

Joshua 5:13-15; 6

Aim of lesson

To show that God was at the head of the army which captured Jericho – a fact recognised not only by the Israelites but by their enemies; and to show how the two spies kept their word.

Background study

Exodus 3:4-5; Leviticus 25:6-13; Joshua 2:18-21; Hebrews 11:30-31.

Suggested outline of lesson

Joshua stood before Jericho and looked at the city. How could these vast walls be penetrated? He had never seen any like them before. The walls were thick enough to incorporate houses and there was only one entrance, the great gates of which were locked. As he pondered the problem, a man appeared in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him to ask whose side he was on, only to discover that he was “the commander of the army of the Lord”. Up to that moment, had Joshua thought of himself as the commander of God’s army? Instantly he recognized the soldier as God’s angel, and he humbled himself and requested directions from God. As Moses had done before him, Joshua took off his shoes in reverence, acknowledging that he was in the presence of God.

The battle is the Lord’s

The divine commands for the attack, and assurance of the outcome, were given. Joshua saw to it that these were conveyed to the people, and followed meticulously. Note the significance of the number seven - seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days, seven circuits of the wall on the seventh day. The trumpets or rams’ horns were jubilee trumpets and had a religious significance, thus emphasizing that this was a holy, and not simply a military, undertaking.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down

Faith played a vital part in this dramatic sequence. Faith was first shown by Joshua, fresh from his encounter with the angel. Then there was the faith of the priests accompanying the ark, the faith of Israel’s armed men and that of the silent people. To all of them that great fortress city must have been a daunting sight, but they obeyed the directions of the Lord, never wavering, as day after day the procession marched around Jericho.

Meanwhile, within the walls of the city, the people of Jericho were far from confident, in spite of their fortifications. They had heard of the extraordinary events that had marked their enemy’s travels towards Canaan, and of the rumours that a supernatural power was at work. The silent march of the enemy unnerved them further, increasing the tension. By the end of a week they would have been speculating as to what would happen. Their

apprehension grew when the pattern changed on the seventh day. In one household only was there knowledge that an attack was certain.

Rahab's scarlet cord

Rahab had kept the agreement made with the two spies, and had gathered all her family under her roof. A scarlet cord was hanging in her window, and now Rahab and her relations waited for deliverance. The rest of the citizens were not at all prepared for the sudden, ear-splitting eruption of noise, and the panic, confusion and destruction that followed. The only part of that immense wall which remained standing was the part on which Rahab's house was built. God had seen to it that her faithfulness was rewarded, and Joshua sent the two spies whom she had befriended, to rescue her and all her family.

Relevance to the children's lives

Rahab relied on the two spies not to let her down. Did they? When we agree to do something for our parents, teachers or friends, can they rely on us not to let them down?

It is important to stress that Israel had to understand that the total destruction of this wicked city was God's will. Severe punishment was to come upon anyone who took anything for himself. The precious treasures of the city were to be sacred to the Lord, but everything else was to be burned. In addition, a curse was pronounced on anyone who should afterwards rebuild the city of Jericho.

Worksheets

These should be self-explanatory.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, we know that you will never let us down. Help us to be trustworthy and reliable with our families and friends. Amen.

Memory verse

"As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat" (Joshua 6:20).