**Joshua 6: The Conquest and Fall of Jericho**

***“And to Joshua the LORD said: I have delivered Jericho, its king, and its warriors into your power.”***

* The opening scripture stresses that the Israelites are not going to achieve their objectives by force. The conquest is a gift from God.
* The instructions on how Israel is to take the city have nothing to do with military strategy. God is the central player.
* God instructs the people that they are to march around the city. The ark of the covenant is to be carried by the Levite priests. There are to be seven priests who will bear seven horns before the ark. The number seven symbolizes the sabbath.
* Armed men are to go before the seven priests with the trumpets. The people were to march around the city once a day for six days.
* On the first six days the priests were to blow the trumpets before the ark of the covenant. The people were to remain silent.
* On the seventh day the people and the arc of the covenant were to encircle Jericho seven times. After encircling the city seven times the people were to shout.

Joshua 6:12-27; The Fall of Jericho

* On the following day, the Israelites marched once around the city once with the seven Levitical priests blowing the trumpets continuously before the ark.
* The Israelites did this for six days. On the seventh day the people marched around Jericho seven times, the Levitical priests made a long blast with the ram horns at which point, Joshua instructed the people to shout for the Lord had given them the city.
* The emphasis of the conquest and fall of Jericho is placed on the *arc of the covenant*, the *Levites* and on the *sabbath*. ***God is revealing to the Israelites that their power is in their priesthood.***

***“The city and everything in it are under the ban. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are in the house with her are to live because she hid the messengers we sent. But be careful not to covet or take anything that is under the ban; otherwise you will bring upon the camp of Israel this ban and the misery of it.”***

* Before the people entered the city, Joshua advised them that everything in the city had been put under *“the ban”.*
* Everything in the city was to be destroyed except for Rahab and her family.
* The purpose of “the ban” was for Israel to avoid being contaminated with the idolatry of the Canaanites.
* To the Christian reader *“the ban”* seem barbaric. *“The ban”* needs to be seen in the context of divine pedagogy.
* Divine pedagogy is God’s teaching method. God puts restrictions on things that are wrong or evil.
* In placing restrictions on evil practices, the people in time will realize that these evil practices are wrong and will prohibit them.
* With *“the ban”* there would be no incentive to go to war if all booty must be destroyed. There would be not financial gain in war and there would be no incentive to wage an ungodly war.
* Divine pedagogy is a process in which the people would gradually come to see immoral or evil practices as wrong.
* St. John of the Cross comments that the order for total destruction of everything in the city was given so that we may understand that to enter into union with the divine that everything that lives in the soul must die.
* Joshua instructs the two men who spied out the land to bring Rahab and her family out of the city prior to burning the city with fire.
* Rahab was made a member of Israel. In Matthew, Rahab is one of the women who figure in the genealogy of Jesus.
* The early church fathers saw Rahab as a foreshadowing of the fact that Gentiles who accept the Christian faith win salvation.

***“On that occasion Joshua imposed the oath: ‘Cursed before the LORD be the man who attempts to rebuild this city, Jericho.’ “***

* The curse laid by Joshua refers to the Canaanite custom of offering human sacrifice in connection with building cities.
* In 1 Kings 16:34, Hiel of Bethel rebuilds Jericho. In rebuilding Jericho, Hiel laid the foundation on Abiram, his first-born son. He set its gates of Segub, his youngest son.

The Navarre Bible; Joshua – Kings; Joshua; Scepter Publishers; New York; 1986

David Guzik, “The Enduring Word Bible Commentary”, Santa Barbara, Ca; https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/joshua-6/

William J. Murphy