

BY FAITH JERICHO FELL

Sunday Morning: April 28, 2002

Text: Hebrews 11:30 "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."

Last Sunday I titled the message "By Faith The Walls Of Jericho Fell." I decided to change the title of last Sunday's message to "A New Beginning At Gilgal," It was at Gilgal that the nation of Israel had another new beginning. When they left Egypt they were given victory, in type, over the world. When they left the wilderness they were given victory, in type, over the flesh. We never gain complete victory over either the world or the flesh, but we can overcome both by the power of Christ. There is the burying by baptism of those who have died to the world as there is a burying by baptism to the sins of the flesh, but there is no burying in baptism to our spiritual enemies in heavenly places.

This morning I want to focus our thoughts on the battle of Jericho that was fought on the basis of faith. Israel went through the Red Sea by faith and it was at Jericho that the next act of faith was recorded in Hebrews eleven.

THINGS WERE CHANGING

At this point in the history of the nation of Israel a lot of things had changed and were going to change in the days ahead.

CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

Joshua 1:1 "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,"

Moses had been taken by the Lord and was no longer in charge of the nation of Israel. Because of the death of Moses there was a need for new leadership. Instead of the Lord speaking to Moses, He was now speaking to Joshua.

CHANGE OF THE HIGH PRIEST

Numbers 20:29 "And when all the congregation saw that **Aaron was dead**, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel."

Not only was Moses taken in death so was Aaron taken in death.

NEW PRIESTHOOD

Numbers 20:25-26 "Take **Aaron** and **Eleazar** his son, and bring them up unto **mount Hor**:
26. And **strip** Aaron of his **garments**, and **put them upon Eleazar** his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there."

Here we find Aaron being stripped of his high priestly garments and those garments being placed upon Eleazar, his son. A similar event happened during the trial of Jesus. Jesus was in the presence of Caiaphas, the high priest, when he confessed to being the Christ, the Son of God. When Caiaphas heard that Jesus was the Christ he rent his clothes, Matthew 26:65 "Then the high priest rent his clothes, . ." The high priest was not to rend his clothes as we see in Leviticus 10:6 "And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar . . neither rend your clothes; lest ye die," Eleazar became the new high priest in Mount Hor, which is a type of Christ becoming our heavenly high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Before the nation of Israel entered into the land flowing with milk and honey they were given a new high priest, Eleazar.

NEW LEADER

Joshua 1:10-11 "Then Joshua **commanded** the officers of the people, saying, 11. Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to **go in to possess the land**, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it."

We see that Joshua was not recommending nor taking a vote, but was commanding. He was taking his position as the leader because God had ordained him to that position. Joshua was one of the two spies that believed that Israel could conquer the land. Moses knew that God had chosen Joshua to lead the children of Israel into the land so Moses placed his hand of approval upon him. I think it is so important for those who are in leadership to identify with those who are coming up through the ranks to become tomorrow's leaders.

Notice that Joshua commanded the officers who in turn commanded the people. Joshua did use others to help him in leading the nation of Israel.

LEADERSHIP METHOD

Joshua 3:6 "And **Joshua spake unto the priests**, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people."

It was Joshua that led the people and not a pillar of fire or a pillar of cloud. Nehemiah 9:12 "Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go." The Lord communed with Moses as well as with Joshua. The difference is that in the wilderness the Lord used visual aids to help the children of Israel know which way to go and when to stop. Numbers 9:20-21 "And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed. 21. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed."

NOT MENTIONED

Exodus 13:21 "And the LORD went before them by day in a **pillar of a cloud**, to lead them the way; and by night in a **pillar of fire**, to give them light; to go by day and night:"

This means of leading the nation of Israel is not mentioned in Joshua. They stopped walking by sight and started walking by faith. 2 Corinthians 5:7 "(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)"

NEW COMMITMENT

Joshua 1:17-18 "According **as we hearkened** unto **Moses** in all things, **so will we hearken** unto **thee**: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. 18. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and **will not hearken** unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be **put to death**: only be strong and of a good courage."

Here we have a firm commitment made by the leaders of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh to Joshua. We will hearken unto you as we did unto Moses and we trust you are led by the Lord. That is the kind of commitment that we should have to the leadership in our own assembly. That is why it is so important to pray for those that have authority over us. Leadership in the church today is not by means of a pillar of a cloud or fire, but through prayer and trusting the Lord to guide the leaders of the congregation.

They were saying to Joshua that they knew that it was not going to be easy to take Moses' place to lead these people. They also encouraged Joshua to be strong and of a good courage

and those who oppose you we will remove. We are not going to tolerate those who rebel against your leadership, we will put them to death.

SANCTIFY YOURSELVES

Joshua 3:5 "And Joshua said unto the people, **Sanctify yourselves:** for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."

The word *sanctify* means to separate yourselves unto the Lord and that meant to depart from that which is evil. The children of Israel were getting ready to enter into the land flowing with milk and honey which was holy ground. Joshua 5:15 ". . . Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy."

SEPARATION

Genesis 35:2 "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, **Put away the strange gods** that are among you, and be **clean**, and **change your garments:**"

Jacob encouraged his household to put away the strange gods because they were moving to Bethel, the house of God. They needed to become clean and change their garments. We are to put off the old man and put on the new. Revelation 3:18 "I counsel thee to buy of me. . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. . ."

The nation of Israel had been set apart from Egypt, a type of the world, and now they were being set apart, so to speak, from the lust of the flesh. This separation from the world and the flesh does not mean that these can't raise their ugly heads again in our lives. In the conquest of Canaan the lust of the flesh caused them grief at Ai when Akin took the silver, gold, and raiment he saw in Jericho.

NO TURNING BACK

Joshua 4:18 "And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the **waters of Jordan returned** unto their place, and **flowed over all his banks**, as they did before."

When Israel passed through the Red Sea the Lord brought the waters together again to cut off Israel from going back to Egypt. When the Lord brought again the flood waters of the Jordan River He was telling the nation of Israel that there was no turning back. It seems that the Lord was isolating them to the task of gaining their inheritance through warfare.

We are admonished by Paul in Philippians 3:13-14 "Brethren, . . . this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We need to receive the exhortation of 1 Peter 1:14 "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:"

THE LAND IS HOLY GROUND

Joshua 5:15 "And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; **for the place whereon thou standest is holy**. . . ."

I have already mentioned that the land of Canaan was holy ground. We need to develop a genuine respect for the heavenly inheritance that God has set before us. The presence of the Lord was in the land of Canaan. When Moses was before the burning bush he was in the presence of the Lord. Exodus 3:5 "And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

NEW DIET

Joshua 5:12 "And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but **they did eat of the fruit of the land** of Canaan that year."

I mentioned this in last Sunday's message. There was to be a change of diet. Israel had been eating manna for 40 years and now they were to eat of the fruit of the land. The change in diet is a picture of being weaned from the milk of the Word to the meat of the Word. It is through the meat of the Word that we are able to discern between good and evil. The fruit of the land is the butter, churned out of the milk, and honey of enlightenment. 1 Samuel 14:29 ". . mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey."

BY FAITH

2 Corinthians 5:7 "(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)"

While they were living in the wilderness they were living by sight and now they will be living by faith. The pillars of fire and cloud along with the manna were taken away and they would have to trust the leadership of the Lord through their leader, Joshua.

NEW BEGINNING

Joshua 4:19 "And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the **first month**, and encamped in Gilgal (less than two miles from Jericho), in the east border of Jericho."

When Israel entered into Canaan they were less than two miles from Jericho, about 1 and a half miles.

WEST SIDE OF JORDAN

Joshua 5:7 "And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, **them Joshua circumcised**: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way."

The last time that Israel observed the passover was in the first month of the second year after they came out of Egypt. Numbers 9:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt." From that time until the time that they entered into the land of Canaan Israel did not observe the passover. To partake of the passover the men had to be circumcised. While they were in the wilderness they did not submit to the ordinance of circumcision.

If I had been calling the shots, I would have circumcised all the males on the east side of the Jordan River so that they would have the river between them and their enemies in Jericho. It would be unthinkable to move that close to the enemy and then be circumcised. The Lord had given them confidence in the presence and power of the Lord. In Genesis 34 we see what happens to a man after he is circumcised.

SHECHEM WAS VULNERABLE

Genesis 34:24-25 "And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

25. And it came to pass on the **third** day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males."

We can see plainly that the men of Shechem were so sore that they could not defend themselves against Simeon and Levi. After three days the men of Jericho could have defeated the nation of Israel without losing one man. God protected Israel from their enemies.

PROTECTED

Joshua 5:1 ". . . when all the kings of the **Amorites**, . . heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan . . their **heart melted, neither was there spirit** in them any more. ."

How did the Lord protect the nation of Israel? The Lord passed the word among the all kings of the Amorites that He had dried up the Jordan River. Knowledge of this even melted the hearts and spirits of the men in Jericho. These feelings of fear and despair in the city of Jericho kept their army locked inside the walls. This gave the men of Israel time to heal.

The events of the passover moved rapidly. They crossed the Jordan on the tenth day and they were to kill the passover on the fourteenth day of the month. It would seem that on the fourteenth day of the month the men would still be sore.

PASSOVER RENEWED

Joshua 5:10 "And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and **kept the passover** on the **fourteenth day** of the month at even in the plains of Jericho."

The keeping of the passover also included observing the feast of unleavened bread. This feast was to be observed for seven days. That meant that the men would have about fifteen days to heal.

BLOOD APPLIED WHERE THEY WALKED

Exodus 12:7 "And they shall **take of the blood**, and **strike it** on the **two side posts** and on the **upper door post** of the houses, wherein they shall eat it."

A significant part of observing the passover was the sprinkling of the blood. The blood was to be applied to the sides and upper door posts of the house where they ate the passover. The door of the house is where they walked with the Lord. 1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The blood would keep them clean and sanctified unto the Lord.

SPY OUT THE LAND AND JERICHO

Joshua 2:1 "And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men **to spy secretly**, saying, Go view the **land**, even **Jericho**. And they went, . . ."

It was 40 years ago that they had spied out the land and they already knew that it was a good because they had tasted of the fruit of the land. Not only were they to view the land but also Jericho. Joshua needed intelligence that the spies would collect about their enemies. We also need to know the weapons and devices of our enemy as well so that we can know what to expect in the battle.

OLD BATTLE STRATEGY

Exodus 17:9 "And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and **go out, fight** with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand."

Here we have Joshua with chosen men of Israel fighting Amalek. God gave Joshua victory over Amalek while Moses lifted his rod above his head with the help of Aaron and Hur. Exodus 17:12 "But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun."

REHEARSE THIS TO JOSHUA

Exodus 17:14 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua:"

This battle that was fought against Amalek was to be rehearsed in the ears of Joshua so that he would not forget it. Joshua learned the battle was won or lost on the mountain where Moses, Aaron and Hur were holding up the rod of Moses. Joshua was not to forget that the people of Amalek were to be utterly destroyed. I believe that Joshua remembered how he went out to fight and how the campaign was conducted. The war against Amalek was old battle strategy.

NEW BATTLE STRATEGY

Joshua 6:3-4 "And ye shall **compass the city**, all ye men of war, and go round about the city **once**. Thus shalt thou do **six days**. 4. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the **seventh day** ye shall compass the city **seven times**, and the priests shall **blow** with the **trumpets**."

Before Joshua received the battle strategy to defeat Jericho, I can imagine Joshua going over in his mind how he fought Amalek. We know that this battle with Amalek had been rehearsed in the ears of Joshua. The next thing we find out that the battle strategy for Jericho would not be the same. The battle strategy of Jericho would be very unconventional.

Remember Joshua had the battle with Amalek rehearsed in his ears and now he must walk around Jericho once a day for six days and then seven times on the seventh day. Joshua did not make any suggestions about the battle strategy. He just listened so that he would know what to do and when to do it.

When we apply this strategy in the heavenly warfare we come to the conclusion that this war is not a conventional war with conventional weapons according to 2 Corinthians 10:4 "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)" Our battle is for our thoughts. If Satan can control our thoughts he can control our lives. 2 Corinthians 10:5 "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" We can begin to imagine things that go way beyond the Word of God. It is important not only to know Satan's devices; we need to know the Word of God. The weapons of our warfare are found in the Word of God. It is the knowledge of God that protects us from our imaginations and ultimate defeat by the enemy.

TAKE NO PRISONERS

Joshua 6:20-21 "So the people shouted when *the priests* blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that **the wall fell down flat**, so that 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, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword."

We need to be reminded that these events in the lives of the nation of Israel are types or pictures for us to learn what will defeat us in battle. 1 Corinthians 10:6 "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." 1 Corinthians 10:11 "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

We need to know that when we are fighting our warfare according to God's plan our enemies are defenseless. The walls of Jericho were their defenses and they fell. When the wall came down every man went straight in and they took the city.

We read in verse seven that no prisoners were to be taken. Taking prisoners is dangerous. When Israel allowed the enemy to live in their camp, the enemy influenced Israel and not the other way around. There were exceptions, of course, like Rahab. Balaam taught Balak how to turn God against the nation of Israel. The way to bring Israel down was to encourage them to have fellowship with them and then to intermarry. When Israel began to become one with the Moabites Israel embraced their gods and culture. This brought the judgment of God upon them.

Notice that ox, sheep, and other animals were not to be spared. Checking the animals for sacrifice would be a distraction from the goal of defeating the enemy. Saul lost his crown saving the best animals for sacrifice during the war with the Amalekites. Samuel rebuked Saul for this in 1 Samuel 15:19 "Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?" While checking out the animals for sacrifice, some of the enemy might escape. Samuel told Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22 ". . . Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." 1 Samuel 15:23 "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." All but one in Israel obeyed and Akin along with his family paid the ultimate price, they perished.

A GOOD SOLDIER

2 Timothy 2:1, 3-4 "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 3. Thou therefore endure hardness, as **a good soldier** of Jesus Christ. 4. No man that **warreth entangleth** himself with the affairs of this life; **that he may please** him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

As the men of war were prepared to move straight into the city of Jericho and defeat them, we need to be prepared soldiers of Jesus Christ. To be prepared soldiers we need to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. When I think of grace, I am reminded of 2 Corinthians 12:9 "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Thinking about grace I thought of the number five which some have associated with grace. When Israel entered into the land by going through the Jordan River it was on the tenth day. The number ten is made up of two prime numbers two and five. Two times five equals ten. When Israel entered into the land flowing with milk and honey they needed a double portion of God's grace to defeat the enemy.

By walking around the city they were fighting the enemy God's way and that takes grace. Joshua had heard over and over the way God allowed him to defeat Amalek. The strategy of the battle at Jericho was different. Joshua obeyed without question and the enemy was defeated.

As good soldiers we need to be able to endure when the times are difficult. As a good soldier of Christ we must be free from the cares and affairs of this life. If we are entangled we become vulnerable and open for attack.

I know that you have heard this illustration before, but it does provide a graphic illustration of what it means to be entangled. When people go fishing they like to have the bait in the water. If you have bait in the water you are going to catch fish if they are biting. Every now and then when you cast your bait into the water the line will tangle. While you are untying the line, how

much fishing are you doing? If you are entangled in the affairs of this life how are you able to fight a good fight and finish the course? Being able to fight a good fight and finish our course and keep the faith will be pleasing Him who has chosen us to be soldiers.

THOSE OVER YOU IN THE LORD

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 "And we beseech you, brethren, to **know them** which **labour** among you, and are **over** you in the Lord, and **admonish** you; 13. And to **esteem** them very **highly** in **love** for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."

When we think of the warfare we know that there is a chain of command. Joshua was the general and he had those that were under him. God put Joshua **over** the nation of Israel. Did the children of Israel know Joshua? Yes. Did they know that Joshua was faithful? Yes. They knew that Joshua followed the Lord fully at Kadeshbarnea.

God has done the same thing in the local body of believers. You need to know your pastor. The pastor is to admonish you and encourage you and not to "lord" over you. A pastor is not to tell God's people what to do but to encourage them to do the right thing.

Those who do not esteem the leadership very highly in love will cause dissention. When there is dissention there will not be peace. When there is dissention the house is divided and it will fall and the sheep will be scattered.

OBEY THEM IN THE LORD

Hebrews 13:17 "**Obey them that have the rule over you**, and **submit** yourselves: for **they watch** for your **souls**, as they that **must give account**, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is **unprofitable** for you."

The focus of my message of encouragement has to do with the salvation of your souls. The salvation of your soul or life is to hear well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord. The salvation of our souls is received at the end of a life of faith. I am not only accountable to the flock, I am accountable to God for the ministry I have in this place. It is difficult for a pastor to serve the flock when he is grieved and the joy of the Lord has departed. When those condition exist, it is unprofitable for everyone.

When Joshua took the reins of leadership, Moses was there to affirm him. Joshua's position was affirmed when God opened the Jordan River for Israel to go through.

The only way that I know that God can show that He has His hand on me is through the ministry of the Word. You can ask the questions, "Am I being fed from the Word of God and am I being encourage to seek first the kingdom of God or not?" If the messages are hollow and the emphasis of the kingdom of the heavens is missing, then there needs to be a change of command or a renewal on my part to get back to the word of the kingdom.

I encourage myself through self examination. I ask myself, "Is God showing me fresh things from His Word, am I growing in grace and knowledge of Him, and am I being faithful to Him and His word?" I want to be the messenger of Proverbs 25:13 "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters."

The Apostles were given to prayer and the ministry of the word. Acts 6:4 "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." That is all that I have for you is prayer and the ministry of the Word. I pray for you and your family and friends as I am aware of the need. I study for you that I might have something for you on Sunday morning. I may not do a very good job in delivering the message from time to time, but the Lord lets that happen so that I

will not be too confident in my ability as an orator. There are times when I feel like I have failed. I hear a thank you, and then I know that God is still in charge of using the imperfect to perfect His own.

If you can not esteem the leadership in a local church you need to find a church where you can respect the leadership enough to trust and follow. Israel trusted Joshua and followed his leadership and the Lord gave them rest from their enemies. Joshua 21:44-45 "And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; **all came to pass.**" The Word of the Lord has been tried and it can be trusted!