

A New Way of War

Joshua 5:13 - 6:27



Everyone knows the feeling of approaching an important day, especially after much preparation. It's hard to sleep, thoughts race through the mind, an extra dose of adrenalin flows through the body.

For Joshua, it was as though he had spent many years in college preparing for his first real day on the job. As he looked over the hills toward the cities God had told him to conquer, he was probably filled with a mixture of excitement and anxiety. "Am I prepared?" "Will I be able to do it?"

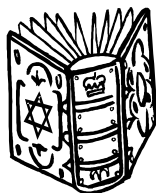
Soon he would see.

- *The Strange visitor (5:13-6:27)*
- *Divine Instruction (6:1-5)*
- *An Incredible Victory (6:6-21)*
- *A Promise Remembered (6:22-25)*
- *The Curse of God (6:26, 27)*

What does it say?

What does it mean?

Joshua 5:13-6:27



¹³ Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

¹⁴ "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"


¹⁵ The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.


¹ Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.

² Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men." ³ March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. ⁴ Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march

5:13-15 Who is this stranger?

Check out a parallel incident in Exodus 3:1-6. The person in the bush is called the _____. To find out who that is, look up these verses and/or consult a Bible dictionary:

 Genesis 22:11,15

 Genesis 31:11-13

 Exodus 23:20-23

 Judges 6:11-18

 Judges 13:3-6

What significance can you attach to the appearance of this person to Joshua, at this time?

6:1-5 If Jericho was already "delivered" to Israel, why do you think they had to go through all these motions?

What does it say?

around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵ When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in."

⁶ So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." ⁷ And he ordered the people, "Advance! March around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD."

⁸ When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them. ⁹ The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. ¹⁰ But Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" ¹¹ So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the people returned to camp and spent the night there.

¹² Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³ The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. ¹⁴ So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

¹⁵ On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. ¹⁶ The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has

What does it mean?

"Through archeological digs we have a better idea of what Jericho was like... Jericho was not a big city; it was only about seven acres in its entirety. What it really was was a fortress – a very strong fortress prepared to resist siege."

Francis Schaeffer



6:6-21 Simply outline the course of events in the fall of Jericho:

What word is used to describe the way the defeated city was to be treated? (see verses 18 & 21)

For background concerning this act of God's judgment, read Genesis 15:12-21 (the Abrahamic covenant) – what does "not yet complete" mean (15:16)?

"Usually the Hebrew word means a ban for utter destruction₃ the compulsory dedication of something which impedes or resists God's work₃ which is considered to be accursed before God. This word is used regarding almost all the cities which Joshua's troops destroyed.

Because the Hebrew word "to be holy" also carries the thought of setting apart from ordinary use in surrender to God, we must distinguish objects set apart because they are "devoted" from those set apart because they are "holy".

In respect to the objects to be destroyed₃ they were considered to be offensive to God and injurious to His work. Objects to be set apart because holy were pleasing to Him and useful."

Theological Wordbook of the O.T.

What does it say?

given you the city!¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."

²⁰ When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.²¹ They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it -- men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

²² Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her."²³ So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.

²⁴ Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house.²⁵ But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho -- and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

²⁶ At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the LORD is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: "At the cost of his firstborn son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates."

²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

What does it mean?

6:22-25 According to the last phrase of verse 23, what must have happened between that day ("a place outside the camp") and "this day" of verse 25? What did that change represent?

What kind of impact do you think Rahab's presence in Israel would make?

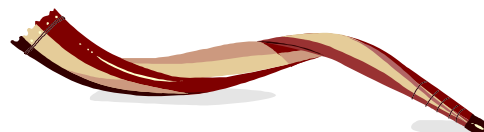
6:26 Based on your study of verse 21 above, would you say that Joshua is overdoing it a little here? (see Deut. 13:16)

Was Jericho ever rebuilt? (see 1 Kings 16:34)

[Note: Scholars make this point -- "The curse is not meant for those who used the site of Jericho for habitation...it involves the refortification of Jericho. The words "foundation" and "gates" refer to the establishment of a wall around the city.]"

6:27 This is a fulfillment of what verse in chapter one?

As people talked about Joshua and his exploits, what "hidden" message would they be drawn to? (hint: what does "Joshua" mean?)





APPLICATION — WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN MY LIFE?

1. When you read the account of Joshua's encounter with the "stranger," do you secretly wish that something like this could happen to you? Do you think it would make you feel stronger, more secure? What truth do you know that tells you that, in fact, this does happen to you daily (only in a slightly different way)?
2. Does God seem overly harsh to you in this lesson? Certainly His judgment is emphasized here. The writer to the Hebrews also focused on God's wrath when he called God "a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29) and said that "it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:31) If this does not fit your mental image of God, how can you change your thinking so that it does?
3. Holiness, obedience, trust, and loyalty to promises – all these qualities are highlighted in this study. Think about them this week - ask God to open your eyes to situations in which these qualities are called for!
4. Do you think Joshua felt stupid walking around the wall for 7 days? Why or why not? (Have you ever "felt stupid" when you were doing the right thing, and later found out it was worth it?)
5. Have you ever doubted the way God's word tells us to deal with problems and people, especially when our culture says the opposite?

