

GOD TAUGHT ISRAEL AT JERICHO

(Josh 5:13-6:5; Heb 11:30-31)

- A. **There is no better way** to understand the power & character of God than to consider the inspired historical record of His dealings with men.

- B. **In our text**, God has led Israel to the brink of her greatest victory in the Promised Land.
 - 1. The LORD Israel had already helped them “utterly destroyed” the Amorites on the Eastern side of the Jordan river, but now they have crossed the river to begin the task of possessing the Land of Promise – *as God had commanded them to do.*

[The Israelites would have many lessons to learn & relearn, through the centuries, from the Lord their God, but if they had simply learned & passed on to their children the lessons learned at Jericho then they could have avoided many of the problems they would face later.

What did God teach Israel at Jericho?]

I. ...His Power Is Limitless

- A. **What had this generation** of Israelites actually seen from the mighty hand of God?
 - 1. They did not see the plagues in Egypt.
 - 2. They did not witness the crossing of the RS.
 - 3. They did not view God’s appearance at Sinai.
 - 4. But they did see manna from the sky & water from the Rock.
 - 5. They did observe the pillar of cloud by day & the pillar of fire by night.
 - 6. They did live through that day when the sun stood still to give them time to win a battle.
 - 7. They did cross the Jordan on dry land.
 - a. They had seen enough to believe & to trust the almighty power of God, but at Jericho that lesson was driven home with brute force.

- B. Why did God display His limitless power in this way?
Was it merely to prove His power?

Josh 1:5-6 – *No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life*; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. *I will not leave you nor forsake you*. 6 Be strong & of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

1. God was demonstrating His commitment to Joshua & his people, & His faithfulness to keep His promise to Abraham.

- C. What kind of power does God demonstrate today?
{His power to create speaks for itself (Rom 1:20).}

1. But God demonstrates His power today through His Word (Rom 1:16; John 20:30-31), to make us alive (Eph 1:19-2:7) & to keep us for salvation (1 Pet 1:5).
2. So the promise God made to Joshua (Josh 1:5), is the same promise God has made to the Christian (Heb 13:5-6).

II. ...His Promise Requires A Fight

- A. The Promised Land didn't just "fall into their laps", they had to fight for it (Summarize Josh 6:20-25).

1. But what were they fighting for? A land flowing with milk & honey, yes, but a land that could be taken away from them as they had taken it from others – *if Israel did not remain true to God*.

- B. The Christian has a better Promised Land (Heb 11:10, 13-16; Gal 3:29), & we too are called to fight for it.

1. Our Citizenship is in Heaven (Phil 3:20), we look at the unseen, eternal things (2 Cor 4:18), we seek dwelling places in the Father's house (John 14:1-3).
2. Just as our Promised Land is a spiritual one, our Battle too is a spiritual one (Eph 6:10-18; 2 Cor 10:4; 1 Tim 1:18-19; 6:11-12).

3. Our spiritual Battle is on three fronts:
 - a. Temptation to sin ([Jas 1:13-15](#)).
 - b. Obstacles to our spiritual work ([2 Thess 2:18](#)).
 - c. Discerning good from evil ([2 Cor 10:4](#); [Heb 5:14](#)).

4. Since our spiritual Promised Land is a better reward than the Israelites received shouldn't we expect our spiritual Battle to be a difficult one?"

Luke 13:23-25 – Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, 24 "**Strive to enter through the narrow gate**, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter & will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up & shut the door, & you begin to stand outside & knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' & He will answer & say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,'"

III. ...His Hatred For Sin In The World

- A. **Many have asked**, "Why did God drive the Canaanites from their homes & lands?" ...so harsh?

1. Some may think that was it just because He wanted that land for His people?

2. The answer is that the Canaanites had finally become too steeped in sin: Sodom-like.
 - a. God waited over 400 years for them to show some sign of repentance ([Gen 15:16](#)), & because they only grew worse & worse, God used Israel to execute His wrath.

3. One day, maybe soon, God will send His angels to execute His wrath against sin ([2 Thess 1:7-9](#)).

4. But does God reserve His wrath only for people who are NOT in His family?

IV. ...His Intolerance For Sin Among His People

- A. **During the conquest** of Jericho someone disobeyed the command of the LORD ([Josh 6:17-19](#)).

1. And because this had occurred, Israel lost its next battle for the city of Ai (Josh 7:1, 4-5, 11).

a. Poor Achan was found out; he then even admitted to his sin, but it was too late to stop the consequences of his actions (Josh 7:24-26).

B. If sin was that serious a matter among the Canaanites & even among the Israelites, how serious a matter must it be for the church?

1. So serious that Paul rebuked Peter (Gal 2:11), & so serious that Annanias & Saphira died at the feet of the apostles (Acts 5).

2. The church is the Bride of Christ (Eph 5:25-27), & as such we must be pure in doctrine, worship & life (Rom 16:17; John 4:24; 2 Thess 3:6; 1 Cor 5:6).

V. ...How To Live By Faith

A. Jericho was a great walled city; to overthrow it by natural means would take an incredible military feat.

1. But Israel had very little war experience; they had no conventional means for overthrowing a walled city, like battering rams, ladders & platforms – *didn't even have horses.*

2. What God was asking Israel to do was contrary to human reason & common sense.

3. But He wanted Israel, *just as He wants us*, to put our faith in His word & not in our power of reason (Rom 10:17).

Heb 11:1, 6 – Now ***faith is the substance*** [assurance] ***of things hoped for, the evidence*** [conviction] ***of things not seen.*** 6 But ***without faith it is impossible to please*** Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, & that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him [obey His commands, which may on the surface seem very unreasonable.]

VI. ...The Importance Of Obeying Him

A. In the text of Joshua 5 there are at least 15 commands that Israel had to obey “by faith”.

1. God’s promise was not fulfilled until their obedience was complete.

Heb 11:30 – By *faith the walls of Jericho fell down* **AFTER** they were encircled for seven days.

B. The only kind of faith that “avails” or “profits” is a working, obedient faith (Gal 5:6; Jas 2:14-26).

1. Every time God promised a blessing based upon meeting certain conditions, that blessing was never given until the conditions were met.
2. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Heb 5:8-9; Rom 1:5; 16:25-26; Mark 16:15-16).

VII. ...His Gifts Are Often Conditional

A. Some argue that since salvation through Jesus Christ is a gift (Rom 6:23) then there can be no conditions attached.

Josh 6:2 – And the Lord said to Joshua: “See! **I HAVE GIVEN Jericho into your hand**, its king, & the mighty men of valor...”

1. The conquest of Jericho was a “gift” to Joshua & the Israelites.
2. Then God outlined 15 conditions that had to be met before the gift could be received.
3. After they met those conditions, the gift was actually received.
4. What does that say about those who teach & believe that we are saved by “faith alone”? (Jas 2:24).

CLOSING

- A. In a sense, God’s people are still fighting the Battle of Jericho.
- B. We need to keep in mind the lessons God taught Israel at Jericho as they began the enormous task of possessing the land, for we will never be good soldiers of Christ until we do.
- C. {Close with the 2nd & 3rd verses, “The Walls Came Tumbling Down”}

GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION:

Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; read it in your Bible: Acts 2; 3; 13; 17; Rom 10:17

Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior:
Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4

Repent of your sins: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ: Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins: Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21

Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge: Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48