

Joshua 6:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city,
and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD.

Analysis

The command 'Pass on' (abar, עָבַר—to cross over) initiates the procession. The armed men going before the ark provides military escort, but their weapons are secondary to God's presence. This order—armed guard, seven priests with trumpets, ark, rear guard—places the ark at the strategic center. The procession's movement around the city rather than against it defies military logic but demonstrates faith. Each circuit declares Yahweh's sovereign claim over Jericho before conquest. The verb 'compass' (sabab, סָבַב) means to surround, encircle—a prophetic enactment of the city's doom. This is spiritual warfare made visible: the people don't storm gates; they walk in obedience and trust God to act. Hebrews 11:30 attributes Jericho's fall to faith, not force.

Historical Context

The command to march around Jericho would have tested Israel's faith severely. To ancient military observers, the Israelites would have appeared vulnerable—exposing themselves to arrows from the walls while accomplishing nothing aggressive. Yet this very vulnerability demonstrated trust in God's protection. The strategy also served to intimidate Jericho's defenders psychologically. Day after day, the city's inhabitants watched this ominous, silent procession accompanied by trumpet blasts and the visible presence of Israel's God (the ark). The psychological warfare was profound—Rahab had testified that Jericho's hearts melted in fear (2:11). This liturgical siege demonstrated that the Lord fights for Israel, fulfilling His promise through Moses (Exodus 14:14).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. When has God called you to obedience that seemed illogical by human standards?
2. How does marching around obstacles in faith rather than attacking them speak to your current challenges?
3. What is the relationship between human obedience (marching) and divine action (walls falling)?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	אֶל	הָעָם	יָעֲבֹר	וְסָבִיב	אֶת	הָעִיר
And he said	H413	unto the people	Pass on	and compass	H853	the city
H559		H5971	H5674	H5437		H5892
וְהָיָה כִּי יִפְגֹּעַ	יָעֲבֹר	לִפְנֵי	אֶת	יְהוָה:		
and let him that is armed	Pass on	before	the ark	of the LORD		
H2502	H5674	H6440	H727	H3068		

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 4:13 (References Lord): About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

Joshua 6:3 (Parallel theme): And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

Joshua 1:14 (Parallel theme): Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them;

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