

As we have been discovering in our study through **Chapter 11**, God is in the business of personally developing our faith both individually and corporately. We have seen this to be true in every story from Abel through to Moses and the children of Israel's exodus from Egypt. It's as if God purposely sets up situations to open up our spiritual eyes so that what is true in the spiritual realm becomes far more real to us than what seems to be true in the physical world around us.

For example, God led the Israelites out of Egypt straight to the Red Sea where they had no apparent escape and then He sent Pharaoh in after them. Moses and the Israelites were a bit bothered by that, but God just tells Moses: "Why do you cry to me" [as if Moses has simply no reason to be upset]? Then He says: "Tell the people to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground" (**Exodus 14:15-16**). Ok; just as simple as that: I'll tell the people to go forward and just lift my staff over the waters and divide them. Duh, why didn't I think of that? Good idea! Are you flipping crazy? That's absolutely impossible.

But that is exactly what the Lord wanted and when Moses obeyed, he and the children of Israel got to personally experience the absolutely impossible. The crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army was a moment that would forever mark the history of Israel and would open the spiritual eyes of faith for myriads of men and women who believed because the water was divided.

This notion of opening our spiritual eyes of faith reminds me of a story in **2 Kings 6** regarding the prophet Elisha. The king of Aram (who was an enemy of Israel) hated Elisha because he was always prophetically eaves dropping in on the king's plans to invade Israel. Elisha literally knew what the king of Aram was

planning and would give the king of Israel prior notice allowing Israel to prepare so they were not caught off guard. Every plan made by the king of Aram was frustrated by Elisha, so he wanted Elisha captured.

Foolishly, he sent a great army with many chariots and horses to surround the area where Elisha was staying not realizing that his problem was not really with Elisha but it was with the Lord God working through Elisha. So he was about to pick a fight with the wrong guy.

When Elisha's servant got up early the next morning he saw that they were completely surrounded by this great army and he freaked. Elisha just said: "Don't be afraid! For there are more on our side than on theirs!" Then Elisha prayed. "O Lord, open his eyes and let him see!" The Lord opened the eyes of the servant and when he looked he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

So the truth in the spiritual realm was that Elisha and his servant were totally surrounded and protected by the army of God and they did not need to worry about the Arameans. They were never really at risk; it just looked that way when perceived from their eyes of the flesh. But with spiritual eyes they were able to see the truth.

Oh how we need those spiritual eyes that come only by faith. Oh, by the way, in an answer to Elisha's prayers, God blinded the Arameans and so they did not touch Elisha or his servant. It was a mockery of the king and God just made a point regarding the futility of living by what you can see in the physical realm versus what is true in the spiritual realm. They thought they could see but they were blind.

Paul captures this truth for us in **2 Corinthians 5:7** when he says: “for we walk by faith, not by sight.” Just think about what that really means not just to you but for your life. Sadly, this tends to be one of those verses that people say and even quote but never really stop to consider the practical implications of this statement.

We must walk or “live” by faith. In the Greek, this is in the present active tense. This means that we cannot be controlled or make any single decision in our life by what we perceive to be true in the physical realm. The physical realm may seem real and can even really freak us out; but, if you are a child of God, it is not your entire reality. God has a whole other reality that applies to you—a reality that supersedes the physical. Paul explains this to the Corinthians when he says:

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, **as we look** not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

We must presently and actively look to the things that are unseen; the things that are true in the spiritual realm. We must always keep our eyes fixated on Jesus and not on what is happening around us. This is the same lesson that Peter learned when he jumped out of the boat and had his moments when he walked on the water. It is the same lesson the disciples learned when they were freaking

out about the storm and Jesus just rebuked the winds and made everything ok. We are to fixate our thoughts on Jesus. We are to form our reactions to this life based on who Jesus is to us.

You see, Jesus is the Lord—the Lord who provides. He is the very wisdom of God for our lives and the one who sees all things from the beginning to the end. He is the God who is with us, the God who will deliver and save us. By the way, those were all names that the Lord gives Himself throughout the Bible. Therefore, we must learn to keep our eyes fixated on Him and not on all that the world or the enemy throws at our face. This is what it means to walk by faith.

And God is the one who trains us to see with our spiritual eyes instead of our physical eyes. He uses all manner of circumstances to teach us how to disconnect from this physical realm and instead be continually connected to the spiritual unseen realm.

It is so easy to get disturbed by what is going on in our lives; believe me, I have my moments of freaking-out. But I am learning how useless it is and how it is such a waste of time and energy to worry about and focus on the things that I cannot control. Instead, I am learning to continually focus on who Jesus is and who He has proved Himself to be—both to me and to others. This study in Hebrews has actually helped a lot. The Spirit has emphasized over and over that God will always be our God, which means that we can rest in this truth for He is a good and loving God.

This next story in Hebrews is one of those big faith building stories where everyone involved had to practice seeing from their spiritual eyes instead of their physical eyes. As the Israelites now stand at the banks of the Jordan River ready

to begin their conquest of the Promised Land, everyone had to practice what they had learned from their experiences in Egypt, through the Red Sea, and through the 40-years of wilderness wandering. Their physical eyes would quite naturally deceive them; thus, they had to live by the truth of the Word of God and walk by faith and not by sight.

Hebrews 11:30

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

The Israelites are all standing on the East side of the Jordan River ready to cross over and enter the land. The last time they were standing here (40 years earlier), what they saw so scared them that they actually refused to enter the land. And, keep in mind that was not so long after God parted the Red Sea and destroyed all of Pharaoh's army; yet, despite this absolutely impossible miracle, they were still gripped by their fear.

They had said: "The people living there are powerful, and their cities and towns are fortified and very large. We also saw the descendants of Anak who are living there! ... We can't go up against them" (***Numbers 13:28, 31***). As such, they made their choices by what they perceived to be true based on their physical reality instead of what was true based on the character and nature of their God; and, as a result, God refused to let that generation of people ever enter the land.

But this time things were different. Not in their circumstances. Across the river still stood an impenetrable fortress; but in their faith.

Archeology has revealed that the mound, or “tell,” of Jericho was surrounded by a great earthen rampart, or embankment, with a stone retaining wall at its base. The retaining wall was some 12–15 ft high. On top of that was a mud-brick wall 6 ft thick and about 20–26 ft high. At the crest of the embankment was a similar mud-brick wall whose base was roughly 46 ft above the ground level outside the retaining wall. This is what loomed high above the Israelites as they peered across the river. Humanly speaking, it was impossible for the Israelites to advance on this impregnable refuge of Jericho.

The city was built for a siege. It was fed by a bountiful underground spring coming up from beneath the mound so they had a continual supply of water and according to *Joshua 3:15*, it was the time of the harvest so the inhabitants quite possibly would have gathered enough food to last for several years. Archeological digs at this tell have found large jars full of grain in the Canaanite houses which supports this conclusion. Now the reason the jars still had grain is because Joshua was commanded to take nothing from this city, but it was all to be committed to the ban or to utter destruction.

So the circumstances still were not looking pretty; but Joshua could see something entirely different. In fact, he saw the same thing He did 40 years earlier when he declared: “The land we explored is a wonderful land! And if the Lord is pleased with us, **He will** bring us safely into the land give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey, and **He will** give it to us” (*Numbers 14:7-8*). Both

before and now Joshua saw the power, majesty and largeness of His God which caused the things of this world to pale in comparison.

That is why when God told Joshua the battle strategy for taking Jericho he did not even flinch or bat an eye. He knew that it would all happen exactly how God had said it would happen, regardless of how weird the plan sounded.

By the way, I find it a bit ironic that God choose Jericho as the target of His first attack when the Jews entered the Promised Land. First of all, Jericho was an early center for Canaanite worship of moon deities. And, as we learned, Abraham's dad, Terah (and quite possibly Abraham himself), was a worshiper of moon deities. In attacking this city, God is proving beyond any question that He is the Lord of Lords, the one and only true God, and that going back to the beginning of Jewish history, Abraham was right in choosing to leave behind his country, relatives, and his father's house.

Secondly, Jericho was primarily inhabited by the Hyskos; and, if it was the Hyskos that initiated the genocide of the Egyptian kids all those years before, now begins their judgment for putting forth their hand against God's chosen ones.

When you read the Old Testament one thing you find out is that God has a very long memory and He never lets those who mistreated His own get away with their actions. He always righteously judged them; it was just a matter of time.

So according to **Joshua 3:15**, the Jordan River was overflowing its banks and the Israelites were still on the wrong side of the river, but the priests led the way with the Ark of the Covenant and as soon as they stepped into the river, in the same manner as the Red Sea, it divided and all the Israelites (2-3 million of them) were able to cross over to the other side of the river on dry land.

On the other side, they camped at Gilgal and took care of some necessary business before they ventured off to war. They set up 12 stones at the banks of the river to remember what God had done that day in delivering the Jews into the Promised Land; and they also celebrated the Passover. Then the day after the Passover they began to eat from the produce of the land and the very next day the manna which God had miraculously provided to them as food throughout their wilderness journey stopped and they were from that day forward sustained by the produce of the land.

In addition, everyone who had not been circumcised while traveling through the desert was circumcised. It is interesting that in Hebrew “Gilgal” means “I have removed” and the Lord said: “today, I have removed (or rolled away) the reproach of Egypt” which was obviously symbolized by the cutting away of the flesh (**Joshua 5:8**).

I want you to understand that when it comes to Biblical typology, circumcision is a very important concept. It was rooted in the covenant made with Abraham whereby God promised to be his God and would give Abraham’s descendents the land if they do their part and be circumcised (**Genesis 17:1-14**). But it is all symbolic of our new life in the Spirit of God.

Let me explain. Egypt is a type of the world and circumcision is symbolic of the tearing away of the control which the *Old Sinful Nature*—or the flesh—wields over a person’s life. Through that act of tearing and then tossing away, the reproach, or the stain of the world, which had impugned our lives (through its ability to work through and control our *Old Sinful Nature*), was also removed

symbolizing our freedom in the Spirit (***Romans 2:27-29; Colossians 2:11; Philippians 3:3***).

Thus, spiritual circumcision is what happens to a person when they choose to accept Jesus into their lives. The Spirit tears, or cuts away, the *flesh* (the *Old Sinful Nature*) from a persons' heart making room for the impartation of the ***New Creation*** and the ability for a person to choose to serve God in the Spirit verses following the dictates of the world through the demands of the *Old Sinful Nature*.

You see, before a person is saved they must do what their *Old Sinful Nature* requires; they are enslaved to it. But once the flesh is torn away, so to speak, by the Spirit then the *Old Sinful Nature* can no longer automatically control a person. Now a person has to choose to give it control over their lives (***Romans 6***).

So this event symbolized their complete separation from the world, in terms of their identity, and as we discussed last week, there is no going back. For a person of faith, Egypt (or the world) has nothing to offer.

Now, while everyone was recovering from the procedure, Joshua gets his battle orders from His Commander and Chief. Keep in mind, they still have no idea how they are going to conquer this impenetrable city; it is still looming large over their lives. Joshua is walking around it and I am sure wondering what in the world they were going to do.

Joshua 5:13-6:5

When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua

went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come."

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him."

Now just so you know, the Commander of the army of the Lord is one of the titles for Jesus in the Old Testament. There must have been something supernatural about this appearance for Joshua did not act as if this was just some man with a sword as if he might be one of the Canaanite generals examining the Israelites in the same way that Joshua was out examining the walls of Jericho. No, there was something different about this man.

As soon as this man identified Himself as the Commander of the Lord's army Joshua just bowed down, worshiped, and called him Lord. One thing about Joshua that has always blown my mind is how he was always so in tune with the Lord. As soon as the Lord speaks, he just bows and wants the Lord's instructions; there is no hesitation with Joshua.

Joshua also does not argue with the man and say that he is the Commander; after all he had been commissioned as such by Moses. No; he just bows and worships. He knows that the true battle is always fought by the Lord and the Lord's host (or His army of angels) and that he and his army are just instruments in the Lord's hands to vanquish evil from the land and take hold in the physical realms what is happening in the spiritual realms (are you following the typology and how this relates to our battle to vanquish the enemy of wrong belief and unbelief from then land within our soul—the parallels are dead-on).

The drawn sword in the hand tells Joshua that the Lord is ready and He means business. It was going to be a very bad day for the Canaanites.

From the time they left Egypt to now, Joshua saw the Lord conquer the armies of Egypt, the warriors of Amalek, the King of Arad, the King of the Amorites, King Og of Bashan, 5 of the Midianite Kings, and Balaam son of Beor. Joshua and his men had continual victory when they followed the Lord. But Joshua also remembered the time when his brethren tried to fight on their own without the Lord's leading and they failed miserably (**Numbers 14:39-45**). So he was listening carefully to the voice of the Lord.

Did you notice that Joshua does not even freak out over the fact that he can actually see and talk to the Lord? You see, Joshua was a man of faith and he was

prepared for this specific time, place and assignment because he knew the Lord. Look at what is said about him:

Exodus 33:11

Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

The “tent” is a reference to the tabernacle or the place where God would speak to His people. Simply said, Joshua would not leave the presence of the Lord. He loved being in the presence of God; and, as a result of his time with the Lord, was filled with the Spirit and with wisdom (***Numbers 27:18; Deuteronomy 34:9***). Accordingly, he was able to see what was true from God’s perspective and ignore what seemed true from man’s perspective. So he was all ears and wanted to know how the Lord planned on conquering this fortress.

Each of us should take a lesson from Joshua. If you want the wisdom that comes from God, never leave His presence. Desire Him and seek after Him and He will gladly pour His wisdom all over your life (***Proverbs 2***).

A little side note for your lessons in Old Testament typology. Joshua is a type of Jesus. He fought with and conquered the enemies of his people securing for them a safe place to live in the Promised Land. Joshua’s name literally means “Savior” and in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) and in the Greek New Testament, his name is rendered as “Jesus.” He was first called

Hoshea in **Numbers 13:16**, but Moses just called him Joshua or “Jehovah is salvation.”

The instructions he received were about as crazy as those Moses received regarding the crossing of the Red Sea. They made no sense from the perspective of war. Just walk around the city once a day for 6-days with 7 priests tooting the rams horns as they walk before the ark. Then on the 7th day walk around 7 times and when the priests blow a long trumpet sound, shout real loud and the walls will come falling down. Wow! Great plan!

What about building siege towers, what about building big embankments against the wall, what about a battering ram, what about flaming arrows and big balls of fire to burn the place down. What about some flanking strategy to trick them out of the city. Or what about building a big hollow moon in which the soldiers can hide. Maybe the Canaanites will think it is an offering to their god and just maybe they will bring it into the city and when they are all asleep the soldiers can jump out of it and get them. It could work.

From a human perspective, the Lord instructions are entirely irrational. But when using spiritual eyes you can see how these instructions paint a picture of spiritual glory and triumph.

First of all the Ark of the Covenant symbolizes God’s presence—God would go with them; that’s a relief. The 7-priests (7 being the number of completion and perfection), symbolize Jesus, the one perfect priest who will mediate with God on behalf of the nation. The Rams horns are actually the ones used on the day of Jubilee and are not the silver horns that were used for war (**Numbers 10:1-10**). These horns are for celebration (**Leviticus 23:23-24**). Thus, the horns symbolize

that in the spiritual realms the war is already won and that the victory already belongs to the Israelites. They can just be silent, watch the Lord do His thing, and rejoice.

They are instructed to travel around the city one time per day for 6-days. One is the number of unity, which declares that the Lord and His host of warriors and Joshua and his host of warriors are one and are unified in purpose and will together prevail over man, which is symbolized by the number 6.

Then on the 7th day they were to march around the city 7 times while the 7 priests blow the 7 trumpets of celebration. Again, all these 7's symbolize spiritual completion and perfection; the certainty that what God said, God would do—no ifs, ands or buts. This is all about God and His character and nature; it is all about faith, it is all about the Israelites believing that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Then when they hear the long blast of the trumpet the people are to make a great shout and then the walls will come falling down. This is really cool. Why the shout? Even though God has made the point that He is going to do everything on their behalf, they get to be a part of the miracle. Just like Moses had to raise his staff over the Red Sea and the people had to choose to go forward, so too the Israelites must shout and with that roar they will see the walls fall down. It's as if they and the hosts of the Lord's army (all those angelic warriors) all shout together and the sound is so powerful in both the physical and spiritual realms that the shock waves just crumble the walls at their foundations.

What a powerful set of irrational and unconventional instructions. They are so odd; it's as if the Spirit bolds, highlights, italicizes, and uses super large font and

so on. In other words, there is no way for anyone who remotely has spiritual eyes to miss the point that the Lord is God and He will prevail and His people will not only be saved but get to rejoice personally experiencing the deliverance of the Lord, personally taking part in the deliverance of the Lord. How cool is that?

Joshua 6:6-14

So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the Ark of the Covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord." And he said to the people, "Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the Lord."

And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Lord went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the Lord following them. The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually.

But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout." So he caused the ark of the Lord to circle the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after

the ark of the Lord, while the trumpets blew continually. And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

Could you imagine what the Canaanites were thinking locked behind the walls of Jericho? That whole thing would have been so creepy. No one is saying a word; they are just walking around carrying this funky looking box blowing horns. I can imagine them getting totally psyched out. What are they doing? This makes no sense? Are they casting some sort of spell around our city? What are those horns for? We're doomed.

We know that they were already scared to death. When they heard that the Lord dried up the Jordan River so the people of Israel could cross, they lost heart and were paralyzed with fear (***Joshua 5:1***). And Rahab, a prostitute who lived in Jericho (who we will study next week), had previously told some of Joshua's spies:

Joshua 2:9-11

We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. For we have heard how the Lord made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed. No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. For the Lord your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.

Day one, day two, day three, day four, day five, day six the army of Israel does the same eerie thing and then they return to their camp. With each day the terror runs deeper and deeper as God mocks the fortresses of man. They thought their walls would grant them salvation; but salvation comes only from the Lord. They hid behind their walls the same way so many people hide behind their walls attempting to protect themselves; but it is all so futile.

Our great walls, no matter how tall and how thick are nothing to the Lord. He will use his hosts of heaven and his chosen people to crack them down and shatter them to pieces. In fact, your walls, when viewed from the spiritual, are actually so fragile that all it would take is a shout and they would fall.

I know that right now many of you are under the siege and your walls are surrounded. You have dug in deep hoping to survive, hoping to cling on to all the ways you have tried to endure this life, but again it is futile. God will always prevail over man, it's just a matter of time, and no wall can hold Him at bay. Let the walls fall. Commit all that is ungodly in your city to destruction. Jesus said: "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it" (**Luke 9:24**).

Then like the prostitute Rahab, you will be delivered and you will be saved. You will be able to live and dwell with God's chosen people in safety and security experiencing the power and glory of the Lord

Joshua 6:15-16; 20-21

On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city.

So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

What a might victory. All they had to do was believe that the Lord would deliver them—regardless of how crazy the methods of that deliverance—and they were saved. In the same way, God wants to deliver you and I know that His methods which He is utilizing here in this fellowship are not conventional and do not fit so well in your experience within the “religion” of Christianity. But trust Him. He has proved Himself faithful and He just wants to free you from yourself and tear down all those walls behind which you have been hiding like a scared person who has been living in constant terror.

The good news is that He has already conquered and freed so many of us who now get to help you through this process. Don't dig in; don't make this any more

difficult than it needs to be. It does not need to take the proverbial 6-days; instead, be convinced that He is God and He is good and let it happen now.

Let us surround your city and do the things that the Lord has asked of us. Your deliverance will come from His hand for sure, but we are merely the vessels that get to participate in your deliverance; the instruments of His shout.

And when it is said and done you will be able to see with your spiritual eyes knowing how to walk and how to live **by faith** never again seeing this world through the eyes of the flesh but seeing everything—AND I MEAN EVERYTHING—through the eyes of the Spirit.

The unseen world that surrounds you is our EVERYTHING. It defines us; it is where our life is found. It is where the battles are fought. This physical world is just the field upon which the Spiritual reality is played out.

It is time we all learn to live as a spiritual being and let the Lord conquer us completely so we can move forward as men and women who are known by and identified by their faith; men and women who have eyes of the Spirit. It is time behold the power, majesty and largeness of your God. When you do, it will cause all the things of this world to pale in comparison.

Let's Pray.