

Joshua 6:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

Analysis

The military formation—armed men before the priests, rear guard after the ark—creates a protective envelope around the ark while prioritizing spiritual over martial elements. The phrase 'priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets' emphasizes continuous action (halok v'taqa, הַלּוּק וְתַקְעֵה—walking and blowing). The Hebrew construction indicates sustained, ongoing trumpet blasts throughout the procession, not intermittent sounds. This sustained proclamation announced God's presence and imminent judgment. The 'rereward' (me'asef, מְאַסֵּף—gathering, bringing up the rear) protected stragglers and completed the sacred formation. The entire structure declares that Israel's strength lies not in military prowess but in worship and God's presence. This formation typifies how God's people should approach challenges—surrounded by prayer and worship, with God's presence at the center.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern armies typically placed elite troops at the front and center, with the less skilled at the rear. Israel inverts this by placing priests and the ark—not warriors—at the center. This unconventional arrangement would have puzzled Jericho's defenders and challenged Israel's own military instincts. The continuous trumpet blowing served multiple purposes: declaring God's sovereignty, maintaining Israel's focus on divine presence rather than human strength, and psychologically unnerving the enemy. Ancient warfare included psychological

elements—war cries, intimidating displays, demonstrations of force. Israel's religious procession combined all these while centering on God rather than human intimidation.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

John 15:13 – Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 – God is love

Study Questions

1. How does your life formation place worship and God's presence at the center, or do secular concerns dominate?
2. What does continuous trumpet blowing (sustained proclamation) teach about perseverance in prayer and witness?
3. How should the church's 'battle formation' differ from worldly organizations?

Interlinear Text

וְמַאֲטֵּן	וְלֹא	אַפְרִי	בְּלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא
and the rereward	came	after	the ark	came	and blowing	
H622	H1980	H310	H727	H1980	H8628	

בְּשׁוֹפְרוֹת:

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 6:13 (Parallel theme): And 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 rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

Isaiah 58:8 (Parallel theme): Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

Numbers 10:25 (Parallel theme): And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, which was the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts: and over his host was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

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