

Joshua 5:13–6:27 Study Guide

Joshua 5:13–6:27 teaches that Jericho did not fall because Joshua had a brilliant military plan. It fell because the Lord was present, the Lord commanded, and the Lord gave the victory.

The people's role was to trust, obey, wait, and act when God said to act.

Emphasis: Joshua 6:12–25

There are no direct Gospel parallels to the fall of Jericho, but there are important forward connections to Christ: Jesus is the true Commander and King, salvation comes through faith and obedience, judgment and mercy meet, and outsiders like Rahab are brought into God's people.

1. What does Joshua's encounter with the Commander teach us before Jericho is even attacked? (Joshua 5:13–15)

Before Joshua faces Jericho, he meets "a Man" with a drawn sword. Joshua asks, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" The answer is striking: "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come" (Joshua 5:14). Joshua is not being asked to fit God into Israel's battle plan. Joshua must submit to God's command.

The holy-ground language connects this moment with Moses at the burning bush, where God said, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). This shows that the conquest begins not with strategy, but with worship, surrender, and reverence.

Forward connection to Christ: Jesus also does not come to endorse human agendas. He calls people to follow Him. He says, "Follow Me" (Matthew 4:19), and later, "Not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Everyday Application: Before asking God to bless our plans, we should ask whether we are submitted to His. The first question is not, "Is God on my side?" but, "Am I surrendered to the Lord?"

2. Why is it significant that God gives Joshua the victory before the battle begins? (Joshua 6:1–5)

Jericho is "securely shut up" because of Israel, but the Lord says, "See! I have given Jericho into your hand" (Joshua 6:2). The victory is spoken as already given before the walls fall. Israel still has to obey, march, wait, and shout, but the outcome rests on God's promise.

This fits the larger pattern of Joshua. God had already said, "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you" (Joshua 1:3). God gives the promise, but His people must walk in obedient faith.

Forward connection to Christ: In Christ, believers also live from a victory already secured. Jesus said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), and Paul writes that God "gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Everyday Application: Obedience is not how we force God to be faithful. Obedience is how we respond because God is faithful.

3. What does Israel's repeated marching teach about obedient faith? (Joshua 6:12-14)

Joshua rises early, the priests take up the ark, the armed men go before them, the rear guard follows, and the people march around the city once each day for six days. Nothing visible changes at first. The walls do not crack on day one. The city does not surrender on day three. Yet Israel keeps obeying.

This is a different kind of warfare. Their primary weapons are not siege ramps or battering rams, but trust and obedience. Hebrews later says, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days" (Hebrews 11:30).

Forward connection to Christ: Jesus often calls for obedience that does not immediately make sense to human wisdom. At Cana, the servants filled waterpots with water before seeing the miracle of wine (John 2:5-9). The man born blind washed in the pool of Siloam before receiving sight (John 9:6-7).

Everyday Application: Faith often looks like steady obedience before visible results. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is keep walking in what God has clearly said.

4. Why are the ark, priests, and trumpets emphasized so much in the battle? (Joshua 6:12-16)

The ark of the covenant is repeatedly mentioned because the Lord's presence is central. The priests blow the ram's horns, and the people follow the Lord's appointed order. Israel is active, but God is the true warrior.

This continues what Joshua 3-4 already showed at the Jordan. The ark went before the people into the river, and the Lord made the way (Joshua 3:3, 11, 17). Now the ark circles Jericho, showing that this battle belongs to the Lord.

The trumpets also remind us that this is not merely military action. Trumpets were used in Israel's worship, assembly, and holy war settings (Numbers 10:8-10). Jericho falls by God's command, not Israel's strength.

Forward connection to Christ: The Gospels show Jesus as the One who carries divine authority. He commands wind and sea, and they obey Him (Mark 4:39-41). He also says, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).

Everyday Application: God's presence matters more than our power. We should not measure a situation only by our resources, skill, or numbers. The central question is whether we are walking with the Lord.

5. What is the significance of the seventh day and the final shout? (Joshua 6:15–20)

On the seventh day, Israel marches around Jericho seven times. At Joshua's command, the people shout, "for the LORD has given you the city" (Joshua 6:16). Then the wall falls down flat, and the people go straight up into the city (Joshua 6:20).

The shout is not magic. It is an act of obedient faith responding to God's promise. The people shout before they have conquered the city because God has spoken. Their obedience publicly declares trust in the Lord.

Forward connection to Christ: In the Gospels, faith often responds to Jesus' word before the full result is seen. The nobleman believed Jesus' word that his son would live before he saw the healing confirmed (John 4:50–53).

Everyday Application: There are moments when faith must act on God's Word before circumstances change. The shout teaches us to trust God's promise, not merely what we can see.

6. Why was Rahab spared, and what does that teach us about mercy? (Joshua 6:17, 22–25)

Joshua commands that Rahab and all who are with her in her house be spared because she hid the messengers Israel sent (Joshua 6:17, 22–23). This reaches back to Joshua 2, where Rahab confessed, "The LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath" (Joshua 2:11). Her faith was not merely words; she acted by protecting the spies and tying the scarlet cord in the window as instructed (Joshua 2:18–21).

Hebrews says, "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe" (Hebrews 11:31). James adds that Rahab's faith was shown by her works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way (James 2:25).

Rahab is also later named in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5). That is a powerful Gospel connection: an outsider from Jericho becomes part of the line of the Messiah.

Forward connection to Christ: Rahab shows that God's mercy reaches unlikely people. Jesus also welcomed outsiders, sinners, and the overlooked, saying, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Matthew 9:12–13).

Everyday Application: No one is beyond the reach of God's mercy. Rahab reminds us not to write people off because of their past, background, or reputation.

7. What warning comes through the command about the devoted things? (Joshua 6:17–19, 24)

Jericho was placed under the ban, meaning it was devoted to the Lord for judgment. Israel was warned not to take the accursed things for themselves, or they would bring trouble on the camp (Joshua 6:18). The silver, gold, bronze, and iron were to go into the treasury of the house of the Lord (Joshua 6:19, 24).

This warning prepares for Joshua 7, where Achan takes what was forbidden and brings defeat and grief upon Israel (Joshua 7:1, 20–26). The issue is not merely theft. It is treating as personal gain what God had placed under His command.

Forward connection to Christ: Jesus warns against hidden greed and divided loyalty: “You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24). He also says that what is hidden will be revealed (Luke 12:2–3).

Everyday Application: Victory can become dangerous when we start claiming God’s gifts for selfish purposes. Obedience includes what we do when no one else sees.

8. How should we understand Israel’s destruction of Jericho (and other cities and nations occupying the Promised Land) as an act of God’s justice? (Joshua 6:21, 24–25)

Israel was not merely acting as a land-hungry conqueror. In the Old Testament’s own explanation, Israel was being used as an instrument of God’s judgment.

God had told Abraham long before this that his descendants would not inherit the land immediately, “for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete” (Genesis 15:16). That means God delayed judgment for generations. The conquest was not sudden divine anger, but judgment after long patience.

The Pentateuch also explains the moral corruption of the Canaanite nations. Leviticus 18:24–25 says the land was defiled by the practices of the nations, and Deuteronomy 18:9–12 condemns practices such as child sacrifice, divination, sorcery, and occult worship. Deuteronomy 9:4–5 is especially important because God tells Israel not to think the land is given because of their own righteousness. Rather, He says it is “because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you” (Deuteronomy 9:5).

So Israel was not to adopt a proud, “we are better than they are” attitude. They were not righteous conquerors earning land by superiority. They were a flawed people being used by a holy God to carry out judgment, while also receiving mercy themselves.

Rahab’s rescue proves that this judgment was not ethnic hatred. A Canaanite woman who believed the Lord was spared and brought into Israel (Joshua 6:25; Hebrews 11:31; Matthew 1:5). Judgment fell on hardened rebellion, but mercy was extended to repentant faith.

Forward connection to Christ: In the Gospel, judgment and mercy meet most fully at the cross. Jesus bore judgment for sinners so that mercy could be given righteously (John 3:16–18; Romans 3:23–26). He is both Savior and Judge (John 5:22–24).

Everyday Application: God’s justice is serious, but it is never reckless or cruel. He is patient, holy, and merciful. This should make us humble, not proud. We should tremble at sin, trust God’s justice, and rejoice that mercy is available to all who turn to Him.