

Joshua 2–4

Day 1

Rahab and the Spies: Read Joshua 2:1–11

1. What did Joshua do before entering the land (2:1)?
2. What made conquering this land a formidable task? See Numbers 13:28–29.

FYI: “Joshua also shows wisdom by sending them **secretly**. The last spies that went out publicly turned out badly for Israel, when a majority of the spies came back with a discouraging report (Numbers 13).”
– David Guzik

3. Where did the spies go, and why might that have provided them with some protection (2:1b,15b)?
4. How quickly were the spies found out (2:2)? What does this say about the danger of this mission?
 - How intimidating was the message the king sent back to Rahab (2:3)? Why do you think they knew so many details?

FYI: “This reconnaissance was supremely perilous because Jericho was a walled city situation in an open valley. Furthermore, its inhabitants, the Amorites, were on the lookout. The ominous presence of the Israelites at the Jordan made them suspicious of everyone...From all appearances they were doomed. The king was calling for them. They could not retreat back into the city. And if they jumped through the window, horsemen would run them down on the plains. Obviously, their time had come – except for one totally unexpected thing – the faith and good works of a prostitute.”
– R. Kent Hughes (35.36)

5. How did Rahab protect the spies (2:4–6)? How dangerous a position would you say Rahab was putting herself in?
 - What reasons can you give for why the King and men of the city believed her and didn't search the house (2:7)?
6. What did Rahab *know* (2:9a)?
 - How did the people of the land feel about the Israelites (2:9b,11a)? See the prophecies in Exodus 15:13–16 and Deuteronomy 2:25.

7. What had the people *heard* about (2:10)?

Digging Deeper
For the defeat of Kings Sihon and Og, see Numbers 21:21–35.

FYI: “Even though the two events mentioned by Rahab—the miracle at the Red Sea and the defeat of the Amorite kings—occurred forty years apart, both were known in Jericho. Evidently the people in Canaan, as well as Sihon and his Amorites (Numbers 22:3), had kept informed about the Israelite multitudes during all those years, and were fearful of them.”
– The Defender’s Study Bible

8. What effect did this knowledge have on Rahab (2:11b)? See Deut. 4:39. How surprised do you think the spies were by Rahab’s statements?

Digging Deeper
In Luke 7:1–10, what surprised Jesus?

FYI: Lord Strong’s OT:3068 *Yehovah*; (the) self-Existent or Eternal; Jehovah, Jewish national name of God

“Rahab’s initial confession of faith is seen in the use of the name *Yahweh*. Without any support or input from her world or Israel’s, she claimed the covenant name God gave to Moses when the Israelites first left Egypt (Ex. 3:14). Then, again, without any encouragement from others, she acted on her commitment by hiding the spies. This kind of faith was not often seen in God’s people in the Old Testament, let alone from a Gentile harlot.”
– The Woman’s Study Bible (344)

“The great irony is that whereas Israel was still surveying the land to see whether the Lord ‘could’ give it to them, here was a Canaanite woman stating that she knew, as a matter of fact, that God had already given the land to Israel...Rahab had heard and had believed. What’s more, her faith was not just a verbal confession. It was combined with action, and risky action at that. It was faith she was ready to die for.”
– Africa Bible Commentary (262)

9. Mark how the Lord responds to people who turn to Him.

- 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.
- Jeremiah 32:18–19....Great and mighty God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to the ways of all mankind; you reward each person according to their conduct and as their deeds deserve. NIV
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

10. In the New Testament, what is said about Rahab’s attitude and actions?

- Hebrews 11:31
- James 2:25

☞ **Applying the Word:** Do you have any experiences from your past that you feel hinder your relationship with God? What does the example of Rahab say about that?

Day 2

Rahab and the Scarlet Thread. Read Joshua 2:12–24

11. What request did Rahab make? What kind of promise and sign did she ask for (2:12–13)?

12. What condition did the spies put on their promise and what assurance did they give her (2:14)?

13. From 2:15–16, list the help and directions that Rahab gave the spies.

FYI: “The Hebrew phrase translated her house was **on the city wall** suggests that Rahab’s house was in the city wall rather than on top of it...This refers to a kind of defensive wall found around many cities in biblical times. The wall were built double and connected by cross-walls between them. The resulting spaces could be used for storage or as living quarters...A dwelling in the wall would be a humble dwelling, just the spot for a poor prostitute...and for God’s grace...”

“Get to the mountain: The only hills near Jericho are to the west. This is the opposite direction from the route the pursuers had taken; they had gone east, down to the Jordan (vs. 7)”
 – The Nelson Study Bible (356)

14. List the conditions the men gave Rahab.

- 2:18

- 2:19

- 2:20

FYI: **“line of scarlet thread.** It is noteworthy that the word translated ‘line’ (here and in Joshua 2:21), which has its first occurrence in the Bible at this point, is never translated ‘line’ anywhere else in the Bible. Its usual meaning is ‘hope.’ For example, ‘thou art my hope, O Lord GOD’ (Psalm 71:5). This thin scarlet line, the scarlet color perhaps speaking of the blood of sacrifice, was thus Rahab’s only hope of deliverance for herself and her loved ones. All others in Jericho perished when the children of Israel took it several days later (Joshua 6:25).”
 – The Defender’s Study Bible

15. How did Rahab respond (2:21)? Compare Exodus 12:12–13. What does this indicate about her faith?

- How does Rahab’s faith and courage compare with the generation of Israelites who refused to enter the promised land? What had they seen? What had she seen?

FYI: “Rahab’s faith was great in its trust. By secluding her family in her home and patiently awaiting the outcome, Rahab revealed her faith. Everything rested upon it. She stood alone against the whole of her culture...She, like Moses before, saw the unseen when no one else did (Hebrews 11:27). By faith she separated herself from her people. She believed!”
 – R. Kent Hughes (39)

16. What happened with the pursuers (2:22–23)?
17. When the spies returned 3 days later, what reports did they give to Joshua (2:24)? How encouraging had their mission been? Whose words were they repeating? See 2:9.
18. What extreme evils did the Canaanites practice? See Deuteronomy 12:30–32.

FYI: “Jericho was a formidable town that sat just north of the Dead Sea. The Canaanites indwelt the city. To call the people barbaric is to describe the North Pole as nippy. These people turned temple worship into orgies. They buried babies alive. The people of Jericho had no regard for human life or any respect for God.”
– Max Lucado (33)

19. Why was Rahab an exception to the command to destroy all the Canaanites? See Joel 2:32.
20. What happened to the city of Jericho? See Joshua 6:20,21,24.

- List who and what was saved because of Rahab (6:22–23).
- What happened to Rahab (6:25b)?

FYI: “[Rahab’s] house that was constructed within (the wall) was left standing...Rahab submitted in faith to God’s program. As a result, she came under the covering of Israel, and her family did too.”
– Tony Evans (243)

“The Hebrew spies, it turns out, were actually missionaries. They thought they were on a reconnaissance trip. They weren’t. God needed no scouting report. His plan was to collapse the city walls like a stack of dominoes. He didn’t send the men to collect data. He sent the spies to reach Rahab.”
– Max Lucado (77)

21. From Matthew 1:5b,6a,16, what amazing thing did God do with Rahab’s life? Why do you think He chose her to be honored like that?

FYI: “Boaz, one of the most gentle and godly men in the old Testament, was [Rahab’s] offspring. God honored Rahab’s faith and courage by placing her in the lineage not only of Israel’s great king David but also of Jesus, the King of Kings.”
– The Woman’s Study Bible (344)

22. What does this account say about God’s understanding of every person’s heart? Do you think He would have saved others in Canaan whose heart was for Him? See 2 Chronicles 16:9.

- ✂ **Applying the Word:** Can you think of anything you know or have heard about the Lord that you need to act on in spite of a hostile world?

Day 3

Crossing the Jordan. Read Joshua 3

23. What effect do you think the people's lodging beside the Jordan had on the people of Canaan (3:1)? (The distance between Shittim and Jordan was about 10 miles.)
- How do Exodus 12:37–38 and Deuteronomy 10:22 describe the people? How massive an undertaking do you imagine this movement to be?
24. What was the first order Joshua gave the people and why (1:3–4)? See Psalm 25:15 and 141:8.
- What significance did the ark of the covenant have for the people of Israel? See Exodus 25:22 and Numbers 7:89.
25. What was the second order Joshua gave and why (3:5)? Compare Exodus 19:10,15. What do you think this involved?
- Who and what led the way (3:6)? What would this signify?
26. How did the Lord encourage Joshua in this step of faith (3:7)? Why would this be important before entering the land?
27. How intimidating do you think the orders for the priests (3:8) sounded?

Digging Deeper

What commands have we been given?
John 10:27; 12:26;
Ephesians 5:1;
Hebrews 12:1–2

FYI: “Our eyes and our hearts can be right on, but if we do not move out to meet the challenges, we will never progress in God’s work. If we are ever going to do anything for God, we must clearly be willing to take the kind of steps that get our feet wet. But it is also true that if we are ever going to accomplish anything for God, we must be willing to stand still just as the vanguard of Israel did – as they awaited the power of God...Their standing still testified to the fact that everything came from God. They were acting, but all their human activity would come to nothing if God did not show His power.”

– R. Kent Hughes (50)

28. What else would the people “know” because of this miracle (3:10)? (Note the titles Joshua ascribed to the Lord in 3:9–11.)

FYI: “This is how you will know” “The real goal wasn’t to get to the other side, but to get to know God in the process. When difficult situations come into your life do you focus immediately on getting through them or is there something else you should consider.”
– Dr. Chris Miller

29. How much faith did the priests need to show *before* God performed His miracle (3:13)?

- What made this crossing more treacherous than usual (3:15b)?

FYI: “The annual flow of the Jordan River today is 2% of what it was 60 years ago, before a number of major dams were constructed...In 1854 an expert swimmer was unable to make it across the river near Jericho because the river was too wide and the current too strong... Before the Roman period, the only way to cross the Jordan was by fording. In later periods, bridges and ferries were built.”
– Todd Bolen “Seven Fascinating Facts about Crossing the Jordan River”
<https://www.bibleplaces.com/blog/2016/08/seven-fascinating-facts-about-crossing/>

30. List the words that describe what happened to the water. 3:16 (Adam was 19 miles to the north.)

- How is this event described in Psalm 114:3–5?

FYI: heap OT:5067 *ned*; from OT:5110 in the sense of piling up; a mound, i.e. wave:

cut off OT:3772; *karath*; to cut (off, down or asunder); by implication, to destroy or consume

“The Canaanites were sitting on the west side of the Jordan quite contentedly because they saw more than a geographical barrier between them and the Israelites—they saw the protection of their god, Baal. You see, Baal was worshipped in Canaan because he was allegedly the god of the storm or rain...In the ancient Middle East, the raindrop is king, simply because in a dry climate all of life (plant, animal & human) starts with rain. Rain brings fertility and life, and this is why in the land of Canaan, Baal was the most popular deity of all...”

The temporarily bloated river wasn’t just a physical barrier; to the Canaanites it was a tangible and powerful sign of how Baal had come to protect them from Yahweh and the Israelites. So, when God literally cuts the Jordan in two and allows Israel to pass through, it is not simply a miracle that demonstrates power, it is also a direct theological statement of dominance over the god of the Canaanites.”
– Dr. Chris Miller

31. What other miracle did the Lord perform (3:17)?

32. How does the miracle of crossing the Jordan compare to crossing the Red Sea? See Exodus 14:21–22,29.

- ☞ **Applying the Word:** In what way do you think the Lord asking you to “step out” in faith for Him? What difficulties stand in your way? What is the first small step you could take?

Day 4

Twelve Stones. Joshua 4

33. What task did the Lord give to the twelve men that had been appointed (3:12) from each tribe (4:2–3)?
34. What purposes did the stones serve (4:6–7)? Compare Exodus 24:3–4.
- For how long were they to be a memorial (4:7b)? Compare Exodus 12:17.

FYI: Sign OT:226 *owth*; a signal (literally or figuratively), as a flag, beacon, monument, omen, prodigy, evidence, etc.:

Memorial OT:2146 *zikrown*; a memento (or memorable thing, day or writing):

35. What other set of stones did Joshua set up (4:9)?

FYI: There to this day “At the time of writing of the historical record and the book of Joshua, these stones still stood as a tribute to God’s great power. Perhaps when the waters subsided to a normal level they became even more visible. And as the waters rose and fell over the next several years, each time the stones stood out as a memorial to God’s love and care for Israel.” – Gene Getz (74)

36. Where were the priests and the ark during the duration of the crossing (4:10–11)? What faith did that take?
37. What does the position and “battle array” of the Trans Jordanian tribes tell you about the people’s state of mind (4:12–13)?
38. What effect did this miracle have on the people (4:14)? Compare Exodus 14:31.
39. How was the flow of the river restored (4:15–18)? What does the timing indicate?
- What different supernatural things do you see that needed to happen for this event to take place?

40. When did this event occur (4:19)? According to Exodus 12:3, what had happened exactly 40 years before that?

FYI: “Gilgal became the command headquarters for conquering the Promised Land. It was the place to which [Joshua] frequently returned after victories, in the midst of battle, and after his defeats such as that of Ai. Here he gather wisdom and strength to go on, for here lay the stones of remembrance.”
— R. Kent Hughes (55)

41. List the things the stones were to remind future generations about (4:20–23).

- What ultimate purpose did God give for this miracle (4:24)? Compare 2:11b.
- What effect do you think this should have had on the people’s attitudes and actions?

FYI: “A ‘memorial’ or remembering in Hebrew is more than a recalling to mind. It involves remembering with concern; it also implies loving reflection and then action.” — R. Kent Hughes (56)

42. What concern did God express about the people’s faithfulness once they were in the land? See Deuteronomy 8:10–14.

✂ Applying the Word: What are some of the most precious memories you have concerning your relationship with God? Do you have a way of preserving those memories and constructively passing them on?