

Joshua 07-03-23a

This is Friday, the 23rd of March, 2007. We continue tonight our study in the book of Joshua. We resume in chapter six.

Let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer. We're going to see an illustration and a symbolic representation of this actual thing in our passage tonight, why we are careful to address ourselves first to God before we address ourselves to his word. So let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, it is a privilege and an adventure to spend time in study of your word and in fellowship with believers of like mind to seek to improve our understanding, not only of what you have done in history and what you have done in your people in times past, but also to see the meaning and the import of these things for us as we live our day-by-day existence here on this earth, as we look forward to the time when the Lord Jesus returns. We ask your blessing on us as we study. May each of us find in the scriptures that we examine tonight those truths that will allow us to see ourselves from your perspective, to ensure that we are in the faith, that our thoughts and intents in the heart are pleasing in your sight, and that we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. As I said, we resume in Joshua chapter six.

We stepped back a little bit last time to think about the meaning of this larger incursion of Israel into the land of Canaan as it foreshadows and serves as a portent of our life. We are the equivalent of this second generation. It is pointed to in so many ways.

You could probably never exhaust that subject, and we are further along than this, but I was thinking about Joshua's meeting with the prince of the armies of the Lord that you find here at the end of chapter five, and when he sees this individual standing with the drawn sword in his hand, it is, of course, very similar in the sense of an encounter with God and a commissioning episode to what happened with Moses some 40 plus years earlier when Moses saw the burning bush. And I asked myself, and I continue to revolve this in my mind, and I hadn't completely thought it through for its implications last time, and I still haven't tonight, but it's very instructive to do a comparison contrast with Moses at the burning bush in Exodus, the early chapters of Exodus, I think it's in chapter four, and Joshua here in chapter five. Both of them are about to lead God's people, Israel, in the fulfillment of a great mission, a great task.

Moses is busy doing something else. He's herding goats, and he finds himself on the plains of the Horeb range of mountains down there, and Sinai is one of the peaks, and if you read the accounts of that area in the Sinai Peninsula, you find that this is often where herdsmen would take their flocks when the lower areas started getting dry and parched. There were six or seven different springs that flowed up in this mountain range, so there would still be lush valleys and fruit trees and all kinds of things up in the mid-

range without going clear to the peak of some of these taller mountains.

But that entire Horeb range there has a number of watered valleys and sheltered plateaus and so on, and so the herdsmen, as the summer was coming on, and you can tell by the timing of the plagues that summer was imminent, Moses took these flocks and herds up there as the lower lands started getting sparse, and this is when he sees this burning bush, and he turns aside to see what it is, but he has no inkling that he's going to be on a mission from God. He's busy doing his thing that he's been doing for decades. I can't imagine how settled you could get in your ways after herding goats for 40 years.

I've barely been on the earth 40 years, and I can't imagine herding goats all that time. I think you would kind of run out of imagination. It's not a place for innovation.

It isn't a place for technological advancement. It's not like Intel's going to introduce a new goat herding chip or there's going to be some breakthrough scientific advancement where you're going to clone the goats or improve their productivity. It's the same old thing.

It's a rut, and it's a rut, and it's a rut. Contrast that with Joshua. Joshua is well aware that Moses has died and the mantle of leadership has now fallen on him, but as in all good organizations, the nation of Israel didn't go to a headhunter organization and say, well, you know, our guy's dying, so can you please find us another leader? He grew up from within.

He's been with Moses for decades. He knows the drill. This isn't some new strange thing.

The application for that, in my estimation, not only for organizations, I think it's good if you have an organization that you want to continue, that needs to continue. And I think specifically of a church, if you have a church that's thriving and a lot of believers there who need the word of God, especially if it's a larger organization, at some point, if the existing pastor starts to realize that he's about to go up and look across the river and check out, somebody ought to be already well-trained, having grown up. In other words, I think churches, rather than having this candidating and trying to get guys to leave other churches and come, a good, healthy congregation, especially if it's large enough, and if it's starting to get to the point where your initial guy is going to have to scroll off the scene, somebody from within ought to be training up.

You could send him away to school if you want him to get the languages, but he ought to live in that church. He ought to know the people. He ought to be assisting the pastor.

Look at the example of Joshua and Moses. Look at the example of Timothy and Paul, or Mark and Paul, or Titus and Paul, or one of a number, the paphroditus, Paul. They talk about mentoring like any man in the Christian community can do it for some other man.

Not at all. If you want to talk about genuine discipleship or genuine mentoring, this is in the area of pastoral leadership. Pastors ought to train their own successors, I think.

I think it's a good application of this principle. A healthy church, hopefully unless I get hit by the proverbial beer truck, we don't have to worry about somebody to take my place at this point. But in your standard congregation of 200 to 300 people or whatever, if you have a pastor that's getting up in his 60s or early 70s, that man ought to be looking around for someone that God has gifted and take him under his wing.

Give him opportunities. There might be many men. Churches ought to be sources of new pastors, not seminaries.

Seminary is a great place to get tools, but churches are the training ground. Churches are the practice ground. Churches are the area where men ought to learn pastoring and learn teaching.

I was fortunate to come up in several churches where I was given that opportunity. Well, I do digress. Joshua, look at him.

He knows he's come up under Moses and he already knows what leadership entails. And he's going to take the people across. Moses dies and his body is taken into custody by God and buried in a place we know not where so that nobody would idolize it or start getting relics from it.

I mean, can you imagine how big was Moses in the nation of Israel? Well, we have to get the finger bone of Moses. I mean, look at what the Catholics have done. If you assembled all the pieces of the true cross or the bones of the various apostles, why you could raise up Ezekiel's whole army on the plains and give them all wooden lounge chairs to sit on with all these relics that have been there.

So God made sure that nobody would make a relic out of Moses, that nobody would make a worship center out of his tomb or his grave. And so here's Joshua and he comes in. So Moses goes to the burning bush and it's a burning bush.

Try to switch. I tried to do this on my mind. Suppose it was different.

Suppose Moses is up there in the mountains and he turns aside and he sees a man standing there with a sword in his hand. Joshua comes across the Jordan, camps with the people, does the Gilgal thing, does the feast, does the circumcision, gets ready to go recon Jericho. And he looks over here and here's a burning bush flaming out there on the outskirts of the town.

Why does it not read that way? Why did God not appear to Moses with an angel with his sword in his hand? By the way, had anybody else ever seen that Prince of the Armies of the Lord with his sword in his hand? Can you think of another place where he showed

up? Has to do with a talking donkey. The angel of the Lord stood with a drawn sword in his hand. The description is identical.

Now I ask myself, well, I don't have time to do Balaam, but I just give you that as food for thought. I've been thinking about that a lot. And it's interesting.

Why would he show up? That's a pretty high ranking guy to put in front of a recalcitrant, probably Gentile prophet on the way to go pronounce either a blessing or a curse, depending on what the intention is of the moment. But that's a whole separate thing. But why do we have this Prince of the Army of the Lord appear to Joshua and a burning bush appears to Moses? I ask myself, both of them are told the very same thing.

And the link there is take off your shoe from off your foot. The place you're standing on is holy ground. It is the place in the presence of God, but in two different manifestations.

Well, so I think about this and I think, what is the burning bush? That thorn bush is a nonproductive plant. You don't get any fruit off of it. And yet within its midst is this fire that burns it or burns within it without consuming it.

Our God is a consuming fire. You remember it later on in the Kings. I know the girls have recently gone through this story and teaching the class in the back for the kids.

Remember the proverb that's told about how the trees were looking around for a king and all the different trees turned it down and finally the bramble said, I will be king over you. And then the talk of fire coming out from the bramble and consuming the cedars of Lebanon. Well, this bush, this thorn bush pictures Israel and specifically the first generation of Israel.

God's holy, purifying presence is in their midst and is visible in their midst. And even though they ought to be consumed by it, they are not. God says to Moses, I'm going to blow this people away and I'll make a new nation out of you.

And Moses says, you can't do that. This is the place of your presence. These are the people of your presence.

What are the nations going to think if you consume the bush? So that generation is allowed to die a natural death by and large in the wilderness. But now the symbol is different because the purpose for Moses was to bring the people out and to bring them to the place where they could be cleansed of the reproach of Egypt, God's presence, the law at Sinai. When they come back to that very same place, it is a purging, it is a judging fire.

And the judgment on that first generation essentially cleanses the nation. The next generation says, we are not going to make those mistakes. We are chastened.

We are judged. We are going to do something different. We're going to learn.

And so God's presence is a judging, purifying fire. Fire is always presented in those terms. Paul is going to talk about it in the New Testament.

Wood, hay and straw is burned. Gold, silver, precious stones survives and so on. So now with that in mind, it makes sense that Joshua, with his second generation, coming into the land, freshly circumcised, having observed the feast for the first time in 38 years, the Feast of Passover, honoring God, trusting God for victory in the land, instead of that first symbol of God needing to purify and judge.

And here's this fruitless tree. They think that, by the way, it was very interesting. I was reading about what kind of tree this might have been and the kind of tree that typically grows in those slopes is not just any old thornbush.

It is a variety of acacia. What was the Ark of the Covenant made with? It would have the table for the showbread and all that. Acacia wood overlaid with gold.

And there is a thorny acacia that grows all over the slopes of that mountain range, and it's the only source of timber in that whole area. And this is likely the type of, a small version of it was probably what was growing because the nation was small at that time. They were, it was their inception.

Well, so now we have the angel with the sword in his hand, and it puts us in mind of times later on when God is going to work on behalf of his people to provide victory. And when you think of the forces of Jericho versus the forces of Israel, it's not as straightforward as it seems. I did some calculation.

I went to the archaeologists and so on, because why does the prince come? We say, okay, I see the significance instead of judging and purifying and preparation, which is Moses' commission for the people. Now it's time for conquest. Now it's time to go in and hack and slash and kick Canaanites and take names and so on.

We're going to go in there and it's going to be the sword of judgment. And this is the sword of victory. It's the victorious armies of the Lord are going to fight alongside.

It's the time to go on the offense. Now that you're purified, now that you're cleansed, here we go. And then he gives the specific instructions for the conquest of Jericho.

We've already seen that. Well, conquest of Jericho says you're going to march around it and the walls are going to fall. How many warriors are there in Israel at this point? We have a pretty good idea.

If you keep your finger in Joshua chapter six and turn back to Numbers chapter one, of course, this is back, you know, a little bit earlier. The ones who were numbered in 144 of

Numbers by Moses and Aaron with the leaders of Israel, all who were numbered of the children of Israel, verse 45, by their father's houses from 20 years old and above who were able to go to war in Israel, all who were numbered were 603,550. So you got over 600,000 troops.

This is a lot of people. This is why they say the whole multitude. If this is just the able-bodied warriors, the whole congregation must have been something approximately 2 million.

Wives, children, sick, old, young, and so on. This is just 20 years old. This is military age, 600,000 guys.

Well, Jericho, how big a town could it be? Going by the archeology of Tel Es Sultan, the archeologists say, and I've got it up here somewhere, that Kathleen Kenyon, when she excavated this back 50-odd years ago, figured that there were probably 2,000 or 3,000 people who lived in that town. That number has been revised downward by more modern archeologists to as little as 700 to 900. So, I ask myself, why does Joshua need encouragement when he's got, by any stretch of the imagination, pretty much overwhelming military superiority here? Why is this an issue? And this is typical of the little city-state type of capitals in Canaan at the time, whether you go to Hezron.

None of these are giant metropolises of hundreds of thousands of people. They're all going to be a few thousand at most, and they're able-bodied men. So, keep in mind a couple of points.

Number one, remember that this is sort of the feudal model. There are a lot more people than just the city dwellers. Remember, Job used to sit in the gates of the city, but his estate is outside.

People didn't live in the city as a whole. They lived in the area of a city, and they would go to the city to trade. They would go to the city to settle disputes.

They would go to the city for various things, but they typically would commute into the city, and there were a relatively small number of actual dwellers within the walls. In a time of threat, the people would retreat. It's kind of like when you see accounts of the Old West, and the U.S. Army would go out there and build a stockade, Fort Wayne in Indiana or whatever, and people that had all the ranches and so on, if there was a big Indian uprising or something, everybody would go to the stockade and get inside, but they didn't live in there all the time.

So, this is much of the function of these ancient towns, which is why they were walled cities. The whole purpose of the walls is that those walls don't do you any good unless you're under attack. So, they are places of refuge.

They are sort of bomb shelters, if you will, for a much larger population. Secondly, it is

true that even counting the surrounding population, let's say that you cover several square miles around Jericho, you're still not going to assemble a force greater than that of the nation of Israel, if they've got half a million troops at this point. But, there is also the strong likelihood of alliance from time to time when there was an invasion from the east or an invasion from the north, these city-states would lead together.

You see this in the League of Kings that came down against Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's day. And so, a confederation would be likely amongst these Canaanite towns and cities. The people from Ai would come over and ally themselves.

The people from down in Jebus, which will become Jerusalem, would do the same thing, and up and down the valley there. The reason that Israel attacks at this point is it is going to cut the nation in half and prevent a lot of this sort of confederation. It's a strategic blow.

It's going to divide the nation in half, and they're going to conquer it one half at a time. And prevent them from uniting against Israel. Thirdly, this particular key city, and this is the gateway to the whole land.

This is a strategic city that is the key to being able to march up the valley to the north and to be able to incurse into the valley down to the south, make an incursion. So, it's not a pitched infantry battle that's going to take place. The key here is to understand that Jericho is not depending for its success on numerical equivalence, or being able to withstand in a hand-to-hand combat kind of way.

Their strength is their walls. It is a walled city. One of the things that is often forgotten about the ancient days is that people in this time used to think of their gods, their deities, in terms of specific functions.

They had pantheons of deities. Here is the god of rain. Here is the god of war.

Here is the god of agriculture. Here is Bacchus, the god of wine and debauchery. Here is the god of fertility.

There are different gods for different things. So, when you see the enemy coming across the Jordan, you don't run to the goddess of fertility and say, oh, Ashtar, please help us have a lot of babies. That doesn't apply.

You need a different god. You need your god of warfare. You need your god of some sort of power against armies for this.

So, think about it. What is the nature of the exodus from Egypt? You remember when we studied Exodus, we looked at those nine plagues preceding the tenth. Each of them embarrassed and mocked and completely eviscerated the alleged power of a deity in Egypt.

There was the god of the Nile. Well, the Nile turned to blood. Nobody could drink from it.

They had the god of light, and so God made it dark for a long time. They had gods for various things, and God demonstrated that each of these gods, in turn, was embarrassed and shown to be of no effect. Rahab says, we know what your god did to Egypt.

We know how he's got power over the weather. He's got power over light and darkness. He's got power over the water.

He's got power over this, that, and the other. And they also saw that they were given victory in battle against Amalek and so on. And these are the things that she mentions to the spies.

We know this about your god. What is the one thing that they have never seen the god of Israel do? They've never seen him pull down a fortress. They had gods of fortresses, and the one thing that the god of Israel has never been known or seen to do is knock down a walled city.

They've never done that in all of this history. So they are putting their last hope. They're scared.

They're shut up. They're not opening their gates. Why? Their entire faith is these walls have stood for millennia.

The original walls of Jericho, if the archaeologists are correct, and of course, I don't think they are. I think they are off because they use carbon dating for these walls. According to the C14 dates, the original, and how would they do that? They would find organic material that got trapped in the walls when they were built.

And so they take this stuff and they say, how much radioactive carbon is left in this? Okay, this well, 8000 BC is what they say that the original walls were built. These walls were six feet at the base and they tapered upward. And they're about four and a half feet at the top.

I'm having to convert everything to meters. But they were thicker at the bottom and got narrower at the top. And so they found the rubble and the debris from this stuff and dated it.

And they say that these were, and there's excavation of pottery and so on that confirms that they were very, very old. Let's say at the least they had been there many hundreds of years. So the people have never seen these walls knocked down.

They added to them. Later on, after those walls were built, they reinforced them. They added a tower on the inside made of rocks, made of boulders.

And this tower was somewhat later. And again, the C14, for whatever else you want to

say about carbon 14, it's good for relative dates. This is after that and so on.

And the tower was built later. But they've got these walls, they've got this high tower, and it's never been knocked down. It's never been overcome.

And so they say, well, in the history of this place, as long as anybody can remember, we've never not had these walls keep us safe. So however many hundreds or low numbers of thousands of people that are inside these walls at this time, they're saying, you know, all we got to do is hold out here. And these, you know, we can we can raid, we can do guerrilla warfare, whatever.

That's the idea. Is God a God of fortresses or not? That's what has not yet been demonstrated. And that's the first thing that God is going to do when Joshua and the people come into the land.

And this is why the prince of the armies of the Lord is going to tell Joshua. And this is why Joshua is looking not that he doesn't think that God is all powerful, but how are we going to deal with this thing we've never seen before? Here's here's the principle. As believers, as we grow, there is there is a progression in our.

In our life, in our Christian experience, and this is not profound, but it's kind of a new way of thinking about it. You remember in Hebrews chapter six, let us go on unto perfection, unto completion, unto maturity, not laying again the foundation of what? Change of mind away from dead works and faith toward God and then moving through those other things. Well, Israel as a nation pictures the individual believer in the church age in many ways.

What is the progression in our lives before we can advance, before we can achieve victory, before we can see God do new things that we've never seen him do before in our lives? Certain things have to take place. There has to be a purification. There has to be a cleansing and a judging of things that we used to rely on the slave mentality coming out of Egypt.

You know, what I really just want is food. I just want to be sure the food is there. And Israel had to learn that God's got the food thing covered.

Quit worrying about it and quit worrying about what kind of food it is. God's going to give you the food that you need. If it's not the leeks and garlicks of Egypt, get over it.

It's manna. It has what you need. It comes every day.

God never fails to give it to you. There are rules about managing it that you need to follow. But get over worrying about provision.

Slaves were always provided for. The taskmasters and the Egyptians made sure the

slaves got fed because it's their advantage. They didn't have to wonder where their stuff was going to come from.

So there was a growth. God had to cleanse them of their old ideas, their old expectations. They had to learn not to take God's law and twist it in their own view and in their own image.

They had to learn that they can't say that the God that brought them out of Egypt is a golden calf. They had to learn that they can't bring strange fire in front of God. They can't modify the rules of worship.

That God's authority is absolute and that they have to submit themselves under the mighty hand of God so that he can exalt them in due time. Submission comes first. Exaltation comes later.

Cleansing comes first. Opportunity comes later. Judgment comes first.

Victory comes later. The old man has to be put off before the new man can be put on. We have to learn how to be cleansed and how to be sanctified before we can be filled and functional.

And so there is a progression. First things first. Many people want to jump straight to the victory.

They want to jump straight to the prosperity. They want to jump straight to the streets of gold and the pearly gates and all the rest of their pie in the sky ideas of what God is going to do now that we're saved. God brings us through experiences that are tailored, are designed to... No two of us are the same.

We have a different makeup in the soul in the same way that no two of us have the same DNA. No two of us have the same start in life. We come from somewhere.

We're headed to somewhere. We have different background. We have different cards that are dealt to us at birth and by way of experience.

Everybody is different. All of us have some things that are advantages. We have some gifts.

We have some pluses. We have some strengths. All of us have weaknesses and deficits and malfunctioning things.

We're conceived in iniquity and born in sin. Nobody gets the golden spoon in their mouth. And if you think anybody does, think again.

The fact that you can't see, some peoples are manifest. Some peoples are not. The idea of the body of Christ, Paul makes an allusion to the fact that some parts of it are visible

and some parts are covered.

Even in the body of Christ, there are parts that are covered and you don't see them. You see the face, there are other parts you don't see. They are designed to be covered.

They're supposed to be covered. So do not assume that when you look over the fence at another believer, well, nobody knows the trouble I've seen. That believer is probably looking over the fence at you saying, nobody knows the trouble I've seen.

There are problems. I think I could manage those problems. I've got problems of my own.

Listen, all God's children got problems. And whether you see in them or not or know about them or not, everybody, I suspect we're going to find out when we get to the future and know more than we know now that there's a balance. It averages out.

You get pluses in some areas and minuses in another. And some people say, well, you know, I was born with no legs, blind and this and the other. Well, some of those people have got gifts of the soul like you can't imagine.

I was reading, I saw an allusion somewhere to a lady who wrote hymns and she reached the place where, oh, I know what it was. It was on a gay thing and they were singing one of her songs. This lady, I need to go look her up.

But she had a disease and it crippled her. And she loved to write, but she reached the point this crippling disease got so bad that she couldn't do anything. They had to suspend a board of paper over her and jam a pencil in between her gnarled fingers, which would no longer move.

And she would scratch the words of these hymns that she was writing on this piece of paper. But when you read the words of those hymns, you realize that this lady understood things about God that some of the rest of us have not been able to comprehend. And it is as though by taking away in one area, it grants extra in another.

I think on the basis of the word of God and the justice of God, everybody gets dealt about the same point total in terms of cards. You get strengths physically and weaknesses in other areas. You get weaknesses physically and strengths in other areas.

But it is a mistake to dwell on that and say, because of this, then there's something the matter. Look at Israel. What does God do with Israel? He says, look, I know you started out as slaves.

I know you don't know how to fend for yourselves and how to have a government and how to be independent and how to live. And so God put them in the wilderness and taught them independence. This is what parents have to do.

You spend 16, 18 years teaching your children how to go from dependence to

independence. You hope and pray to God that by the time they're 18, they are functional. You don't want somebody that can't operate without you.

But it's a hard thing because it's fun when when your little child comes to you and there are people who really enjoy being dependent upon. And they have a nurturing personality. And those people have a doubly hard task because you have to discipline yourself to wean your child off of you.

So that by the time they reach early adulthood, they don't need you to tell them to get up. They don't need you nipping at their ankles, telling them to get this and that and the other. They don't depend on you anymore.

They cannot be dependent and be healthy. They've got to be independent. God took the nation of Israel out of slavery where they didn't have to think or do anything for themselves except obey the taskmaster.

And he gave them 40 years in the wilderness, purging out in the person of that first generation, the slave mentality, the dependent mentality, depending on man and looking to man and instead looking to God, moving their eyes from the physical and the earthly and the human to the divine and the spiritual. And the transcendent. And it's a process.

It takes time. It took them 40 years. But the generation that emerges from the wilderness and goes across with Joshua is now ready to fight alongside the prince of the armies of the Lord with the sword in his hand.

They've gone from being a bush that's just so many degrees away from being consumed by the fire, fruitless, to being fully functional. Warriors for the Lord, and they're going to go in and do the Lord's business in judging that nation, those nations that occupy the land of Canaan. That's the difference between the first vision and the second vision.

That's the difference between Moses, whose name is synonymous with law. With the shadows of good things to come and with Yeshua, who goes across and fulfills those good things, brings to reality all of those covenant promises. But first things first.

So we need to be patient. This is what Paul says over and over again in the New Testament. You have need of patience.

You have need of endurance so that after you have gone through this process, you will be ready to inherit. You'll be ready to pick up the sword and fight alongside the armies of the Lord instead of being back in that phase where you still haven't learned to trust. You haven't learned to rein in the complaining, rein in the bitterness.

Rein in the self-centeredness, rein in all of the things that afflicted Israel and caused God to have to drop them in the wilderness or open the earth and swallow them up. It's a

change of mind. It's a process.

It takes time. We have to be willing to undertake it. We have to be willing to go through it.

And you have Caleb and Joshua who actually go through that entire process from beginning to end. And that's a wonderful, hopeful picture. So that's why we have Joshua at the end of chapter 5 and the beginning of chapter 6 in this conversation with the prince of the armies of the Lord with the sword in his hand.

It is about graduation from the school of purification into the operational, functional, fruitful, inheritance-grabbing period of victory. Now they're going on the offense. Now they're going to be fighting the wars of the Lord.

Remember, they're going to have that book. I hope we get to get a copy of this in the millennium because we don't have it now. But there's a book that they had in Israel called the Book of the Wars of the Lord.

And it details the conquest of the land and the conquest and the military incursions that were made by these armies in this period and following. The Book of the Wars of the Lord. Now God can use us to accomplish his purpose.

We're not the patient. Anymore. We're well.

We're healthy. And now we can go function. We're not the student.

We're not the apprentice. We're not in training anymore. We're now ready to go out and do the thing.

It's a horrible thing to just be in school all your life. I used to get so tired. I would think I've been in school for 12 years.

Now I've been at the college level for four years. And now I'm at the basic school. Now I got to go to artillery school.

Now I got to go to follow on artillery. When am I going to get out of school and start doing something? After 18 solid years of school, I, for one, was ready to go blow something up. Go make something happen.

Go accomplish something meaningful instead of sitting there reading about everybody else that ever did anything meaningful. And this is where Israel is. And that's why now you don't need the fire of judgment and you don't need the symbol of the thorn bush.

So you have this city of Jericho and this is a new thing. God has new things in store for us. We're not just going to march around in a rut.

We're not going to do the same old thing. When's the last time Israel, former nation of slaves, 40 years in the wilderness, now has crossed the Jordan. Now it's celebrated the feast.

Now it's circumcised. Now it's ready to take up their weapons of war. When's the last time they ever even saw, much less took, a walled city? When's the last time they ever seen God knock down a wall in Egypt? Does it say any of the walls of Egypt fell? They had a lot of tall things.

They had pyramids and such. Did God knock over a pyramid in Egypt? They were standing. It's really something.

I can only imagine what it would be like to visit Egypt and look at the pyramids there and think, you know, these things were standing here when Moses was walking around. These things were standing here when Joseph was around. I mean, these are some landmarks.

If these big stone blocks could talk, what tales they could tell. But God didn't knock any of them over. They're there to this day.

So it's a new thing. And so Joshua's over there considering. He said, well, this is a new thing.

I wonder how we're going to do this. And that's when God provides this prince standing there. Never been seen before.

Did Moses ever talk to the prince of the armies of the Lord? Not to my knowledge. But here he stands. New revelation for a new task.

Why do we have the New Testament? It's new revelation for a new task. We're in the age of Joshua. We're in the age of Yeshua.

We're not in the age of Moses anymore. And those principles are still sound. The principles taught in the law are still valid.

But we advance. We move forward. We're going to get some new guidance, some new information, a new opportunity.

And that's why this prince stands there as the commander of the armies of the Lord. You find out, guess what? Even though you've been cleansed. And even though you've been purified.

And even though you've been judged. And you've been prepared. And you're ready to go on this attack.

You don't have to do it by yourself. You don't have to single-handedly go in and whip all

the Canaanites and the Amorites. God's power is going to be fighting alongside you.

You are going to be participating in a battle that is already going on. You're joining a program in progress. It's already underway.

You get to enter the big leagues here. And fight on the side of God's forces who are already engaged. That's what this means.

What an opportunity. What an encouragement. And we're about to see God do something that He hasn't been seen to do before.

He is going to demonstrate that even the gods of strongholds in Canaan, the last holdouts, the last ones that haven't, they can say, well, you know, technically this Israelite god's never knocked down. He's not a god of strongholds. Well, He's going to take that last straw of hope away from them at Jericho.

Well, we'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, at long last, we will see this actually take place. We'll see what the details of this episode tell us with regard to that overall vision, that overall understanding of what's happening here in symbolic terms.

So let's pause here and take our break.