

Hebrews 11:30-31
“Faith, the most dangerous safe place”

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 30 Receiving the victory

III. Vs. 31 Rahab’s steps of faith

I. Introduction

The next witness for the author of Hebrews for his readers of why they should continue by faith in trusting in Jesus is found in verses 30-31. The first is the example of the Israelites as they faced the walls of Jericho which is found in Joshua chapter 6. The second illustration is closely related to the first but relates to Rahab who first appears in chapter 2 of Joshua. Since these illustrations are intertwined we will look at them together. Before we examine these stories in detail the point the author is making is that God’s way of faith is never the easy way out, the path of least resistance, and in never proposes to be so; no God’s way of faith is the ONLY WAY!

II. Vs. 30 Receiving the victory

Hebrews 11:30 simply declares that “*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.*” It is again assumed that the original reader would have complete knowledge of this historical event as recorded in Joshua but we don’t so back we go to Joshua 6. The first thing we need to bring into reference is that, ***Jericho was not an exceptionally large city; but it was an important, formidable fortress city.***

Excavations of Jericho indicate that the city was protected by two high parallel walls, which stood about fifteen feet apart and surrounded the city. According to Deut. 1:28 and Numbers 13:28 it was the sight of cities like Jericho that convinced ten of the Jewish spies 38 years earlier that Israel could never conquer the land. One of the amazing truths about faith is found in God’s reassuring words in 6:2 where we read the tense of the verb, “I **HAVE given** Jericho into your hand” in other words **the victory had already been won!** All Joshua and his people had to do was claim the promise and obey the Lord. The plan for advancement beyond the walls left no room given for human schemes or military tactics all they could do is obey the Lord in bring down the walls. These plans went against what Moses had instructed previously on most every point:

1. ***They were to use priests yet we are told that priests were exempt from all military duty.***
2. ***They were told to take the Ark into battle but else where we learn they were never to take the Ark into battle.***
3. ***They were to blow seven rams horns but we are told in Numbers 10 that they were to blow two silver horns.***
4. ***They were told to walk around Jericho seven times on the seventh day which would have been the Sabbath yet we know that according to the law they were forbidden to travel on the Sabbath.***
5. ***Finally, they were told to engage on battle on the Sabbath yet we know that the law forbids such a thing.***

How are we to unravel this seeming contradiction? The answer is found in a prophecy in Zech. 14:3 where we are told that “*Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*” **This is a word about a future time when the Lord Jesus will fight in the battle of Armageddon but just when did Jesus fight before?** We never see Jesus draw a sword, yet when we consider that prophetic word in light of this passage we realize that it was Jesus who was the Commander of the army of the Lord. So then it was Jesus who placed His word above their law.

That brings us to the 2nd part of this story and the instructions on how walls were to come down. **Based upon verse three they were to walk around Jericho one time each day for six days then on the seventh day they were to walk around in seven times.** Think of those soldiers as they walked around each day for six days then seven times on the seventh day and nothing changed; **the walls didn't shrink; white flags didn't start waving from the inhabitants of Jericho. They had no doubt become mentally exhausted thinking of every human means to breach those walls. I think God allows us to go in circles so that we can come to the end of ourselves and realize that the only way to see the walls come down will be by the hand of the Lord.** God's instructions were that the armed men march around Jericho once a day for six days, followed by seven priests each blowing a trumpet. The priests carrying the ark of the Lord would come next, and the rear guard would complete the procession. The only noise permitted was the sound of the trumpets. On the seventh day the procession would march around the city seven times, the priests would give a long blast on the trumpets, and then the marchers would all shout. God would then cause the walls to fall down flat so that the soldiers could easily enter the city. The Jews used two different kinds of trumpets, those used by the priests to signal the camp when something important was happening and those used primarily for celebrations. The Hebrew word for "trumpet" is *shofar*; but the Hebrew word for "ram's horn," it is *jobel*, which is the root of the word *jubilee*. **Here we see that the Lord had them blow the horn of celebration instead of the trumpet to get their attention. Israel was not declaring war on Jericho, they were announcing the celebration of the arrival of Israel in their new land.** They were shouting with a great shout of victory **BEFORE the walls fell down not after they did. In faith: we fight FROM victory, not FOR victory!** We see **three things the Lord would have us remember in dismantle our walls:**

- **The question isn't whose side the Lord is on; the question is, are we on the side of the Lord.**
- **We must come to the place where we are at the end of ourselves, done with trying to scale over, dig under or go around our walls.**
- **We need to celebrate the victory of the Lord before the walls fall down not just after they do.**

I'm impressed by the lack of hesitation from Joshua, the priests and the people as clearly this was no ordinary way to see walls fall down. The circling of Israel once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day would have left them extremely vulnerable to attack from the inhabitants of Jericho and they had to do so when it didn't make much sense to continue. After six days of silence they were told at the appropriate time to shout for the "Lord has given you the city". **This shout was God's power demonstrated through man's silence!**

III. Vs. 31 Rahab's steps of faith

The out come of Israel's and Rahab's obedience is given us in the the rest of chapter 6 verses 17-21 where we are first told verse 17 that "*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.**" We are first introduced to the Amorite Rahab in chapter 2 which happens to be an entire chapter written about a prostitute who lives on the wall and contains nothing strategically necessary to defeat the enemy! Yet after meeting this woman the two spies will proclaim that "*Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.*" There is no report of them doing any espionage; they simple come into the city stay at the house of a prostitute on her roof for a day then leave and confidently declare to Joshua that not only was Jericho going to be defeated but all the lands and all the people. There are several key parts to Rahab's salvation the first appears right here in 2:12 as we see that she did two things:*

- a. First, **she acknowledged that the God of the Israelites whom she names specifically is the only one that can save her.** Many people say they believe in God and even use His name but they do so without regard to His nature and character. That is not what Rahab did as she used the name used by the Israelites, which implies that she wasn't trying to make a god fashioned to her

Israelites, which implies that she wasn't trying to make a god fashioned to her own making.

- b. Second, **she recognizes that she and her family is equally deserving of God's judgment as were the rest of the inhabitants of Jericho.** There is no indication that she feels that she some how deserves God's salvation, only that she has done the works fitting her repentance.

There is no argument that she and her family are "good idol worshippers". Instead she lumps her family in with herself as equally needing to be delivered. Rahab doesn't have it all together, **what she does have is an awareness that she is a sinner and that only the God of the Israelites can save her.** Rahab was forsaking all she had ever known leaving her culture and people behind. What's interesting is that **the only stories she heard about were ones that involved God's judgment but to her they also spoke to her of God's love! The same Joshua that would judge most of the people was the savior to Rahab and her family simply because she trusted and obeyed.** In Joshua chapter 2:18-20 the spies promise her that if she would show three signs to them that they would honor her request and spare her life and those of her family.

1. Vs. 18a **Visible Transformation** "when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down": She needed to make a visible sign of where she was at. There are those who profess to know Christ but there has been no visible fruit of that profession no personal transformation.
2. Vs. 18b-19 **Verbal Conformation** "unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home." She had to make her confession before others, in this case her family. By gathering at her place it was an indication that they believed as she had.
3. Vs. 20 **Consistent Alienation** "And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear." Finally, Rahab couldn't go back on her commitment, she couldn't just say the words and then go back to the way she used to live.

Based upon Joshua 2:15 Rahab's house was part of the wall. **The most dangerous place to be for the rest of the city was the safest place to be for Rahab and her family.** **It wasn't necessary for the spies to look for a window with a red cord hanging from; because the only house that was left standing was her house.** God saved and protected Rahab because of her faith and she led her family to trust in God so they were also saved. Their faith brought them into the nation of Israel and Rahab would marry Salmon and became an ancestress of King David and of the Messiah! Rahab and her family were willing to do what the rest of the residents of Jericho weren't willing to do even though their hearts were melting at the pending judgment. **Rahab's salvation wasn't based upon knowledge but obedience and their disobedience was not based upon ignorance but rather willfulness.** It is the cross of Jesus that saves us from our past, it is the cross of Jesus that changes our path and is the cross of Jesus that saves us from the destruction we rightly deserve.