



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Joshua 6:1-27

Lesson 6

Fall 2020

"City of Destruction"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth. Well, we are in the Book of Joshua. And this morning we're in chapter 6, and it's a lengthy chapter, so I'm not going to read the whole chapter. I'm going to read verses 6 through 21, and much of the rest of it I will read or make mention of, of course, in the lesson itself. But the first five verses give the Lord's instruction to Joshua about how they were to proceed against Jericho, and it's very unusual military instructions. So with verse 6 on he gives the instruction to the priests and the nation, and they carry it out in our text.

⁶ So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." ⁷ Then he said to the people, "Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the ark of the LORD." ⁸ And it was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. ⁹ The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while they continued to blow the trumpets. ¹⁰ But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you,

'Shout!' Then you shall shout!" ¹¹ So he had the ark of the LORD taken around the city, circling *it* once; then they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

¹² Now Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³ The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew the trumpets; and the armed men went before them and the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while they continued to blow the trumpets. ¹⁴ Thus the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp; they did so for six days.

¹⁵ Then on the seventh day they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times; only on that day they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶ At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city. ¹⁷ The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. ¹⁸ But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not covet *them* and take some of the things under the ban, and make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it. ¹⁹ But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD." ²⁰ So the people shouted, and *priests* blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city. ²¹ They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

Joshua 6:6-21

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of studying it together. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, it's a great privilege to be here on a Sunday morning. We're going through this pandemic; and it's changed our schedule quite a bit; and our lives have been altered by it. But we're able to come back under these conditions and meet; and it's a great thing to be with Your people on the Lord's day, to see one another we haven't seen throughout the week, and have fellowship. This is great fellowship; this is fellowship. It's meeting together with one another; with people who are born again, people of a common mind, and meeting around the Word of God and studying it and reflecting upon it, worshiping You in song, and worshiping You in our heart, worshiping You as we reflect upon the things that are in our text.

And so Lord, we pray You would bless us, and bless us with an understanding of these things. Some things in this passage are difficult to understand and accept. Difficult certainly for the world; but even for Christians they can prove difficult. But we pray that the Spirit of God would open our minds to them and help us to understand the great lesson of this text—and learn this great lesson about Your sovereignty and Your empowerment. The things that took place so long ago in ancient history are just as relevant for us today. And the lesson in this passage is very relevant for us today. So may we learn that. Teach us Lord. Give us great confidence in You, and in Your Word, that we would follow it, and we'd live according to it.

So we ask Your blessing upon us spiritually, but we also pray for our material needs. We do that whenever we pray together on a Sunday morning. But of course, in these past months, the urgency of praying for our physical needs is all the more important, with this virus about. We pray for all of us that You would watch over us and give us wisdom and health.

Lord, we thank You for the great blessing that You have given to every one of Your children, all of Your elect, all of those that You have chosen from the foundation of the world, but You have brought to Yourself through saving grace and faith, and we thank You for the future that's ours. We live in troubled times, but we have a glorious future, and we thank You for that. And thank You that, as we live in this world, You are

leading us. We're reminded of that in this text, and we're to follow You. And as we do that, every step is a safe step.

So Lord, bless us now as we sing our next hymn. Prepare our hearts for a time of study together. We thank You for this great opportunity we have to be together, to read this text of Scripture, to consider the meaning, and pray that through that, You'd build us up in the faith. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

When we think of man's 'genius', we think of art; literature; and certainly we think of science. But we also see it in war. Man has a genius of inventing weapons of destruction for new situations. It's always been that way. In the British Museum, there are great alabaster slabs taken from a Syrian king, Sennacherib's palace, in Nineveh. And on them is depicted the battle of Lachish. That battle is referred to in the Bible. Lachish was a large, walled city southwest of Jerusalem.

At some point, villages realized that one way to stop these invading armies is to build walls. —And so they built walls. And here we see on these bas-reliefs all the different engines of war, the inventions of siege warfare designed to breach the walls of those cities. There are arches on ladders against the walls, shooting arrows at defenders above. Great siege towers rolled up to the wall, often with battering rams, all kinds of weapons to overcome walls of defense.

What isn't found in any of those scenes of battle is trumpets and priests. What we find in Joshua 6, at the battle of Jericho, when priests blew rams' horns—and the walls collapsed. It was a unique battle that relied on the power of God—not the genius of man. And that's the point. It was to demonstrate to Israel, at the very beginning of their conquest of Canaan, that the Lord is great and He can be trusted.

But ultimately it occurred for us, the church, to teach us how we fight the battles that we face every day. Paul wrote of it in 2 Corinthians, chapter 10, verses 3 through 5. 'We live in the flesh but don't war according to the flesh. The weapons of our warfare,' he wrote, "are divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God." That's the

lesson of Joshua 6 for us. We walk and war by faith. We fight an invisible enemy, and cause the collapse of unseen castles. But they're just as real as Jericho and its tall brick walls.

Joshua had been scouting Jericho and making his plans for battle when he had a supernatural encounter. A warrior stood before him, with sword in hand. He was the "captain" of the Lord's army. When Joshua heard that, he fell on his face and he worshiped Him. The warrior received his worship and told him that the ground that he was on was holy. What all of that indicated is, this was no man, but a divine being. It was a theophany, an appearance of God, an appearance of the Lord—what we would call a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. And that is made explicit in verse 2 of chapter 6, where the conversion continues, and 'the captain' is identified as the Lord, "The LORD said to Joshua, 'See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king *and* the valiant warriors.' "

Verse 1 is a parenthesis that gives context: Jericho is described as 'tightly shut up'. No one went out and no one came in. The point is, the city was paralyzed with fear. They didn't go out to fight. They stayed within the security of those great walls. But it also indicated the difficulty of Israel's mission in conquering it. Its gates were shut tight. Its walls were tall. There was no way in, it would seem, except by means of a bitter fight. But the difficulty, like the flooded Jordan river earlier, only magnified the might of the Lord.

If Joshua had been developing a strategy for taking Jericho by conventional means; with ladders, or building a siege ramp, it was scrapped when the Lord said, "I've given it to you." It was the Lord's assurance that victory was so certain that it was as though it had already occurred. "I've given it to you." It was now only a matter of Joshua following the orders of his captain.

The orders are given in verses 3 through 5, and they would have been received by any military man with surprise, to say the least. Verse 3, "You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days. Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; then, on the seventh

day, you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall be that when they make a long blast with the rams' horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up, every man straight ahead."

Now that has to be unique in the annals of military history. But it was a strategy with at least two purposes. First, to test the people's faith in the Lord, and their obedience to His Word. That was the previous generation's problem—the previous generation's failure. The great walled cities of Canaan were too big a challenge for them. They couldn't trust God to topple them. Now the Lord put the new generation to the test. Will you walk around the city walls and trust Me to pull them down?

Well that's the first purpose. The second purpose was to magnify the greatness of God. This was not a victory that could be claimed by Israel's soldiers or attributed to the genius of Joshua, as though he were an ancient Napoleon; or Patton. This was supernatural. So that when the conquest was complete, all Israel would have to say, "To God alone be the glory. He's all sufficient." And it would show the nature of all of Israel's victories in Canaan. The strategies may differ. In fact, we will see that at the next battle at Ai; the battle is different, the strategy is different. But the reason for victory is always the same. And that is "the captain of the Lord of hosts" was going before Israel.

The plan was also symbolical. You'll notice all the sevens—seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days of circling the city, seven times around the city on the seventh day. The word seven occurs four times in verse 4, and 14 times in the chapter. And clearly, we're intended to notice that; notice it for a purpose. Seven is the number of perfection. It's the number of completion. And the meaning was, to reinforce that idea that God's plan is complete. God's plan is perfect. And the Lord gave Israel a complete victory.

It always is complete when God gives us instruction. There is nothing incomplete in God's plan. It may be very simple, and it may be puzzling to us because of its simplicity, but it's always complete and always perfect. His ways and His works are that,

and we can rest in them. But it's a test. Obedience always is a test. It can be counter intuitive. Often it is. Do we go forward as God has instructed us to do?

Now that applies broadly, from our personal lives, to businesses and how they are run, and to our church and how it is governed and it's run. It applies across the board to all things. Are we going to follow the Word of God or are we going to follow the way of the world. Oftentimes worldly wisdom gives us a shortcut. It seems to have a quick fix and have the clear insight of how we should do things; 'Well this is the simplest way to do it!' While following Scripture means, 'We have to wait on the Lord'. And waiting is always difficult. —It's a test.

But that's the life of faith. It's really Romans chapter 12, in verse 2, where Paul said, "Do not be conformed to this world." Literally, "Do not be conformed to this age"; to its way of thinking—its way of doing. Those who walk by faith walk with the Lord, and think differently. But He always honors His Word, and He honors those who are faithful to Him. Always.

Joshua didn't question the Lord's strategy or hesitate to make preparations for it. He had learned the lessons of the previous generation. He'd seen their failure. He'd seen the consequences. He'd learned the lessons of 40 years in the wilderness. So he went to the priests, and in verses 6 and 7, gave them the instruction to carry the ark of the covenant and march around the city, blowing rams' horns. He told the people that an armed guard was to accompany the seven priests and go in front of the ark, and go behind it. The ark was the focus. It symbolized that the Lord was in their midst; that He was there; that the battle was His. The only sound that would be heard was that sound of the trumpets. The people were to remain silent and wait for Joshua to give the order. And only then, upon the orders of Joshua, were they to shout.

So, according to verse 11, Joshua had the ark of the Lord taken around the city, circling it once. Then they came to the camp and spent the night in the camp. The second day, Joshua rose early in the morning. The priests took up the ark of the Lord, and the people marched around the city again.

The city of Jericho occupied about nine acres. You don't need to assume that every Israelite took part in the march. It had seven priests and very likely had representatives from each of the tribes. It would have been a large company of people, even at that. And so, the march around the city would have taken something like 25 to 35 minutes.

Every day the Canaanites would see a long column of soldiers and priests coming across the plain and circle their city in a kind of eerie silence, broken only by the sound of the horns. Verse 14 says that they did it for six days. And it must have produced a growing sense of apprehension inside the city of the approaching doom.

During the first crusade, when the French crusaders came up to conquer Jerusalem, they marched around the city singing psalms. And on the walls of the cities, the Muslims held crosses that they'd taken from the churches—and they mocked the cross, and they defiled the cross. Well there's no account of that kind of bravado from the walls of Jericho. They were evidently paralyzed with fear wondering what the strange procession meant each day.

"Then came the seventh day", verse 15 states, the people "rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times; only on that day they marched around the city seven times. At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, 'Shout! For the Lord has given you the city. The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD, only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.' " Everyone else though, men, women, and children, were to be put to the sword.

That's the idea in the phrase, "put under the ban". The Hebrew word translated *ban* is the word *cherem*. And it means "devoted". So it can be translated, "The city shall be a devoted thing." Devoted to a specific end or purpose. Since Jericho was the first city of the conquest within Canaan, it was devoted to the Lord as the first fruits of the land—an offering to Him.

Verses 18 and 19 state that all of the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron belong to the Lord; and they were to be put into His treasury. In the other cities, the rest of the conquest, all of the spoils of war went to the people. But Jericho was different. Jericho was the first city of conquest, and so nothing in that city was to be taken. It was the Lord's, and it was to be devoted to His service.

But the people of Canaan were devoted to destruction. And so under the ban also means being utterly destroyed. That's what happened. After Joshua shouted, verse 20 and 21 state that the people shouted, and the priests blew the trumpets, and the walls fell down flat.

Now how did that happen? Is there a naturalistic, rationalistic explanation for this; such as an earthquake occurring just at the right time? If so, it would have been in just the right way and not only in just the right time, because all the walls of the city fell down except where Rahab's house was. Which indicates that this is something completely of the Lord, if that's not clear enough in and of itself.

Now people who doubt miracles would dismiss this as just a kind of myth that's been passed down; a fable that has been enhanced. And maybe they did conquer a city and did conquer Jericho like other armies had done, but this couldn't have happened. Well people who doubt that, (have a problem with the account), have a problem—not with reason; but with faith. There's nothing unreasonable about God doing this. Not if you believe in the God of the Bible, (which is not an unreasonable thing to believe). Not if the God of the Bible can create everything out of nothing; can breathe life into dust; and create a living human being. There's nothing God cannot do.

In fact, that's what He said to Abraham when He gave him the promise, that out of his old age, when he was past the age of bearing children, and Sarah herself was barren, that he'd have a child. And Abraham marveled over that, found it a bit incredulous, I guess. And God says, "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?" Which can also be translated, "Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?" There's nothing He can't do. There's no wonder he can't perform. And so this is nothing. Jesus is described in Colossians 1:17 as holding everything together in the Universe by the will of His power.

He can just let the atoms go and the walls fall. Well, that's how the Bible explains it. And this has happened.

It's not a problem of reason, it's a problem of faith. And in Hebrews 11, verse 30 says, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." This was a miracle which God brought about in response to the people's faith and obedience. Just as crossing the Jordan, you'll remember. The priests come to the Jordan. It's flooding. They don't stop. They don't stand before this flood and think, "What are we going to do now?" They just kept going. And as the sole of their foot touched the water, the waters backed up.

That's the life of faith, going forward. And when it seems like this is not the wise thing to do, God works. That's what He did here. The walls fell, the people attacked, and verse 21 states, "They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and donkey with the edge of the sword."

"Everything" but Rahab and her family. Joshua kept the promise that the two spies made to her and sent them into her house to bring her and her family and things out. And brought them out, we're told, and placed them outside the camp of Israel. Why outside the camp of Israel? Because they weren't ready for the camp of Israel. They were Gentiles and Canaanites, and they were in need of ceremonial cleansing before they became a part of the nation.

Then, verses 24 and 26 state that the city was burned with fire, and cursed by Joshua. The chapter ends, verse 27, "So the Lord was with Joshua and his fame was in all the land." It was a decisive victory and a token that the Lord had given all of Canaan to Israel, as He had promised to Abraham. It was their inheritance. But they got it at the cost of a lot of Canaanites.

What about them? One commentator wrote, "The annihilation of the Canaanites is one of the most perplexing moral problems in the Bible." And a lot of critics would agree with that. But all of this has to be looked at in context. This was divine judgment on the Canaanites who were not innocent people. Their fate had been foretold centuries earlier, in Genesis 15, verse 16. God had promised all of the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants "Forever", in Genesis 13, verse 15. And again in Genesis

15, verse 7. He is the Lord of all the earth. He is the Lord of all the universe, but certainly the Lord of all the earth, and it's His land to give to whom He wishes.

But in Genesis 15, verse 16, He told Abrahah, 'The people would not inherit Canaan for over 400 years—not until the "iniquity of the Amorite" was complete.' Now that would take four generations. We get an idea of the *iniquity* that is referred to there from the Book of Deuteronomy. In chapter 18 there's a list of what is called their "detestable things", (vs9). And the list includes witchcraft, idolatry, child sacrifice. —This was a murderous, immoral people. Their perversion was full blown. This was justice. Just what occurred with Sodom and Gomorrah.

God is patient with sinners. He was patient with the Amorites and the Canaanites for four generations. But eventually a holy God must execute justice—and justice had come. But this was also, not only to carry out divine justice, the justice of a holy God against a very, very unholy people, this was also a safeguard for the nation—to protect Israel from what Dr. Bruce Waltke called, "The spiritual contagion of the Canaanites."

Now that's the reason given in Deuteronomy chapter 20, verse 18, where Moses said they had to be eliminated, (these Canaanites), so that they may not teach you 'to do according to all their detestable things'. And the susceptibility of Israel to that spiritual disease is seen all through the Old Testament. So for the spiritual health and preservation of the nation, and the purpose of God in salvation, the Canaanites had to be removed. It was only just.

But also, this was a very specific remedy for a specific problem. It was not the general practice of war in Israel. It was restricted to the Canaanites and it was not used against other people. In the midst of this severe but righteous display of divine justice is also divine mercy, and grace. Because verse 25 states, "However, Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." She learned the truth about the Lord, and she believed. She repented. Jericho didn't. And grace abounded to her. The harlot not only became a citizen of Israel, but she became

an ancestor of the Messiah. Rahab is listed in Christ's genealogy in Matthew chapter 1, verses 5 and 6. That's grace. That's transforming grace.

None of this is to soften the seriousness of what happened at Jericho, and the ban on the Canaanites, 'utterly destroy them'. That's very serious. But again, it was restricted to the Canaanites, and was not used against other people.

And it certainly is not anywhere in the Bible set forth as a practice of the church. I mentioned the crusaders earlier. When they stormed Jerusalem, they lacked all restraint. They'd been provoked somewhat by those in the city and those on the wall. But they entered the city and lacked all restraint. And as a result, they carried out a massacre. It's been called one of the greatest crimes of history. They killed everyone in their path. Soldiers and civilians. Thousands of people. And then they all went to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and celebrated mass. Well they called themselves soldiers of Christ, but they were not doing the Lord's work.

God has given the sword to the state. The sword of the church is spiritual. It's the Word of God; It's Scripture; The Gospel. And we use it as Paul told the Corinthians, for the destruction of fortresses. Those are philosophical, spiritual fortresses that men have built in defense of error and in opposition to the truth. They are the world views of the age—that's our 'Jericho'. And that's how Paul explains it in 2 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 5. "*We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

So these are fortresses of the mind and will—intellectual strongholds. The battle is between truth and error; between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world. It's been that way from the very beginning. Paul wrote, in Romans chapter 1, verse 18, that men "suppress the truth in unrighteousness." They know the truth, they see the truth, but they suppress it. They rationalize it away so that they can live as they please.

Science is good. Christians do not object to science. Science is good. But men falsely use science and construct philosophy to dismiss the Gospel and Word of God as 'foolish', (and rest confidently in their own conclusions.) These are the intellectual

castles they inhabit, the walls they hide behind. Christian warfare is aimed at casting them down, while unbelievers aim at fortifying them against the light of the Gospel.

We won't succeed against them on their ground—fighting with their strategies and weapons. We can do that, we can succeed against them, only by God's way and His means. That's the lesson of Jericho. It wasn't conquered by conventional warfare. Israel's tactics would have seemed foolish to any military genius—but by marching and shouting, though, the walls fell. The Gospel is like that. We don't need to shout, just speak. It may seem foolish to the world—it will seem foolish to the world—but it brings down the walls and the intellectual towers of men by God's power, not man's ability. That's the power of divine revelation over human reason. 'The Gospel', Paul said in Romans chapter 1, verse 16, is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..."

So we don't need to try to engage the unbeliever on his ground. Paul never did that. In fact, when he came to Greece and to Corinth, he told them, in his first letter, that he didn't come as a philosopher. 1 Corinthian 2, verses 1 and 2, he "...did not come (*to them*) with superiority of speech or of wisdom..." In other words, 'I didn't come using all of the philosophical terminology that would impress someone. I didn't come to make people think I was educated in Elysium, that I was a person who studied under the students of Aristotle or Plato. He determined', he said, 'to know nothing among them, know nothing' about that, about philosophy and the way of the world, and the terminology of the world. He didn't come as a philosopher. He said, 'he came not with superiority of speech or wisdom, determined to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' And that was enough.

Faith is not established in the unbeliever on the basis of argument and reason. Not that we don't have sound reasons for believing. We do. But it's established by God through the new birth—through regeneration. It's not that we don't give reasonable responses to challenges raised against the truth. We do. We should. In fact, Peter said that we are to be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks about the hope that is in us. They should see there's a hope in us, and we should be able to defend that hope.

And we're to do it the right way. He tells us the right way in 1 Peter 3, verse 15, with "gentleness and reverence". But in chapter 1, verse 23, Peter said that 'we are born again through seed that is imperishable'; that is, through the living and enduring Word of God. In other words, it is through the Gospel that the Holy Spirit implants life in the heart of a person. —The hearer of the Gospel, as he or she hears it, that seed is planted within them so that through the giving of the Gospel a person is born again—and believes.

Now that's what Paul said in Romans chapter 1, verse 16, the gospel is "the power of God for salvation", not our skill in debate. It's the Holy Spirit using the Word of God. It is supernatural, like Joshua chapter 6, 'The soldiers shouted—the walls of Jericho fell.' We preach, or teach, or tell the Gospel, and fortresses of the mind fall. We have the powerful and sharp "two-edged sword" that is the Word of God. With it, Paul says, we not only pull-down towers of resistance, we take prisoners. And the prisoners, or the captives, are the thoughts of a person's mind. 2 Corinthians 10, verse 5, "...we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." Which means through the Gospel a person's mind is actually set free to think correctly. Freed from error. —The truth shall set you free.

We struggle still, (we know that), that even when an unbeliever is born again, and his thoughts are taken captive by Christ, some resistance remains. So we have that and will have that till the day we die. We're tempted by the world. We're tempted by its ideas. So the battle continues within us. And we must struggle to continually, daily, take every thought captive to Christ, to align our thinking with God's revelation. And that takes time. That takes study. That takes prayer. That takes discipline. Christians need to discipline their life to study and consider deeply and obey the Word of God. That is the daily battle—daily battle!

When Israel obeyed, when they followed the Lord's instruction, He was with them. Walls fell, and they triumphed. And it's the same for us. We must listen to His Word and obey it.

In connection with that, there is an epilogue to Joshua 6 that's instructive. Joshua cursed the city of Jericho in verse 26. It was never to be rebuilt. If it were, it would be rebuilt at great loss; "Cursed before the LORD is the man who raises up and builds this city Jericho, with *the loss of* his first born he shall lay it's foundation, and with *the loss of* his youngest son he shall set up its gates."

Centuries later, that very thing happened. It's recorded in 1 Kings chapter 16, verse 34, "In his days, Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundation with the *loss of* Abiram, his first son, and set up its gates with the *loss of* his youngest son, Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun."

That's paganism. That's what Israel destroyed at Jericho. But it shows how contagious sin is, and the results of unbelief—of ignoring God's Word. The destruction of family and self. Centuries had passed, but God's Word was still active and still relevant—as it is today. John 3, verse 36, is 2000 years old but applies today; "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." And we have a picture of the wrath of God in Joshua, chapter 6.

If you've not believed in Christ for forgiveness and salvation, you're like those people in Jericho—doomed. It was a city of destruction. That's what the world today is.—It is doomed. Don't be a fool like Hiel, who ignored God's Word. Flee the wrath. Be like Rahab. Come to Christ, as you are, with all of your sin. Come to Him, He'll remove it, take it away, take your guilt away, your sins away, "as far as the east is from the west." Trust in Him, in His sacrifice and be saved.

May God help you to do that, help all of us to be men and women, young and old like Joshua and that army, following the Lord in all that He tells us to do.

Let's close in a word of prayer, and give thanks for the Elements that we are about to take. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank you for this time together again. We thank you for this great text of Scripture that may be a bit troubling, but not if we see it in context. It's a serious passage. It's history. —It happened. And it tells us that You are a holy God and a just God, and justice comes. There'll be no loose ends. When it's all said and done, justice will have established Your righteousness. But You establish Your righteousness in Your people through the cross, where justice fell on our substitute. And that through faith in Him and faith alone in the Gospel, we are saved. And we thank You for that. It's all of grace. We're like Rahab the harlot, just as bad and undeserving as she was; but through faith in You we've been rescued. We've been numbered among Your people with a glorious future, a glorious inheritance. We thank You for that.

And Lord, as we take this Supper now, we pray that You would bless us, You would prepare our hearts for it, and You would help us to do what we're instructed to do, and that's remember Your Son and His sacrifice. And we should remember this, that it's the gift of the Triune God. You chose a people for Yourself, an innumerable multitude, and You sent Your Son to purchase them. —He did that. And the Spirit of God has brought us to a saving knowledge, joined us to Him and to salvation. May we reflect deeply upon that as we take these Elements. We thank You for them and what they for the grace of God. And it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

(End of Audio)