



A Systematic Expository Study on the book of JOSHUA

Study 11: DIVINE STRATEGY FOR CONQUERING IMPREGNABLE STRONGHOLDS

Joshua 6:1-27

Jericho was a frontier city, an important and powerful fortress, standing as a great hindrance to Israel's entrance into the Promised Land. Its capture was necessary and indispensable before Israel could conquer Canaan and possess their possession. This chapter dealing with the capture of Jericho provides much needed lessons and principles for believers who need to conquer, overcome and overthrow impregnable strongholds hindering them from possessing their possessions.

In the overthrow of Jericho we learn afresh that the ways of God are different from the ways of man and that God accomplishes His great purposes in ways that may be despised by natural, sense-knowledge men. For Israel to conquer Jericho and for us to overcome our great strongholds requires faith and obedience to divine directives. With faith in God and obedience to God's commandments, victory is certain.

With **"the Captain of the Lord's host"** directing and leading Joshua, and the people following and obeying Joshua's leadership, Israel's battles became **"the wars of the LORD"** (Numbers 21:14). Our problems pass from our hands to the Hands of the Almighty when we have unwavering faith in God and render implicit obedience to all His commandments. **"The battle is not yours, but God's"** (2 Chronicle 20:15,17,20).

DIVINE PROMISE AND STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS

Joshua 6:1-5; 2:9-11,24; 8:1; 11:6-9; 2 Kings 5: 10-16; 1Samuel 17:40-52; 2 Chronicles 32: 7,8; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Luke 1:37.

"Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out and none came in" (Joshua 6:1). Little did **"The king and the mighty men of valour"** in Jericho realise that they were contending not only with Israel but also with **"the LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle"** (Psalm 24:8). What are bolts and bars unto Him who can make the Iron Gate **"open of his own accord"** and cause **"all the doors"** of a prison to be opened when he pleases? (Act 12:10;16:26). No stronghold, however seemingly secured or unassailable can withstand or resist the power of the Almighty.

"And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof and the mighty men of valour" (Joshua 6:2). The Lord assured Joshua that victory was sure, success was certain before the beginning of the battle. The children and servants of the Lord only need to listen to the Lord and we will know assuredly that we have already overcome enemies who are stronger than we are even while they are armed to the teeth and seem unbeatable! The Lord said. **"See, I have given into thine hand Jericho"**. The walls of Jericho were still standing but he was to see by faith, see as God sees and count it done. Have you seen the defeat and downfall of your great stronghold even before the outward, visible, complete and final victory? **"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"** (Hebrews 11:1). 'We have overcome.'

After the proclamation of a sure victory, God gave Joshua instructions for conquest. If the Lord had definitely given Joshua the victory over Jericho, why were such elaborate preparations as these in verses 3 to 5 necessary for its overthrow? The disclosure of God's gracious purpose and the absolute certainty of its accomplishment do not release us from obedience to God's commands and commitment to a life of holiness and honesty. God's promises do not set aside His precepts. Joshua was not left free to follow his own devices, but he must adhere strictly to the plan God gave him, following God's instructions to the very letter if Jericho was to fall before Israel. If Joshua had **"conferred with flesh and blood"**, that is, consulted with the head of the tribes of Israel, the plan of action would have been different, very different. **"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts"** (Isaiah 55:8,9).

DOUBLE PRINCIPLE OF SILENCE AND SUBMISSION

Joshua 6:6-16; Deuteronomy 20:2-4; Hebrews 11:1,30,32-34; Job 36: 10-12; Isaiah 36:13-15,20,21; 37:14-20, 36-38; Psalm 46:10; Isaiah 30:15; Acts 26:19,20,22.

The plan or strategy for victory was very simple – so simple that worldly wisdom would have despised the wisdom of God! Compass the city once each day for six days. On the seventh day, compass the city seven times. Let there be absolute silence and quietness during each procession. In marching around the city, the Ark will be at the center, seven priests will go before the Ark, the men of war and the people will follow. On the seventh day, after the seventh march, the people will shout when Joshua tells them to shout. That was the program of events to conquer Jericho and bring its great, strong walls down! Israel acted in full subjection to God's revealed will and had the victory. That is the secret of victory over sin, over sickness, over Satan and all his agents, over all strongholds today. Those acts of marching around in silence and obedient submission may seem to be nothing in themselves but the faith of the children of Israel in following His word and will was important to God, **"By FAITH the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days"** (Hebrews 11: 30). Surely then **"all things are possible to him that believeth"** (Mark 9:23).

The instruction to march around Jericho ***in absolute and complete silence*** was a great test of Israel's obedience. Murmuring and the wrong use of the tongue was one of the great and frequent sins of Israel in the wilderness, now the new generation must be willing to bridle their tongue if they are to possess the land. Great victories are often lost through the uncontrolled use of our tongue. In every battle of life, to win great victories, overcome strong enemies, overthrow and conquer formidable strongholds, we must be obedient to divine instructions and also learn when to be silent, when to speak and when to shout (Ecclesiastes 3:7; Psalm 46:10; Isaiah 30:15; 1 Peter 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; Amos 5:13; Habakkuk 2:20). For the mouths of such a vast multitude to be sealed during the entire march around the city was no small victory and proof of their submission to the revealed will of God. The church can lose a great victory if her membership speak and shout instead of being silent while marching around our Jericho or walking around the world. **"Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand"** (Zephaniah 1:7). **"Be silent, O all flesh before the LORD: for He is raised up out of His holy habitation"** (Zechariah 2:13). Profound silence! Silence that has power more than speech! Dignified, dynamic silence that activates divine, supernatural power! May each believer discover and use the power of such commanded silence!

"They compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days" (Joshua 6:14). Admire their persistency. After the first, second, third encompassing of Jericho, nothing happened, yet they continued in unquestioning obedience. It is not ours to question God; we can neither hasten nor retard the Almighty. **"Let patience have her perfect work"** (James 1:4). **"Wait on the LORD, and KEEP HIS WAY, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land"** (Psalm 37:34). If we want ***divine intervention***, we must follow ***divine instructions***.

DYNAMIC POWER THAT SUBDUES ALL STRONGHOLDS

Joshua 6:17-27; Deuteronomy 7:23-26; 20:1,17,18; Judges 7:20-22; 2 Chronicles 13:13-16; 2 Corinthians 1:10; 4:13-18; Romans 8:37-39.

Faith and obedience conquered Jericho. Here is a remarkable example of united faith and united obedience. The time had come for them to break their silence and to give one loud concerted shout. What was the shout for? It was a shout of praise for victory over Jericho! But the walls were still standing and nothing seemed to have changed! The command to shout was a test of their unwavering faith. It is easy for anyone to shout after the Jericho walls have fallen, but only men and women of faith could shout while the fortress still stood intact before them. Faith can always shout the praise of God in anticipation of assured victory.

"Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city. So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets; and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, 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" (Joshua 6:16,20). That is the grand reward of faith, obedience, and patience. Thus shall Satan's strongholds fall before us. Jericho fell and a curse was placed on anyone that would rebuild it. Jericho has fallen. We have subdued all strongholds. **"Every plant, which my heavenly hath not planted, shall be rooted up"** (Matthew 15:13). "By faith Rahab perished not with them that believed not" (Hebrews 11:31). Rahab was saved and protected from the judgment, which came on all others. All her believing relatives who sought refuge by faith under the God of Israel were saved with her. Saved and cleansed from their old lifestyle, they became part of Israel. Faith in Christ is our only refuge and security from the judgment and wrath to come.

“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 6:18). No one in Israel was to covet and steal the silver or the gold in the city of Jericho. **“All the silver, and the gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD”** (Joshua 6:19). The riches of Jericho, as the first fruits of Canaan were to be entirely devoted unto the Lord and taken into the treasury of the Lord. We must not enrich ourselves with treasures that belong to God and to His treasury. To do so is to bring a curse upon ourselves and our households.

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