

Joshua 6:1-20 | Sunday September 20, 2026

1 Corinthians 10:11 NLT

(11) These things happened to them **as examples for us. They were written down to warn us** who live at the end of the age.

When handled correctly, the Old Testament has so much value for believers today. We are told that these real-life events happened to Israel as an example to us. They were meant to be used for our instruction and to warn us how important it is to live for God. When we see God's timeless character and the eternal truth in them, we are able to learn so much about God's love for His people and how He leads us. Yet, often the wrong details, the culturally specific ones, are emphasized and practiced. A pastor once told young men to walk around a woman 7 times to claim her as his wife, and just as the walls of Jericho fell down, so will the walls to her heart. This is nonsense and a misuse of the Word. As God calls Israel to walk around Jericho 7 times, we can learn so much about how we are called to walk by faith with Him.

Joshua 5:13-6:5 ESV

(13) **When Joshua was by Jericho**, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with His **drawn sword in His hand**. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us, or for our adversaries?"

(14) And He said, "**No**; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to Him, "What does My lord say to His servant?"

(15) And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

(1) Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in.

(2) And the LORD said to Joshua, "**See, I have given Jericho into your hand**, with its king and mighty men of valor.

(3) You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days.

(4) Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.

(5) And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him."

Joshua encountered the commander of the Lord's army, who we saw two weeks ago is Jesus before He was born in Bethlehem. Jesus has an intimidating stance, holding out His sword of judgment. God is going to accomplish His own purposes and is not on the side of the Israelites or the Canaanites.

Instead of seeing whose side God is on, Joshua needs to focus on being on God's side.

God had promised all the way back in the garden to provide a Messiah (Gen. 3:15), and God is working towards fulfilling that promise. He was creating a people for the future Messiah to be born into, and that people needed a homeland. Jesus declares to Joshua that He has given Jericho into their hands. This is the first of many cities that will be conquered in the Promised Land. **Jesus is clearing the way for His birth over a thousand years later.**

Notice that Jesus describes giving the city to Joshua as a **completed action**. The outcome of the battle for Jericho is not in doubt. Before the battle even starts, Joshua is assured of complete victory. It has already been given over. This was meant to give Joshua tremendous confidence. **The victory was already accomplished; Israel just needed to walk faithfully in it.** The same is true of our salvation.

Ephesians 2:1; 4-7 ESV

- (1) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins
- (4) **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us,
- (5) even **when we were dead** in our trespasses, **made us alive** together with Christ—**by grace you have been saved—**
- (6) **and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him** in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
- (7) so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

We are to live each day from a place of victory in Jesus as believers. We have been saved through Jesus' tremendous grace. Paul worded this in such a way (periphrastic construction, perfect participle paired with εἰμί in the present tense) to emphasize that **our salvation is a completed event that has present and persistent ramifications**. In our salvation we have been declared holy; we are in a process of being made holy, and we will be ultimately holy one day when we are with Him. This whole process of salvation is contingent on being made alive through His grace when we believe in Jesus. The moment we trusted in Jesus for our salvation, we were raised with Him and seated in the heavenly places with Him. Notice it does not say we **will be** raised with Him but presents these truths as already happening the moment we were saved. **Our salvation is so secure through the blood of Christ that God declares that we are resurrected and seated in heaven with Jesus.** Just as Joshua needed to walk in a victory that was already secure, we are called to walk each day, growing in our relationship with God, knowing it is fully secure. **The freedom to grow and walk with God is not found in a place of fear but from a place of knowing the victory is fully secured in Him.** God's battle plan emphasized to Israel that the victory was already won.

Joshua 6:3-5 ESV

- (3) **You shall march around the city**, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days.
- (4) **Seven** priests shall bear **seven trumpets of rams' horns** before the ark. On the **seventh** day you shall march around the city **seven** times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.
- (5) And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him."

God does not instruct Israel to make battering rams or scaling ladders to overcome the walls of Jericho; instead, they are to march. For six days the military is to walk around the city as seven priests blow seven horns, and the men are to remain silent. Then on the seventh day they are to walk around it seven times, and the city walls are promised to fall. **Seven is emphasized, as this will be a complete victory secured by God.** These plans are so ludicrous from an earthly

perspective that there is no doubt that only God could secure this victory. The seven days also correlate to the seven-day feast of unleavened bread that follows the Passover.

Joshua 6:6-14 ESV

(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 bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.”

(7) And he said to the people, **“Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD.”**

(8) And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them.

(9) The armed men were walking before the priests **who were blowing the trumpets**, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, **while the trumpets blew continually.**

(10) But Joshua commanded the people, **“You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth**, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout.”

(11) So he caused the ark of the LORD to circle the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

(12) Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

(13) And the seven priests bearing **the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets blew continually.**

(14) And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

God protected Israel as they marched around the city, constantly announcing their presence as the horns blared. Jericho did not rain down arrows on them as the people were terrified of Israel and the God whose Ark was encircling their city. **God had the Ark be right in the middle of the men of war.** The impression is they followed the same order of marching as in the wilderness found in Numbers 10:11-28 with 6 tribes before the Ark and 6 tribes behind the Ark. The holy God who at the Jordan asked the nation to stay a half mile away from the Ark now had Israel join Him in a battle march. **God was showing that He was with His people in the battle that He asked them to walk in.**

At the time the people of Jericho would have known the **Ugaritic Epic of Keret**, which describes a god instructing a military to walk around a city for six days and then on the seventh to accept a gift from the city and then leave the city in peace. It is likely that the inhabitants of Jericho were hoping for this kind of outcome from a people that terrified them. **The trumpets blared constantly each day of the march.** These were not the silver trumpets that were used to organize the camp of Israel (Num. 10). These were **shofars**, which are trumpets made from **a ram's horn**. The shofar was to be used each year, marking the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 25:9 LSB

(9) **‘You shall then sound a ram’s horn** abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; **on the day of atonement** you shall sound a horn all through your land.

The blowing of the ram's horn was to mark the forgiveness of sins that the blood offered in the Holy of Holies **temporarily** secured for the people. The blood of animals was always to point to the need for the perfect sacrifice of Jesus' blood. A ram's horn was chosen as a remembrance of God substituting a ram for Isaac.

Genesis 22:7-8; 13 ESV

(7) And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son."

He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, **but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?**"

(8) Abraham said, "**God will provide for Himself the lamb** for a burnt offering, my son."

So they went both of them together.

(13) And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him **was a ram,**

caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

God had to provide Jesus as the perfect lamb of God. That day He provided a ram as a placeholder until the time for the perfect sacrifice. **These horns that were blaring each day were declaring the need for a substitute.** The need for Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice. **Jericho heard them as a declaration of judgment and was terrified by them, yet in them is the hope of the coming Messiah.**

God used this specific plan to conquer Jericho to show that the complete victory came from Him and as a reminder of the coming Messiah. As a military general, Joshua would have never anticipated or planned for this strategy. How much time could Joshua have wasted worrying about how to overcome the walls of Jericho? Likewise, how much time could Joshua waste trying to figure out what God was going to do? I guarantee Joshua would not think of a 7-day march with ram's horns. **We are not to worry and try to figure things out for God but to walk faithfully with Him.**

Luke 12:25-26 ESV

(25) And which of you **by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?**

(26) If then you are not able to do **as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?**

No amount of worry or anxiety can add a single hour to our lives. The number of days we will live was determined before we lived a single one of them (Ps 139:16). Jesus is declaring to us how empty and useless worrying truly is. We can spend so much time anticipating "what ifs" and **trying to imagine what God might do instead of looking to Him.** We are to walk in His truth and let Him work. God's battle plan with Jericho was for Israel's good as they learned to trust Him even more and was for His own glory.

Joshua 6:15-19 ESV

(15) On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times.

(16) And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "**Shout, for the LORD has given you the city.**

(17) **And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction.** Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.

(18) But you, **keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction**, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things **and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.**

(19) But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, **are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD."**

On the seventh day, and the seventh time around the city, it was finally time for Israel to shout. It was time to receive His victory. As we reach the important climax of the story, the instructions of verses 17-19 delay the pivotal moment. The entire city and its contents were to be set aside as holy to the Lord, and the Israelites were not to take anything for themselves.

We will spend time next week looking at this command of complete destruction. The important part for today is to see the importance placed on Israel's obedience. **This was God's victory, and Israel was to obediently walk in it.**

Joshua 6:20 LSB

(20) So the people shouted, and the 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 beneath itself, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city.**

God was faithful to His promises yet again, and at the shout of the people, the walls fell down. **The Hebrew is specific in that the walls fell to the outside, beneath themselves.** The historical details presented in Joshua are very specific in when and how Jericho was destroyed.

- Jericho was destroyed during harvest time- Joshua 3:15
- Jericho had walls that protected the city from attack- Joshua 6:1
- The walls fell outward and beneath themselves- Joshua 6:20
- In victory, Israel burned the city- Joshua 6:24
- After its destruction Jericho was to be left deserted and not rebuilt- Joshua 6:26

The historical site of ancient Jericho has been found, and parts of the city excavated and studied. **God's Word has been fully confirmed** in all the details it offers. The city had a strong tiered double-walled system. The foundations of these walls are still there today. Archaeologists found that the walls fell to the outside and served as giant ramps for the Israelites to enter into the raised city. The city was not destroyed by traditional means of being breached inward, but the ruins confirm God's Word. A thick layer of ash was also found, confirming that the city was destroyed by fire. **Burnt jars full of grain** were found, showing that the city was not looted and that it was destroyed during the harvest season. Above the ash is a layer showing erosion and desolation, as the city was uninhabited. God's word is confirmed to every detail. Archaeologists are unanimous in these findings. Some archaeologists debate the exact timing of these events, but none of their arguments are based on physical evidence found. With all this evidence that the walls fell down, God's Word is very clear on what actually caused them to fall.

Hebrews 11:30 ESV

(30) **By faith the walls of Jericho fell down** after they had been encircled for seven days.

The walls of Jericho fell by walking in a trust, in a faith, **that God had secured the victory.** We are called to walk in the same trust, the same faith in Jesus' victory.