

God Is Victorious

Printed Text • Joshua 6:2-3, 4b, 12-20b

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPRESS how God brings victory to our lives; EMBRACE confidence in obeying God's instructions; and RECALL some of the past victories that God won for us and praise Him.

In Focus

Aaron is in a predicament. He knows he must make a decision, but he is having difficulty. His family and friends all have suggestions about what he should do, and all the suggestions seem logical. The problem is, Aaron believes that God is directing him toward a certain decision, but he feels that it does not make sense. In the tension between choosing what seems logical or following God, Aaron remembers another time he had to make a decision. Although that situation did not in any way resemble this one, the similarity was that God granted a solution that did not seem logical in Aaron's eyes or the eyes of his family and friends. Aaron's choice was difficult in the past, but in the end, he followed God's direction. Aaron's friends and family immediately mocked him, but his decision quickly proved to provide the most amazing outcome. This memory helped Aaron with his current predicament and like the Israelites at the wall of Jericho, Aaron chose to do exactly what God asked of him.

Why is it sometimes difficult to follow God's direction? Even when God has proven Himself repeatedly, we often want to do our own thing. What can we do to make it easier to follow God's plan in the future?

Keep In Mind

"And when it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city" (Joshua 6:16, KJV).

Words You Should Know

- A. **Rereward** (Joshua 6:13) 'acaph (Heb.) – A military term for the rear guard troops.
- B. **Accursed** (v. 17) cherem (Heb.) – Something that is dedicated or devoted to destruction.

Say It Correctly

Caleb. KAY-lehb

Jericho. JER-uh-koh

Joshua. JAH-sh-uh-wuh

Hosea. Shoh-ZEE-uh, not hoh-ZAY-uh

KJV

Joshua 6:2 And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

3 And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

4b And the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord.

13 And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.

17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18 And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.

20b And the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

NLT

Joshua 6:2 “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.

4b On the seventh day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns.

12 Joshua got up early the next morning, and the priests again carried the Ark of the Lord.

13 The seven priests with the rams' horns marched in front of the Ark of the Lord, blowing their horns.

Again the armed men marched both in front of the priests with the horns and behind the Ark of the Lord. All this time the priests were blowing their horns.

14 On the second day they again marched around the town once and returned to the camp. They followed this pattern for six days.

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!

17 Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and the others in her house will be spared, for she protected our spies.

18 “Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel.

19 Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the Lord and must be brought into his treasury.”

20b They shouted as loud as they could. Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites charged straight into the town and captured it.

The People, Places, and Times

Jericho. It is one of the oldest known fortified cities in the ancient world and could very well be the oldest city on the earth. It is thought that the name “Jericho” sounds like the Hebrew word for “moon”—y@riychow (yer-ee- KHO). This led many to believe it could have been the central place of

moon worship. It is also believed that the destruction of Jericho was commanded by God in Deuteronomy 20:16–17 because of its paganism.

Dates. The Exodus and the victory over Jericho are interrelated; that much the Bible tells us. However, there is confusion about whether the Exodus took place around 1446 B.C. (fifteenth century) or 1220 B.C. (thirteenth century), which both fall into what historians call the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 B.C.). Most of the archeological research supports the battle at Jericho happening around 1250 B.C. This would have meant that the Exodus took place under Pharaoh Rameses II. However, a good case is also made for 1406 B.C., when Amunhotep II was pharaoh. The exact time remains questionable today because at this time, biblical text referred to any pharaoh only as “Pharaoh” and never by his individual name.

The Israelites. Known as God’s chosen people, the Israelites are held in a special covenant with God. However, 40 years prior to the period of Joshua’s leadership, at the time of the Exodus, Israel disappointed God by fearing humans—the Canaanites—and believing in their own abilities as opposed to having faith in Him. Because of this, God declared that nobody from that generation would enter the Promised Land—except for Joshua and Caleb. But because God is a promise keeper, He kept the covenant He made with Abraham about providing a permanent place for his heirs (Genesis 15:13, 16, 18; 17:8).

Joshua. Early in life, Joshua was known as Hosea, which means “salvation.” However, Joshua had the honor of being renamed by Moses, and he received his more common name, which means “the Lord saves (or the Lord gives victory).” The Greek form of Joshua is Iesous (ee-ay-SOOCE), which of course became Jesus, the most loved name. Joshua was a man of honor, a man who trusted God. He was also known as the “new Moses” (Joshua 1:1–9). He was the man who was to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. He was given this honor because he was one of two spies out of 12 who returned with a positive message for Moses after spying on the land that God promised (Numbers 13:30). Because he trusted in the Lord instead of fearing the Canaanites, God granted him and Caleb their generation’s sole opportunity to enter the Promised Land. Joshua remained faithful to God as he was chosen to take over Moses’ work and bring the Israelites into the Promised Land.

Background

Today’s lesson begins shortly after the end of the 40 years that the Israelites wandered in the desert. Because the Israelites did not trust God at the time of the Exodus and rebelled against Him, He did not allow them into the land that was promised to them. Instead, He made sure all of that generation died out—all but Joshua and Caleb.

Moses was part of the generation that was unable to enter the Promised Land. Instead, Joshua inherited his duties. Joshua lived through Egypt’s rule and experienced the miracles that God conducted to lead the Israelites out of bondage, including the parting of the Red Sea. Since the Israelites needed a leader, God commissioned Joshua, His chosen servant, because He knew Joshua would follow His instructions as he had in the past.

At-A-Glance

1. A Promise to the Israelites (Joshua 6:2)
2. Instructions to the Israelites (vv. 3–4b)
3. The Choice of the Israelites (vv. 12–20b)

In Depth

1. A Promise to the Israelites (Joshua 6:2)

God promised the Israelites a land in which they could settle. The last of the old generation had passed, and it was time for the promise to be fulfilled. God showed them that He had delivered the land and its inhabitants to them. However, God gave them a task that must be completed. They had to work for their gift and follow God's direction. Because God is almighty, He easily could have destroyed the city on His own and given His people the land, but instead, they had to work for it. And the work was not easy, or necessarily practical. However, success was guaranteed if they followed His direction, just as He promised.

2. Instructions to the Israelites (vv. 3–4b)

After reiterating His promise, God told the Israelites what must be done. He gave them specific directions to follow which would guarantee their entry into the Promised Land. Again, God could have delivered the city to the Israelites immediately, but they were to follow a set of specific instructions perfectly for a week. The Israelites were to circle Jericho, a fortified and seemingly impenetrable city, for seven days. The first six days required one circle around. The seventh day required seven circles, led by the seven priests blowing seven trumpets while carrying the Ark, signifying the Lord's presence. God's use of the number seven solidifies the sacred significance of the event. He used seven priests with seven trumpets, with the siege to take place in seven days, and the city was to be encircled seven times on that seventh day. This may have been done to signify the beginning of God's new order in the world, mirroring the seven-day creation of the world itself.

3. The Choice of the Israelites (vv. 12– 20b)

The Israelites, led by Joshua, chose to follow the Lord's instructions exactly as He commanded. Not only did He give instructions about how to destroy the city, but He also provided instructions about what to do after the walls fell—to not take possession of anything. Perhaps the Israelite's decision to obey so readily stemmed from the history of their people. They were to enter the Promised Land, unlike their fathers, because of the past generation's failure to fully trust God. Although God's instructions were not familiar in warfare, it proved that He alone was responsible for the victory. Not only did the Israelites have a choice, but Rahab the prostitute had a choice. Rahab, who protected the spies and demonstrated her devotion to God, made a decision that allowed for her and her family to be spared (Joshua 2:1–24; 6:17).

Search the Scriptures

1. What did the Lord deliver to Joshua and the Israelites (Joshua 6:2)?
2. Why were Rahab and her family spared (v. 17)?
3. Why were the Israelites instructed to take nothing from the city (v. 18)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. Why were no other Canaanites spared from Jericho?
2. Why was it important that the Israelites take nothing from the city?

Liberating Lesson

Our human brains always want to make sense of our world. However, our sense is never God's sense and we forget that. We forget that God is not human and that His perfection is the standard to bear in mind. He will not do things as we would do things, and we should follow Him. He has history, precedence, and authority on His side.

Remember we are children of a living God. His way is always the way. His timing is always the time. Instead of struggling to fit Him into your mold, mold yourself into His. Also, remember your own history. Has God delivered you from anything? How did He deliver you? What led you to put your trust in Him? Did you doubt His answer initially? What was the outcome?

Application For Activation

Pray that God will allow you to more readily trust Him. Pray that He will help your faith to grow. Remember that you may be a leader to others, so let them see that you allow God to be in control of your life. Your example may show them that even though what God is telling them may not make sense to them, it is the right way to go. Prepare to be an example in your action and in your words. Brainstorm different times that God directed you or provided you with deliverance and be ready to share it when a friend or an unbeliever has questions.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Joshua 6:2–3, 4b, 12–20b

2 And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

The verb form of “I have given” is the perfect tense; in other words, the battle has already been won. Joshua and the Israelites only needed to claim the victory. We never learn the name of the king of Jericho or any of his “mighty men of valour.” Rahab is the only name of an inhabitant of Jericho that we ever learn. The king and his mighty men are the material defenses of Jericho, but the Israelites have the LORD God. This verse indicates that God has entrusted the leadership for this task to Joshua.

3 And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

Archeologists tell us that ancient Jericho was about nine acres, so a walk around the entire city might only take 15 to 20 minutes. However, it must have taken a long time for all the warriors to march around the city. If you live in a large city, think of rush hour. You may only have a short distance to travel, but because of all the other commuters, it will take a long time. It must have been a little

humiliating for the Israelites to march around the city day after day. The citizens of Jericho probably had very mixed feelings. At first, they were probably shaking in their boots, wondering what the Israelite army was up to. Then as the days passed, they probably began to relax a little as they saw nothing happening.

4b And the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

The orders for winning the battle of Jericho sound much more like directions for a ceremony than a military strategy. The number seven is an important part of this narrative. There are four instances of seven in this verse alone and 14 mentions in the chapter. Seven represents perfection, totality, and completeness in Scripture. The sevens in this narrative represent the completeness of God's victory on behalf of Israel.

6:12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

Just as the day in which Joshua led the people in crossing over the Jordan River (Joshua 3:1), Joshua got up early in the morning. Both tasks were undertaken with Joshua leading and the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant.

13 And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

Warriors, priests, and the Ark of the Covenant ("the ark of the LORD") make up the procession. Two different kinds of horns are mentioned here. The "rams' horns" in Hebrew is yowbel (yo-BALE). This type of horn was used as a signal to let the Israelites know when they were allowed to approach Mount Sinai. The "trumpets" mentioned in Joshua 6:13 are in Hebrew showphar (sho-FAR), another type of ram's horn. This type of horn is the most commonly mentioned one in the Old Testament, and it was often used for signaling in times of battle, as well as its use in religious ceremonies.

This verse tells us the order of the procession—first the armed guard, then the priests, and after them came the Ark. The word "rereward" in Hebrew is 'acaph (aw-SAF) and is a military term for the rear guard troops, so at the end were more armed men. Following them were more priests blowing on trumpets.

14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

Each day the marchers returned to the camp at Gilgal (Joshua 5:10). Gilgal was the temporary camp for Joshua and the Israelites. In Joshua 9:6 and 10:6 we read that this was where they were still camped, both when the Gibeonites came to them and deceived them and when the Gibeonites requested their help.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same compassed the city seven times.

"It came to pass" in Hebrew is hayah (hawyaw) and can be translated "and it happened." Look back at verse 12 where Joshua got up early in the morning; here all the warriors are getting up early. There will be lots to do on this day. The entire Israelite army will have to march around the city seven times. And when the walls fall down, the warriors will have a great military task.

The Hebrew word for “only” is raq (rak) and it emphasizes that this day is different.

16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

The word for “shout” in Hebrew is ruwa` (roo-AH), and it literally means “to burst the ear with sound.” So when the priests blew with a long blast, the people were to shout with an earpiercing sound. The reason for the shout was not to knock down the walls; the reason was to acknowledge God’s accomplished destruction of Jericho.

17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

Here there is a pause in the instructions from Joshua—some very important things for the warriors and priests to obey. All the inhabitants of Jericho are to be killed. “Accursed” in Hebrew is cherem (KHAY-rem), and it means “something that is dedicated or devoted to destruction.” God had His reasons for telling the Israelites to destroy the Canaanite people. In Deuteronomy 20:16–18, NLT, He said, “In those towns that the LORD your God is giving you as a special possession, destroy every living thing. You must completely destroy the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, just as the LORD your God has commanded you. This will prevent the people of the land from teaching you to imitate their detestable customs in the worship of their gods, which would cause you to sin deeply against the LORD your God.”

But there is one important exception — Rahab and her family are to be rescued. In Joshua 6:22, we read that Joshua assigned the two spies the task of escorting out Rahab and her entire family. Rahab has accepted the Lord God as her God and the nation of Israel as her people. She married an Israelite man and became one of the ancestors of our Savior (Matthew 1:5).

18 And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

Joshua clarifies the command regarding the things devoted to destruction by giving it in the negative, along with stating the consequences of disobedience. Keep away from such things, he is telling the Israelites, or you yourself will be accursed (headed for destruction) and will bring a curse on the chosen people.

19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

In this verse, we read of another way to devote things and that is to make them gifts to God. All the treasures of the city of Jericho are to be consecrated to the Lord. The Hebrew word for “consecrated,” qodesh (KO-desh), means “holy, set apart for God.”

This is the first reference in the Bible to a treasury; the Hebrew word for “treasury” is ‘owtsar (ow-TSAR). We are not sure where this was located, but the logical guess is somewhere within the tabernacle.

20b And the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

Now Joshua has finished his parenthetical instructions to the Israelites, and we pick up where the story left off—as the Israelites are shouting and the walls of Jericho are falling down completely.

Then the Israelites are following the final instruction for the battle – walk right into the city and overtake it.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday

Genesis 15:13-21

Tuesday

Joshua 5:2-12

Wednesday

Joshua 5:13-6:1

Thursday

Deuteronomy 20:16-18

Friday

Joshua 6:6-11

Saturday

Joshua 6:22-25

Sunday

Joshua 6:2-3, 4b, 12-20b