

Studies in the Book of Joshua
Lesson 2 – Joshua 2:1-24
The Abundant Life
Spies Go into Jericho

Archaeologists have done a great deal of research at Jericho. They tell us the city covered about eight acres, with inner and outer walls surrounding the city. The inner wall was twelve feet thick, the outer wall six feet thick, and there were houses upon the walls. The walls stood about thirty feet high, and excavations show that these walls were “violently destroyed.”

Only two women are personally named in Hebrews 11, “The Hall of Faith”: Sarah, the wife of Abraham, and Rahab, the harlot of Jericho. Sarah was a godly woman, the wife of the founder of the Hebrew race, and God used her dedicated body to bring Isaac into the world. But Rahab was an ungodly Gentile who worshiped pagan gods and sold her body for money. Humanly speaking, Sarah and Rahab had nothing in common. But from the divine viewpoint, Sarah and Rahab shared the most important thing in life; they both had exercised saving faith in the true and living God.

Not only does the Bible associate Rahab with Sarah, but in James 2:21–26, it also associates her with Abraham. James used both Abraham and Rahab to illustrate the fact that true saving faith always proves itself by good works. But there’s more: The Bible associates Rahab with the Messiah! When you read the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 1, you find Rahab’s name listed there, along with Jacob, David, and the other famous people in the messianic line. She has certainly come a long way from being a pagan prostitute to being an ancestress of the Messiah! “*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*”

Keep in mind that the most important thing about Rahab was her faith. That’s the most important thing about any person, for “*without faith it is impossible to please God.*” Not everything that is called “faith” is really true faith, the kind of faith that is described in the Bible.

Finally, the people of Israel, weren’t quite ready yet to cross the river and conquer the enemy. They had some “unfinished business” to take care of before they could be sure of the blessing of the Lord.

Read Joshua Chapter 2:1-24 and answer the following questions

1. Why did Joshua send spies to Canaan? How do you imagine the spies felt about sneaking into Canaan?

2. What does this passage reveal about Rahab? (2:1)

3. How did the king of Jericho respond to the message that there were spies in his city?

4. How did Rahab respond to the king's message? (2:4-5)

5. How did Rahab protect the spies from the king's messengers?

6. What reassurance did Rahab give to the spies? How did Rahab know that the Lord had given the land over to the Israelites?

7. What instilled fear in the hearts of the Canaanites? (2:10-11)

8. What were the conditions of the deal between Rahab and the spies? (2:17-20)

9. What was the nature of the spies report to Joshua? (2:24)

10. What is one Christian value that you feel you need to take a stand on to be a more effective witness for Christ?

11. What does this passage teach us about the kind of people God uses to accomplish His purposes?

12. What does the conclusion of this passage teach us about God's faithfulness to believers who take risks because of their faith?

God's Cord of Mercy

The Bible tells us that we are all under a sentence, just as much as the people of Jericho. We are by nature sinners and are under the sentence of eternal destruction (Eph. 2:1–3). Just as the army of Israel gathered together and marched against Jericho, so God's destruction is marching towards each of us.

But God in mercy has given us a cord to put in the window of our lives. That cord is Jesus. Before the sentence of wrath can be lifted from us, the reason for that wrath has to be removed. What is the reason for God's wrath? Our sin! The only way for sin to be removed is for its penalty to be paid. Jesus came to this earth for the express purpose of removing sin from between us and God, which is another way of saying that Jesus came to this earth to receive the penalty for sin so that all those who believe in him do not have to receive that penalty themselves.

On the cross, Jesus received that penalty in full. The only question that remains is whether we believe what Jesus did. We have in Jesus the cord that can and will spare us from the wrath of God. Have we put the cord out? Have we believed the word of God, as Rahab did, and acted accordingly? Have we believed what the Bible says about our sins, about God's wrath and about salvation through Christ?

True faith in Christ changes our lives. If we truly believe in Jesus, we cannot go on living as we did before. Rahab believed and was spared, and that changed her life. She did not go on with harlotry, but rather took her place among the people of God in Israel and, yes, even as one of the ancestors of the Messiah. The apostle Paul says, *'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.'* (2 Cor. 5:17)