

# THE FALL OF JERICHO (PART 3)

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As we conclude this study of the fall of Jericho, recorded in the sixth chapter of the Book of Joshua, we take the opportunity to consider that what happened at Jericho is singled out as one of the greatest examples of faith in God's word. Hebrews 11:30 says, *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."* We are given this example to encourage us to *"lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us"* and to *"run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"* (Heb 12:1-2).

## **God's promises**

Understanding the lesson of faith and obedience from the fall of Jericho should help us to resist sin and grow more like Christ. God had promised Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan to his descendants (Gen 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7,18-21; 17:8; 22:15-17; 24:6-7). God spoke the same promise to Isaac (Gen 26:2-3; 28:1-4) and to Jacob (Gen 28:10-13; 35:10-12; 48:3-4,21; 50:24). God repeated His promise to Moses (Exod 3:6-8), and, through Moses, God repeated His promise to all Israel (Exod 3:17; 6:1-4,8; 12:25; 13:5,11; 15:15-17; 23:27-31; 32:13; 33:1-3; 34:24; Lev 14:34; 18:3,25-28; 25:38; 26:42; Num 32:11-12; 33:51-54; 34:1-29; Deut 1:8,21-40; 6:10-11; 7:1-2,16-24; 9:5-6; 30:20). God commanded men to spy out the land in preparation for taking it (Num 13:1-14:38). God showed Moses the land before he died (Deut 32:48-52; 34:1-4). Finally, God chose Joshua to lead the Israelites into the land (Num 14:30,38; 26:65; 27:18-23; 32:11-12,28-30; 34:16-29; Deut 1:35-38; 3:21-22,27-28; 31:1-8,14,23; 34:7-12; Josh 1:1-9). Under Joshua, the children of Israel crossed the Jordan river and entered the land of Canaan (Josh 3-5). Jericho was the first city that Israel was to conquer in Canaan. Joshua sent two men to spy the city in Joshua 2 and they reported to Joshua, *"Truly the Lord has delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us"* (Josh 2:24). God sent the captain of His host to appear to Joshua before they went against Jericho (Josh 5:13-15), a certain sign that God would deliver Jericho to them. In Joshua 6:2, God promised Joshua to give him Jericho, its king and all its mighty men of valor.

## **Faith in God to keep His promises**

Now, after nearly 600 years of promises (from the original promise to Abraham), and as many years of God demonstrating His faithfulness, the

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crucial question facing Joshua and the Israelites was whether or not they truly believed God was going to keep all these promises. After promising to deliver Jericho into their hands, God gave Joshua specific instructions to follow in order to bring about the fall of the walls of the city. God told the priests to carry the ark of the covenant before them with seven other priests blowing trumpets of rams' horns while the armed men of Israel marched with them around the city of Jericho one time each day for six days, and then seven times on the seventh day (Josh 6:3-4). Finally, the priests were to make a long trumpet blast and the people were to give a shout and then God said the wall of the city would fall down flat (Josh 6:5). If Joshua and the Israelites had not believed God's promise, they would not have followed these instructions and the walls of Jericho would not have fallen. But, by faith, they followed these instructions to the letter, and the walls fell exactly like God said they would (Josh 6:6-20). The fall of Jericho teaches us the important lesson that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6), and we will receive none of God's promises if we do not believe (Jas 1:5-7).

## **Not by faith only**

The fall of Jericho is also an example that blessings do not come by faith *only*. Joshua and the Israelites demonstrated a *living* faith, a faith that was accompanied by works of obedience (Jas 2:14-26). If they had had faith that God was going to make the walls fall, and then did nothing, the walls would not have fallen. They had to obey. Likewise, Jesus Christ is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* him (Heb 5:9).

## **Complete obedience**

Finally, the fall of Jericho teaches us that *complete* obedience is required to inherit the promises of God. Partial obedience is *disobedience*. King Saul mostly obeyed God's command to destroy the Amalekites, but was rejected by the Lord because he did not render total obedience to God's commandments (1 Sam 15). Naaman was not cured of his leprosy until he completely obeyed God, and met all of his conditions to receive the promise of the cure (2 Kgs 5). Likewise, the walls of Jericho would not have fallen except that Joshua and the Israelites completely submitted to what God had commanded them. The walls did not fall after they had marched around Jericho on any of the first six days, nor did they fall after they had marched around the city the first few times on the seventh day. The walls only fell after they had done *everything* that God commanded. Similarly, we must keep all of God's commandments in order to receive the promise of eternal life (Matt 28:18; Eph 6:13; Heb 5:9; Rev 22:14).