

THE FALL OF JERICHO (PART 1)

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The fall of Jericho is one of the great events recorded in the Bible to teach us to be strong in faith and keep God's commandments. After Moses' death, God instructed Joshua to lead the people of Israel across the Jordan into the land of Canaan (Josh 1:1-2). At that time, the Lord said, *"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee"* (Josh 1:3-5).

Rahab and the spies

Prior to the battle of Jericho, Joshua first sent two spies into the city of Jericho, and they were hidden on the rooftop of Rahab. When she hid them, Rahab told the spies, *"I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath"* (Josh 2:9-11). For doing this, Rahab is upheld in scripture as one of the greatest examples of having a living, obedient faith in God. Hebrews 11:31 says, *"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."* James 2:24-25 says, *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"* Rahab's words to the spies were more valuable than any reconnaissance of the city's layout. *"So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them: and they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us"* (Josh 2:23-24).

The captain of the Lord's host

Just before the battle of Jericho ensued, God gave Joshua further encouragement and assurance by sending his "captain" to speak with him. Joshua 5:13-15 says, *"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that*

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he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." There is good reason to suspect that this "captain of the Lord's host" was actually Jesus Christ. First, we know this being was not merely a man because Joshua fell down and worshiped him (Josh 5:14). Men cannot be worshiped (Acts 10:25-26; 14:12-18). For this same reason, we can eliminate the possibility that this captain of the Lord's host was an actual man or even an angel of God. Angels are our "fellowservants" and must not be worshiped (Col 2:18; Rev 19:10; 22:8-9). The captain of the Lord's host did not refuse Joshua's worship, but rather responded by telling Joshua to take his shoes off because that ground was holy (Josh 5:15). Towards this being, Joshua had not rendered too much, but rather too little. Only God can be worshiped (Matt 4:10; Luke 4:8; Rev 4:10-11; 14:7; 19:10; 22:9). Therefore, all the evidence indicates that this "captain of the Lord's host" was deity. Second, in Exodus 23:20-23, God said, "*Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off*" (see also Exod 32:24). In fact, 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 plainly tells us that when the Israelites passed through the Red Sea with Moses, the people "*did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*" Christ was definitely there with the children of Israel when they left Egypt. It only makes sense that now, at the moment when Joshua was about to lead Israel in their first battle to conquer the land of Canaan, that the Christ, their "rock," would be directly with them as he had been for forty years since they had left Egypt. The Lord Himself was fighting for Israel (Josh 10:14,42; 23:3; 1 Sam 17:45-47). Thus, the captain of the Lord's host was now leading Joshua and Israel into battle (Josh 5:13-15). The very next chapter in the Book of Joshua records the details of the fall of the city of Jericho.