

Hymns: 1 A Mighty Fortress is Our God 8 Great Is Thy Faithfulness 26 Trust and Obey
Scripture: Psalm 46; 18:1-19, 49; 91

Big Idea: God is greater than any wall we face.

We've been hearing a lot about walls lately -- and one in particular In fact, a key campaign promise that won the election for President Trump was that if he's elected, he would build a wall. "We're going to build a wall," he said "and Mexico will pay for it."

The purpose of that wall is to secure our southern border. A portion of the 1954-mile barrier was built in response to laws first passed in 1994 and a subsequent law passed in 2006. But construction was halted when the barrier was about one-third complete as congress withheld further funding. The cost to complete the wall could be as high as \$22 billion. Some project it will take approximately three years to complete while others, including President Trump, believe it will be completed much sooner.

Today's study will take us to **action-packed** events associated with a famous ancient wall – one that stood during the time of Joshua.

Review

First though, let's stop and get our bearings. Before the holiday messages, we were proceeding on our adventure to **better** understand the Bible by analyzing each *dispensation* or *economy*. We had progressed through the dispensations of:

1. Innocence - Adam
2. Conscience - Noah
3. Human Government - Nimrod
4. Promise - Abraham

We left off before the holidays in the fifth dispensation called *law*. We learned that God gave the law to Moses and that it was **good**. Almost immediately thereafter, the Israelites worshiped the golden calf – breaking that law. Next, we dropped back to pick up the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and considered biblical morality as set forth in the law as it relates to the distinctions between male and female.

As the Israelites followed God's leading in the wilderness, He brought them to Canaan. Lacking faith, they decided to spy out the land. The spies came back with a glowing report of a land "flowing with milk and honey" but also with great **fear** of the Canaanites – speaking of "giants" in the land.

All except Joshua and Caleb, **feared** confronting the Canaanites and **ignored** the power of God. God turned them back **to** 40 years of wandering until all of the **faithless** people died in the wilderness. Even Moses was not allowed to lead them in.

Instead, Joshua took charge. Does anyone know the meaning of the name *Joshua*? That's right it means *savior*. And what's the Greek word for *Joshua*? Yes, it's *Jesus*.

We'll see that the book of Joshua is about *faith* and *courage*. In fact, the word *courage* is a key word in Joshua chapter 1.

[Josh.1](#)

[1] *Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD*

Note that Moses was **not** permitted to lead Israel into the Promised Land. Moses had disobeyed the Lord by striking the rock rather than speaking to it. In a spiritual sense this also signifies that the law has no power to save us. Moses (the symbol of the law) could not enter the Promised Land. By the way, the meaning of *Moses* is “saved from the water” – not *savior* but one *saved*. Being a savior was reserved for Joshua.

*it came to pass, that **the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,***

Here comes Joshua's marching orders from the Lord.

[2] *Moses my servant **is dead**;
now therefore **arise**,
go over this Jordan,
thou, and all this people,
unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.*

[3] *Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon,
that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.*

[4] *From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun [the Mediterranean], **shall be your coast.***

Here we have another definition of the Mediterranean coast of Israel.

[5] *There shall not [be] any man [] able to stand before thee all the days of thy life:
as **I** was with Moses,
so I will be with thee:
I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

What a promise! Did the Lord honor His promise to Joshua?
Yes, He did. He's a promise-keeping God.

[6] ***Be strong and of a good courage**: for unto this people shalt thou divide **for** an inheritance the land, **which I swear unto their fathers** to give them.*

Next comes conditions for blessing from the Lord.

[7] *Only **be thou strong and very courageous**,
that thou mayest **observe to do** according to **all the law**,
which Moses my servant commanded thee:
turn not from it to the right hand or to the left,
that [you may] **prosper** [wherever you go].*

*[8] This **book of the law** shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest **observe to do** according to **all that is written** therein: **for then** thou shalt **make thy way prosperous**, and **then** thou shalt have good success.*

God is drawing on His expanded conditional promise made in Deuteronomy 28 (the blessings and cursings chapter) stating **if** Israel obeys, God will bless them, but **if** they disobey He will curse them.

*[9] Have [I] not [] commanded thee? **Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee withersoever thou goest.***

You may have heard, “you plus God are a majority.”

We need to remember that when circumstances of life come to overwhelm us.

Josh.2

So Joshua sent two men to spy out Jericho. They talked with Rahab the harlot who helped them.

[9] And she said [] to the men,

*I know that
the LORD hath given you the land,
and that **your terror** is fallen upon us,
and that all the inhabitants of the land **faint** because of you.*

Why?

[10] For we have heard

*how the **LORD dried up the water of the Red sea** for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and **what ye did** unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye **utterly destroyed.***

[11] And as soon as we had heard these things,

***our hearts did melt,**
neither did there remain any more **courage** in **any** man, because of you:*

*for the **LORD your** God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.*

There's Rahab's clear statement of faith. She believed in the Lord. In fact, she became the mother of Boaz and the great-great-grandmother of David – putting her in the royal line of Christ. She also appears in the heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11.

Rahab requested from the spies that the armies of Israel spare her and her family. They agreed and then with her help escaped.

Josh.3

The Israelites traveled to the Jordan River and spent the night on the east side.

*[5] And Joshua said [] to the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do **wonders** among you.*

*[10] And Joshua said, Hereby **ye shall know** that the living God is among you, and that **he will***

without fail

drive out from before you

the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

This further nails down the different territories of the land that God has given to them.

As the Lord had directed, Joshua sent the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant to enter the Jordan River first. When their feet touched the water, the upstream water dammed up as a **wall**, and downstream from there became **dry ground**.

*[17] And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm **on dry ground** in the midst of Jordan, and **all the Israelites** passed over **on dry ground**, until **all the people** [] passed [] over Jordan.*

Does this sound familiar?

Josh.4

One man from each tribe carried a stone *from* the middle of the river bed to make a twelve-stone memorial. They placed the stones at their campsite on the west side of the river east of Jericho called Gilgal. We'll learn more about that name *Gilal* in a minute.

Joshua took twelve more stones from the Jordan River bed and piled them where the priests stood in the **middle of the river bed** as a second memorial.

[13] About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

*[14] On **that day** the LORD **magnified** Joshua in the sight of all Israel;*

*and they **feared** him,
as they feared Moses,
all the days of his life.*

Then the Lord told Joshua to order the priests carrying the ark standing in the dry river bed to exit. As soon as they made it to the west side, the river was restored.

[23] ... the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, **as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, ... :**

Yes this is familiar. And why did he do it?

[24] That **all the people of the earth** might know the hand of the LORD, that **it is mighty:** that ye might **fear the LORD** your God for ever.

Josh.5

[1] And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the [west] side of Jordan [], and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, **heard** that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were **passed over**, [] **their heart melted,**

neither was there spirit in them any more,

because of the children of Israel.

Those born in the wilderness were not circumcised.

The Lord told Joshua to circumcise every male.

He obeyed and waited at their camp called Gilgal (which means *circle*) until they had healed.

They celebrated the passover there outside of Jericho.

The next day, they began eating from of the bounty of Canaan.

The following day, manna ceased. In John chapter 6:32 who said He was the true bread from heaven?

That's right Jesus. Let's see what else besides the "bounty of Canaan" that the Lord gave His people after withdrawing the manna.

[13] And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, **behold**, there stood a man [before] him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou **for us**, or **for our adversaries**?

[14] And he said, Nay; but as **captain of the host of the LORD**

am I now come.

And **Joshua fell on his face** to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him,

What saith my lord unto his servant?

[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. And Joshua did so.

Joshua had just met Jesus – the one who would go ahead of him, fight every battle, and win every victory.

Josh.6

[1] Now Jericho was [tightly] shut up because **of** the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

They knew the Israelites were approaching and were prepared for them. I cannot help thinking of a large turtle I saw crossing the road recently. I decided to take a picture of it. I took one from a distance and then moved in closer to get a better shot. What happened? The turtle withdrew into his shell. He was tightly “shut up,” just like Jericho, and that was the end of my picture snapping.

*[2] And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have **given** into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.*

Notice that God sees the future as a done deal. That’s the way He speaks of it. Jericho is already defeated.

Jericho

The word *Jericho* means *a fragrant place*. This tropical oasis and hill is located about seven miles north of the Dead Sea, five miles west of the Jordan River. Although it is more than 800 feet **below** sea level, that’s still nearly 600 feet **higher** than the Dead Sea. The city had many springs and has been inhabited for as long as history records – making it one of the oldest known cities.

Ancient Jericho is famous for its wall. Here are some facts about the city and wall taken from an article written by Answers from Genesis. The wall contained four parts:

1. foundation retaining stone wall – 14 feet high
2. mud brick wall – 23 feet high and 6 feet thick
3. sloped earthen fill rising 32 feet over a about 50 foot distance
4. upper mud brick wall 23 feet high and 6 feet or more thick
5. total height nearly 70 feet
6. The size of the city was about 9 acres or four city blocks

The cities of Jericho and neighboring Ai had great military significance **as** they allowed control of a key transport route.

The Lord told Joshua to have the armies of Israel march around Jericho one time each day for 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.*

*[5] And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and **the people shall ascend up** every man straight before him.*

The Israelites did as the Lord instructed.

*[15] And it came to pass on the **seventh** day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city ...*

[16] *And it came to pass at the **seventh** time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, **Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.***

[20] *..., **when** the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, [] **the wall fell down flat,***

so that the people went up into the city, ..., 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.*

[24] ***And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein:** only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.*

[25] ***And Joshua saved Rahab** the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; ...; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.*

Did you ever wonder why God prescribed this method of **circling around** the city **twelve** times before the last trip of conquest? And why was circumcision done and mentioned in preparation for this? Was God reminding the **twelve** tribes of Israel of the promise of **land, seed, and blessing** sealed to by the **circular** sign of circumcision? It seems like much more than a coincidence to me. I'll let you decide.

[27] *So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame [spread through] all the country.*

Application

The story of the conquest of Jericho gives us a chance to consider our own faith. Perhaps some of you have seen the movie *Groundhog Day*. It was about a man who was stuck in time -- reliving the same day (Groundhog Day) over and over. Could it be that's how it felt to the army of Israel as they marched around Jericho day after day and time after time? Perhaps some were getting tired of what seemed like an exercise in futility. But rather than give up or even grumble, they trusted God and persisted.

After twelve times around, the Israelites proceeded on their victory lap. They followed God's specific instruction and with a trumpet blast and a shout the mighty walls of Jericho crashed to the ground, and they entered the gateway to the Promised Land.

Although at times it may seem that we are getting nowhere going around in circles. We need **never** give up hope. God keeps His word. The Captain of the Lord's Host is with us. He will go before us and *fight* our battles if we only **trust** Him.

And He, our Bridegroom, awaits to give a **shout** with the sound of a trumpet and call us to our heavenly home to be with Him forever. This too is a done deal. Hallelujah!

Benediction

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that worketh in us,*

Unto him be glory

in the church

by Christ Jesus

throughout all ages,

world without end. Amen.
(Jude 20-21)

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