

Shalom, servant of God! Let us reflect together on the word of life and the enduring truth of God's judgments.

When the Israelites were crossing the Jordan to enter the Promised Land, they came face-to-face with a mighty barrier: Jericho — a city of fortified walls, inhabited by strong and fearsome warriors. The people of Jericho were giants, as seen in Numbers 13:33 (NKJV):

There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.

This fearfulness caused the Israelites to lose faith, which greatly displeased the Lord. In righteous judgment, God condemned that generation to wander in the wilderness for forty years (Numbers 14:33-34).

Jericho was not just a physical fortress; it symbolized a spiritual stronghold that blocked the fulfillment of God's promise. Had Jericho not stood in the way, the Israelites might have entered and possessed Canaan much earlier.

Later, under Joshua's leadership, God gave specific instructions on how to overthrow Jericho: the Israelites were to march around the city once a day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day, after which they would shout, and the walls would fall (Joshua 6). This victory was a demonstration that the battle belongs to the Lord (1 Samuel 17:47).

When the city fell and was burned as a judgment offering to God, Joshua declared a prophetic curse:

Joshua 6:26-27 (NKJV)

Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates." So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

This curse wasn't arbitrary. Jericho had represented the greatest challenge to the Israelites, a city that had stood in opposition to God's covenant purpose. Joshua's curse made it clear that rebuilding Jericho would be an act of defiance against God's victory and a reopening of the

spiritual wounds caused by Israel's earlier rebellion.

The people honored Joshua's words for centuries. Even as Israel grew, built cities, and planted vineyards as God had promised (Deuteronomy 6:10-11), Jericho remained untouched — a solemn reminder of God's judgment.

Yet, over 500 years later, during King Ahab's wicked reign, Hiel of Bethel defied this word:

1 Kings 16:34 (NKJV)

In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the Lord, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.

This fulfilled the curse word-for-word. Hiel's disobedience brought tragedy upon his household — a vivid reminder that God's word never fails (Isaiah 55:11):

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

The Theological Message for Us Today

What can we learn? Simply this: ignorance of God's law does not protect us from its consequences. Whether blessings or curses, God's word will always come to pass (Galatians 6:7):

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

God's covenant faithfulness applies to both Old and New Testaments. In the New Covenant, we see a parallel warning through the Apostle Paul regarding spiritual integrity and the true gospel. When false teachers arose, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, pronounced a severe curse:

Galatians 1:6-9 (NKJV)

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

This warning is timeless. Just as the curse over Jericho endured for generations, Paul's curse upon those who distort the gospel remains in effect today. The gospel of Jesus Christ, as preached by the apostles, is the only foundation for salvation (1 Corinthians 3:11):

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Christ Himself reinforced this warning at the close of Scripture:

Revelation 22:17-19 (NKJV)

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Final Exhortation

The lessons of Jericho and the warnings of Paul and Jesus call us to reverence God's word and faithfully uphold the gospel of Christ. Before we aspire to teach or preach, let us ensure that what we proclaim aligns fully with the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). Otherwise, we risk falling under judgment — not because God delights in cursing, but because His holiness demands that truth be upheld.

Let us therefore hold fast to the gospel that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3), and may the Lord grant us grace to walk faithfully in His truth.

THE CURSE OF JERICHO — A LESSON FOR ALL GENERATIONS

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