

## **Jericho Campaign: By the Power of God**

The Battle of Jericho is as important to the Lord and His enemies as the Battle of the Red Sea. God's enemies were still talking of His work against the Egyptians. News of the defeats of the Midianites, Sihon and Og, had also been spread throughout the area. The Lord wants His enemies to be terrified. Now the invasion of Canaan begins.

Various stages are discernable each contributing certain principles to godly warfare. First, authority and power had been physically and spiritually transferred to Joshua by Moses.

God's acceptance of Joshua is backed up by His speaking directly to Joshua. He tells Joshua that he is to prepare the people for crossing over the Jordan. Three times the Lord commands Joshua to "Be strong and very courageous." (Joshua 1:6,7,9). The people then accept Joshua as Moses replacement and conclude by telling Joshua the same thing the Lord told him that is "be strong and courageous." (Joshua 1:18).

The next step after confirmation is for Joshua to prepare for battle. He takes two men and sends them secretly on a reconnaissance patrol from Shittim to Jericho, about a two hour walk. The patrol is secret because Joshua did not want to alert the enemy nor a repeat of the debacle when Moses sent the 12 man reconnaissance team to spy out the land.

Jericho was on high alert expecting visitors so the king immediately learned of the team's presence, a bad start to an important mission.

Men are sent to arrest the spies. When interrogated, Rahab admits that the men had come to her but had already left. Often things happen in scripture which man finds difficult to explain so he just makes up ideas which conform to his beliefs.

So it is with Rahab. Some find it reprehensible that God would use a prostitute. So she must not be a real 'prostitute' but instead runs some kind of hotel. Sorry folks, she is a prostitute in every sense of the word. The only question is whether she was one of the prostitutes used in the worship of Baal or just a regular working woman. If she worked in the temple of Baal then there is no doubt that she now believes in the living God and her loyalty and allegiance is now to the Lord God. Whatever the truth, she undergoes a career change.

The second issue is of having lied to the king. It seems that good Christian folk have an aversion to lying, or untruths under any circumstances. We must understand that in warfare the rules of war are different than the when sitting in the pew Sunday morning. This woman is praised for her faith in telling the lie!

Turn to 1 Kings 22:19, "Micaiah says, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' "One suggested this, and another that. Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him.' 'By what means?' the Lord asked. "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said. " 'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the Lord. 'Go and do it.' "So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you."

Deception is a critical part of the warfare the Lord carries on with Satan. Denial in no way explains it. Readjusting our understanding of truth might. I am not sure it is possible to 'lie' to Satan. I would challenge the reader to see if there is a way that they could 'lie'

to Satan. Maybe an understanding of how two negatives in algebra make a positive helps to explain how lying to Satan just cannot be.

Rahab demands she be protected for her allegiance to the Lord. The spies agree. The spies escape.

The walls of Jericho have been a topic of discussion among archaeologist for nearly two centuries. Early on there was denial on the part of scientist that any evidence existed supporting the biblical text. More information of late now refutes those conjectures. Bryant Wood gives us a general idea of the fortification.

The mound or 'tell' of Jericho was surrounded by a great earthen rampart, or embankment, with a stone retaining wall at its base. The retaining wall was some four to five meters (12–15 feet) high. On top of that was a mudbrick wall two meters (six feet) thick and about six to eight meters (20–26 feet) high. At the crest of the embankment was a similar mudbrick wall whose base was roughly 14 meters (46 feet) above the ground level outside the retaining wall.<sup>1</sup>

Other excavation reveals additional information about the existence of a large moat scooped out of rock at the foot of the wall 9 meters wide and 3 meters deep. Such a moat would have taken thousands of man-hours to make.<sup>2</sup>

The people of Jericho had several years to prepare for this attack and well prepared they were. Woods details some of this preparation.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Creation Archive , Volume 21 Issue 2 , The walls of Jericho.

<sup>2</sup> (Yadin, Yigael. The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands. Vol. I., p.33)

The citizens of Jericho were well prepared for a siege. A copious spring which provided water for ancient, as well as modern, Jericho lay inside the city walls. At the time of the attack, the harvest had just been taken in (Joshua 3:15), so the citizens had an abundant supply of food. This has been borne out by many large jars full of grain found in the Canaanite homes by John Garstang in his excavation in the 1930s and also by Kenyon. With a plentiful food supply and ample water, the inhabitants of Jericho could have held out for perhaps several years.<sup>4</sup>

The warriors of the city would have been on the walls in preparation for an attack. Because of the distance between the Israelites and Jericho, they would not have been able to bring to bear any weapons. They would have to wait until they attack the walls or the gate structure. When the walls collapse, then a great majority of the defenders would have died falling nearly four stories or being buried in the rubble.

The manner in which the walls fall helped the attackers. “After the city walls fell, how did the Israelites surmount the four to five meter (12–15 foot) high retaining wall at the base of the tell? Excavations have shown that the bricks from the collapsed walls formed a ramp against the retaining wall so that the Israelites could merely climb up over the top.”<sup>5</sup>

The text tells us that the city was burned. Evidence to this has been discovered by several diggings at Jericho. Moreover, large amounts of supplies were found in the city. Dr. Wood says “Such a large quantity of grain left untouched gives silent testimony to the truth of yet another aspect of the biblical account. A heavily fortified city with an

---

<sup>3</sup> Woods

<sup>4</sup> (Ibid).

<sup>5</sup> (Ibid. Woods).

abundant supply of food and water would normally take many months, even years, to subdue. The Bible says that Jericho fell after only seven days. The jars found in the ruins of Jericho were full, showing that the siege was short since the people inside the walls consumed very little of the grain.”<sup>6</sup>

Israel’s armament would be impressive. The sword would be the weapon of personal use. Numerous references to ‘smiting’ the enemy identifies this weapon as curved or sickle sword. The sword was usually carried on the shoulder as depicted in Megiddo carvings. The weapon was balanced and sharpened on the outer surface. (It was not used as a farming tool).

Like the composite bow Israel would have acquired skill from the Egyptians (or the Egyptians could have acquired knowledge of it from the Hebrews). Both weapons seem to have Semitic origins. Israel had plenty of both weapons and others as well, spears, javelins, slings. There was no shortage of weapons.

Israel had no experience in siege warfare, no equipment to attack the walls. The placement of the walls at Jericho made it impractical for a lightly armed attacker to successfully breach the walls. Joshua must have been wondering just what was going to happen on the seventh day, and the seventh circle around the walls. It was probably just as much a surprise to Israel as it was to the defenders of Jericho. It is amazing how the Lord picked the one city with walls at such an angle that when they collapsed they would allow the attackers ramps into the city.

---

<sup>6</sup> (Ibid).

As to how the walls collapsed some would say earthquake, and that is a possibility however it would have been more of a surprise if for no reason they just crumbled. God does like doing the unexpected.

God required that the city and its inhabitants be completely destroyed. The city was under a ban of destruction. Men, women, and children, along with all of the animals all died that fateful day.

The text does not indicate one way or another but one might suspect that the total number of warriors employed in the battle was probably 12000, a thousand from each tribe. It may be difficult to grasp the scene. Whatever took place here sent shock waves throughout the land.

Blood from 10,000 warriors, women and children drenched the cobble stones and walls of every house of every street. The ghastly sight greeted anyone who ventured into the destroyed town. Grave robbers, and visitors alike shun this place. Jars of burnt grain and other products littered the place. It would be nearly five hundred years before an attempt to restore the city would occur.