"SHOUT; FOR THE LORD HATH GIVEN YOU THE CITY"

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**In** the sixth chapter of the book of Joshua there is an account of the taking of the city of Jericho. This strongly walled city was the first to fall before the armies of Israel after they had crossed the river Jordan, which had rolled back as the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the Lord touched the edge of the waters.

Now safely over, they stood on the soil of the land promised to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but this promised land, so long desired, had to be taken from its heathen inhabitants. These were men strong in evil, worshipers of fierce and cruel gods named Baal and Moloch. Joshua, the leader of the armies of Israel, wisely waited for God's guidance in this task. His humility was rewarded by the vision of a man holding a drawn sword in his hand, who proclaimed himself "captain of the host of the Lord," and before whom Joshua reverently bowed.

How released and relieved Joshua must have felt! He had only to be obedient, and the armies of Israel would be safe and victorious under the Lord's leadership. Accordingly, as Joshua listened for divine direction, the plan of the siege of Jericho was unfolded to him. This strong walled city, awaiting attack, was not to be assaulted; its formidable walls were not to be scaled. Armed men were to march around the city once a day for six days in silence, carrying in their midst the ark of the covenant. White-robed priests carrying trumpets of rams' horns were to march in front of the ark, sounding triumphant music. On the seventh day the city was to be encircled seven times. After this would come the shout of victors from each man of the armies of Israel.

What did the people of Jericho think as they watched the silent marching men, fully armed but not fighting? Did fear grow in their hearts and intensify as the days drew on to the seventh day of climax? If their walls fell, what could they do? But though fear may have mounted in the men of Jericho, faith and confidence grew and abounded in the men of the armies of Israel. Had they not been led, guarded, guided, and protected ever since they had left Egypt? God, the omnipotent, was still guarding and guiding.

So the seventh day dawned. Seven times they circled the city, and at the end of the seventh time Joshua called to them, "Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." A great shout of victors broke the solemn silence, ringing upwards from every side of the fear-stricken city. And then the unscalable walls "fell down flat," leaving the city defenseless.

Christian Science, discovered and founded by Mary Baker Eddy, highlights points in this thrilling story. Mrs. Eddy says in "Miscellaneous Writings" ([p. 279](https://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=The+six+days+are+to+find+out+the+nothingness+of+matter%3B+the+seventh+is+the+day+of+rest%2C+when+it+is+found+that+evil+is+naught+and+good+is+all)), "The six days are to find out the nothingness of matter; the seventh is the day of rest, when it is found that evil is naught and good is all."

The armies of Israel held fast their faith in God, as shown by their willing obedience to His plan. And is it not marvelous that faith proclaimed a victory before the walls of Jericho fell? God's victories do not need the evidence of matter's attestation. We are reminded of something similar when we read that Christ Jesus, standing by a sepulcher which still held Lazarus, said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me ([John 11:41](https://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=Father%2C+I+thank+thee+that+thou+hast+heard+me&book=tfccs.main.hb.kj)). The men of Jericho trusted to their walls to safeguard them; but it was these walls that failed them. So it must always be. Whatever form of materiality the human mind trusts eventually crumbles away, leaving the individual defenseless. But when all else fails, men may always turn to God, who stands ever ready to help.

It is encouraging to notice that it was Joshua's willingness to be led, his humility, which enabled him to receive God's guidance. While we feel sufficient unto ourselves, God cannot guide us. Let us pray humbly that we may hear God's voice; then we too shall be blessed with a vision. We shall see that man, the divine likeness of God, which is our true selfhood, is completely victorious over sin, disease, and death. We shall glimpse the divine nature and unassailable power of this "captain of the host of the Lord" and know that this true selfhood abides with each one of us as the man God made and maintains.

There is a comforting lesson to be learned from the fact that on the seventh day Jericho was encompassed seven times. Only at the end of the seventh time was the order given. "Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." Evidently some citadels of fear require much earnest knowing of the truth before they are demolished. Frequently the temptation to give up comes with force just as victory is near. We think our work has been ineffective or our understanding is not sufficient for this demonstration.

We need to know that every statement of Truth is effective and that the demonstration follows faithful insistence upon Truth's presence and power. What could seem more futile than the process of walking round a strongly walled city in order to take it? So, to material sense, our affirmations of God's allness and of our full dependence on that allness may seem equally futile. But Truth is always victorious over error of every sort, and if we will know that God is working with us, we shall see the walls of the citadels of fear go down. They were no more real when we started to know God's allness than they were when they crumbled to the nothingness they had always been. So let us continue our glad confidence in God's ever-presence, undeterred by what error tries to tell us. No power obliges us to listen to lies. "Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" asks Paul in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Galatians.

There is a beautiful parallel between this story of the taking of Jericho and the conquest divine Science makes over all citadels of fear. These fears are many, and they look unassailable. There is a feeling of insecurity abroad in the world which is a form of fear: there is fear of lack, fear of sickness with its attendants, disease and death, fear of failure and inadequacy, fear of loneliness and the loss of love. Against all these citadels of fear, Christian Science wages its war of extermination; for only Love is present. As the Apostle John says ([I John 4:18](https://concordexpress.christianscience.com/?query=Perfect+love+casteth+out+fear&book=tfccs.main.hb.kj)), "Perfect love casteth out fear."

How do Christian Scientists demolish these citadels of fear? They use the Lesson-Sermons in the *Christian Science Quarterly,* each of which stresses the truth of the allness of God. Christian Scientists study this Lesson on each of the six days of the week. Then they meet on Sunday for the sevenfold shout of victory. This insistent joyous realization of God's allness girdles the earth as the armies of Israel surrounded Jericho. From thousands upon thousands of "the host of the Lord" comes the joyous affirmation, "The Lord hath given you the city."