

**1. The people had to be silent**

1. **The people had to be silent.** The number of people marching around Jericho was immense. It would be difficult to keep such a large number of people in total silence. But Joshua said to them ‘Don’t say a word’<sup>□1</sup>. There are times and situations when the most difficult thing in the world is to be totally silent. But the pathway of obedience for these Israelites involved the control of the tongue.

□1 6:10

**2. They had to be unswervingly obedient for seven days**

2. **They had to be unswervingly obedient for seven days.** It took amazing self-control and submission to God’s will. The people would walk around the city, not doing a thing to attack it, and maintaining absolute silence. It was a time for doing nothing except to exactly follow God’s instructions. Then they would all go back to the camp and spend the night there<sup>□1</sup>. It was a very unusual way of destroying a city!

□1 6:11

The second day they were up early to do the same thing all over again<sup>□1</sup>. The people carried on this way for six days<sup>□2</sup>.

□1 6:12–13

□2 6:14

The marching tested the faith of the people. ‘By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days’<sup>□1</sup>.

□1 Hebrews 11:30

**• Patience, self control & faith**

It took faith to continue in obedience without knowing what would happen. Joshua knew what would happen, but there is no hint in the text that Joshua told the people exactly what that was. They did not know how long the marching would continue. It took patience and self-control, and such patience and self-control required faith.

**3. There was a final test of faith before victory came**

3. **There was a final test of faith before victory came.** The seventh day was the key day. They had already done a lot of silent marching. Nothing had happened. Now Joshua announced that they have to do seven times as much marching. They would have to walk around the town seven times<sup>□1</sup>. If anyone had doubted the usefulness of all of this walking, they would now doubt it even more! Yet actually victory was close. It was a final test before God would act. After the seven circuits the priests were told to sound the trumpets. At the sound of the trumpet blast Joshua gave the people their instructions. They had to give a great shout<sup>□2</sup>. The city was to be destroyed<sup>□3</sup> but Rahab must be kept safe<sup>□4</sup>. Anything that could be easily destroyed should be destroyed. Valuable metals should be handed over to Israel’s treasury<sup>□5</sup>. The trumpets sounded, the people shouted – and Jericho’s walls fell<sup>□6</sup>.

□1 6:15

□2 6:16

□3 6:17a

□4 6:1 7b

□5 6:18

□6 6:19

**4. Care was taken about destroying the city**

4. **Care was taken about destroying the city.** The people of Jericho, their homes, their possessions – everything that was destructible – were to be destroyed. They were ‘banned’ or ‘devoted to destruction’ (as the word in 6:17, 18, 21 may be translated). God demanded the genocide of the Canaanites.

There is no getting round the fact. ‘You must destroy them utterly’, God said. ‘Show no mercy’<sup>□1</sup>. Just as He annihilated the human race in the flood and exterminated Sodom and Gomorrah, so He demanded the annihilation of the Canaanite tribes.

□1 see Deuteronomy 7:1–5

Three things should be kept in mind when one considers the slaughter of the Canaanites.

**• Canaanite**

(i) The Canaanites were a filthy and degraded people. Their

## depravity

wickedness had gone on for centuries. They had been given plenty of time to repent but their depravity had gotten worse and worse. Sexual depravity, child sacrifice, snake worship and demonization, were all commonplace.

## • Israelite vulnerability

(ii) The Israelites were vulnerable to corruption. They could fall easily into sin themselves, as the story of Numbers 25 shows. The people of God themselves would be made extinct shortly if severe action was not taken to preserve Israel from the contaminations of paganism.

## • No concept of right & wrong ways of warfare

(iii) There was no concept of right and wrong ways of fighting war in the early ancient world. The idea of there being 'war crimes' is taught in the Bible<sup>□1</sup> but at this stage of world history there were no prisoner-of-war camps, and no way of keeping the Canaanites alive while forcing them to reform their ways.

## • A foretaste of judgement day

(iv) The extermination of the Canaanites is a foretaste of final judgement day. Just as God cleared away wickedness from the land of Canaan, so one day He will wipe planet earth clean of all sin. The 'slaughter of the Canaanites' is not a pleasant incident – but the judgement day will be worse. There one land was largely cleared of vileness. On judgement day the entire planet earth will be cleared of all sin and wickedness and on that occasion a more thorough job will be done.

□1 see Amos chapters 1–2

## 5. God's child was kept safe amidst the judgement

5. **God's child was kept safe amidst the judgement.** Everything was destroyed<sup>□1</sup> but the two spies went to look for the woman they knew by sight – Rahab! God took special care of His new convert; in the midst of the judgement Rahab was kept safe<sup>□2</sup>. The redeemed are kept safe; the instruments of sin are destroyed<sup>□3</sup>. Rahab became an honoured member of Israel and was still alive and well in Israel when the Book of Joshua was written<sup>□4</sup>.

□1 6:20–21

□2 6:22–23

□3 6:24

□4 6:25

## 6. Joshua cursed Jericho

6. **Joshua cursed Jericho**<sup>□1</sup>. Anyone who should ever again seek to make Jericho a fortified place where vile sin was sponsored would come under God's judgement. Years later the curse was fulfilled when vile Canaanite worship was restored by King Ahab and Jericho was rebuilt<sup>□2</sup>. Sin is destined to be exterminated. The gift of planet earth comes solely from God; His planet is to be used for righteousness not for sin. It is only a matter of time before the story of Jericho will be repeated. Soon Jesus will come, the planet will be wiped clean by the fire of God, the walls which protect sinful ways will fall again – and God's redeemed people will be kept safe for God's new world.

□1 6:26–27

□2 1 Kings 16:34



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