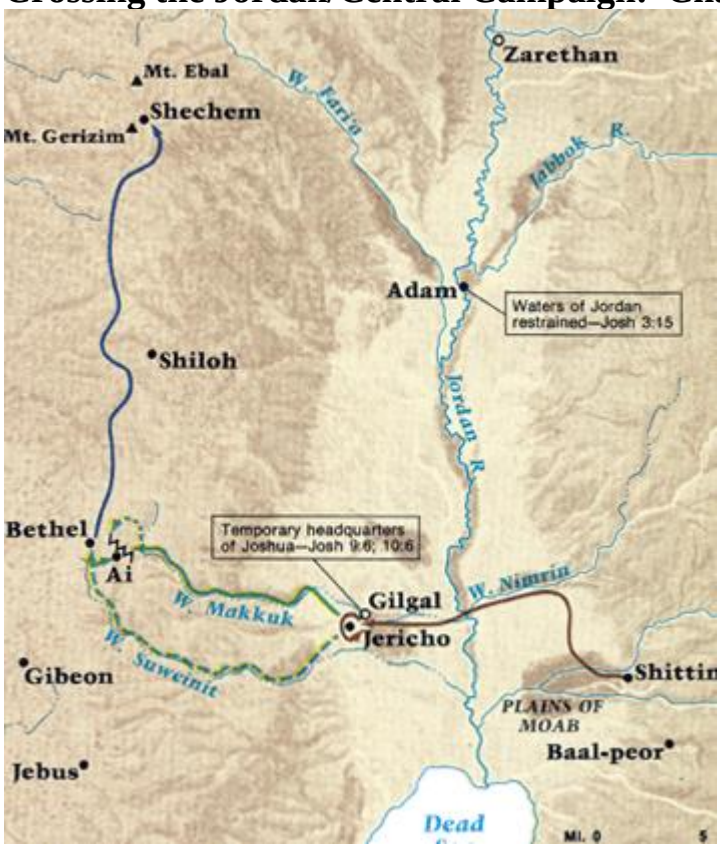
Joshua
September 27, 2009
<u>Joshua 6</u>

I. Crossing the Jordan/Central Campaign: Chapters 2-8



II. Jericho Shut Up: Josh 6:1

Josh 6:1

6:1 Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.

NIV

We saw in Chapter 2 that Jericho was on high alert. They would have known of the millions of Israelites crossing the Jordan and would have guessed as to their next destination. Jericho would have been far too small to attack the Israelites. So, their only option was to hide within the hoped safety of their city's walls.

III. Jericho Is Yours: Josh 6:2-5

Josh 6:2-5

2 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. 3 March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. 4 Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. 5 When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in."

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Verse 2 Although the Israelites do not appear to have any experience in siege warfare, they do not need it because the LORD is going to give the city to them.

Verse 3 Some have seen a magical formula of circumambulation involved in this chapter, but clearly the word of the LORD takes magic out of it.

Verse 4 Marching seven times around the city does not seem like a great strategy. Even a relatively small city would require a mile or so to circumnavigate. Marching seven miles would have tended to tire out most men. Of course, if the LORD orders it, then the Israelites should do it.

Heb 11:30
30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.
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IV. Silent Parade: Josh 6:6-11

Josh 6:6-11
6 So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." 7 And he ordered the people, "Advance! March around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD." 8 When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them. 9 The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. 10 But Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" 11 So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the people returned to camp and spent the night there.
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Another interesting military tactic is having the priests lead the troops into battle carrying the ark! Note that the battle is really in doing what the LORD says to do. The actual fighting is completed in only a few words comprising about a fourth of verse 20. The rest of the chapter shows the Israelites obeying the LORD.

Why could the Israelites not shout until told to do so? The answer is simple, because this is what the Lord says to do. As we read through this chapter, people attempt to explain why these tactics make sense. For example, as the Israelites march around the city, the people of Jericho will see their vast numbers and become even more afraid. While perhaps true, the primary reason is that they are obeying God.

V. Agreement: Josh. 6:12-19

Josh. 6:12-19
12 Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. 14 So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days. 15 On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. 16 The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! 17 The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. 18 But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. 19 All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."
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We see a continuation of obedience and additional commands through these verses, most of which is familiar because we have taught it to our children.

In verse 17, did God condone that Rahab and her people would not be harmed despite her lies and His command not to make treaties with Canaanites? Apparently so, or they would have been destroyed too.

Those things devoted have engendered a lot of discussion. The Canaanite people and things devoted to the LORD were to be completely destroyed.

Lev 27:28-29
28 "'But nothing that a man owns and devotes to the LORD — whether man or animal or family land — may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD. 29 "'No person devoted to destruction may be ransomed; he must be put to death.
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Critics will use this passage from Leviticus to suggest that God wanted human sacrifices such as the despicable peoples who surrounded them. The chronicle of Isaac's near sacrifice in Genesis 22 is given as supporting "evidence."

The devoted things have been corrupted with sin. If the Israelites do not stay away from them, they will become corrupted as well. If corrupted, the Israelites should expect the same punishment. Remember this verse concerning Achan's sin in the next chapter.

VI. The Battle: Josh. 6:20-21

Josh. 6:20-21
20 When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. 21 They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it — men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.
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The actual battle go as thus: "so every man charged straight in, and they took the city." This seems rather short for such a major battle. The rest of the chapter deals with the Israelites obeying God.

VII. Additional Comments on Rahab

Josh. 6:22-25
22 Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her." 23 So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel. 24 Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. 25 But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho — and she lives among the Israelites to this day.
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If Rahab's house was in or on the wall, why was it still standing? Apparently, this section of the wall did not fall. How much of the wall actually fell? We do not know. We know that enough of it fell that the Israelite army was unencumbered in attacking the city.

Note that the scarlet cord is not mentioned, although the spies would probably have noted it as they entered. The fact that it is not mentioned probably gives credence to God having given His grace on Rahab and notifying Joshua of this fact.

In verse 25, we see Rahab and her family being incorporated into Israel. We also see another reference that leads us to believe that this book was written at an early time. Even in the OT, God's choice of people is dependent on His grace, leaving room for a Canaanite prostitute to join Israel.

VIII. Closing Comments

Josh. 6:26-27
26 At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the LORD is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: "At the cost of his firstborn son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates." 27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.
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Of course, Jericho was again an important city by the time of Jesus, having been rebuilt. The fulfillment of the curse occurs in:

1 Kings 16:34
34 In Ahab's time, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken by Joshua son of Nun.
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In verse 27, we see fulfillment of the LORD's promise to Joshua:

Josh 1:5
5 No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.
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Joshua's fame would have been coupled with the fame of his God. The other peoples might not have recognized God as the one and only God, but they would have recognized some of His power and would have feared Him.

IX. Bible Critics

Critics have found the destruction of the Canaanites in Joshua as a primary reason not to believe in God or the Bible. Their viewpoint is that these chapters show a god who is bloodthirsty that he cannot be God. In a sense, they are genuinely concerned; their primary question is basically "How can a good god allow bad things to happen?" In their minds, they construct what they think God should do, and then determine that the God of the Bible is not consistent with the god that they imagine. Both the god that they imagine and their view of the God of the Bible are false views.

The Canaanites have sinned against the Lord to the point that He has decided that they will have no more changes to repent. Since life belongs to God, we have no basis to question Him if He decides to end it. Under all conditions, life starts and ends with God. In this case, He decides to use the Israelites as the instrument for removing most of the Canaanites. Ultimately, the question becomes as we read Joshua and other parts of the Bible that have death or suffering in them: "Do I trust God?" If we trust Him, then we should understand that the deaths have been ordained by Him for good reasons.