God is in Control](#)

We will choose to remember and never be shaken

There is no power above or beside Him, we know

God is in control, oh God is in control

He has never let you down

Why start to worry now?

He is still the Lord of all we see

And He is still the loving Father

Watching over you and me

Watching over you, watching over me

Watching over everything

Watching over you, watching over me

Every little sparrow, every little thing

Every little thing, oh!

[God is in Control](#)

We believe that His children will not be forsaken

[God is in Control](#)

We will choose to remember and never be shaken

There is no power above or beside Him, we know

[God is in Control](#), oh [God is in Control](#)

Oh [God is in Control](#)! oh [God is in Control](#)

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**3. And ye shall compass—thus shall thou do six days.**The address is made in the latter clause to Joshua, in the singular number, as the commander and representative of the people. In the former clause the plural is used. Such changes of person are frequent, and always worthy of attention, as showing the constructive unity of people and their leaders.—It seemed good to Infinite Wisdom to appoint this method of besieging the city, (1) To magnify his power, to show in a convincing manner, both to the Canaanites and to Israel, that Omnipotence alone had achieved the work, that he was infinitely above the need of the ordinary means of obtaining a victory, and to render those of his enemies entirely inexcusable who should presume to withstand his resistless arm. (2) To try the faith and obedience of Joshua and his people, by prescribing a course of conduct that seemed to human wisdom the height of folly and absurdity, and also to secure a profound respect to all his subsequent institutions, however simple or contemptible they might seem to the eye of carnal reason. (3) To put honor upon the ark as the appointed token of his presence, and to confirm still more fully that veneration and awe, with which they had always been taught to regard it.

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## Joshua 6:3-5 Dr. Woodrow Kroll It's a Mystery to Me

Joshua 6:3-5 - "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. . . . But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. Then 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."

It's a Mystery to Me - In speaking of things beyond our understanding, the famous orator and statesman William Jennings Bryan declared, "I have observed the power of the watermelon seed. It has the power of drawing from the ground and through itself 200,000 times its weight. When you can tell me how it takes this material and out of it colors an outside surface beyond the imitation of art, and then forms inside of it a white rind and within that again a red heart, thickly inlaid with black

seeds . . . when you can explain to me the mystery of a watermelon, you can ask me to explain the mystery of God."

Joshua was faced with the mystery of God as well. Upon hearing the plan given by God, surely someone must have asked him, "How will marching around a wall, blowing trumpets and shouting knock down that wall?" Certainly it was beyond understanding. But the mysteries of God usually are.

Divine mysteries abound. We don't understand how a child could be conceived without a father, but it happened (Luke 1:34). We can't comprehend how an infinite God could be housed in a finite human body, but He was (see note Colossians 1:15). It's beyond our comprehension that one man's death could pay for the sins of the world, but it did (see note Romans 5:18). We don't understand, but that's okay. God's mysteries are not for us to explain; they are for us to accept by faith and act upon.

If you're struggling to understand a mystery of God, don't trouble yourself. The real issue is not whether you understand; it's whether you are willing to obey.

Faith obeys when explanations are lacking.

**Joshua 6:4 "Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.**

- **trumpets of rams'**: Lev 25:9 Nu 10:1-10 Jdg 7:7,8,15-22 2Ch 13:12 20:17,19,21 Isa 27:13 Zec 4:6
- **seven times**: Ge 2:3 7:2,3 Lev 4:6 14:16 25:8 Nu 23:1 1Ki 18:43 2Ki 5:10 Job 42:8 Zec 4:2 Rev 1:4,20 5:1,6 8:2,6 10:3 15:1,7 16:1
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Leviticus 25:9+ 'You shall then sound a ram's horn ([shophar](#)) abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land.

#### A SET OF SEVENS

**Also** - In addition to the men of war.

**Seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark** Trumpets of ram's horns is literally "trumpets of jubilee." Now the LORD gets more specific on the order of the march. It will be the priests carrying trumpets and preceding the Ark.

**Utley - trumpets of rams' horns**" The rabbis stipulate that this must be the left horn of a male flat-tailed sheep. It was used to remind the synagogue of the lamb that God used to provide as a substitute for Isaac, Gen. 22:13. It was primarily not a musical instrument, but a loud blast for religious (cf. Exod. 19:13; Lev. 25:9), and at times, military purposes. (see more on [horns below](#))

**TSK** has an interesting note on the **trumpets** - The Hebrew words {shopheroth hyyovelim,} should rather be rendered jubilee, trumpets, i.e., such as were used on the jubilee, which were probably made of horn or silver: for the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan was indeed a jubilee to them (See Note on Lev 25:11): instead of the dreadful trumpet of war, they were ordered to sound the trumpet of joy, as already conquerors.

**Then** (marks progression) **on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times**- Note the 4 "sevens" - priests, trumpets, days and times around the city. Clearly the number seven is significant and in this context appears to mark the completion of the preparation for conquering Jericho.

**And the priests shall blow the trumpets**- Seven priests blowing seven trumpets would have been audible throughout the city. Rahab surely would have heard these trumpet sounds and her heart must have quickened with a degree of anxiety mixed with anticipation.

**Wiersbe** - In this plan the emphasis is on the number seven: seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days of marching, and seven circuits of the city on the seventh day. The number seven is written clearly into the life of Israel: The Sabbath celebrated on the seventh day of the week; seven weeks from Passover is Pentecost; the seventh year is the Sabbatical Year; and after forty-nine years (seven times seven) comes the Year of Jubilee. Three of Israel's feasts fall in the seventh month: the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), and the Feast of Tabernacles. (For details about this remarkable calendar, see Lev. 23+.) ([Be Strong -- Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

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**Ram's horn** (Jubilee) ([03104](#)) **yobel** from **yabal** = to conduct, bear along) has two distinct meanings (1) that of "ram's horn," appearing in construct with the noun *shôphâr*, "horn," and *qeren*, "horn"; and (2) reference to "Year of Jubilee." The horn was used as a musical instrument in Hebrew and is usually labeled by the technical term "shophar." The association of the meanings stems from the blowing of the horn to announce the advent of the Year of Jubilee. It is used in the phrase *qeren yôbêl*, "horn of a ram" (Josh. 6:5) or in the phrase **šôperôt hayyôbelym** "shophars (rams' horns) of rams" which is rendered as "**trumpets of rams' horns**" (e.g. Josh. 6:4). Its most famous use is in the phrase "year of the ram's horn," which means the Year of Jubilee that was announced by blowing a ram's horn (Lev. 25:13)

**4. Seven trumpets of rams' horns** Heb. שופרות יובלים shoperoth yobelim, trumpets of the jubilee, i. e. such trumpets as used to be blown in the [year of jubilee](#), implying, perhaps, that the entrance of Israel into Canaan was a kind of jubilee to them, an occasion that called rather for the sound of the trumpet of joy, than the dreadful notes of the trumpet of war. No other scriptural instance is adduced, in which the word יובל yobël is translated ram, though it be true that the Chaldee paraphrase favors that rendering. But its single authority on the point is not conclusive. The like phrase in v.5, is, in the original קרן יובל keren yobël, horn of jubilee, and proves only that horns were used, without restricting the meaning to rams' horns. Still the sense of rams' horns, as a traditional sense, seems for ages to have connected itself with the phrase, grounded, we presume, on the fact, that the trumpets in question were made in the shape of the horns of this animal, and the appellation 'horn of jubilee' may be used figuratively for trumpet of jubilee, just as with us a well known musical instrument of brass is called 'a horn,' from its form, and another called 'a serpent,' for the same reason.

**The seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times.** The time was thus lengthened out, both to afford a continued exercise of the faith and patience of the people, and that the besieged and besiegers might be the more deeply impressed with that supernatural power by which the result was to be accomplished. Men are usually prone to precipitate measures. **God moves deliberately, and he would have his people wait his time.** 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' 'It is the pleasure of God to hold us both in work and in expectation, and though he require our continual endeavors for the subduing of our corruptions, during the six days of our life, yet we shall never find it perfectly effected till the very evening of our last day,' Bp. Hall, **The repeated mention of the number seven** in this connexion, is worthy of notice. It has been suggested that it might have a latent reference to the creation of the world in six days, and God's resting on the seventh, which completed the first week, and in the present case, that it may convey an allusion to the preaching of the gospel for a limited period of time, at the close of which, perhaps early in the seventh thousand years, all Satan's remaining bulwarks shall fall to the ground, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.

**Joshua 6:5 "It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead."**

- **make a long:** Jos 6:16,20 Ex 19:19 2Ch 20:21,22
- **the people:** Jdg 7:20-22 1Sa 4:5 17:20,52 2Ch 13:14,15 Jer 50:15
- **and the wall:** Isa 25:12 30:25 2Co 10:4,5 Heb 11:30
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A TRUMPET BLAST  
AND A SHOUT

**It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's(yobel) horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout (rua) with a great shout (teruah)** - Joshua obviously passed on these unusual orders apparently with no grumbling or questioning of his authority or his reasoning, which is undoubtedly one reason the LORD exalted him in the sight of all Israel (Josh 3:7, Josh 4:14). Were Joshua not highly esteemed by the people, can you imagine how they would have reacted to this seemingly silly strategy for sacking Jericho! But clearly the generals and the people simply believed him and obeyed him.

**Utley on shout** - The TERM (Hiphil IMPERFECT) is used to describe a characteristic "war cry" (cf. Joshua 6:10, 20; Nu 10:5, 9; Jdg 7:20; 1Sa 17:52; 2Chr 13:14-15).

**And the wall of the city will fall down flat**- The direction was not forward or backward but straight down, the phrase **fall down flat** picturing a sudden complete collapse. "Not absolutely all the wall in the whole extent of its compass, since that would have involved the house of Rahab in the destruction, which, it is plain, was not intended, nor did it happen, Josh 6:22." ([Bush](#))

**ESV Study note** - [Tell es-Sultan](#) (OT Jericho) has had a long history of archaeological excavation. Many aspects of the site seemed to fit the biblical picture: clear evidence of fallen mud brick walls creating ramparts against the outer reinforcing wall, which could have allowed Israelite soldiers to go up, everyone straight before him; evidence of a rapid defeat in springtime; evidence of a lack of plundering; evidence of burning; etc. But the date seemed wrong. The question of dating the ruins of [Tell es-Sultan](#)—a site that has, in any case, experienced severe erosion—has recently been reopened. Many archaeologists believe that the fall of Jericho occurred in the thirteenth century B.C. But some analyses of the original excavation reports, including pottery, stratigraphy, scarab data, and carbon 14 testing, have instead concluded that Jericho was destroyed at the end of the Late Bronze period (c. 1400 B.C.).

**TSK** The words {wenaphelah chomath hair tachteyha,} are literally, "and the wall of the city shall fall down under itself;" which appears simply to mean, that the wall shall fall down from its very foundation; which was probably the case in every part, though large breaches in different places might have been amply sufficient first to admit the armed men, after whom the host might enter to destroy the city. There is no ground for the supposition that the walls sunk into the earth.

**And the people will go up every man straight ahead** - The invaders would **go up** in the sense of climbing up over the rubble of the fallen wall, because even though it fallen flat there was still rubble.

**Utley** - One can almost see the consternation on the part of the elders when Joshua explained this plan to them, for this was not normal military procedure! However, it was the word of God and throughout the Pentateuch we have seen that God has required His people to do that which seems illogical (cf. Numbers 2) as a test of obedience which shows their faith in His word and promises.

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**Ram's horn** ([jubilee](#)) ([03104](#)) **yobel** from **yabal** = to conduct, bear along) has two distinct meanings (1) that of "ram's horn," appearing in construct with the noun *shôphâr*, "horn," and *qeren*, "horn"; and (2) reference to "Year of Jubilee." The horn was used as a musical instrument in Hebrew and is usually labeled by the technical term "shophar." The association of the meanings stems from the blowing of the horn to announce the advent of the Year of [jubilee](#).

**Yobel** - 25v - [jubilee](#) (21), ram's (1), ram's horn(1), rams' horns(4). Exod. 19:13; Lev. 25:10; Lev. 25:11; Lev. 25:12; Lev. 25:13; Lev. 25:15; Lev. 25:28; Lev. 25:30; Lev. 25:31; Lev. 25:33; Lev. 25:40; Lev. 25:50; Lev. 25:52; Lev. 25:54; Lev. 27:17; Lev. 27:18; Lev. 27:21; Lev. 27:23; Lev. 27:24; Num. 36:4; Jos. 6:4; Jos. 6:5; Jos. 6:6; Jos. 6:8; Jos. 6:13

**Shout** (cry aloud, sound an alarm) ([07321](#)) **rua** verb meaning to raise a noise, shout, shout, raise a sound, cry out, to sound a blast. Rua was utilized primarily to convey the action of shouting or the making of a loud noise. One could "raise a noise" either by shouting or with a horn (Nu 10:7, or the shofar - Josh 6:5). Shouting often took place just before a people or army rushed into battle against opposition (JUST LIKE THOSE SCENES IN "BRAVEHEART!"). At other times the war cry became the signal used to commence engagement with the enemy (Josh. 6:10, 16, 20; Jdg. 15:14; 1 Sa. 4:5; 17:20; 2 Chr. 13:15). At other times rua represented a shout of joy, often in response to the Lord's delivering activity His people (Job 38:7; Ps. 47:1; 95:1, 2; Isa. 44:23; Zeph. 3:14). Rua was used in rituals of the Israelite tabernacle (1 Samuel 4:5) to describe the exaltation of the people of Israel when the ark of the covenant was brought to the camp. Rua is also used for cries of complaint and distress (Isaiah 15:4). But the most common usage of rua is in signals for war (Nu 10:7) and war cries (Josh 6:10). Rua is used in Joshua 6:5, 10, 16, 20.

**Shout** ([08643](#))(**teruah** from **rua** = to raise a shout, give a blast) a shout or blast of war, alarm, or joy. shout of joy; a shout of alarm, a battle cry. It refers to a loud, sharp shout or cry in general, but it often indicates a shout of joy or victory (1 Sam. 4:5, 6); a great shout anticipating a coming event (Josh. 6:5, 20). It can refer to the noise or signal put out by an instrument (Lev. 23:24; 25:9). Amos used the word to refer to war cries (Amos 1:14; 2:2; cf. Job 39:25; Zeph. 1:16). The Lord puts shouts of joy into His people (Job 8:21; 33:26).

**Gilbrant** - Occurring thirty-six times in the Hebrew Bible, *terû'âh* is derived from the verb *rûa'* (HED # 7607), "to shout," "to rejoice." It occurs in Middle Hebrew and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The noun, just as the verb, has two distinct semantic environments and is often used with the verb in cognate accusative constructions. In a number of lesser nuances, it is used in the sense of "shouting loudly."

The first broad category of usage is found in warfare to indicate signals used (e.g., with trumpets, Num. 31:6; 2 Chr. 13:12; Job 39:25). The victims of sieges would shout as conquering armies stormed their cities (Ezek. 21:22). Victims likely were the ones shouting in Amos' condemnation of Ammon (Amos 1:4) and Moab (2:2). This is the same imagery behind Jeremiah's cursing of the day of his birth (Jer. 20:16). He cursed the messenger that he might "hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide." Indeed, the Day of Yahweh would be against the fortified cities, "a day of trumpet [blast] and alarm" (Zeph. 1:16).

The second broad category of usage centers upon ritual usage. *Terû'âh* is used with a trumpet for certain festivals (Lev. 23:24). That battles and rituals both began with trumpet blasts is not at all odd, given that it was Yahweh Who fought the battles for the Israelites. The shouts of joy, in a ritual sense, were raised when the Ark of the Covenant appeared to lead the Israelites in their ill-fated battle at Ebenezer against the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:3ff). The noun is also used to describe the clash of cymbals in a ritual procession (Ps. 150:5). The crowd seeing the laying of the foundation of the second temple were led in ritual shouting for joy, a sound equaled by the loudness of the weeping of those who remembered the majesty of the first temple (Ezra 3:13). Festal shouting was part of temple ritual (e.g., Pss. 33:3; 89:15).

The psalmist also celebrated personal blessings with sacrifices and shouts of joy (Ps. 27:6). Job's companions offered that the righteous have opportunity to shout for joy at the blessings of Yahweh (Job 8:21; 33:26).

Finally, the ritual surrounding covenant renewal during the reign of the Judean king Asa was met with ritual shouts of joy (2 Chr. 15:14). This act clearly possessed ritual aspects, as the people agreed to bind themselves to the laws of Yahweh, the stipulations of this contract they were bound to live by.

**Teruah** - 33v alarm(5), battle cry(2), blowing(1), blowing trumpets(1), joy(1), joyful sound(1), resounding(1), shout(10), shout of alarm(1), shout of joy(1), shouted(1), shouting(4), shouts of joy(1), signal(1), trumpet blast(1), war cries(2), war cry(1). Lev. 23:24; Lev. 25:9; Num. 10:5; Num. 10:6; Num. 23:21; Num. 29:1; Num. 31:6; Jos. 6:5; Jos. 6:20; 1 Sam. 4:5; 1 Sam. 4:6; 2 Sam. 6:15; 1 Chr. 15:28; 2 Chr. 13:12; 2 Chr. 15:14; Ezr. 3:11; Ezr. 3:12; Ezr. 3:13; Job 8:21; Job 33:26; Job 39:25; Ps. 27:6; Ps. 33:3; Ps. 47:5; Ps. 89:15; Ps. 150:5; Jer. 4:19; Jer. 20:16; Jer. 49:2; Ezek. 21:22; Amos 1:14; Amos 2:2; Zeph. 1:16

It was huge, and it stood in their way. As Joshua looked at the fortifications of Jericho, he realized that taking the city was no small task, especially with the seemingly impenetrable wall that stood before him.

However, God promised Joshua that Israel would triumph, and Joshua believed Him. Joshua 6:5 records God's command: "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."

For generations to come, the children of Israel would ask about the onslaught at Jericho, to which their parents would respond that it was by shouts and trumpet blasts that the walls were destroyed, because the power of God was with them. No battering ram technology, no modern warfare strategy was necessary—only obedience. The lesson for you remains that God has a way for you to overcome every obstacle by His power. It may not be what you expect, but it is exactly what is needed.

As Theodore Parker prayed, "Give me, Lord, eyes to behold the truth; a seeing sense that knows the eternal right; a heart with pity filled, and gentlest truth; a manly faith that makes all darkness light."

Lord, You are the Creator, the innovator in the face of the impossible. I give You all my obstacles, for I know that You alone can overcome them. (Pathways to His Presence)

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Faith can be embarrassing—at least to the world's eyes. From the safety of Jericho's high walls, the city's defenders must have ridiculed the Israelite priests and soldiers who walked around the fortress day after day doing nothing but blowing on trumpets. Maybe even some of the Israelites themselves secretly wondered what they were doing, and why.

But as unorthodox as it seemed, this was God's plan to hand Jericho over to Israel, which meant finally entering the promised land after forty years of disobedience in the wilderness. Joshua was acting under direct orders from "the commander of the army of the Lord" (Josh. 5:14).

The chapter break between Joshua 5 and 6 is a little misleading, because the conversation begun in 5:13 continues into chapter 6, after a brief parenthetical note about the situation at Jericho (6:1). The complete lack of any military effort on behalf of the Israelites underscored the most important part of this story: Jericho was conquered "by faith" (Heb. 11:30).

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**5. The wall of the city shall fall down flat** Not absolutely all the wall in the whole extent of its compass, since that would have involved the house of Rahab in the destruction, which, it is plain, was not intended, nor did it happen, v. 22. As the city was completely surrounded by the Israelites, the falling of the wall would give the inhabitants no opportunity of escape. They could not break through the array of armed men that hemmed them in. The original for 'fall down flat' is 'fall down under itself,' or 'in its place,' which appears to mean simply, that the wall should fall down to its very foundations.

**Ascend up every man straight before him.** The obstruction of the wall being removed, nothing stood in the way of the people's advancing in a direct line, as if from the circumference to the centre of a circle, and meeting in the heart of the city. This is called 'going up,' or 'ascending,' from the necessity there was of climbing over the ruins of the walls on their way. Besides which it is common, in nearly all languages, to describe the approach to a city as a 'going up' to it. After giving these directions, the Angel-Jehovah no doubt departed.

**Joshua 6:6 So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, **Take up** the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD."**

- **Take up the ark:** Jos 6:8,13 3:3,6 Ex 25:14 De 20:2-4 Ac 9:1
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### JOSHUA'S OBEDIENCE TO YAHWEH'S UNUSUAL BATTLE PLAN

**So** - For this reason or therefore. God spoke, Joshua obeyed. Given the unusual nature of the LORD's instructions, this was a major test of Joshua's faith and yet we see his heart is like the old hymn [Trust and Obey](#).

**Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them-** Thus once again we observe Joshua's unhesitating, unquestioning obedience as he gives these unusual instructions to the priests.

**THOUGHT** - " We cannot but be admonished, by his example, of the necessity of always subordinating our shallow wisdom to the plain mandates of Omnipotence." (Bush)

**Joshua the son of Nun** - his full title - 27x in 27v - Exod. 33:11; Num. 11:28; Num. 14:6; Num. 14:30; Num. 14:38; Num. 26:65; Num. 27:18; Num. 32:12; Num. 32:28; Num. 34:17; Deut. 1:38; Deut. 31:23; Deut. 32:44; Deut. 34:9; Jos. 1:1; Jos. 2:1; Jos. 2:23; Jos. 6:6; Jos. 14:1; Jos. 17:4; Jos. 19:49; Jos. 19:51; Jos. 21:1; Jos. 24:29; Jdg. 2:8; 1 Ki. 16:34; Neh. 8:17

**Take up the Ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD** - See the order of the procession below. As with the crossing of the Jordan, the presence of the Ark was symbolic of the actual presence of the LORD in the midst of Israel (in diagram below literally in the middle).

**Utley on ark of the covenant** - "the ark of the covenant" After the crossing of the Jordan, the Cloud which had represented YHWH's presence with the people was removed. Now the ark was the visible symbol of His presence.

**Ark of the Covenant** - 42x in 41v (and 32x it includes "of the LORD.") - Num. 10:33; Num. 14:44; Deut. 10:8; Deut. 31:9; Deut. 31:25; Deut. 31:26; Jos. 3:3; Jos. 3:6; Jos. 3:8; Jos. 3:11; Jos. 3:14; Jos. 3:17; Jos. 4:7; Jos. 4:9; Jos. 4:18; Jos. 6:6; Jos. 6:8; Jos. 8:33; Jdg. 20:27; 1 Sam. 4:3; 1 Sam. 4:4; 1 Sam. 4:5; 2 Sam. 15:24; 1 Ki. 3:15; 1 Ki. 6:19; 1 Ki. 8:1; 1 Ki. 8:6; 1 Chr. 15:25; 1 Chr. 15:26; 1 Chr. 15:28; 1 Chr. 15:29; 1 Chr. 16:6; 1 Chr. 16:37; 1 Chr. 17:1; 1 Chr. 22:19; 1 Chr. 28:2; 1 Chr. 28:18; 2 Chr. 5:2; 2 Chr. 5:7; Jer. 3:16; Heb. 9:4

**Ark of the LORD** - 37x in 35v - Jos. 3:13; Jos. 4:5; Jos. 4:11; Jos. 6:6; Jos. 6:7; Jos. 6:11; Jos. 6:12; Jos. 6:13; Jos. 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:6; 1 Sam. 5:3; 1 Sam. 5:4; 1 Sam. 6:1; 1 Sam. 6:2; 1 Sam. 6:8; 1 Sam. 6:11; 1 Sam. 6:15; 1 Sam. 6:18; 1 Sam. 6:19; 1 Sam. 6:21; 1 Sam. 7:1; 2 Sam. 6:9; 2 Sam. 6:10; 2 Sam. 6:11; 2 Sam. 6:13; 2 Sam. 6:15; 2 Sam. 6:16; 2 Sam. 6:17; 1 Ki. 2:26; 1 Ki. 8:4; 1 Chr. 15:3; 1 Chr. 15:12; 1 Chr. 15:14; 1 Chr. 16:4; 2 Chr. 8:11

**Matthew Henry Concise Commentary** - Verses 6-16. Wherever the ark went, the people attended it. God's ministers, by the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, which proclaims liberty and victory, must encourage the followers of Christ in their spiritual warfare. As promised deliverances must be expected in God's way, so they must be expected in his time. At last the people were to shout: they did so, and the walls fell. This was a shout of faith; they believed the walls of Jericho would fall. It was a shout of prayer; they cry to Heaven for help, and help came.

Below is a representation of the organization of the march, the left side representing the front or vanguard of the procession

1	2	3	4	5
<b>Soldiers</b>	<b>Priests with Rams' Horns</b>	<b>The Ark</b>	<b>Soldiers</b>	<b>The People</b>
Joshua 6:9	Joshua 6:6, 8, 13	Joshua 6:6, 8, 13	Joshua 6:9	Joshua 6:7

**Trust and Obey.**

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,  
 What a glory He sheds on our way!  
 While we do His good will, He abides with us still,  
 And with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
 To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
 But His smile quickly drives it away;  
 Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear,  
 Can abide while we trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
 To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet.  
 Or we'll walk by His side in the way.  
 What He says we will do, where He sends we will go;  
 Never fear, only trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
 To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Oh, Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
 To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

And 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,  
 Just to take Him at His Word;  
 Just to rest upon His promise,  
 Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord!"

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!

How I've proved Him o'er and o'er;  
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!  
Oh, for grace to trust Him more!

Oh, for grace to trust You more!

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**6. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, &c** Although the charge which he now received relative to the manner of besieging the city was highly calculated to put his faith to the test, yet he falters not in the least, but complies as readily as if human reason had nothing to object to so strange a procedure.

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### QUESTION - [What is the biblical significance of the number seven/7?](#)

**ANSWER** - [PLAY THE VIDEO answer](#). Throughout the Bible, God often gives symbolic significance to mundane items or concepts. For example, in Genesis 9:12–16, God makes the rainbow the sign of His promise to Noah (and, by extension, to all mankind) that He will not flood the whole earth again. God uses bread as a representation of His presence with His people (Numbers 4:7); of the gift of eternal life (John 6:35); and of the broken body of Christ, sacrificed for our sins (Matthew 26:26). The rainbow and the bread are obvious symbols in Scripture. Less obvious meanings seem to be attached to some [numbers in the Bible](#), especially the number 7, which at times provides a special emphasis in the text.

The first use of the number 7 in the Bible relates to the creation week in Genesis 1. God spends six days creating the heavens and the earth, and then rests on the seventh day. This is our template for the seven-day week, observed around the world to this day. The seventh day was to be “set apart” for Israel; the Sabbath was a holy day of rest (Deuteronomy 5:12).

Thus, right at the start of the Bible, the number 7 is identified with something being “finished” or “complete.” From then on, that association continues, as 7 is often found in contexts involving completeness or divine perfection. So we see the command for animals to be at least seven days old before being used for sacrifice (Exodus 22:30), the command for leprous Naaman to bathe in the Jordan River seven times to effect complete cleansing (2 Kings 5:10), and the command for Joshua to march around Jericho for seven days (and on the seventh day to make seven circuits) and for seven priests to blow seven trumpets outside the city walls (Joshua 6:3–4). In these instances, 7 signifies a completion of some kind: a divine mandate is fulfilled.

Interestingly, man was created on the sixth day of creation. In some passages of the Bible, the number 6 is associated with mankind. In Revelation “the [number of the beast](#)” is called “the number of a man.” That number is 666 (Revelation 13:18). If God’s number is 7, then man’s is 6. Six always falls short of seven, just like “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Man is not God, just as 6 is not 7.

Series of seven things crop up often in the Bible. For example, we find seven pairs of each clean animal on the ark (Genesis 7:2); seven stems on the tabernacle’s lampstand (Exodus 25:37); seven qualities of the Messiah in Isaiah 11:2; seven signs in John’s Gospel; seven things the Lord hates in Proverbs 6:16; seven parables in Matthew 13; and seven woes in Matthew 23.

Multiples of 7 also figure into the biblical narrative: the “[seventy weeks](#)” prophecy in Daniel 9:24 concerns 490 years (7 times 7 times 10). Jeremiah 29:10 predicted the [Babylonian Captivity](#) would last for seventy years (7 times 10). According to [Leviticus 25:8](#), the [Year of Jubilee](#) was to begin after the passing of every forty-ninth year (7 times 7).

Sometimes, the symbolism of 7 is a great comfort to us: Jesus is the seven-fold “I AM” in the Gospel of John. Other times, it challenges us: Jesus told Peter to forgive a wrongdoer “seventy times seven” times (Matthew 18:22NKJV). And then there are passages in which the number 7 is associated with God’s judgment: the seven bowls of the Great Tribulation, for example (Revelation 16:1), or God’s warning to Israel in Leviticus 26:18.

Speaking of the [book of Revelation](#), the number 7 is used there more than fifty times in a variety of contexts: there are seven letters to seven churches in Asia and seven spirits before God’s throne (Revelation 1:4), seven golden lampstands (Revelation 1:12), seven stars in Christ’s right hand (Revelation 1:16), [seven seals](#) of God’s judgment (Revelation 5:1), seven angels with seven trumpets (Revelation 8:2), etc. In all likelihood, the number 7 again represents completeness or totality: the seven churches represent the completeness of the body of Christ, the seven seals on the scroll represent the fullness of God’s punishment of a sinful earth, and so on. And, of course, the book of Revelation itself, with all its 7s, is the capstone of God’s Word to man. With the book of Revelation, the Word was complete (Revelation 22:18).

In all, the number 7 is used in the Bible more than seven hundred times. If we also include the words related to *seven* (terms like *sevenfold* or *seventy* or *seven hundred*), the count is higher. Of course, not every instance of the number 7 in the Bible carries a deeper significance. Sometimes, a 7 is just a 7, and we must be cautious about attaching symbolic meanings to any text, especially when Scripture is not explicit about such meanings. However, there are times when it *seems* that God is communicating the idea of divine completeness, perfection, and wholeness by means of the number 7. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Tony Garland** on [symbolic meaning of seven](#) - The number seven is the most frequently encountered number in

the book of Revelation:

Even the most careless reader of the Apocalypse must be struck by the manner in which almost every thing there is ordered by sevens. Thus, besides the seven Churches, and their seven Angels, we have already in this first chapter the seven Spirits (Rev. 1:4▶), the seven candlesticks (Rev. 1:12▶), the seven stars (Rev. 1:16▶); and further on, the seven lamps of fire (Rev. 4:4▶), seven seals (Rev. 5:1▶), seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb (Rev. 5:6▶), seven heavenly Angels with their seven trumpets (Rev. 8:2▶), seven thunders (Rev. 10:3▶), seven heads of the dragon, and seven crowns upon these heads (Rev. 12:13▶), the same of the beast rising out of the sea (Rev. 13:1▶), seven last plagues (Rev. 15▶;1▶); seven vials (Rev. 15:7▶), seven mountains (Rev. 17:9▶), seven kings (Rev. 17:10▶); not to speak of other recurrences, not so obvious, of this number seven as the signature of the Book; as for instance, the distribution of the entire Book into seven visions, the sevenfold ascription of glory to the Lamb (Rev. 5:12▶), and to God (Rev. 7:12▶).<sup>90</sup>

Hindson lists the following 'sevens' in the book: churches (Rev. 1:4-20▶; 2-3▶); spirits (Rev. 1:4▶; 3:1▶; 4:5▶; 5:6▶); lampstands (Rev. 1:12-20▶; 2:1▶); stars (Rev. 1:16-20▶; 2:1▶; 3:1▶); lamps of fire (Rev. 4:5▶); seals (Rev. 5:1-5▶); horns (Rev. 5:6▶); eyes (Rev. 5:6▶); angels (Rev. 8:2-6▶); trumpets (Rev. 8:2-6▶); peals of thunder (Rev. 10:3-4▶); seven thousand people (Rev. 11:13▶); heads (Rev. 12:3▶; 13:1▶; 17:3-9▶); diadems (Rev. 12:3▶); angels (Rev. 15:1-8▶; 21:9▶); plagues (Rev. 15:1-8▶; 21:9▶); bowls (Rev. 15:7▶; 17:1▶; 21:9▶); mountains (17:9▶); kings (17:10-11▶); beatitudes (Rev. 1:3▶; 14:13▶; 16:15▶; 19:9▶; 20:6▶; 22:7▶, 14▶); "I ams" of Christ (Rev. 1:8▶, 17▶, 18▶; 2:23▶; 21:6▶; 22:13▶, 16▶).<sup>91</sup> Tenney notes seven beatitudes (Rev. 1:3▶; 14:13▶; 16:15▶; 19:9▶; 20:6▶; 22:7▶; 22:14▶).<sup>92</sup> Hindson notes: "David Hocking observes that the concept of our Lord's soon return is emphasized seven times in the Revelation by the words 'shortly' or 'quickly' [Rev. 1:1▶; 2:16▶; 3:11▶; 11:14▶; 22:7▶; 22:12▶; 22:20▶]."<sup>93</sup> Morris mentions seven "I ams" of Christ (Rev. 1:8▶, 11▶, 17▶, 18▶; 21:6▶; 22:13▶, 16▶) and seven doxologies in heaven (Rev. 4:9-11▶; 5:8-13▶; 7:9-12▶; 11:16-18▶; 14:2-3▶; 15:2-4▶; 19:1-6▶).<sup>94</sup>

As mentioned in our discussion of six, the number seven is understood to denote 'perfection' in the sense of completion. God created in six days and *rested* on the seventh.<sup>95</sup> This is the main symbolism of the number seven in the book of Revelation. The *seven* churches are representative of *all* churches. The *seven* Spirits represent the perfect omniscience of the Holy Spirit.<sup>96</sup> The seven seals, trumpets, and bowls denote the completeness of God's worldwide judgment.<sup>97</sup>

The prevalence of seven throughout the book of Revelation has also been recognized as signifying this book as the final revelation of God to complete the [canon](#) of Scripture.<sup>98</sup>

Almost certainly one of the primary reasons [for the preponderance of sevens] is to emphasize that this's the last book of the Bible! In fact, the book closes with a grave warning against anyone who would pretend to add anything further to God's inspired Word (Revelation 22:18▶).<sup>99</sup>

It seems likely that John has written his book carefully to signify the perfect plan of God and the completeness of his work.<sup>100</sup>

With the final acts recorded in the book of Revelation, God *completes* His mighty act of redemption and renewal thus restoring His creation to the condition it had prior to the entrance of sin.<sup>101</sup>

**Joshua 6:7 Then he said to the people, "Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the ark of the LORD."**

- **armed:** Jos 6:3 Josh 1:14 4:13
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

FORWARD MARCH!

**Then he said to the people** - After addressing the priests, then he addresses the people.

**"Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the ark of the LORD."** - In Joshua 6:3 it says "all the men of war." Here the instruction is to all **the people**. As depicted in the diagram below the armed troops lead the way. There is no evidence of grumbling by anyone at these unusual commands. This is amazing for Israel had only been out of Egypt for a short time and they already began grumbling at Moses (Ex 15:24+)! As stated above Joshua had been exalted before the people as the result of the miracle at the Jordan (cf Josh 3:7, Josh 4::14+) and clearly he had earned their complete respect.

Below is a representation of the organization of the march, the left side representing the front or vanguard of the procession

1	2	3	4	5
Soldiers	Priests with Rams' Horns	The Ark	Soldiers	The People

Joshua 6:9	Joshua 6:6, 8, 13	Joshua 6:6, 8, 13	Joshua 6:9	Joshua 6:7
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**GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)**

**7. And he said unto the people.** Heb. ויאמרו va-yomeru, and they said; i. e. the officers acting under the general orders of Joshua. But the Masorites have indicated a doubtful reading, and the Chal., the Lat. Vulg., and most of the versions, have rendered it in the singular—'he said.' We see no reason, however, to question the correctness of the Hebrew text.

**Joshua 6:8 And it was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.**

- **before the Lord:** Jos 6:3,4 Nu 32:20
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And it was so** - "And it came to pass" (KJV). This speaks again of the obedience of the people and priests to these unusual commands. At this time the nation is in unity of spirit and purpose.

**That when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them** - Again we see the obedience to the the LORD's "military strategy."

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**GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)**

**8. Passed on before the Lord.** That is, as we suppose, before the Ark of the Lord, Josh 6:4, and Joshua 3:11.

**The ark of the covenant.** The ark in which were deposited the two tables whereon the covenant was written.

**Joshua 6:9 The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while they continued to blow the trumpets.**

- **the rear guard came after the ark** Jos 6:13 Nu 10:25 Isa 52:11 58:8
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

BRINGING UP  
THE REAR

**The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets**([shophar/shopar/sopar](#)), **and the rear guard came after the ark, while they continued to blow the trumpets** - No speaking was heard, only the blast of the ram's horn [listen and imagine the effect this sound might have had on the Jericho-ites!](#)).

**Utley** notes that "The term **"armed men"** (Qal PASSIVE PARTICIPLE) means "fully equipped for battle" (cf. Josh 6:7, 9, 13; 4:13; 2 Chr. 20:21; 28:14).

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**GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)**

**9. And the armed men.** Heb. והחלוץ hahalutz, the armed man, i. e. each armed man, collect sing for plur.

**The rear guard.** The hinder part. The original מאסף meassēph, comes from אסף asaph, to collect, to gather up, and is equivalent to our military phrase bringing up the rear, and not improperly rendered in the margin, 'gathering host.' It implies a kind and protecting care towards those who are its objects. The same phraseology occurs, Isa. 52:12, 'For the LORD will go before you, And the God of Israel will be your rear guard.' (Heb. מאספכם meassiphkim, your gatherer.) Ps. 27:10. 'When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.' (Heb. יאספני yaasphēni, will gather me.) Judg. 19:18, 'I am now going to the house of the Lord, and there is no man that receiveth (מאסף meassēph) me to house.' A re-re-ward, therefore, is that portion of an army which, moving behind the main body, gathers up all the stragglers, takes care of any that may faint and fall by the way, sees that neither cattle nor baggage are missing, and protects or covers the rear of the host from the assault of enemies. The Jews think the division of Dan is meant, which always brought up the rear. Num. 10.

**Joshua 6:10 But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout!"**

- **You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard**, Isa 42:2 Mt 12:19
- **until the day:** 2Sa 5:23,24 Isa 28:16 Lu 24:49 Ac 1:7
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SILENCE IS  
COMMANDED

There is a phrase "silence is golden," is a proverbial saying, often used in circumstances where it is thought that saying nothing is preferable to speaking. There is something reverential and holy about the silence of the people.

**But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout!"**- They are to march in silence until the seventh day. The silence of the people would of course be broken by the continual, eerie blasts from the trumpets and the shuffle of feet each day for about 30 minutes for 6 days.

**Rod Mattoon** - According to this verse, God's people were to be totally silent till the seventh day when they would be commanded to shout. This would take discipline. It would not be easy to control their tongue. It never is. The principle of silence is taught all throughout Scripture. Learning to be silent at the right time and learning to speak up at the right time is the secret of the victorious Christian life. We spend so much time talking that we don't hear God when He speaks.

([Treasures from Joshua](#))

This reminds me of God's charge in Psalm 46:10

Psalms 46:10NLT - ""**Be silent**, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world."

**Faith** is an action verb, in this case commanding the people to **shout**. The thought is

**"Don't doubt, just shout!"**

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**10. Nor make any noise with your voice.** They were not only required to abstain from shouting, but to observe a profound silence in every respect. This would be expressive of a reverent awe in anticipation of the event; and would preclude all danger of mistake as to the precise time when they were required to shout. If noise of any kind had been allowed, they might have taken it for the signal of a general acclamation. This would not only have been ineffectual before the appointed time, but would have rendered them the derision of their enemies.

**Joshua 6:11 So he had the ark of the LORD taken around the city, circling it once; then they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.**

- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ONCE AROUND AND  
RETURN TO CAMP

**So** - This indicates Joshua is taking action.

**He had the ark of the LORD taken around the city, circling it once; then they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp** - Presumably this is the plan for each of the six days. The mention of the **Ark of the LORD** but none of the other marchers emphasizes that the Ark is the central figure in this march.

**Bush** makes an interesting comment "The procession undoubtedly moved at a sufficient distance to be out of the reach of the enemy's arrows, and out of the hearing of their scoffs. They must have looked with a very contemptuous eye upon such an unwarlike mode of assault, and when day after day passed, and no effect followed, would naturally become hardened in security, and think the whole the mere mockery of a siege, a senseless and childish parade. Thus they would cry 'peace and safety,' while sudden destruction was coming upon them."

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**11. So the ark of the Lord compassed the city.** Or, 'so he caused the ark of the Lord to compass the city.' The original will admit of this rendering, and, indeed, rather requires it, as the Hephil form of the verb (כּוּסַף יָסַב) is nowhere used in an intransitive sense, excepting Ps. 140:9....'There was never so strange a siege as this of Jericho: here was no mound raised, no sword drawn, no engine planted, no pioneers undermining; here were trumpets sounded, but no enemy seen; here were armed men, but no stroke given; they must walk, and not fight; seven days must they pace about the walls, which they may not once look over to see what was within. Doubtless these inhabitants of Jericho made themselves merry with this sight. When they had stood six days on their walls, and beheld nothing but a walking enemy, "What," say they, "could Israel find no walk to breathe them with, but about our walls? Have they not travelled enough in their forty years' pilgrimage, but they must stretch their limbs in this circle? We see they are good footmen, but when shall we try their hands? Do these vain men think Jericho will be won by looking at? Or do they only come to count how many paces it is about our city? If this be their manner of siege, we shall have no great cause to fear the sword of Israel." Wicked men think God in jest when he is preparing for their judgment.' Bp. Hall.

**Joshua 6:12 Now Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.**

- **Joshua rose:** Jos 3:1 Ge 22:3

- **the priests:** Jos 6:6-8 De 31:25 Joh 2:5-8 6:10,11 9:6,7 Heb 11:7,8
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Now Joshua rose early in the morning**- This same description had been given in Joshua 3:1. Men of action arise early.

**And the priests took up the ark of the LORD**- Again the Ark is emphasized.

### **Joshua 6:12 Dr. Woodrow Kroll God's "Haves" and "Wills"**

Joshua 6:12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

As they had miraculously left the land of Egypt, Israel had now entered the land of Canaan by a similar miracle. All the people were safely across the swift waters of the Jordan. The army of Israel encamped at Gilgal. Having settled in the land, Joshua and the people were now ready for their first great test?the capture of the outpost of Jericho.

Since Jericho was the most secure stronghold in a string of fortifications defending the eastern front of Canaan, there were many anxious Israelite hearts the night before the conquest began. Joshua himself was pacing the ground at the edge of the Israeli encampment. While meditating on how to attack Jericho, a man appeared to Joshua with a sword drawn in his hand. Intrepidly Joshua asked, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" (Joshua 5:13) The powerful figure identified himself as the Captain of the host of the Lord. This title, so often afterward applied to the Son of God, revealed to Joshua that this was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Joshua must have known immediately the identity of this warrior for he fell on his face to the earth and worshiped Him.

Joshua 6:2 records, "And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor." Although it was the night before the once-a-day treks around the city of Jericho, the Lord's promise to Joshua was, "I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof." Their lines of battle had not yet been drawn. The fighting had not yet begun. Yet the victory was certain. Even before the event occurred, God said "I have done it."

How can this be? How can God say the battle is won before it is begun? The answer is that God is above time. He has no futures nor pasts, only an eternal present. He always deals in what is for Him the "now." Frequently God uses the words "I will" and "I have" interchangeably.

Consider the similar experience of Abraham, recorded in Genesis 17. Abram was ninety-nine years old when the Lord God appeared to him and, as Joshua did, he fell on his face before the Lord. The Almighty God was about to make a covenant with Abraham that he would become the father of many nations. To Abraham God said, "Neither shall thy name anymore be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee" (Genesis 17:5). To a childless ninety-nine-year-old man, whose wife was nearly that age, God said, "A father of many nations have I made thee."

In quoting that promise in Romans 4:17 (note), the Apostle Paul notes, "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb" (see note Romans 4:19). It did not matter that Sarah was well beyond the age of childbearing. God said He had made Abraham the father of many nations and we can count God's "wills" as God's "haves."

As twentieth century believers, the promises of God to us which have yet to be fulfilled are in the eternity of God already fulfilled. Thus the Lord Jesus promised, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again" (John 14:2-3). Although this is an event in history future, nevertheless, it is a promise as certain as if it had already been fulfilled. God calls things that are not yet as if they already are.

Hence, even though the battle plan was strange to Joshua, the defeat of the enemy was sure. Trusting the God of completed promises, "Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD" (Joshua 6:12) and the children of Israel proceeded to the conquest of Jericho. Another great victory was won for the Lord God whose "haves" and "wills" are interchangeable.

### **MORNING HYMN**

(Beautiful [Solo Vocal](#))

**[Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake](#)**

To guide the future as He has the past.

Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;

All now mysterious shall be bright at last.

**Joshua 6:13 The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew the trumpets; and the armed men went before them and the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while they continued to blow the trumpets.**

- **went on:** 1Ch 15:26 Mt 24:13 Ga 6:9
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE REPEATED

BLOWING OF TRUMPETS

**The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew the trumpets; and the armed men went before them and the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while they continued to blow the trumpets** - This verse is a beautiful illustration of walking by faith (literally), not by sight! (2Co 5:7+).

**Utley** - "ram's horns" It was the left horn of a male flat-tailed sheep.

**Utley** - **went**" Notice how many times this VERB is used in this verse—six times (ED: NOT PICKED UP IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS). This literary style seems repetitive to moderns.

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**Bob Utley** - [Horns Used By Israel](#) - There are four words in Hebrew for association with horns/trumpets:

**1) the ram's horn**—turned into an instrument of sound, cf. Josh. 6:5. This same word is used for the ram caught by his horns which Abraham will substitute for Isaac in Gen. 22:13.

**2) trumpet**—from the Assyrian term for wild sheep (ibex). This is the horn that was used in Exod 19:16, 19 at Mt. Sinai/Horeb. #1 and #2 are parallel in Josh. 6:5. It was used to communicate times of worship and times to fight (i.e., Jericho was both, cf. 6:4).

**3) ram's horn**—from Phoenician word for Ram (cf. 6:4, 6, 8, 13). It also stands for the Year of Jubilee (cf. Lev. 25:13, 28, 40, 50, 52, 54; 27:17, 18, 23, 24).

All of these first three seem interchangeable with no distinction intended. The Mishnah allowed several animal horns—sheep, goat, or antelope, but not from a cow.

**4 trumpets**—possibly from the VERB "stretch out," implying a straight bone (not curved as the animal horns). These were made of silver (after the shape and form of Egypt).

These are used

- a. with worship rites (cf. Num. 10:2, 8, 10; 1 Chr. 13:8; 15:24, 28; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:35, 41)
- b. For military purposes (cf. Num. 10:9; 31:6; Hosea 5:8)
- c. for royal purposes (cf. 2 Kgs. 11:14)

One of these metal horns is depicted on the Arch of Titus in Rome; Josephus also describes them in Antiq. 3.12.6.

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#### **Related Resources:**

- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Trumpet](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Trumpet](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Trumpet](#)

**Joshua 6:14 Thus the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp; they did so for six days.**

- Jos 6:3,11,15
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

Lamentations 3:26 It is good that he waits silently For the salvation of the LORD.

**Comment** - **Salvation** is the Hebrew word [teshuw](#) which speaks of deliverance, usually by God. The Septuagint translates it with [soterios/soterion](#) which means saving, delivering, preserving, bringing salvation.

FAITH OBEYS THE  
LORD'S COMMAND

**Thus the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp; they did so for six days** One could read over this statement and miss the import that Israel's obedience is unhesitating, unquestioning and complete. This is a good pattern for all of us to emulate. In one sense this 7 day march reflects the mercy of the Lord, for this would have given the king of Jericho time to ponder their persistent plodding and surrender. However clearly the LORD knew they would not surrender for He had ordered their utter destruction.

Their faith as well as their feet must compass the city.  
Our faith also must compass the object of desire if we would possess it.  
"Be it done to you according to your faith" Matthew 9:29

**Matthew Henry** - "As promised deliverances must be expected in God's way so they must be expected in God's time" (Matthew Henry).

**A W Pink** - We turn next to consider the patience of their faith, which was conspicuously evidenced here. The walls of Jericho did not fall down the first day nor the sixth that Israel marched around them, but only "after they had been compassed about seven days." Nor did they fall the first time they were encompassed on the seventh day, but not until after seven circuits had been made on that day. No less than thirteen journeys around them were completed before the power of God was displayed. Why so? To test their patience as well as their courage and obedience. They must be kept waiting on the Lord....Israel were required to carry out the orders they had received, to persevere in the performance of duty, and leave the issue with the Lord. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but to those who are steadfast and persistent.

**Joshua 6:15** Then on the seventh day they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times; only on that day they marched around the city seven times.

- **they rose early at the dawning of the day.** Ps 119:147 Mt 28:1 2Pe 1:19
- **only on that day:** Jos 6:4
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SEVEN CIRCUITS  
OF THE CITY

**Then on the seventh day they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times; only on that day they marched around the city seven times** - The seventh day was unique with 7 times around the city.

**Alan Redpath** - Why had they walked thirteen times around that place in silence? I suggest it took that long for every one of them to realize that it was utterly impossible for them to capture Jericho if God were not with them--thirteen big long looks at the enemy, until they became convinced that they were no match for those behind the walls. God made the Israelites walk around the great fortification until within themselves they died to every hope of conquest unless God should intervene. ([Victorious Christian Living](#))

**Henry Morris** - The Israelite men of war, on God's instruction, circled around the city of Jericho once a day for six days, then seven times on the seventh day. This included the sabbath day, although it is not stated explicitly whether the seventh day was the sabbath. In any case, there was significant work done on the sabbath day, confirming that, even in this early period in the Mosaic dispensation, "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

**J Oswald Sanders** has an interesting comment - A march of this nature would doubtless bring ridicule from the troops on the walls of the city, and ridicule is hard to endure when one doubts the wisdom of the course being followed. What would be the most stringent test for a nation notorious for its murmuring and complaining? Would it not be the discipline of silence? No taunts, no jeers, no words of defiance--no criticism of strategy or tactics--- complete silence. It requires little imagination to picture the confusion that would reign if everyone were free to air his view on the strategy being adopted for the overthrow of this fortress! Unbridled criticism and airing of doubts would soon paralyze the nerve of faith. They would have talked themselves out of faith on the first day, for unbelief is unbelievably contagious. There was great spiritual and psychological wisdom in the muzzling of any expressions of unbelief, for this would have afforded a bridgehead that the adversary would put to good use. ([Promised-land living](#))

**Wiersbe** - If the week's schedule was a test of their patience, the divine command of silence was a test of their self-control. People who can't control their tongues can't control their bodies (James 3:1-2), and what good are soldiers whose bodies are not disciplined? "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10). In the Christian life there's "a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Ecc. 3:7); and wise is the child of God who knows the difference. Our Lord is the perfect example of this (Isa. 53:7; Matt. 26:62-63; 27:14; Luke 23:9). ([Be Strong -- Joshua: Putting God's Power to Work in Your Life](#))

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## **GEORGE BUSH** [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**15. The seventh day—they rose early.** Because on this day they had to encompass the city seven times; a proof that the city could not have been very large, and also that the whole Israelitish host could not have been employed in going round it; for as the fighting men alone amounted to 600,000, independently of the mass of the people, who made a total of at least two millions more, the thing is utterly inconceivable. A select number, sufficient for the occasion, was doubtless all that were employed. It is evident that in the course of these seven days there must have been a sabbath. This the Jewish writers say was the last, the day on which the city was taken; but this is not certain. It is not material, however, which day it was. That God, who commanded the sabbath to be set apart for rest and religious purposes, has a right to suspend or alter the usual modes of its observance when he sees fit, and his command is sufficient to make any action lawful at any time.

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## **Joshua 6:15-27 Theodore Epp A Shout of Faith**

According to Hebrews 11:30 (note), the walls of Jericho fell down by faith. Some people want to attribute the collapse of the walls to an earthquake.

It makes no difference to us what means God used. Whatever He did was timed so that after Israel had passed around the city the 13th time, and when the trumpets blew and the shout was made, then the walls fell. It took place just when God said it would.

God will speak again, and this time to the whole world. Just as the shout of the Israelites preceded the judgment on Jericho, so the Lord Jesus will come for His saints, descending from heaven with a shout and with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first (see note 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Then will follow the Great Tribulation, the time of awful judgment for the earth. Hebrews 12:26 (note) prophesies of this when it says of God, "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."

Peter described it in 2 Peter 3 in these words: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (see note 2 Peter 3:10).

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:52).

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### **Joshua 6:15 Dr Woodrow Kroll Perfect Promises**

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

Every few years the countries of the free world participate in national elections. The democratic system of government provides the opportunity for men and women representing their parties to campaign, make promises and pledges, and run for office on the basis of their platform and promises. Generally the winner is the person who promises the most and who, in the minds of the voters, can actually deliver on those campaign promises. Unfortunately history has taught us that most political promises are little more than campaign rhetoric and the voters have justifiable reason for concern about their validity. In contrast to this are the promises of God in which the believer may have absolute confidence. God has a perfect record of keeping His promises.

The story of Jericho's conquest is a fine example of the completed promises of God. Prior to their entrance into the promised land, Joshua sent two men across the Jordan to spy out the city of Jericho. These spies came to the place where information would freely flow among the men of the town. They entered the house of Rahab the harlot. Although the life of Rahab as a harlot was certainly not condoned by the Israeli spies, nevertheless apparently the Lord God had been working in the heart of Rahab. When the king of Jericho attempted to track down the two spies, Rahab hid them on her roof among the sticks of flax. She confessed her faith in Jehovah God saying "The LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Joshua 2:11). Because this woman aided His secret agents, God promised Rahab and her household salvation in the midst of the peril of her city.

God's battle plan for the defeat of Jericho was unconventional, to say the least. Joshua would command seven priests, bearing seven trumpets of ram's horns before the ark of the Lord, to march around the city walls in silence for seven days, once each day until the seventh. On the seventh day they would march seven times around the wall. Then amid the blast of the seven jubilee trumpets and the war cry of the people of God, the destruction of the stronghold at Jericho would take place.

The children of Israel did as God commanded. "And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day and compassed the city after the same manner seven times" Joshua (6:15). On the seventh circuit of the seventh day the people shouted and the walls of Jericho fell down flat. The army of Israel entered the city unhindered and utterly destroyed all that was in the city, with one notable exception--the household of Rahab. Because they obeyed the Lord explicitly, the people saw two great promises of the Lord performed on the same day. The city of Jericho, the strongest outpost of the Canaanite defenses, had been utterly destroyed as God had promised. Likewise Rahab and her household had been spared destruction, as God had promised.

But there is one final promise of God that can be seen in the conquest of Jericho. In verse 26 Joshua counseled the people, warning them, "Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." To show that God means business when He makes a promise, Joshua imprecated a solemn curse on anyone who would rebuild the now-destroyed Jericho. This curse was literally fulfilled in the fate of Heil, the Bethelite, who rebuilt Jericho in the reign of Ahab (about 925 B.C.). Heil's firstborn son, Abiram, died as he was laying the foundation for the rebuilding of Jericho. Also his youngest son, Segub, died while he was setting up the gates of the city (1 Kings 16:34). What God promises, God performs.

Whether the promise is for salvation, as in the case of Rahab, or for destruction, as in the case of Heil, the promises of God must never be taken lightly. Whatever God promises, God performs. You can count on it.

### **MORNING HYMN**

#### **[Standing on the promises that cannot fail.](#)**

When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail  
By the living word of God I shall prevail,  
Standing on the promises of God.

**Joshua 6:16 At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city.**

- **Shout:** Jos 6:2 Jdg 7:20-22 2Ch 13:15 20:22,23
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A TRUMPET BLAST AND A SHOUT

**At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city** - After 6 days of silent marching Joshua gives the command to shout or as the NET version says "Give the battle cry!" Notice that the "for" functions as a term of explanation, in this case explaining to the people why they were to shout. This explanation would clearly have drawn immediate obedience from the people. They were learning "step by step" to trust in the LORD's power to deliver on His promises.

Recall the assurance of the LORD's declaration to Joshua in Joshua 6:2 "See, **I have given** Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors.

**NET Note** on "for the LORD has given to you the city." The verbal form is a perfect, probably indicating certitude here.

**J Oswald Sanders** - It is the nature of faith that it believes and rejoices in advance of realization. Every step around Jericho had been a step of appropriation by faith. But the climax came with the mighty shout, the release of long pent-up emotion, which was the outward expression of their inward confidence in God. It must be noted that the shout of faith arose before the walls showed any sign of collapse, not after. It would be easy to shout afterward. Once again, in the second impossible situation, they had risked everything on the faithfulness of God, and their faith received its reward.

Compass the frowning wall  
With silent prayer; then raise--  
Before the ramparts fall--  
The victor's song of raise.  
It shall be done! Faith rests assured;  
Challenge thy mountain in the Lord!  
(Author Unknown)

A magnificent example of the shout of faith is told of Robert Moffat, father-in-law of David Livingstone. For seven years Moffat had been engaged in missionary work in Bechuanaland, but with no visible results. In those days, mails to and from Scotland, his homeland, took six months. One year, his home church wrote inquiring what they could send him as a Christmas present. As yet there was not a single convert, but in sublime faith Moffat replied, "A communion service . ." When it arrived at Christmas, was it put to use? Of course it was! That letter had been his shout of faith after he had encircled his Jericho for seven years. God could not disappoint His trusting servant, and many new believers joined the missionary in using that Communion service to celebrate the Lord's death. (Promised Land Living)

## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**16. Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.** As before it does not appear that the people were informed how they were to cross the Jordan till they came to the river's brink, so on this occasion Joshua seems to have forbore telling them how they were to become masters of the city, till they had compassed it six times. Their implicit obedience in this, as in the former instance, strikingly evinced their faith, which is commended by the apostle, Heb. 11:30. 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days.'

## James Smith - THE FALL OF JERICHO Joshua 6

"Faith is a courier swift and sure, who will carry us to the absent." —MADAM DE JASPARIN.

The terror of the Lord had fallen upon the Canaanites on hearing what the Lord had done. Joshua believed God, and He overcame. All really holy men are a terror to the ungodly. Those who live only for God will have a power for Him that the wisdom and strength of the world cannot resist (v. 1). All human defences melt in the powerful presence of the Holy Ghost. Power for testimony is oneness with God, witness the life of Jesus Christ. It was easy for Joshua to overcome, just because he trusted in God, who goeth before in the spirit of conviction, showing to the enemy their utter weakness in the presence of the Almighty. We shall notice three leading thoughts in this chapter—

### I. A Doomed City, OR THE SINNER'S STATE It was—

**1. UNDER THE CURSE OF GOD.** "The city shall be accursed" (v. 17). The sentence of death had been passed upon it forty years ago (Exod. 23:27, 28), although then they were glorying in their strength, ignorant of their condition in the sight of God, just as many still are insensible of their state. Their doom was as surely fixed when they were rejoicing as when they were trembling. The Scriptures hath concluded all under sin, and so under the curse of a broken law. The sentence of death has already passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (Rom. 5:12).

**2. STRAITLY SHUT UP** (v. 1). If it had been straitly shut up by God as Noah was shut up in the ark, then they might have laughed the Israelites to scorn. When He shutteth no man can open, but they shut themselves up against God. He that

covereth his sins shall not prosper. This is characteristic of the vain effort of proud, defiant sinners, shutting themselves within the walls of their own righteousness. Every mouth must be shut up.

**3. QUICKLY BROUGHT DOWN.** "The wall fell flat" (v. 20). Their only refuge failed, and great was the fall of it. What is the value of a refuge that will not stand the day of trial? It is like a rotten ship in a storm. These great walls, the work of their own hands, were all their confidence (Isa. 28:17). Such hopes will only make ashamed.

**II. A Strange Assault, OR THE VICTORY OF FAITH**(Heb. 11:30). The means appointed by God are often foolishness with man. But the believing heart delights to obey. The means appointed were the—

**1. COMPASSING OF THE CITY**(v. 3). Here we see the measure of faith. Heb 11:30 says: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell." They must have had great faith; their faith as well as their feet must compass the city. Our faith also must compass the object of desire if we would possess it. "According to your faith," etc. It is in the compassing that the faith is tried, for nothing is seen but huge walls of difficulty. Nothing is felt but human inability. But these only make the trusting heart more confident in God.

**2. BLOWING OF THE TRUMPETS**(v. 4). Here we see the means of faith. The means faith uses are far different from the inventions of the carnal mind. They are the simple, seemingly weak, things of God; but they are the weapons, not of doubt or experiment, but of faith. The sling and the stone would be no use to Saul, but they are mighty in the hand of David. The trumpet of the Gospel must be blown in faith if the victory is to be won. The holy lips of the priests alone were to blow. Holy men must still speak, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

**3. CARRYING OF THE ARK** (v. 6). Here we see the object of faith. The ark, the symbol of Jehovah's presence. All was arranged according to the ark. What confidence! The Ark that divided Jordan is coming. Their faith would not be in their blowing or marching, and yet if they do not march the ark does not follow. So our faith must look up to Him who has said, "Lo, I am with you always," and press on with the compassing and the blowing.

**4. SHOUTING OF THE PEOPLE** (v. 20). Here we see the expectation of faith. This is not the work of the priests alone, but of all the people (v. 5). Through what has been done faith has been increased in the hearts of all Israel. Now all are trusting and expecting, and all shout the downfall and the victory. Why so few great victories for God? Because so few expect. So few join in the shout. Oh, how much blowing there is in these days of much preaching, but how little shouting among the people.

**III. A Family Spared, OR THE GREAT SALVATION** (v. 25). "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not" (Heb. 11:31). Notice that she—

**1. BELIEVED.** "I know that the Lord hath given you the land; ... for the Lord your God, He is God" (chap. 2:9, 11). She hid the message as well as the messengers. Her old beliefs and prejudices were cast aside. She heard and believed (vv. 2, 11). "Who hath believed our report, to whom is the arm (power) of the Lord revealed." He that believeth shall be saved.

**2. OBEYED.** "She bound the scarlet line in the window" (chap. 2:21). Her faith was justified in the sight of men by her works. She hid the messengers and exposed the line (James 2:25). "Faith without works is dead." By the scarlet cord she is to be justified or condemned. Is the crimson blood between you and the approaching vengeance, which must come upon all who obey not the Gospel? When I see the line (blood) I will pass over you.

**3. TESTIFIED.** She not only saved herself, but "all that she had" (v. 23). How she would persuade them we know not, but drowning ones will catch at a straw; the hope might seem vain, but the honour of Joshua was at stake. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." "Behold, now is the accepted time;" not when the walls are fallen flat. "Come thou and all thy house into the ark."

**Joshua 6:17 "The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.**

- **Under the ban** Jos 7:1 Lev 27:28,29 Nu 21:2,3 1Co 2:7 Ezr 10:8 \*marg: Isa 34:6 Jer 46:10 Eze 39:17 Mic 4:13 1Co 16:22 Ga 3:10,12
- **only Rahab the harlot:** Jos 2:1
- **because:** Jos 6:22,23 2:4-6,22 Ge 12:3 1Sa 15:6 Mt 10:41,42 25:40 Heb 6:10 Heb 11:31 Jas 2:25
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

James 2:25+ In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

Hebrews 11:31+ By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

JERICHO UNDER THE BAN  
BELONGS TO GOD

**The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD** Under the ban is actually "defined" in this

passage, for the word describes the fact that all of **it belongs to the LORD**. The Septuagint translates ban ([herem](#)) with [anathēma](#) which means something dedicated to the deity or "votive gifts" (cf Lk 21:5) and in a negative sense, as one delivered over to divine wrath. Both senses are in play in this passage.

**Utley - the city shall be under the ban** This is the word [herem](#), which means "devoted to God for destruction." It is the concept of holy war where everything in the city that breathed must die because it is given to God and, therefore, it becomes too holy for human use. The one exception is Rahab, the harlot, and her family, because of the help she gave to the spies and their oath in YHWH's name to protect her.

**Only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent** - Joshua not only tells the people to shout, but he gives them very specific instructions that everything in the city is to be devoted to the Lord. Only **Rahab the harlot** and all the people who are in her house shall be spared. And the reason is: She hid the spies that were sent (cf Jas 2:25+, Heb 11:31+). You notice that Joshua does not mention the red cord hanging from Rahab's window because by now everyone had seen it on the previous thirteen encirclements of the city and everyone by now knew the meaning of the red cord.

**Believer's Study Bible** - (vv. 17-19) That these verses interrupt the narrative and contain a divine command shows the emphasis being placed on strict obedience. A form of the word [herem](#) (Heb.), "accursed" or "curse," is used four times in Joshua 6:18. It describes something separated from common use, marked either for temple use or for destruction. It could also be translated "devoted." The word [akar](#) (Heb.), "trouble," prepares for the next chapter, since it is used in Joshua 7:24-26. Also note the alternating references in this chapter to Rahab (Joshua 6:17, 22, 23, 25) and to the condemned inhabitants of Jericho, thus contrasting the two. **Any Canaanite could be saved by turning in faith to the Lord.** Rahab is an illustration of every believer who was under God's judgment, but has been spared by God's grace (cf Joel 2:32+). ([The Believer's Study Bible](#))

**Ryrie** - under the ban. The same Hebrew word ([herem](#)) is translated "utterly destroyed" in verse 21. It means "to ban, destroy, devote," in the sense of belonging to a god or, as here, to the true God. Jericho was completely devoted to God as **the firstfruits of Canaan**, and no booty was to be taken by the people (vv. 18-19). See note on Lev. 27:28-29.

**Matthew Henry Concise Commentary** - Verses 17-27. Jericho was to be a solemn and awful sacrifice to the justice of God, upon those who had filled up the measure of their sins. So He appoints, from whom, as creatures, they received their lives, and to whom, as sinners, they had forfeited them. Rahab perished not with them that believed not, Hebrews 11:31. All her kindred were saved with her; thus faith in Christ brings salvation to the house, Acts 16:31. She, and they with her, were plucked as brands from the burning. With Rahab, or with the men of Jericho; our portion must be assigned, as we possess or disregard the sign of salvation; even faith in Christ, which worketh by love. Let us remember what depends upon our choice, and let us choose accordingly. God shows the weight of a Divine curse; where it rests there is no getting from under it; for it brings ruin without remedy.

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**Rod Mattoon** - Rahab is a picture of a believer prepared for the return of the Lord and the judgment to come. Rahab was removed from the calamity and judgment after the shout. She was one on high looking down on the peril below. She did not know when the judgment would begin, but she was ready and prepared. Are you? John Wesley was asked by a friend, "If you were to die at midnight tomorrow, how would you spend the rest of your life until then?" Wesley replied, "I would spend my time exactly as I plan to spend it now. I will preach tonight and travel to another town tomorrow to preach in the afternoon. Then I would go to the Martin's home in the evening where they are expecting me. We will spend time fellowshipping together and praying. I would go to bed, put myself in my Father's care, go to sleep, and wake up in Heaven." Wesley was a man ready for Glory!! ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

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**Ban** (devoted, destruction, utterly destroy) ([02764](#)) [herem](#) it is something devoted unto divine service, and is under a ban. In some context as the present use, it describes a curse or extermination which implies total destruction (see Dt 7:26; 1Sa 15:18; Zech 14:11). MacKay says "The 'curse' is the ban, the utter devotion to destruction (Isa. 43:28 — and NIV footnote; Jer. 25:9) of what is an abomination in the LORD's sight."

**Herem** "conveys the "basic meaning is the exclusion of an object from the use or abuse of man and its irrevocable surrender to God. The word is related to an Arabic root meaning "to prohibit, especially to ordinary use." The word "harem," meaning the special quarters for Muslim wives, comes from it. Usually [āram](#) means a ban for utter destruction, the compulsory dedication of something which impedes or resists God's work, which is considered to be accursed before God. The idea first appears in Nu 21:2-3, where the Israelites vowed that, if God would enable them to defeat a southern Canaanite king, they would "utterly destroy" (i.e. consider as devoted and accordingly utterly destroy) his cities. This word is used regarding almost all the cities which Joshua's troops destroyed (e.g. Jericho, Josh 6:21; Ai, Josh 8:26; Makkedah, Josh 10:28; Hazor, Josh 11:11), thus indicating the rationale for their destruction. In Dt 7:2-6, the command for this manner of destruction is given, with the explanation following that, otherwise, these cities would lure the Israelites away from the Lord (cf. Dt 20:17-18). Any Israelite city that harbored idolators was to be "utterly destroyed" (Deut 13:12-15; cf. Ex 22:19). A man who was the object devoted to God came under the same ban." (Leon Wood - TWOT)

Lev. 27:21; Lev. 27:28; Num. 18:14; Deut. 7:26; Deut. 13:17; Jos. 6:17; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 7:1; Jos. 7:11; Jos. 7:12; Jos. 7:13; Jos. 7:15; Jos. 22:20; 1 Sam. 15:21; 1 Ki. 20:42; 1 Chr. 2:7; Isa. 34:5; Isa. 43:28; Ezek. 44:29; Zech. 14:11; Mal. 4:6

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**17. And the city shall be accursed.** Heb. היתה חרם *hâyithâh 'herem*, shall be a curse, an anathema; i. e. devoted to utter destruction; no spoils were to be taken, no lives to be spared, except those of Rahab and her family. **All was to be, if we may so say, consecrated to a curse.** For an account of the [herem](#) or [anathêma](#), see note on Lev. 27:21, 28, 29. It is plain from 1Ki 16:34, that Joshua spake this by Divine direction; and though to human view it may carry the aspect of undue severity, yet considered as the enactment of Him whose judgments are righteous altogether, we cannot question its perfect equity. Jericho belonged to a nation which had filled up the measure of its iniquities, and its guilt was peculiarly enhanced by reason of the amazing display of divine power which it had recently witnessed and against which it had hardened itself. It was just, therefore, that the vengeance taken should be in proportion to the light resisted. The severe judgment upon Jericho, moreover, would tend to strike terror into the hearts of the rest of the devoted nations, and make them an easier conquest.

**Only Rahab shall live, &c.** The Most High never forgets his people. When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them, whoever else may be overlooked.

**Because she hid.** The original has an extraordinary and emphatic form, implying that she carefully and diligently hid them.

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### QUESTION - [What did it mean to be devoted to destruction \(under the ban\)?](#)

**ANSWER** - In Exodus 22:20, God commands, "Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than the Lord alone, shall be devoted to destruction" (ESV).

The Hebrew word used here is *charam*, meaning "to curse, annihilate, or destroy." The literal interpretation is that the Hebrew person who sacrificed to another god was to be put to death. Idolaters received capital punishment.

The use of the phrase "devoted to destruction" elsewhere in the Old Testament confirms this understanding. In Numbers 21:3 we read, "And the Lord heeded the voice of Israel and gave over the Canaanites, and they devoted them and their cities to destruction" (ESV). The NIV translates it as, "They completely destroyed them and their towns." The idea of being devoted to destruction included destroying these cities.

In Deuteronomy 2:34 we read a review of Israel's time in the wilderness. The narrative includes, "And we captured all his cities at that time and devoted to destruction every city, men, women, and children. We left no survivors" (ESV). In this case, "devoted to destruction" clearly indicates death. Deuteronomy 3:6 offers a similar use of this phrase: "And we devoted them to destruction, as we did to Sihon the king of Heshbon" (ESV); Sihon was a king they had previously put to death.

In Joshua 6:17, Jericho was devoted to destruction. We read, "And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction" (ESV). In Joshua 10:28 the same fate befalls the city of Makkedah.

Exodus 22:20 reveals that the punishment for Jews who sacrificed to any god other than Yahweh was that they be put to death under the Mosaic Law. However, in the time of the judges and the pre-captivity kingdom, idol worship among the Jews was a perennial problem. God had made it clear that idolatry was worthy of death. Yet many wicked people and leaders through Israel's history resorted to open idol worship in ways that brought God's judgment upon them from other nations.

The enforcement of this command can be found in 1 Kings 18. In this account, [Elijah](#) challenged King Ahab's 400 prophets of [Baal](#) to call down fire from heaven. The God who answered would be the true God. When the Lord God answered, Elijah commanded, "'Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!' They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there" (1 Kings 18:40).

This command notes God's displeasure with the worship of other gods. He presents Himself as the one God who calls every person to worship Him and to believe in His Son Jesus for eternal life (John 3:16). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 6:18 "But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not covet them and take some of the things under the ban, and make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it.**

- **But as for you, only keep yourselves from:** Ro 12:9 2Co 6:17 Eph 5:11 Jas 1:27 1Jn 5:21
- **accursed:** Jos 7:1,11,12,15 De 7:26 13:17
- **make the camp:** Jos 7:11,12 22:18-20 1Sa 14:28-42 Ec 9:18 Jon 1:12
- **trouble:** Jos 7:25 2Sa 21:1 1Ki 18:17,18
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Joshua 7:1 But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

Joshua 7:11 "Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have

also put them among their own things.

Joshua 7:12 "Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst.

Joshua 7:15 'It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.'"

HAND'S OFF  
THE BOOTY!

**Booty** is loot taken by force. Achan must have missed this warning (he had an "aching heart" aching for riches)!

**But as for you, only keep (shamar) yourselves from the things under the ban** - NIV = "**keep away from** the devoted things" This command to **keep** away from the "devoted" things could not have been any clearer. It means to guard, to keep oneself in this case from evil, and is the same verb used by the psalmist of Yahweh protecting and guarding His own "sheep." (Ps 127:7-8). The **Septuagint** translates **shamar** with **phulasso** which means to guard like a military sentinel would at his post.

**Utley** on **keep yourselves from the things under the ban** - YHWH's people must restrain (Qal IMPERATIVE) themselves. Chapter 7 will describe the consequences of disobedience!

**So that** (purpose clause) **you do not covet them and take some of the things under the ban**- Note the progression. It is implied that you see the treasures which are under the ban or to be devoted to the Lord. The "eye gate" is usually the problem in stirring up fleshly energized covetousness! Then you covet them. And then you take them! So first make a choice to "guard" yourself the "devoted things" (like gold, etc). In Psalm 101:3 David offers good advice (he learned the truth in 2Sa 11:1-4!) declaring "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me." . The idea is to not even go near. Second, Joshua explains why they are not to go near (**keep yourselves from**), because if they do, they will covet them and thirdly it will culminate in one taking some of the the forbidden **ban!**

**THOUGHT** - In the classic book *The Holy War* ([online](#) or [Audio part 1](#), [Audio part 2](#)) by John Bunyan, Bunyan mentions 5 gates (Ear-gate, Eye-gate, Mouth-gate, Nose-gate, Feel-gate). The focus of the story was the capture of a city called **Mansoul**. In it **Diabolus** (the devil) has taken it and the battle rages as the **Prince Emmanuel** works to recapture it. The way it was overcome was because **the gates of the city had been compromised**. Diabolus and his wicked imps had traversed it by taking advantage of the **Eye Gate and Ear Gate** which are symbolic of the use of the senses to cause the capture of the city. This begs the question are you setting an alert sentry at your "eye gate?" Or is the sentry at your "eye gate" dosing off and falling asleep, allowing deadly temptations to enter in?

**and make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble (akar) on it** - The danger of taking something under the ban is not only personal disobedience and discipline but a production of a "ripple effect" so that the entire nation is adversely affected!

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**Keep** (careful, guard, kept, observe, watch) **08104 shamar** means to keep, watch, preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one's guard. The first use of **shamar** in **Ge 2:15** is instructive as Adam was placed in the garden (a perfect environment) and was commanded to "**keep**" it which in the **Septuagint** is translated with **phulasso** (which is used to translate many of the OT uses of **shamar**) which means to guard like a military sentinel would at his post.

Uses of **shamar** in Joshua - Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:8; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 10:18; Jos. 22:2; Jos. 22:3; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 23:6; Jos. 23:11; Jos. 24:17;

**Trouble** (Lxx = ektribo = rub out, destroy, ruin) **05916 akar** is a verb meaning to cause trouble, stir up resentment, cause hatred. It usually describes the trouble brought upon one from another person. The first use is by Jacob addressing his sons Simeon and Levi declaring "You have brought **trouble** (Lxx = **miseo** = to be hated) on me." (By killing Hamor and his son Shechem who had defiled their sister Dinah - Ge 34:26-27). (Ge 34:30) In Pr 11:17 "the cruel man does himself **harm** (Lxx = exollumi - to destroy utterly in the present tense = continually destroys himself!)" In Pr 11:29 Solomon warns that "He who **troubles** his own house will inherit wind," which "refers to actions which make life difficult for one's family." His reward is "empty air," nothing that can be grasped, nothing he can put his hands on. In 1Sa 14:29 Jonathan (son of Saul) declared that Saul had "**troubled** the land" by telling the soldiers none could eat food (1Sa 14:28) Ahab called Elijah a **troubler** of Israel." (1Ki 18:17, 18).

13x bring trouble(1), brought trouble(1), does...harm(1), grew worse(1), trouble(3), troubled(3), troubler(2), troubles(2). - Gen. 34:30; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 7:25; Jdg. 11:35; 1 Sam. 14:29; 1 Ki. 18:17; 1 Ki. 18:18; 1 Chr. 2:7; Ps. 39:2; Prov. 11:17; Prov. 11:29; Prov. 15:6; Prov. 15:27

**18. In any wise keep yourselves.** That is, by all means, most carefully, studiously, vigilantly. This city was as it were, the first fruits of Canaan, and as such wholly devoted to the Lord. The spoil of other cities, subsequently taken, was allowed to be divided among the captors, but this was to be an exception to the general rule.

**And make the camp of Israel a curse.** Heb. 'put, or place the camp a curse.' The Heb. word for 'put' has often the signification of 'make, constitute, render.' The meaning is, that they would thereby render themselves obnoxious to the curse denounced upon the city.

**And trouble it.** Bring distress upon it by provoking the Divine displeasure, and interrupting the prosperous course of your victories. Heb. עכרתם achartem, from עכר achar, to trouble. See note on Gen. 34:30, 31. This is spoken as if in foresight of the sin of Achan, to whom Joshua afterwards said, ch. 7:25, 'Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day.' From hence he is called Achar, or trouble. 1 Chron. 2:7.

**Joshua 6:19 "But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD."**

- **all the silver:** 2Sa 8:11 1Ch 18:11 26:20,26,28 28:12 2Ch 15:18 31:12 Isa 23:17,18 Mic 4:13
- **are holy,** Lev 19:24 Zec 14:20,21
- **the treasury:** 1Ki 7:51 14:26 2Ki 24:13 1Ch 26:20 Ne 7:70,71 10:38 Jer 38:11 Mt 27:6 Mk 12:41
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE THINGS  
DEVOTED TO THE LORD

**But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD** - In short, the all (not a percentage) of the treasure retrieved from Jericho goes into the treasury of the LORD. It all belongs to Him! No exceptions! This crucial instruction is the last from Joshua before things began to happen.

**Holy to the LORD** - 22x - Exod. 28:36; Exod. 30:10; Exod. 31:15; Exod. 39:30; Lev. 23:20; Lev. 27:14; Lev. 27:21; Lev. 27:23; Lev. 27:28; Lev. 27:30; Lev. 27:32; Num. 6:8; Jos. 6:19; 2 Chr. 35:3; Ezr. 8:28; Neh. 8:9; Jer. 2:3; Jer. 31:40; Ezek. 48:14; Zech. 14:20; Zech. 14:21; Lk. 2:23

**McGee** - Jericho represents the world to the believer. It is strong and formidable and foreboding-- the conquest depends upon faith " For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4). Hebrews 11 reveals how faith worked in all ages in the lives of God's choice servants as they met the world head-on and overcame by faith.

**Don Anderson** - Since Jericho symbolizes the world to us and our relationship to it, it would be good for us to consider the warning of John the Apostle in 1Jn 2:15-17+

"**Do not love** (present imperative with a negative see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away (present tense - in the process of passing away), and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**18. In any wise keep yourselves.** That is, by all means, most carefully, studiously, vigilantly. This city was as it were, the first fruits of Canaan, and as such wholly devoted to the Lord. The spoil of other cities, subsequently taken, was allowed to be divided among the captors, but this was to be an exception to the general rule.

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**Joshua 6:20 So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city.**

- **wall:** Jos 6:5 2Co 10:4-5 Heb 11:30
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses (WE WALK BY FAITH). 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

Hebrews 11:30 **By faith** the walls of Jericho fell down **after** they had been encircled for seven days.

One Schematic of Fortified Walls of Jericho ([see note](#))

THE SHOUT AND TRUMPET LEAVE  
THE WALL IN A SHAMBLES

**So** - Therefore. A term of conclusion. Joshua's instructions are followed by action steps (literally 7 times around) and action shouts!

**Madvig** points out that ""To emphasize the divine intervention, no secondary causes for the collapse of the wall are mentioned. It would be no less a miracle were we to find that God used an earthquake to bring the walls down." ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**W E Vine** on Israel's conquest of Jericho - The ordinary way would be by direct attack. God's ways are not man's ways. The people were taught their complete dependence upon the Lord. (The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine)

This incredible event is recorded in the Hebrews "Hall of Faith" "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days." (Hebrews 11:30+) . Whose faith is being touted here? It has to be all the Israelites, Joshua, the leaders and the people. Why? Because faith is an "action" word and true faith calls for obedience, which Israel manifested. Faith in Jehovah's unusual command was manifest by obedience to His charge. Faith that pleases God is faith that obeys God and believes it will be rewarded by God as it was in this case with a total victory over this strong pagan enemy (cf Heb 11:6+).

**THOUGHT-** Notice the little word "AFTER" in Hebrews 11:30 - What is the point? What would have happened had they shouted after walking around one time? Six times? Absolutely nothing because **PARTIAL OBEDIENCE** is always **DISOBEDIENCE!** God is not playing games with us. He wants total, wholehearted commitment! Perhaps you are not experiencing the "abundant life" Jesus promised in John 10:10. Could it be that you've only walked around your impregnable "Jericho" only 6 times, that you have given partial obedience, but hesitated to root out that cherished pet sin that precludes complete obedience? Jesus wants ALL of our hearts, not 99%! Read Mark 12:30-31+ for a refresher!

**Cyril Barber** - The wall was approximately thirty feet high. The part of the wall on which Rahab's house had been built did not collapse. Most writers believe that the walls fell down because of an earthquake. If so, then the quake occurred at precisely the time the men uttered their war cry (which would be a remarkable miracle of timing). The Israelite encampment approximately 1.5 miles away was unaffected, and the sheep and cattle did not panic or stampede. I was taught that if Christians would surround their problems with prayer the difficulties they faced would "fall down flat" in the same way the walls of the city of Jericho had collapsed before the Israelites. This teaching was applied specifically to missions with the expectation that the "walls" of heathenism would crumble before the prayers of God's people. Unfortunately the proponents of this teaching did not go back to the text of Scripture to verify that this is what the passage taught. Joshua had said to the people, "You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, 'shout!' Then you shall shout!" Happily for us there are verses in the New Testament that do encourage us to pray for ourselves as well as for others, but to use the conquest of Jericho as an example of successful prayer is to stretch the teaching of this passage. What is remarkable is the combination of faith and obedience on the part of the priests and the people (cf. Hebrews 11:30). And faith in the overriding providence of God gave the Israelites confidence that the soldiers in Jericho would not sally forth and engage them in battle while they were marching around the city. ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

**Spurgeon** - **Believing** and **obeying** always run side by side...Faith and obedience are bound up in the same bundle. He that obeys God, trusts God; and he that trusts God, obeys God...(In short) Obedience is the hallmark of faith.

Jericho was insurmountable, but that is exactly where faith triumphs.

**The people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city** - Israel obeys and experiences the blessings associated with obedience as God carried out in effect a "divine demolition!" This would have a dual effect - fear factor of Jericho-ites; faith-factor for Israelites.

Remember that obstacles to us are opportunities for God to show Himself great and mighty in our life.

This same thought is sometimes expressed this way -

"We are faced with a series of great opportunities-brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems."

What disguised opportunities do you face today?

How did the wall fall? It certainly was not the reverberating effect of Israel shouting. By all human standards, Jericho was impregnable. This seemed to be a humanly impossible situation. Israel, by this time, had only a limited trained army. They had no machines of war, no artillery to batter down the walls, and no equipment to scale the walls. God did not tell Joshua and the sons of Israel to attack the city with carnal weapons of war, but to obey the commands of a supernatural working God. Clearly it is a manifestation of the power of the LORD. One is reminded of Zechariah 4:6

"Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts."

**THOUGHT** - Liberal scholars try to explain away this supernatural intervention, but faith sees it as a clear indicator of God's mighty power at work on the part of His people. What are the towering walls that seem an insurmountable obstacle? Faith enables us to march around those walls, so that they melt like snow before the noonday sun.

The fact that this battle was won not by human might but by spiritual might reminds us that in our Jericho "battles" we need to remember the wise words of Paul that although "we walk in the flesh, **we do not war according to the flesh**, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup>We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5+)

**Mattoon** - The walls fell flat and the people went up into the city to attack. The word "flat" is translated from a Hebrew word which means "underneath it." The walls collapsed from the very foundation. ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

The secret to Israel's strength wasn't in her people's military might. It was the presence of the Lord in their midst that made the difference. That's why it's interesting to learn that the **trumpets** the priests blew were the trumpets blown during Israel's feasts to announce the Lord's presence. The Israelites would have known the trumpets' significance.

**Henry Morris** - fell down flat. The miraculous collapse of Jericho's walls has been attributed by many to a providentially timed earthquake. This may be the case, but whatever the reason, the fact of Jericho's collapse and burning has been adequately confirmed archaeologically. Strategically located near the Jordan at the entrance to Canaan, Jericho is a very old occupation site, with numerous towns erected one above the other at the same site. The Jericho of Joshua's time has been disputed by archaeologists, especially in view of the uncertainties in both pottery and radiocarbon dating and the ongoing controversy over the date of the exodus. Nevertheless, some conservative archaeologists have argued cogently in favor of accepting the traditional date (around 1450 B.C.), at which time the Jericho site does seem to show evidence of a collapse of its walls and a burning of the city.

**William MacDonald** - Reason would claim that such an impregnable fortress could be taken only by superior forces. But faith's methods are different. God uses strategies that appear foolish to men in order to accomplish His purposes...Military experts would write off the method as ludicrous. But it worked! The weapons of the spiritual warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds (2Co 10:4-note). ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Chrysostom** - The soundings of trumpets, though one were to sound for ten thousand years, cannot throw down walls, but **faith** can do all things (quoted by Jamieson)

**Jack Arnold** offers this pithy, practical application - Do you want to be a victorious Christian with a triumphant faith? You say, "Of course I do; every Christian wants that for his life." Well, then if you want a triumphant faith, you must exercise real faith. It is not enough to talk about faith, but you must actually believe God if you are ever going to see Him supernaturally work for you. Faith is the key to a life of progressive victory in Christ. The Christian's life, from beginning to end, must be a life of faith in a supernatural working God (2Co 5:7). Without faith, a Christian cannot progress in his spiritual life, no victories can be won, and no fruit can be manifested for God's glory. In the children of Israel and Joshua, their leader, we have the example of a triumphant faith as God brought down the walls of Jericho. However, this triumphant faith did not just happen automatically, but there were certain promises, precepts and principles that Israel had to obey before the walls came tumbling down. ([Sermon](#))

Summary lessons gleaned from Israel's march around Jericho - (from [Faith to Conquer and Convert \(Hebrews 11:30-31\)](#) by **Steven Cole**)

- 1) God's way of victory over these enemies accentuates His power and our weakness.
- 2) **Faith** must obey God implicitly.
- 3) **Faith** must wait upon God.
- 4) **Faith** must wait on God expectantly.

The popular old song [I Believe In Miracles](#) could have been Joshua's favorite song after the opening of the Jordan and the falling down of Jericho's walls.

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**Mattoon** - For years this story has been ridiculed and considered untrue! Archeologist Briant Wood excavated this site and published his findings in the [March, 1990, issue of the Biblical Archeological Review](#)

1. He found the city was strongly fortified.
2. The battle was after the harvest because the granaries were still full even to this day. Pottery jars were full of charred grain.
3. There was no way to flee from the city.
4. The siege was short.
5. The walls were leveled and fell outward.
6. The city was not plundered.
7. The city was burned and the wood and grain were charred. ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

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**Robert Foster** in his "Challenge... a biweekly letter from the heart of a man to men" says,

Hebrews 11:30 "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days" The city walls of Jericho were massive ... 30 feet high and about 15 feet thick. This frontier fortress was impregnable with ramparts wide enough for two chariots to drive side-by-side. An impossible obstacle to the ragtag gang of ex-slaves. The spies report was right on: "these cities in Canaan are fortified to heaven." Deuteronomy 1:28. Joshua, the Jewish General, knew that Jericho was invincible . . . except ... God had a plan. "People who walk by faith don't see obstacles • .. they see opportunities."

And that is exactly what happened! Israel marched in silence around the city 13 times in seven days . On the last go-round, the priests blew their trumpets...the people shouted as thunder..."and the walls fell down flat." Jericho was taken by men who thought not what they could do but of what God could do with..... through....and for them. They were prepared to believe that their obvious weakness was able for an incredible task. "Human wisdom would have advocated the purchase of slings and catapults and the amassing of huge stockpiles of stones for ammunition. Human wisdom would have suggested digging trenches to enable sappers to creep up to the walls and undermine them. Human wisdom would have called for starving the people of Jericho into submission. But like the Ford Motor Company, faith had a better idea!" The real battle was for men's hearts...not the walls of Jericho . God's purpose was not to impart an expertise in warfare but to provide an exercise in faith. It was seven days as an education in trust in Jehovah ... not to battle "the city of palm trees. " **"The strength of a man consists in finding out the way that God is going and then gets in step with Him. The lesson from Jericho is simply this: learn to go God's way!** Not passive or active fighting, resisting or revolting against Divine authority, but 'as Thou wilt; what Thou wilt; when Thou wilt'" By faith the walls of Jericho fell . . . not by an earthquake, nor mighty winds off the Great Sea ... nor by the strategy of man's mind. God accomplished the destruction with or without "scientific" means...the glory is the Lord's not Joshua's. God placed an invisible steel band around the foundation of that city wall and tightened it. . .and when God does that to the foundation of any structure , national or personal . . . beware! The absolute and unquestioning obedience of Joshua and the people leads to this moment of great triumph. Their obedient response in faith, believing God, brought triumph in this situation.

**A C Gaebelein** - We must also think here of the walls, the hindrances, the obstacles in our lives as believers, as we pass through the world. The enemy often tries to terrify us by these, as he discouraged Israel at Kadesh by the walled cities. Alas! we often do what Joshua did not do before Jericho. We measure the walls, we study the difficulties, we are occupied with our perplexities and trials. We reckon with the walls, instead of reckoning with the Lord and His power. By faith walls still fall down.

**Alan Redpath** - But, in thinking of these simple lessons of victory, I want more especially to give this text its proper place in all the revelation of God's Word. I would lift it out of the narrow realm of the personal and individual, and show you the tremendous Jerichos which stand in the way of the people of God as a whole. There is the **Jericho of sin**. There is the **Jericho of indifference**. There is the **Jericho of materialism**. There is the **Jericho of paganism**. Worse than that, there is the Jericho within the church of disloyal Christians, of unconsecrated lives, of people who have become so used to sinners going to hell that they don't care. Surrounding the Church of God today and within her walls stand endless **Jerichos** which seem to be utterly unconquerable.

**F B Meyer** - The apostle speaks of strongholds that had to be cast down, and of high things that exalted themselves against the knowledge of God; and asserts that he did not war against such things according to the flesh, and that the weapons of his warfare were not of the flesh, but mighty before God for the casting down of strongholds, and for the bringing of every high and proud thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. What need there is for all Christian workers to ponder these pregnant words!

**Irving Jensen** - The lessons for Israel at Jericho are beneficial for the Christian today. Faith and obedience to instructions from God will see the fortress of the enemy of the soul crumble under the mighty hand of the Lord. For this purpose the "Son of God [was] manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

**Handley C. G. Moule** in his book **Faith: Its Nature and Its Works** says, Faith, by the nature and necessity of the case, is practical. If true to its description, faith is personal reliance on a person, exercised by a living soul in a real life. It is an attitude taken and maintained with a view to the conditions of duty, labor, suffering, opportunity, faculty, which make the path of that real life what it is. It presupposes something of the unknown, the uncertain, the difficult, the perilous, as lying along that path. And the believer, the man of faith, addresses himself to that path with the persuasion that the one true secret by which to tread it aright and to attain at last its radiant end, is to keep in contact with the Divine Guide and to trust him for leading and for power.

**Ronald Dunn** in his book **The Faith Crisis** says, When my brother and I were small boys, we would go to our father at Christmastime and ask for money so we could buy him a present. Dad would give us a few dollars and we would go to town and buy him a Christmas present with his own money. On Christmas morning under the tree would be a gift with a card that read "To Dad from Barry and Ronny." It didn't occur to me how presumptuous that was buying my father a present with his own money and then acting as though the gift came from me. It didn't occur to me until my children came to me at Christmastime asking for money so they could buy me a present. It is the same with the faith we bring to God. We are simply presenting to Him that which He has given us. This means that whenever God puts us in a situation that demands faith, we can be assured that He will provide the faith He demands. And He will never demand more than He has provided. In this way, God gets all the credit for any faith we may have, and thus no flesh can glory in His presence.

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### **Play this old Maranatha song**

#### **[Let the Walls Fall Down](#)**

Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
By His love Let the walls fall down

Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
By His love, let the walls fall down

One by one, we're drawn together  
One by one, to Jesus' side  
One in Him, we'll live forever  
Strangers He has reconciled

Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
By His love Let the walls fall down

In His love, no walls between us  
In His love a common ground  
Kneeling at the cross of Jesus  
All our pride comes tumbling down

Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
By His blood let the walls fall down

Let the walls  
Let the walls  
Let the walls  
All fall down

Let the walls  
Let the walls  
Let the walls  
All fall down

Let the walls  
Let the walls  
Let the walls  
All fall down

Let the walls

Let the walls  
Let the walls  
All fall down

Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
By His love, let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
Let the walls fall down  
By His love, let the walls fall down

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## GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**20. So the people shouted, &c.** More literally rendered from the Heb., 'So the people shouted and blew with the trumpets (i. e. the priests blew in the name of the people,) and it came to pass when the people heard the sound of the trumpets, that the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, and the people went up,' &c. The latter clause is merely a more detailed and exact account of what is contained in the first. Probably great numbers were killed by the falling of the wall. We are not warranted, perhaps, to speak of this event as typical. Nevertheless it was doubtless intended to convey most important instruction to all succeeding ages. It was peculiarly calculated to show how easily God can make a way for the accomplishment of his own purposes, and for the salvation of his people. If it did not typify, it certainly well illustrates, the victories which the gospel was to obtain over all the principalities and powers of earth and hell. No human force was to be used. Nothing but the simple announcement of the truth, and that by the instrumentality of weak and sinful men—men unlearned, unskilled in logic, and unfurnished with eloquence—was the means chosen for the destruction of idolatry, and the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom over the earth. Yet how mightily has the bare sound of the gospel trumpet prevailed for the overthrow of Satan's empire in the world!

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**John Phillips** - To them, **Jericho was insurmountable**, but that is exactly where **faith triumphs**. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell" ([Heb 11:30](#)). Human wisdom would have advocated the purchase of slings and catapults and the amassing of huge stockpiles of stones for ammunition. Human wisdom would have suggested digging trenches to enable sappers to creep up to the walls and undermine them. Human wisdom would have called for starving the people of Jericho into submission. But faith had a better way. Faith does not oppose Satan's devices with human devices. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2Co 10:4+). (Exploring Hebrews: An Expository Commentary)

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**Alan Carr** - There are some reasons why Israel experienced victory at Jericho:

1. They had a Word from God—(v. 2–6) 2 Tim. 2:15; John 16:13
2. They believed God—(v. 8–20) God said it, that settled it! Do we really believe God? Mark 11:22; Matt. 21:21–22!
3. They acted in faith—(III. Heb. 11:1; 11:6) (III. 1 John 5:14–15; James 1:8
4. They did it God's way—(III. This is the secret to success!) His way may seem too hard, too slow, or as in this case too foolish, but His way is always the best way! (III. Isa. 55:8–9
5. God gave them the victory—(v. 20–21) ([How To Make Your Walls Fall Down Flat](#))

### **The Walls of Jericho - Archaeology Confirms They Really Did Come A-tumblin' Down**

- [For full article click Answers in Genesis.](#)

Fascinating recent discoveries reveal something unusual happened to the ancient city of Jericho.

Heavily fortified, with a virtually impregnable double wall, what caused her sudden destruction? And find out why it is significant that even her inhabitants' foodstores could still be seen in our time, where they were left ...

The name "Jericho" brings to mind Israelites marching, trumpets sounding and walls falling down. It is a wonderful story of faith and victory, but did it really happen? The skeptic would say no, it is merely a folk tale to explain the ruins at Jericho. The main reason for this negative outlook is the excavations at the site carried out in the 1950s under the direction of British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon. She concluded,

"It is a sad fact that of the town walls of the Late Bronze Age, within which period the attack by the Israelites must fall by any dating, not a trace remains .... The excavation of Jericho, therefore, has thrown no light on the walls of Jericho of which the destruction is so vividly described in the Book of Joshua."<sup>1</sup> ([Note: For Bibliography click here and go to bottom of page](#))

Thomas A. Holland, who was editor and co-author of Kenyon's excavation reports, summarized the apparent results as follows:

“Kenyon concluded, with reference to the military conquest theory and the LB [Late Bronze Age] walls, that there was no archaeological data to support the thesis that the town had been surrounded by a wall at the end of LB I [ca. 1400 B.C.].”<sup>2</sup>

**However, a careful examination of the archaeological evidence collected throughout this century leads to quite another conclusion.**

Fortifications of Jericho - Before the Israelites entered the promised land, Moses told them that they were now about to cross the Jordan river, to dispossess nations which were greater and stronger than themselves, with large cities having walls that reached, as it were, to the sky (Deuteronomy 9:1). The meticulous work of Kenyon showed that Jericho was indeed heavily fortified and that it had been burned by fire. Unfortunately, she misdated her finds, resulting in what seemed to be a discrepancy between the discoveries of archaeology and the Bible. She concluded that the Bronze Age city of Jericho was destroyed about 1550 B.C. by the Egyptians. An in-depth analysis of the evidence, however, reveals that the destruction took place around 1400 B.C. (end of the Late Bronze I period), exactly when the Bible says the conquest occurred.<sup>3</sup>

- [Schematic cross-section diagram of the fortification system at Jericho based on Kenyon's west trench.](#)

The mound, or “tell” of Jericho was surrounded by a great earthen rampart, or embankment, with a stone retaining wall at its base. The retaining wall was some four to five meters (12–15 feet) high. On top of that was a mudbrick wall two meters (six feet) thick and about six to eight meters (20–26 feet) high.<sup>4</sup> At the crest of the embankment was a similar mudbrick wall whose base was roughly 14 meters (46 feet) above the ground level outside the retaining wall (see diagram). This is what loomed high above the Israelites as they marched around the city each day for seven days. Humanly speaking, it was impossible for the Israelites to penetrate the impregnable bastion of Jericho.

Within the upper wall was an area of approximately six acres, while the total area of the upper city and fortification system was 50% larger, or about nine acres. Based on the archaeologist’s rule of thumb of 200 persons per acre, the population of the upper city would have been about 1,200. However, from excavations carried out by a German team in the first decade of this century, we know that people were also living on the embankment between the upper and lower city walls. In addition, those Canaanites living in surrounding villages would have fled to Jericho for safety. Thus, we can assume that there were several thousand people inside the walls when the Israelites came against the city.

### **The fallen walls**

The citizens of Jericho were well prepared for a siege. A copious spring which provided water for ancient, as well as modern, Jericho lay inside the city walls. At the time of the attack, the harvest had just been taken in (Joshua 3:15), so the citizens had an abundant supply of food. This has been borne out by many large jars full of grain found in the Canaanite homes by John Garstang in his excavation in the 1930s and also by Kenyon. With a plentiful food supply and ample water, the inhabitants of Jericho could have held out for perhaps several years.

After the seventh trip around the city on the seventh day, Scripture tells us that the wall “fell down flat” (Joshua 6:20). The Hebrew here carries the suggestion that it “fell beneath itself.”<sup>5</sup> Is there evidence for such an event at Jericho? It turns out that there is ample evidence that the mudbrick city wall collapsed and was deposited at the base of the stone retaining wall at the time the city met its end.

Kenyon’s work was the most detailed. On the west side of the tell, at the base of the retaining, or revetment, wall, she found,

“fallen red bricks piling nearly to the top of the revetment. These probably came from the wall on the summit of the bank [and/or] ... the brickwork above the revetment.”<sup>6</sup>

In other words, she found a heap of bricks from the fallen city walls! An Italian team excavating at the southern end of the mound in 1997 found exactly the same thing.

[Artist's reconstruction of the north side of ancient Jericho, based on the German excavations of 1907-1909](#) Note the houses built against the mud brick city wall, which rests on top of the stone retaining wall. The Bible says that Rahab's house was built against the city wall (Joshua 2:15).

According to the Bible, Rahab's house was incorporated into the fortification system (Joshua 2:15). If the walls fell, how was her house spared? As you recall, the spies had instructed Rahab to bring her family into her house and they would be rescued. When the Israelites stormed the city, Rahab and her family were saved as promised (Joshua 2:12–21, 6:17, 22–23). At the north end of the tell of Jericho, archaeologists made some astounding discoveries that seem to relate to Rahab.

The German excavation of 1907–1909 found that on the north a short stretch of the lower city wall did not fall as everywhere else. A portion of that mudbrick wall was still standing to a height of over two meters (eight feet).<sup>7</sup> What is more, there were houses built against the wall! It is quite possible that this is where Rahab's house was.<sup>8</sup> Since the city wall formed the back wall of the houses, the spies could have readily escaped. From this location on the north side of the city it was only a short distance to the hills of the Judean wilderness where the spies hid for three days (Joshua 2:16, 22). Real estate values must have been low here, since the houses were positioned on the embankment between the upper and lower city walls. Not the best place to live in time of war! This area was no doubt the overflow from the upper city and the poor part of town, perhaps even a slum district.

After the city walls fell, how did the Israelites surmount the four to five meter (12–15 foot) high retaining wall at the base of the tell? Excavations have shown that the bricks from the collapsed walls formed a ramp against the retaining wall so that the Israelites could merely climb up over the top. The Bible is very precise in its description of how the Israelites entered the city: “**the people went up into the city, every man straight before him [i.e., straight up and over]**,” (Joshua 6:20). The Israelites had to go up, and that is what archaeology has revealed. They had to go from ground level at the base of the tell to the top of the rampart in order to enter the city.

### **Destruction by fire**

The Israelites burned the city and everything in it (Joshua 6:24). Once again, the discoveries of archaeology have verified the truth of this record. A portion of the city destroyed by the Israelites was excavated on the east side of the tell. Wherever the archaeologists reached this level they found a layer of burned ash and debris about one meter (three feet) thick. Kenyon described the massive devastation as follows.

“The destruction was complete. Walls and floors were blackened or reddened by fire, and every room was filled with fallen bricks, timbers, and household utensils; in most rooms the fallen debris was heavily burnt, but the collapse of the walls of the eastern rooms seems to have taken place before they were affected by the fire.”<sup>9</sup>

Both Garstang and Kenyon found many storage jars full of grain that had been caught in the fiery destruction. This is a unique find in the annals of archaeology. Grain was valuable, not only as a source of food, but also as a commodity which could be bartered. Under normal circumstances, valuables such as grain would have been plundered by the conquerors. Why was the grain left at Jericho? The Bible provides the answer. Joshua commanded the Israelites that the city and all that is in it were to be dedicated to the Lord (Joshua 6:17, lit. Heb.).

Dr Wood stands at the base of the stone retaining wall uncovered by Italian archaeologists at the southern end of Jericho in 1997. The Israelites marched around this wall when they attacked the city as described in Joshua 6.

The grain left at Jericho and found by archaeologists in modern times gives graphic testimony to the obedience of the Israelites nearly three-and-a-half millennia ago. Only Achan disobeyed, leading to the debacle at Ai described in Joshua 7.

Such a large quantity of grain left untouched gives silent testimony to the truth of yet another aspect of the biblical account. A heavily fortified city with an abundant supply of food and water would normally take many months, even years, to subdue. The Bible says that Jericho fell after only seven days. The jars found in the ruins of Jericho were full, showing that the siege was short since the people inside the walls consumed very little of the grain.

### **Lessons of Jericho**

Jericho was once thought to be a “Bible problem” because of the seeming disagreement between archaeology and the Bible. When the archaeology is correctly interpreted, however, just the opposite is the case. The archaeological evidence supports the historical accuracy of the biblical account in every detail. Every aspect of the story that could possibly be verified by the findings of archaeology is, in fact, verified.

There are many ideas as to how the walls of Jericho came down. Both Garstang and Kenyon found evidence of earthquake activity at the time the city met its end. If God did use an earthquake to accomplish His purposes that day, it was still a miracle since it happened at precisely the right moment, and was manifested in such a way as to protect Rahab’s house. No matter what agency God used, it was ultimately He who, through the faith of the Israelites, brought the walls down. After the people had marched around them for seven days, it was “by faith the walls of Jericho fell down” (Hebrews 11:30).

As well as showing us how vital it is not to discount the Bible because of some apparent conflict with secular scholarship, Jericho is a wonderful spiritual lesson for God’s people yet today. There are times when we find ourselves facing enormous “walls” that are impossible to break down by human strength. If we put our faith in God and follow His commandments, He will perform “great and mighty things” (Jeremiah 33:3) and give us the victory. ([Answers in Genesis](#))

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### **Related Resource:**

- [Jericho's wall - Has archaeology confirmed the biblical record](#)- Is the Bible accurate concerning the existence and destruction of the walls of Jericho?

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### **F B Meyer Our Daily Homily**

Every man straight before him.

God required of the Israelites only to wait, obey, and trust, whilst the Divine Captain led his celestial hosts to the assault, and achieved the victory. “And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.” We must be sure that our way lies through and beyond Jericho, and that God has called us to take it. When that is ascertained, we may be perfectly certain that the frowning walls of difficulty, which rise between us and the further land of promise, will fall down flat.

There must be times of Waiting. Israel waited a whole week. We may have to wait still longer. Let patience have her perfect work. There is no such teacher as she is; her pupils become perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

There must be times of Obedience. The people could not understand the meaning of these repeated marchings around the walls. They were not, however, asked to understand, but simply to obey. First the priests and ark, then the warriors. We must subordinate our armed activities to the slow and reverent pace of faith, hope, and love.

There must be times of exultant Faith. There was no quaver or hesitation in that cry. The Word of God, as communicated by Joshua, hushed every doubt and misgiving. In confident assurance the people shouted, and according to their faith, so it was to them. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." There are no walls of superstition and sin strong enough to resist Faith's shout, when God says that her shouting time is come.

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**DEVOTIONAL - THE BIBLE STANDS** - Unbelievers have long scoffed at the biblical story of the fall of the ancient city of Jericho. That's why I was delighted to see this headline on the front page of the newspaper: **NEW STUDY BACKS BIBLICAL VERSION OF JERICHO'S DEMISE**

The Associated Press article began,

"The walls of Jericho did come tumbling down as recounted in the Bible, according to an archaeological study." Archaeologist Bryant G. Wood of the University of Toronto said, "When we compare the archaeological evidence at Jericho with the biblical narrative describing the Israelite destruction of Jericho, we find remarkable agreement." Wood noted that the Bible places the event after spring harvest and indicates that the Israelites burned the city—both facts confirmed by the archaeological remains. Once again, archaeology bears testimony to the truthfulness of Scripture.

Our belief in the authenticity of the Bible does not depend on scientific research but on its claim to be God's Word. As 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." We can therefore have complete confidence in what it says.

It's a fact—the walls of Jericho did indeed fall. The Bible stands!— Richard De Haan [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Bible stands like a mountain towering  
Far above the works of men;  
Its truth by none ever was refuted,  
And destroy it they never can. —Lillenas  
©1917, 1945 Hope Publishing Co.

To the wise, God's Word is sufficient.

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**QUESTION - [What should we learn from the walls of Jericho falling down?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The story of the walls of [Jericho](#) falling down, recorded in Joshua 6:1–27, is one that vividly demonstrates the miraculous power of God. But more than that, the utter destruction of Jericho teaches us several grand truths regarding God's grace and our salvation.

The people of Israel had just crossed over the Jordan River into the land of Canaan (Joshua 3:14–17). This was the land of milk and honey God had promised to Abraham over 500 years earlier (Deuteronomy 6:3, 32:49). After spending forty difficult years wandering in the desert of Sinai, the people of Israel were now on the eastern banks of the Jordan. Their challenge: take the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. However, their first obstacle was the city of Jericho (Joshua 6:1), an unconquerable, walled city. Excavations there reveal that its fortifications featured a stone wall 11 feet high and 14 feet wide. At its top was a smooth stone slope, angling upward at 35 degrees for 35 feet, where it joined massive stone walls that towered even higher. It was virtually impregnable.

In ancient warfare such cities were either taken by assault or surrounded and the people starved into submission. Its invaders might try to weaken the stone walls with fire or by tunneling, or they might simply heap up a mountain of earth to serve as a ramp. Each of these methods of assault took weeks or months, and the attacking force usually suffered heavy losses. However, the strategy to conquer the city of Jericho was unique in two ways. First, the strategy was laid out by God Himself, and, second, the strategy was a seemingly foolish plan. God simply told Joshua to have the people to march silently around Jericho for six days, and then, after seven circuits on the seventh day, to shout.

Though it seemed foolish, Joshua followed God's instructions to the letter. When the people did finally shout, the massive walls collapsed instantly, and Israel won an easy victory. In fact, God had given the city of Jericho to them before they even began to march around its walls (Joshua 6:2, 16). It was when the people of God, by faith, followed the commands of God that the walls of Jericho fell down (Joshua 6:20).

The apostle Paul assures us, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4). The description of the complete obliteration of Jericho was recorded in Scripture in order to teach us several lessons. Most important is that obedience, even when

God's commands seem foolish, brings victory. When we are faced with seemingly insurmountable odds, we must learn that our Jericho victories are won only when our faithful obedience to God is complete (Hebrews 5:9; 1 John 2:3; 5:3).

There are other key lessons we should learn from this story. First, there is a vast difference between God's way and the way of man (Isaiah 55:8–9). Though militarily it was irrational to assault Jericho in the manner it was done, we must never question God's purpose or instructions. We must have faith that God is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do (Hebrews 10:23; 11:1).

Second, the power of God is supernatural, beyond our comprehension (Psalm 18:13–15; Daniel 4:35; Job 38:4–6). The walls of Jericho fell, and they fell instantly. The walls collapsed by the sheer power of God.

Third, there is an uncompromising relationship between the grace of God and our faith and obedience to Him. Scripture says, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days" (Hebrews 11:30). Although their faith had frequently failed in the past, in this instance the children of Israel believed and trusted God and His promises. As they were saved by faith, so we are today saved by faith (Romans 5:1; John 3:16–18). Yet faith must be evidenced by obedience. The children of Israel had faith, they obeyed, and the walls of Jericho fell "by faith" after they were circled for seven straight days. Saving faith impels us to obey God (Matthew 7:24–29; Hebrews 5:8–9; 1 John 2:3–5).

In addition, the story tells us that God keeps His promises (Joshua 6:2, 20). The walls of Jericho fell because God said they would. God's promises to us today are just as certain. They are just as unswerving. They are exceedingly great and wonderfully precious (Hebrews 6:11–18; 10:36; Colossians 3:24).

Finally, we should learn that faith without works is dead (James 2:26). It is not enough to say, "I believe God," and then live in an ungodly manner. If we truly believe God, our desire is to obey God. Our faith is put to work. We make every effort to do exactly what God says and keep His commandments. Joshua and the Israelites carried out the commands of God and conquered Jericho. God gave them victory over an enemy that was trying to keep them out of the Promised Land. So it is with us today: if we have true faith, we are compelled to obey God, and God gives us victory over the enemies that we face throughout life. Obedience is the clear evidence of faith. Our faith is the evidence to others that we truly believe in Him. We can conquer and be victorious through life by faith, a faith that obeys the God who gives us that faith as a free gift (Ephesians 2:8–9). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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## And the Walls Fell Down Flat

Scripture: Joshua 6:1–27, especially verse 1: Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in.

### Introduction:

Americans are having problems sleeping well. A poll released last year by the National Sleep Foundation showed that 74 percent of respondents suffered symptoms of a sleep disorder a few nights a week or more. The number was up significantly from 62 percent in 1999. Those symptoms include difficulty falling asleep, waking up a lot during the night, waking up too early and not being able to go back to sleep, and waking up unrefreshed. The problem is that we have more to worry about nowadays. Most of us are experiencing various levels of stress due to problems in life. This chapter in Joshua tells us what to do with those stubborn problems that are like a city "securely shut up."

### Background:

**Joshua** and the children of Israel had finished their forty-year trek in the wilderness, had crossed the Jordan River, and were ready to sweep into the long-awaited Promised Land. But they faced a great obstacle, the city of Jericho. It was an unsolvable problem—vast, powerful, directly in their path, and undefeatable. Do you have any problems like that? For the Israelites, the Lord's solution was strange. He told them to march around the city one time a day for six days, then to march around the city seven times on the seventh day. Afterward they were to blow the trumpets, to shout with a great shout, and the walls would fall down flat—and that's what happened. What is the lesson for us? When we face an unsolvable problem, one like a city securely shut up, we must realize that God alone can solve it. But He expects us to encompass the problem as He directs:

**1 Encircle the Problem with Prayer.** How often in the Bible did the Lord's people, facing an unsolvable problem, encompass it with prayer, beseeching the Lord to do what no human power could do. Examples: Abraham's servant praying for a bride for Isaac in Genesis 24; the Israelites praying for deliverance at the Red Sea in Exodus 14; Hezekiah facing the invasion of Assyria in 2 Kings 19; the church praying for Peter's deliverance in Acts 12. In *The Kneeling Christian*, the anonymous author gives this advice to those burdened for loved ones who, despite our pleading, are tightly "shut up" against the Lord: "They may not listen to us when we plead with them, but they cannot hold out if we pray for them. . . . Tell God, and then trust God."

**2 Encircle the Problem with Praise.** On the seventh day, Joshua said, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!" The ability to praise the Lord in the midst of impossibility is a powerful secret. Satan can't abide the presence of godly praise and worship. An old hymn, translated from the German, says: "Does sadness fill my mind? A solace here I find, May Jesus Christ be praised! / Or fades my earthly bliss? My comfort still is this, May Jesus Christ be praised! / The night becomes as day, when from the heart we say, May Jesus Christ be praised! / The powers of darkness fear when this sweet chant they hear, May Jesus Christ be praised!"

**3 Encircle the Problem with Faith.** What an act of faith for Joshua and the Israelites! They had no organized army, no weapons, nothing but sheer obedience to an odd command while going against a powerful enemy. Hebrews 11:30 says, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days." When we have those unsolvable problems, we encompass them by prayer and praise, then we continue walking around them by faith until the walls fall and the Lord sends His deliverance.

**4 Encompass the Problem with Perseverance.** Notice that the successful result was not achieved in a day or two. It took day after day of encompassing the city. The Israelites must have grown weary, but they didn't give up. It may take time for the Lord to break through and achieve the victory in your situation, but don't give up!

**Conclusion:** If you're worried about a particular problem today, one that is "securely shut up," one that is robbing you of sound sleep at night, try the Jericho pattern. Encircle the situation with prayer, praise, faith, and perseverance. Don't give up, and in due time the walls will fall down flat ([Nelson's Annual Preacher's Sourcebook, 2003](#))

**Joshua 6:21 They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.**

- **utterly destroyed:** Jos 9:24,25 10:28,39 11:14 De 2:34 7:2,3,16 20:16,17 1Sa 15:3,8,18,19 1Ki 20:42 Ps 137:8,9 Jer 48:18 Rev 18:21
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A GOOD BEGINNING:  
TOTAL OBEDIENCE TO YAHWEH

**They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword** - Absolute and unquestioning obedience takes place in the actions of the children of Israel as they move into the city of Jericho.

**Utley** - This is a description of holy war. It seems very cruel to us in our day, but one must remember that it was a common military practice in the day in which it was done (e.g., Moabite inscription from Mesha, KAI 181:17). It was also an act of divine judgment based on Gen. 15:16. That which was given to YHWH became holy and could not be used by humans (cf. Lev. 27:28–29).

**Woudstra** - The author makes clear that the extermination of the Canaanites by Joshua and the Israelites was at the Lord's behest (cf. Josh 6:2; 8:1–2; 10:8, 40, 42). At the same time, while stressing the sovereign design expressed in the hardening of the Canaanites' hearts (Josh 11:20), he also points out the resolve of the Canaanites to destroy the invading Israelites (Josh 9:1–2; 11:1–5). He even highlights this aspect of human responsibility by using it as part of his "frame" around the account of the Conquest (see "Unity of Composition"). This emphasis is in keeping with other OT passages (Gen. 15:16b; Lev. 18:24–25; Deut. 9:1–6; 12:29–30). Apparently, the sins of the Canaanites were such as to demand exemplary punishment. Instead of using the forces of nature, as he did with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, God used the sword of the Israelites to accomplish his punitive purpose. The iniquity of the Amorites now being "full" (Gen. 15:16), God ceased to be long-suffering with respect to them. ([The Book of Joshua The New International Commentary on the OT](#))

**John Davis** - the morality of the actions described in this chapter have come under severe scrutiny on the part of modern scholars. Is it true that the Israelites unjustly slaughtered "innocent" Canaanites? There are several facts which should be kept in mind when dealing with this problem. First of all, it should be noted that the destruction of Canaanite cities was based on religious, not political or military considerations (Deut. 7:2–6; 12:2–3; 20:10–18). Secondly, the action taken at Jericho (and also at Ai) was done on the basis of divine command (Exod. 17:14; Deut. 7:2; 20:16; Josh. 8:2) and thus involves the moral character of God. If we believe that God is holy and without imperfection, it follows that whatever He commands will be just and right. And, thirdly, it was really Jehovah who was destroying these cities and their peoples (Josh. 6:2; 24:8). Israel should merely be regarded as God's instruments of destruction. Fourthly, the reason for this command is clearly stated in Scripture and seems to justify the action taken. For example, Deuteronomy 20:18 makes it clear that this demand was designed to preserve the religious purity of the nation of Israel. The destruction of various Canaanite cities should be regarded as a direct judgment from God because of their iniquity (Gen. 15:16–21; cf. Gen. 19). If the Lord thought it necessary to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin, it is also appropriate that Jericho should be destroyed because of its iniquity. The means that God might use is insignificant in such a case. It might also be observed that the destruction of such cities would serve as a visible illustration of God's view of polytheism. Israel, on several occasions, was warned that if she became like the Canaanites, she too would be punished (Deut. 28:15ff.; Josh. 6:18; 24:20). Therefore, rather than this command and its fulfillment being in conflict with the New Testament, it is, after all, a complement to the theological and moral principles of Scripture as a whole. God is a holy God. He demands that sin be punished. The Lord reserves the right to punish sin wherever it is found. He may act, then, in the immediate destruction of a city or in the condemnation of the sinner at final judgment. It is only by the mercy and the grace of God that any sinner is permitted to live his life completely. In fact, He could punish sin upon the committing of the first act, take the life of that individual, and still remain a perfectly righteous and holy God.

**Jensen** - Knowing why God was punishing the Canaanites gave the Israelites a keener knowledge of His holy person. The annihilation of the entire population of Canaanite cities was purposed by God to purge the land of the Israelites' future dwelling place of all the corruption of its heathen polytheism. Religious prostitution, infant sacrifice, and many other corrupt and brutal practices were potentially fatal threats to the righteous life of Israel in Canaan, and it was for Israel's benefit that

God commanded the purge. Furthermore, the slaughter of all the inhabitants of Jericho—young and old, with the exception of Rahab and her household (6:21–22)—was totally justifiable on the basis of the sovereign right of the holy Creator to design life from its beginning to its end, which design included the unmixability of sin and holiness. The wars of Israel against the idolatrous nations of Canaan were God's holy wars, and their disposition of the prisoners was the fulfillment of God's orders. If only Israel had learned for her future days that her idolatry too would reap the vengeance of the same holy God!

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Few stories in the Bible are better known than the story of Joshua and the battle for Jericho. We know it so well that when someone starts to tell the story, we subconsciously start singing the famous African-American spiritual:

Joshua fit the battle of Jericho  
Jericho Jericho  
Joshua fit the battle of Jericho  
And the walls come tumbling down.

And then comes this verse:

You may talk about your men of Gideon  
You may brag about your men of Saul  
There's none like good old Joshua  
At the battle of Jericho.

(Play [Mahalia-Jackson's version](#))

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**Knowing God's Word** by Stanley A. Ellisen - This book highlights a crucial, moral question--how God's chosen people could be justified in taking Canaan, slaughtering its population, and expropriating its land and wealth as their own. We face that moral issue in other books such as Numbers and Samuels where Israel wields the sword on the heathen rather than preaches the Word. Why were they not sent into Canaan as evangelists rather than executioners? Several significant reasons should be noted from the historic background.

**1. Because of Canaan's Debased Religion** The cultic religion of Canaan had become especially abhorrent in its views of God and of morality itself. Ugaritic excavations have shown the extreme lewdness of their whole religion with its pantheon of gods, e.g., El the head deity is pictured proudly as being completely sensual, sordid, and bloodthirsty even with his own. The three Canaanite goddesses are shown with serpents wrapped about them in vile, sexual postures. The system gave homage to serpents, was totally debased, and was due for extinction.

**2. Because of Their Degenerate Culture**. This worship of demonic sex and war idols reflected a society with the grossest kinds of immorality and violence. Archeological digs reveal their temples were centers of vice with Sodomite priests and prostitute priestesses. Burning children alive on their altars had become a common ritual. The wretchedness of this idolatry may be contrasted with that of Egypt and Mesopotamia whose morality had not sunk to such depths of vulgarity and brutality. The whole culture was due for destruction (Lev. 18:25).

**3. Because of God's Warnings and Patience**. The text many times declares that the Lord was the real landowner of Canaan and could give or deny it to whom He would for reasons not always apparent to men. His plan of giving and probation is several times noted long before Moses and Joshua:

- a. Through Noah God predicted judgment on the Canaanites for their lewdness (Gen. 9:22-27).
- b. To Abraham and his children the Lord promised the land of Canaan which they would receive after the sins of the Amorites were full (Gen. 15:13-16).
- c. As with the Sodomites before its destruction, the Lord doubtless gave the Canaanites ample opportunities to respond by repentance (Gen. 18:25; Rom. 1:18-22). God waited 400 years for that response.

**4. Because of Israel's Divine Commission**. Israel was not called to be a religious organization only, but a civil government with covenant obligations to the Lord. As such, its first commission was to execute judgment on a corrupt and violent society in compliance with the Noahic covenant (Gen. 9:6). Though continually reticent to perform this sordid duty, Israel was under specific command of the Lord to take the land, destroy the Canaanites, and receive its wealth (Num. 31:7; Deut. 9:3; 7:16; Josh. 1:1-7). Israel's attacks, in fact, were often responses to the Canaanites' initial attacks (Num. 21:1, 23-24, 33; Josh. 9:1-2; 10:1-4; 11:1-5).

**5. Because of God's Covenant Promises**. As declared to Abraham and Israel by the Lord, the final occupation of Palestine by Israel will extend from Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen. 15:8; pp. 60-61 Deut. 1:7-8; 30:5). Before that future, final occupation, however, the Lord will again purge the land of vile idolatry and brutality brought in by a Satan-inspired religious system (Rev. 14:16f.; 19:15).

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**Norman Geisler - JOSHUA 6:21—How can the total destruction of Jericho be morally justified?**

**PROBLEM:** This passage states that the Israelites “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.” But how can such a ruthless destruction of innocent life and property be justified?

**SOLUTION:** First, the Canaanites were far from “innocent.” The description of their sins in Leviticus 18 is vivid: “The land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants” (v. 25). They were cancerously immoral, “defiled” with every kind of “abomination,” including child sacrifice (vv. 21, 24, 26).

Second, it must be remembered that God had given the people of Palestine over 400 years to repent of their wickedness. The people of that land had every opportunity to turn from their wickedness. According to Genesis 15:16, God told Abraham that in 400 years the descendants of Abraham would return to inherit this land, but that the iniquity of the people was not yet full. This prophetic statement indicated that God would not destroy the people of the land, including those who dwelt in Jericho, until their sins were such that their guilt merited their complete destruction in judgment.

Third, as for the killing of the little children, several things should be noted. (1) Given the cancerous state of the society into which they were born, they had no chance to avoid its fatal pollution. (2) Children who die before the age of accountability go to heaven (see comments on 2 Sam. 12:23). This was an act of God’s mercy to their souls to take them into His holy presence from such an unholy environment. (3) God is sovereign over life (Deut. 32:39; Job 1:21) and can order its end according to His will and in view of the creature’s ultimate good.

Fourth, Joshua and the people of Israel were acting according to the direct command of God, not on their own initiative. The destruction of Jericho was carried out by the army of Israel, but the army of Israel was the instrument of judgment upon the sins of these people by the righteous Judge of all the earth. Consequently, anyone who would question the justification of this act is questioning God’s justice.

Fifth, it was necessary to completely exterminate any trace of the city and its people. If anything had remained, except that which was taken into the treasure house of the Lord, there would have always been the threat of heathen influence to pull the people away from the pure worship of the Lord. Sometimes radical surgery is required to completely eliminate a deadly cancer from the body. ([When Critics Ask](#))

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**QUESTION - [Why did God command the extermination / genocide of the Canaanites, women and children included?](#)**

**ANSWER** - In 1 Samuel 15:2-3, God commanded Saul and the Israelites, “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.’” God ordered similar things when the Israelites were invading the promised land (Deuteronomy 2:34; 3:6; 20:16-18). Why would God have the Israelites exterminate an entire group of people, women and children included?

This is a difficult issue. We do not fully understand why God would command such a thing, but we trust God that He is just – and we recognize that we are incapable of fully understanding a sovereign, infinite, and eternal God. As we look at difficult issues such as this one, we must remember that God’s ways are higher than our ways and [His thoughts are higher than our thoughts](#) (Isaiah 55:9; Romans 11:33-36). We have to be willing to trust God and have faith in Him even when we do not understand His ways.

Unlike us, God knows the future. God knew what the results would be if Israel did not completely eradicate the Amalekites. If Israel did not carry out God’s orders, the Amalekites would come back to trouble the Israelites in the future. Saul claimed to have killed everyone but the Amalekite king Agag (1 Samuel 15:20). Obviously, Saul was lying—just a couple of decades later, there were enough Amalekites to take David and his men’s families captive (1 Samuel 30:1-2). After David and his men attacked the Amalekites and rescued their families, 400 Amalekites escaped. If Saul had fulfilled what God had commanded him, this never would have occurred. Several hundred years later, a descendant of Agag, Haman, tried to have the entire Jewish people exterminated (see the book of Esther). So, Saul’s incomplete obedience almost resulted in Israel’s destruction. God knew this would occur, so He ordered the extermination of the Amalekites ahead of time.

In regard to the Canaanites, God commanded, “In the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them — the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites — as the LORD your God has commanded you. 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” (Deuteronomy 20:16-18). The Israelites failed in this mission as well, and exactly what God said would happen occurred (Judges 2:1-3; 1 Kings 11:5; 14:24; 2 Kings 16:3-4). God did not order the extermination of these people to be cruel, but to prevent even greater evil from occurring in the future.

Probably the most difficult part of these commands from God is that God ordered the death of children and infants as well. Why would God order the death of innocent children? (1) Children are not innocent (Psalm 51:5; 58:3). (2) These children would have likely grown up as adherents to the evil religions and practices of their parents. (3) These children would naturally have grown up resentful of the Israelites and later sought to avenge the “unjust” treatment of their parents.

Again, this answer does not completely deal with all the issues. Our focus should be on trusting God even when we do not

understand His ways. We also must remember that God looks at things from an eternal perspective and that His ways are higher than our ways. God is just, righteous, holy, loving, merciful, and gracious. How His attributes work together can be a mystery to us – but that does not mean that He is not who the Bible proclaims Him to be. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### Related Resources:

- [What does it mean that “the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure” \(Genesis 15:16\)? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
  - SEE Multiple sources discussing God's command to Utterly Destroy (in commentary on Numbers 31)
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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**21. And they utterly destroyed.** Heb. יחרמו ya'harimu, made a curse, devoted to destruction

**Both man and woman, young and old, &c** In all this the Israelites acted strictly according to their orders, Deut. 20:16, 17, so that whatever charge of cruelty or barbarity may be brought against them in view of their conduct on this occasion, it strikes directly at the rectitude of the Divine judgments. That the Canaanites were a nation of incorrigible idolaters, whose morals, from the most remote periods, were polluted to the utmost degree, we have the highest authority for asserting. Had Jehovah, after bearing with such a people for no less than four centuries, sent upon them at last a famine or a pestilence, and cut them off from the face of the earth, who could deny that he had acted with perfect justice? Had he again caused fire to fall upon them from heaven, or overwhelmed them by the waters of a flood, the same admission must have been made. Why then should it be urged that he acted in opposition to any one of his known attributes, because he let loose another of his judgments upon them, namely war? For such, as far as they were affected, was really the case. The Israelites were towards them neither more nor less than instruments of punishment in the hands of the great Ruler of the universe, who chose to slay them by the edge of the sword, rather than by earthquakes, famine, or plague. Towards the Canaanites themselves, we must admit that there was great severity in the order for their extermination. But there was goodness in it, yea great goodness, towards the world at large; for it has shown the danger of unbelief and impenitence in such awful colors, that the proudest and most obdurate must tremble. If it be urged that to subject women and unoffending children to the horrors of war, is inconsistent with our ideas of Divine justice, we reply, that the very same observation might be made in the case of a plague or a deluge. In all public calamities infants are involved, and tens of thousands die in great agony every year. If God is the agent in these calamities, they must consist with the most perfect justice and goodness, and on the same ground is the present order, fearful as it was, to be vindicated.

**Joshua 6:22 Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, 'Go into the harlot's house and bring the woman and all she has out of there, as you have sworn to her.'**

- **Joshua:** Jos 6:17 2:1-24
- **as you have sworn to her.** Jos 2:12-14, 17-20 9:15, 18-20 2Sa 21:2, 7 Ps 15:4 Eze 17:13, 16, 18 Eze 17:19 Heb 11:31
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, 'Go into the harlot's house and bring the woman and all she has out of there, as you have sworn to her** - Now Joshua turns to the two spies who are close at hand and gives them some instructions.

In the conquest of Jericho we see God's justice in punishing sin as well as His mercy in sparing Rahab and her family. We also note in a very practical way the vital connection between trust (i.e., faith) and obedience. There is a beautiful hymn that amplifies this point. It was written by John H. Sammis (1846–1919).

[When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,](#)

what a glory He sheds on our way!

While we do His good will He abides with us still,  
and with all who will trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
but His smile quickly drives it away;

Not a doubt nor a fear, not a sigh nor a tear,  
can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,  
but our toil He doth richly repay;

Not a grief not a loss, not a frown nor a cross,  
but is blest if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of His love  
until all on the altar we lay,

For the favor He shows and the joy He bestows  
are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet,  
or we'll walk by His side in the way;

What He says we will do, where He sends we will go—  
Never fear, only trust and obey.

**Joshua 6:23** So the young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and her mother and her brothers and all she had; they also brought out all her relatives and placed them outside the camp of Israel.

- **brought out Rahab:** Jos 2:18 Ge 12:2 18:24 19:29 Ac 27:24 Heb 11:7
- **placed them outside the camp of Israel:** Nu 5:2,3, Nu 31:19 Ac 10:28 1Co 5:12 Eph 2:12
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Numbers 5:2; 3 “Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp every leper and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is unclean because of a dead person. 3 “You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camp where I dwell in their midst.”

Numbers 31:19 “And you, camp outside the camp seven days; whoever has killed any person and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves, you and your captives, on the third day and on the seventh day.

Deuteronomy 23:14 “Since the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you.

#### THE TWO SPIES RESCUE RAHAB

**So the young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and her mother and her brothers and all she had** - The result of the command of General Joshua is seen in the two spies going to the house with the red cord on the wall, the house of Rahab the harlot where they had been hidden on the roof under the flax. Rahab had all of her relatives in there.

Utlely - “the young men” This term (BDB 654) denotes a young person under the supervision of another. However, in 2:1, 3; 6:22, they are called “men” (BDB 35). It is possible that the term does not refer to age in this context, but to these spies who must report back to Joshua.

**They also brought out all her relatives and placed them outside the camp of Israel-** NET - They brought out her whole family and took them to a place outside the Israelite camp.”

**Utlely** - “and place them outside the camp of Israel” Because Rahab, at this point, was still a Canaanite, and, therefore, ceremonially unclean, she was removed from the holy people for a time (cf. Deut. 23:14). However, Joshua 6:25 shows that she was later fully included in the covenant community (people can change/be changed!).

**Believer's Study Bible** - They were kept outside the camp because, being Gentiles, they were ceremonially unclean. This was only temporary (cf. v. 25; see also Eph. 2:13). According to Matt. 1:5, Rahab eventually married into the tribe of Judah and the line of Christ. ([The Believer's Study Bible](#))

**Ray Pritchard** (see his full sermon Why Jericho Fell) - If you read Joshua 6, you discover that God's promises do not equal inactivity. Read it all and you will discover . . .

- Diligent preparation (vv. 6-7).
- Careful discipline (v. 10).
- Patient repetition (v. 14).
- Audacious exultation (v. 20).
- Complete obedience (v. 21).
- Intentional compassion (vv. 23-25)

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#### GEORGE BUSH [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 6](#)

**23. The young men.** These persons have all along hitherto been called simply ‘men,’ and no intimation given of their having been young. For an explanation of the Scriptural import of the phrase ‘young men,’ see Note on Gen. 14:24.

**All her kindred.** Heb משפחותיה mishpe'hothëyâh, all her families.

**And left them without the camp**—and made them to stay or abide, till they were cleansed from the impurities of their Gentile superstition, and prepared, by suitable instruction, for admission as proselytes into the Israelitish church.

**Joshua 6:24** They burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

- **They burned the city with fire:** Jos 8:28 De 13:16 2Ki 25:9 Rev 17:16 18:8
- **Only the silver and gold** Jos 6:19
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JERICHO BURNED  
GOLD GOES TO GOD

**They burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD - The house of the LORD is the tabernacle (Ex 23:19, Ex 34:26, Dt 23:18)**

**Joshua 6:25 However, Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.**

- **Rahab the harlot:** Jos 11:19,20 Jdg 1:24,25 Ac 2:21 Heb 11:31
- **she dwelleth:** Mt 1:5
- **unto:** Jos 4:9
- **For she hid the messengers:** Jas 2:25
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE BLESSING OF  
RAHAB'S FAITH

**However, Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day** - Her actions remind me of Ruth's words to Naomi in Ru 1:16 "But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for **where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.**"

**For she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho**- James uses this work of Rahab to show that her faith was genuine writing "In the same way, (as Abraham - Jas 2:21-24+) was not Rahab the harlot also justified (SHOWN TO BE RIGHTEOUS) by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?" (James 2:25+)

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**25. Saved alive.** Heb. החיה hehëyâh, vivified, made to live. The usage of the original is peculiar. It seems to imply that Rahab and her kindred were as good as dead, that they had virtually perished in the general destruction, but by being preserved through it, had had, as it were, their lives restored to them. See the Note on Pharaoh's being preserved, Ex. 9:14-16.

**Dwelleth in Israel even unto this day.** Heb. בקרב ישראל bekereb Yisrâël, in the midst of Israel, i. e. as a communicant and partaker of all the distinguishing privileges of the chosen seed. It is, however, contended by Masius and others, that this phrase implies that Rahab lived in her posterity in the midst of Israel, and that this clause was added by Ezra or some late reviser of the history. Rahab married Salmon, the son of Nahshon, a prince of the tribe of Judah, and thus became one of the ancestors of David and of Christ. Mat. 1:5.

**Unto this day.** A strong proof that the book was written in or near the time to which it refers, and in all probability by Joshua himself.

**Because she hid the messengers.** This is repealed, as if the spirit of inspiration delighted to dwell on the act which redounded so signally to her credit and to her salvation. God takes pleasure in reciting the good deeds of his people.—From the various particulars recorded in the sacred narrative respecting Rahab, we may learn, (1) That there is no person so vile but that he may become an eminent saint. Would that all abandoned women in the world might hear of the mercy shown towards this harlot of Jericho! Despised and outcast as they are by their fellow-creatures, would that they knew what compassion for them exists in the bosom of God! They usually persist in their wickedness, through an utter despair of obtaining the mercy and grace which they need. But here they might see that there was hope for the vilest of the vile. (2) Faith, if genuine, will uniformly produce good works. (3) Whatever we do for God or for his people, because they are his people, shall most assuredly be richly rewarded.

**Joshua 6:26 Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before the LORD is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates."**

- **Then Joshua made them take an oath:** This is to be regarded as a prediction, that he who rebuilt this city should lose all his children in the interim between the laying of the foundation to the completion of the walls. Nu 5:19-21 1Sa 14:24-46 1Ki 22:16 Mt 26:63 Ac 19:13
- **Cursed:** 1Ki 16:34 Mal 1:4
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JOSHUA'S PROPHETIC  
WARNING RE JERICHO

**Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed([arar](#); Lxx = [epikataratos](#)) before the LORD is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates** - Note the warning is for rebuilding it as a fortified city, not against

living in it. As noted below Hiel was **cursed before the LORD**. The fact that he set up its gates" (1Ki 16:34) supports the premise that he was building it as a fortified city.

**Utley - and then Joshua made them take an oath at that time'** This oath would involve calling YHWH's name into play on someone who acted in the way that was cursed. We learn from 1 Kgs. 16:34 that this curse was literally fulfilled in the life of Hiel, the Bethelite.

Sadly Joshua's warning was not heeded and thus was fulfilled about 600 years later (~870 BC) - "In his days **Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho**; he laid its foundations with the **loss of Abiram his firstborn**, and set up its gates with the **loss of his youngest son Segub**, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun." (1Ki 16:34) Why did Hiel build? Either he was unaware of the prophetic warning, he did not believe the warning or he selfishly did not really care.

**Henry Morris** - Cursed be the man. It was God's will that, because of its wickedness, Jericho should not be rebuilt, and a curse would fall upon the man who would attempt it. Such a man would lose all his children between the times of the beginning and completion of its reconstruction. This curse was literally fulfilled some 500 years later when a man named Hiel rebuilt Jericho (1 Kings 16:34).

**Rod Mattoon** - The curse was pronounced upon anyone who would rebuild the city of Jericho. Did anyone try to do this? Yes! Jericho was built three times.

1. It was destroyed during Joshua's leadership of Israel.
2. During the time of King Ahab, apostasy characterized the nation. The Word of God was mocked and not believed. A man name Hiel, a Bethelite rebuilt the city at the cost of his firstborn son and youngest son. (1 Kings 16:30–34) The city was destroyed by the Herodians in 3 B.C.
3. In 2 B.C., the Archelans rebuilt the city again. It existed during the days of Christ and was destroyed in 68 A.D. by the Roman conqueror Vespasian. God's Word is true! ([Treasures from Joshua](#))

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**Cursed** (0779) **arar** which refers principally to exclamations, or imprecations, uttered by one person against another. It bears the idea of people reviling one another. **Gilbrant** adds it "carries the idea of being bound or banned from something. Therefore, God's **original curse to Satan** in Ge 3:14, 17, "cursed are you above all cattle and cursed is the ground for your sake," means you are banned from all the other animals and condemned to be the soil on your account. Likewise, God's curse upon Cain, "you are cursed from the earth" (Gen. 4:11, 12), means Cain is banned from enjoying the productivity of the earth's soil. Furthermore, the curse pronounced upon Jezebel by Elijah (1 Ki. 21:23) barred her from a proper burial (2 Ki. 9:34). Balaam was hired by King Balak to curse the Israelites (Num. 22:6ff). Although his efforts were unsuccessful, Balak desired Balaam to disable the Israelite forces. The Israelites, however, eventually brought the curse of God upon themselves through idolatry and its accompanying immorality (Num. 25:1-9). Most of the curse sayings are within proclamations of laws (Deut. 27:15-26; 28:16-19) or pronouncements of threats (Jer. 11:3; 17:5). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Only used twice in Joshua - Joshua 6:26, Joshua 9:23**

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**26. Joshua adjured them.** Made them to swear, caused them to bind themselves by a solemn oath, confirmed by an imprecation upon themselves and their posterity, if they broke it, that they would never rebuild the city. This he did, not on his own responsibility, but by a Divine impulse, 1 Kings 16:34. From the remarkable manner in which Jericho was taken and destroyed, it appears to have been the design of God to preserve such a memorial of the event, as would teach to the latest posterity, his detestation of idolatry and the vices that grow out of it. Accordingly Joshua here adjures the people by a solemn oath, and binds it upon them and their posterity, to leave the ruins of the city as a perpetual warning to after ages against the commission of those crimes. It would thus serve also as a precaution to Israel to abstain from worshipping the idol deities of the surrounding nations.

**Cursed be the man before the Lord.** That is, from God's presence and by his sentence. Thus Joshua is said, ch. 18:8, to have 'cast lots before the Lord,' i. e. as under his sanction and expecting the decision from him. This was what gave its terror to the penalty. As to what is implied in the curse of God, see on Gen. 3:14.

**That riseth up and buildeth.** That is, that attempts to build, that enters upon the work of building, that engages in it. This is often the sense of 'rise' in the sacred writers. The denunciation is here limited to the builder, and extends not to those who should inhabit the city after it was built, for that it was subsequently rebuilt and inhabited is evident. See below.

**Shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, &c.** That is, shall lose all his children in the interval between laying the foundation and completing the walls; he shall, as it were, lay the first stone on the dead body of his eldest son, and the last on that of his youngest. This is said to have been fulfilled in Hiel, the Bethelite, 1 Kings 16:34, who rebuilt Jericho in the reign of Ahaz, and 'laid the foundation thereof in Abiram, his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub.' This was 550 years after the utterance of the curse. The city does not appear, however, to have lain in ruins during the whole period from Joshua to Hiel, at least if the 'city of palm trees,' mentioned Deut. 34:3, be, as is generally supposed, the same with Jericho, for we find this an inhabited place in the beginning of Judges, ch. 1:16, a short time after the death of

Joshua, and the same city appears to have been taken from the Israelites by Eglon, king of Moab, Judg. 3:13. Moreover, the ambassadors of David, who were maltreated by Hanan, king of the Ammonites, were commanded to tarry at Jericho till their beards were grown, 2 Sam. 10:4, 5. It appears, therefore, that there was a city which went under this name long before the time of Hiel, unless it be supposed that the 'city of palm trees' was a different place from the ancient Jericho, though standing in its neighborhood, and sometimes called by its name, which we think not improbable, especially as Josephus speaks of the site of the old city of Jericho, as if to distinguish it from a more modern one.

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#### QUESTION - [Why did Joshua curse Jericho in Joshua 6:26?](#)

**ANSWER** - After the Lord God gave the city of [Jericho](#) into the hands of Joshua and the people of Israel, Joshua pronounced a curse on the city: "Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates" (Joshua 6:26).

Prior to the battle, the Lord had declared Jericho, the first city to fall to Israel's conquest of Canaan, to be wholly dedicated to Him: "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. 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. All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the Lord and must go into his treasury" (Joshua 6:17-19). The facts that *everything* in Jericho belonged to the Lord and that the [collapse of the city walls](#) was *wholly* the Lord's work probably factored into Joshua's warning not to rebuild the city.

First Kings 16:34 reveals that Joshua's curse did come true during the time of King Ahab: "Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of [Abiram](#) his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun."

Several important details must be noted. First, Joshua did not promise Jericho would never be rebuilt. Instead, he said the person who rebuilt it would be judged by the loss of his firstborn son and youngest son.

Second, God confirmed His word through Joshua, taking the lives of Hiel's sons Abiram and Segub. At the beginning of the work (the laying of the foundation), the first son died; at the end of the work (the hanging of the gates), the youngest son died. This proved God's faithfulness and revealed the consequences of sin that often affect one's family members. Though the sin was Hiel's, the consequence included the deaths of two sons.

Third, Hiel's rebuilding of Jericho is included as part of a longer passage describing the evil that took place during King Ahab's reign in Israel. Ahab took a pagan, non-Jewish wife named [Jezebel](#) and even worshiped her god, Baal. Further, Ahab had a temple of [Baal](#) built in the capital city of Samaria and erected an [Asherah pole](#). The conclusion of this account is that "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (1 Kings 16:33). During this wicked time, Hiel disregarded Joshua's curse and rebuilt Jericho.

This moral low point in Israel's history was also the point at which God raised up the [prophet Elijah](#) to fight against Baal, revive the hearts of the Israelites, and turn many people back to the Lord. After a three-year drought during Ahab's reign, Elijah defeated the priests of Baal and helped begin a spiritual revival among the Israelites. [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### **Joshua 6:27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.**

- **the Lord:** Jos 1:5,9 Ge 39:2,3,21 De 31:6 Mt 18:20 28:20 Ac 18:9,10 2Co 13:14 2Ti 4:17,22
- **his fame:** Jos 9:1,3,9 1Sa 2:30 2Sa 7:9 Mt 4:24 14:1
- [Joshua 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### YAHWEH'S PRESENCE AND GIFT OF PRESTIGE

**So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land** This is a fulfillment of Joshua 1:5 "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you." This passage reaffirms Yahweh's promises in Joshua 1....

Joshua 1:5; 9 "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, **I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you...**" 9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for **the LORD your God is with you wherever you go**"

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**27. The Lord was with Joshua, &c.** That is, by his powerful aid, giving him miraculous assistance, magnifying him and raising his reputation, making him acceptable to Israel, and formidable to the Canaanites. 'Nothing can more raise a man's reputation, nor make him appear more truly great, than to have the evidence of God's presence with him.' Henry.

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#### F B Meyer - The Walls of Jericho (JOSHUA 6)

"More than conquerors even now,

With the war-sweat on our brow,  
Onward o'er the well-marked road,  
March we as the host of God."  
BONAR.

JERICHO, palm-girt, standing out clear-cut in the pure air and under the deep blue of the sky, in front of the vast precipice of rock down which the road descended from Jerusalem, was filled with many thoughts, chief among which was faint-heartedness. There was no mustering of forces; no issuing forth of the men of war; no sudden night attack upon that host which lay along the Jordan bank, the brown tents pitched around the central pavilion or tabernacle of God. It was as though some mysterious spell had fallen upon king and people, unnerving them, impelling them to stand upon the defensive and await the unfolding of events. "Their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel."

Israel, on the other hand, was probably impatient, eager to be led to the conflict. The men of war, confident in their might, were eager to match themselves against the inhabitants of the land, and to wipe out in blood the memory of their fathers' defeat at Hormah. Conscious that the passage of the Jordan had been due to the presence of the priests, it may have been that there was a secret desire in their hearts to show that the time had come for the priests to stand aside, whilst they approved their powers and won the land by might.

But they had to learn that the land was a gift, to be received by faith, not won by effort. God required of them only to obey and wait and trust, whilst the divine Captain led his celestial hosts to the assault, and achieved the victory. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all the men of war going about the city once."

It certainly was the strangest spectacle ever witnessed by a beleaguered garrison. The besiegers did not make an assault, or rear mounds, or place scaling-ladders against the walls. They did not, indeed, afford an opportunity for parley or discussion of terms of capitulation. On each side it seems to have been understood that the war would be to the knife—no quarter asked, no mercy shown. Without delay the host of Israel began encompassing the city. "Ye shall compass the city." May it not be rather said that the ark encompassed the city, and that the men of war accompanied it? For in each case, whether the directions were given to Joshua by the Captain, or by Joshua to the host, the particular position of the ark was minutely specified. Indeed, as Joshua came from the divine interview he appears to have first summoned the priests into his presence, and given them his instructions. After this, he turned to the people generally. There is a remarkable emphasis in the words, "He caused the ark of the Lord to compass the city."

It was but a little after dawn. The sun had mounted not far above the eastern horizon. Blue blended with amber in the morning sky. Toward the south the mountains of Moab stood like a mighty rampart, veiled in violet, while the sullen waters of the Dead Sea gleamed like silver at their foot. The belt of desert sand added its dark red to the variegated colors of the picture, contrasting notably with the emerald green of the oasis in which Jericho stood, watered by perennial streams. Then from out the camp of Israel a long procession began to unwind itself: first the men of war, marching beneath their tribal banners; then seven priests, white-robed, blowing with seven trumpets of rams' horns; next the ark of God, hidden by its coverings from gaze of Israelite and Canaanite alike; and lastly the tribe of Dan, closing up the rear.

Toward the city this strange procession made its way, preserving an absolute silence, save that the priests went on continually and blew with the trumpets. With that exception no other sound was heard. No challenge! No taunt! No cry as of them that shout for mastery! The whole host wound silently around the city, as a serpent with sinuous folds; and when the circuit was completed, to the surprise of the Canaanites, who probably expected an immediate assault, it returned quietly to the camp from which it had emerged some hour or two before. And the rest of the day passed without further incident. "So they did six days."

On the seventh day the circuit of the walls was repeated seven times. And at the close of the seventh, Joshua's voice rang out on the still evening air the command, "Shout! for the Lord hath given you the city." Then the priests blew a blast upon the trumpets; the people shouted with a great shout, that reverberated through the hills around, and was perhaps answered by the feebler voices of the women and children from the camp; and the wall of Jericho fell down flat, so that the people could go up into the city, every man straight before him, "and they took the city." As, in years long after, an inspired writer reviewed the incident, he quoted it as a remarkable instance of that faith which, in various dispensations, unites the hearts of all the saints in one, as a thread a number of diverse beads. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." In various directions we may find a counterpart of this remarkable incident.

I. IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.—If Egypt represents our conflicts with the world, and Amalek our conflict with the flesh, the seven nations of Canaan represent our conflict with the principalities and powers of wicked spirits, who resist our entrance into the heavenlies, and dull our practical realization of what Christ has wrought for us. Intrenched behind the ramparts of some stronghold of difficulty or habit, they defy us and threaten to arrest our progress in the divine life. Who is there amongst us, or who reads these lines, that does not know, or has not known, of something—a cherished indulgence, a friendship, a pernicious entanglement—reared as an impassable barrier to the enjoyment of those blessed possibilities of Christian experience which are ours in Christ, but which for that reason seem beyond our reach? That thing is a Jericho.

Now it cannot be the purpose of God that anything, however deeply rooted, should shut his redeemed ones out of the heavenly places, which are theirs in Christ—even though it should be the result of their own sin or mistake, the heirloom of early indiscretions, the better entail of trespass off the narrow path. I have met with those who have declared that they have forever forfeited their right to the richer experiences of the blessed life because they have wrought some wickedness in the

past. What though it has long ago been forgiven, yet it has left its shame, its scar, its fatal offspring, by reason of which, in their apprehension, their path into Canaan is barred. I have met with others who, eager enough to enjoy all that may be experienced on this side the Golden Gate, yet point to some hindrance in the way, the lasting memorial of days when the spirit was less on the alert, and conscience less sensitive; and for this cause they too fear that they can never do more than encamp, beyond the Jordan indeed, but on the fringe of the Land of Promise. Again, it may be asked, Who is there that has not stood, at some period or another, before a Jericho, right in the pass to Canaan?

To all such there is infinite sweetness and comfort in the word spoken by the Great Captain to Joshua, standing with bared foot on the holy ground, "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor."

Be still!—The hardest of all commandments this! That our voice should not be heard; that no word should proceed from our mouth; that we should utter our complaints to God alone—all this is foreign to our habits and taste. As death is the last enemy to be destroyed in the universe of God, so is the restraint of the tongue the last lesson learned by his children. We like to air our grievances; to talk over our ailments; to compare ourselves with others; and to discuss the likeliest remedies. We tell our friends our secrets under strict promises of confidence, to discover in bitter experience the truth of the Master's words, that what is told into the ear in closets will be proclaimed upon house-tops.

It is only the still heart that can reflect the heaven of God's overarching care, or detect the least whisper of his voice through its quiet atmosphere, or know his full grace and power. Only when we have quieted ourselves as weaned babes can we reach that position in which God can interpose for our help. Not dumb toward God, but dumb as the dove amongst strangers, or as the lamb before her shearers. "Be still," saith God, "and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth." And that soul may well be still and wait which has learned that the Lord of hosts is beside it and the God of Jacob its refuge. To that Friend it hies to pour out its secret agony. In that home it nestles as in the covert of a great rock, sheltered from the blast.

Obeys!—As in this story so in grace, there must be co-operation between God and man. The walls of Jericho could fall down only by the exercise of divine power; but the children of Israel must needs encompass them. Only God can give a body as it hath pleased him to the seed corn; but man must plow and sow and reap and thresh and grind. Only the Son of God could multiply the loaves or raise the dead; but man must provide and distribute the broken bread, and roll the stone from the sepulcher door. Only God can remove the difficulties that stand in the way of an entirely consecrated and blessed life; but there are commands and duties which it is incumbent on us to fulfill.

What are these? In some cases we are withholding obedience that we should give at once. There are things which we ought to do, but which we are not doing. And there is equal danger in doing more than we should—endeavoring to scale walls which we are told to encompass; shouting before the word of command has been uttered; making the circuit of the city oftener than the once each day prescribed by the divine ordering. It is so hard to feel that we do more by doing less; that we save time by resting quietly in our tents; that it is vain to rise up early, and so late take rest, because he giveth to his beloved while they sleep.

Whatever, then, is clearly borne in on us as the will of God, either for us to do or discontinue doing, let us immediately perform; and leave it to him to do all the rest. Some must bear the sacred ark in witnessing to the Gospel; others must blow on the rams' horns perpetual blasts of victorious anticipation; others, again, must face the daily routine in silence; but our position should ever be the prompt soldier-like one that rang out through Joshua's noble words, "What saith my Lord unto his servant?"

Have faith!—Look away from all your preparations, and even from your God-commanded acts to God himself; and as you do so, your difficulties will melt away—that stone will be rolled from the mouth of the sepulcher; that iron gate will open of its own accord; those mighty walls will fall down flat.

Whatever it be that seems an insuperable difficulty to your enjoyment of the best of those things which Christ has purchased, hand it over to your Saviour; wait before him in silence, till you know what he would have you do. Be sure in the meanwhile to put off all that belongs to the past, and cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit; then do his bidding, at whatever cost. At the same time believe that he is working for you, and that the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places smooth, and that the glory of the Lord shall be seen in your heart and life, so that all who know you shall be compelled to confess that the Lord has done great things for you. He has given you Jericho. Let your heart already dwell on that glad word. Though the walls are yet standing, they are as good as gone; and with their ruins in your rear, you shall go forward to possess the land.

II. IN CHRISTIAN WORK.—The Apostle speaks of strong-holds that had to be cast down, and of high things that exalted themselves against the knowledge of God; and asserts that he did not war against such things according to the flesh, and that the weapons of his warfare were not of the flesh, but mighty before God for the casting down of strongholds, and for the bringing of every high and proud thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

What need there is for all Christian workers to ponder these pregnant words! The peril of our time is that we should get away from the simplicity of the early Church, which went into the conflict with the mighty superstitions and flagrant sins of its age with no weapons save those that may be found in symbol in this old-world incident. There were the white robes of priestly purity; the lifting up of the propitiation of Christ; the blowing of the rams' horns; the Gospel message proclaimed with no silver cadence, but with rude and startling effect, as a summons to surrender. It was in the use of such weapons as these that giant forms of error collapsed, and hoary systems of idolatry were dissolved like morning mists touched by the warm fingers of the sun.

With what dismay would the confessors and martyrs, the prophets and apostles of primitive Christianity view the methods with which we assail the monster forms of vice that confront us! Drink is entrenched behind mighty fortifications—the bastions and walls of social custom and habit, of national usage and immense revenues. Impurity has built around itself a girde of defense, flaunts itself undismayed in our streets, and mocks us from the gilded splendor of music-hall and theater. The opium traffic laughs us to scorn—supported by government; ministering to an inveterate habit; willing to pay a handsome sum for its right to exist. The depravity of the human heart is another Jericho, in which there are the towers of spiritualism, indifference, pride, and high imagination, which proudly rear themselves against the law of God. And in the case of each individual worker there is almost certainly some Jericho in the apathy of fellow-workers, the spirit of opposition from other Christians, or the special forms of sin that are rampant in the sphere intrusted to his care.

When confronted with all these things we are apt to fight the world with weapons borrowed from its arsenals, and to adopt methods which savor rather of the flesh than of the spirit. It is a great mistake. Our only hope is to act on strictly spiritual lines, because we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with the wicked spirits that lie behind all that is seen in this world of men and things. If we can overthrow the dark spirits that abet and maintain, we shall see the system which they support crumble as a palace of clouds before the wind.

Let us pure and holy, giving time to heart-searching in the presence of the Captain; let us lift up the sacrifice and work of Jesus; let us blow the Gospel trumpet of alarm and summons to surrender; let us be much in silent prayer before God; let us cherish a spirit of unity and love, as the tribes of Israel forgot their differences in one common expedition against their foes; above all, let us believe in the presence and coöperation of God, and we shall see the old miracle repeated, and the walls of Jericho fall down flat.

III. IN THE STORY OF THE CHURCH.—This capture of Jericho is surely capable of being read as a parable of things that are yet to be. We know that the world lieth in the power of the wicked one. It has long boasted itself against God, with its mighty walls and gates; and it would seem as if the time will never come of which psalmists and kings have sung and spoken in rapturous phrase.

In the meanwhile the various tribes of the Church of Christ have been perambulating about the walls, subjected to much derision and mockery, though sometimes a sickening premonition of approaching judgment must steal upon the hearts of the votaries of worldliness. For nearly nineteen centuries the circuit has been made, the trumpet-blast uttered, the testimony maintained. And surely the seven days have nearly expired.

It may be that this narrative of the taking of Canaan is even a miniature anticipation of what is yet to transpire in that future which is probably so near. God has given the kingdoms of this world to his Son; but they will have to be engirdled by the sacramental hosts of his elect until he shall have put down all rule and authority and power.