

## **When Walls Come Tumbling Down**

Joshua 5:13-6:5

August 24, 2025

### **I. A Strange Strategy**

For six days Israel was to march around the city with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant while sounding trumpets of ram's horns. On the seventh day, the sabbath day, the people were to march around the city seven times with the priests blowing the trumpets. Then when the priests gave a prolonged trumpet blast, the people were instructed to give out a great shout. For the Lord has given the city into their hands. That's when the walls came tumbling down.

God uses these strange tactics to teach his people about overcoming the spiritual strongholds that stand in their way in this world.

### **II. The "When" Question**

Israel's effectiveness in overcoming the city of Jericho is directly linked to when the walls come tumbling down. This "when" question is crucial to Israel's conquest of the land. Without an answer, Israel will lose heart and not prevail.

As we move into life with Christ, we find ourselves facing strongholds in this world that need to be conquered. We too face a question of "when." "When will the walls of these strongholds come tumbling down?" A "stronghold" is anything that stands against God and his kingdom. It can be a broken relationship, a rejection of Christ as Savior, social injustices, anything that refuses or resists God's rule in Jesus Christ.

The question of "when the walls of these strongholds come tumbling down" looms large in the minds of people who seek to do God's will. When will righteousness prevail? When will the church make effective inroads into the community and grow? When will racism end and people accept one another regardless of the color of their skin? When will wars cease and the peace of God reign in this earth? When will the hungry be fed, and the poor be clothed, and the meek inherit the earth? Having an answer to the "when" question is important for carrying on the work of the Lord. Without an answer, we will not prevail, but will lose heart.

### **III. Getting Our Spiritual Bearings**

Two details help us embrace God's strategy of conquest that give an answer to the "when" question involve the commander of the Lord's army and Israel marching around the city blowing trumpets.

Joshua meets the commander of the Lord's army and asks, "*Are you for us or for our enemies?*" The commander of the Lord's army answers "*Neither.*"

The commander in the Lord's army represents the Lord and teaches us our place in this struggle. The Lord is not enlisted on our side to fight our battles. We are enlisted on the Lord's side to fight his battles. By taking off his sandals, Joshua acknowledges this is

sacred space that belongs to the Lord. So he must be faithful to the Lord's mission, doing it the Lord's way and in the Lord's time. This is the holy perspective he is given. *"Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy"* Jos. 5:15.

The blowing of the trumpets as Israel marches around Jericho are signaling instruments announcing the coming of the Lord. The time is at hand for God's purposes to be fulfilled. The use of the number "seven" with seven priests, seven trumpets, marching seven days, marching around the city seven times on the seventh [Sabbath] day indicates that this sacred event is all about the Lord's timing and how he will establish his new creation in the land of Canaan. It answers the "when" question, calling the people to trust in the Lord and rest secure in his great power.

Today, we don't blow ram horns to announce the coming presence of the Lord, we share the good news of Jesus Christ with people. Through our words and actions, we tell people the time is at hand. The kingdom of God has come among us in the person of Jesus Christ. By overcoming sin, death, and the devil, he invites us and all people to a new way of life by receiving him as Savior and Lord. As we share with people how Jesus Christ has changed our lives and is changing the world, we trust in the timing of God's Spirit to convict and change them. In sharing these things, we take on a priestly role and bring the presence of Christ to people.

#### **IV. The Walls Come Tumbling Down When ...**

1. We live into this holy perspective of knowing our place in following the Lord. We understand that what we are doing is the Lord's mission where we are called to do things the Lord's way and in his timing.
2. We see the "strongholds" of the world as God's holy territories that belong to the Lord. Instead of separating ourselves out from the world and disengaging from its many problems, we get involved and willingly engage in finding solutions that are blessings to all.
3. We rest secure in the Sabbath knowledge that God is advancing his kingdom in and through us as we seek to be faithful to him.
4. We bear the presence of Jesus Christ to people through our words and actions.
5. Christ returns to judge the living and the dead.