

SERMON: Immovable Walls**GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House**

In my last Message in the Book of Joshua, I closed with these comments:

Many sincere Christians had followed Jesus for years but then somehow, they were discouraged and did not try to keep in a close relationship. Someone or something crushed their hearts with pain. They blamed God or simply seemed to drift away. Jesus promised to never leave us or forsake us in **(Hebrews 13.5)** *...for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"*

The Bible also tells us in **(2 Timothy 2.13)** *If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.* So, after God has drawn these dear Believers He loves back close to Jesus, they also have a personal *Gilgal*, for sin and shame washed away. They can sing again as in their early days in Christ, my sins have been washed and rolled away. They can now say, as in the Praise Song:

O God, You are my God, I will ever praise You

I will seek You in the morning, and learn to know Your ways,

Step by step You will lead me

And I will follow You all of my days

We Christians can seek God daily and trust that He will guide us *Step by Step*. Today I chose the title of this sermon, "WALLS TO BIG TO ...

Joshua with God's miracles had led the Israelites through a "dried" Jordan River only to face an invincible fortress, Jericho. When I talk with young Believers I say: Only God knows His plans for your life. But whatever joys or sorrows there may be in your pilgrim walk to Glory, the Christian life is not often boring!

Today I repeated these closing comments on Christian "backsliding," or "leaving fellowship with Jesus," from my last Message. This is a segue or flow of history for my Messages. But also, I

know many sincere Christians struggle to forgive themselves for things for which God already has forgiven them.

Reading (**Joshua 5.9-12**) *9 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the shame of your slavery in Egypt.” So that place has been called Gilgal to this day. 10 While the Israelites were camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they celebrated Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month. 11 The very next day they began to eat unleavened bread and roasted grain harvested from the land. 12 No manna appeared on the day they first ate from the crops of the land, and it was never seen again. So from that time on the Israelites ate from the crops of Canaan.*

Now the Israelites were a people set free from Egypt and shame of their slavery there. They praised and honored God by celebrating the Passover with sacrificed lambs and eating unleavened bread. This bread was likely from fields they marched through as it was the Spring Harvest, the Jordan being in flood stage.

MIRACLES AND NATURE

God does the miraculous to accomplish His plan: His will for His Chosen people. As we see in (**Joshua 5.12**) *No manna appeared on the day they first ate from the crops of the land, and it was never seen again. So from that time on the Israelites ate from the crops of Canaan.* The daily bread, *manna*, was miraculously created by God for His Chosen people in the wilderness which was barren. In places of fertility, the people could not stop their walk or pilgrimage to the Promised Land to plant and harvest crops.

Jesus, the Word of God, created all Natural and Supernatural things, such as angels. God gets glory when He fulfills His plans either with His created Universe, or, by supernatural miracles. As I said before, “The Holy Spirit is not a *gnostic* or nature hating Spirit.” The Israelites now in the Promised Land began to harvest wheat for bread. The Lord had promised them in (**Exodus 3.8**) *So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.* His faithfulness to His Promise now was fulfilled by the natural land that He created. After the miracles of provision, it was time for the farmers to get to work!

As Born-again Christians in a world which worships wealth, we are warned not to seek wealth rather than to simply work. **I have a few Bible points:**

- **(1 Timothy 6.10)** *For the **love of money** is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving **money**, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.*
- **(Ephesians 4.28)** *If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.*
- **(2Thessalonians 3.10)**
Even while we were with you, we gave you this command: “Those unwilling to work will not get to eat.”
- In **(Matthew 6.24-27)** Jesus said: **24** *“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money. 25 “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? 27 Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?*

Like the Israelites we Christians we are also God's Chosen people. We are born of the Spirit, not of any physical birth or by any flesh relationship to Father Abraham. In **(Ephesian1.3-5)** **3** *All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4 **Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ** to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.* As God's Chosen, Jesus now leads us on our Walk or Pilgrimage to our Promised Land, Heaven. God has not lost any power since 1400B.C. He will orchestrate and command both supernatural and natural events to fulfill His Promise to all Christians. Jesus has promised that He will present us all, each of us, in His Bride, the Church, to Father God. He will bring us to Heaven as in **(Ephesians 5.26-27)** **26** *that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, 27 that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

PASTOR BRUCE'S MIRACLES FOR DELIVERANCE

As many OIC members know, your pastor had a career in science before God called me to the Ministry and Missions. I was a Christian only in name as Jesus was real but up in Heaven and

irrelevant to my life. God used many miracles to try to get my attention. Yet it was Holy Spirit directing my steps as a sinner to the right places that led to my being born-again. I did not understand most of these miracles until after I got saved! God even gave me a “personal” earthquake (October 1971). God timed it as I just opened my astrology book. But, I did not understand God's attempt to reach out to me. God saw, and of course foreknew, of my science “religion” being replaced by my occult practice of “astrology.”

My science was true, even as a sinner. But I wanted a “God” who would give me all I wanted in sinful life. The astrology book cover said “God used astrology to give a good life.” **What a lie from the devil that was!!!**

But God's plan was to reveal the reality of Satan to make me seek deliverance by seeking the only One who has the power to do it, JESUS! Once a co-worker hung up a “Voodoo” mask from a vacation trip in our computer room. I was afraid of it. I went next door to pray. Maybe the first time since a child...out of fear..to Jesus. I returned to our computer room and the mask was on the floor. One night after hours in the computer room I met Satan. I saw nobody but heard his voice, and miracles. I had stayed after work to check carefully my part of our company's report. This was for the US Army. We had written a computer simulation for atomic bomb attacks on Nike Missile Bases. Our computer programs showed the Army which type of electric generator would keep going during an exploding A-Bomb. That night at my work Satan gave me mind-control of the large computer that filled most of the 50X60 ft (279 square meter) room. Every time I said OFF..the IBM computer stopped. And saying START, it started. ... Several times. Then Satan said I had to accept this “gift.” **I somehow decided to fight.** So I said NO! He said in a murderous voice: “If you tell people that you said no to me they will say you are crazy.” I said back: “Jesus heard you and He is not crazy.” He left in anger. It took another year of intense mental spiritual warfare against the Prince of Darkness before I found the Prince of Peace! I even lost my precious engineering science job from such mental fatigue. But one night God led me to watch Billy Graham's telecast. I prayed as I went to sleep: “God, You don't care about me. But I need help.” That night the devil was pushed away with lights in my bedroom and witches knocking on my door. The next morning I found an “Evangelical Church” in my phone book. About a month later on May 17, 1973, I received Jesus by FAITH as I read Bill Bright's Four Spiritual Laws. Thus began my new life in Christ.

So....Dear OIC Saints, do not be afraid of the Devil, nor be shy to ask God for miracles when your life seems stuck or having no good affect for God's Kingdom. He gave them to me before I asked.

He has as much power today and forever as for His Chosen Ones...for Joshua in 1406BC and for me in 1971AD.

But, we must also remember when we request a miracle, in His Love, He can answer: Yes, or No, or Wait. But He always answers! As we read in **(Ephesians 1.11/KJ21)** *In Christ also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will,*

Next, in **(Joshua 5. 13-14)** *13When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, “Are you friend or foe?”*

NOTE that I use the Septuagint Translation next. I will explain a little later:

(Joshua 5.13-14/TSGA-KJ21) *And he said to him, I am come now the chief Captain of the Host of the Lord. And Joshua fell on his face upon the earth, and said to him, Lord, what commandest thou thy servant.*

Pastor Bruce, you may ask: Who is this “*Captain of the Host of the Lord.*” confronting Joshua?

THE CAPTAIN OF THE HOST OF THE LORD(KJ21). Or COMMANDER OF THE LORD'S ARMY(NLT) ?

Christians know and confess “Jesus is LORD.” Peter preached this revelation to humble the Jews unto salvation in **(Acts 2.36)** *“So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both **Lord and Messiah!** Thus Jesus' divine nature and equality with God is proclaimed. Yet, Jesus revealed or explained God in detail to Mankind as never before in the Older Testament. He made the three Persons of the Triune God clear. He prayed to Father God. He was anointed by Holy Spirit. So with our knowledge of God looking back to Joshua in 1406B.C..... what do we think? This *man standing in front of him with sword in hand* could have been Jesus. But I think not! Because Jesus, the Prince of Glory, poured out His Glorious appearance to be born a baby to die for Mankind. I expect this *emptying Himself* only happened once and only for lost sinners. This *emptying Himself* is written about Jesus in **(Philippians 2.7/AMP)** *but emptied Himself [without renouncing or diminishing His deity, but only temporarily giving up the outward expression of divine equality and His rightful dignity] by assuming the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men [He became completely human but was without sin, being fully God and fully man].**

The correct interpretation or exegesis of this Bible passage in the Book of Joshua does not change on the exact identity of **The Commander of the LORD's Army(NLT)**. **But I strongly believe that he was an angel of the Lord.** The angels given names in the Bible that I recall are Gabriel and Michael. Gabriel brought the news to Mary that she was chosen to be the mother of the Messiah. Michael came to Daniel after being delayed in a battle in the spiritual world against the Prince of Persia. These angels fight for, and bring messages from God to, God's Chosen People. They may be delayed, but we can be sure they never lose. All God's purposes will be completed!

God's purpose for Israel was taking possession of the Promised Land of Canaan. It was clear that an angel with a sword came to fight for Joshua and the Israelites. It is worth noting that the *Septuagint Old Testament Bible does not have the words “Neither one,...”* as the angel answered Joshua in **(Joshua 5.13-14/NLT)** *“Are you friend or foe?”* **14“Neither one,”** he replied. *“I am the commander of the LORD's army.”* The Septuagint was the Bible most often quoted by the Apostles of Jesus: **(Joshua 5.13-14/TSGA)** *And he said to him, I am come now the chief Captain of the Host of the Lord.* This response, *“Neither one,...”* in many translations makes no sense. The Lord has been sending His angels (hosts) to perform miracles for the Israelites all the way from and in Egypt. This was to defeat the foes or enemies against the Israelites. The angels were on the side of Joshua and the Israelites. The battle between good and evil is the same since the Garden of Eden. Jesus said in **(Luke 9.50/KJ21)** *And Jesus said unto him, “Forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us.”*

Joshua had often seen the miraculous even a day before when the Lord dried up the Jordan River. But, he may never had met an angel before. It took a few minutes to understand, I expect, until he heard in **(Joshua 5.12/NLT)** : *“I am the commander of the LORD's army.”* Then, Joshua acted correctly for the Lord's Angels are the Lord's Messengers.

So in **(Joshua 5.14-15/NLT)** *At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. “I am at your command,” Joshua said. “What do you want your servant to do?”* **15** *The commander of the LORD's army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did as he was told.*

I wonder what Joshua was feeling as he saw a real Angel of the Lord. A reverential fear, for sure. Actually, even such a wonderful experience required *courage*. As God said to Joshua in **(Joshua 1.9)** *This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For*

*the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” The Angel's Message would bring great confidence to Joshua if he did not allow fear or doubt keep him from really believing God's Word. We Christians about 3,400 years later also need to *be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged.* We must often recall Jesus' Promise in **(Matthew 28.18-20)** *18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

Reading **(Joshua 6.1)** *Now the gates of Jericho were tightly shut because the people were afraid of the Israelites. No one was allowed to go out or in.* The King of Jericho and his enemies in adjacent cities considered Jericho as invincible. The following is a quotation from a note for **(Joshua 6.1)** from the *Life Application Bible (LAB)* : **“The city of Jericho, built thousands of years before Joshua was born, was one of the oldest cities in the world. In some places it had fortified walls up to 25 feet (7.6 meters) high and 20 feet (6.1 meters) thick. Soldiers standing guard on top of the walls could see for kilometers. Jericho was a symbol of military power and strength--- the Canaanites considered it invincible.”**

GOD'S PLAN FOR VICTORY AT JERICHO

The angel then gives God's instructions for Victory in **(Joshua 6.2-5)** *2 But the LORD said to Joshua, “I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors. 3 You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days. 4 Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram’s horn. On the seventh day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns. 5 When you hear the priests give one long blast on the rams’ horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge straight into the town.”*

In last week's sermon, *Step By Step*, I said: Yet, the Lord then made them {the Israelite Army} incapable of fighting for some period of time to heal after their circumcision {their re-commitment to the Lord}. Whenever you really hear from God, do not worry about any accusations of *foolishness*. He knows the strength and location of all the enemies of His Chosen People...then and now!

God trusted Joshua to *continue in the faith* and let courage expand his view of reality with the Lord in his life. God wanted no man to take credit for the *invincible* Jericho falling before the Israelite Army. Joshua and the soldiers needed to keep faith in Him, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Let us, as God's people, see our faith grow as we exercise courage, as Joshua did.

Joshua's Encouragement at Jericho:

- He had a visit from the Angel who Commanded the Lord's Angels in Battle.
- He also could recall the Lord's command to have courage and the Lord's promised Presence

Every Christian's Encouragement until the End of the Age:

- We have The Promise by Jesus, who created all the angels, to never leave us.
- Loving Fellowship from Father God as His children.
- Unstoppable Power from the Holy Spirit within us.

Joshua's Challenge at Jericho

- Believe God's Word brought by an angel
- Keep his sword at his side until the Holy Priests released God's Power after marching around the city in circles for seven days.
- Do exactly as the Lord told him regarding the details over seven days of marching
- After the walls collapsed, risk his life in hand to hand combat against the King of Jericho and his army

Every Christian's Challenge as we walk as pilgrims to be with Jesus in Heaven

- Believe God's Word in the Bible
- Remember Jesus said *without Me you can do nothing*
- Live by walking in God's Ways: Jesus' Gospel is Peace and God's Law is Love
- Have courage to stand against the devil and resist him to reach sinners for Christ

In (Joshua 6.2) *But the LORD said to Joshua, "I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its strong warriors.* Note that the angel as God's Messenger spoke as if He were the Lord. This makes sense since He is hearing from the Throne of God directly.

In (Joshua 6.3) *You and your fighting men should march around the town once a day for six days.* I think some of the Israelites may have been saying quietly: "Joshua is leading us in circles. We can't win a battle this way!" Of course the Lord was testing Joshua for obedience for the Victory. We Christians are not under the Law. But we must not neglect obedience. The Law of Love means

our desire to please Jesus with our actions. Not from fear, but we desire to live close to Jesus in our relationship built on Love...His great love and our earnest love back to Him.

(Joshua 6.4-5) *4 Seven priests will walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram's horn. On the seventh day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests blowing the horns.5 When you hear the priests give one long blast on the rams' horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge straight into the town."*

We must beware of making numbers too important over Bible meaning. But it is clear that God was *creating a Victory from an apparent human defeat, an immovable wall*. Thus the number seven to finish the 6 days of Creation with the Seventh Day, the Day God rested-the Sabbath. The Battle a Sabbath Day? Yes! The fact is that as the soldiers waited and watched before the fight. Then, God created the Victory for them all on the 7th day of marching by a simple blast of the priests' horns and a shout by the people.

JOSHUA LEADS WITH OBEDIENCE

Joshua believed the angel of the Lord. He trusted that God would "come through" or "show up" or "be Present" as He promised. Joshua knew that without a great supernatural Victory there would be no victory at all. God would make the *immovable* clay brick wall collapse.

Next Joshua starts the "miracle" by leading God's people with courage and faith to face their *immovable wall* to destroy. In **(Joshua 6.7)** *Then he gave orders to the people: "March around the town, and the armed men will lead the way in front of the Ark of the Lord."*

Christians face a variety of *Immovable Walls* that block their pilgrim walk to Jesus in Heaven. We are still maybe too human as "Children of God" as we become "Sons of God" day by day...*step by step*. We would do well to remember how Joshua led the people into the open area against an *Immovable Wall* to climb. But Joshua believed God. Joshua need not climb it for God would crumble it like a cupcake by His Mighty Power. After the wall collapsed, as God promised, then there would be bloody warfare. But God had promised Joshua that the Israelite soldiers would win! We should also expect God to use His mighty power in our lives. He showed this power when He raised Jesus from the dead. He often combines something supernatural with some hard work by us afterwards. Joshua saw many miracles traveling from Egypt to Jericho. These miracles

strengthened his faith for what he could not yet see. He trusted God's promised Victory. Today, death itself has no threat to us as Christ is risen from the grave. God may crumble our *Immovable Wall* before us. He may strengthen us to climb up it and fall, to try again. But we can trust God to show up and be Present to give us the Victories He promised for our lives to be abundant.

As God's Son promised in **(John 10.9-11)** *9 Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. 10 The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.*

The Good Shepherd already sacrificed His life for us on the Cross. Jesus' Victory is the blessed assurance of our Victory. In the 1st Century AD Paul marched forward with courage and faith like Joshua to face his own Immovable Walls. He had these wherever he preached. But he still had the joy, and felt the freedom, to say in **(Philippians 1.21/KJ21)** *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

Let Us Pray,

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