

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

- ✓ **Joshua 4:1-6:27.** The second generation.
- ✓ **2 Corinthians 9:6-15.** Grace Giving.
- ✓ **Psalms 48.** The Glory of God in Zion.

COMMENTARY:

Joshua 4:1-6:27. In chapter 4 God instructs Joshua to set up memorial stones to serve as reminders of the faithfulness of God (4:6-7), illustrating the importance of regular reflection on God’s past faithfulness. All of who and what we are and have is courtesy of God’s faithfulness, not our faithfulness. Any faithfulness that we have is only possible by His grace opportunities, from the privilege of life as such to being able to daily grow in the Word of God, be part of the universal and local body of Christ. In chapter 5 God instructs Joshua to circumcise the second generation before they cross the Jordan to enter the Promised Land. The significance of circumcision is that it is sign of the covenant with Abraham. In other words, it marked the Israelites as the people of God and the people of promise. Moreover, the circumcision was also required before they could partake of Passover, which itself was a sign of redemption from Egypt, as well as hope for the future Messiah who would redeem His people from eternal condemnation. Both the promise to Abraham and the redemption from Egypt looked forward to the day of entering the Promised Land—in time and in eternity. Circumcision was necessary at this time because the generation that came out of Egypt had fallen under God’s judgment and God was raising up a new generation for Himself (5:7). Chapter 6 is a recounting of the destruction of Jericho. The name Jericho means “moon” implying that the city was a center for astral worship. As far as the destruction of Jericho, it is important to make a distinction between divine sanctioned holy war and unsanctioned “holy war” perpetrated by religious groups like Islam and even Christians during the Crusades and following the Reformation. The crucial difference is that God specifically commanded the people of God to destroy Jericho, it “was doomed by the Lord for destruction” (6:17) whereas in other cases God did not specifically command warfare against other peoples. *Just because one can find an example of God commanding His people to destroy a pagan city in the Old Testament does not mean that it can be taken as a universal principle.* We are told in 6:21 that the Israelites “utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.” Atheists often complain by asking, “But how can such a ruthless destruction of innocent life and property be justified? There are at least 6 responses: First, the Canaanites were vile and needed to be destroyed: *Leviticus 18:25* ‘For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. They were involved in all kinds of abominations, including child sacrifices (Lev. 18:21-26). Second, God had given them 400 years of grace to repent of their despicable acts (Gen 15:16). Third, as far as killing the little children, those under the age of accountability would go to Heaven (see 2 Sam 12:23), therefore, these small children were transferred from a demonically induced vile, gross, and violent culture to the holy, pure, and peaceful presence of God. Fourth, it must be remembered that God is sovereign over life (Deut. 32:39; Job 1:21) and can order its end according to His will and in view of the creature’s *ultimate* good. Fifth, the Israelites were acting according to the direct command of God, not their own initiative. They were God’s instruments of justice and

righteous. Sixth, it was necessary to completely exterminate any trace of the city and its people due to the extent of wickedness. Sometimes radical surgery is required to completely eliminate a deadly cancer from the body.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15. One of the most abused passages in the Bible is verse 6, which states that those who sow sparingly will reap sparingly, and those who sow bountifully will also reap bountifully. The abuse is the use of the passage with an idea on gaining more riches by giving more. However, the next verse Paul makes it clear that what God looks for is a “cheerful giver” rather than an “investment giver.” Certainly God will provide for those who give, but our willingness to give should never be out of selfish desires in order to receive more. Selfish giving only produces more selfishness, not love for God and the people of God. God is our Model. God is incredibly generous—even sending His Son to die for us. As a result of His gracious love, we should also freely give. Giving is to reflect the thankfulness in our hearts: “being made rich in every way for all generosity” (2 Cor. 9:11). In short, we should give out of love for Him, and not give expecting a return on our *investment*.

Psalm 48. This psalm continues the theme of God’s reign in the context of Him reigning from Mount Zion. God rules over all in that He gives existence to all things continuously and is even the existential cause behind the formal cause of every thought of every person. Not one thought exists apart from God giving existence and sustaining those thoughts all the while each person is his own formal cause of each thought and action. Note the beautiful way this psalm ends: “Our God forever and ever; He will be our guide, Even to death.” What a deal! What an incredible promise! What an incredible future awaits all believers!

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don