

The Curse of Jericho, God Does What He Says

by James Jennings

This sermon delves into the curse of Jericho as recorded in Joshua 6:26, emphasizing the importance of God fulfilling His promises and warnings. It highlights the consequences of defying God's commands, the need to take God at His word, and the eternal significance of trusting in Christ for salvation. The sermon urges believers to know and believe in the Scriptures, emphasizing the certainty of God's Word being fulfilled, both in blessings and curses.

Scripture: Galatians 1:8, Galatians 3:10, Isaiah 55:11, Joshua 6:26, 1 Kings 16:34, Hebrews 11:30

Topics: "God's Promises", "Consequences of Disobedience"

Description

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Transcript

I want to consider the curse of Jericho. The curse of Jericho. Joshua 6.26 This is where we find it.

Joshua 6.26 Joshua laid an oath after Jericho had fallen on them at that time saying, Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn, shall he lay his foundation. And at the cost of his youngest son, shall he set up its gates.

So the Lord was with Joshua and his fame was in all the land. Let's pray. Father, Lord, we thank You for Your Word.

Lord, we thank You even for these verses that are inspired by You that is God-breathed. And Lord, You've led me here to speak on this, and so I just ask that You would give me grace and be with the words of my lips. Lord, be with my hearers that they would have ears to hear.

And Lord, if any here don't know You, and as we're going to see are under a curse from You, Lord, not this one, but something different, Lord, I pray You'd open their eyes and save them. In Jesus' name, Amen. So my title is, The Curse of Jericho, God Does What He Says.

Both the blessings and the curses. God does what He says. I'm going to say that a lot this morning because I want you to leave believing that, being reaffirmed in that, that the God of the Bible does what He says.

And in some ways, you could speak on this from all over the Scripture. I mean, you could have 10,000 sermons on the point that God does what He says. He keeps His Word.

Obviously, as we go to the Scriptures, there are things written in the Old Testament that are shadows, are types, and it might say there's a covenant of circumcision that is forever. And then you go to the New Testament and you find out what matters is not physical circumcision, but circumcision of the heart. That doesn't mean God didn't do what He said.

It doesn't mean God didn't mean what He meant. It just means we need to interpret it correctly. But here we have a curse.

That's something to be condemned. It's not something light. So first, why am I going here to prove to you guys, why is it necessary to prove the point this morning that God does what He says? Why is that even necessary? I mean, is anyone really trying to attack and get us or you to believe that God doesn't do what He says? When was the first occasion that this happened that you can think of? In the Garden.

Genesis 3.1 The serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. And He said to the woman, did God actually say? Did God actually say that? That you shall not eat of the tree of the Garden. Has Satan told you that this week? Have you read something? Has there been a slander from the enemy? God didn't actually give that verse for you to take comfort in, Christian.

The devil might slander God's character to you in some ways like this. Satan often tries to convince us that God doesn't do what He says under the disguise of false religion. Right? What does Paul say? Some disguise themselves as angels of light.

They're angels of light. They appear like they're angels of light, but they've got a disguise on. And even this last Friday, I went to a funeral.

A friend of mine who died at 90 years of age, I went to this funeral, and at this funeral, there were three different ministers who shared. You had a Baptist. You had someone who was a Presbyterian.

And then you had the Catholic priest who had been my friend's hospice minister in the final weeks of his life. And as I'm sitting there with my 5-year-old daughter, just Celia and I were able to go to it, I'm kind of whispering to her, that was good what that person said. That was according to what God says.

But this Catholic priest got up. He made all manner of statements pointing to you being saved by your works. And then he said this, he said, now I'm going to read you something that Jesus told our sister.

Now when I heard that, you know what was going on in my mind? Okay, what did Jesus tell Mary? And then he says, our sister Olivia, a Catholic saint. And he starts to quote what this lady supposedly had in the vision as if it is authoritative with Scripture. Now I know, we know the Catholics are going to do that.

But you know what? What that lady supposedly had from a vision from the Lord was not according to my Bible. It was pointing to trusting in your works to be saved. It was Satan disguising himself as an angel of light.

A devil, Satan, the deceiver. But God does what he says. God does not do what false teachers say.

False teachers will tell you something and it won't be fulfilled in the true sense because it's not a word from God. It's something they've made up. Some wrongly say the Bible, listen to this quote, they say the Bible is nothing but an old wives' fable.

It's unworthy of credence. It's unworthy of giving yourself to. It's an old-fashioned jingle without a particle of meaning.

Is that true? No, it's not true. It's not an old wives' fable that's made up, but it's the old truth that God Himself has given us that is God-breathed and there's nothing more true than what the Lord has given us. And God is a God who keeps His Word.

Is it an unworthy of belief in? No. Rather, if you don't believe in the truth in this book, you will be unworthy of eternal life. Is it an old-fashioned jingle? No.

It's the everlasting God's loud, trumpeted revelation to us that is fully relevant today. In every generation, we have people who will come and try to make us believe the lie that the Bible is not relevant for us today in these situations that we face. And lastly, that quote, they say it is not without a particle of meaning.

There's not one particle of meaning. Is that true? No. The truth is, not one particle that's been created in all the universe makes any sense without God and His Word.

And there wouldn't be one particle except that the Lord has spoken and created. So, I want to consider God's Word here, this curse of Jericho, because it's an example of God keeping His Word. And it's an example of someone not believing God does as He says.

But first, let's look at Joshua 6. This is in the context of the fall of Jericho. And let's first consider God's fulfilled Word of the destruction of the walls. Look at the start of chapter 6. Joshua 6.2 And the Lord said... the Lord has said something.

Is He going to do what He says He's going to do? He said something to Joshua. See, I have given Jericho into your hand with its keen 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 ram's 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 flat down. And the people shall go up, everyone straight before Him. The Lord says this.

Did God do as He said? How long did it take to see it fulfilled? Five weeks? Five years? Seven days, right? The Lord says something, and over a week, you see that fulfilled. And you see, God did as He said. God did as He said.

So here, these people, these Israelites, they see God told us this. Walk around the city. And on the last day, shout, and the walls will fall.

And they saw this supernatural event happen. And clearly, God did as He said He did, and yet still at the end of this chapter, in our verse 26, Joshua laid an oath on them at that time. He put this oath on them.

They've clearly seen God does what He says and here He gives them this oath. Now, here's something to recognize. God does what He says, but if the Israelites didn't march around and do as He says, would the walls have fallen? No, they wouldn't.

So God does what He says when you believe Him. Right? By faith. Hebrews 11.30, it says, by faith, by taking God at His Word, the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

So the writer to the Hebrews records this didn't just happen because God said it was going to happen. It happened because they took God at His Word and He fulfilled it. Blessings will be delayed or not given if there's no faith.

If you don't have faith, if you don't believe God, He might have said this, but if you don't believe Him, when are you going to see that fulfilled? You've got to take God at His Word. We see here that the wicked and idolatrous people could not avoid God's justice and His promise to His children to give them victory. The Lord is able to do what He says in a supernatural way that no human arm of the flesh can stop Him from doing.

Now, let's consider this curse of Jericho. That's what I'm calling it. Verse 26.

When was it given? I kind of mentioned that. At that time. Victory happened.

Did they have a celebration? No. They had men come up. Probably not every person, maybe some of the leaders, and they took an oath.

Not a celebration, but people taking an oath. You see that right there. Joshua laid an oath on them.

Apparently, they obviously received that oath. They swore by it. So they had an oath.

Rather than celebration, they had an oath of consecration. These walls that God supernaturally destroyed, this city, we're not going to rebuild this fortified city back to the way it was. And then I guess I'd ask this question.

At this point, is this even necessary for Joshua? I mean, the Lord's the one who's put this on Joshua, but you would think, is it really necessary to say that right after they've had victory? I mean, are there some in Israel who are kind of eyeing the real estate there and thinking about rebuilding everything? Is it necessary? Yeah, it is. It is very necessary. No one in their right mind would be thinking about rebuilding that city after God tore it down.

But you know what mankind's problem is? Are men in their right mind outside of Christ? No. And who's the man in chapter 6? We've not read about him yet. Who's clearly not in his right mind.

What's his name? Achan. Achan. Look at Joshua 6. 18.

It shouldn't surprise us that Joshua would need to lay this oath upon them when you see what type of men were among the Israelites. As we find in 1 Corinthians 10, they all did not enter. Not all of Israel was truly born again and looking to the promise in the Old Testament of Christ's coming.

Joshua 6.18. He told them, here they're taking the city, but you keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them, you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. The camp of Israel. So don't do that.

Verse 21, then they devoted all in the city to destruction. Both men, women, young and old, oxen, sheep, donkeys with the edge of the sword. And then verse 22, they send two men to spy out more land and they're going to move on from here.

And they go on to Ai and what happens? They're defeated. They don't have victory. Chapter 7, verse 1, but the people of Israel broke faith in regards to the devoted things.

For Achan, son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things and the anger of the Lord burned against the people of Israel. I mean, here you have God said, I'll supernaturally rip down those walls, and He did it. You've just witnessed that and you're told not to take of these things, and yet Achan goes in there and that's exactly what happened.

Chapter 7, verse 20. Look at Achan's response. He answered Joshua, truly I've sinned against the Lord.

He's acknowledging his sin. He had a guilty conscience. And this is what I did.

Achan explains what happened. Verse 21, when I saw... so his eyes saw something. What did they see? Among the spoil, a what? A beautiful cloak.

What do some other versions say? Other than cloak, what does it say? Garment? Mantle? I saw a beautiful mantle. I saw a beautiful cloak. Wait, wait, is that worth disobeying the Lord for? And then he says what happened.

It was from Shinar. I didn't look that up. I mean, it was from Shinar.

That must have been some fancy stuff from that city. And 200 shekels of silver. And a bar of gold.

Is your soul worth a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels? And then look what he says happened. Then I coveted them. So something's happening in the heart.

And then action happens. He takes them. And then his conscience convicting him, he hid them.

And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath. What happens to Achan? Verse 25, Joshua said, why did you bring trouble on us? The Lord brings trouble on you today. And all Israel stoned Him with stones.

They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. And they raised over Him a great heap of stones that remain to this day. Then the Lord turned from His burning anger.

Therefore, to this day, the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor. Now imagine you're there. Here you've already heard this curse.

If you rebuild, if you rebuild this fortified city, that firstborn son of yours is going to die when you lay the foundations. And if you keep doing it, you're going to eventually hang those gates and that youngest son of yours is going to die. You've already heard that.

And if you were someone right there thinking in your mind, hmm, maybe I won't do this right now. Honestly, after you're looking at that heap of stones over Achan's dead body and all of his stuff, who in their right mind at that point would think, let's go ahead and rebuild Jericho. God doesn't really mean what He says when He gave that curse.

Who would think that? And you know what we're going to find? It did put a healthy fear of God in everyone. And no one did rebuild that fortified city at this point. But then we've got this question.

Will the truth about this warning, about this curse, will it carry on from generation to generation or at some point will it lose its relevancy and not be taught as it should? And people ignore the Word of the Lord. Same thing happens today. People attacking the Scriptures.

Attacking what God has said. We could ask this question about the motive. Maybe we could assume some things about the motive of the Lord giving this curse here over rebuilding the fortress of Jericho.

Why was it necessary? Why? What's the big deal? Well, I guess my first thought would be this. This is the first city that they've taken in the land of Canaan. The land that God has promised and He's kept His Word and given them this city supernaturally destroying down the walls.

Here it is. God's given that to them. Why undo that? Why undo that memory? This is a testimony of the supernatural power of God to give them victory against this idolatrous people.

And it made me think about monuments. If you watch some of the news once a month, if you tune into the news, you're going to find some type of monument being removed. Now, I'm not saying whether it's right or wrong, but what's the motive behind people wanting to remove a monument? It brings something to your mind.

It represents something. And in this case, people don't like what it represents or maybe it doesn't represent that, but they don't like what it brings to their mind. But what do they do? They do everything they can to get that monument removed so they don't have to be faced with what it symbolizes and might point to.

You know what? I don't think the Lord here wanted those walls that were rubble on the ground that pointed to His supernatural power to deliver them and give them this city. I think part of behind the curse is that's a monument. Don't remove that by rebuilding those walls.

Those walls that show God did what He said when He said, you walk around this city seven times blowing those trumpets, and on that last day, you shout and those walls will crumble. And it happened. God did as He said.

And as many people have pointed out, there's no indication in the text that on day 5 or 6, cracks were starting to appear on the walls. It looked just like it did on day 1. But God acted suddenly on the final day to give them victory. So by faith, even though it appears I'm not getting an answer to this prayer, believer, I've got to keep walking around praying, and one day the Lord will come and answer quickly as Luke 18 tells us in regards to prayer.

So, you look at this curse and it makes you just ask yourself, this curse could be fulfilled now or on any future day. Is it going to be five days? Five weeks? Five years? Fifty years? When's it going to take place? Joshua even makes it sound like it's a given. Right? He says, Cursed before the Lord be the man who

rises up and rebuilds this city.

Joshua makes it sound like it's going to happen. That's maybe not encouraging if he said it like that. It's like someone's going to do it.

It makes you ask questions like this. How many future generations will be taught this oath and believe it? Or a question like this, when will this new law, so to speak, lose its sharp edge and no longer feel threatening? Because there's a lot of truth in the Bible that if we don't hold firm to the Scriptures, it could lose its edge. We don't want it to lose its edge.

Or, we could ask this, in hundreds of years, will God do as He said? Will the curse be enforced? I mean, doesn't it expire? And again, like I mentioned, there are things in the Scriptures that you come to the New Testament, you've got to interpret things rightly. Well, turn to 1 Kings 16. 1 Kings 16.

To the right a little in your Bible. 1 Kings 16. This is approximately 500 years later.

500 years later. So generations have come and died and new generations have been born. 500 years later or more is what the estimates are.

1 Kings 16. Verse 34, here it is. In His days... that's the days of King Ahab.

We're going to consider Ahab in a minute. In His days, Hael of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abraham, his firstborn.

And set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son, Segab, according to the Word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua, the son of Nun, over 500 years previously. 500. That's a long time.

The first thing you see when you read that is did God do exactly, specifically as He said He would do? Yeah. I mean, He said it. Just like it's recorded here.

When you lay the foundation, what's going to happen? Firstborn. I mean, who knows how many kids this man had and who knows how old those kids were at that point. The wrong kid didn't die.

That right there shows us that God controls every one of our lives and He can cut the thread of our life and kill us in the moment He desires. Not an accident that these guys died here. And then, what happens? Set up the gates.

I mean, look, the gates, this wasn't a week-long project. This is years. And here they get to the end of the building project, and sure enough, He sets up the gates and His youngest son dies.

It doesn't say how they died. Was it subtly? Was it dramatically? It doesn't say. But what it does tell us is God did specifically as He said He would do with something He said 500 years previously.

You go 500 years on, and He did it. So here in Joshua 6, God said something about the walls falling, which is a blessing. It was fulfilled in seven days.

And at the end of Joshua 6, He says something that is a curse, and that was fulfilled in 500 years. Both things did not expire. I mean, what if the Lord would have told them to march around the city 100 days? Would they have by faith done that? I mean, thank God He knows our frame.

I mean, giving them those seven days, that's encouraging to me. It wasn't 70 days. It wasn't 700 days.

The Lord knows our frame. I kind of conclude from that. But our Lord has no memory loss.

Our Lord was aware of what Hiel was doing. It wasn't like Hiel somehow is going to hide from God. I'm going to go over here and start clearing the rubble to lay the foundations and God isn't going to see what I'm doing.

Can you hide from the omnipresent God? The omniscient God? The One who knows your step before you take it? You can't hide from Him. You want proof of that? Just a little further in 1 Kings, what happens to King Ahab? You think you can hide from God? What did Ahab do? He knew they were going to try to kill him in battle, so he disguised himself. No one's going to know I'm the king.

And someone pulled a bow at random. And you know where that arrow went? It went exactly right there between the scale of armor and the breastplate. And Ahab died.

And the very prophecy about Ahab where he would be taken and that chariot took him to that pond and he died there and his blood was there, all of it happened. God did exactly as He said He would do. So Ahab can disguise himself.

God will do as He said He's going to do. 500 years can go by. God will do as He said He was going to do.

God keeps His Word. And He did it here specifically with no variance. He did it specifically.

Look, the Bible's definition of eternal hell is not changing. No sleep day or night. Torment ascending through smoke, ascending forever and ever.

That definition's not changing 2,000 years in. So those who want to change what God said, they're going to find out God didn't change it. Second, maybe thought here on this area, this curse fulfilled answers a common question.

Now, what do I mean by that? When you look at Joshua 6, you can stay in 1 Kings, when you look at Joshua, here a question is about this text that we've got to answer. I'll answer briefly. It says here, Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds his city Jericho.

Rebuilds this city. The thing is, when you get to Joshua 18, you see some of the people being allotted the land of Jericho. And the curse does not come upon them.

Right? Well, I think it's clear from where the curse is fulfilled and God keeps His Word in 1 Kings 16:34, the idea wasn't don't live in Jericho or else the land wouldn't have been allotted to anyone to live in Jericho. Clearly, it was referring to the fortified walls. That's what the Lord tore down supernaturally was the walls.

And here, they laid foundation for the walls. They set up its gates. Where do you set gates up? You've got this big wall completed.

You need gates for people to come in and out of. So, clearly when the Lord fulfilled it, He helps define. He didn't mean anyone who lived in Jericho or anyone who built a house in Jericho was going to die.

But anyone who wanted to take that city that God supernaturally tore down and build it back to its preeminence and build those fortified walls back to what they were, God didn't want that to happen. He wanted that monument there of rubble showing He does what He says and He gives His people victory.

So, let's move on and ask this question.

What led Hiel to do what he did? What led Hiel to do what he did? Right? I mean, why didn't it happen 300 years earlier? Why not 200 years earlier? I mean, how many people for 500 years saw this nice piece of real estate and they maybe thought, wow, I could build some serious fortress here. And it didn't happen 200 years. It didn't happen at 300 years.

It didn't happen at 400 years. It happened at 500 plus years. This man, Hiel, started that project.

Ignored this curse. Why? Why? How did he get to this point of bringing this curse on himself? Now, we've got to partly speculate because we don't have all the details here. We do have some.

But we've got to speculate. What could one answer be? Well, we already saw it with Achan. Lust.

When did Achan hear this warning about not taking the devoted things? How long from hearing the warning and breaking it did it take? Was it hours? Was it a day? I mean, it was a very short amount of period for Achan to hear. What's that show you? The power of lust. You could be here today hearing the truth.

And this evening, you could be viewing all manner of lustful things. That's how deceitful sin is. You hear truth.

You hear warning. And what are you doing later that day? Sin is deceitful. So it shouldn't surprise us you could hear a curse like that and whatever.

There are men who go against God in defiance of what He says. And they're not ignorant of it. Some people are ignorant.

They don't know what He said. Was Hyle ignorant? Did he know of what Joshua said? Or was he fully informed and did it in total defiance? Your passions can blind you to believe, not believe God will do what He said He will do. I mean, Adam and Eve in the garden.

There's not one reason for you to doubt God. And yet, the serpent could come along and say, did God actually say and they believed the lie? And here we are in this fallen world because one man ate of the fruit, the woman ate, and guess what? Sin entered the world and through sin, death came. Unbelievable.

Maybe Hyle grew up and he was in a family where they did not, because here this bell worship is going on, they did not hear the truth proclaimed and he was ignorant. We don't want our children to be like that. We want to know what God has said.

And we've got to carry the truth on from generation to generation so that 400 years from now, people still know the Word. Or, a third thing, maybe one, it was like, why did Hyle do what he did? The deceitfulness of lust like Achan? Or secondly, he was ignorant of the curse? Or thirdly, maybe Hyle believed wrongly the curse was no longer relevant. It didn't apply.

It wasn't for today. I mean, it's been 500 years. I mean, come on.

Does the Lord really remember every single thing He has said? Is the Lord really all watchful to make sure all the promises and curses are going to be fulfilled? Yes. For the Christian, that's really good news. Because guess what? All those promises? This is just pointing us to God keeps His Word for you,

believer, for the promises.

Sure, we're looking at an example of a man who fulfilled a curse, but in that, I take great encouragement that after 500 years, God did what He said. And here we are 2,000 years later and we have our Scriptures, and guess what? God will do as He has said. Now, then we ask this question.

What if he believed it no longer applied? What would then lead Hyle to believe it no longer applied? You know what the answer is? Ahab. Ahab. Ahab was the king.

Look at 1 Kings 16. Stay with me. 1 Kings 16.

30. This is Ahab. This, and the fulfillment of the curse, remember verse 34, in his days, in Ahab's days, he specifically puts, in his days.

This is during the reign of Ahab and you know what type of man Ahab was. He's the type of man you do not want to be. Verse 30, "...And Ahab the son of Amri did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him." So in the last 500 years, no man did evil like him.

All those kings before him. Not no man, but no king. Verse 31, "...And as if it had been a light thing..." You catch that? "...A light thing.

Woe to you who take sin so lightly. "...As if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. On top of this, he took for his wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbel, king of the Sidonians.

And he went and served Baal and worshipped him. He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he built in Samaria. And Ahab made an asherah.

Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days, Ahel of Bethel built Jericho." Wow! You know what that tells you, Christian? If you've got a friend who takes sin lightly, who takes God's Word lightly, what's another way to say lightly? Not seriously. You know what? You're going to end up like Ahab.

You're going to end up like Ahel. You keep company with that person who misrepresents God. You keep up with that person who dives into their sin.

They take sin lightly. They joke about sin. You're going to get to the point where you're going to hear the warnings and curses of God.

And like Ahel, it doesn't put any fear in you. And then you kind of justify it. I mean, look, here Ahab is.

Nothing's happening to him. Well, Ahel, his sons didn't get to live to see that arrow go in Ahab's chest and kill him. And God show Himself as a God who keeps His Word and He judges that wicked man.

But if you have friends who take sin lightly, it will take the edge off of not just the warnings of the Bible, but the promises as well. You see, it's not just the warnings are going to be dulled. The promises will be dulled as well.

Think about it. Not too long ago, Joshua and Caleb, they go into the land, and here all these spies were filled with unbelief and it was a hindrance to others. Unbelief, taking sin lightly, not taking God at His Word, it affects others, it corrupts others.

We must be careful who we keep company with. And think, if you're Ahab, you're seeing this delay, delay of Ahab being dealt with by God. And so you know what that can do? You just think God must have not meant what He said about this curse.

I mean, look how wicked Ahab is. He's getting away with all of this. God doesn't really actually mean what He says.

That's the devil. Even if you see no immediate punishment or consequences, it does not invalidate God's Word. Often, it might actually show His mercy and patience to give people more time.

Or often, it might actually be His judgment. He's not acting like He did in Acts and had Ananias and Sapphira die for lying to the Holy Spirit. He just lets people go on.

Romans 1, He gives them over to do what ought not to be done. And He does not come and reprove them because they are not His children. But time does not destroy the certainty of God's Word.

Time might give Satan an opportunity to slander God's character to you and say, see, he's not going to do what he's going to do. It's been another month. It's been another year.

But remember, George Muller, the praying man of Bristol, when did he see a lot of his prayers answered for people to be saved? It was after he died. God did what He said. He just got to see it in heaven as they were ushered in.

Not on earth. Delay should not discourage us with His promises or with His warnings. There's a day coming where God is going to right all the wrong.

Now, imagine with me. Just use our imaginations and think about Hael. I mean, put yourself in his shoes.

You see Ahab the king doing vile things, setting up these altars, worshiping Baal. And let's suppose Hael knew about the curse. He knew about what Joshua said.

Here he's thinking it expired. So Hael, he starts to draw up the plans. You know, the price on this real estate, it's so low because people know about the curse and no one wants to do it.

But he thinks it's expired. He's drawing up the plans. How are we going to remove the rubble? We're going to lay the foundation.

We're going to get those walls going. We're going to hire this guy to frame the gates. We're going to hang those gates.

He's getting it all planned out. And maybe Ahab even permitted him in Ahab's time. Maybe Ahab was behind it.

It doesn't say. What should have Ahab been doing? What do the godly kings do? They stop you from doing it. Ahab wasn't doing that.

That's not a leader you want to be under who doesn't take God's Word for what it says. You see, you don't want to be in a church where we don't take God's Word for what it is. Where we dole it out.

Well, that's expired. Again, there are things that are fulfilled. Don't hear me wrong.

There are things in the Old Testament that don't have an application today because we're looking at the fulfillment of the shadow of that type. But here he's seeing all of this. Ahab should have been banning him.

And imagine, let's use our imagination. What if they actually had a ceremonial day for laying of the foundation stone? You know, they do that today, right? You're going to have this ribbon cutting. You've got this big project going.

Probably they didn't do that, but think about it. Here this day is where they're going to lay the foundation. And you know what happens on that day? They're laying that foundation.

Whether subtly or dramatically. Guess what happens? It was at the cost of Abiram. Sorry, Abiram is how to pronounce it.

Abiram dies. It doesn't say. How? I mean, did he just drop dead? Did he get sick? I'll tell you this, I don't think God did it in some subtle way where people thought, yeah, maybe that was just some sickness.

I would imagine the Lord did it in a way to make a serious statement. No, He doesn't tell us how because it ultimately doesn't matter. What matters is God did what He said He did and Abiram is dead.

Because his father thought God's Word expired. He ignored it. Or he did it in defiance.

And here Ahab is, not banning this, but allowing it. So here you go from this excitement, so to speak, to a funeral. And then you'd think, Hael, what would you do after you've seen your firstborn? That's a big deal.

For that man to lose his firstborn son. Firstborn sons meant a lot. Maybe one of his friends.

Maybe Hael was ignorant of the Bible. And one of his friends, he thought something seems very eerie about what just happened. I must have heard about this from one of my grandparents.

And maybe Hael, one of his friends went and got that scroll. And he took it and he put it before Hael. And he said, look what it says right here.

It says the man who lays the foundation his firstborn will die. Hael, that just happened to you? It looks like this is being fulfilled. Look, maybe that happened.

Maybe it didn't. But you know what? If it did happen, what was Hael's response? To bow humbly before the Word of God and fear God? Or was his response to just steamroll ahead in defiance? Amazing! Confronted maybe with it. You know what men say? Mere coincidence.

Just a coincidence. Friends, brethren, no one's death is a coincidence. It's not.

It's not an accident. God is seated in the heavens and He does what He pleases. And one of the things He pleases to do is ride through the heavens to our aid.

One of the things He pleases to do is He keeps His promises for us the Christian. Just as we're seeing Him keep this curse, we're looking at our God who does what He says. Even after 500 years, He does it specifically.

He doesn't forget. He doesn't contradict Himself. Now, let's imagine some more.

You've got the foundation laid. You've got to build the walls on top of that and then eventually get to the gates. Again, this is not a week project.

Years, I would imagine, for this to happen. If you Google a picture of what Jericho was like, that was not a small project. Years.

I mean, what's going on in those years? A man, Hael, is given years. Change your mind. Imagine being the youngest son.

Segub. It doesn't say how old he was. We don't know if he was 5. We don't know if he was 15.

We don't know if he was 20. But imagine being the youngest son. I mean, maybe one of your friends really loves the Bible.

I'm thinking of some of you here. Maybe one of your friends loves the Bible and he's bringing it to you. Are you listening to him? Maybe, Segub, one of his friends came and he said, hey, you know, I keep thinking about this verse here.

It talks about a coming day when your dad is going to finish framing in those gates. And he's going to set up those gates. And it says you're going to die.

Because you're the youngest son right now. Unless another son is born, you're going to die. I mean, if you're Segub the son, and again, I'm just using my imagination, and you take that any seriously, imagine him going to his dad and saying, Dad, stop the project! I'm going to die! Probably didn't happen.

But even if it did, you know what? Proud man who defies God, they don't care if their kids die. Some of the richest people in the world have had their kids commit suicide because their parents don't show any love towards them. Nothing but hatred as they pursue their own passions and the kids don't want \$10 million to spend.

They want love. So think of that. So, Segub is thinking, is it true? Is it true? Is it true? Is it true? I mean, imagine that.

If he was afraid, I doubt it, but if he was, imagine the fearful anticipation as you're standing there watching those gates be hung. And maybe there were some in the city who they did take God at His word. And maybe they were praying against these people, just Segub dying senselessly because of his own father's idolatry.

And the day comes, verse 34, at the cost of his youngest son, Segub. His son dies. His son's dead.

He's gone. His one life is over. God kept His word.

Or we could imagine, Segub was not in fearful anticipation for that day, but his heart was as hard as Ahab. And he was there cheering on his dad. Finish the project, Dad, and show everyone that God is a liar and He's dead and there's no living God.

Maybe that's how Segub was. Well, guess what he found out that day? He met his Maker and he found out his Maker means what He says. God is not a liar.

Even after 500 years plus, He does as He says He does. Was this a coincidence? No. Did the walls of Jericho fall as a coincidence? No.

Is this two sons dying a coincidence? No. It's our God doing what He says He will do. And like Pharaoh of old, Hiel had a concrete heart that only the jackhammer of the Spirit of God could break in and open that man's blindness to see the foolishness of what He was doing.

I mean, it's amazing to me that it wasn't just you lose the one son and that's it. He had a period of years between building these fortified walls where he already lost a son. It wasn't like it was all going to be a judgment at the end.

He already saw His firstborn die. You're given a period to think about it. You don't stop.

And then you lose your youngest. I mean, that's the same way it is with humanity. How many people, they hear the truth.

God even does something dramatically to show them I'm the living God. Trust in My Son. And what do they do? They don't.

They make excuses. They say it was a coincidence. And then they move on.

They move on. And eventually, they face the end. They think they have more time and they find out they don't have more time.

Everyone's not going to have 90 years. Now, in closing, someone might say, or actually, one more thought right here. 1 Kings 16.34 Look at how he says this at the start of it.

In his days, Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost. At the cost.

Does sin cost you? Does going against God cost you? Does not believing God does what He says cost you? It does. It costs you your own soul if you ignore it. Or if you're a believer, when we don't believe God does what He says, it costs us joy, peace, His provision.

We should believe Him. We should believe Him. And we should know our Bibles.

This is actually, in some ways, this is screaming at you to say, know your Bible. Right? I mean, at some point here in these 500 years, clearly, the amount of Scripture being memorized and propagated and put out, it had declined. We need to know our Bibles.

How will I lay a hold of a promise from God if I don't know my Bible? How will I be afraid of a proper warning from God if I don't know my Bible? So this is a call to know our Bibles. Scripture memory can be one of the hardest things to do. And even like Jeff mentioned in the first hour, our brother, I would see him there hours a day reading.

He sought to memorize one verse a day for six years. Anyone can do that if you're disciplined enough. That's our problem.

We can get on Facebook every day for the next six years and spend ten minutes. We could have memorized a verse in that time. You've got to determine what you're going to do, but my point here is know God's Word.

The devil wants to silence God's threats and promises. It's not true and not relevant for the day. And the devil, when he slanders God's character, we, like our Lord Jesus, need to know our Bibles as He was in those temptations so that we can counter that slander that Satan said with the truth of the Scriptures rightly interpreted.

So we need to know our Bibles. Now, in closing, turn to Galatians. Flip over in the New Testament to Galatians.

Now someone might say, well, I don't need to be afraid of that curse. Hiel already tripped the wire, and besides, I have no plans of moving to Palestine and rebuilding the walls of Jericho. Like I said, that's not our problem.

What we see in this is God did what He said He'd do. There's another curse that every single one of us in this room should be worried about. There's two we're going to look at right here in closing.

First, in Galatians 1, verse 8, even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach, let him be a curse. So if you misrepresent God and you misrepresent the Gospel of His blessed Son, Paul pronounces a curse. Now many would say, well, I'm not misrepresenting God.

I'm not a false teacher. I believe He is who He says He is. Okay, turn to Galatians 3. Galatians 3, verse 10.

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse. Not a blessing. If you're relying on works of the law to be declared righteous before God, you're cursed.

Because it is written, cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them. So if you don't keep the law perfectly and do all the positive commands of obedience of love perfectly, you're cursed. So that's why you can't rely on it.

Verse 11, Now it's evident that no one is justified, declared righteous before God by the law. For the righteous shall live by faith. But the law is not a faith.

Rather, the one who does them shall live by them. Christ redeemed us. Paid the price to secure our release from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

Because it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. So that in Christ Jesus, the blessing, not a curse, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles. That's the majority of us.

We're not ethnic Jews. We're the world. So that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Everyone who does not keep everything written in the book of the law to do it is under a curse. Guess what? Every single one of us has a curse over our head outside of Jesus Christ. This is the curse that you want to take God at His Word about for our generation.

It's not rebuilding the fortified walls of Jericho. It's building a works-based righteousness for your justification, which is exactly what that Catholic priest at my friend's funeral taught. He taught to trust in your own goodness in order to pay the penalty for your sin.

But what does Paul teach here is required in order to pay the penalty of your sin. We need someone born of a woman, born under the law, who perfectly keeps the law. Not just keeps it in that he does not sin, but positively keeps it in that every act of love he has an opportunity to do, he does it perfectly.

So who's born of a woman under the law who didn't just not sin, but he did perfectly every single act of love? One man. Jesus Christ. The God-man.

And it says right here, He paid the price to secure our release. He redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. That's the Gospel.

We don't want to take that lightly. And guess what? This is 2,000 years ago. And guess what? It's still relevant today.

And thank God, this Good News of the Gospel has not expired. And the people that Jeff talked about in the first hour who think that they've committed the unpardonable sin and there's no hope for them, they're not taking God at His Word. That they can come to Him and have life.

They're calling God a liar. They're making excuses. They're being deceived by the devil.

And the devil is saying to them, God didn't really say you can come. You've committed the unpardonable sin. There's no hope for you.

They need to trust the Lord. We are like Segub, the youngest son. Our father Adam has sinned.

He's broken a law that God put up. A curse has come upon all of humanity. And it's only a matter of time before those gates are hung and the earth burns up with fire and every one of us is judged.

And unlike Segub, Segub had to go to his dad and try to convince his dad, don't hang the gates. Guess what? You can go to the Lord Jesus Christ. And He will pay for your sin.

All of it. Like the walls of Jericho, the Lord Jesus Christ will break the power of sin and the penalty of sin. He'll save you from your legal problem of being a condemned criminal in God's courtroom and He'll save you from your internal problem being a slave of sin and He'll make you a slave of righteousness.

That is the good news of the Gospel. And you wish you would shake people up. You wish they would see it for what it is.

Christ's death opens wide the gates of Paradise for all who will surrender to Him. If you're lost, trust Christ. This still applies for today.

And Christian, we're going to look back in eternity and see every single thing that God said He would do, He did. He didn't miss anything. This is an encouragement for us to believe His promises.

To believe He is who He says He is. And don't let delay cause you to doubt God's ability to follow through. In Isaiah 55, there's a verse that in some ways is wrongly quoted for evangelism.

Not that it doesn't have an application. But it says in Isaiah 55, verse 11, so shall My Word... He's just talking about an everlasting covenant. So shall My Word be that goes out from My mouth, just like He spoke through Joshua this curse, it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose.

God has a purpose. He says what He says and He will do it. He will accomplish the purpose.

He shall succeed in the thing for which He sent it out to do. So that's our God. He accomplishes the things He says He is going to do.

And that curse on Jericho shows us that God does what He says. Both the threats and the promises. You've got to get that, Christian.

You should be encouraged by this. God does what He says. In the curse there, but that means for you.

5,000 years later, those promises, I mean, they're good. Trust the Lord. Believe Him.

If you're lost, that's good news. The only ones this is bad news for are those who reject the Savior who is the way, the truth, and the life and the only way to get to the Father. The Savior who is the only name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Let's pray. Father, I pray in the name of Your Son that those here today who are still under this curse of falling short of Your perfect standard, I pray, Father, save them.

Please, open their eyes to believe that Christ will apply His redemption to their account that He became a curse for sinners. Lord, open, please, Father. Lord, please, open the eyes of the blind to not rely on self, to not defy You, but to believe You are who You say You are and that You'll save them from this curse.

Lord, we don't want our loved ones to go to hell. Lord, we don't want our neighbors to go to hell. We don't want our children to perish because You are a God who does what You say.

And when we read about the eternal anguish in hell, Lord, we know it's not expired and we know that is an actual place right now where many millions and billions of people are right now gnashing their teeth. And Lord, we don't want people to join. And so, Lord, we pray, I pray You'd save people.

Lord, please, save someone. Raise someone from the dead. Lord, You are a God who says what You say.

And You say that we can ask anything in the name of Your Son and He will do it. And so, Father, we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest who's seated in the heavenlies, Lord, we ask that You would raise people from the dead, that You would give life, that You would speak a word of regeneration into someone's soul. Lord, that is our heart's desire for them that they might be saved.

We pray these things in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

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