

Joshua 6:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

Analysis

The people's immediate obedience—"as Joshua had spoken"—demonstrates covenant faithfulness. The seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns (shophar yobel, שופר יובל) before Yahweh emphasizes the theocentric nature of this military operation. These weren't battle trumpets but ritual instruments, particularly associated with Jubilee celebrations (Leviticus 25:9) and divine revelation (Exodus 19:16). The trumpet blast proclaimed God's kingship and coming judgment. 'Before the LORD' (lifnei YHWH, לפני יהוה) indicates the action occurs in God's presence, under His direction, for His glory. The ark following symbolizes God accompanying His people into battle. This coordination creates a unified act of worship-obedience. This prefigures spiritual warfare where believers advance not by carnal weapons but through prayer and God's presence (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Historical Context

The use of rams' horns (shofar) connects this conquest to Israel's worship life. The shofar sounded at Mount Sinai when God gave the Law (Exodus 19:16-19), at Jubilee announcing liberty, and at festivals celebrating God's kingship. By using liturgical instruments in warfare, Joshua signals that conquest of Canaan is

fundamentally about establishing God's kingdom rule, not merely territorial acquisition. The Ancient Near East commonly believed that warfare involved conflict between national deities—when armies clashed, so did their gods. Israel's procession with the ark declared that Yahweh was personally present to fight for His people. The silent marching (verse 10) heightened the solemnity, turning military campaign into sacred ritual. This was holy war in the truest sense—God Himself waging war against wickedness.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How should understanding spiritual warfare as fundamentally about God's kingdom change our strategies?
2. What is the significance of using instruments of worship in the context of judgment?
3. In what ways does the church advance through worship rather than worldly power?

Interlinear Text

בְּאֹמֶר רְאֵה
H1961 had spoken And it came to pass when Joshua
H559 H3091

אֶל פָּעָם
H413 unto the people
H5971

בְּשָׁוֹפֵר וְתַשְׁבַּע הַזְּבָלִים
that the seven priests bearing that the seven trumpets of rams' horns
H7651 H3548 H5375 H7651 H7782 H3104

לְפָנֵי אֶרְאֹן בְּשָׁוֹפֵר וְתַשְׁבַּע וְיִמְקַע וְעָבָר וְיִהְיֶה הַזְּבָלִים
before of the LORD passed on and blew trumpets and the ark
H6440 H3068 H5674 H8628 H7782 H727

אַפְרִיקָם: הַלּוּ יְהָה בְּרִית
of the covenant of the LORD followed them
H1285 H3068 H1980 H310

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 32:20 (References Lord): And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,

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