

JOSHUA: PROPHET OF CONQUEST

Bible Background – JOSHUA 5:13-6:27

Printed Text – JOSHUA 5:13-6:5, 15-16, 20

The LORD's Commander Confronts Joshua

¹³ When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, "Are you friend or foe?"

¹⁴ "Neither one," he replied. "I am the commander of the LORD's army. "At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. "I am at your command," Joshua said. "What do you want your servant to do?"

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 as he was told.

The Fall of Jericho

⁶ Now the gates of Jericho were tightly shut because the people were afraid of the Israelites. No one was allowed to go out or in.

² But the LORD said to Joshua, "I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors.

³ You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days.

Lesson Introduction

When we think of Joshua and the wall of Jericho, we often recall the Old Negro spiritual, "Joshua Fit De Battle of Jericho." It tells the story of God's assurance of victory in a battle against the people's enemies. It reminds us that God is a God of deliverance and power. To our fore-bearers, it celebrated a message of faith manifested in complete obedience to God and served as a reminder that an oppressed

⁴ Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram's horn. On the seventh day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns.

⁵ When you hear the priests give one long blast on the rams' horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge straight into the town."

¹⁵ On the seventh day the Israelites got up at dawn and marched around the town as they had done before. But this time they went around the town seven times.

¹⁶ The seventh time around, as the priests sounded the long blast on their horns, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the town!

²⁰ When the people heard the sound of the rams' horns, they shouted as loud as they could. Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites charged straight into the town and captured it.

-----New Living Translation

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people can find strength in God, the Deliverer. As we study this lesson, let us reflect on our response to overwhelming challenges that we face and our commitment to obedience to God.

Background: Joshua, the mighty Israelite military commander, knew His God and believed He would give His nation the Promised Land. Militarily, God instructed Joshua to plunge into Palestine and divide it into north and south. Jericho was the first target to conquer since it lay directly in the path of their destination. Jericho lay in the valley of the Jordan River. In this lush tropical climate, palm, balsam, sycamore, and henna trees grew. Great and wealthy, Jericho would be an ideal first fruit sacrifice to God. Once the Israelites had safely crossed the Jordan, they commemorated the event by taking twelve stones from the riverbed and placing them at the next night's campsite. One man from each tribe was to select a stone. The stones were to serve as a memorial for instructing future generations about the Lord's intervention at the Jordan River. Other memorials were established as well. Teaching children about the faith through the use of memorials was an established Israelite practice. After they crossed the Jordan, the manna which had fallen from heaven each day ceased. Since Israel had reached the land of promise, the daily provision of manna was no longer necessary.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 333

Messenger of the Plan

Joshua 5:13-15: The Israelites have just miraculously crossed the Jordan River and are prepared to possess the land of Canaan. The inhabitants of the land have all heard how the Lord their God had dried up the waters of the Jordan and allowed them to cross on dry land (Joshua 5:1). Because of this, the kings of the Canaanites lost all courage in face of the Israelite people. Therefore, Jericho, the first city west of the Jordan, tightly shut the gates of their well-fortified city in defense against them.

As the Israelites consecrated themselves and prepared for battle, Joshua met a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword. "Friend or foe," Joshua asked. "Neither," was the reply, "but the captain of the Lord's army." Joshua immediately fell to the ground in worship which leads many to believe that this Heavenly Being who accepted worship from Joshua was no mere angel, but a *Theophany* or a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Himself. Furthermore, the Angel gave Joshua the same instructions that the Lord gave Moses, to remove his sandals, for he was standing on holy ground.

◆*When has God commanded you to worship in what seemed to be an impossible situation?*

The Plan to Conquer Jericho

Joshua 6:1-5: As was stated earlier, the residents of Jericho were expecting the attack from the Israelites and had therefore, closed the city to all incoming and outgoing traffic. The gates were barred, and the hope was in the strength of the city walls to protect them. These walls were substantial enough that some houses were actually built within them. (Joshua 2:1). But the Lord assured Joshua that he would have the victory and then proceeded to give him very unusual instructions for battle.

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Led by the priest carrying the Ark of the Covenant, the army was to walk in complete silence around the city once each day for six days. In front of the Ark would be seven priests with seven horns. On the seventh day, the procession would march around the city seven times with the priests blowing their trumpets of Ram's horns. With a long blast of the horns, all the people would shout with a great shout and "the walls came a-tumblin' down." This victory would be the result of obedience to God's instruction, no matter how unusual from a worldly perspective.

Joshua Obeys the Plan

Joshua 6:15-16, 20: The destruction of the wall was total, and the Israelites took possession of the land. These particular verses describe the obedience of the people to God's instructions and the victorious results as the victory came just as God said it would. Of course, many have tried to offer physical or natural reasons that brought about the destruction of the wall. Some propose that the vibration of the marching brought about a weakening of the wall. Or that the Lord may have used an earthquake to accomplish His purpose. But whatever the speculations, we should never lose sight of the supernatural reality that the fall of the wall was used to demonstrate God's power over every situation and the importance of obedience to Him.

◆ *What encouragement can you give to new Christians about trusting God?*

Conclusion

Do we, as Christians fully function with belief that God can and will deliver us from our challenges? Do we take the time to praise Him despite what may be happening in our lives? Do we pray out of tradition or only when we are in trouble? As we reflect on this lesson, and share it with others, let us make the decision to trust God and follow where He leads no matter how impossible the path seems to us. Open your heart to Him and praise Him for answered prayer.

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Call in the New Testament. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Spring Quarter), 329-339.

The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.

Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation, Carol Stream, Illinois.

Staff Writer. 2019. [Theophanies in the Old Testament: The Creator at Work in His World](#). *Acts & Facts*. 48 (4).

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Lesson for Next Week – March 21 – Study Guide 3

HULDAH: PROPHET OF WISDOM

Bible Background ♦ 2 KINGS 22

Printed Text ♦ 2 KINGS 22:14-20

Devotional Reading ♦ PSALM 25:1-10

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

God Loves Covenant Keepers

(Psalm 25:1-10)

TUESDAY

Entering God's Promised Rest

(Hebrews 4:1-11)

WEDNESDAY

New Covenant Made with the Israelites

(Deuteronomy 29:1-6)

THURSDAY

Josiah Prepares to Repair the Temple

(2 Kings 22:1-7)

FRIDAY

Josiah Seeks Guidance to Confront Disobedience

(2 Kings 22:8-13)

SATURDAY

Josiah Leads in Covenant Renewal

(2 Kings 23:1-3)

SUNDAY

Huldah Confirms Coming Judgment, Josiah Spared

(2 Kings 22:14-20)