

# Thought For The Week

Articles: [Jericho](#) - ~1000 words, ~300 words

## Articles, *from a sermon on Jericho*

### The Biblical History of Jericho

#### Holy Ground, Divine Judgment, and Redemptive Mercy

The ancient city of Jericho holds a unique place in Scripture, representing both the depths of human sin and the heights of God's sovereign power, judgment, and grace. Situated in the Jordan Valley, approximately 850 feet below sea level and just north of the Dead Sea, Jericho is renowned archaeologically as one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities, with settlements dating back over 11,000 years. Biblically, it emerges as the first major conquest in Israel's entry into the Promised Land, a site of miraculous intervention, curse, and eventual healing.

The sermon begins with readings from Exodus 3:1-6 and Joshua 5:13-15, highlighting parallel divine encounters. In Exodus, Moses encounters the Angel of the Lord in a burning bush that is not consumed. God reveals Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, commanding Moses to remove his sandals because the ground is holy. Similarly, as Joshua surveys Jericho, a man with a drawn sword appears, identifying as the "Captain of the host of the Lord." Joshua falls in worship and is told to remove his sandals for the same reason—holy ground.

These appearances are often understood as theophanies or Christophanies—manifestations of the pre-incarnate Christ. The shared command to remove sandals underscores the holiness of God's presence. The Captain commissions Joshua, assuring victory over Jericho's formidable walls.

Jericho was a Canaanite city, inhabited by descendants linked to Canaan, cursed through Noah's line (Genesis 9). Its people's wickedness prompted God to use Israel as an instrument of judgment. Joshua sent spies, saved by Rahab, a prostitute who acknowledged Israel's God. Her family was spared when Israel conquered the city.

The conquest was miraculous: Priests bearing the Ark led marches around the walls for six days. On the seventh, after seven circuits, trumpets blasted, the people shouted, and the walls fell flat (Joshua 6). Everything was destroyed except Rahab's household. Rahab later married Salmon, entering the lineage of Boaz, Ruth, David, and Christ (Matthew 1:5), demonstrating God's providence in preserving the Messianic line.

Joshua then cursed rebuilding: "Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates" (Joshua 6:26).

Centuries later, during wicked King Ahab's reign, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. As foretold, he lost his firstborn Abiram when laying foundations and youngest Segub when setting gates (1 Kings 16:34). This fulfillment, over 500 years later, affirmed God's unchanging word amid Israel's

apostasy.

Yet mercy followed judgment. After rebuilding, Jericho's waters were bad, causing death and barren land. The people appealed to Elisha (successor to Elijah). He threw salt into the spring, declaring, "Thus says the Lord, I have healed this water" (2 Kings 2:19-22). The waters remain pure, transforming the area into a fruitful oasis.

Jericho's story weaves themes of holiness, obedience, judgment, and restoration. Divine encounters at the burning bush and with the Captain reveal God's active leadership—prefiguring Christ as "Yahweh saves" (Joshua/Yeshua). Miracles like the Jordan parting, walls falling, and waters healing built faith in a new generation, renewing the covenant after wilderness wanderings.

The curse on rebuilding and its fulfillment warn of disobedience's cost. In apostasy under Ahab, ignoring God's word brought tragedy. Conversely, Elisha's miracle shows mercy: God heals what sin curses.

Physically low and hot, Jericho spiritually mirrors humanity—cursed by sin yet redeemable. From pagan stronghold to site of providence (protecting Christ's lineage) and healing, it teaches God punishes unfruitfulness but revives the repentant.

For believers, Jericho calls to faithful obedience, producing fruit that glorifies God. It urges appealing to mercy for unfaithfulness. As Jim concludes, this history stimulates continued service and repentance, reminding us God makes the dead alive through Christ.

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# The Ancient City of Jericho

## A Testament to God's Holiness and Mercy

Jericho, one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world, stands as a profound symbol in biblical history. Located in the Jordan Valley, about 850 feet below sea level north of the Dead Sea, this oasis city was first conquered by Joshua's Israel after miraculous crossings and divine encounters.

The sermon draws parallels between divine appearances: Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-6), where God commands removal of sandals on holy ground, and Joshua meeting the "Captain of the Lord's host" (Joshua 5:13-15), who issues the same command. Many interpret these as pre-incarnate appearances of Christ, emphasizing God's direct involvement.

Jericho's fall showcased obedience: marching, trumpets, and shouts brought walls tumbling, sparing Rahab, whose faith integrated her into Israel's lineage, leading to David and ultimately Jesus (Matthew 1:5).

Yet disobedience brought curse. Joshua pronounced rebuilding would cost the builder's sons (Joshua 6:26), fulfilled centuries later when Hiel lost his firstborn and youngest during Ahab's reign (1 Kings 16:34). Later, Elisha purified Jericho's waters, healing barrenness and symbolizing God's mercy (2 Kings 2:19-22).

From cursed Canaanite stronghold to fruitful plain, Jericho illustrates God's judgment on sin and blessing on faithfulness. It reminds us that disobedience leads to death, while repentance invites restoration. As Jim notes, God makes the spiritually dead alive through obedience and mercy. This history calls believers to faithful service, bearing fruit that glorifies Him, and to seek forgiveness where unfaithful.

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