

Joshua 6

Read Joshua 6:1-17: It is important to understand the immediate historical context, as well as an application to modern life. The conquest of Canaan is comparable to the aspects of our flesh that need to be conquered. We are well within God's plan for our lives; but we can still be a bit stifled. Our personal spiritual victories can only be accomplished by the power of God. Jericho, (AKA the moon city) was not conquered with swords as much as it was God going before his people. Perhaps we can even draw a comparison to Islamic strongholds in our land.

As Joshua and the children of Israel approached Jericho the residents battened down the hatches. Normally fortress populations were around 100 people per acre. During sieges, that could increase to 200. The Canaanites living in Jericho locked their gates, put their trained soldiers on alert, and waited with intense fear.

Why did God tell the Hebrews to take a lap around this 10-acre city's walls once a day for 7 days? The actual Israeli soldier count was 603,550. That would equate to 13 men abreast surrounding the city.



Joshua saw Jesus as the Captain of God's army when he first got to town.



Ancient Jericho

Towns became bigger as their populations increased. This made their architecture and urban planning more complex and they required more space to expand. The possibility of storing food surpluses meant that part of the population quit agricultural activities to devote their time to other things. Artisans, priests, traders... The wealth of flourishing cities attracted greed of the nomadic tribes and forced their inhabitants to build protective walls around their cities. This was the case of Jericho, in the West Bank, Palestine. With a history of more than 11,000 years, this was the first fortified city known ever and, up to the present day, it is considered the first city in history.

Jericho, the first one

Natufian hunter groups settled in this spot in 11,000 BC before it became the city of Jericho. Towards 9,000 BC, the settlement had more than 70 houses with around a thousand inhabitants and something unprecedented: a 5.5m high wall and a stone tower that reached a height of 6.5 m.

9000 BC
The round houses made with adobe, similar to igloos, were substituted by rectangular ones. Rectilinear and ovens appeared.

Glory and collapse

The opposition of the Canaanites implied changes in house planning. This people absorbed the original culture and took Jericho to its most glorious times. According to archaeological records, the city was destroyed by 1500 BC to be re-founded in the 9th century BC.

Houses
They had stone foundations, clay brick structures, so one with walls and the roofs were covered with a mixture of reeds and clay.

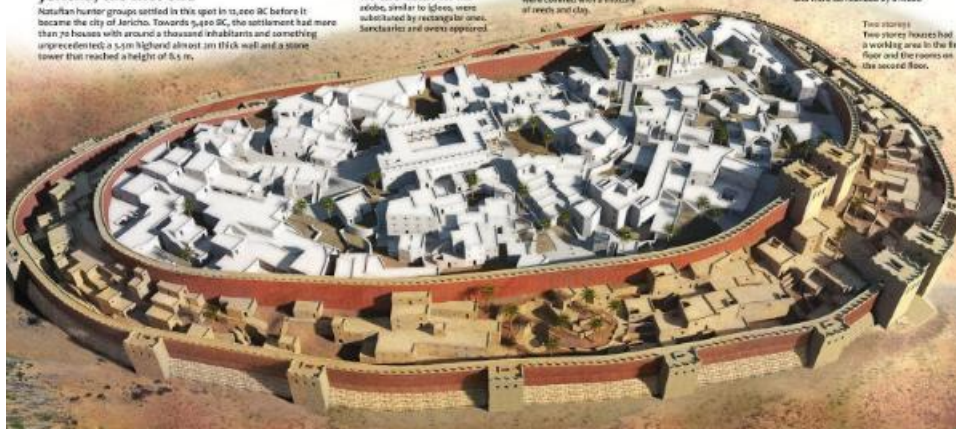
Courtyards
The buildings usually had a 7 metre square courtyard used to cook and preventing smoke from entering inside the house.

Double fortification
Similar to medieval fortifications, these were 1 m wide and more than 4 m high by 1500 BC. They were re-constructed at least 15 times.

Irrigation
There is evidence of cultivated plants and possible sheep breeding since 7000 BC. There was a water canal system.

The Jordan River
Jericho was favored by the river and trade. Its walls became thicker and were surrounded by a moat.

Two stories
Two-story houses had a working area in the first floor and the rooms on the second floor.



Why did God tell the priests carrying 7 trumpets to lead the ark of the covenant, in front of the men of war? The word used here for trumpet is *shofar*, which is a curved ram's horn. There are 3 ways to blow a shofar:

1. Tekiah-a long steady blast, communicating urgency, and a changing situation and new leadership, or
2. Teruah-Short, 9 staccato noises as an alarm, or in the pattern of a cry
3. Shevarim-3 blasts, like a cry of a broken person

The long trumpet blast in this chapter communicated that God's presence and authority were upon that place. The shofar is a wordless communication with God. It is not the same as speaking in tongues, but it does have some similarities.

²⁶ Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with [a]groanings too deep for words; ²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the [a]saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8)

Are God's voice and angel's voices sometimes like a trumpet? Am I using the horn to speak his language?

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, (Revelation 1)

God introduced his heavenly trumpets at Mount Sinai 40 years prior with nearly deafening calls from heaven to earth. It communicated the seriousness of this moment, when the true king was arriving. It communicates God's authority and a coming changes.

The word usage here for a long drawn out prolonged pitch is H4900 (masak):

There are also annual events that require shofar accompaniment and blowing:

1. Rosh Hashannah (Feast of Trumpets): commemorating a period of self reflection and repentance preceding a time of God's judgement, and
2. Yom Kippur: To signify the completing of atonement



God travels with his people. They had been gone for 400 years from Canaan. He cringed at how the Canaanites were living. Now he was coming home with his people (in a sense).

For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil [c]dwell with You. ⁵ The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity. ⁶ You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. (Psalm 5)

What may have been happening was that God's people were proclaiming that the king is returning. It was communicating an urgency to wake up and get on the right side of what is about to happen. After all, the ark is a representation of God's presence on earth.

God said that there is only one person and her family who will be making the transition to join God's people. Rahab the Gentile prostitute became the great grandmother of King David and Jesus. Another way to look at the trumpets, was that God was calling out to anyone who wanted to join God's people.

Read Joshua 6:18-27: Not only is becoming a believer the first step forward (of many) towards life. Paul talked a lot about subsequent things and setbacks that can effectively shipwreck our faith. We can get caught up in peripheral things or even cursed things and ruin our testimony and even bring destruction upon ourselves and our family. In this case, some of God's people took some souvenirs from the victory spoils that were forbidden. It was time to fight, not to be weighed down with distractions.

Joshua closes this chapter by placing a curse on whoever tries to rebuild Jericho. Centuries later, Joshua's words were fulfilled exactly when Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho during King Ahab's reign, losing his children as the curse had predicted (1 Kings 16:34).