



## LESSON 7

*God gives Jericho to Israel*

*JOSHUA 5:13-6:27*



**God fights for those who obey Him.**



***“And the LORD said to Joshua, ‘See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor’” (Josh 6:2).***

## Supporting Truths

1. God fights for those who obey Him.
2. God fights for His own glory, so He must be worshiped.
3. God’s instructions must be obeyed even when they seem strange.
4. God is just in His fighting.
5. God is merciful in His fighting.

## Objectives

1. Describe the way Israel defeated Jericho, especially the role of the ark.
2. Describe Joshua’s meeting with the captain of the LORD’s army.
3. List the LORD’s instructions and describe Israel’s obedience.
4. List a few reasons why the destruction of Jericho was just.
5. Explain why Rahab needed mercy and how she obtained it.

# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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## Lesson Summary

Before the attack against Jericho, the LORD met with Joshua, reminding him that Joshua's first priority was to worship the LORD as the One in charge. Then the LORD gave Joshua specific but strange instructions. Israel followed these instructions obediently, and the LORD miraculously defeated Jericho despite its strong walls and locked gates. Jericho was totally destroyed. Only Rahab, her family, and their possessions were spared. Through all of this, the LORD proved faithful to bring Israel into the land.

## Spotlight on the Gospel

The battle of Jericho reveals both God's hatred of sin and His mercy towards repentant sinners. Rather than shake our fists at God, like the inhabitants of Jericho, we must be like Rahab and return to God and seek His mercy. Only then will we find safety and protection from God's great wrath against sin.

LAST WEEK



God reveals His might at  
the Jordan  
*Joshua 3:1–5:1*

THIS WEEK



God gives Jericho  
to Israel  
*Joshua 5:13–6:27*

NEXT WEEK



God judges Achan's sin  
*Joshua 7:1–26*

POSSESSION



## Lesson Commentary

### *God fights for those who obey Him.*

In the first five chapters of Joshua, God kept encouraging Joshua and the Israelites, while at the same time instructing them to trust Him and obey. And for the first time since leaving Egypt, the Israelite men obeyed God's command to be circumcised (Josh 5:2-7; Gen 17:9-14). They obeyed even though the procedure was painful and left the men unable to fight for a few days. They also obeyed by celebrating the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (5:10-12). After this obedience, the manna stopped, showing that they could now live off of the land God had given them (5:11-12). Now, if they would continue to trust and obey, they could finally take possession of the land, starting with Jericho.

### **The preparation: The LORD came to Joshua (5:13-6:5)**

Encouragement and instruction came again before the battle for Jericho. The captain of the LORD's army met Joshua, a fearsome warrior who fought only for God's glory (5:13-14). While this encounter was unexpected, it was also encouraging, for it revealed that the battle was not just between the Hebrews and the Canaanites. There was a third army fighting to achieve the LORD's promises: an angelic army (1 Kgs 22:19; Ps 103:21). This mysterious warrior was actually the LORD Himself, another appearance of the second person of the trinity. This meeting is a reminder that God is not just a source of guidance and help. He is first and foremost the One we must worship (Josh 5:14-15).



#### **THINK ABOUT IT**

Sometimes God chooses to act in extraordinary ways so that the power is clearly seen to be from Him and not from us (2 Cor 4:7).

But before the instructions, a problem interrupts: Jericho was tightly shut (6:1). Jericho was a small city, only about 225 meters long, 80 meters wide, and about a half mile around. But with strong walls and secure gates, it was a difficult obstacle. The normal way to

conquer such a city was a siege of several months in order to force surrender through starvation. But God,

not human might or methods, would give the city to Israel (6:2).

### **The battle: Joshua and Israel obeyed God's instructions (6:6-20)**

After receiving a very unusual battle plan (Josh 6:3-5), obedience was essential. So Joshua took the time to repeat God's instructions (6:6-7), and the story carefully describes the people doing exactly what God told them to do (6:8-16). No matter how unusual God's instructions may have seemed, Joshua and the people obeyed, trusting in God rather than themselves. Even when Joshua gave the command to shout (6:16), the story pauses to state specific instructions and emphasize obedience again (6:17-19).

Obedience to the LORD is important. The story shows this by emphasizing the ark during the marches around Jericho. It was at the center of the column, and it is mentioned in almost every verse (6:6-14). As at the crossing of the Jordan, the ark represented God's presence with Israel. He is present with His people to enable them to carry out His instructions (Matt 28:20). He is present with His people to give them victory (1 Cor 15:57). So the story emphasizes the people's obedience and God's presence.

#### **THINK ABOUT IT**

Israel's obedience proved that they believed that the LORD was with them and would do exactly as He said (Heb 11:30).



### **The results: victory, judgment, salvation, and fame (6:20-27)**

By His might, God accomplished all His purposes at Jericho. First, He gave Israel victory, just as He said He would (Josh 6:20-21). The destruction of Jericho's walls is even more miraculous considering the fact that Rahab's house, which was part of the wall, was still standing after the walls came down. God is a faithful and powerful God who fights for His people (Exod 15:1-3).

Second, God brought just punishment upon Jericho. Jericho was utterly destroyed, and all the inhabitants were killed (Josh 6:21). Everything was burned, except

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for the metal, which was devoted to the LORD's service (6:24). All this was by God's command (Deut 20:10–18). In addition, even the walls and gates of the city were put under a curse (6:26), which later was fulfilled (1 Kgs 16:34).

How could a good God demand the death of all the Canaanites? There is no denying that the death of so many was painful and sad. God grieves over the death of the wicked (Ezek 18:23), and so should we. But though we grieve, we must also rejoice in God's justice (Ps 35:1–9; Rev 18:20–21). Rather than let our grief cause us to doubt or reject God, it should cause us to tremble as we realize how terrible sin is (Isa 6:5), and to marvel at how merciful God is (Ps 103:8–14).

It was just for the Canaanites to be killed for four reasons. First, it was **justice** because they got what they deserved. The Canaanites were extremely wicked (Deut 9:5). They were infamous for their idolatry (Lev 18:24–25), for child sacrifices (Deut 12:31), and for all kinds of sexual perversion (Lev 18:3–30).

Second, their sin was also contaminating. In fact, when Israel failed to remove all the inhabitants from the land, they joined the Canaanites in their sin (Deut 20:18; Ps 106:34–42). Millions of Israelites strayed from God, suffered, died, lost the land, and failed in their testimony to the nations, all because they let the Canaanites remain in the land.

Third, it was just for the Canaanites to be killed because God was very patient. He patiently delayed judgment for 600 years (Gen 15:16). During this time the Canaanites had contact with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They had opportunity to turn to the true God, and perhaps some did, since men like Eliezer of Damascus became part of Abraham's household (Gen 15:2). But on the whole, they remained entrenched in their sin.

Fourth, because God is merciful. God forgives even the wickedest nations if they repent (Jonah 4:11; Jer 18:5–10). God provided the Canaanites a way to be saved.

They could have, like Rahab, turned to the true God and joined with Israel in all its covenant blessings. Unfortunately, the hearts of the people of Jericho remained as closed as their gates.

The third result of the battle highlights God's mercy: Rahab's salvation, along with all her family, is repeatedly emphasized (Josh 6:17, 22, 23, 25). Rahab gets as much attention as Jericho itself, showing God's concern for the one lost sheep, the despised, and the rejected (Matt 18:12–14; 15:21–28; 1 Cor 1:18–31). He loves to save in the midst of judgment (Gen 6:7–8), to bring near those who were far off (Eph 2:13). Rahab, formerly a Canaanite prostitute, was now a woman of faith living as part of the chosen nation of Israel. God even saved her family with her and made her an ancestor of the Messiah (Matt 1:5). God's mercy truly overflows.

The fourth result of the battle was that God made Joshua famous (Josh 6:27). Just as God had promised, God was with Joshua to give him great success (1:5–9). What an encouragement this is to follow in Joshua's steps—to be bold and courageous, believing in God's presence and clinging to His law (1:8).

The battle of Jericho reveals the hideousness of man's sin and the greatness of God's mercy. The consequences of sin are great, but so too is the reality of God's mercy. Out of the rubble of Jericho a single house stood securely—evidence of God's amazing mercy towards undeserving sinners. Rather than shake our fists at God, this story should cause us to flee as fast as we can from our sin and run straight into God's open arms of mercy. It should strengthen us to choose God's way, even when His way seems foolish to us.

## THINK ABOUT IT

How much sin could have been avoided by fully carrying out God's command?



# Lesson Outline

*God fights for those who obey Him.*

## AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The LORD was with Joshua at Jericho (5:13–15).
2. The LORD told Joshua to march around the city (6:1–5).
3. Joshua obeyed the LORD and the walls fell down (6:6–20).
4. The LORD destroyed Jericho, but saved Rahab (6:21–27).

## AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The preparation: The LORD came to Joshua (5:13–6:5).
  - The LORD came as the captain of His army (5:13–14).
  - The LORD required Joshua's reverent worship (5:14–15).
  - The LORD gave Joshua an unusual battle plan (6:10–13).
2. The battle: Joshua and Israel obeyed God's instructions (6:6–20).
  - Joshua and Israel marched around Jericho for seven days (6:6–14).
  - Joshua and Israel kept the ark in the center of their army (6:6–13).
  - Joshua and Israel marched around 7 times on the 7th day (6:14–16).
  - Joshua and Israel shouted, and the walls came down (6:17).
3. The results: victory, judgment, salvation, and fame (6:20–27).
  - God gave Israel victory over Jericho (6:20–21).
  - God judged Jericho with total destruction (6:17–21, 24, 26).
  - God saved Rahab and her family (6:17, 22–23, 25).
  - God made Joshua famous (6:27).



# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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## Lesson Questions

*Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.*



### Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who met with Joshua?**  
The captain of the LORD's army, who is also the LORD.
- 2. What did the LORD tell Joshua to do?**  
Take the ark of the covenant, march around Jericho one time each day for six days, then seven times on the seventh day. Be quiet until the end, then shout.
- 3. What happened when Israel obeyed?**  
God knocked down Jericho's walls.
- 4. Who did God save in Jericho?**  
God saved Rahab and her family because of her faith.



### Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Whose side was the captain of the LORD's army on?**  
The LORD was not on any person's side. He is His own captain, and Joshua chose to be on His side by worshiping Him.
- 2. Who was the captain of the LORD's army?**  
He was the LORD. He was the second person of the Trinity.
- 3. Why would Jericho have been difficult to defeat?**  
Jericho had strong walls, and they had shut and locked their strong gates.
- 4. What was at the center of Israel's army as they marched around Jericho?**  
The ark of the covenant was at the center, representing God's presence with them.
- 5. Did Israel obey?**  
Yes, Joshua was very careful to give clear instructions.
- 6. What happened to Jericho?**  
Jericho was completely destroyed. This shows God's justice, because the people in Jericho were very wicked.
- 7. Did anyone in Jericho survive?**  
Yes. Rahab and her family were spared because of her faith.
- 8. What did God do for Joshua by giving the victory at Jericho?**  
God caused Joshua to become famous.

# Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCTION

## TUMBLING WALLS

**Materials:** large foam blocks or small cardboard boxes, large towel.

**Directions:** Build a small wall on top of the towel while the children watch; then have them sit in front of the wall and shout (or blow their rams' horn trumpets; see activity below) at it to see if they can knock it down. When they cannot, have them shout again; then quickly pull the towel out from underneath the wall. (It should tumble down.) Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about a much larger and stronger wall that was built around the city of Jericho. God crumbled the wall flat so the Israelites could get in.

## RAM'S HORN TRUMPET

Have the children make rams' horn trumpets by curling a sheet of paper lengthwise and taping it closed, making one side larger than the other. They can use the horns during the "Tumbling Walls" activity.



ILLUSTRATE

## ISRAEL'S KEY

**Materials:** several keys on a key chain

**Directions:** Explain to the children that the city of Jericho was locked up tight. Nobody could get in or out of the city (Josh 6:1). Hold up one key at a time and ask them whether they think that the key could open the door. Explain that the only key that would open up Jericho for Israel would be God's power.

## CONQUERING JERICO

Using the materials from the "Tumbling Walls" and "Rams' Horn Trumpet" activities, have the children act out the conquering of Jericho. The walls of Jericho could be made up of butcher paper, cardboard boxes, or cardboard. After children have walked around the walls of Jericho, they can blow trumpets and yell, making the walls fall.



APPLY

## GOD DESTROYS JERICO

See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 1.

**Materials:** Craft sheets, construction paper, scissors, crayons, and glue.

**Directions:** Pre-cut pictures from craft sheets. Have children color pictures and glue them to a sheet of construction paper. Glue on the verse. Explain to them that God caused the buildings to crumble when his people blew the trumpets.

God Destroys Jericho  
See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 1





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AGES 6–8



## PUSH OVER

Have the children line up against a wall, and on the count of three, have them all try to push the wall over. After they realize that it is impossible for them to do this, tell them to yell the wall over. On the count of three, have the children yell at the wall to see if they can knock it down. After they try to yell over the wall, ask them whether they think it is possible for the walls to fall that way. Explain that in today's lesson, they will be learning about how God made a wall fall when Israel obeyed His surprising instructions.

## SURPRISING INSTRUCTIONS

Give the children strange instructions that do not make sense to them but will result in a small blessing. For example, blindfold a child and tell him to take a certain amount of steps in various directions. If he follows the directions correctly, he will then be blessed with a prize. Israel was also blessed through their obedience. If they followed God's instructions, they would also experience God's blessing in the promised land.



## CANDY UNDER THE BAN

Bring to class a piñata with a variety of candy inside. Tell the children they can collect the candy, but all of one particular kind must be set aside and given to the teacher. You might even talk about how good this candy is and the fact that God should have the best, but also remind the children that there is plenty of other good candy left.

## OBEDIENCE—EVEN WHEN IT DOES NOT MAKE SENSE

Ask the children what kinds of people or instructions we obey (a policeman, our moms and dads, a medicine prescription, the Bible, etc.). Ask the children if there are some kinds of instructions that we can choose to obey or not obey (instructions on a recipe or directions on a map). However, we usually obey instructions because we think that the other person knows better than we do and can help us get what we want or help us avoid danger. Explain that God knows everything and always knows what is best for us. We must, therefore, always obey God's instructions, even when we think we know better. This shows that we trust God and believe He knows best.

*God's Surprising Instructions*  
*See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 1*

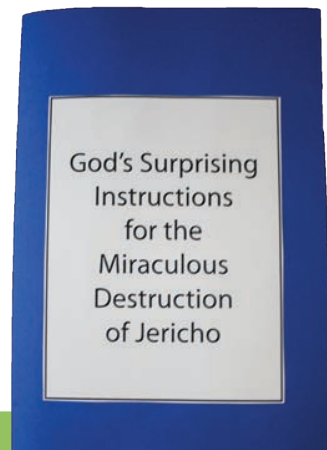


## GOD'S SURPRISING INSTRUCTIONS

*See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 1.*

**Materials:** Craft sheets, cardstock, scissors, glue or tape, crayons, red yarn.

**Directions:** Color and cut out all the pieces from craft sheet. Fold a piece of cardstock in half like a greeting card. On the front of the page, glue the square that says "God's Surprising Instructions for the Miraculous Destruction of Jericho." On the back, glue the square that says "Israel Did All That God Commanded." Glue the city to the inside of the card in a W shape. Glue the verse across the bottom. Draw figures above each description—Rear Guard, Ark of the Covenant, etc.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

**ENCOURAGING WORDS**

Throughout the first five chapters of Joshua, God encourages Israel. Discuss words that are encouraging. Ask the children how people have encouraged them in the past. Discuss how they have encouraged others. Then talk about how the words that God told Israel would have been an encouragement to them.

**OBSTACLES**

Discuss with the children obstacles that they have had in their lives. This could be a school subject that they had a difficult time learning, or maybe a particular problem that they encountered. Explain that Israel also had obstacles. They struggled with not trusting God, not putting Him first in their lives, etc. But when they trusted God, amazing things happened. One huge obstacle in Israel's history was Jericho's wall. This huge wall seemed like an impossible obstacle. It would have been easy to question God and His instructions in this situation. But Israel obeyed, and God did amazing things that they witnessed firsthand.



ILLUSTRATE

**GOD PROVIDES**

Tell a story of a missionary that shows God overcoming a seemingly impossible situation to further His purposes. One example would be George Mueller and the amazing ways God provided for the many orphaned children under his care. One incident involved a baker bringing bread on just the morning when he had nothing to give the 300 children sitting at the breakfast table waiting for food. Soon after, there was another knock at the door. A milkman's cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. Since the milk would spoil by the time the wheel was fixed, the milkman asked George if he could use some free milk. He brought in ten cans, just enough for the 300 thirsty children.

**WHOSE SIDE IS GOD ON?**

During the US civil war, President Abraham Lincoln met with a group of ministers for a prayer breakfast. At one point, one of the ministers said, "Mr. President, let us pray that God is on our side". Lincoln's response showed far greater insight, "No, gentlemen, let us pray that we are on God's side."



APPLY

**ENCOURAGEMENT AND EXHORTATION**

Ask the children what sorts of things they dislike doing (cleaning their rooms, brushing their teeth, washing dishes). Ask what sorts of things they find very difficult to do (juggle or catch a ball, for example). Sometimes we don't do things just because we don't feel like doing them, and sometimes, we don't do them because we don't think we are able to. Sometimes we lack discipline and don't want to keep trying until we learn to do something that is difficult to do at first. Israel didn't always feel like doing the hard work of taking over the promised land, and they weren't sure that they were able to. God encouraged the Israelites by promising them that they would be able to drive the Canaanites out of the land. He also exhorted them to obey. This means that He gave them firm instructions that they needed to believe His promises and act upon them. What are some exhortations and encouragements that God gives to us today?