

Joshua

Lesson 6

Chapter 6

Have you ever looked forward to doing something for years, and when the time came to start the project, you realized you did not know how long it would take or how far it would take you? With the start of chapter 6 in the Book of Joshua, we come to such a point in the lives of the people of the Nation of Israel. For forty years, they had been on the journey to the Promised Land, and finally, they are on the land, and all preparations have been made to start the task of clearing the people from the land and making it their own. The people will be at war with the natives; no one knows how things will work out. Additionally, no one knows how long the project will take?

G. The Campaigns After Crossing the Jordan River

1. The Triumphant Campaign in the Promised Land – Jericho

a) The State of the Conquest

(1) The Trouble of Jericho

Thus, we come to the campaigns of Joshua's Command. The first will be the triumphant campaign in the Promised Land for the city of Jericho. We must look at the state of the conquest by observing the trouble of Jericho and its people. Chapter 6, verse 1. *"Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in."* (6:1)

Days before, when the two spies spent just a few hours in the house of Rahab in Jericho, she had voiced the feelings of the people of the city concerning Israel from Jericho's kings to its peasants. With the camp of Israel at the eastern edge of the city, where Jericho's people could view it from the city walls, the king had ordered the quarantine of the city – *"no one went out and no one came in."* It was sealed tight.

(2) The Triumph of Israel

In the camp of Israel, the LORD declared the triumph of Israel over Jericho in verse 2. *"The LORD said to Joshua, 'See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors.'" (6:2)*

It is the LORD's promise. How could Joshua be anything but encouraged and courageous?

b) The Strategy of the Conquest

(1) The Circling of the City

The LORD continued to give Joshua the strategy for the conquest. It would start with the circling of the city. Verses 3. *"You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days."* (6:3)

Once a day, for six days, the men of war would circle the city. Notice that it was not all the people of the city. No women or children participated in this six-day assignment.

(2) The Carrying of the Horns

The LORD wanted the trumpets in the parade around the city, so He gave the order for the carrying of the horns in verse 4a. *"Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark...."* (6:4a).

Israel had more than seven priests. All the Kohaths were priests. Only seven of the priests were needed to carry seven rams' horns in front of the Ark. That means the Ark would be in the parade too, carried by the proper Kohaths.

(3) The Cheering of the People

The circling of Jericho on the seventh day would be much different. All the people of the Nation of Israel would join in. The LORD gives the instruction for that day and the cheering of the people. Verse 4b. "... *then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.* ⁷ *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....*" (6:4b-5a)

Seven times around the city, then the seven trumpets will blast, and the people will shout.

(4) The Cratering of the Walls

With the blast of the horns and the shout of the people, they will see the cratering of the walls. Verse 5b. "... *and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead.*" (6:5b)

And with that, we have the strategy for the conquest of Jericho.

c) The Scheme of the Conquest

(1) The Directive for the Priests

With the strategy of the conquest in place, we hear Joshua announce the scheme of the conquest with the directive to the priests in verse 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.'*" 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.'*" (6:6-7)

(2) The Departure of the Priests

The directive to the priests had been given by Joshua. As directed, the next verse tells us about the departure of the priests. Verse 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.*" (6:8)

Once everyone was in place in line at Gilgal, the priests blew the trumps, and the march began. Behind the priests, the Ark followed. But the lineup will not occur on the day this instruction is given. In verse 11, we will discover that the lineup will occur on the following morning.

(3) The Defenders of the Priests

But the priests were not alone in the caravan that marched around Jericho. Verse 9 tells us of the defenders of the priests. "*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.*" (6:9)

The "armed men" were in front of the priests who carried the trumps. No doubt these were the men of Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manasseh. They had led the way across the Jordan in battle array. Why wouldn't they take that same position in this caravan? After the priests came the Ark. After the Ark came the "rear guard." The rear guard is always as important as the front guard. This rear guard was probably all the rest of the men of Israel twenty years of age and upward.

d) The Silence of the Conquest

But Joshua had one more instruction for the scheme of the conquest. It was the silence of the conquest. Verse 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!'*" (6:10)

Let us set the scene. The lineup will take place in Gilgal. Once everyone is in line, the priests will blow the horns to start the parade around the city. After the blowing of the horns to signal the departure from Gilgal, the rest of the parade is in total silence – that is, until they hear Joshua give the command to shout. Surely Jericho heard the horns that started the parade. The king and the people probably ran to their walls to see the Israelites quietly pass around their city.

e) The Sacredness of the Conquest

This conquest of Jericho was the plan of the LORD; therefore, there was the sacredness of the conquest. Verse 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.”* (6:11)

Wherever the Ark traveled, the ground was sacred. When the Ark circled each day and returned to the camp, the holy desire of the LORD was involved.

f) The Sequence of the Conquest

After giving all the instructions for the campaign against Jericho, the camp rested through the night. Then, early the following morning, Joshua started the sequence of the conquest. Verse 12. *“Now Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 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. ¹⁴ Thus the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp; they did so for six days.”* (6:12-14)

Every day for six days, Joshua led the parade around Jericho just as he had been directed by the LORD.

g) The Siege of the Conquest

On the seventh day, the order of events would be different from those of the past six days. The seventh day would be the siege of the conquest. We hear of that in verse 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. 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.”* (6:15-16)

(1) The Caution Concerning the Prohibition

We come to a place where the writer inserts some vital information for the Israelites concerning the siege. It is not new information because it was given to the nation just a few months before by Moses, before he died, when the people were camped on the east side of the Jordan River in the Plain of Moab. The ban placed on the cities captured in the Promised Land had not changed except for one detail Moses did not know about. We hear the caution concerning the prohibition in verse 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. 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. 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.”* (6:17-19)

The exception for Rahab and her family is an example of Moses’ instruction concerning the foreigners. If a foreigner converted and believed in the LORD, as was expected by the LORD, they were forgiven by the LORD and accepted. We have not discussed the impact Rahab will have on the future of Israel but we should do it quickly now. Rahab will marry Salmon of the tribe of Judah. Their son will be Boaz. Boaz will be the father of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of King David. Rahab will have the honor of being in the ancestry of Jesus.

Notice also the warning concerning taking things from Jericho that were banned by law. The ban covered the things that the people might covet – remember, *“Thou shalt not covet.”*

(2) The Combat Concerning the Destruction

When Joshua called for the shout, the people shouted. Here is the report of their combat concerning the destruction. Verse 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. 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.”* (6:20-21)

(3) The Command Concerning the Extraction

Joshua had not forgotten the promise made to the harlot. He remembered the oath. He turned to the two spies and gave them the command concerning the extraction. Verse 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.”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. (6:22-23)*

h) The Summary of the Conquest

(1) The First Chattel Delivered

Finally, the writer records the summary of the conquest of Jericho. He tells of the first chattel delivered in the Promised Land to Israel. Verse 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.” (6:24)*

A chattel is *tangible property*. In this case, it is the property of the dead Canaanites. The silver, gold, bronze, and iron chattels from Jericho were the first to go into Israel’s treasury. It will not be the last. All the captured chattel from all the conquered cities and villages will go into the nations treasury.

(2) The First Canaanites Delivered

The writer tells us of the first Canaanites delivered. Verse 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.” (6:25)*

We do not know how many family members were rescued from Rahab’s house that day, but it seems from the verse that it was all of her father’s household – however many that might have been. When this book of Joshua was completed, she was still living with the nation as a reward for her help with the spies. We also know, as we have already said, she will be the great grandmother of King David.

(3) The First Curse Delivered

Joshua’s words concerning Jericho will be the first curse delivered in the Promised Land by a leader of Israel. Joshua’s words are recorded beginning in verse 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.”²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.” (6:26-27)*

Was this curse ever fulfilled? Yes. Five hundred and fifty years after Joshua spoke these words, the curse occurred. We find the record in 1st Kings.

“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.” (1 Kings 16:34).