

# JOSHUA 6

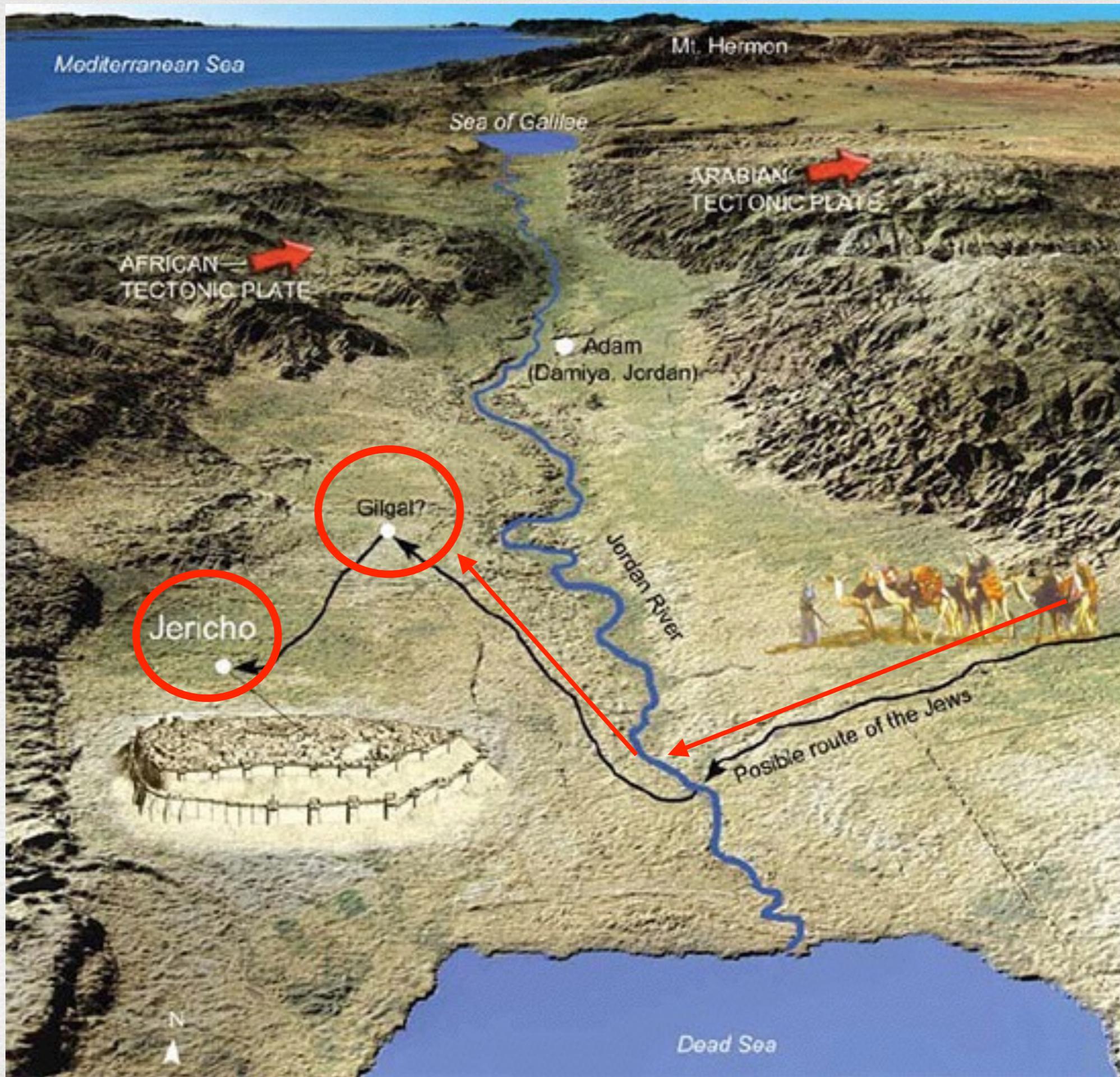
GOD PROVIDES VICTORY  
OVER STRONGHOLDS

# INTRODUCTION

- The account of Joshua's battle at Jericho is one of the most well-known stories in Old Testament literature.
- It continues to encourage God's children that, though we are weak, we are strong.
- Israel conquers the walled city of Jericho after obeying a battle plan authored by the LORD.
- With the merciful exception of Rahab and her household, the entire city was destroyed.

# INTRODUCTION

- Jericho is one of the geographically lowest cities on earth (750 feet below sea level), one of the oldest cities, and one of the earliest cities to fortify.
- Notably, Jericho is spring-fed and referred to as the “city of palms” in Judges 1:16.1
- However, despite its strength and resources, Jericho is trembling. The city has shut its gates. Jericho is closed for business in anticipation of Israel’s siege.



**WALK IN OBEDIENCE  
AND WAIT ON GOD**

**JOSHUA 6:1-21**

# STRANGE BATTLE PLAN

- Joshua and the Commander of the Lord's Army stand outside of Jericho's gates and discuss the battle plan.
- In his communication with Israel's leader, the LORD encourages Joshua saying "See, I have given Jericho into your hand" (verse 2).
- The tense of the Hebrew verb is prophetic perfect (I have delivered), describing a future action as if it were already accomplished.

# STRANGE BATTLE PLAN

- Imagine Joshua's position. At this point in life, Israel's leader was an experienced warrior and commander. The warrior was told that he would not be using any battering rams or scaling tools to either destroy or climb the walls.
- The unconventional plan instead instructed seven priests to blow seven trumpets continuously before the ark of the Lord. Warriors would march before the priests and after the ark. No one would speak.

# STRANGE BATTLE PLAN

- Instruments of worship, not warfare, are the items highlighted in these verses.
- The Ark of the Covenant was a unique reminder of God's presence.
- Hebrews 9:4–5 shares that the contents of the ark were as follows: the Ten Commandments, a jar of manna and Aaron's rod. The Ten Commandments were of significant consequence.



# STRANGE BATTLE PLAN

- The Law did not save but instead made God's people aware of their sin.
- Thankfully, the ark also featured the Mercy Seat.
- The Mercy Seat was where God would meet with His people.
- Each year on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would make a blood sacrifice, sprinkling the blood on the Mercy Seat.

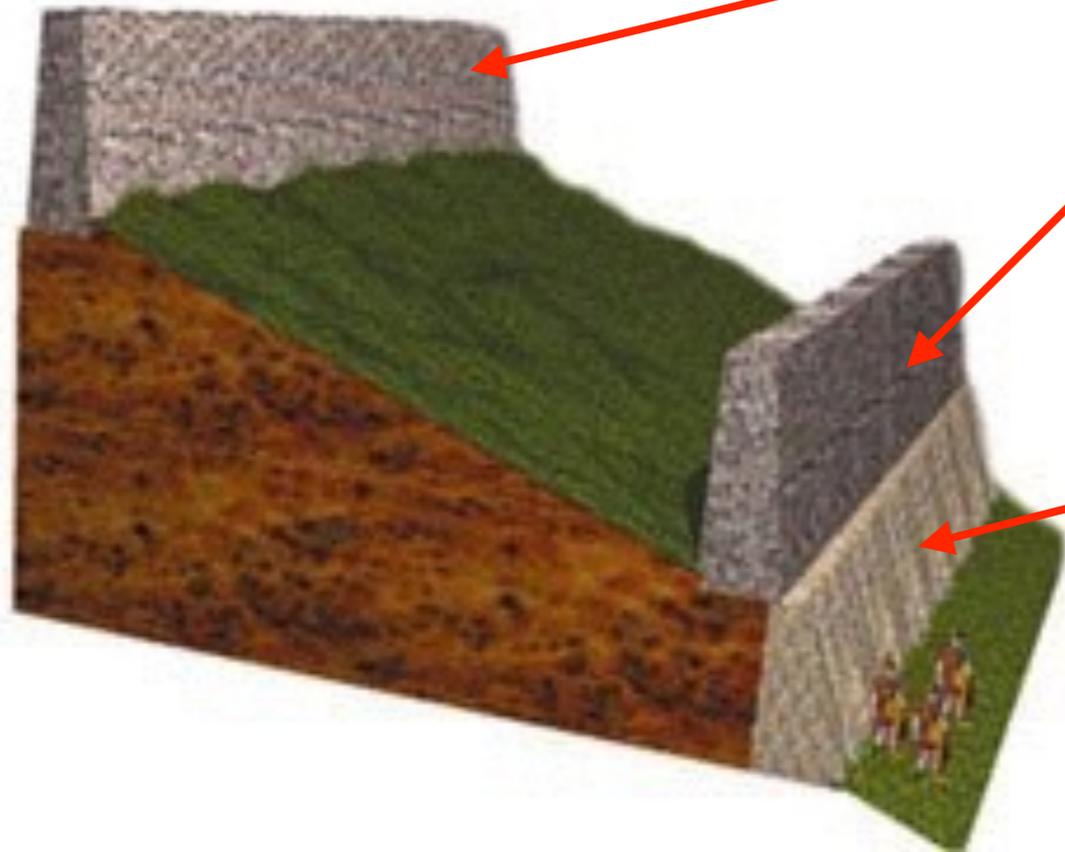
# STRANGE BATTLE PLAN

- This sacrifice was to atone for the sins of the people, for their shortcomings in not living up to the law (Exodus 30:10).
- The other items of note involved in the siege were trumpets. These were no ordinary trumpets; they were “jubilee trumpets” and were instruments used during solemn feasts. The blowing of these horns reminded God’s people of His presence and His connection to His people.

# STRANGE BATTLE PLAN

- Joshua teaches us that a spiritual battle is the only battle won by surrender.
- He and Israel did not have to exert effort to win, but only to obey and to praise the God who gave Joshua a step-by-step battle plan.
- Because God's language proved victory over Jericho was a done deal, Joshua executed the remaining details with trusting obedience.

# WALLS OF JERICHO



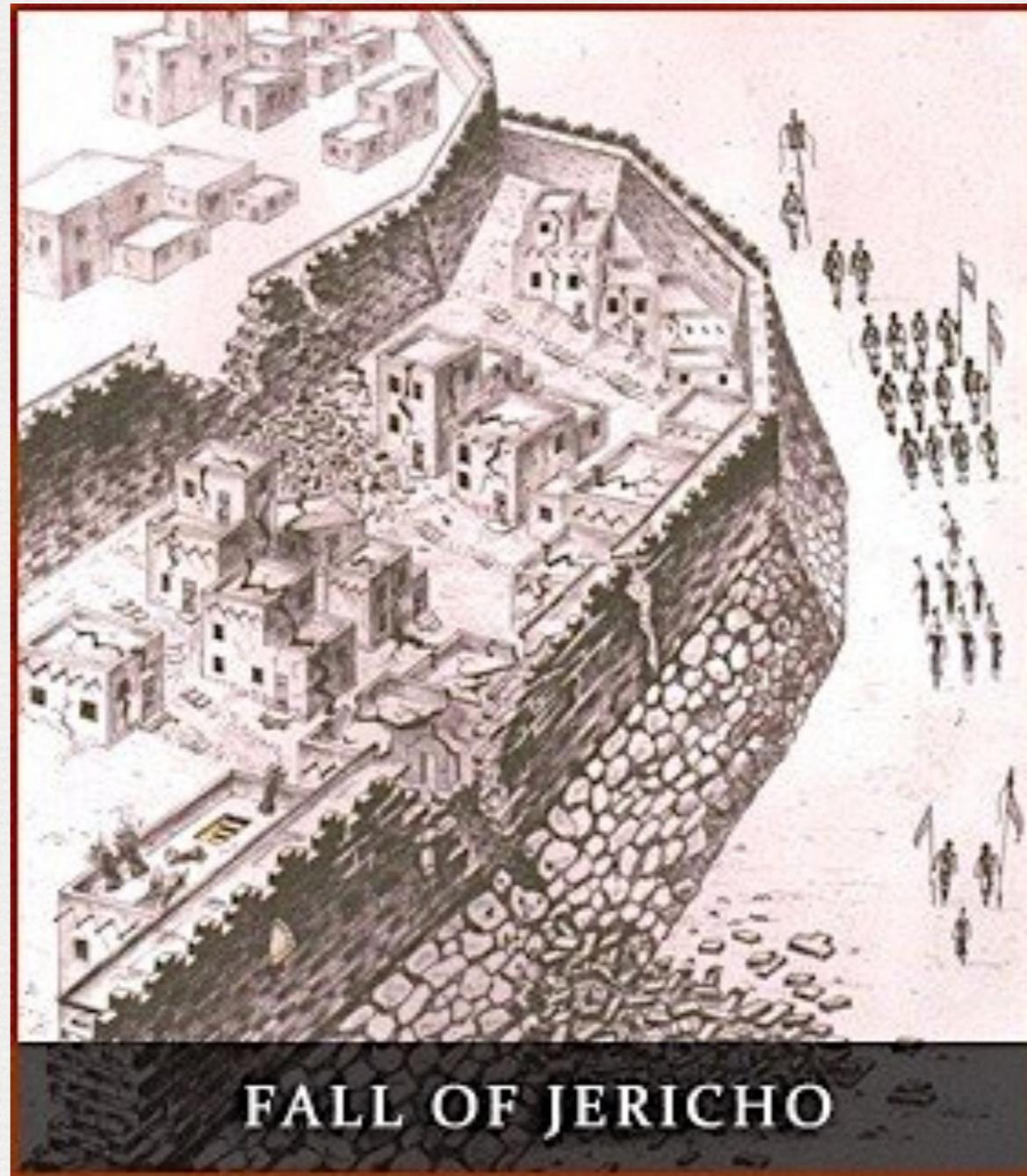
Walls 6 feet thick,  
26 feet high.

Retaining wall  
12-15 feet high

**RECOGNIZE GOD'S  
PROVISION IN VICTORY**

**JOSHUA 6:22-27**

# FALL OF JERICHO



FALL OF JERICHO

# BATTLE VICTORY

- Joshua gives the command: “Shout, for the LORD has given you the city.”
- This is the exciting part, the portion of the story that is memorized by children and held up as an encouragement for believers who are fighting a stronghold in life.
- However, the instructions in verses 17–19 are just as significant: Keep nothing for yourselves, this victory and its spoils belong to God.

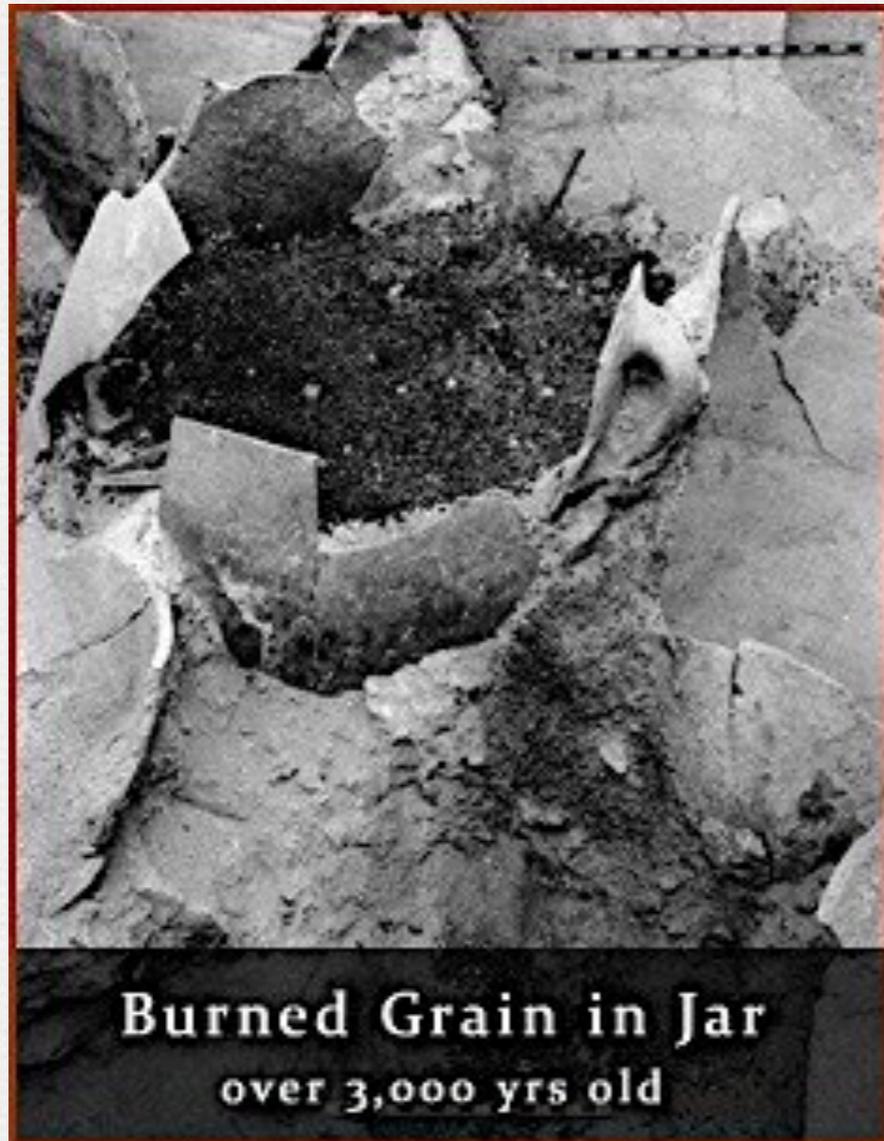
# BATTLE VICTORY

- Donald Campbell:
- The contents of Jericho were to be given “to the LORD” as the firstfruits of the land.
- Just as the firstfruits of a crop, given to the Lord, pointed to more crops to come, so the conquest of Jericho signified that Israel would receive all of Canaan from Him.

# BATTLE VICTORY

- The word in verse 17 translated as devoted comes from the verb “haram” and the noun herem. The words carry the meaning “to completely destroy.”
- When someone destroys something that has been devoted, that offering is without the possibility of being revoked.
- If the city were destroyed in devotion, there would be no chance that the Israelites would be tempted to claim it for themselves.

# DESTROYING JERICHO



- Jericho was destroyed by fire (Joshua 6:24).
- Destruction was in the spring, grain storage (Joshua 2:6; 3:15, 5:10).
- The grain was not consumed or taken (Joshua 6:15-20).

# BATTLE VICTORY

- The priests blew the horns; the people shouted; the wall fell; the Israelites entered and devoted all in the city to destruction. The majority of the text focuses on the preparation and follow-up of taking the city.
- Scripture leaves out the details of the battle; this aids the reader in understanding that the battle belonged to the LORD, it was effortless for Him.

# BATTLE VICTORY

- The city was destroyed but, as promised, Rahab and her family were spared.
- Verse 23 explains that she and her family were kept outside of the camp of Israel, a period of spiritual quarantine.
- Rahab's faith motivated her to action and she was shown mercy. Rahab was the mother of Boaz, Boaz the great grandfather of David, David the ancestor of Jesus.

# BATTLE VICTORY

- Joshua promised trouble for the one who attempted to rebuild Jericho. This curse was later experienced by Hiel the Bethelite in 1 Kings 16:34.
- Finally, the last paragraph focused the reader's attention on the cause for Joshua's success: the LORD was with him.
- The Almighty won the victory at Jericho that day; Joshua's role was to act in faith and obedience.

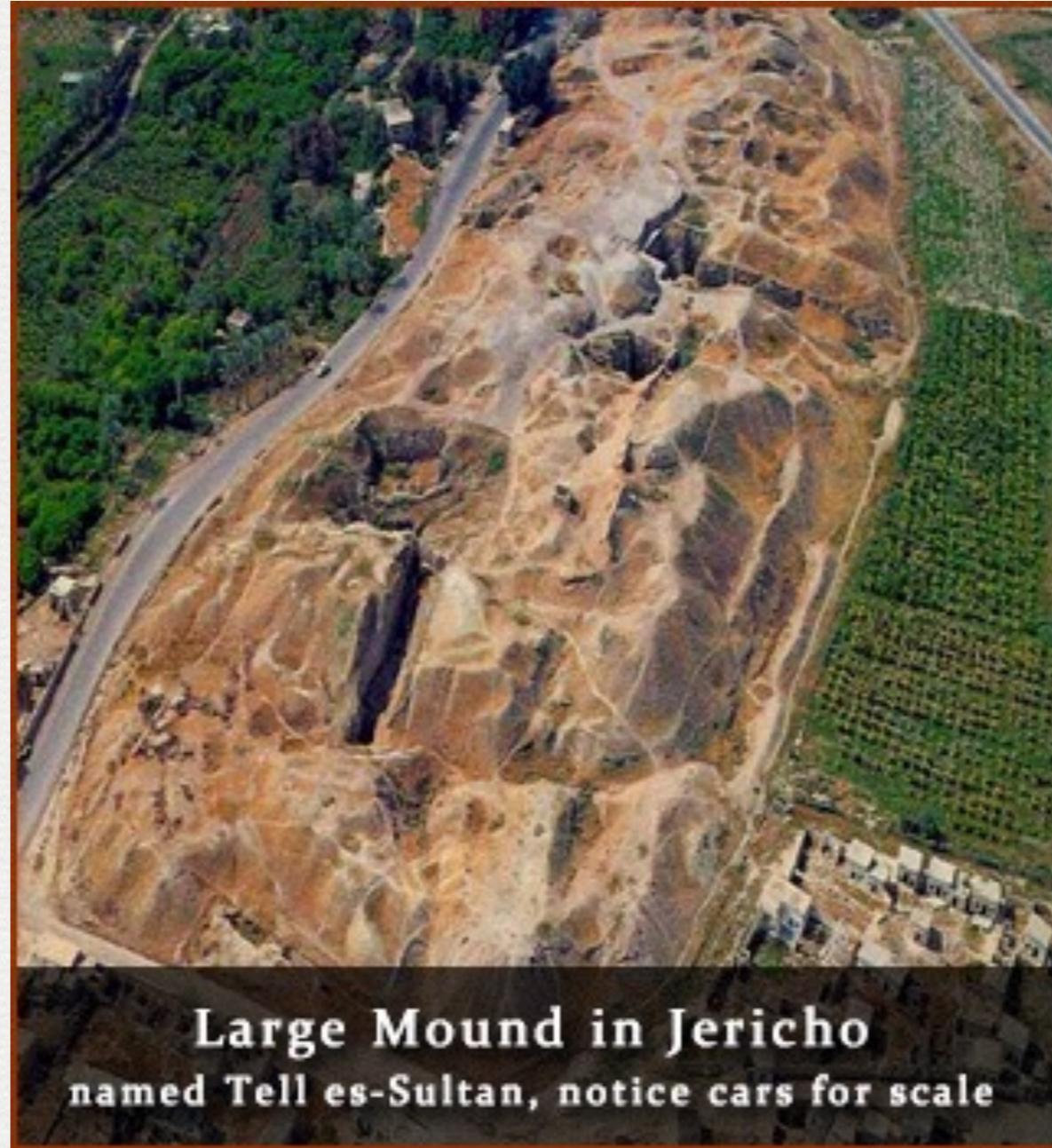
# THE NUMBER SEVEN

- The number 7 is used 14 times in the chapter.
- It is the number of divine perfection also the number of completeness.
- We have 7 priests, 7 trumpets, 7 days, and 7 trips around the city on the 7th day. This string of sevens indicate judgment on Jericho.
- Seven trumpets in Revelation describe the last days and herald the beginning of God's kingdom.

# CURSE ON JERICHO

- The curse on Jericho was a prohibition against refortifying, not inhabiting the site.
- During the reign of Ahab, Hiel rebuilt the walls at the cost of his two sons (1 Kings 16:34). It is possible he offered them as blood sacrifices, or else they may have merely died during the building process.
- Excavations show a gap of some 500 years where the city lay in ruins.

# REMAINS OF JERICHO



**Large Mound in Jericho**  
named Tell es-Sultan, notice cars for scale

QUESTION

THE CANAANITE WARS

# YAHWEH WAR

- There are several aspects of Yahweh war.
- A key element of Yahweh war is what is called “herem.”
- Herem literally means “ban” or “banned.” It means to ban from human use and to give over completely to God. The ESV give a fuller understanding of the term by translating it “devote to destruction.”
- Canaan, because of its sin, was to be “herem.”

# CONQUEST OF CANAAN

- In the conquest of Canaan, three goals were being accomplished.
- First, the movement of the Israelites into Canaan was the fruition of God's promise to Abram that He would give that land to his children (Gen. 12:7).
- When Joshua led the people across the Jordan River into Canaan, he was fulfilling this promise. Since the land wasn't empty, this could only be accomplished by driving the Canaanites out.

# CONQUEST OF CANAAN

- The second goal of the conquest was the judgment of the Canaanites. The Canaanites were an evil, depraved people who had to be judged to fulfill the demands of justice. What about these people prompted such a harsh judgment?
- In the worship of their gods, the Canaanites committed other evils. They engaged in temple prostitution which was thought to be a re-enactment of the sexual unions of the gods and goddesses.

# CONQUEST OF CANAAN

- An even more detestable practice was that of child sacrifice.
- Under the sanctuary in the ancient city of Gezer, urns containing the burnt bones of children have been found.
- They are dated to somewhere between 2000 and 1500 BC, between the time of Abraham and the Exodus.

# CONQUEST OF CANAAN

- The third goal of the conquest was the protection of Israel. If the Canaanites remained in the land, they would draw the Israelites into their evil practices.
- The Israelites would intermarry with them, and their spouses would bring their gods into the marriage with all that entailed.
- The Israelites would be tempted to imitate Canaanite religious rituals because of their close connection to agricultural rhythms.

# DISPOSSESSION OF THE CANAANITES

- The Dispossession and Destruction of the Canaanites
- The instruction often is to dispossess the Canaanites or move them out rather than to destroy them.
- We read that the “hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man.”
- Because of that advance warning, it is possible that many of the people abandoned their cities.

# GOD AND THE CANAANITES



[Answers](#) ▾ [Articles](#) ▾ [Podcasts](#) ▾ [Mind Games](#) ▾ [Resources](#) ▾ [About](#) ▾ [Donate](#)  

God and the Canaanites: A Biblical Perspective

[Home](#) / [God and the Canaanites: A Biblical Perspective](#)

**Probe-Alert  
Newsletter**

Stay informed  
of our new  
content

Our Topics

Rick Wade  
January 9,  
2011



*Rick Wade provides a biblically informed perspective of these Old Testament events, looking back at them with a Christian view of history and its significance.*

## The Charge of Genocide

A common attack today on Christianity has to do with the character of the God of the Old Testament{1}. Moses' instructions to the Israelites as they were about to move into Canaan included this:

