

**Rahab the harlot.** A woman whose kind-heartedness had saved the lives of the spies sent out by Joshua. Her story is so interwoven with the fall of Jericho that it should be kept clearly in the mind of every teacher and scholar. It is found in Josh. 2.

**18. Keep yourselves from the accursed thing.** That is, from the "consecrated" thing, the "devoted" thing, the thing already given over to Jehovah. The sin which Achan afterward fell into was sacrilege; it was the taking that which had already been given to God. **Lest ye make yourselves accursed.** He who steals a sacrifice must be sacrificed to the wrath of God.

**Make the camp of Israel a curse.** The whole camp would bear the responsibility till the individual was discovered.

**20. The wall fell down flat.** It is idle to attempt to tell why or how. Possibly an earthquake was so timed as to correspond with the shout of the people. It would not detract at all from the spiritual lessons of the story if natural means had been used unknown to the inhabitants of Jericho, but the plain story as we have it here implies that the walls fell by miraculous power. **Every man straight before him.** And as the army of the Israelites surrounded the city, there was no means for its inhabitants to escape.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

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Jericho, the chief city of that section, the first place taken by the invading Hebrews, famous for its wealth and power, was situated in a beautiful grove of palm trees (Deut. 34, 3) about six miles west of the Jordan and about eighteen from Jerusalem. Commentators have called attention to the strategy shown by Joshua in leading his hosts by the way of Jericho, and thus attacking the land in its very center, rather than marching directly north to Bersheba and Hebron. Jericho, being on a caravan route from southern Arabia to western Palestine and the seacoast, held the key to the most important strongholds of Canaan. The word Jericho, from the verb "to smell," means "fragrance," and not "City of Palms," much less, as Geikie, following Hitzig, maintains, "City of the Moon," because the place was famous for the worship of Ashtoreth.

**Verse 8. And it was so.** The exact time is not given, but probably two or three weeks after the events of the last lesson. Four days after crossing the Jordan the passover was celebrated. Immediately before the passover the rite of circumcision, which had been neglected in the wilderness, was performed on all those born during the wandering (Josh. 5, 5). The feast continued seven days; the healing of those circumcised might have required a little longer. **Joshua had spoken unto the people.** His words are recorded in the preceding verses. **Seven priests.** Seven is a sacred number; hence seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days, seven times on the seventh day (verse 4). Then we have seven days for the passover and other sacred feasts. Seven lambs were offered daily; then the seventh month and the seventh year. Seven was a sacred number not only among the Hebrews and Semitic peoples, but also among the East Indians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, ancient Germans, and other nations. The fact that seven is one of the two numerals (the other is six) which the Semitic tongues have in common with Indo-European languages is quite

significant. The moon, with its four quarters, probably suggested the sacred character of this number. **Trumpets of rams' horns.** The word rendered "rams' horns" usually denotes noise, alarm, or blast. It is the same word as jubilee. In ancient times these trumpets might have been made from the horns of animals.

**9. And the armed men went before the priests.** This was a matter of precaution, so that the ark, in charge of the unarmed priests, might march the more safely. We are not to think that the entire people went around the city, but rather a small detachment of the warriors. **The rearward.** "The rearward," or rear-guard, is a participial form. Literally, the one or part bringing up the rear. During the exodus Dan occupied the rear (Num. 10, 25).

**10. Ye shall not shout.** The oriental, being naturally noisy, especially in the performance of a religious or military duty, would find it difficult to maintain silence. This solemn, noiseless procession would at first appear ridiculous to the inhabitants of fortified Jericho, but the repetition of the march at regular intervals of twenty-four hours and the recollection of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan and the late conquests in Bashan and Gilead would fill the besieged citizens with dismay.

**11. So he caused the ark . . . going about it once.** How near the walls the Hebrews marched is not said, but evidently far enough to be without the reach of missiles which might have been hurled out of Jericho. **And lodged in the camp.** The camp was at Gilgal, (5, 10) which is identified by some with Tel-Gelgal, on the north side of Wady Kelt. Josephus states that Gilgal was ten stadia (about one mile and a quarter) from Jericho and five times as far from the Jordan.

**12. And Joshua rose early.** He was thoroughly in earnest and obeyed the Lord promptly, without hesitation. Herein is the secret of all reformers' success.