

Joshua 6:17-25 | Sunday September 27, 2026

Last week we saw the miracle of the walls of Jericho falling down. God delivered the city to the Israelites just as He promised. It was God's victory, and the Israelites just needed to walk faithfully and obediently in it. Israel was not only in the promised land, but they were starting to inherit it and take over what God gave to them. Yet, the reality of the Promised Land is that it was not sitting empty; the land was full of cities and people. The story of Jericho does not stop when the walls fall down. Israel was to fully destroy the people and all that was in it.

Joshua 6:15-19 NAS95

(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.

(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."**

God placed Jericho under the ban. This means to devote something to God for complete destruction. Putting something under the ban means that it is exclusively to be given to God and no one else can partake of it. Jericho was not a city that was to be plundered or moved into. It is the concept of a **holy war** where everything in the city that is alive must be put to death with the exception of Rahab and her family. **The ban meant a total destruction.** This was not the Israelites' idea but came from God.

Leviticus 27:28-29 ESV

(28) "But **no devoted thing** that a man devotes to the LORD, of anything that he has, whether man or beast, or of his inherited field, shall be sold or redeemed; **every devoted thing is most holy to the LORD.**

(29) **No one devoted, who is to be devoted for destruction from mankind,** shall be ransomed; **he shall surely be put to death.**

"Holy" means to be set apart. In this case when things under the ban are described as holy, it means they are **set apart for God only and are to be destroyed.** They cannot be redeemed or used in any other way. Rahab and her family were not under the ban and so were saved from the city before the ban was carried out. We will look later on as to why they were not under the ban. The rest of the city and all that were in it were put to the ban, a complete and full destruction.

Joshua 6:20-21; 24 ESV

(20) So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city.

(21) Then **they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.**

(24) And **they burned the city with fire, and everything in it.** Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

Jericho was burned and offered as a first fruits offering to God. Just as the first fruits of a harvest were to be given over to God in thanks, **Jericho was the first fruits of the Promised Land was given to God in thanks.** When we really see what this describes, it can be hard to process. An entire city is put to death and then completely burned. The best way for us to understand it is in terms of a nuclear blast and its contaminating radiation. Whatever was not killed by the blast of the bomb was infected by radiation and needed to be cleansed by fire. This is how complete the ban of destruction was meant to be. The Promised Land was contaminated by sin and had to be purged. **It was time for the people of the Promised Land to be judged** after God had been so patient with them.

Genesis 15:13-16; 18 ESV

(13) Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for **four hundred years.**

(14) But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

(15) As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.

(16) And **they shall come back here** in the fourth generation, **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”**

(18) On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “**To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,**

God let Abram know exactly what was going to happen to His future descendants. They would be afflicted for 400 years but would leave their enslavement in Egypt with great possessions. Then they would be brought to the land that God was showing to Abram. From the river of Egypt to the Euphrates was to be given to Israel. It was not time for Abram to take over this land yet because **the sin of the Amorites, the inhabitants of the land, was not yet complete.** God, in His amazing patience and grace, gave the inhabitants of Jericho **over 400 years** to respond to Him. **God judges nations based on their sins.** He has a limit of how much sin a people are allowed to walk in. The people in the Promised Land had hit their limit; **it was time for a holy God to judge them.** Jericho was not a kind city with peaceful people but was a brutal society that had given themselves over to gross immorality.

Leviticus 18:20-25; 27 ESV

(20) And you shall not lie sexually **with your neighbor's wife** and so make yourself unclean with her.

(21) You shall not give any of **your children to offer them to Molech**, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

(22) **You shall not lie with a male as with a woman;** it is an abomination.

(23) And **you shall not lie with any animal** and so make yourself unclean with it, **neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it:** it is perversion.

(24) “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, **for by all these the**

nations I am driving out before you have become unclean,

(25) and **the land became unclean**, so that I punished its iniquity, and **the land vomited out its inhabitants.**

(27) **(for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations**, so that the land became unclean),

The Promised Land was full **of adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality.** The land vomited them out because of how sinful they had become. Our scale of how sinful a society can get so often ignores these examples from scripture. Our sinful natures are desperately wicked, and societies as a whole can sink to depths of depravity that are hard to imagine. **Sin is extremely contagious.** It is not that these actions were done by a few, but after giving themselves over to sin for over 400 years, these depraved acts had infiltrated their entire society. **God is judging the people and their sins, and He is using the imperfect tool of Israel to do this.**

Deuteronomy 9:4-6 ESV

(4) “Do not say in your heart, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, **‘It is because of my righteousness** that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,’ **whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations** that the LORD is driving them out before you.

(5) **Not because of your righteousness** or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, **but because of the wickedness of these nations** the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that He may confirm the word that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

(6) “Know, therefore, that the LORD your **God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people.**

Israel was not more righteous or more deserving of the promised land. They were not used as an instrument of justice because of their own righteousness. The people of the Promised Land were judged because of their own sin and wickedness. **God used stubborn sinful Israel to exact His judgment.** Just as He was willing to use sinful Babylon to one day judge Israel. **God can use sinful nations to execute His judgment**, and then He will judge that people when their sin reaches its limit. The ban that Jericho was put to is not gross injustice but shows our holy God and the amazing patience He is willing to show. **After waiting for over 400 years, He gave the people 7 more days to respond to Him.** At any point they could have turned to Him.

Jeremiah 18:1-10 ESV

(1) The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD:

(2) “Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words.”

(3) So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel.

(4) **And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.**

(5) Then the word of the LORD came to me:

(6) **“O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD.** Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.

(7) **If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it,**

(8) and **if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will**

relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it.

(9) And **if at any time** I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it,

(10) and if it does evil in My sight, not listening to My voice, **then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it.**

God is affirming that even when a judgment has been pronounced on a nation, if the people would turn to God from their evil, He would relent from the destruction that was promised. **He is the potter and can rework the clay however seems fit to Him.** He cannot bend on His holy standard, but He can defer judgment and blessing based on how a nation walks with Him. At any time a nation can turn to God. **Nineveh is a great example of this.**

Jonah 3:3-5 ESV

(3) So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, **three days' journey in breadth.**

(4) Jonah began to go into the city, **going a day's journey.** And he called out, **"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"**

(5) **And the people of Nineveh believed God.** They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, **from the greatest of them to the least of them.**

Jonah does a pitiful job of sharing God's message and only travels 1 day into a 3-day journey to the city, and amazingly, **everyone believed God.** They called for a fast, and the greatest in the city to the least believed in God. **God relented from the immediate destruction.** God's judgment was delayed over 100 years until future generations eventually went back to their sin. Nahum, then, is given the message of destruction for Nineveh. **At any time a nation can turn to God.** Jericho knew the stories about what God had done in Egypt and chose to reject from following this God.

Joshua 6:1 ESV

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

The people of Jericho shut up their gates and closed themselves off from the God of Israel. They refused to turn to the powerful God that destroyed Egypt and chose to continue in their immorality. It is amazing how the closed gates of Jericho are compared to Rahab's open window.

Joshua 2:18 ESV

(18) Behold, when we come into the land, **you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down,** and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household.

Rahab's open window with its scarlet cord shows how gracious God is when someone is willing to turn to Him. Rahab chose to trust in the God of Israel. She heard how Israel destroyed the two kings of the Amorites (Josh. 2:10) and did not want the same fate. **Rahab responded to God, just as the rest of the city could have.** Even after all the years of immorality, God was still patient and gracious as He delivered judgment.

2 Peter 3:9 ESV

(9) The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, **but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach**

| **repentance.**

Psalm 7:11-12 ESV

- (11) **God is a righteous judge**, and a God who feels indignation every day.
(12) **If a man does not repent, God will whet His sword**; He has bent and readied His bow;

God does not want anyone to perish and be judged in their sins. This is why He sent Jesus to die and pay for the sins of the entire world. God desires that all would repent, to turn to Him and live. **Jesus is not being slow about His return but is patiently giving people time to turn to Him.** God knows that He is righteous and sin must be judged. So often we try to diminish sin and its consequences, and yet we forget the affront it truly is to a holy God. God is loving and wants people to turn to Him, and He is just and His judgments are not empty threats. **So God patiently waits to give time for all who would come.** Rahab is so thankful He did. Rahab and her family opened themselves to God as Jericho closed itself. They were now considered Israelites and were **brought into an entirely new kingdom, and thus the ban did not apply to them anymore.**

Joshua 6:22-25 ESV

- (22) But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her."
(23) **So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel.**
(24) And **they burned the city with fire, and everything in it.** Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.
(25) **But Rahab** the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. **And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.**

The complete ban and destruction of Jericho show God's righteous judgment, as Rahab shows God's patience and amazing grace. About as much is said about Rahab and her deliverance as the destruction of the ban. Rahab and her family were saved from the complete destruction of the ban. At first, they were brought outside the camp because **they were ceremonially unclean.** The amazing thing is that they did not stay outside the camp; **Rahab and her family lived in Israel.** They become part of God's people. They were not second-class citizens or outcasts but members of God's family, and Rahab is the great-great-etc. grandmother of Jesus. When we are willing to believe in Jesus, we are fully brought into His family and become His people.

Ephesians 2:12-14 ESV

- (12) remember that you were at that time **separated from Christ**, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world.**
(13) **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**
(14) **For He Himself is our peace**, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

Every one of us was like Rahab, a sinner living with an impending judgment. **Everyone who believes in Jesus is marked by the scarlet cord of the blood of Christ** and will be saved from the coming judgment. The blood of Christ is sufficient for everyone; they simply have to turn to Him. **We were all under the ban, and Jesus was willing to take the ban for us.**

Galatians 3:13-14 ESV

(13) **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us**—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

(14) so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, **so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.**

Jesus was willing to take on the curse that our sins deserved. He took God’s righteous judgment so that we could live. We receive this incredible gift by faith just as Rahab did.

Hebrews 11:31 ESV

(31) **By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient**, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.
