

JERICHO

City of Palm Trees

Description: The location of Jericho is 5 miles west of the Jordan River and about 7 miles north of the Dead Sea. It was an oasis with a freshwater spring. The city was 840 feet below sea level and was very hot in the summer. In ancient times, date trees flourished there and it was called the “City of Palms” (2 Chronicles 28:15). These were date palms and were the chief food of desert people. The New Testament Jericho is about one mile SE of the old city. Today it has plentiful banana groves. Jericho is probably the oldest city in the world. In the time of Joshua it was in a very strategic position, being the first main city the children of Israel would encounter in their invasion of Canaan after crossing the Jordan River. The remains of the Old Testament Jericho is under “Tel es-Sultan” (*Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary*)

The Bible story of the conquest of Jericho (Read Joshua chapter 6)

Jericho was a special case. The city (the first to be conquered in the land) was to be an offering to God, a “first fruit” of the conquest of the Promised Land. Note that Joshua did not win this battle. He just obeyed God and marched. God did the fighting. God’s instructions were very specific. *What were they?*

Trumpets of ram’s horns: A ram’s horn was steamed to make it soft and then the wide end was bent to form a trumpet (called a *shofar*). The deep, mournful sounds of this horn are still heard in Jewish synagogues on certain holy days.

(*Children’s Illustrated Bible by Hastings and Thomas*) Modern Judaism in the celebration of Rosh Hashanah (Leviticus 23) as in days of old blows a shofar – signifying repentance. This is based on Ezekiel 33:5.

Archeology: Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary says that virtually nothing remains today of the Jericho of the period of Joshua. If there was once evidence of a great city of Jericho destroyed by Joshua, it has long since succumbed to the elements. After touring the site of the Jericho ruins at the Tel es-Sultan, J Vernon McGee said that he was glad the faith of the believer did not rest on the shovel of the archeologist!

And now we will learn about Rahab the harlot who lived in Jericho...