

JOSHUA

Lesson 9 - Chapter 6

We ended our last lesson with Joshua 5; and the last paragraph dealt with this mysterious Commander of the Lord's Hosts who suddenly appeared before Joshua. No doubt this was a manifestation of God and not a regular angel nor an archangel because not even an archangel allows himself to be worshipped. But Joshua bowed down before this being and the being instructed Joshua with the same words and authority that Moses had heard more than 80 years earlier: "Take you sandals off your feet because the place you are standing is holy ground".

When Joshua asked the being if he was here to fight alongside Israel or was with the enemy, the sword-wielding apparition said "no", that he was the Commander of God's army. It was a strange answer, really, and one that we only lightly discussed. The Hebrew sages point out that at least part of the meaning of the being's cryptic response was that he was NOT under any **human** authority. He was not here to offer his army to join with Joshua's army nor was he to be under Joshua's command.

Quite the contrary, this being was THE Commander of ALL of God's army. As I have demonstrated to you in my Reality of Duality illustration, there are parallel realities that exist; there is the visible physical realm and there is the invisible spiritual realm. These two realms work in concert to achieve God's purpose. God has an army of spirit beings (warrior angels if you would), and He established at Mt. Sinai an army of physical beings (Israel's Holy Warriors). Each may have its own leader (Joshua's was Israel's and it's generally believed that archangel Michael was the leader of the heavenly army), but over them is the supreme commander, the Lord Himself. And THAT is who stood before Joshua.

I have mentioned a few times that the chapter and verse numbers in the Bible were invented and assigned somewhat arbitrarily long after the Bible era came to a close. The purpose was not to distort the Bible or to change it, but merely to divide it up in ways that could be universally referred to and communicated thereby making the study and discourse concerning The Word more precise.

However that doesn't mean that chapter and verse beginnings and endings were necessarily chosen in a way that best reflects the end of one story or scene, and the beginning of another. Most times I can see the logic and rationale behind how it was divided; but here in Joshua 5 and 6 it causes us some confusion.

There really ought to be no break between chapters 5 and 6; it is one long story. But more than

that the chapter markers make it seem as though the Commander of God's Hosts finished speaking to Joshua at the end of chapter 5, and then a new and different conversation was struck between the Lord and Joshua to begin chapter 6; such is not the case. The same apparition who stood before Joshua in chapter 5 is still speaking to Joshua to begin chapter 6. So that we get the context correct in today's lesson, I'm going to begin reading at Joshua chapter 5:13 and then just continue right into Joshua 6.

Open your Bibles to Joshua chapter 5.

READ JOSHUA 5:13 – 6:27 (end)

Please recall that the reason we started in chapter 5 before moving to chapter 6 is that the SAME divine being is continuing to speak with Joshua, and the subject is the forthcoming attack on the Canaanite city of Jericho. The 1st verse of chapter 6 explains that the city had barricaded itself inside its thick rock walls and closed its gates so that none could go out or come in.

I've tried to reveal to you some of the obvious and not-so-obvious God-patterns that were established in the Torah and are now playing out in Joshua; this one little verse represents yet another of these patterns. Allow me to momentarily detour to repeat and perhaps make more clear a fundamental principle about Torah Class's approach to presenting the Holy Scripture; it is that God's truth is best revealed by the patterns He creates and these patterns form the context and the boundaries for understanding the meaning behind what is occurring in any given circumstance in His Word (Old and New Testaments). Destroy or ignore the patterns and the truth becomes distorted or even un-understandable. Distorted truth leads to distorted beliefs, which leads to distorted doctrines.

In our modern era we want everything presented to us short and sweet. Westerners in particular don't want to take the long and sure path we prefer shortcuts. But shortcuts (of all kinds) give us very crude and incomplete views and information because what we bypassed is where the real beauty and substance lies. Discovering God's patterns is not difficult, but it is time consuming; and first and foremost discovering God's patterns involves the realization that the New Testament is based and dependent upon the Old, and not the other way around. The New Testament does NOT create God-patterns, it follows them (or to use an often misused Bible word, the NT *fulfills* the OT patterns) and I believe I've shown you dozens (if not scores) of them over the past few years.

Thus the standard way that Christians have, for centuries, debated and formed doctrines about various theological topics is to whip out a favorite verse from here and there in the Bible (usually with little context and often taken completely OUT of context) and claim that the answer to whatever the argument lies there. It is really quite dangerous to take a verse or two out of context or to take even a whole chapter out of the context of the book it's in; and it is equally as dangerous to take an entire book out of the context of the Bible as a whole when forming conclusions. But when we take 2/3rds of the Bible and declare it null and void, then we not only lose the context we lose the all-important patterns that connect us with the mind and purposes of God. The resulting doctrines are what one might expect when most of the

pertinent information is ignored or deleted in favor of advancing a pre-determined agenda of some sort.

I'll give you one quick illustration of what can happen when God-patterns are destroyed or thought to be no longer relevant. Due to the upcoming Presidential election, the faith of one of the leading candidates has caused some concern; he is a Mormon. The Mormons were established early in the 1800's and at the center of their faith are a human Prophet called Joseph Smith and a revelatory angel named Moronai. The Mormons claim Jesus as their Savior; they claim the entire Bible as the true Word of God. But they also claim that the Prophet Smith and the angel Moronai have brought NEW laws and commands from the Lord, and changed and abolished some older ones. Thus we have the Book of Mormon that is essentially the 3rd (and the newest) testament to the Bible.

Now typically most Evangelical Christians gasp and shake their heads and cluck their tongues at this so-called "cult" and their reliance on a 3rd Bible testament. But in reality they are doing nothing more than what mainstream Christian doctrine has enabled them to do; they are merely the first to take advantage.

I think I can sum that rather provocative statement up in a simple question: is it possible that God can give His Word to His Mediator, declare His Word to be permanent, unchangeable and forever, and then He changes it and declares parts of it as null and void at a later date? Well if you are like most Evangelical Christians your honest answer MUST be yes because that belief is central to the current doctrines of the church. Most mainstream Christian denominations insist that even though God said (hundreds of times) that all of His laws and commands and principles were forever, He nonetheless ended them with the close of the Old Testament and created new ones to replace the old in the New Testament.

So if that is the case (and the Lord has done this once already) why should we be surprised if the Lord does it yet again? Why should we be shocked if He were to suddenly declare that all or parts of the New Testament are now changed (or even abolished) and replaced with the NEWEST Testament, a 3rd testament, called the Book of Mormon? That, essentially, is the position of the Mormon Church. Oh, just like Christians who run around with a Bible that has an Old Testament in it but at the same time believe it to be generally irrelevant because of the New, so do Mormons run around with an Old AND New Testament under their arm but believe it to be subservient to the NEWEST testament.

You see that's the slippery slope we buy into when we say that God at one time declared His laws and commands are forever, but then later He changed up on us and gave new ones to replace the ones that He had previously given. That is exactly what we're doing, though, when we say that the Hebrew Bible (the OT) has given way to the New Testament. And that we must accept that while God at one point in history gave us the Law and declared it perfect and completely doable, that with the advent of Jesus the disciples of Christ were supposedly running around telling anyone who will listen that the Law was faulty, it was bad, it was too hard, and thus it was to be ignored. That same erroneous doctrine also says that we must accept that while in the Torah the Lord declared the Sabbath to be a holy and permanent appointed time that commemorates the day He ceased from creating, that in the New

Testament He has now reversed course and declared (through Paul) that the Sabbath is actually a profane thing that is really all about the elemental spirits and therefore it should stop being observed.

So all that Mormonism has done is to take the logical path set down by a wrong-minded, agenda driven Christian theology and follow it to it's logical conclusion; that the Bible HAS no patterns that the Lord can't change at a moments notice. After all if the Lord can abolish or make major changes to the original testament that He at one time declared perfect and permanent, and replace it with a newer one, then why would anyone believe that at some point He couldn't simply abolish or make major changes to the New Testament, declare it's message and Mediator to be faulty, and then give us an even newer and better one?

Naturally I object to the entire premise behind this mainstream Christian theology that has practically ruined the Church. God has not replaced the Old with the New, anymore than the writing of Exodus replaced Genesis. The Old was perfect and remains perfect. The New is perfect and remains perfect. The Old is the foundation and basis for the whole Word of God. The Old is where the patterns are generated and explained; the New only follows those patterns. The Old set down all the requirements of the Messiah, the New revealed the Messiah and recorded that He met ALL the Old Testament requirements; therefore we can be certain that Yeshua of Nazareth is that Messiah.

Look, I know that this topic still bothers many of you and I suspect some of you get tired of hearing it; in fact I wish I didn't feel as though I have to bring up the subject over and over again (believe me, I'd rather not). But everything I teach you is from the perspective of a never changing, living God that means what He says and says what He means. When He says His laws are perfect, they're perfect. When He says they are forever, it means forever (not until further notice). As long as I sense His instruction to keep hammering this home, I'm going to do it. This concept that in order to accept Jesus Christ as God and Savior we must throw out everything that came before His advent is a travesty and keeps us in slavery to weak and burdensome manmade doctrines instead of to God and His immutable patterns and order of things.

Thus we see a never changing and still-in-effect God-pattern being played out and further developed in verse 1 of chapter 6 of Joshua. And it is this: **the hardening of the human will and mind towards God brings certain destruction**. We saw this with the Pharaoh of Egypt, and now the King of Jericho orders that his fortified city harden itself against God and God's people. All avenues of access were closed. All avenues of escape were blocked. This people wanted nothing of the God of Israel; in reality all they had to do to have their lives spared was to submit to the Lord God just as the innkeeper/prostitute Rahab did a few days earlier. But the inhabitants of Jericho had reached the point of no return; there was no opportunity for them to escape death even if they changed their minds. Their fate was sealed (although they didn't necessarily believe that) once God's Holy Warriors took up positions around their doomed city.

When this verse speaks of the gates being barricaded it is declaring the permanence of the situation; no changing of heart is going to happen. There is a day not too far ahead of us when this will be the circumstance for all mankind.

In verse 2 the Commander of God's Army speaks to Joshua again and tells him that the outcome of this siege of Jericho is already decided. All the inhabitants of the city will be annihilated, even the king and his warriors (often these are spared by a merciful enemy). Since God has already won the battle in the heavenlies (as attested to by the Commander of God's Hosts being there to explain to Joshua what little Israel had to do to fulfill the same on earth), then all Joshua's men are going to do is a mop-up operation. If they will but follow the Lord's instructions the city will fall like a house of cards; and you know what, I'll bet those divine instructions sounded about as ridiculous to Joshua and his warriors as they do us now. This was no earthly or known battle strategy being played out. The army of Israel was to march around the city every day for a week, doing nothing but blowing shofars, and that was that. No shooting arrows. No climbing up siege ladders. Soon they would just walk over the top of the debris and destroy everything that would be laid bare by a supernatural act; at least that's what the Lord was telling Joshua that would happen if he were obedient.

The instructions are quite simple: they are to march around the city of Jericho one time per day for 6 consecutive days. Seven priests were to carry 7 shofars and blow them during this circular procession. But on the 7th day of doing this they were to march around the city 7 times; once accomplished a long blast was to be blown on the 7 shofars, and the people were to shout and the walls would cave in until the city was flat and exposed. Only then are God's people (who completely encircle the city) to walk straightforward from where they stand and kill all that were still alive.

Starting in verse 6 we have Joshua do what a subordinate officer does: he takes the orders from the Commander and forwards them on to his charges. But here we get a little more detail. The Ark of the Covenant is to be the featured item of the procession. Rather than this most sacred item being held far away, safe from harm, it will be in the middle of the column with the warriors of Israel front and rear. That is because the Ark is indicative of God's presence. God was not only there "in spirit" (in other words wishing them well but from a safe distance); He was there in HOLY spirit. His actual presence was on the battlefield with them not simply as an encouragement but as the instrument of victory and destruction of the enemy. Not only the priests but also the warriors were to blow shofars as they made their daily journey around the battlements of Jericho. Can you imagine the racket of all those shofars, and the commotion and confusion of the people inside the city? They had never heard nor seen such a thing before. But another interesting command is also given: do NOT shout until the day I tell you to shout. In fact, other than for the shofars don't let a word come from your mouth! The warriors and priests are to march around the city silently but for the incessant blowing of the shofars.

There is a word play going on here that is good to know: we have the people and the shofars "shouting". The Hebrew word for "shout" is *rua* and the term is applied BOTH to the noise that will come from the people's mouths on the 7th day, and to the daily blowing of the shofars. We'll talk about the shouting a little more later.

Let's talk about the shofars a bit. A shofar is an animal horn, usually from a Ram, so these are not trumpets as are sometimes the English translation; these are signaling devices, not musical instruments. The primary ritual trumpets that the Hebrews were known to use at the Temple were the silver trumpets blown by the priests and the Levites (regular Israelites or their

warriors would never be permitted to blow such an instrument). However it is also known that there were some metal horns used by the Levites that were shaped much like a Ram's horn, and they were given the rather generic name of **yobel**. **Yobel** is a Hebraism that technically means an animal horn, but more commonly it meant a trumpet or a horn used during the Jubilee year celebrations. Two kinds of Jubilee year horns were known: extra large Ram's horns, and metal horns that had an intentional resemblance to an animal horn. There is much disagreement over exactly WHEN the metal horns, the metal **yobel**, came into use so it's hard to know exactly what kind of instrument the Priests were blowing as they walked around Jericho. However since it would be 50 years at least before Israel would even have a Jubilee it is my suspicion that the **yobel** used by the Priests at Jericho were but king-sized horns taken off of a Ram.

Shofars were also used in battle like bugles were used in the American military until a few decades ago; the purpose was the same. Shofars could make a loud noise heard above the din of battle, and there were various kinds of blasts that gave instructions to retreat, go forward, close up formation, and signaled other kinds of military maneuvers. And like bugles, they were used to signal the call to battle at the start of a war. In the Bible era that's how they were used most; but also we see shofars used in connection with the prophets either announcing a new oracle of God or as a warning that destruction and wrath were on the way.

Likely we are talking about hundreds of shofars being blown as Israel's warriors walked around Jericho. But, are we talking here about ALL of Israel's male warriors being present? Were there 600,000 men in the column that surrounded Jericho? No. The same term "armed men" is used here (referring to the troops that marched around Jericho) that was used to describe the 40,000 soldiers from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh that led Israel across the Jordan River. Recall that those 3 tribes took up their land inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River; their crossing to the west was only to keep a promise to Moses that if they were allowed to have their land allotment on the east side they would fight along with the other Israelite tribes to conquer Canaan. So these were those special crack troops that would be the vanguard of most of the Israelite battles to come. The people of Israel were undoubtedly still camped near Gilgal, in the plains of Jericho, which was only a half-days walk or so from the city.

Verse 12 uses another Hebraism that we talked about a couple of weeks ago; it says that Joshua got up early in the morning to lead the men to encircle Jericho. Remember, that term "got up early in the morning" is a literary device used to indicate a great zealotness to get to work on whatever task the Lord has assigned; so it is a sign of great merit and honor.

We certainly see a litany of 7's in this story, don't we? Seven days of circling Jericho; 7 priests carrying 7 shofars; going around Jericho 7 times on the 7th day. This, coupled with the command that the people are to keep silent, is to show that everything that is happening regarding Jericho is a work of Yehoveh; that the people had little to do with it. Seven is symbolic of the works of God, and of His perfection and **that** is what is being impressed upon both Israel and on the local inhabitants.

Well, in verse 16, the day of destiny arrives; in his zeal Joshua gets up early in the morning

and organizes this, the 7th day's, procession. It's going to be an especially long day, for today the army of Israel along with the Ark of the Testimony held upon the shoulders of the priests, will compass the shut-up city of Jericho 7 complete revolutions. And upon completing the 7th revolution all the warriors shout and the shofars blast out a single long note. Or better, as the Hebrew says, the people made a **rua** and the shofars made a **rua** thus tying those two actions together.

Verse 17 then reminds the people of something they should already thoroughly understand: the city and everything in it is to be set-aside for God. This is called the law of **herem**, or in English, the law of the ban. As with my repetition at the outset of our lesson concerning the continuing validity and existence of the Torah and all the OT, so I want to remind you about this all important God-pattern and principle of **herem**. It is translated as "ban" because the people are banned from doing what would otherwise be completely usual, customary, and lawful for them to do upon winning a battle; and that is taking the vanquished people and their possessions and livestock as war booty. This is God ordained Holy War; and in Holy War special rules apply. Chief among those special rules is the **law of herem** that makes all war booty the sole possession of the Lord; the booty (including the defeated people) become holy property. Holy property cannot be taken and used by Israel's warriors.

Thus the only way for the Lord to take possession of His holy property is (as it is spelled out in verse 17) that everything within Jericho be destroyed; all must be reduced to ashes. This of course reflects the God-pattern that is established in the ritual of the Burnt Offering, the sacrifice called the 'Olah, where gifts to the Lord are given over to Him by means of burning them up in a holy setting. So this **law of herem** INCLUDES the defeated people, their animals, the people's possessions, the city itself, all except the precious metals (gold, silver) and valuable bronze and iron utensils that are to go to God's priesthood for their use alone as God's representatives and keepers of the Law on earth.

The ONLY thing that is to be spared is the innkeeper/prostitute Rahab and her family. This was because she voluntarily submitted to the God of Israel and helped His people (the Israelites) by hiding those 2 spies sent by Joshua to reconnoiter Jericho a few days earlier.

We need to stop and back up a tad because there are a couple of God-patterns and principles that we hurried over that need to be highlighted. The first one concerns the people and the shofars shouting, or in Hebrew making a **rua**. This event is a direct type and shadow for something that is still future to us.

NAS 1 Thessalonians 4:16 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*

This is, of course, the event that Christianity has dubbed The Rapture. Remember that this event presents two different scenarios for mankind depending on which side of the fence you stand. If you stand with God and His Son, Yeshua, then this is a wonderful, marvelous, joyful, awesome day when the Lord comes back for us. It is a day of life when those who died as saved people will be resurrected, and those who are alive will be transformed to a higher level

of incorruptible life. But; it is also a day of death, dread, horror, sadness, and finality for the far larger portion of mankind; those who died unsaved and for the living who have refused to submit to the God of Israel and His Messiah Yeshua. Those living and dead who were like Jericho; closed, shut, barricaded against God inside a shelter that seemed to their godless intellects like the secure way to keep their lives. But it turned out to be a mass graveyard. Those walls had no hope against the wrath of God.

Also notice the connection in Thessalonians between the shout and the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God. This is exactly as we have been studying in the Battle of Jericho. But now you better understand about the shout, the *rua*. What happened over 3000 years ago in Jericho will happen again, in a higher spiritual plane, in the near future. The spiritual shofar of God will shout in Heaven just as the physical shofars of God's representatives on earth (the Priests) shouted at Jericho. The spiritual Holy Warriors of God (the heavenly angels and their archangel leader) will shout in Heaven, just as the physical Holy Warriors of God (the Israelite soldiers) shouted on earth at Jericho. And what will the shout signal? Salvation for Rahab and her family who were for Yehoveh, death and permanent destruction for those who were against Him. And of course, that is what occurs at the time of Rapture and immediately following.

The pattern was established in the Old Testament and will be fulfilled at the Rapture. Let me say that again: the Rapture does NOT make a new principle or establish a new pattern, it simply follows one that is thousands of years old and established in the Tanakh, the Old Testament.

That's not all. Notice the principle of Rahab; she was the enemy at one time. In fact, she even lived among the enemy but still counted as devoted to God and so was spared. Rahab is the pattern and principle for gentile redemption; born a pagan, a goy, a gentile living a pagan lifestyle, but by God's grace she realized that all the gods of her life were false. She realized that she had no choice but to stand with the God of Israel (and that meant standing with His chosen people) if she hoped to survive what was certain destruction. But it goes even farther; verse 23 says that Rahab and her family were brought SAFELY outside the flattened walls of Jericho and placed OUTSIDE of the camp of Israel. But later, in verse 25, Rahab and her family were allowed to live among, INSIDE, the camp of Israel. The significance of this part of Joshua was meant for our time, for those of us living today.

When we accepted the God of Israel, even under the false assumption that we had replaced His chosen people and so separated ourselves from them, we were indeed ushered to a safe place; we were saved in the name of the Israelite Savior, Yeshua HaMashiach. But, this place was (symbolically) OUTSIDE THE CAMP of Israel from a physical perspective. Partially because the so-called early church fathers (all gentiles) chose a path and a set of doctrines that determined belief in Jesus meant a different and separate religion for gentiles even from Jewish Believers, and partially because Israel had ceased to exist from shortly after Jesus' death until recently in 1948, gentile Believers (we Rahabs) resided outside the camp of Israel. We wanted to be near the part of Israel that we saw most beneficial for us (their Messiah) but we didn't want anything else; we didn't want to be part of their faith roots or their Torah or their Biblical observances or them physically. We WANTED to be outside the camp.

In proper time Rahab sought to be (and was obviously allowed) inside the camp of Israel. In God's redemptive history we have arrived at the moment when the Lord has given His Rahabs (gentile Christians) the opportunity to live inside the camp of Israel. If Rahab had NEVER moved inside the physical camp of Israel, she certainly had been saved physically and spiritually and was welcome to live out her days in that safety. But why, when such a greater relationship awaited her, such a greater proximity to the holy Tabernacle, to God's Land, God's people, and teaching from His awesome Torah, would she not jump at the opportunity to move inside the camp and partake? Answer: she took the opportunity and it is recorded here in Joshua 6.

Torah Class exists, in part, to invite you to move from outside the camp of Israel to inside the camp. Your status of being saved, or not, doesn't change either way. What changes is the depth of your relationship with God and His people. What changes is that being outside the camp separates you from the blessings of Torah and from being a blessing to the Jewish people, a people chosen by God. How do you make that move from outside the camp to inside the camp? As with Rahab it is partly spiritual and partly physical. Spiritually you reject the doctrine that the Church has replaced God's chosen people, the Hebrews. Spiritually you must acknowledge that your salvation has made you a member of true (or spiritual) Israel as explained by St. Paul in the book of Romans. Physically you must stop separating yourself from God's people, Israel. Physically you must begin to bless them by standing with them, loving them, and recognizing that they are our elder brothers and sisters in the faith. I can tell you confidently from personal experience that what awaits you when you do these things, is like the difference between leaving childhood behind and becoming an adult. It is the difference between mere survival and productive living.

Let me close with an anecdote told to me by my dear friend Bob Lehton, who is a board member of Seed of Abraham Ministries and our Saturday evening worship director. This was a dream or a vision that he experienced many years ago that changed the course of his life and direction of his ministry forever; it is exactly about the opportunity for we Rahabs to move from outside the camp of Israel to inside.

Bob is an old surfer dude, so there is no place better for him than the beach breathing in that salty air. So not surprisingly his vision was that he was walking on a completely empty and pristine beach one day when he happened upon a large picnic table; spread out upon its white tablecloth was a cornucopia, a veritable feast of the most beautiful and perfect fruits and vegetables and breads in huge quantities, more than he had ever seen. It was an endless bounty. But there was no one there; not one person was sitting at that table eating of this delicious food. Bob said a feeling of immense sadness engulfed him and he started crying uncontrollably; what was so incredible and beautiful and available for the taking suddenly seemed so depressing because it was all going to waste. So Bob asked the Lord (who was walking along with him), where this feast came from and where were all the people? The Lord told Bob, "I provided it for My people", and then instructed Bob to approach the table and lift up the tablecloth and look underneath; and lo and behold, there were the people! Christians, a huge number of them were sitting below, and they were all scooping up the sand with their hands, pressing it into their mouths, and saying, "isn't this wonderful, isn't this delicious?" And Bob asked them why they sat underneath that table, eating sand when they could but look

up and partake of the bountiful feast that God had prepared FOR THEM, right above their heads, and they answered, “yes we know, but we’re satisfied with what we have”.

Then the vision ended as abruptly as it began.

We’ll continue the book of Joshua next week.