

OUR COMMANDER IN CHIEF IS THE WAY TO VICTORY (JOSHUA 5:13-7)

There are three main events in what we will be reading today from **Joshua 5:13** through **Joshua 7. 1.** The appearance of the Commander of the Lord's army before Joshua, **2.** the conquering of Jericho, where the walls came tumbling down, and **3.** the sin of Achan that became a hindrance to the whole of God's people. That is a lot of stuff to unpack so-to-speak, yet they all tie in together to what is the main theme of the book of Joshua, and really the whole of God's inspired and written Word that we have today in our Holy Bible, that is "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through **faith which is in Christ Jesus** [there's our theme]. All Scripture is given by inspiration of **God** ["God-breathed"-theopneustos], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof ["is a noun meaning an act or expression of rebuke or censure"¹, which is from the verb "reprove" that can mean the expressing of disapproval or just "to convince"²] for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.** (**2 Timothy 3:15-17**) The Word of God therefore, is not intended to just give us historical facts and interesting stories, and we are also not putting our faith and trust in the wisdom of this world. As the Apostle Paul explained, "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." (**1 Corinthians 3:18-20**) There's a lot of books in this world, full of a lot of words, and there are a lot of professors and "experts" and scientists, who have a lot of opinions, based on theories and suppositions, yet if you want to know **THE TRUTH**, it is in the Word of God. That is not just my opinion! As "Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, **"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** (**John 8:31**) And, as Jesus also claimed, **"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."** (**John 14:6**) The Word of God, the inspired by, God-breathed written Word and the Word that became flesh to die on a cross for our sins against God, by taking our sins upon Himself, to the grave, and as He rose from the grave, He conquered sin, death, and evil and has made a way for us too to overcome sin, death and evil in Christ Jesus, our Savior and Lord!

As **Psalms 146** says this, "Praise the Lord [YHWH/Jehovah]! Praise the Lord, O my soul! While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God [Elohim] while I have my being. Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish. Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope

1 <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/reproof>

2 <https://www.wordnik.com/words/reprove>

is in the Lord his God, Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps **truth** forever, Who executes justice for the oppressed, Who gives food to the hungry. The Lord gives freedom to the prisoners. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord raises those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. [We are righteous in Christ Jesus yet it can also be said, those who practice righteousness, "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous." **(1 John 3:7)**]

The Lord watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; but the way of the wicked He turns upside down. The Lord shall reign forever—your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!"

For context to our three main events that we will be reading in Joshua, one can read in Exodus, and in summary form in Deuteronomy, how Moses was called by God to lead God's people, the Israelites, out of their bondage to Egypt, to the promised land, the land of Canaan. Due to their disobedience to God, the people of Israel wandered all around, not in, the land of Canaan for 40 years. Because of Moses' disobedience to God by striking a rock to get water for the people, which he did out of anger, instead of speaking to the rock as God had commanded, Moses died on Mt. Nebo just outside of that Promised Land. Moses of course made it to the ultimate PROMISED LAND, as he and Elijah appeared to Jesus on the mount of Jesus' transfiguration (Matthew 17). But Joshua then was appointed and anointed by God to then lead them into the Promised Land, Canaan Land. Through Joshua, God parted the Jordan River (similar to His parting the Red Sea) and the Israelites walked on that dry land to just outside of Jericho.

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[Joshua 5:13-15 (The Commander of the Army of the Lord)] And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord [YHWH/Jehovah] I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord [Adoni] say to His servant?" Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

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That Commander of the army of the Lord is none other than Christ Jesus, our Savior AND Lord. He is "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (**John 1:29**) He is also presently and forever our Great Shepherd, our Chief Shepherd, or as Jesus said the Good Shepherd. Yet the Word also tells us, "For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (**Romans 14:11**) " Then speaking of Christ Jesus, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those

under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (**Philippians 2:9-11**) Then one day, in speaking of the enemies of Christ Jesus, "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful." God's Word is telling us that Jesus is the Commander of God's army, the Chief Shepherd, and the King of kings and Lords, presently and forever! That is why we are told, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same **Lord over all** is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (**Romans 10:9-13**)

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Joshua 6 (The Destruction of Jericho) Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him." Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord." And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the Lord." So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Lord advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them. The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout." So he had the ark of the Lord circle the city, going around it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.

And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came

after the ark of the Lord, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days. But it came to pass on the 7th day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city! Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates." So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

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We know that Rahab the harlot, was putting her trust in God, as she said to the spies of Israel whom she hid, "For we have heard how the LORD [YHWH/Jehovah] dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God [YHWH/Jehovah Elohim], He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." (**Joshua 2:10-11**) She then became the great-grandmother of King David, who was the seed to "the

Lion of the tribe of Judah" (**Revelation 5:5**), the King of kings and Lord of Lords. In **1 Kings 16:34** we are told that Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho at the cost of the lives of his oldest and youngest sons, due to his disobedience to the Word of God. See the contrast?

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Joshua 7 (Defeat at Ai) But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel. Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few." So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water. Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord God, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! 8 O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?"

[The Sin of Achan] So the Lord said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? 11 Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: "There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you." In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the Lord takes shall come according to families; and the family which the Lord takes shall come by households; and the household which the Lord takes shall come man by man. Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.' "

So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me." And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it." So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

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Today, God is not leading His people of Israel according to the old covenant, according to the Mosaic law. We now have the new covenant that is in Christ Jesus. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**) An interesting comparison to the old and new covenant is in what was described in the story of Achan taking of the "accursed things". It is the word "herem" or "haram" which is usually something that is devoted to destruction, is accursed by God. The entire land of Canaan had fallen into God's judgment for their godless, idol-worshipping, and evil ways, similar to the judgment that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah. There is a New Testament term in the Greek that is similar to the Hebrew "herem" and that is "anathema". The Apostle Paul addressed the anathema, saying "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed [set apart for destruction]. O Lord, come!" (**1 Corinthians 16:22**) "O Lord come" is the Greek "maranatha". It "is an Aramaic expression used by early Christians as a prayer or exclamation expressing a longing for the return of the Lord Jesus

Christ. It is a plea for the returning of Christ and reflects the early church's anticipation and hope for His return."³ To us, we are called to be obedient to the Word that tells us, "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord." (**Romans 12:19**)

Jesus tells us, as He told His disciples, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." (**John 14:15-18**) Right after that, "Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." (**John 14:22-24**) It is then, as we are born of the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit we are then to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and to also love others as ourselves. Jesus elaborated on the loving others by saying, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (**Matthew 5:43-45**) That was part of Jesus' sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5-7**. The closing to that sermon was Jesus saying, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." (**Matthew 7:24-27**) In closing, the Apostle Paul spoke of vessels of honor, those who are in Christ Jesus, and vessels of dishonor, the herem or anathema. "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter [which we do through Christ Jesus], he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." (**2 Timothy 2:19-21**)

3 <https://biblehub.com/greek/3134.htm>