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

The inhabitants of Jericho close their gates, Jos 6:1. Continuation of the discourse between the captain of the Lord's host and Joshua. He commands the people to march round the city six days, the seven priests blowing with their trumpets; and to give a general shout, while marching round it on the seventh, and promises that then the walls of the city shall fall down, Jos 6:2-5. Joshua delivers these directions to the priests and to the people, Jos 6:6, Jos 6:7. The priests and people obey; the order of their procession, Jos 6:8-16. He commands them to spare the house of Rahab, Jos 6:17, and not to touch any part of the property of the city, the whole of which God had devoted to destruction, Jos 6:18, Jos 6:19. On the seventh day the walls fall down, and the Israelites take the city, Jos 6:20, Jos 6:21. The spies are ordered to take care of Rahab and her family - the city is burnt, but the silver, gold, brass, and iron, are put into the treasury of the house of the Lord, Jos 6:22-24. Rahab dwells among the Israelites, Jos 6:25; and the city is laid under a curse, Jos 6:26.

Verse 1

Now Jericho was straitly shut up - The king of Jericho, finding that the spies had escaped, though the city was always kept shut by night, took the most proper precaution to prevent every thing of the kind in future, by keeping the city shut both day and night, having, no doubt, laid in a sufficiency of provisions to stand a siege, being determined to defend himself to the uttermost.

JOSHUA 6:2 The LORD said to Joshua, "Behold, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the mighty men of valor.

Verse 2

And the Lord said unto Joshua - This is the same person who in the preceding chapter is called the captain or prince of the Lord's host, the discourse being here continued that was begun at the conclusion of the preceding chapter, from which the first verses of this are unnaturally divided.

I have given into thine hand Jericho, etc. - From Jos 24:11, it seems as if there had been persons of all the seven Canaanitish nations then in Jericho, who might have come together at this time to help the king of Jericho against the invading Israelites. The Targum intimates that the place was very strong, having "gates of iron and bars of brass; and was shut up so closely that none came out, either to combat or make offers of peace."

JOSHUA 6:3 All your men of war shall march around the city, going around the city once. You shall do this six days.

Verse 3

Ye shall compass the city - In what order the people marched round the city does not exactly appear from the text. Some think they observed the same order as in their ordinary marches in the desert; (see the note on Num 10:14, and see the plans, Num 2:2 (note)); others think that the soldiers marched first, then the priests who blew the trumpets, then those who carried the ark, and lastly the people.

JOSHUA 6:4 Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day, you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.

Verse 4

Seven trumpets of rams' horns - The Hebrew word יובלים yobelim does not signify rams' horns; (see the note on Lev 25:11); nor do any of the ancient versions, the Chaldee excepted, give it this meaning. The instruments used on this occasion were evidently of the same kind with those used on the jubilee, and were probably made of horn or of silver; and the text in this place may be translated, And seven priests shall bear before the ark the seven jubilee trumpets, for they appear to have been the same kind as those used on the jubilee.

Seven times - The time was thus lengthened out that the besiegers and the besieged might be the more deeply impressed with that supernatural power by which alone the walls fell.

JOSHUA 6:5 It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you 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 go up every man straight before him."

Verse 5

The wall of the city shall fall down flat - Several commentators, both Jews and Christians, have supposed that the ground under the foundation of the walls opened, and the wall sunk into the chasm, so that there remained nothing but plain ground for the Israelites to walk over. Of this the text says nothing: - תחתיה חומת העיר תחתיה venaphelah chomath hair tachteyha, literally translated, is, The wall of the city shall fall down Under Itself; which appears to mean no more than, The wall shall fall down From Its Very Foundations. And this probably was the case in every part, though large breaches in different places might be amply sufficient to admit the armed men first, after whom the whole host might enter, in order to destroy the city.

JOSHUA 6:6 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' horns before the LORD's ark."

JOSHUA 6:7 They said to the people, "Advance! March around the city, and let the armed men pass on before the LORD's ark."

JOSHUA 6:8 It was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD advanced, and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

JOSHUA 6:9 The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the ark went after them. The trumpets sounded as they went.

Verse 9

The rereward came after the ark - The word $\eta\sigma\alpha\mu$ measseph, from $\eta\sigma\alpha$ asaph, to collect or gather up, may signify either the rereward, as our translation understands it, or the people who carried the baggage of the army; for on the seventh day this was necessary, as much fighting might be naturally expected in the assault, and they would need a supply of arms, darts, etc., as well as conveniences for those who might happen to be wounded: or the persons here intended might be such as carried the sacred articles belonging to the ark, or merely such people as might follow in the procession, without observing any particular order. The Jews think the division of Dan is meant, which always brought up the rear. See Num 10:25.

JOSHUA 6:10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout, nor let your voice be heard, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout."

JOSHUA 6:11 So he caused the LORD's ark to go around the city, going about it once. Then they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

JOSHUA 6:12 Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the LORD's ark.

JOSHUA 6:13 The seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD's ark went on continually, and blew the trumpets: and the armed men went before them. The rear guard came after the LORD's ark. The trumpets sounded as they went.

JOSHUA 6:14 The second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. They did this six days.

Verse 14

So they did six days - It is not likely that the whole Israelitish host went each day round the city. This would have been utterly impossible: the fighting men alone amounted to nearly 600,000, independently of the people, who must have amounted at least to two or three millions; we may therefore safely assert that only a select number, such as was deemed necessary for the occasion, were employed. Jericho could not have been a large city: and to reduce it could not have required a hundredth part of the armed force under the command of Joshua.

JOSHUA 6:15 On the seventh day, they rose early at the dawning of the day, and marched around the city in the same way seven times. Only on this day they marched around the city seven times.

Verse 15

The seventh day - they rose early - Because on this day they had to encompass the city seven times; a proof that the city could not have been very extensive, else this going round it seven times, and having time sufficient left to sack and destroy it, would have been impossible. It is evident that in the course of these seven days there must have been a Sabbath, and that on this Sabbath the host must have encompassed the city as on the other days: the Jews themselves allow this, and Rab. De Kimchi says "He who had ordained the observance of the Sabbath commanded it to be broken for the destruction of Jericho." But it does not appear that there could be any breach in the Sabbath by the people simply going round the city, the ark in company, and the priests sounding the sacred trumpets. This was a mere religious procession, performed at the command of God, in which no servile work was done. Therefore Marcion's objection, that the God of the Hebrews showed a changeableness of disposition in commanding the Sabbath to be kept sacred at one time, and then to be broken at another, is without foundation; for I must contend that no breach took place on this occasion, unless it could be made to appear that the day on which Jericho was taken was the Sabbath which is very unlikely, and which none can prove. But if even this were to be conceded, it is a sufficient answer to all such cavils, that the God who commanded the Sabbath to be set apart for rest and religious purposes, has always authority to suspend for a season the operation of merely ceremonial laws, or to abrogate them entirely, when the purpose of their institution is fulfilled. The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

JOSHUA 6:16 At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!

JOSHUA 6:17 The city shall be devoted, even it and all that is in it, to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

Verse 17

The city shall be accursed - That is, it shall be devoted to destruction; ye shall take no spoils, and put all that resist to the sword. Though this may be the meaning of the word **חרם** *cherem* in some places, see the note on Lev 27:29, yet here it seems to imply the total destruction of all the inhabitants, see Jos 6:21; but it is likely that peace was offered to this city, and that the extermination of the inhabitants was in consequence of the rejection of this offer.

JOSHUA 6:18 But as for you, only keep yourselves from the devoted thing, lest when you have devoted it, you take of the devoted thing; so would you make the camp of Israel accursed, and trouble it.

JOSHUA 6:19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are holy to the LORD. They shall come into the LORD's treasury."

Verse 19

But all the silver, and gold - shall come into the treasury - The Brahmins will receive from any caste, however degraded, gold, silver, etc.: but to receive from Shoodras food, garments, etc., would be considered a great degradation. - Ward.

JOSHUA 6:20 So the people shouted, and the priests blew the trumpets. When the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with 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 took the city.

Verse 20

The people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down - There has been much learned labor spent to prove that the shouting of the people might be the natural cause that the wall fell down! To wait here, either to detail or refute any such arguments, would be lost time: enough of them may be seen in Scheuchzer. The whole relation evidently supposes it to have been a supernatural interference, as the blowing of the trumpets, and the shouting of the people, were too contemptible to be used even as instruments in this work, with the expectation of accomplishing it in a natural way.

JOSHUA 6:21 They utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, both young and old, and ox, and sheep, and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

Verse 21

They utterly destroyed - both man, and woman, etc. - As this act was ordered by God himself, who is the Maker and Judge of all men, it must be right: for the Judge of all the earth cannot do wrong. Nothing that breathed was permitted to live; hence the oxen, sheep, and asses, were destroyed, as well as the inhabitants.

JOSHUA 6:22 Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house, and bring out from there the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her."

JOSHUA 6:23 The young men who were spies went in, and brought out Rahab with her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. They also brought out all her relatives, and they set them outside of the camp of Israel.

Verse 23

Brought out Rahab, and her father, etc. - Rahab having been faithful to her vow of secrecy, the Israelites were bound by the oath of the spies, who acted as their representatives in this business, to preserve her and her family alive.

And left them without the camp - They were considered as persons unclean, and consequently left without the camp; (see Lev 13:46; Num 12:14). When they had abjured heathenism, were purified,

and the males had received circumcision, they were doubtless admitted into the camp, and became incorporated with Israel.

JOSHUA 6:24 They burnt the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only they put the silver, the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron into the treasury of the LORD's house.

Verse 24

Only the silver, and the gold - they put into the treasury, etc. - The people were to have no share of the spoils, because they had no hand in the conquest. God alone overthrew the city; and into his treasury only the spoils were brought. This is one proof that the agitation of the air, by the sound of the people's voice, was not the cause of the fall of the city walls.

Vessels of brass and of iron - Instead of כֶּלִי keley, Vessels, the Septuagint, in the Alexandrian copy, evidently have read כֹּל col, All, with the omission of the י yod; for in Jos 6:19 they translate πᾶς χαλκος και σιδηρος, All the brass and iron: but this reading does not appear in any of Kennicott's or De Rossi's MSS.

JOSHUA 6:25 But Rahab the prostitute, her father's household, and all that she had, Joshua saved alive. She lived in the midst of Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers, whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

Verse 25

And she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day - This is one proof that the book was written in the time to which it is commonly referred; and certainly might have been done by the hand of Joshua himself, though doubtless many marginal notes may have since crept into the text, which, to superficial observers, give it the appearance of having been written after the days of Joshua. See the preface to this book.

JOSHUA 6:26 Joshua commanded them with an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed is the man before the LORD, who rises up and builds this city Jericho. With the loss of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son shall he set up its gates."

Verse 26

And Joshua adjured them at that time - It appears that he had received intimations from God that this idolatrous city should continue a monument of the Divine displeasure: and having convened the princes and elders of the people, he bound them by an oath that they should never rebuild it; and then, in their presence, pronounced a curse upon the person who should attempt it. The ruins of this city continuing would be a permanent proof, not only of God's displeasure against idolatry, but of the miracle which he had wrought in behalf of the Israelites; and for these reasons God willed that it

should not be rebuilt: nevertheless, he left men to the operation of their own free will, and recorded the penalty which those must pay who should disobey him.

He shall lay the foundation thereof, etc. - This is a strange execration; but it may rather be considered in the light of a prediction. It seems to intimate that he who should attempt to rebuild this city, should lose all his children in the interim, from laying the foundation to the completion of the walls; which the author of 1Kgs 16:34 says was accomplished in Hiel the Beth-elite, who rebuilt Jericho under the reign of Ahab, and laid the foundation of it in Abiram, his first-born, and set up its gates in his youngest son Segub: this was 550 years after Joshua pronounced the curse. But we are not sure that this means that the children either died a natural or violent death on this occasion for we may understand the history as relating to the slow progress of the work. Hiel having begun the work at the birth of his first-born, was not able to conclude before the birth of his last child, who was born many years after: and as their names are mentioned, it is very likely that the distance of time between the birth of each was well known when this history was written; and that the extraordinary length of time spent in the work, in which a multitude of vexatious delays had taken place, is that to which the prophetic execration relates. Yet the first opinion is the most probable. We must not suppose that Jericho had been wholly neglected from its overthrow by Joshua to the days of Hiel; if it be the same with the city of palm trees, mentioned Deu 34:3. We find it mentioned as an inhabited place in the beginning of Jdg 1:16, a short time after the death of Joshua: And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees, with the children of Judah, etc.; and this said city (if the same with the city of palm trees) was taken from the Israelites by Eglon king of Moab, Jdg 3:13. The ambassadors of David, who were disgracefully treated by Hanun king of the Ammonites, were commanded to tarry at Jericho till their beards should grow, 2Sam 10:4, 2Sam 10:5. It appears, therefore, that there was a city which went under this name long before the time of Hiel, unless we can suppose that the city of palm trees was a different place from Jericho, or that the name Jericho was given to some part of the circumjacent country after the city was destroyed, which is very probable. After Hiel had rebuilt this city, it became of considerable consequence in the land of Judea: the courses of priests lodged there, who served in their turns at the temple; see Luk 10:30. There was a school of the prophets there, which was visited by Elijah and Elisha, 2Kgs 2:4, 2Kgs 2:5, 2Kgs 2:18; and it was at this city that our Lord miraculously healed blind Bartimeus, Mar 10:46; Luk 18:35, etc. At present, Jericho is almost entirely deserted, having but thirty or forty miserable cabins in it, which serve for a place of refuge to some wretched Moors and Arabs, who live there like beasts. The plain of Jericho, formerly so celebrated for its fertility, is at present uncultivated, producing nothing but a few wild trees, and some very indifferent fruits. See Calmet.

JOSHUA 6:27 So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land.

Verse 27

So the Lord was with Joshua - Giving him miraculous assistance in all his enterprises; and this was what he was naturally led to expect from the communication made to him by the captain of the Lord's host, Jos 5:14, etc.

1. Many attempts have been made either to deny the miracle in the fall of Jericho, or to account for it on natural causes. Reference has already been made to some of these in the note on Jos 6:20. But to those who believe the Divine authenticity of the New Testament, every objection of this kind is removed by the authority of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Heb 11:30; By Faith the walls

of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven days. Hence we find that it was a miraculous interference; and that Joshua's faith in the promise made to him by the captain of the Lord's host, was the instrument which God chose to employ in the accomplishment of this important purpose.

2. The same is said of Rahab: By Faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace, Heb 11:31. She believed that the true God was on the side of the Hebrews, and that all opposition to them must be in vain; and this faith led her to put herself under the Divine protection, and in virtue of it she escaped the destruction that fell on her countrymen. Thus God has ever chosen to put honor on faith, as the instrument by which he will perform his greatest miracles of justice and mercy. God, who cannot lie, has given the promise; he that believes shall have it accomplished; for with God nothing shall be impossible, and all things are possible to him that believes. These are Scriptural maxims, and God cannot deny himself.

3. On the curse pronounced by Joshua on those who should rebuild Jericho, it may be necessary to make a few remarks. In ancient history we have many instances of execrations against those who should rebuild those cities which had been destroyed in war, the revival of whose power and influence was dreaded; especially such cities as had been remarkable for oppression, insolence, or perfidy. Strabo observes, lib. xiii., p. 898, ed. 1707, that Agamemnon pronounced execrations on those who should rebuild Troy, as Croesus did against those who should rebuild Sidona, in which the tyrant Glaucias had taken refuge; and this mode of execrating cities, according to Strabo, was an ancient custom - Εἶτε καὶ καταρασαμένου τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος κατὰ παλαιὸν ἔθος· καθάπερ καὶ ὁ Κροίσος ἐξέλων τὴν Σιδωνίαν, εἰς ἣν ὁ τυραννὸς κατέφυγε Γλαυκίας, ἀρας ἐθετο κατὰ τῶν τειχιούτων πάλιν τὸν τοπὸν. The Romans made a decree full of execrations against those who should rebuild Carthage, which had been the rival of their empire; and which, from its advantageous situation, might again become formidable should it be rebuilt. See Zonaras, Anal. The Ionians, according to Isocrates, pronounced the most awful execrations on those who should rebuild the temples destroyed by the Persians, that they might remain to posterity an endless monument of the impiety of those barbarians; and that none might put confidence in a people who were so wicked as to make war on the gods themselves. The other Greeks who had suffered by the Persians acted in the same way, leaving the desolated temples as a public monument of the enmity that should ever subsist between the two nations. See Calmet, and see the notes on Num 22:6.