

Jericho: And the Walls Came Tumbling Down!

I dare say that no one reared up in church has escaped hearing the story of Joshua and the fall of Jericho a myriad of times in all different formats, such as in preaching from the pulpit, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, AWANA or personal Bible study. We have a tendency to steer away from these familiar stories because we have heard so much about them, but that would be a mistake. This is a classic story that bears more than repeating; we should be learning from and applying the lessons learned. Let's examine the fall of Jericho one more time.

I. THE IMPASSE

Joshua 6:1. The city was promised to Joshua and the children of Israel by God in Joshua 1:2-6 and Joshua 6:2. In verse one of chapter six, we see the city was locked up. There was no overt war. Nothing was happening. One of the great tests that we go through is when we are going nowhere. Ireland was going through national depression the same time America was. The Irish elected officials admired the way America, under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, was implementing government projects to give her citizens jobs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps. One of the projects Ireland started was building roads. Men cheerfully picked up their pickaxes and shovels and went to work. One of the men went to one of the foremen who was evidently no better informed than they were and asked, "Where is this road going to?" The reply was, "Well, we don't know; we're just building a road." In a few days, men began to put down their tools and walk away from the government job. When asked why, one of the men answered, "No one wants to build a road that goes nowhere." This is where Israel was going at this time - nowhere!

II. THE PLAN

Joshua 6:3-5. The LORD commanded Joshua and Israel to march around the city one time six days in a row. Then on the seventh day they were to march around the city seven times. Marching out in front were seven priests designated with seven trumpets made of a ram's horn. Following the priests were other priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant. After circling seven times around Jericho the priests were to make a long blast on their ram's horns and then everybody would shout and the promise was that the mighty walls of Jericho would fall down.

God seems to enjoy taking foolish things to men's reasonings and doing wonderful things that bring Him the ultimate glory. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to

bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Corinthians 1:27-31). “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:23, 24). God wants to bless us in such a way that no one can take credit for what He alone has done.

III. THE PRIZE

Joshua 6:6-27. It was 1400 BC. The children of Israel had been wandering in the wilderness for forty years. They could have entered forty years earlier but they walked by fear, not by faith. They couldn't get into the Promised Land without dealing with Jericho. It was time to walk by faith and throw fear to the wind (II Timothy 1:7).

A. Patience precedes the prize.

Joshua 6:10. Being quiet is hard to do at times. This would definitely be one of those times. The temptation to plan strategy would be strong. The temptation of some to complain would also be easy. There would be a longing to just cry aloud to God at this time. But instead, they would have to pray silently and keep all thoughts and complaints to themselves. “For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not” (Isaiah 30:15).

B. Obedience assures the prize.

Joshua 6:11-16. There are no short cuts in doing the will of God. If any of us attempts to leave out obedience, all will fail. Saul won a decisive victory against the Amalekites, but he did not fully obey the Lord. “And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (I Samuel 15:22). An entire generation of Jewish men was forbidden to enter the Promised Land because of disobedience. The only ones permitted are revealed in Numbers 32:12, “Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.” Even Moses and Aaron were forbidden to enter the Promised Land because they did not wholly follow the LORD at Meribah. “And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them” (Numbers 20:12).

C. The prize within the prize.

Joshua 6:11: "So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp." From the first day of obedience to the conquering of Jericho, the ark of God, the place of God's manifested presence, was with Israel (Exodus 25:21, 22). I am reminded of what Moses told the Lord in Exodus 33:15, "And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

D. God's prize is personal and prophetic.

Joshua 6:17: "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." Matthew 1:5 reveals a most amazing blessing that came to Rahab!

E. The prize must be given, not taken.

Joshua 6:17, 18. There was an enormous wealth remaining after the city of Jericho was taken, but the children of Israel were forbidden to take it. We see in Joshua 7 the sad story of Achan who coveted that which God forbade and he and his family paid for it with their own lives.

IV. THE PERFORMANCE

Joshua 6:20. It is most interesting that the archeological record shows the walls falling flat as the Bible records. Hebrew scholars say the wording could have just as easily read, "fell beneath itself." There was a retaining wall, with a mud wall above it, then a great mound of dirt and then at the top of the tell (mound) was another high wall. It appears the top wall fell and the falling debris provided ramps all the way around the city allowing the Israelites to do exactly what the Bible says, "...the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up and into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city" (Joshua 6:20b). They went up and over in their conquering! This brings to mind the previous promise of Deuteronomy 28:13: "And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them."

Conclusion:

1. God brings down walls.

What are the walls in your life? Rejection? Anger? Lust? Faithlessness? Bitterness? The Past? There is no wall too high for God. He has the power to bring it down (II Corinthians 10:4).

2. Don't rebuild the walls that God brings down!

A special curse comes on those who do (Joshua 6:26, 27; I Kings 16:34). Let us keep in mind that Leviticus 10:10 says, "And that ye may put difference

between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.” Isaiah 5:20 says, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” If something was wrong 3,000 years ago, it is still wrong. If something was right 3,000 years ago, it is still right. We have no right to re-name or re-invent wrong and right. God has already declared it!

3. Place God in the center of everything.

Joshua 6:9: “And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.