

The Book of Joshua



Blowing the Shophar

The Book of Joshua

Bible Study – Good Shepherd Lutheran Church – Collinsville, Illinois

Chapter Six

1. (6.1-5) The LORD Commands Joshua How to Capture Jericho

Joshua chapter six is the most well-known chapter in the book. Here we see how Israel receives the land as a gift of grace. Take a look at Psalm 44.1-8.

**How is Israel to think of their victory over Jericho?
Why is this important?**

The victory over Jericho is clearly God's victory! This is important because this is not just another fight between human beings. This is God's fight against sin, death, and the devil.

How do you see the same principle at work in your own life?

Why do you think God prescribed the seven day ritual?

The seven day ritual helped to reinforce the fact that this victory was clearly the miracle of God. Note how Hebrews 11.30 refers to this...

^{NKJ} Hebrews 11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

Another important thing to remember is that the procession was as much for Jericho as it was for Israel. Jericho needed to see that this was not just another human fight. This was God's judgment upon their wickedness.

2. (6.6-14) The Six Day Procession

What are trumpet blasts used for in the following passages?



Ex 19.13 'Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.'
When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain."

Rev 8.6 So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

1Thes 4.16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Note the order of the procession: Soldiers, Seven Priests & Trumpets, Ark of the Covenant (See 6.8), Rear Guard.

We don't know the exact size of Jericho. Tell El-Sultan, about 4.5 miles west of the Jordan is the most likely site. Today it covers 8.5 acres. At the time of Joshua it may have been 9-12 acres. The circumference would have been a half to a mile. It could have been walked in an hour. There would have been no problem making seven circuits in one day.

3. (6.15-21) The Seventh Day

Why did God destroy everyone: men, women & children?

The Bible uses a very technical term for this: *cherem*. The word means "damned to destruction." What happened to Jericho is a part of God's judgment. We cannot presume to second guess God's judgment. But we can be sure that He judges righteously.



Here are some of the important things to remember:

1. Canaanite Religion: El was the chief god and called "Father Bull." He killed his favorite son, cut off his daughter's head, and sacrificed another son. El's wife was Ashera, goddess of fertility. Their son was Baal, god of storm. Baal's wife was Anat, goddess of love, fertility and war. In one poem she rejoices as she wades in the gore of the soldiers she has killed.

2. God said that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet complete in Genesis 15.16. He told Abraham that the fourth generation would return to this land. Using "generation" as 100 years that (Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born) would roughly refer to the conquest that occurred 430 years later.
3. God condemned the practices of the Canaanites in Lev. 18 & 20 and warned Israel not to adopt them. We know the Canaanites practiced prostitution, homosexuality, incest, & child sacrifice. God said the Canaanites would be vomited out of the land and that Israel would be vomited out if they practiced the same things (Lev. 18.23).

What is the application for *cherem* today?

Cherem refers to anything that is damned for destruction. The New Testament *cherem* could be considered all forms of temptation. Remember the words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount: "If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you" (Mat 5.30). Jesus also said that anyone that causes "one of these little ones who believe in me to sin" should be drowned with a millstone (Mat 18.6).

Is There Such a Thing as Divine Warfare?

Genesis 3.15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.

Exodus 14:13 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. ¹⁴ "The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

Exodus 15:3 The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name.

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

Divine warfare is God's judgment upon those who reject Him and oppose His plan of salvation.

Is there a difference between Divine Warfare and human warfare?

Yes. God's judgment is reserved for the last day. What we see in the Exodus and in the conquest of Canaan is a very specific and temporary judgment that occurs before the last day. There are no general commands in the Bible to execute unbelievers. This is why Jesus commands us to "love your enemies." God's primary plan is salvation through the proclamation of the Gospel. His secondary work is judgment and punishment.

Human warfare is always an act of God's judgment. It is unfortunately a necessary part of restraining evil in this world. But it is only a "restraint" not a cure. The cure is spiritual – salvation by grace alone through faith alone.



The Bible does not condemn those who are the instruments of God's justice. John the Baptist did not tell Roman soldiers to stop serving in the Roman army. The New Testament commends certain centurions. Warfare can be conducted justly. Paul commends the work of governments to restrain evil as the work of God (Romans 13.1-4).



We must take great care not to confuse the two as is often done in the Islamic teaching of Jihad. Neither should we sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" or "The Son of God Goes Forth to War" as we prepare for battle in Iraq. These songs are all talking about the spiritual warfare of proclaiming the Gospel and sacrificing for the Gospel. A Christian soldier may in fact perform spiritual warfare on his own as he witnesses to fellow soldiers, prisoners, and civilians. Also the human warfare may pave the way for spiritual warfare by putting down evil that obstructs the Gospel. But the mission he is fulfilling at the request of the government is one of judgment. It is the secondary, not the primary work of God. For this reason human warfare must always be treated with a sense of great respect. A very appropriate hymn for those serving in human warfare is "Eternal Father, Strong to Save." We should take no joy in killing fellow human beings. It must always be viewed as a necessary form of God's judgment on man's sin.

4. (6.22-25) The Rescue of Rahab

Was Rahab fully accepted by Israel?

Verse 23 says that she and her people were kept outside the camp. This may have been due to ritual uncleanness (a situation that often included Israelites). But verse 25 says "she dwells in Israel to this day." The Bible refers to her as a "prostitute" in the same way it refers to the "thief on the cross."

What happened to Rahab?

Rahab married a man named Salmon according to Matthew 1.4. They had a son Boaz (Ruth 4.20-21). Boaz married Ruth. They had a son named Obed, and Obed had a son named Jesse. Jesse fathered King David. Rahab was great-great grandmother of King David and ancestor of Jesus.



4. (6.26-27) Joshua's Curse

Joshua's curse of the rebuilding of Jericho came true again under Ahab (874-853 B.C.) 500 years later. See 1 Kings 16.34. The site was

apparently preserved like the 12 memorial stones as a reminder of God's judgment. Later people could live in Jericho (Josh 18.21; Judges 3.13; 2 Sam 10.5). It was allotted to Benjamin. However, the rebuilding of its formidable defenses was not permitted. There is no defense that will stand in the way of God's plan of salvation. This reminds us of Jesus' words in Mat 16.18 "The gates of hell will not prevail against her..." In our times the fall of the Iron Curtain is one of the best examples.