



Joshua 6:6-27

Judgment and Salvation in Jericho

6 Then 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 ark of the LORD."

7 And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD."

8 So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that 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.

9 The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets.

10 Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout."

11 So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

13 Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets.

14 And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days.

15 But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times.

16 And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!"

17 "Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18 "And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

19 "But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

20 So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

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

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

23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.

24 But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."

27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

Modern Christians have a tendency to wish that the story of the taking of Jericho had been edited somewhat, it has been my experience that they would be much happier had two verses in particular simply been removed. Those verses are:

***17** "Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.*

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***21** And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.*

If we could just do that, we'd have a happy story wouldn't we? The walls come down, Rahab is saved and becomes part of Israel. Perhaps the people of Jericho are taken prisoner, *we don't know*. But certainly we don't want a story where every living thing, human and animal, in the city is put to death.

In fact, if we could just do that we wouldn't have to listen to the skeptics and atheists who attack the Christian faith and the bible using these verses, and others like the story of the destruction of the Amalekites which comes a little later on. I mean what would we lose if we could just cut out all the references to the *Herem* that is the curse that is applied to the nations of Canaan whereby they were devoted to destruction. We would just lose a lot of vicious "sub-Christian" killing wouldn't we? We could have a nice story instead about the people getting the land and nobody having to die as a result.

Maybe we could change the story so the people come to the land, and God showers money on them instead of Manna and they buy the promised land and the Canaanites give them the keys and move to Egypt. Or even better that the people show up on the borders of the promised land, and the Canaanites say "*you poor homeless people who have lived for so long in bondage and then wandered in the desert, this land of ours is big enough for both of us, come and live amongst us in peace and harmony*" and then they give them all a bottle of coke and they join hands and sway back and forth and break forth in song.

What could be wrong with that?

Well, I'll tell you what, lets do that, and while we are at it. Lets change the book of Revelation so that Jesus returns in the second coming, and instead of the destruction of Babylon, the last battle, and the

Devil and the beast and the false prophet being cast into the lake of fire to be followed by all who followed them, we have the devil welcoming Jesus and then the devil's followers and Christ's followers join hands and decide to live together. And we hear not "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." But ***"Go into her my people, and don't worry about all this sin stuff."***

Someone might get angry at this point and say, ***Well that's ridiculous Andy. In the account in Revelation we have God's righteous judgment being delivered in time and space upon all those who rebelled against God, engaged in terrible sins and abominations, and followed the leading of the Devil and listened to the false prophet. While those who had faith in the Lord and served and followed Him as His people are saved and delivered in that day. Of course God can't allow the Devil and those who serve him to stand or for him and his people to dwell in the midst of sin and abomination.*** But uh... the situation in the account in Joshua is uh.. different because there you have...ummmm... *God's righteous judgment being delivered in time and space upon people who rebelled against God, engaged in terrible sins and abominations, and followed the leading of the Devil and listened to the false prophets. While those who had faith in the Lord and served and followed Him as His people are saved and delivered in that day.*

Brothers and Sisters, what I want to suggest to you is that the account of the destruction of the Canaanites and their cities is merely a bringing forward in time of the final judgement that all those who remain opposed to God and His Christ will ultimately suffer and that far from being "harsh" that what happened was actually 1) A righteous Judgment 2) Something that followed patience and longsuffering and was necessary 3) The inevitable consequence of choosing judgment over mercy.

- 1) **What happened to Jericho here was in fact a righteous judgment:** Who were the Canaanites? What kind of people were they? Well the Lord calls them a people who practiced every abomination under the Sun. Not only did they fail to serve and glorify the Lord as their creator, they worshipped and served false Gods. The Lord warns his people again and again, you have to guard your hearts because you are entering into a land where the current inhabitants practice all sorts of abominations. He lists just a few of them off in Leviticus 18. I'm not going to read or exposit all of them, lets just go over a few:

NKJ Leviticus 18:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God.

3 'According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.

...

20 'Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her.

21 'And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

22 'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.

23 'Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion.

24 ' Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

25 'For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.

26 *'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you*

27 *'(for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled),*

28 *'lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.*

Passing through the fire, which the Lord particularly hates was...

So the judgment that was visited upon them that day was not on an innocent pastoral people, it was passed upon a group of people entirely given over to vile sins.

2) *Something that followed patience and longsuffering and was necessary*

God in his promises to Abram long before these events said the following:

Gen. 15:13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.

14 "And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

15 "Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.

16 "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

400 years the people were afflicted under bondage in Egypt, they were delivered when God judged that nation, but he says they will only enter into the promised land after hundreds of years have passed. Why can't they just go in now, in Abram's generation? Why did they have to labor in Egypt for so long, wander in the wilderness, wait, wait, wait... because *the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete*

God was waiting for them to repent, giving them time, he will not judge them until their sins, so to speak, reach the high water mark. God's mercy is so great he is willing to wait hundreds of years and even put the final deliverance of his people on Hold

I was necessary lest they be corrupted by their abominations.

Deut. 20:16 *"But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive,*

17 "but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you,

18 "lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

3) *The inevitable consequence of choosing judgment over mercy.*

Was everyone in Jericho killed? No Rahab and her entire family were delivered. Redeemed from the destruction that came. She was one of the Lord's people in the midst of a city devoted to destruction and she heeded the God's internal call to her heart that we see echoed in Rev. 18:4 ***"Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.***

5 "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

She embraced the mercy extended to her, she became part of the covenant people, in fact, she became one of the ancestors of Jesus! This Jerichite woman is listed in Matt. 1:5 as the mother of the famous Boaz who married another redeemed Canaanite, Ruth who was in turn the mother of Jesse the father of King David!

That is no coincidence, but that same mercy was open, available to all. Yet they did not embrace it.

Final Application:

The Israelites sounded the Horn and gave a shout and the wall came down and judgment came to Jericho.

1 Thess. 4:16 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Keleusma – a Cry of Command – a war Cry.

Zec. 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

1 Cor. 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Christian was born in the city of destruction. We were all born in Jericho, will we stay?

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Christ has appeared now for Salvation

He will appear again for judgment