

Joshua 5:13-6 • The Beginning of the End

Introduction

There are many lessons to be learned from Israel's conquest of Jericho, and the one we'll focus on here is its parallel to God's working in the Last Days leading up to Final Judgment. In all that occurs is the pattern of how God works His Final Judgment which will be seen in those times that Israel itself is carried away for its disobedience, and in the Final Days as documented in Revelation and supported throughout all of Scripture. What occurred at Jericho was really the beginning of the end, a very powerful lesson highlighting the difference between those who listen and obey God's Word and those who don't.

¹³Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?"

¹⁴He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD."

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?"

¹⁵The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

¹Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in. ²The LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors. ³You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days. ⁴Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead."

⁶So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD."

[Read v.5:13-15]

Q: How do we know that this is the pre-incarnate Christ that appears to Joshua?

A: By the fact that He allowed Joshua to worship Him. Whenever angelic messengers are sent and men react this way, the men are told to immediately stop worshiping them as only God alone can be worshiped. Joshua is not discouraged in worshiping Him.

Q: How is the appearance of Christ as the "captain of the Lord's host" similar to what we know of the chronology of the End Times?

A: Both are personally led by Christ.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war...And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Revelation 20:11, 14-15

[Read v.6:1-7]

Q: Why not attack outright? What is the purpose in delaying with the circling of the city for each of 6 days before the actual, final attack?

A: God always provides the maximum amount of time possible for repentance. He declares beforehand what is about to happen to provide notice that time is running out before Final Judgment takes place.

But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

Matthew 24:8

Q: Were there others "birth pangs"—warnings from God—previous to the Israelites showing up at Jericho?

A: Yes. According to Rahab's testimony to the spies, all the people in Canaan were aware of other signs from God beginning with the crossing of the Red Sea 40 years previous to the conquest of the Amorites west of the Jordan River over the past couple of years.

For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in

Joshua 5:13-6 • The Beginning of the End, Page 1 of 4

⁷Then he said to the people, “Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the ark of the LORD.”

heaven above and on earth beneath.

Joshua 2:10-11

Point: Just as labor pains come over a period of time, increasing in frequency until birth actually occurs, so events from God are provided in ever-increasing frequency leading up to Final Judgment.

- The Canaanites had ample opportunity to repent and return to God during Israel's 430 years of captivity in Egypt, but did not.
- They could have repented at the acknowledged miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea—giving them another 40 years to repent— but they did not.
- They could have repented during the campaign that destroyed Sihon and Og the previous 2 years on the other side of the Jordan, but they did not.
- They could have repented each and every day their city was circled, but they did not.

God provides the greatest amount of time possible with an increasing display of His warnings as an inducement to repent.

Point: Note that the issue is not about “belief”—the Canaanites “believed” God was at work in all that they saw; the issue is whether or not to be changed by God's Word from the heart and therefore truly repent.

[Read v.8-11]

Q: What is special about the “seven trumpets of rams’ horns” they were instructed to use?

A: These were the “jubilee” horns that were to be sounded at the celebration of the Year of Jubilee, an event that symbolizes the complete redemption of the land and people as about to be literally undertaken by Israel for the first time.

Q: What might the sending of the ark of the covenant signify?

A: It carries God's Word which is fulfilled for everyone concerned, whether fulfilling God's promises for Believers or bringing judgment upon non-Believers.

⁸And it was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the LORD went forward and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. ⁹The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while they continued to blow the trumpets. ¹⁰But Joshua commanded the people, saying, “You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, ‘Shout!’ Then you shall shout!” ¹¹So he had the ark of the LORD taken around the city, circling it once; then they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

[Read v.12-14]

Q: What is God essentially doing through this procession?

A: He is sounding the alarm (through the rams’ horns) to heed His Word (the ark of the covenant) which is about to be fulfilled.

Q: How might this parallel the order of events in the Last Days?

A: Signs and wonders come with greater and greater strength with greater and greater frequency. (e.g., the 7 seals, the 7 trumpets, and the 7 bowls in Revelation). These, in effect, are the last warnings before Final Judgment.

¹²Now Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew the trumpets; and the armed men went before them and the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while they continued to blow the trumpets. ¹⁴Thus the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp; they did so for six days.

¹⁵Then 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. ¹⁶At 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. ¹⁸But 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. ¹⁹But 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.”

²⁰So the people shouted, and 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 flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city. ²¹They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

[Read v.15-21]

Q: How is this event characterized in the book of Hebrews? How is it defined?

A: “Faith”.

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

Hebrews 11:20

Q: Why do you suppose that this is attributed to faith?

A: First, it has to do with their following God's Word to do it **HIS** way instead of following their own ways or desire. Second, it comes about as the result of a word of faith, the shout provided at the appointed time. It's an example of faith in God's Word.

Q: If they marched around Jericho for 7 days, that most likely means that this day was the Sabbath. What might that signify?

A: Normally it is a day of rest, usually strictly observed by Israel, a day that they would avoid doing work much less going to battle. It would be the least suspected time that they would go to war. This is probably a teaching about the fact that Final Judgment will come at a time we do not expect.

You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.

Luke 12:40

Q: This is not the first, nor last, mention of a trumpet in connection with the presence of God. What does it usually mean?

A: It signified the people coming to meet God at Mt. Sinai and will be used to announce His final coming in the End Times.

So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

Exodus 19:16-17

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

1 Thessalonians 4:16

Q: What is the significance of the destruction of Jericho being “under the ban”?

A: It means Final Judgment for those that have refused to repent and be reconciled to God.

²²Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the harlot’s house and bring the woman and all she has out of there, as you have sworn to her.”

²³So the young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and her mother and her brothers and all she had; they also brought out all her relatives and placed them outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴They burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. ²⁵However, Rahab the harlot and her father’s household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

²⁶Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, “Cursed before the LORD is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates.”

²⁷So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

[Read v.22-25]

Q: Who were the only people that were saved?

A: Those that followed through in their belief in God by being obedient to His Word, to do exactly as instructed.

Q: This is not the last time that Rahab is mentioned in the Bible. What else of note is attributed to her?

A: She will marry Salmon with whom she’ll bear Boaz, the great-grandfather of David. Through David—and therefore Rahab—the messianic seedline is traced. (Matthew 1:5)

Q: When “final judgment” was rendered on Sodom and Gomorrah—or the earth in the form of Noah’s flood—everyone was destroyed collectively in the same instance. However, Jericho is only the first conquest for what will be the whole of Canaan. What might that teach concerning the End Times?

A: Jericho served as an example and warning itself to all the others living in Canaan of what awaited them if they did not repent. In the End Times, there are many judgments that take large numbers of lives that serve as an example and warning to the rest of the world leading up to Final Judgment.

[Read v.26-27]

Q: What is the deeper meaning of “foundation” and “gates” that is being taught here?

A: This teaches of what it means to build upon a foundation other than the One True God and to trust in the strength and protection of another (the symbolism of the city’s gates). Just as Jericho fell because of its refusal to trust in God, so will those who emulate it.

Overall Application

- *What is the sure way to avoid fear of God’s workings in the Last Days? [Hint: Live in a right relationship with Him now.] How should we be personally preparing for it?*
- *Why is merely believing in God not enough? What must we encourage others to do in order to make a difference?*
- *What is our most powerful tool of both preparation and preservation? [Hint: God’s Word] How should it be employed to build the faith essential for overcoming these events?*