

The Book of Joshua, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 5: The Fall of Jericho

Joshua 6:1–27

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

The first aim of this lesson is to let Jericho preach its central truth: the victory belongs to the Lord. Every detail of the battle plan, the marching, the trumpets, the silence, the shout, is designed so that when the walls fall no one can credit Israel's strength or strategy. Help the class see that this is how God loves to work, choosing the weak and the foolish things so that no flesh may glory in His presence (1 Corinthians 1:27–29). Hold up Hebrews 11:30 as the inspired commentary: the walls fell by faith. Press your students toward the faith that keeps obeying God's way even when His way makes no human sense, trusting that the Lord saves on His own terms so that the glory is unmistakably His.

The second aim requires real care, because this is a conquest text. Teach the fall of Jericho as God's unique, unrepeatable act of covenant judgment on the entrenched wickedness of the Canaanite nations, their idolatry, child sacrifice, and gross immorality, carried out by His direct command at a specific moment in redemptive history. Set it inside God's long patience (He waited until 'the iniquity of the Amorites' was full, Genesis 15:16) and His perfect justice (Leviticus 18:24–25; Deuteronomy 9:4–5). Be clear and firm that this account is never a model for human violence, vengeance, or any notion of 'holy war' today. The Christian's warfare is spiritual, waged with the gospel and the whole armor of God (2 Corinthians 10:3–5; Ephesians 6:10–18). Hold God's justice and His grace together, and let the text leave your students with a deepened sense of the seriousness of sin before a holy God and the wonder of His mercy.

The third aim is the spiritual formation of your students. Jericho is full of personal application. Most of us face walls that will not fall to our own effort, and most of us know the discouragement of obeying God when nothing seems to be happening. Use this chapter to call the class to a marching, persevering faith, and to point them, through Rahab's scarlet cord and her place in the camp, to the grace that reaches the believing outsider. Above all, lift their eyes to Christ, the true Captain of the Lord's host, who wins the only victory that finally matters and gathers in everyone who trusts Him.

Question 1

Student Question:

The Lord tells Joshua, 'See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof' (Joshua 6:2), before a single wall has fallen. Look carefully at how the victory is described all through this chapter. Who is doing the real fighting, and what does it teach us about where true deliverance comes from (compare Psalm 44:3 and Zechariah 4:6)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The chapter opens with Jericho 'straitly shut up' (Joshua 6:1), a picture of human defense at its strongest. Then comes the divine word: 'See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour' (Joshua 6:2). Notice the tense. The victory is spoken of as already accomplished before the marching even begins, because it rests on God's word, not Israel's effort.

Throughout the chapter, the fighting is conspicuously not done by Israel's military skill. They march, they carry the ark, they blow trumpets, they shout, and God brings the wall down. The text is careful to keep the deliverance in God's hands from start to finish.

This echoes a theme that runs across Scripture. Psalm 44:3 says Israel 'got not the land in possession by their own sword,' but by God's right hand and His favor. Zechariah 4:6 names the principle plainly: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'

For the class, the point is that true deliverance comes from the Lord. Jericho is the opening demonstration of a lesson Israel, and we, will need again and again: salvation is of God. He gives the victory, and He gives it in such a way that we cannot mistake its source.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The victory is God's gift, spoken of as accomplished before Israel lifts a hand (Joshua 6:2).
- True deliverance comes from the Lord, not from human strength, skill, or numbers (Psalm 44:3).
- God's pattern is 'not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit' (Zechariah 4:6).
- Faith rests on God's word about the outcome before the outcome is seen.
- Keeping the glory with God guards us from trusting our own resources for what only He can do.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the chapter make clear that the victory belongs to God and not to Israel?
- Why does God announce the victory as already won before the marching begins?
- Where do you need to trust that deliverance comes from the Lord and not from your own effort?

Question 2

Student Question:

Israel was commanded to march around a fortified city in silence for six days while nothing visibly changed, trusting that God would act in His own time. Where in your own walk are you tempted to give up on obedience because it does not yet seem to be accomplishing anything?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Israel was commanded to march once around the city each day for six days in silence (Joshua 6:3, 10). Imagine the temptation on day three or day four, when nothing had changed, the walls still stood, and the men of Jericho jeered from above. Obedience here meant continuing to do what God said even though it seemed to accomplish nothing.

This is a self-examination question. Press the class to locate the place where they have grown weary in obedience because they cannot yet see results. We are quick to abandon what God commands the moment it stops feeling productive.

Help them see that faithfulness is not measured by visible results but by trust in the One who gave the command. Israel's marching looked pointless until the seventh day, and then the walls fell. The obedience of the silent days was not wasted; it was the very path to the victory.

Encourage students that God often works beneath the surface during the days when nothing seems to be happening. The call is to keep marching, to keep obeying, and to leave the timing and the outcome with the Lord.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Obedience is often required before any visible result appears (Joshua 6:3–4).
- We are tempted to abandon God's commands the moment they stop feeling productive.
- Faithfulness is measured by trust in God, not by immediate, visible outcomes (Galatians 6:9).
- God frequently works unseen during the 'silent days' before the breakthrough.

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you tempted to give up on obedience because it does not seem to be working?
- What helps you keep obeying God when you cannot yet see any result?
- How does Israel's marching on the silent days encourage you to keep going?

Question 3

Student Question:

The instructions God gives are deliberately strange: march, carry trumpets, circle the city, wait for the seventh day, and shout (Joshua 6:3–5). Why would God attach His promise of victory to commands that look so foolish by human reckoning, and what does this reveal about the nature of obedient faith (compare 1 Corinthians 1:27–29)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The battle plan God gives is, by any human standard, absurd: march around the city, have seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns, circle once a day for six days, then seven times on the seventh, and at a long blast and a shout the wall will fall (Joshua 6:3–5). No general would draw up such a plan.

But that is precisely the point. By attaching the promise of victory to commands that look foolish, God ensures the outcome can only be credited to Him. Obedient faith does what God says, not because it can see how the command will work, but because it trusts the One who gave it.

Paul names this divine pattern: 'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty... that no flesh should glory in his presence' (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). Jericho is an early and vivid example.

For the class, this reveals the nature of true faith. Faith is not waiting until God's command makes sense to us; it is obeying because He is trustworthy. The strange commands at Jericho test whether Israel will trust God's wisdom over their own, and that same test comes to us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God deliberately joins His promise to commands that look foolish by human reckoning (Joshua 6:3-5).
- Obedient faith trusts the One who commands rather than first demanding to understand the command.
- God chooses the foolish and weak things so that no flesh may glory in His presence (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).
- The strange commands test whether we will trust God's wisdom over our own.
- Faith obeys God's way even when it differs sharply from human strategy.

Discussion Prompts

- Why would God attach His promise of victory to such strange-sounding commands?
- What does it reveal about faith that Israel obeyed before they could see how it would work?
- Where is God asking you to obey a command that does not make sense to you yet?

Question 4

Student Question:

Hebrews 11:30 says, 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.' Think of a 'wall' in your life that has not yielded to your own effort or strength. What would it mean to face it the way Israel faced Jericho, trusting God's way rather than your own might?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Hebrews 11:30 gives the inspired interpretation of the whole chapter: 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.' The walls did not fall because of Israel's strength but because of Israel's faith expressed in obedience.

This is a transformational question. Invite students to name a 'wall' in their own lives, a besetting sin, a broken relationship, a fear, a circumstance, that has not yielded to their own effort or willpower.

Help them see the difference between attacking the wall with their own might and facing it the way Israel did, trusting God's way and God's timing. Some walls fall only when we stop relying on ourselves and start obeying the Lord in faith.

Be careful and pastoral here. The point is not that any wall will fall if we simply have enough faith, as if faith were a technique. The point is that the God who brought down Jericho is the same God we trust, and our part is faithful, persevering obedience while we leave the outcome to Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The walls fell by faith, not by human strength (Hebrews 11:30).
- Some walls in our lives will not yield to our own effort or willpower.
- Faith faces obstacles God's way and in God's timing rather than by our own might.
- Faith is trust in God expressed through persevering obedience, not a technique that guarantees outcomes.

Discussion Prompts

- What is a 'wall' in your life that has not fallen to your own effort?
- What would it look like to face it the way Israel faced Jericho?
- How does Hebrews 11:30 reshape the way you think about that obstacle?

Question 5

Student Question:

When the people finally shouted, 'the wall fell down flat' (Joshua 6:20), and the credit could go to no one but the Lord. Why is it so important, both for Israel and for us, that the glory for this victory belongs entirely to God and not to human power or cleverness (compare Deuteronomy 8:17–18)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

When the priests blew and the people shouted, 'the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city' (Joshua 6:20). The collapse was total and instantaneous, plainly the act of God. No human cause could account for it.

This matters because it locates the glory exactly where it belongs. Had Israel breached the wall with rams and ladders, they might have credited their own valor. Instead, the manner of the victory makes boasting impossible. The Lord alone brought down Jericho.

Deuteronomy 8:17–18 warns against the very temptation this guards against: ‘thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power.’ Jericho is built to keep Israel from that pride.

For the class, the lesson is that God so often gives victory in a way that leaves the glory unmistakably His. This is not God being possessive; it is God being truthful, for the victory really is His. Our calling is to receive His deliverance with humble gratitude rather than self-congratulation.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The manner of the victory makes human boasting impossible (Joshua 6:20).
- God gives deliverance in ways that keep the glory unmistakably His.
- Pride tempts us to credit our own power for what God has done (Deuteronomy 8:17–18).
- Receiving God’s victory rightly means humble gratitude, not self-congratulation.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is it important that the glory for Jericho belongs entirely to God?
- How does Deuteronomy 8:17–18 expose the temptation Jericho was meant to guard against?
- Where are you tempted to take credit for what God alone has done?

Question 6

Student Question:

Israel had to obey before they saw any result, marching six full days with no visible change, then circling seven times on the seventh day before the shout. When has God asked you to obey fully before He showed you the outcome, and what did you learn about Him in the waiting?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Israel had to obey fully before they saw any result. Six days of marching with no visible change, then seven circuits on the seventh day, and only after all of that came the shout and the falling wall (Joshua 6:14–16, 20). The outcome was withheld until the obedience was complete.

This is a personal question about obeying before we see the result. Ask the class to recall a time when God asked them to do what He said and trust Him for an outcome they could not yet see.

Help students understand that this kind of obedience is itself an act of faith. To keep marching when nothing has happened is to declare, with your feet, that you trust God’s word more than your own eyes. The seventh-day shout came only to those who had obeyed through the silent days.

Encourage them that God is faithful to His promises even when their fulfillment is delayed. The waiting is not God withholding; it is often God working, and the outcome comes in His perfect time to those who keep trusting and obeying.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God often calls for full obedience before He reveals the outcome (Joshua 6:14–16).
- Obeying before we see results is itself an expression of faith.
- The delay between command and fulfillment is part of how God grows our trust.
- God is faithful to His promises even when their fulfillment is slow (2 Peter 3:9).

Discussion Prompts

- When has God asked you to obey fully before showing you the outcome?
- What did you learn about God in the waiting?
- How does Israel's obedience through the silent days encourage you now?

Question 7

Student Question:

In the middle of a city marked for destruction, God preserves Rahab and her whole household because she believed and acted on that faith (Joshua 6:17, 22–25). What does this single thread of mercy, woven right through an act of judgment, reveal about the heart of God toward anyone who will turn and trust Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Right in the heart of a chapter about judgment, God preserves Rahab. 'And the city shall be accursed... only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers' (Joshua 6:17). Joshua sees to it that she and her whole household are brought safely out (Joshua 6:22–23).

This single thread of mercy is woven deliberately through the act of judgment. The same God who brings down Jericho lifts Rahab to safety, because she believed and acted on her faith. Judgment and grace are not at odds in God; they meet here in the same chapter.

Rahab is the living proof that no one is beyond the reach of God's mercy who will turn and trust Him. A Canaanite, a harlot, a citizen of the condemned city, she is spared, not because she was less guilty, but because she believed and was sheltered under the scarlet cord (Joshua 2:18–21).

For the class, Rahab reveals the heart of God toward anyone who will turn to Him. Even in His justice, God is reaching for the one who will believe. The fall of Jericho and the rescue of Rahab, judgment and grace, stand side by side as twin truths about who God is.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God weaves mercy right through an act of judgment; Rahab is spared (Joshua 6:17).
- Judgment and grace are not at odds in God; they meet in the same chapter.
- No one who turns and trusts God is beyond the reach of His mercy.
- Rahab was spared by faith expressed in action, not because she was less guilty (Joshua 2:18–21).
- Even in His justice, God is reaching for the one who will believe.

Discussion Prompts

- What does Rahab's rescue, set inside an act of judgment, reveal about God's heart?
- Why is it significant that God preserves a Canaanite from the condemned city?
- How do judgment and grace stand together in this chapter without contradiction?

Question 8

Student Question:

Rahab, once an outsider in every way, ends the chapter dwelling 'in Israel even unto this day' (Joshua 6:25), brought in by faith. Is there a place in your life where you have felt like an outsider, too far gone or too unworthy to belong? How does Rahab's rescue speak to that?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Rahab ends the chapter dwelling 'in Israel even unto this day' (Joshua 6:25). The outsider has become an insider, brought into the people of God by faith. She who lived in the wall of a doomed city now lives in the camp of the Lord.

This is a personal question for anyone who has ever felt disqualified, too far gone, or unworthy to belong. Ask the class to name, even just to themselves, the place where they have felt like an outsider to God's grace.

Rahab's story answers that fear directly. Her past did not bar her; her faith brought her in. The God who welcomed a Canaanite harlot into His own people is the same God who welcomes everyone who trusts Him, regardless of their history.

Encourage the class that belonging to God is never a matter of pedigree or merit but of faith. Like Rahab, those who feel furthest from the camp may, by trusting the Lord, find themselves brought right into the heart of His people.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The former outsider Rahab is brought into the people of God by faith (Joshua 6:25).
- Our past does not disqualify us; faith brings us in.
- Belonging to God is a matter of trust, not pedigree or merit.
- Those who feel furthest from grace may, by faith, be brought nearest.

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you felt like an outsider, too far gone or unworthy to belong?
- How does Rahab's rescue speak to that feeling?
- What would it mean to trust that your past does not bar you from God's people?

Question 9

Student Question:

The conquest of Jericho is presented as God's direct, unrepeatable act of covenant judgment on the entrenched wickedness of the Canaanite nations, carried out at a specific moment in redemptive history (Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:24–25; Deuteronomy 9:4–5). How do we hold together God's perfect justice against deep-seated evil and His patient grace, and why is this account never a license for human violence or 'holy war' today, given that the Christian's true warfare is spiritual and fought with the gospel (2 Corinthians 10:3–5; Ephesians 6:10–18)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question reaches the doctrinal heart of the lesson, and it must be handled with both honesty and care. The conquest of Jericho was not ordinary warfare; it was God's direct, specific, and unrepeatable act of covenant judgment on the entrenched wickedness of the Canaanite nations. Their sins were not minor: idolatry, gross immorality, and the burning of their own children in sacrifice (Leviticus 18:21, 24–25; Deuteronomy 12:31).

Set this judgment inside God's long patience. Centuries earlier He told Abraham that his descendants would not possess the land yet, 'for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full' (Genesis 15:16). God waited generations, giving the nations time, before the cup of their wickedness overflowed. This is not the act of a hasty or cruel God, but of a holy and patient One whose justice finally answers entrenched evil.

Make plain that Israel is given no ground for pride. 'Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart... but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee' (Deuteronomy 9:4–5). Israel is the instrument of God's judgment, not its author, and the same Israel will face judgment when it falls into the same sins. God is no respecter of nations; He is the holy Judge of all.

Be clear and firm that this account is never a license for human violence, vengeance, or any notion of 'holy war' today. The conquest was a unique moment in redemptive history under God's direct command, not a standing model for any nation, church, or person. The Christian's warfare is spiritual: 'the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds' (2 Corinthians 10:3–5), and we stand in 'the whole armour of God' against spiritual powers, not flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:10–18). We conquer by the gospel, by love of enemies, by truth and righteousness, not by the sword.

Hold the two truths together for the class without softening either. God's justice against deep, settled evil is real and terrible, and a sober reminder of how seriously a holy God regards sin. And His grace is real and reaching, seen in His long patience and in Rahab spared within the very city of judgment. Keep the emphasis where the text puts it: on God keeping His promise to the fathers and on the seriousness of sin before a holy God, while pointing forward to Christ, who bore that judgment and in whom mercy and justice perfectly meet.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The conquest is God's unique, unrepeatable act of covenant judgment on entrenched Canaanite wickedness (Leviticus 18:24–25; Deuteronomy 9:4–5).
- God's judgment came only after long patience; He waited until 'the iniquity of the Amorites' was full (Genesis 15:16).
- Israel is the instrument of judgment, not its author, and is given no ground for pride; it too will be judged for the same sins (Deuteronomy 9:4–5).
- This account is never a model for human violence, vengeance, or 'holy war' today; it was God's direct command at a specific moment in redemptive history.
- The Christian's warfare is spiritual, waged with the gospel and the whole armor of God, not with the sword (2 Corinthians 10:3–5; Ephesians 6:10–18).
- God's perfect justice against sin and His patient, reaching grace must be held together, both pointing to Christ in whom they perfectly meet.
- The text keeps the emphasis on God keeping His promises and on the seriousness of sin before a holy God.

Discussion Prompts

- How does God's long patience (Genesis 15:16) shape the way we understand the judgment on Jericho?
- How do we hold together God's perfect justice against evil and His patient grace?
- Why is this account never a license for human violence, and what is the Christian's true warfare?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole of Joshua 6, from the first silent march to the walls lying flat and Rahab safe inside the camp. Name one specific way the Lord is using this chapter to form Christ in you. What is He asking you to believe about who He is, and what is He asking you to do in response, this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the capstone. Invite the class to look back across the whole of Joshua 6, from the first silent march to the walls lying flat and Rahab safe inside the camp, and to ask what the Lord is forming in them through it.

Jericho holds together several truths that should now press into the heart: the victory belongs to God, faith keeps marching when nothing is visible, God's justice against sin is real, and His grace reaches the believing outsider. Help each student name the specific place where the Spirit is applying this chapter to them.

For some it will be the call to keep obeying when results are slow, to keep marching around their own walls in faith. For others it will be the sober reminder of how seriously God regards sin, or the comfort that, like Rahab, they are not beyond His grace.

Close by lifting their eyes to Christ. The Captain of the Lord's host (Joshua 5:14) leads His people to a victory they could never win themselves, and at the cross the justice and grace seen at Jericho meet perfectly. The God who brought down these walls and welcomed Rahab welcomes us in Jesus. Ask each student to name one specific thing to believe about God and one specific thing to do in response this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Jericho unites several truths: the victory is God's, faith perseveres, God's justice is real, and His grace reaches the outsider.
- Christ is the goal of the story; He wins the victory we cannot and reconciles justice and grace at the cross (Joshua 5:14; Romans 3:25–26).
- Spiritual formation moves from admiring a truth to embodying it; the aim is a changed life, not merely a moved heart.
- Each student should name one thing to believe about God and one thing to do in response this week.

Discussion Prompts

- As you look back over Joshua 6, what one truth about God is the Lord asking you to believe more deeply?
- What one specific action is He asking you to take in response, this week?
- How does seeing Christ as the true Captain of the Lord's host change the way you face your own walls?