

## Joshua 6 The Reduction of Jericho

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**Summary:** Jericho sat at the entrance to the route from the Jordan valley to the Saddle of Benjamin. As such it needed to be destroyed so that Joshua could leave the Israelite women and children behind in safety while the warriors moved west and fought the Canaanites. The events of the reduction of Jericho prefigure the seven trumpets of Revelation.

Tonight, we're going to be in Joshua 6, and I'm going to do a quick recap before we go into that. What we did last time was the crossing of the Jordan River. If you look at the map behind me, one of the things that you'll notice is there's a saddle right here. It's called the Saddle of Benjamin. Notice you have a mountain ridge running north and south. You've got the Jordan Valley also running north and south. And then up here you have the Carmel Mountains. Key piece of terrain is this saddle, because who controls the saddle controls the north-south central ridge route, a trade route that runs along the top of the mountains. It also is the way up out of the Jordan Valley and over onto the coastal plain and back. It is the key piece of terrain in central Israel. To this day, the IDF makes sure that they control that piece of terrain.

Joshua is down on the Jordan plain here. Last week he was on the east side of the Jordan, and we got him across. Notice how steep the mountains are coming up out of that plain. Then it goes gradually down to the sea. Coming up out of the Jordan Valley, there are only certain places that you can come up. You can't just walk up any place you want. It turns out that Jericho sits at the entrance of the route that goes up from the Jordan Valley to Jerusalem, which is on the southern edge of the Saddle of Benjamin.

In order for Joshua to be able to leave the women and children down at Gilgal, which is on the Jordan plain, he has got to reduce Jericho. If he's leaving his women and children down in the valley, he cannot have a Canaanite fortress right there. That's the reason he is crossing where he is. It's also the reason why he's got to reduce Jericho before he does anything else.

They, of course, cross the Jericho. God stops the river. This crossing happens on the 10th of Nisan, which is when the triumphal entry was, when Yeshua came into Jerusalem. That's the day that Israel crosses the Jordan to start their conquest of the land. Being led by Joshua, and of course, Yeshua's name is Joshua. All the same thing. One of the places we're going to be tonight is we're going to be over in Revelation because there's a whole lot of correlation between what's going on tonight and Revelation and several other things. So we're going to be all over the place.

God stops the Jordan River and they walk over on dry ground. This is the bookend, if you will, to when they left Egypt and God split the Red Sea. You had God splitting the water, getting them out of Egypt. Now God splits the water, bringing them out of the wilderness and into the land. If you'll remember, the first thing that happens is when God talks to Moses at the burning bush. God has this conversation with Moses at the burning bush and he says, "Take your shoes off. You're on hallowed ground. And where we finished up last time was in Joshua 5, verse 13, when Joshua was in Jericho, "He lifted up his eyes and

looked and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, are you for us or for our adversaries? And he said, 'No, but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, 'What does my Lord say to his servant?' And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, 'Take off your sandals from your feet. The place where you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so."

So this is the other end of the burning bush, if you will. All the stuff that God did to get Israel out of Egypt and into the wilderness is now being unwound as they go out of the wilderness into the land.

The last thing I want to say is morale. Moses has a track record of being able to have God with him and having God do stuff for him and so forth. So one of the things that God is doing for Joshua and the reason he stops the river at Jericho is so that the Israelites will see that God is also with Joshua. So they will have the same confidence that they had with Moses. The other thing that's going on there is Jericho is terrified. You remember from two weeks ago when we had the spies go to Jericho, Rahab said that everybody is absolutely terrified of you because they know what happened at the Red Sea. "They know what you did to Egypt. They know what you did to Sihon and Og. They're absolutely terrified."

The Jordan Valley is a fertile plain. That's where Lot chose to move when he and Abraham split up. He looked down at the Jordan Valley and saw that it was well watered and lush. So Lot chose the Jordan Valley. I have been in the Jordan Valley at the site of Jericho. Jericho, of course, does not exist anymore, but there isn't any good reason why people up on the walls of Jericho could not have watched Israel as they crossed the Jordan River and watched as the river stopped and they came across on dry ground. In addition to giving Joshua and the warriors of Israel confidence that God was with them, what it did is it drained all of the will to resist from the people in Jericho because they could see it, too.

There's two endpoints, if you will. The first one being the Red Sea splitting and the Jordan River drying up. The other one being Moses at the burning bush and Joshua with the commander of the Lord's army, who most people believe was a pre-incarnate appearance of Yeshua. And I have no problem with that whatsoever. What we're going to see when we step over to Revelation a little bit later, he is going to have a drawn sword and all of that kind of thing. So the parallels are very, very strong.

The last thing that I'll say about this is the Jordan River at that time of year was in flood stage. It's the spring, it's Passover time, and remember they left Egypt at Passover. They are now coming into the land just before Passover, and just as they celebrated Passover in Egypt, then went into the wilderness, now they will celebrate Passover in the land. The timing of all that is, again, the end of a chiasm.

Chapter 6, "Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have given Jericho into your hand with its king and mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus you shall do for six days. Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of ram's horn before the ark. In the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And when they make a

long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city shall fall down flat. And the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.

This gets played out again in Revelation. By the way, it isn't clear in what I just read, but it becomes clear later on that every time they march around, the priests are blowing the horns. As you read the instructions from God, you could assume that the only time they're actually blowing the horn is on the seventh trip. That is not the case. They're going to walk around the city blowing the trumpets and then go back to camp. What this is doing is it is absolutely freaking out the inhabitants of Jericho. Everything is shut up. They're terrified anyway. What we do is we walk the army all the way around blowing our trumpet and carrying the ark of God and then go back.

And so, the question is always going to be, "Well, when are they going to attack?" They do this six times before they attack. What they are doing is they are draining the people of Jericho of morale. This is all psychological warfare. In addition to which it's all going to happen again in Revelation. So we're setting up, if you will, the stuff that's yet to happen. But the practical effect of it is to increase the terror of the people in Jericho.

The other thing that would make it more bizarre from the point of view of the inhabitants of Jericho is the army is marching around silently. There's no yelling or anything from the army. The only noise is the constant blast of these seven trumpets as they walk around.

All of this is designed to terrify the inhabitants of Jericho, which it does. Verse six. "So Joshua, the son of Nun, called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams horn before the ark of the Lord.' And he said to the people, 'Go forward, march around the city and let the armed men pass before the ark of the Lord.'" Verse eight. "And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of ram's horn before the Lord went forward, blowing the trumpets with the ark of the covenant of the Lord following them. The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark while the trumpets blew continually. But Joshua commanded the people, 'You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth until the day I tell you to shout, then you shall shout."

And this whole thing is absolutely designed to terrify the inhabitants of Jericho. The idea is that they are going to be so frightened that they are not going to be effective at fighting. Verse 11. "So he caused the ark of the Lord to circle the city, going around it once, and they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp. Then Joshua rose early in the morning and the priest took up the ark of the Lord and the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of ram horn before the ark of the Lord walked on and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the Lord while the trumpets blew continually. And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did for six days. On the seventh day, they rose early at the dawn of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, 'Shout for the Lord has given you the city.'"

Now the word shout there, by the way, is Teruah, Yom Teruah that we just had. It's usually called the Feast of Trumpets, which is a correct translation. It could also be translated the Day of Cheering or the Day of Crying for a War. The interlinear Hebrew Bible that I have where I looked it up said it was a war cry, which I'm sure it was, but it could be a cheer or a shout or a war cry or any number of things like that. But Teruah is the Hebrew word and it's the same word as Yom Teruah,

17. "And the city and all that was in shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. But you keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them, when you have devoted them, you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it."

Two things here. Thing one, of course, is Rahab is re-enacting the Passover. Her instructions are you tie a scarlet cord on your window, and anybody that you want to have live stays inside of your house. Anybody outside your house is going to die. So those are basically the exact same instructions that God gave to the people of Israel at the Passover. You spread the blood of the lamb on your doorpost, and anybody that wants to live through the night stays indoors. Anybody outside is going to die.

And for those of you who said, wait a minute, wait a minute, it's just the firstborn that are dying. Yes, except what is Israel's status as a nation? They're God's firstborn, aren't they? Clear back at the burning bush, God tells Moses, you go tell Pharaoh, Israel is my firstborn. You need to let my firstborn go. So I am surmising, even though scripture doesn't say it, that not just the firstborn sons of the Israelites were in danger at the Passover. I am surmising that the entire nation would have been in danger, anybody that walked outside of his home. But that's just my interpretation. You don't like it, you don't have to believe it. The instructions for Rahab are exactly the same as the instructions that were given to the children of Israel on the night of the Passover. And the sign is similar.

It's a scarlet cord on her window, which is on the outside of the wall, as opposed to blood on the door. I will take a guess here, and this is just a guess, I think part of the reason for that was so Rahab wouldn't be obviously a traitor and wouldn't be killed by the people of Jericho. The scarlet thread out there is much less noticeable than if she had done something on her door. And that might have caused her to be at least harassed, perhaps killed by the people of Jericho. Those are all speculations.

The other thing that's going on here is Joshua is giving them explicit instructions not to loot the place. That, of course, is going to become important in the next chapter. The only thing that is to survive the destruction of Jericho are metallic objects.

And one of the things, if you remember about the purification of things after a battle, one of the battles in the Torah, they were to destroy everything except that which could be purified by fire. So they took all of the metal and ran it through a fire to purify it. The only thing that is going to survive out of Jericho are metallic objects, and those are going to be devoted to God. They're not going to be your personal stuff. You can't go in there and grab a frying pan because, oh wow, frying pan, I can use a frying pan. No, all the metallic objects

are devoted to God. So we have explicit instructions here about how you're going to treat the spoil that would normally be for the warriors.

Verse 19, "But all the silver and gold and every vessel of bronze and iron are holy to the Lord. They shall go into the treasury of the Lord." So the people shouted and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout and the wall fell down flat so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. Then they devoted all the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep and donkeys with the edge of the sword.

The instruction there is kill everything that breathes. You've seen all the whoof-raw that is going on about collateral damage in Gaza. This would be a very, very difficult thing to carry out for anybody, but they did.

The other thing that's going on, and scripture doesn't say anything about it, so I'm just speculating, is Rahab's house is explicitly described as having been built into the wall. The way these ancient fortresses would have been built is you actually have two walls. Then you have a battlement across the top, and the battlement is where your soldiers stand up and pour burning oil on people and all the charming things that they do when people are trying to get into their fortress. So there's a space between the two walls, and in that space below the battlement where your soldiers are standing, they obviously built apartments. Rahab's house was in that area, so when it says the walls fell down flat, and we are reasonably certain that Rahab didn't get squashed, then we can assume that her section of the wall did not fall down, which would have made her easy to find by the Israelites.

22. "But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, 'Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the women and all who belong to her, as you swore to her.' So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her, and they brought out all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. Then they burned the city with fire and everything in it. Only the silver and gold and the vessels of bronze and iron they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua was saved alive, and she has lived in Israel to this day because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26. "Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, 'Cursed before the Lord be the man who raises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates.' So the Lord was with Joshua and his fame was in all the land."

First off, the curse, go over to 1 Kings chapter 16, verse 29. "In the 38th year of Asa, king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel. And Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. And if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbal, king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him." One of the things that I find really kind of interesting is as you get these kings of Israel as opposed to

kings of Judah, one of the things that is a touchstone is whether or not they followed the sins of Jeroboam.

The sin of Jeroboam, after Solomon's death, God said that he was going to take the kingdom away from the descendants of Israel, with the exception of Judah and Benjamin. Solomon ticked God off so badly that God said, I'm going to take Israel away from you. But out of love for my servant David, I will not take Judah away from you, and I will not take Benjamin away from you. Everything else you're going to lose. And of course, you know the story. After Solomon's death, Rehoboam, his son, became king, and he wanted to raise taxes.

Solomon was a superb administrator and bureaucrat. So he did lots and lots of civic improvements all over Israel, just built all sorts of stuff, massively increased the wealth of the kingdom, very successful king. However, he had more than a reasonable number of wives. They all led him to serve other gods. So he built high places and altars for all of his wives so that his wives could worship the gods of where they came from. This annoyed the heck out of God, the real God.

And so he said, "I'm not going to take it away from you, Solomon, but I'm going to take it away from your son." So Rehoboam said, all right, dad taxed you a lot. I'm going to be even tougher. The northern kingdom then split off. They split off under Jeroboam, and Jeroboam was given the northern kingdoms by God. However, he didn't trust God and was afraid that if people from the kingdom of Israel continued to go back to Jerusalem for all of the feasts, the kingdoms would eventually reunite and he would get killed.

So what he did was he said, Jerusalem's too far. What we'll do is we'll start celebrating the feasts up here in the north. And furthermore, just to make sure it all works out, we're going to change the dates." So they moved the dates of all the feasts a month later. That is the sin of Jeroboam that all of the kings of Israel subsequently did not try and unwind. None of them tried to get back to the feast days as appointed by God. They all continued with their own feast, their own calendar, and all that kind of stuff. That's what's going on with Ahab.

First Kings 16:32. "He erected an order for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. And Ahab made an Asherah; asherah is a totem pole. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days, Chael of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation to the cost of Abiram, his firstborn. He set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son, Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Joshua, the son of Nun. Jericho gets rebuilt."

And when it says at the cost of, what I am assuming that means is when he laid the foundation, he sacrificed his oldest son. And then as he built the walls, he sacrificed Segub. I'm assuming these were not industrial accidents; his sons were supervising construction and somebody dropped a rock on them. I'm assuming that's not what's going on. I'm assuming that what's going on is that they were sacrificed because Israel went into Baal worship, which involves all that kind of stuff.

The other place we're going to go is to Revelation 8. "When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and

stood at the altar with a golden censer. And he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints rose before God from the hand of the angel. And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth. And there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.”

For those of you who have been through Revelation, that echoes what happened at Korah's rebellion. There was a plague that had gone out through the land. And Moses said to Aaron, “Quick, go in, take some incense from the incense altar and run and get between the people and the plague.” So he took some incense from the altar, ran into the crowd and got at the edge of the plague and spread his incense around and that stopped the plague. I'm assuming that this is a bookend to that. And this censer full of incense is designed to stop some sort of a plague that got started as one of the seals.

Verse six. “Now, the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

We're not going to go through all seven trumpets. Where I want to be is when we get down to the eighth trumpet, which is down in Revelation 11, verse 15, Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever.’” I will suggest to you that is shouting or cheering.

You remember when we got the seventh trumpet, last one, they were to shout or cheer and the walls were going to fall flat. I am suggesting to you that exactly the same thing happens at the seventh trumpet when Yeshua gets ready to land on the earth.

Verse 16. “And the twenty-four elders who sat on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God saying, ‘We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.’” The seventh trumpet announces the beginning of the reign, just as the seventh trumpet in Joshua announced the beginning of Israel taking back the land.

Verse 18. “The nations raged, but your wrath came and the time for the dead to be judged and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.” Which is to say, just as Joshua's instructions were, when you go into Canaan, don't mess with any of them, get them all. Here what he's saying is, all these people who have been destroying the earth, kill them all. Same instructions.

Verse 19. “Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.” What went with the army around Jericho every time? The ark. The ark of the Lord is going around Jericho for seven days, and then seven times on the seventh day. What we have in Revelation is at that seventh trumpet, God's tabernacle in heaven opens up and the ark becomes visible.

I'm going to skip a couple of chapters, let me give you a quick synopsis of Revelation. Revelation is organized around three sequences of seven. You've got seven seals, you've got

seven trumpets, you've got seven bowls of wrath. In between those sequences, you've got some stuff which I call "Back at the ranch," which is to say some of it's past, some of it's future. My perspective on Revelation is the three sequences of seven are linear and sequential. They're in order. The stuff that I call "Back at the ranch" is not necessarily in time order. Very often it isn't clear just exactly what the time signature is for the stuff that happens between the three sets of seven.

Furthermore, between the sixth and the seventh one of each of these sets of seven, you have another "Back at the ranch," a digression, if you will, where stuff gets talked about and explained. So what I've done for you with the trumpets, I have said, all right, there's going to be seven of them, skipped all the back at the ranch, and now I am back in time flow sequence. We had the seventh trumpet, which I just read about, and that's when he became king over all the earth. So now we're back at chapter 14, and we are back in time sequence.

Chapter 14. "Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his father's name written on their foreheads." The sequence is, you had seven seals, then you had seven trumpets. At the end of the seventh trumpet, Yeshua is standing on Mount Zion. I am firmly convinced that the book of Joshua is a rehearsal, if you will, for revelation, because the same stuff happens in same order.

So I'm not going to start on the battle of Ai. We'll do Ai next time. And what's going to happen next week is, after reducing Jericho, Ai sits on the top of the saddle of Benjamin, right in the middle. It's a small town. They look at it and say, this is not going to be a military significant problem. And they send a rather small party up there, and they get routed.

And they come back, and Joshua says, "What?" What they discover is one of the Israelites had taken some personal loot from Jericho, and that caused God not to be with them. They take care of that, and then they turn around and they go back up to Ai, and I've got slides and maps and all that kind of stuff on the battle of Ai, and we'll talk about that next time.