

Joshua 6

Despite Joshua's long military experience, he had never led an attack on a fortified city that was prepared for a long siege. In fact, of all the walled cities in Palestine, Jericho was probably the most invincible. There was also the question of armaments. Israel's army had no siege engines, no battering rams, no catapults, and no moving towers. Their only weapons were slings, arrows, and spears—which were like straws against the walls of Jericho.¹

What was the security posture of the city of Jericho at this time (v. 1)? It had been “*tightly shut up*.” All the gates of the city were closed and no traffic was permitted in or out. All because of the fear of the advancing Israelites (cf. 5:1)

What did the Lord promise Joshua (v. 2)? He promised victory to Joshua and announced that He had given Jericho into his hands along with its king and its army.

What specific guidance did the Lord give to Joshua (vv. 3-5)? The battle plan Joshua was to use was most unusual. Ordinary weapons of war were not to be employed. Rather Joshua and his armed men were to march around the city once a day for six successive days, returning at night to Gilgal, with seven priests blowing trumpets preceding the Ark of the Covenant. On the seventh day, they were to circle Jericho seven times. When the priests blew the rams' horns (trumpets), the people were to give a loud shout and then the wall of Jericho would collapse and the city would be taken.²

NOTE: In the Bible the number seven often symbolizes completeness or perfection. There were seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days, seven circuits of the wall on the seventh day. Though God's plan of action may have seemed foolish to men it was the perfect scheme for this battle.³

What orders did Joshua give to the priests and the people (vv. 6-7)? The order of the battle procession. No battle strategy appeared more unreasonable than this one. But unlike Moses at the burning bush who argued with lengthy eloquence against the Lord's plan (cf. [Exodus 3:11-4:17](#)) Joshua responded with an unquestioning obedience. He lost no time in calling together the priests and soldiers, passing on to them the directions he had received from his Commander-in-chief.⁴

In what order did the various groups march around the city (vv. 8-9)? First came the armed guard marching under tribal banners, then seven priests with trumpets, next the Ark of the Covenant, and last the rear guard.

What commands did Joshua give to the people (vv. 10-11)? Observe absolute silence until otherwise ordered. This strange parade made its way toward Jericho and then around the city like a serpent. Jericho covered about eight or nine acres and required less than 30 minutes to march around. When the circuit was completed, to the amazement of the Canaanites, who probably anticipated an immediate attack, the Israelites returned quietly to camp.⁵

What was the routine on the following days (vv. 12-14)? The same procedure was followed for six days. No fortress had ever been conquered in this fashion. This strange strategy was probably given to test the faith of Joshua. He did not question; he trusted and obeyed. This procedure was also designed to test Israel's obedience to God's will. And that was not easy in this case. Every day they were exposing themselves to ridicule and danger.⁶

What was the routine on the seventh day (v. 15)? On that fateful seventh day the procession made the circuit of the walls seven times. This parade—consisting of the armed guard, the seven trumpet-blowing priests, the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant, and the rear guard—may have taken about three hours.⁷

What did Joshua command the Israelites to do (vv. 16-19)? After the seventh time marching around the city, the priests were to sound the trumpet blast and the people were to Shout!....."for the *LORD* has given you the city." The only survivors were to be Rahab and her family. Joshua also commanded the Israelites to take none of the spoils of Jericho for themselves. He strongly warned them that "everything that is in it [Jericho] belongs to the Lord" (vv. 17, 19). Only the valuable things were to be retained for the treasury of the Lord.

What happened when the trumpets sounded after the seventh circuit around the city (vv. 20-21)? The people gave a loud shout. At that moment the wall of Jericho, obeying the summons of God, collapsed (lit., "fell in its place"). The army of Joshua entered the city and captured it. They destroyed every living thing – people and animals.

What did Joshua tell the two spies to do next (vv. 22-23)? Before the city was burned (v. 24), Joshua kept the promise made to Rahab by the two spies (cf. 2:12-21) and sent those same young men to the house where the scarlet cord hung from the window. She and her entire family followed them without hesitation to the appointed place outside the doomed city. Rahab and her family were spared from divine judgment because of their faith.⁸ Rahab even became a part of the messianic line of Jesus (Matthew 1:5).

After saving Rahab and her family, what did the army do next (v. 24)? The city and everything in it was burned. But the valuable items were put into the treasury of the Lord's house.

How did Joshua treat Rahab (v. 25)? Joshua spared Rahab and her family because they hid the spies. She is memorialized among the Israelites to this day.

What solemn oath did Joshua proclaim (v. 26)? After Rahab and her family were escorted out safely, the city was burned. Joshua pronounced a curse on anyone who sought to rebuild Jericho as a fortress, prophesying that the man's oldest son would die when the foundation was laid and his youngest son would die when its gates were erected. See 1 Kings 16:34 for the fulfillment of this curse.⁹

What was the end result of the Jericho victory (v. 27)? Joshua's fame "*spread throughout the land.*"

NOTE: The conquest of Canaan is frequently thought of as an Israelite campaign, carried out with severe violence and defended by claims of divine approval. However, the Old Testament offers a contrasting view: the conflict is presented as a divine enterprise, with human participants.....not acting independently but serving as instruments subject to God's sovereign will.

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Joshua, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 56.

² Donald K. Campbell, "Joshua" in the Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 340.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 341.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 342.

⁹ William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 245.