

Rahab

Day 1 Background

The account of Rahab takes place after the Exodus from Egypt and 40 years of wandering in the desert. Israel was about to cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan. Moses had died and God had chosen Joshua to take his place and lead the people in to conquer and possess the promised land.

1. Who was Joshua? Joshua 1:1 (See Numbers 11:28)

- What was his assignment? Joshua 1:2-6

2. How had Joshua been equipped? Deuteronomy 34:9

3. What orders did Joshua give the people? Joshua 1:10,11

- How did the people respond? Joshua 1:16-18

4. Why did the Lord decide to conquer and destroy the inhabitants of Canaan (Joshua 1:1-6) and give the land to the Israelites? Deuteronomy 12:31,32; 18:9-14; 20:17-18

- How long had God waited and why? Genesis 15:16; Exodus 12:40

- What picture does this give you of the culture in which Rahab lived?

Digging Deeper

In what ways had Joshua been prepared for leadership?

Exodus 17:8-13

Exodus 24:12-14

Digging Deeper

For a description of the sexual sins of the Canaanites see Leviticus chapters 18 and 20. (Especially 18:28; 20:23)

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

5. What was the first step Joshua took before entering the land? 2:1

- What past experience did Joshua have with spying? Numbers 13:1,8,16

FYI: "Jericho is located by an oasis about five miles west of the Jordan River...It guards the strategic passageway between the Jordan valley and the central hill country to the west.....The tell [mound or mount formed by debris from the ruins of a city]...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."
- The IVP Bible Background Commentary (213)

"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

6. Forty years earlier, what had Joshua found out about the land? Numbers 13:27-31

7. Because of the dangers in the land, how did most of the spies respond? Numbers 14:1-4

- How had Joshua and Caleb responded? Numbers 14:5-9
- What happened to the nation because of this unbelief? Numbers 14:26-30

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

Day 2

Rahab Protects the Spies. Read Joshua 2:1-11

8. How would the home of a prostitute have protected the spies? 2:1b

- From 2:15, what advantage did the location of her house have?

FYI: "The term **harlot** is the word for a common prostitute, not a cultic prostitute. It is possible that Rahab had been reduced to prostitution by the death of her husband...In any case, out of all the populace of Jericho, only she reached out to the living God and He in turn saved her."
- The Nelson Study Bible (355)

"It could be that Rahab was running an inn for travelers. If so, staying there would have helped the spies to look inconspicuous...These men were in town for righteous purposes – not for wickedness."
- The Tony Evans Study Bible (242)

9. How quickly were the spies found out? 2:2

- What action did the king take? 2:3

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

- In how dangerous a position would you say Rahab was putting herself?

11. What other incident in scripture deals with lying to protect the lives of others? Exodus 1:15-19

- How did God respond? Ex. 1:20

FYI: "So, when is it acceptable to lie? Rahab was confronted with two sinful options, lying or abetting the execution of God's representatives, and she chose the option that would bring the most glory to God – protecting His people."
- The Tony Evans Study Bible (243)

"The midwives (Ex. 1:20) had both disobeyed their rulers and lied to them, both of which actions are normally sinful in God's sight (e.g., I Peter 2:13; Ephesians 4:25), and yet God rewarded them. When situations arise in which the commands of rulers conflict with explicit commandments of God...then God's word must be obeyed (Acts 5:29) rather than the unlawful orders of men. The midwives protected the infants at the risk of their own lives. What may seem superficially to have been a "false witness" was not "against thy neighbour" (Exodus 20:16), but in hazardous protection of their neighbor, just as was the case with those Christians who hid their Jewish neighbors during Hitler's pogroms."
- Henry Morris

12. What reasons do you think the King and men of the city had for believing her? 2:7

13. What did Rahab *KNOW*? 2:9a

- How did the people of Jericho *FEEL about the Israelites*? 2:9b ,11a (See Deuteronomy 2:25; Exodus 15:13-16)
- What had they *HEARD*? 2:10

FYI: "**2:10 we have heard.** 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."
- Henry Morris

14. What declaration did Rahab make to the spies? 2:11b (See Deuteronomy 4:39)

- How do you think they felt about Rahab's faith? How surprised do you think they were?

Digging Deeper
What surprised
Jesus? Luke 7:1-10

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."

- The Africa Bible Commentary (262)

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

- Hebrews 11:31
- James 2:25

16. Underline how and to whom the Lord responds.

- 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, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." NIV
- Jeremiah 32:18,19Great 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.

Applying the Word: What is one of the most surprising and unexpected ways that God has encouraged you or provided for your needs?

Day 3

The Spies Promise to Protect Rahab. Read Joshua 2:12-21

17. On what basis did Rahab ask for protection? 2:12

- Whom did Rahab ask the spies to protect? 2:13 What does this reveal about her?

18. What condition did the men put on Rahab's family's protection? 2:14

19. Where exactly did Rahab live? 2:15

- What other help did Rahab give the spies? 2:15,16 (How do you think Rahab knew the details of the king's plans so well? Who or what may have been her sources?)

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)

20. What warnings did the men give her?

- 2:17-18
- 2:19a
- 2:20

21. What obligation did they put themselves under? 2:19b

22. What significance might the scarlet cord have had? Exodus 12:12-13

FYI: 2:18 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.',,,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)."

- Henry Morris

23. What does Rahab's response say about her trust in the spies? 2:21

- What conclusions can you draw about Rahab? What character traits would you ascribe to her?

Applying the Word: Does anything hold you back from following God's will or call on your life because you feel you don't "fit the mold" that He would use? What does Rahab's example have to say about that?

Day 4

The Spies' Report. Rahab Saved. Read Joshua 2:22-24; 6:22-25

24. What happened to the spies? 2:22,23 How much trust had they put in Rahab?

FYI: "A '*day*' for the ancient Israelites could mean any portion of a day. Thus three days would refer to parts of three days, as in 'part of today, tomorrow, and part of the next day.'" - The Nelson Study Bible (357)

25. What report did the spies give to Joshua when returning 3 days later? 2:23b,24

- Why do you think the spies were so certain of victory? (Whose words were they repeating? See 2:9)

26. From Deuteronomy 7:1-5, what had been God's command concerning the inhabitants of Canaan?

- What danger did their presence have? Deuteronomy 7:4; Numbers 33:55

27. Why would you say Rahab was an exception to this rule? (Compare Joel 2:32)

28. What happened to the city of Jericho? 6:20,21,24

29. List who and what was saved because of Rahab? 6:22,23

- How closely did Rahab become identified with Israel? 6:25

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."

- The Tony Evans Study Bible (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

30. From Matthew 1:5, what do you learn about Rahab?

- Who were descendants of Rahab? 1:6,16

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)

31. What word is used to describe Rahab throughout scripture? (Joshua 2:1; 6:17,22,25 James 2:25, Hebrews 11:31) Why do you think she is continued to be described that way? What is this emphasizing about God's grace?

FYI: *harlot* (Heb: *zônâ*) both here and in Hebrews 11:31 (Greek: *pornê*). to be a harlot, act as a harlot, commit fornication; to commit adultery; to be a cult prostitute; to be unfaithful (to God)

"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"...The threefold reference to Rahab in the New Testament reveals how she became a faithful follower of the Lord... 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>

"In the Bible, repetition is emphasis. God want us to understand that no matter how wretched our pasts, He can do great things through anyone who righteously connects to Him through faith." - Tony Evan's Study Bible (243)

32. What does Rahab's life teach you about God's dealings with our past and future?
Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 5:17 (note "*all things*")

FYI: "Our history can become part of our testimony of God's goodness. Our future—which is secured by God's grace alone—can give us hope and a place in God's family."
- Max Lucado

"You may know some that seem 'impossible' to save, but God's hand is not short to save people like Rahab, and He can work in amazing ways to bring salvation."
- David Guzik

Applying the Word: *What is one of the most risky things your faith has prompted you to do? What does this story teach you about God's faithfulness in rewarding faith?*

Have you ever experienced the faith of a new believer encouraging your faith and confidence to step out and move forward? Explain