

TRUTHS LEARNED FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO

(Joshua 6)

INTRODUCTION: A Bible class teacher asked her young students, "Who broke down the walls of Jericho?" One boy answered, "I didn't do it!" All the others also denied having done it. The teacher became exasperated so she told one of the elders what happened in class. The elder said, "I don't think these children broke the walls down. However, the church will pay for repairing the damages and charge it to maintenance." In order that we may know who broke down the walls of Jericho, we shall study Joshua six.

After the Jews crossed over Jordan "*on dry ground*", the first city they encountered was Jericho. (Josh. 3:14-17) "Jericho, also called the city of palm trees (Deut. 34:3) is located five miles W of the Jordan and seven miles N of the Dead Sea...Jericho is probably the oldest city in the world...existing some 5,000 years before Abraham... The city's location made its capture the key to the invasion of the central hill country. It was regarded as a formidable obstacle by the Hebrews, requiring divine help to take it." (*Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, pg. 413, 414*) It is about 25 miles NE of Jerusalem.

Jericho fell about 1,400 B.C. Joshua spoke an amazing prophetic curse upon the man who would rebuild it. (Josh. 6:26-27) It was rebuilt about 850 B.C. by Hiel in the days of king Ahab. (1 Kgs. 16:34)

From the destruction of Jericho, we learn that:

I. GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT MAN'S WAYS (Isa. 55:8-9; Lk. 16:15)

- A. What general would have ever thought of taking the city in the manner in which God told Joshua to capture it?
 - 1. Man might have tried to climb the walls, batter down the gate or besiege it
 - 2. Man's power is limited, but God's power is unlimited
- B. The Son of God being born in a stable, raised by poor parents in the despised city of Nazareth, is not the way man would have had the Son of God coming and living on the earth
- C. Jesus, being rejected by most men and dying the cruel death on the cross, is not the plan of salvation man would have devised
- D. Jesus' manner of life was so different from what the Jews expected that most rejected Him
- E. How foolish it is for us to think that I:
 - 1. Approve of this activity – so must God
 - 2. Believe this doctrine – so must God
 - 3. Like worshiping in this manner – so must God
 - 4. Am satisfied with my salvation – so is God
- F. We can only know what pleases God by reading it in the Bible

II. GOD'S WAY WILL WORK! (Read Halley's Bible Handbook, pg. 159,160)

- A. God's way will work if we will only have the faith to work God's way!
- B. God's way is to preach the gospel to save souls (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21)
 - 1. Man's way is to "water down" the preaching, feed the body, provide recreation, entertainment, etc.
 - 2. This shows a lack of faith in God's way
 - 3. What if Joshua had wanted to help the Lord out by making ladders to scale the walls?
- C. God's way is for each local church to be self-governing and responsible for her own work

under the oversight of her own elders (Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:2)

1. Man's way is to: tie the local churches together by some type of centralized organization; do the church's work through human organizations; etc.
2. This shows a lack of faith in God's way

III. WE CANNOT HIDE OUR SINS FROM GOD

- A. Joshua told the people that the spoils of the city were devoted to the Lord {vs. 17-19}
- B. Achan willfully sinned by taking some of the treasure of Jericho (Josh. 7:1)
- C. Achan's disobedience shows how Satan entices us to sin (Josh. 7:20-21; Jas. 1:13-15)
- D. Even though Achan hid his sin, God knew about it (Josh. 7:10-19)
 1. God knows our secret sins (Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2: 16; Heb. 4:13)
 2. Let us not wait until the Judgment to confess and repent of our sins for then it will be too late
- E. All sin is very serious because it brings upon us great punishment
 1. Because of Achan's sin: about 36 Jews died; the morale of the army was broken; and he, and his family, were stoned and burned to death (Josh. 7:4-9,24-25)
 2. Your sins, if not forgiven, will cause you to be eternally tormented (Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41,46)

IV. "BY FAITH THE WALLS OF JERICHO FELL DOWN, AFTER THEY WERE ENCIRCLED FOR SEVEN DAYS" (Heb. 11:30)

- A. Because of their faith, the Jews did what God told them to do and the result was "*the wall fell down flat*" (vs. 20)
 1. Suppose they had said that they believed God could knock the walls down so they would just skip all the marching every day. They would have run into a wall!
 2. Suppose they had said they would march around the wall once for six days and then six times on the seventh day; or seven times on the seventh day, but remain silent. They would have marched into a wall!
- B. Many today claim they are saved by faith only (Jn. 3:16)
 1. Our faith must lead us to comply with the conditions of salvation that God has commanded (Matt. 7:21; Jas. 2:14-26)
 2. Do you see their mistake?
- C. Many today claim that they are saved for they have believed, repented, confessed, but have not been baptized for the remission of their sins
 1. Our faith must cause us to do all that God has said to do, in the manner God said do it
 2. Can you see their mistake?
- D. Those who make changes in God's plan of salvation have lost faith in God's way!

V. GOD GAVE THEM THE CITY OF JERICHO, BUT THE JEWS HAD TO WORK. (vs. 2, 16)

- A. The Jews knew that their shout had not caused the walls to fall flat. It was the power of God!
- B. Being baptized does not mean that we have earned our salvation (Eph. 2:8-9)
- C. Salvation is a gift, but conditions must be met (Rom. 6:23; 10:9-10; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38)
- D. Have you obeyed God's conditions of salvation?