

Rahab - Joshua 1,2,6

Day One. Read Joshua 1:1 - 2:1

Background on the book of Joshua and the story of Rahab.

FYI: “The book of Joshua is made up of two parts : ‘The Book of War’ (ch. 1-11) chronicles a series of battles, with victory going to the strong and courageous (a theme repeated at least 8 times in God’s call to Joshua)... The less action-packed ‘Book of Distribution’ mostly details allocation of the conquered land.” [Serendipity Bible]

“In the book that bears his name, Joshua impresses us with his harshness: it depicts a violence, even a thirst for violence, that is found nowhere else. The conquest of the land of Canaan occurs with fire and blood. Too much destruction at every turn. The only moment of tenderness in this account is the story of Rahab in Jericho. The brave and generous prostitute saves Joshua’s spies.” - Elie Wiesel. [The author of more than 30 novels, plays and profiles of Biblical figures, Elie Wiesel received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. “Supporting Roles: Joshua” in Bible Review.]

1. Who was Joshua? What was his role and significance to Israel?

- Deuteronomy 31:7-8
- Deut. 31:14
- Deut. 31:23
- Deut. 34:9

2. What promises did God make to Joshua? Joshua 1:2-6

3. How did the Israelites feel about Moses? Deuteronomy 34:10-12

- How did they feel about Joshua, Moses' replacement? Joshua 1:16-18

4. What did God repeatedly demand of Joshua when he is commissioned as the new leader? (Deut. 31:6,7, 23; Joshua 1:6,7,9,18)

Digging Deeper:

What are ways Joshua had been prepared for leadership?
Exodus 17:8-13

Exodus 24:12-14

5. Why were the Israelites looking over the land? Joshua 2:1 (See 1:2.3. Compare Numbers 13:2)

- Note the word "secretly" in 2:1. Why would Joshua have sent spies secretly?

FYI: *“Jericho is located by an oasis about five miles west of the Jordan River...and six miles north of the Dead Sea. It guards the strategic passageway between the Jordan valley and the central hill country to the west (including Jerusalem...), as well as the major ford between the Jabbod and the Dead Sea. Though it averages only four to six inches of rain per year, Jericho is supplied with ample water from the spring system today called Ain es Sultan. The tell [mound or mount formed by debris from the ruins of a city] of the ancient city is Tell es Sultan. It is 825 feet below sea level, the lowest city in the world. The oblong-shaped mound covers an area of about ten acres, with a circumference of about half a mile. A city of that size would have housed perhaps as many as two thousand people, though more would have lived in surrounding farms and villages.”* - Walton, John H. , Victor Harold Matthews, and Mark William Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, Old Testament*. IVP Academic..

6. What past experience did Joshua have with spying? (Numbers 13:1,8,16, 27-31; 14:5-9)

7. What type of man might Joshua have trusted on his first big mission as the Leader? What could his reasoning have been for only choosing two spies?

Digging Deeper:

We can only guess who these 2 spies were - the Bible never tells us. But Jewish tradition holds that one of them was named Salmon. Look up Matthew 1:5 and see if you can spot him.

8. How seriously would Joshua have taken the appointment of the spies? What was the possible outcome if the scouting mission went poorly? (Numbers 14:26-30)

Application: Entrance into the promise land is also called entrance into "God's rest," and Joshua is seen as a precursor to the one who later leads to a more permanent promised land. Read Hebrews 4:6-11. Joshua was successful in leading the Israelites to the promised land, but not in keeping them there. In the chapters to come, God's people turn their backs on him again and again. In what ways can you keep yourself from hardening your hearts, so that you can hear his voice and enter his rest? What is the difference between our walk in the desert and that of the Israelites (Hebrews 4:14-16)?

DAY 2 : Read Joshua 2:1-14

9. Why do you think the two spies ended up in a prostitute's home?

FYI: *" Their purpose was not impure; rather, the spies sought a place where they would not be conspicuous. Resorting to such a house would be a good cover, from where they might learn something of Jericho. Also, a house on the city wall (v.15) would allow a quick getaway... God, in his sovereign providence, wanted them there for the salvation of the prostitute. She would provide an example of His saving, by faith, a woman at the bottom of the social strata, as He saved Abraham at the top (cf. James 2:18-25). Most importantly, by God's grace she was in the Messianic line (Mat 1:5)." [MacArthur Bible Commentary]*

- How would this have helped with their information gathering on Jericho?

10. What is the significance of the messengers? (2:3) What potential dangers did they pose to the spies? To Rahab?

11. Beyond denying that they were in her home, what else did Rahab do to protect the spies? 2:4-6

- What is the significance of these actions? What do you think it would mean for her if she were caught?

12. Why did Rahab decide to be on the side of the Israelites? What was her explanation to the spies? (2:9-11):

- What did she/the people of Jericho *KNOW* of The Lord? (Compare Deuteronomy 4:6-7)
- What had they *HEARD*?
- How did they *FEEL*?

Digging Deeper:

Read Exodus 15:13-. 11:22-25, 28:9-10 to see what God had promised Israel about their enemies. What did Israel need to do to receive those promises?

13. In your own words, describe what is at the heart of all that Rahab is saying about the Lord. (*What does she believe? What stage of faith has she reached? How is she relating to The Lord? In what ways does her faith still seem to need to grow? Consider Proverbs 9:10; Psalm 36:7*)

- What do you think Rahab's declaration in 2:11b reveals about her? (Cp Hebrews 11:31)

FYI: "God commended Rahab's faith (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25) as expressed in verses 9-16, not her lie. He never condones any sin; yet, none of us are without some sin (cf. Rom. 3:23), thus the need for forgiveness. But he also honors true faith, small as it is, and imparts saving grace (Ex. 34:7)." [MacArthur]

"We may be appalled at the fact that Rahab was a prostitute, or that she was a liar. But the fact is that she was not saved by her works, but by her faith. She knew who God was, she knew who she was, and she trusted God for her very life."
- David Guzik

14. Underline how God responds to faith:

- 2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. NIV
- Psalm 145:18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
- Romans 10:12-13 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." NIV
- Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. NIV

15. List what Rahab asks of the men in 2:12-13, and their response in 2:14. (*What does Rahab's request reveal about her?*)

FYI: "The men respond with a strong assurance that they will guarantee with their very lives (v.26) the safety of Rahab and her kin... But they insist that utter secrecy must be observed, and that 'this agreement of ours (27)' should not be told to others. But 'faithfulness and loyalty' will surely be shown when The Lord will have 'given the land' to Israel. 'Faithfulness and loyalty' is the standard expression for acts done and kindness shown in connection with covenantal agreements." (Woudstra)

Rahab thinks in terms of family and clan. This is in keeping with the thought patterns of the ancient Near East. It is also an indication of her unselfishness.

Application: When you first became a believer what were the ways that God first asked you to step out in faith? What did you feel? How did you decide what to do?

DAY 3: Read Joshua 2:15-24

16. Where exactly did Rahab live? (v. 15)

FYI: “The structure of the city wall varied in different periods in ancient Israel. In the Late Bronze Age, the time in which the story of Rahab in the Bible was set, thick defensive walls were common; people could conceivably have lived on them...Analyzing the Hebrew words for ‘within the wall,’ which described the residence of Rahab the harlot, along with the chronology of defensive construction in ancient Israel, Frendo suggests that Rahab lived on the wall.” [J. Frendo addresses these questions about the life of Rahab in the Bible in the September/October issue of Biblical Archaeology Review.]

17. How do you think Rahab knew the details of the king's tactical plans so well? Who or what may have been her sources? (2:16)

FYI: “Josephus [a first century historian] maintained that Rahab was an innkeeper. It is possible she was both that and a harlot. The Targums [Jewish commentaries] call her a “pundequita,” which means innkeeper. But, as Kroeze indicates (Jozua, p. 36) this word in the Targums always receives an unfavorable sense.” [Woudstra]

18. What warnings did the men give her?

- 2:17-18

- 2:19

- 2:20

FYI: “Joshua honored the promise of safety to the household of Rahab. The part of the wall securing this house must not have fallen, and all possessions in the dwelling were safe.” [MacArthur]

“The life of a person put under the curse ordinarily could not be redeemed. Thus the sparing of Rahab and her family takes on unusual significance... The purpose of this verse is to celebrate the goodness of God exhibited in Rahab's rescue.” [Woudstra]

19. What does Rahab's response say about her trust? 2:21,22 (What do you think, is the significance of the red cord?)

FYI: “Some of the church fathers considered the red cord...as a sign whereby she and her family would be spared from death to be a symbol of the blood of Christ. Rahab herself was considered a symbol of the Church, since she by her faith and kindness secured the safety of her family.” [Woudstra]

20. In the following verses, review what Rahab says, does, and what risks or dangers she faces.

	<i>SAYS</i>	<i>DOES</i>	<i>RISKS</i>
2:3-6			
2:9			
2:12-13			
2:15-16			
2:21			

- What conclusions can you draw about the kind of woman Rahab was? What character traits would you ascribe to her?

Application: What is one of the most risky things your faith in God has compelled you to do? What did you need to know and believe about God in order to do it?

DAY 4: Read Joshua 2:23-24; 6:17-27

21. What account did the spies give to Joshua after returning 3 days later? 2:23,24

- How does this differ from Joshua's experience as a spy in Numbers 13:26-33? Why do you think these spies had a different attitude and response?

22. What happened to the city of Jericho?

23. What had God' commanded concerning the inhabitants of Canaan? Deuteronomy 20:16-18

- Why was God taking them out of the land? Deuteronomy 18:9-13

24. What was the end result of Rahab's fledgling faith? 6:22-25 (*List those who were saved along with Rahab. 6:23 How closely was Rahab identified with Israel? 6:25*)

25. What word is used to describe Rahab throughout Joshua? (2:1; 6:17,22,25) Why do you think she is continued to be described that way?

- Compare the account in Luke 7:36-48.

It's Greek To Me: "Rahab the *harlot*" (Heb: zōnâ) both here and in Hebrews 11:31 (Greek: porné).

"Three times over Rahab is referred to as "the harlot," and the Hebrew term zoonah and the Greek word porne have at no time meant anything else but "harlot"—a woman who yields herself indiscriminately to every man approaching her...

While her name came to be sanctified and ennobled, both Paul and James affix the label to her name, Rahab the harlot. She still carried the distinguishing name, thus declaring the peculiar grace of the transforming power of God. The threefold reference to Rahab in the New Testament reveals how she became a faithful follower of the Lord. She [was] placed among the saints in the genealogy of the Saviour (Matthew 1:5... Paul highly commends Rahab for her energetic faith and gives her a place on the illustrious roll of the Old Testament of those who triumphed by faith. In fact, Rahab is the only woman besides Sarah who is designated as an example of faith [in Hebrews 11]... What a manifestation of divine grace it is to find the one-time harlot ranked along with saints like Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David!"

<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/all-women-bible/Rahab>

26. Read Matthew 1:1-6. What did Rahab become? How was she rewarded for her faith?

Application: Rahab was not a typical woman of faith, and yet God chose her and used her extraordinarily. Do you hold yourself back from following God's will or call on your life because you feel you don't "fit the mold" that He would use? Have you ever stepped up to do something you felt God calling you to even though you felt inadequate or afraid or unworthy? What was the result? In what ways do you feel God calling you to act right now?

"Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. 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."

(Joshua 1:8, 9 NLT)