

THE WALLS OF JERICHO

(Ephesians 6:10-11)

Purpose: To teach that a life of victory and blessing depends on faith in God and obedience to Him.

When the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan, Joshua was their leader a man chosen by God who had commanded . . . *"Behold, I have set the land before you: Go in and possess the land."*

Canaan was a good land flowing with milk and honey. But this beautiful land was filled with the wickedness of the Canaanites.

In cities like Jericho, people worshiped evil and magic and sacrificed their children to idols. God said these things were abominations and the people who did them must be driven from the land. That was to be Joshua's task, and it was a tremendous one.

But Joshua had God's promise . . . *"As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. Only be thou strong and very courageous."* So Joshua, at God's command, led his people to the plains of Jericho.

The great city of Jericho shut its gates when they heard the Israelites had come. They were afraid of these people and hated their miracle-working God. But instead of changing their ways Jericho prepared to resist. They gathered together their weapons and got ready for war.

Day and night the men of war kept watch from the top of the walls that surrounded the city.

Nearby the city of Jericho, Joshua looked at the walls so tall and thick and strong. He knew no human power could break them down. But Joshua remembered...

God had said . . . *"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."*

And as Joshua looked to the Lord for help, a strange thing happened!

There stood a man with a sword drawn in his hand!

And when Joshua asked . . . *"Are you for us, or for our enemies?"* The man said *"As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy."*

Joshua obeyed with humble worship. And he listened carefully to all that the Lord said to do.

When Joshua returned to camp he called together his men. These men of Israel had sworn to obey Joshua as they had Moses ...

... but as they listened to Joshua's orders the men of Israel realized that obedience would test not only their loyalty to their leader, but their faith in the Lord as well.

Surely no soldiers ever heard orders such as Joshua's men heard from their leader! But the men were encouraged when Joshua told them . . .

The Lord said the walls of Jericho would fall down flat! And every man would go into the city straight before Him! So the men of Israel prepared to obey.

Inside the walls of Jericho the alarm suddenly rang out . . . "The Israelites are coming!"

"To the walls! To the walls!" they shouted, as every man hurried to his place.

From the top of the wall, Jericho's men of war watched tensely as the Israelites approached. First came armed men, then something that looked very strange in the ranks of an army!

Seven priests were blowing their trumpets continually, and following them . . .

... a mysterious object was hidden beneath rich blue coverings. What could it be?

Only the people of Israel knew it was the ark of the Lord and it was there to remind them that the Lord went before them, and victory was in the Lord.

Strange as it seemed, all the Israelites did was to march around the city in a quiet and peaceful way. Not a single word was spoken! The only sounds to be heard were . . .

... the steady tramp of marching feet . . .

... and the endless blast of the priests' trumpets!

The people of Jericho just stood still and watched in amazement as the long column of Israelites disappeared among the hills and returned to their camp.

Jericho's fighting men were troubled . . . and uneasy. What could it mean? Was it a trick of some kind?

On the second day the Israelites did exactly the same thing as they had done the day before.

The priests carried the ark of the Lord around the city, seven priests always blowing their trumpets before it, and armed men marching in front and the rear.

The Israelites marched once around the city then returned to camp without anyone saying a single word!

Every day for six days the same thing happened, and every day the people of Jericho watched and waited.

Some were still fearful and troubled, remembering the things they had heard about Israel's Almighty God.

But others began to mock. These foolish Israelites marching around and around the strong walls of Jericho, blowing their trumpets and carrying a mysterious box! Anyone could see they'd never get into the city that way!

On the morning of the seventh day, the Israelites marched around the city as before. But then, instead of returning to their camp, they marched around a second time, and then again and again and again! Seven times the Israelites marched around the city.

At the end of the seventh time, every man stopped and faced the walls, completely surrounding the city of Jericho.

And suddenly the trumpets stopped! Every man waited for the Lord's appointed signal!

A long blast of the trumpets! Then Joshua cried . . .

"Shout! For the Lord hath given you the city!"

And while the people of Jericho looked on, not knowing that their end had come . . .

. . . the people of Israel raised a great shout of victory! And the walls of the city fell down flat!

And every man went up into the city straight before him, just as the Lord had said. *"And they utterly destroyed all the evil that was in the city"* for this was the Lord's command.

After that time, wherever they went in the promised land the Israelites had victory as long as they had faith in the Lord and obeyed His commands.

To every believer today God promises a life of victory and a life of blessing on the same condition!

Have faith in the Lord, obey His commands, be strong and very courageous. The Bible says . . .

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
(Ephesians 6:10-11)