

4. On what day of the month was the Passover held?
5. When did God stop giving manna to the people?
6. What instrument of war did the man who appeared to Joshua have in his hand?
7. What title did the man give to himself?
8. How did Joshua act in the presence of the man?
9. What military title is given to the man?
10. What article of clothing was Joshua told to remove from himself?

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 6

- Vv. 1-11 *Instructions for attacking Jericho.* God gave explicit instructions to Joshua as he attacked Jericho. The men who bore the Ark of the Covenant were to go before the people along with priests who were to blow their trumpets. An advanced guard of soldiers was to lead the way, but the host was to proceed noiselessly until they were given the order to shout.
- Vv. 12-21 *The city destroyed.* The strategy for the campaign was not one which men would devise. The circling of the city for seven days was God's plan, and He blessed the obedience of the people with complete victory.
- Vv. 22-27 *The sparing of Rahab.* Joshua did not forget the promise which the two spies had made to Rahab. He ordered them to go into her house and to bring out all that were with her. Only the vessels of brass and iron, the silver and the gold were spared and put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. When the campaign was completed, Joshua pronounced a curse upon anyone who would rebuild Jericho.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God's ways are not man's ways.* Joshua must have thought it strange that he was not given directions for drawing up his army in groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. God did not tell him how to position his archers or to station his lancers. Instead he received directions for lining up the people and ordering them to march around the city.
2. *Firstfruits belong to the Lord.* A standing order in Israel provided for the people giving back to God the first crops which they raised in a field. They also were to give God the first beasts born to their cattle. Their firstborn sons were to be redeemed at great cost to themselves. God had ordered them to take nothing of the spoils of Jericho. The first city they conquered belonged to God. Everything in it was dedicated to Him. Such sacrificial giving ought to be the earmark of a Christian. He should give God the first and best part of everything—time, talent, and treasure.
3. *God-fearing men are honest.* The spies had made a promise to Rahab. Joshua arranged for them to keep this promise. A Christian man's word should be as good as his bond. By such honest activities God's people gain a good reputation in the communities where they live. Lives of this nature enable Christian people to fill the role of cities set on hills and candles placed on candlesticks. Thus Christ's followers obey His command to let their lights so shine that others may see their good works and glorify their Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:15, 16).

## CHAPTER SIX

*Instructions for Attacking Jericho 6:1-11*

Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

2 And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor.

3 And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

5 And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord.

7 And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord.

8 And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them.

9 And the armed men went before the priests that

blew with the trumpets, and the rearward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

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.

1. *Why was Jericho "straitly shut up"?* 6:1

The strongly fortified city of Jericho was shut up tightly because of the fear of the Israelite people which gripped the inhabitants. When all the kings of the Amorites who were on the side of the Jordan westward and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea heard how the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, their hearts melted. There was no spirit in them any more because of the children of Israel (Joshua 5:1). These pagan people knew the Israelites were blessed by God himself. The actual Hebrew text says Jericho "did shut and was shut up," an emphatic way of saying it was tightly closed against anyone going out or anyone coming into the city. The inhabitants were expecting an attack, and they were trying to prevent any infiltration of the enemy by securely locking up the city. They were also preventing any of the inhabitants giving aid to the Israelites or surrendering to them.

2. *What was the angel's commission?* 6:2

All the Israelite men of war were to go around the town once a day for six days. As they marched in this manner around the city, seven priests were to carry seven jubilee trumpets before the Ark. This implies that the Ark itself was to be carried around the city in solemn procession. On the seventh day they were to march around the town

seven times, and the priests were to blow the trumpets. When there was a blast on the jubilee horn, the people were to raise a great cry. Then the wall of the town would fall down.

3. *What were the seven trumpets?* 6:4

The "trumpets of rams' horns" are the same as the "rams' horn" in verse five. They were not the silver trumpets of the priests (Numbers 10:1 ff.), but large horns, or instruments in the shape of a horn, which gave a loud far-sounding tone (see Leviticus 23:24; 25:11). These horns were not the trumpets which were blown to signal the beginning of a march. They were the horns which were sounded as feast days were announced. The use of these horns for this predominantly military engagement would give a religious significance to the conquest of Jericho.

4. *In what order were the people to march?* 6:7-10

The Ark, with the priests in front carrying the trumpets of rams' horns, was to form the center of the procession. One portion of the fighting men was to go in front of it; the rest, to follow after. The priests were to blow the trumpets every time they marched around during the seven days. It was not until the seventh time of going around, on the seventh day that the people were to raise the war cry at the command of Joshua. Then the walls of the town were to fall.

5. *Why were the people to keep silent until the horns were blown?* 6:10

The people were not to depend upon themselves at all for the conquest of the city until God had wrought His mighty act of deliverance. The sound of the trumpets of rams' horns was to serve as a signal for the raising of the great war cry by the people of Israel. The blowing of a trumpet is frequently introduced into the writings of the prophets. The trumpet signaled the manifestation

of the Lord in great judgments. The blowing of the trumpets and the raising of the war cry of Israel would encourage her soldiers to rise and fight. It would also throw terror into the hearts of the enemies.

*The City Destroyed 6:12-21*

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord

13 And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets; and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.

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.

18 And ye, in all 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.

19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.

20 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.

21 And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

6. *Why did they rise early on the seventh day?* 6:15

The people of Israel were to march around the city of Jericho seven times on the seventh day. The city itself was about a quarter of a mile long and about an eighth of a mile wide. The circumference of the city would thus be almost three quarters of a mile. Since the people would need to stay far enough away from the city walls to prevent their being struck by stones and arrows, the circle that they would use in their march around the city would be considerably longer. This would mean that the distance they traveled would be quite extensive, and it would be necessary for them to start at the dawning of the day in order to encompass the city seven times in one day.

7. *Was anything to be saved?* 6:17

Because the Lord had given Jericho into the hands of the Israelites, they were to consecrate it to Him as a ban—that is, a holy thing belonging to Jehovah. It was not to be touched by man, as being the first-fruits of Canaan (see Leviticus 27:28, 29). Rahab, alone, was excepted from this ban, along with all who belonged to her, because she had hidden the spies. The inhabitants of an idolatrous town laid under the ban were to be put to death, together with their cattle. All the property in the town was to be burned, as Moses himself had enjoined on the basis of the law in Leviticus 27:29. The only exceptions were metals—gold and silver and the vessels of brass and iron. These were to be brought into the treasury of the Lord—the

treasury of the Tabernacle—as being holy to the Lord (v. 19; cf. Numbers 31:54).

8. *Why was Jericho delivered miraculously?* 6:20

Jericho was the first and largest of the Canaanite cities. If the Israelites went out and conquered this city on their own and then conquered the remaining towns on their own, they would be led to believe they had wrought the deliverance by themselves. Now that the Red Sea had been crossed under the leadership of Moses and the Jordan River had been crossed under the leadership of Joshua, there could be no question after the fall of Jericho but that God was leading them in strange paths and over seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

9. *Is there a natural explanation for Jericho's fall?* 6:20b

Different attempts have been made to explain the miraculous overthrow of the walls of Jericho as a natural occurrence. Some suggest it was done by an earthquake, by mining, or by sudden storming. They suggest that the inhabitants had been thrown into a false security by the strange procession repeated day after day for several days and so were quite unprepared. Such humanistic explanations really deserve no serious refutation. All of them are arbitrarily forced upon the text. The destruction of Jericho was a miracle wrought by the hand of God. There is no natural explanation sufficient to account for all the aspects of the great victory won by Israel at Jericho.

10. *Why were Jericho's inhabitants and possessions utterly destroyed?* 6:21

This first town was offered as a sacrifice unto Jehovah. In some of the other towns, the cattle were taken as booty. This town, however, was the first, and it was completely destroyed as an offering unto Jehovah. Since Jericho was devoted to the Lord completely, it was treated as something which a man would devote to God. The rules for handling these materials were laid down in the Law. No devout



thing that a man devoted to God could be sold or redeemed. It was treated as the tithes of the land which belonged completely to God. Man had nothing to do with it after it was devoted to God. For this reason nothing in Jericho was to be saved and used by the people.

*The Sparing of Rahab 6:22-27*

22 But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her.

23 And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.

24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.

25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.

27 So the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.

*11. Why was Rahab left without the camp? 6:23*

After the walls of Jericho fell down flat and the people went up into the city every man straight before him to take the city, Joshua sent the two men who had

spied out the country to rescue Rahab. They had entered into a covenant with her promising to spare her if she would gather everything she had into her house and identify her house by displaying the cord of scarlet thread by which she had helped them to escape. These men thought Rahab had kept her part of the agreement. She had brought her father, mother, and brethren to her house. Everything she had was there. They brought all these people and their possessions out of the city before they burned the city with fire. Rahab was left outside the camp of Israel since she was not yet integrated into the community as a member of a particular tribe. Her mother, father, and brethren would also need to accept the laws of Israel before they could be taken into the community. Leaving them outside the camp was a precaution which they took out of the necessity of the case.

12. *What was the treasury of the house of the Lord?* 6:24

The people of Israel were told to bring out their first-fruits, tithes, and offerings to the house of the Lord. This was the means of providing for the livelihood of the priests and Levites. When they had a special need for materials in the days of Moses, they brought such an abundance that Moses had to ask them to desist (Exodus 36:5-7). It was in this same spirit that the people set apart all the silver, the gold, and the vessels of brass and iron for the use of the priests and Levites at the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle is called the "House of the Lord."

13. *How long did Rahab live among the Israelites?* 6:25

Rahab lived among the people of Israel until the time of the writing of the book of Joshua. The statement that she "dwelleth in Israel even unto this day" can only be a reference to the fact that she was alive at the time of the writing of the book. Since Rahab is presented as an adult at the time when she hid the spies this verse must have been written within the adult lifetime of Rahab herself.

Such a statement prevents our supposing that this book was written at a much later date. If the book was written by a contemporary of Rahab, there is no one in a better position than Joshua to do the writing himself. This is another indication of the fact that Joshua wrote this book.

14. *Why did Joshua announce a curse to prevent rebuilding Jericho?* 6:26

Jericho had been filled with people who were the Lord's enemies. Although their hearts melted in them, they were so hardhearted that they did not repent. The city itself was placed under the ban and was completely destroyed. To prevent a similar civilization from arising on the site, Joshua announced that the man who rebuilt the city would be cursed of God. Some feel that anyone who attempted to rebuild the city would celebrate the laying of the foundation by offering his firstborn son as a human sacrifice. He would then celebrate the completion of the project and the setting up of the gates of the city by offering his youngest son as a human sacrifice. It is better to view this as a prediction that God would smite the heirs of such an irreverent man until his heirs would be cut off—the firstborn as well as the youngest.

15. *Was the curse on Jericho ever executed?* 6:26b

It was not until Ahab's time that Hiel, the Bethelite, attempted to rebuild Jericho (I Kings 16:34). The curse included the loss of all the sons of the man who tried to remake Jericho into a fortified city. The curse was to be upon one who would lay the foundation of a wall, build the wall, and set up the gates of the wall. As the Scripture says, he laid the foundation "in Abiram his firstborn" and set up the gates "in his youngest son Segub." This was "according to the word of the Lord."

16. *How did Joshua's fame become known?* 6:27

God said to Joshua, "I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (1:5). God kept His promise.

The Lord was with Joshua. He enabled Israel to cross the Jordan River on dry ground at Joshua's order. He caused the walls of Jericho to fall down when Joshua obeyed His commandments. Such great acts of power as these were to be talked about in all the cities of Canaan. Reports of these events had caused the hearts of the people to melt. Rahab said the people had heard how the Lord had dried up the water of the Red Sea when the people of Israel came out of Egypt. They had heard about the conquests on the east side of the Jordan as Israel defeated Sihon, king of Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. Travelers going from village to village would carry the news of the latest victories. The things which God was doing through His people were known by all the Canaanites. Joshua's name was on the lips of all the people. His victories had made him famous, and the people of the land were afraid of him.

### TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 6

1. How many times were the Israelites to circle Jericho on each of the first six days?
2. How many priests were to go before the Ark?
3. On what instrument were they to blow?
4. What article of Tabernacle furniture were the priests to carry with them?
5. How many times were the Israelites to circle Jericho on the seventh day?
6. How many times did they circle the city altogether?
7. How many people were spared when Jericho was destroyed?
8. What materials were spared from the destruction of Jericho?
9. What was done with the material which was spared?
10. What loss would be suffered by anyone who rebuilt the city?