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THE LIFE OF JOSHUA – LESSON 10

VICTORY OR DEFEAT?

After the men healed from being circumcised, Israel left Gilgal to go to Jericho. God had given very specific instructions to Joshua of how to march seven days around this large, fortified city.

Jericho actually had two 30-foot-tall walls spaced 15 feet apart. The first wall was six feet thick and the second twelve feet thick. If the first six-foot thick wall was breached, the second twelve-foot-thick wall should hold any enemy.

Such walls were no obstacle to God. Both walls fell flat to the ground allowing Israel to rush in and kill every living creature except Rahab's family.

Archaeologist Dr. John Garstang (1876-1956) found the walls in his excavations lying flat on the ground which verified the accuracy of Joshua 6:20 which said that *"the wall fell down flat."* It fell intact, not crumbled or broken up. Only God could do that.

Joshua had approximately four hundred thousand men suited for war. After the conquest of Jericho, he sent spies to evaluate a small town near Jericho named Ai. The spies came back and reported that it would only take a relatively small band of soldiers to take the town.

Joshua sent 3,000 soldiers to conquer Ai. They lost the battle. It only took 36 men of Ai to conquer them! Joshua was so upset that he rent his clothes and spent the day prostrate before the ark of the LORD (Joshua 7:6). How could God perform such a great miracle at Jericho only to let them be humiliated by such a tiny group?

God revealed to Joshua that the defeat was due to sin in the camp. It was then shown that Achan, in his greed, had taken a spoil from Jericho consisting of 200 shekels of silver, 50 shekels of gold, some fine garments and hid them. It had been forbidden by God for the people to take anything from Jericho. Achan was then stoned and all the goods that had been stolen were burned. After this Ai was defeated.

Joshua, in his wisdom, raised up a large heap of stones over Achan's ashes to appease God's wrath (like unto an altar) as a reminder to never sin against God's instructions.

We know that unconfessed sin in our individual lives can open the door to adverse happenings to us. What we do not usually think about is that sin in the church or our house can cause these adverse things to happen to the whole church or family including the innocent people. It opens the door to the devourer.

Sin must be dealt with, not tolerated.