

August 7

Scriptures: Read Joshua 5 & 6

Key Verse: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand...” (6:2)

Overview

In preparation for war, there were yet two things to accomplish: circumcision and the observance of the Passover. During the wilderness wanderings, Israel was in a time of judgment, and since circumcision was a sign of the covenant, which they had broken, it seems they were forbidden to perform this rite upon their sons. Now that they were back in a covenant, a reminder that they were to remain pure, holy, and consecrated to Him and that they were the people of the true God of Israel. Circumcision was also a prerequisite for both the holy war and the Passover (Ex.12:48).

When all the men were circumcised, the Lord pronounced that now the reproach of Egypt had been rolled away. This signified their final freedom from the shame and ridicule of enslavement and from the disgrace brought upon them for their sins of idolatry and lustfulness. Now they were in covenant with God and free at last in the Promised Land.

In the providence of God, Israel crossed over just in time to choose the Passover lamb on the first month (4:19) and celebrate the Feast on the fourteenth day. This was to remind them that they owed their national existence to God. Finally, after forty years of divine discipline Israel was spiritually prepared to celebrate the Lord's Passover. They were now eating food from the Promised Land, so the day after the feast, the manna, which had sustained them for forty years miraculously stopped (5:12), just as suddenly as it had begun.

There are times when each of us must get alone with God, especially when making an important decision. This is what Joshua was doing: praying and possibly trying to figure out a strategic way to conquer the strongly fortified city of Jericho. God already had a plan and sent the Captain of His host to reveal it and to encourage Joshua. This must have been none other than our Lord Jesus Christ in a reincarnate form, for Joshua immediately fell down and worshipped Him. He must have known that the Captain was not only from God, but God Himself. Just as Moses in the presence the Lord was to remove his shoes (Ex.3:5), so it was with Joshua (5:15). By His drawn sword would bring judgment upon the wicked inhabitants whose iniquity was now full (Gen.15:16; Deut.9:5). He was the Commander-in-chief and Joshua was to follow His orders.

If Joshua had planned the attack, it would have been very different, probably using military strategy, but it was clearly evident to all that God had planned it, because of the unusual method. It was God of Israel who supernaturally caused the high, double-thick walls to collapse. God gave victory to His people, but first they had to be obedient to Him even though some may have thought it foolishness. God's work, done in His way, will always be blessed by Him and succeed.

Without delay, Joshua informed the priests and soldiers of their God-given plan of action. They did just as he commanded. The march around the city was not just a military march but also a religious one, as was evident from the prominent position given to the Ark of the Covenant (indication God's presence among Israel and that it was His battle). An important role was played

by the seven priests, each having a ram's horn to be used for signaling the presence of the Lord and His awesome display of power.

When the walls fell down (Heb.11:30), God not only brought judgment and defeat upon the wicked people but also upon their gods, especially the moon god, after whom the city had been named.. As Joshua had previously instructed the soldiers, the whole city was under the ban, accursed, and doomed to total destruction. Only Rahab and her household experienced the miraculous salvation of the Lord. Although her home was built on the crumbled wall, none within it came to any harm.

Under the waning of becoming accursed themselves, Israel was strictly commanded not to take any spoil, with exception of certain precious metals to be consecrated for the sanctuary (6:17-19). Joshua gave yet another warning with a curse upon the one who would try to rebuild walls of fortification around Jericho (6:26, fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34) for it was to be a sign forever of God's judgment on the wicked. The fear of the Lord must have spread throughout the whole region just as did Joshua's fame (6:27).

Prayer

Lord, grant us the grace of obedience to do as You command. We know that when we do this in faith, Your great power backs up Your Word and we are established in Your Promised Land as more than conquerors over every enemy.