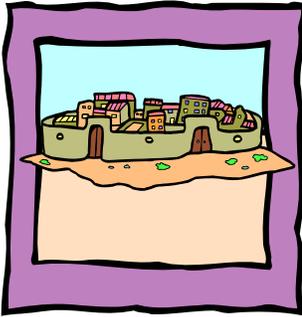




God Gives Jericho to His People

Joshua 5 - 6



A new generation of Israelites began their journey into the long-awaited Promised Land. God told them to be strong and brave because He would be with them. God showed Himself strong and mighty as He made the way for His people.

Day #1: Passover Feast

Do you remember when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt? The Egyptian Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go free, even though God gave him many opportunities (Exodus 7-10). God sent mighty plagues, or disasters, to Egypt. Can you name any of the 10 plagues that God sent on Egypt? (Nile turned to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, animals died, boils or sores, storm, locusts, darkness, first-born son died.) The last plague was by far the worst. This plague caused the oldest son in each home to die.

The **Passover** was God's PROVISION for the Israelites to be safe from the tenth plague. God instructed the Israelites to kill a perfect, male lamb or goat and place its blood on the doorframe of each of their homes. God "PASSED OVER" every home with blood on the doorframe (Exodus 12:3, 5-7, 12-13). All who listened to God and obeyed were safe. Finally, because of this plague, Pharaoh let the Israelites go. That night, God told the Israelites to celebrate a feast to remember the Passover once they entered the Promised Land. They also held this feast one year after they left Egypt (Deuteronomy 16:6).

The Lord will give you the land, just as He promised. When you enter it, keep this holy day. Your children will ask you, "What does this holy day mean to you?" Tell them, "It's the Passover sacrifice in honor of the Lord. He passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt. He spared our homes when He struck the Egyptians down." - Exodus 12:25-27

While they were in the desert, God sent special, sweet, bread-like flakes, called manna, for the Israelites to eat. Remember, none of the Israelites who came out of Egypt were alive to enter the Promised Land, except for Joshua and Caleb. This new generation of Israelites had been born out in the desert. They had never known a day without manna (Exodus 16:35).

After Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River, they celebrated the Passover Feast. Joshua had LISTENED to the command God had given forty years before. This feast was a time to remember God's provision. The day after they ate the Passover feast, the people ate fruits and vegetables from the land of Canaan. They also ate bread without yeast in it. Then something amazing happened - the manna stopped coming (Joshua 5:12). Manna has never fallen from the sky since.

No one in this generation was alive to see the plagues God sent on Egypt, so it was very important for them to celebrate the Passover Feast. This feast helped them REMEMBER how God had provided safety for their parents and grandparents. Remembering God's miraculous

Day #1 continued:

provision would help them to be brave in the days ahead. God always wants us to REMEMBER His power and faithfulness!



Ask your parents and grandparents to share their stories of the good things God has done in their lives. It would be wonderful to write these things down in a journal to share with your own children one day!

Day #2: Commander

God had promised to give the whole land of Canaan to the Israelites. However, this land was already filled with people.



The Lord your God will bring you into the land. You are going to enter it and take it as your own. He'll drive many nations out to make room for you. He'll drive out the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Those seven nations are larger and stronger than you are. The Lord your God will hand them over to you. You will win the battle over them. You must completely destroy them. - Deuteronomy 7:1-2a

God promised that He would win the battles for His people. God warned the Israelites not to have ANYTHING to do with the people who lived there (Deuteronomy 7:2-4), because they worshipped false gods. God warned the Israelites to remain far from them!

The first city the Israelites had to battle was Jericho. Back in these days, many cities had a wall going around it to keep out enemies. These were huge walls made of stone or brick. They were high so that no enemy could climb up. They were so thick that often, homes were actually built into the wall. The city of Jericho had one of these walls around it. All the kings of the land had heard how God brought the Israelites across the Jordan River. They were weak with fear (Joshua 5:1). Because the king of Jericho was so scared about the Israelites, the gates of Jericho were shut tight and guarded closer than ever. Joshua stood near the city of Jericho. No doubt, he was looking at the city, thinking about how they could attack it. Suddenly, Joshua looked up and saw a man in front of him. The man held out a sword in his hand, and he was ready for battle.

Joshua went up to him. He asked, "Are you on our side? Or are you on the side of our enemies?"

"I am not on either side," he replied. "I have come as the commander of the Lord's army." Then Joshua fell with his face to the ground. He asked the man, "What message does my Lord have for me?" - Joshua 5:13b-14

Surely, Joshua was not expecting this man to be a messenger from God. It is interesting that the commander said he was not on either side. He was there to do God's work. Tomorrow we will see the unusual plan this messenger came to reveal.



Joshua fell with his face to the ground. [Other people in the Bible who came close to God and were filled with fear: Moses hid his face (Exodus 3:6) Zechariah was gripped with fear (Luke 1:12) Mary was greatly troubled (Luke 1:26) the shepherds were terrified (Luke 2:9) Peter fell to his knees at Jesus' feet (Luke 5:8)] Discuss why people are afraid when they come near to God or His messengers. (No one can come close to the presence of God without realizing how holy God is and being filled with fear because of how sinful we are!) This shows us how holy, set apart and pure, God is.

Day #3: God's Plan

Build a wall out of any building blocks. Now, think of the best way to knock it down. Would you hit it, or throw something at it? Could you possibly make it fall by yelling at it? Try it! Without touching it, yell at your wall and see what happens. Of course this will not work - not unless God's power was behind it. Today we will see God's unique plan to bring down the walls of Jericho. Joshua was face down in front of God's messenger:

 *The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals. The place you are standing on is holy ground." So Joshua took them off. - Joshua 5:15*

We have heard these words before. When God appeared to **Moses** from the burning bush, God told Moses that he was standing on holy ground (Exodus 3:5). At the burning bush, Moses received orders from God to confront Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Here, we see Joshua is about to receive orders to confront the armies of Canaan and lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.

The commander was had some great news and some unusual instructions for Joshua.

Then the Lord spoke to Joshua. He said, "I have handed Jericho over to you. I have also handed its king and its fighting men over to you."

"March around the city once with all of your fighting men. In fact, do it for six days. Have seven priests get trumpets that are made out of rams' horns. They must carry them in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times. Have the priests blow the trumpets as you march. You will hear them blow a long blast on the trumpets. When you do, have all of the men give a loud shout. The wall of the city will fall down. Then the whole army will go up to the city. Every man will go straight in." - Joshua 6:2-5

Wow. That is a very strange way to take over a city! This kind of plan is not found in any military handbook anywhere. A plan like this - and the POWER to make it work - could only come from God. The Bible says that God's ideas are MUCH better than our ideas (Isaiah 55:9)! Surely, marching around the city was not one of the options Joshua was thinking of earlier. But when God sent His message, Joshua LISTENED! Right away, Joshua sent the priests to get the Ark of the Covenant. He told seven of them to carry trumpets in front of the Ark. He also ordered his military men to march along with them. Then Joshua gave the order to, "Move out!"

 Even though God's plan probably did not make sense to Joshua, Joshua obeyed right away. We must also obey God's plan. What are some things that God's word instructs us to do that do not seem to make sense to us at times? (Being kind to those who are not kind to us, putting other people first, memorizing Scripture) Even though many of these things do not come naturally to us, it is ALWAYS right to do things God's way.

Day #4: Walls Crumble Down

Joshua had the priests and the fighting men do just as God's messenger had instructed.

 *But Joshua had given an order to the fighting men. He had said, "Don't give a war cry. Don't raise your voices. Don't say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" - Joshua 6:8-10*

The men carried the Ark around the city once, then returned to camp and spent the night. They did this the next day, and the next, for six days total. On the seventh day, the men arose at sunrise and marched around the city seven times. The seventh time around, the priests blew a long blast on their trumpets. Joshua told the men that everything in

Day #4 continued:

the city would be devoted to God. Joshua warned all the people to stay away from the gold, silver, and valuable things. Those things would go into God's treasury. Joshua warned them that if anyone went near these things, they would be destroyed, and bring big trouble to all of the Israelites.

On the seventh time around, the priests blew a long blast on the trumpets. Then Joshua gave a command to the men. He said, "Shout! The Lord has given you the city!" - Joshua 6:16

The huge walls began to fall! Imagine the sound of the massive stones splitting. People screamed as the giant boulders crashed to the ground. Great clouds of dust filled the air, as the magnificent wall lay in ruins. In a walled city such as Jericho, many of the soldiers would have stood guard on top of the great wall. When the walls crumbled, it would have killed those soldiers, and many more that were just inside the walls. This would have destroyed a great portion of Jericho's army. The Israelite fighting men charged straight in and destroyed every living thing as they were commanded. Only Rahab and the people in her home were spared.

 Why do you think God had this plan for the wall just to come tumbling down? With this plan, it was CLEAR that God won the battle. God showed the Israelites that He was in control, and He was mighty to save them. The Israelites could never take credit for this victory. And God's amazing power became known to other nations (Joshua 9:9).

Day #5: Rahab

Last week, we read that Joshua had sent two spies ahead to check out Jericho. A woman in Jericho named Rahab helped them because they were God's people. The two spies promised not to harm her or her family when the Israelites raided Jericho. After the walls came down, Joshua told the spies to go get Rahab and everyone who was in her home.

 *So the young men who had checked out the land went into Rahab's house. They brought her out along with her parents and brothers. They brought out everyone else who was there with her. They put them in a place that was outside the camp of Israel. - Joshua 6:23*

Rahab lived among the Israelites from then on (Joshua 6:25).

Then they (the Israelites) burned the whole city and everything that was in it. But they added the silver and gold to the treasures that were kept in the Lord's house. They also put there the articles that were made out of bronze and iron. - Joshua 6:24

Joshua proclaimed a curse on anyone who would ever try to rebuild the city of Jericho. Look at the last verse in Joshua 6:

So the Lord was with Joshua. And Joshua became famous everywhere in the land. - Joshua 6:27

God kept His promise to be with Joshua (Joshua 1:5)! God had also promised to make Joshua famous (Joshua 3:7). We even study Joshua's name today - thousands of years later. Very few people are famous for **thousands** of years! God ALWAYS keeps His promises!

 The spies came in the name of the Lord. Rahab respected them because of God's name. These two men had never even met this woman before, yet she knew of their God. They made a promise to her and they kept it. Their actions honored God.

When people know that you are a Christian, you carry the name of Christ. People will watch your behavior. Your behavior will either honor God, or dishonor God. Always remember that the way you treat others may draw them to God, or push them away from God.