



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

**"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me
the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16**

KEEP CALM AND MARCH ON!

Marching through the Book of Joshua: Lesson 5

We ended chapter 1 with the people of Israel encouraging Joshua with those powerful and familiar words, "Only be strong and of good courage!" (Joshua 1:18) Joshua is now prepared to take action and enter the land. Possessing the land meant that the Israelites had to drive out all the many enemies that were in that land. Even though he was confident that God would honor His Word, Joshua was still faithful to his responsibilities as a leader. Joshua knew that he needed to form a strong military plan of attack. In order to be well prepared, he needed to know what to expect. Chapter 2 promises to be an exciting one. Are you ready?

First Day

1. Read Joshua 2:1-24 completely through. Go back and read it again, listing any facts that you find as you observe the text. Remember to ask yourself, "What is the text saying?" Make sure you understand who the main characters are, where this is happening, when it is taking place, etc.
2. What is the main point of the chapter? What is the key verse or verses?
3. Upon first reading, what immediate application do you see for your own life?

Irving Jensen, in his book, Joshua, Rest-land Won, gives a great double outline for this chapter:

<u>The Spies</u>	<u>Verses</u>	<u>Rahab</u>
1. Spies are dispatched	1	
2. Spies are protected	2-7	Rahab's works
3. Spies are informed	8-11	Rahab's faith
4. Spies promise safety	12-22	Rahab's reward
5. Spies give report	23-24	

At this point, the Israelites are camping in a place called Acacia Grove, or "Shittim" in Hebrew. Shittim was located in the foothills of the eastern edge of the Jordan Valley, off the northeast corner of the Dead Sea. Because of its dry soil, Acacia trees were able to grow abundantly. From this point, it was about 14 miles to Jericho.

4. Why did Joshua want to know about the land?
5. What were the spies supposed to do?
6. How would knowing about the land help him to conquer it? Read Luke 14:28-32 and explain this principle.
7. Why did Joshua send the spies out "secretly"? What might he have been trying to avoid?
8. Was Joshua showing signs of doubting God by sending spies? Why or why not?

We don't know much about these spies, except that they were "young men" (Joshua 6:23). Their names are never given in Scripture. It is obviously assumed that Joshua would have chosen these two men based on

their faithfulness and commitment to the Lord. We do know that the spies were not sent to determine whether or not the battle should take place, but when and how the attack should be made.

9. How was the spies' response (vs 23-24) similar to Joshua's own response when he was sent out as a spy (Numbers 13)?

Joshua told the spies to "view the land." God promised it to them, but Joshua was still supposed to evaluate it. Often God impresses on our hearts to do something, but we are also told to "view the land" before we act. Sometimes God calls us to "**go and view**," while other times He clearly says, "**go and do**."

10. Has God called you to act in a situation? Are you "viewing" or "doing"? How is it possible to view too long? What's the difference between evaluating and hesitating? When are we supposed to "look before we leap"?

This ends our lesson for today. I pray that as we move forward with Joshua, you are encouraged to move forward with confidence. Tomorrow we will meet Rahab, a woman with faith in our great God. We can learn many exciting lessons from her life. Our memory verse for this week reflects one of those lessons.

Memory Verse of the Week: "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace."
Hebrews 11:31

Second Day

Review this week's memory verse.

1. Read Joshua 2. What city was Joshua especially curious about?

The spies were told to go out and view the land, "especially Jericho." Jericho lay directly in their path, and was the most important city of the Jordan Valley at the time. It was a "city-state" that was ruled by a king (Joshua 12:9-24). It covered about 8-9 acres and was protected by double walls about 15 feet apart. It was situated in a large, fertile plain at the foot of the Judean Hills. It was a bridgehead to the west, south, and the north, located at the entrance to one of their passageways. If Joshua could conquer Jericho, he would be in a central position to launch military campaigns to the west, north and south, causing a wedge between the north and south armies, who then could not join together in defending themselves. We will talk more about Jericho in chapter 6.

2. In whose home did the spies lodge? What was her occupation?
3. Why do you think the spies stayed there?
4. How did the king of Jericho know they were coming?
5. What was Rahab's response when the king asked her where the spies were?
6. Where actually were the spies?

The word "harlot" in verse 1 can simply mean "inn keeper." While this is true, the other references to Rahab in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 clearly mean "prostitute." In the East, many poor families made their daughters become prostitutes to supplement their incomes. Rahab didn't have much reason to be loyal to the lords and king of Jericho. (E. John Hamlin, Joshua)

Quite often flax was gathered and laid out on flat roofs to dry. It was then used for spinning and weaving. Flax can grow to a height of three to four feet. This could serve as an excellent hiding place for the spies. Some scholars suggest that having flax in her home may have been a sign that she had already given up her profession and was now trying to live a useful life. What do you think?

7. How did Rahab's story give the spies some time to escape?

The word “**ford**” is used in verse 7. (Wait a minute, I thought there were no cars back then!) A “**ford**” is a “crossing place” of a river or a mountain, or some sort of passageway.

8. Why did she want to help the spies?

9. Were the people of Jericho scared of the Israelites? Why? Also, read Exodus 15:13-18.

10. What amazing confession did Rahab make in verses 8-11?

Rahab realized some great things about our God. We often need to be reminded of how great and powerful our God is. He was not like any other god she had worshipped in her life. No, this God was no ordinary God!

11. Spend some time meditating on the greatness of God. Find some verses that describe His power and His greatness. Ponder them throughout your day, praising Him for being who He is.

The people of Jericho heard about God and were scared. Rahab heard about God and she was drawn to Him. Her heart was softened and her eyes were opened to this God of Israel.

12. When you first heard God's Word, how did you react? Did your heart become softer or harder? Did you want to hear more or did you run from what you heard?

13. Read the parable of the soils in Matthew 13:3-9. Which soil would describe your heart the first time you heard the Gospel?

God sovereignly brought the spies to Rahab's house. He had been preparing her heart for the meeting, knowing that her heart was now "good ground." Tomorrow we will discuss whether or not it was right for Rahab to lie about their whereabouts to protect them. Does the end justify the means? Think about it ...

Third Day

Review your memory verse.

1. Read Joshua chapter 2 again.
2. What does Rahab ask for in exchange for hiding the spies?
3. Explain the covenant that the spies made with Rahab. (vs 17-21)
4. Now ... the big question: Was it right for Rahab to lie to the king to protect the spies? Why or why not? Think about this before answering.
5. Read Psalm 101:7, Proverbs 6:16-19, Proverbs 12:22, Ephesians 4:25, and Colossians 3:9. What do these verses say about lying?
6. Was there another way that Rahab could have helped the spies rather than lying?
7. Do you believe that the ends ever justify the means? How important are the "means"?

8. Read Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25-26. What is emphasized about her?
9. Compare Rahab's actions to the Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1:17 and the woman at Bahurim in 2 Samuel 17:15-22.

In an attempt to justify Rahab's actions, many explanations have been offered. Some say that her lie was never condemned in the Bible. Others say that Rahab was simply practicing a wartime strategy to deceive the enemy, which was perfectly acceptable. Still others claim that because Rahab was not a Jew, she could not be held accountable for keeping the law, therefore her lie was justified in a righteous attempt to protect God's people.

Although it is true that her lie is never mentioned in Scripture, the Bible never endorses any form of lying. F.B. Meyer said, "**Rahab's morality was faulty, but alongside of it was evidence of a strong faith.**" We find that in Hebrews and James, Rahab's words are not what is emphasized, but her actions on the spies' behalf. She was saved by her faith in the God of Israel and her actions were evidence of that faith. Even though she may have been wrong to lie, God knew her heart. We need to remember that as a Canaanite, Rahab was an idolater. She worshipped idols and different gods all of her life. She had never heard the commandments that God had given His people. But when she heard about this God, something stirred in her heart. She had put her faith in God before the spies had even come to her home (Joshua 2:9-11). This selfless act of doing something to help God's cause is what is commended in James 2:25, not her lie. When there is genuine faith, it will be accompanied by good works.

10. Read James 2:14-26. Explain the relationship between faith and works.

Justification is God's act of declaring us "not guilty" for our sins. When we are justified, we are made "**just as if we've never sinned**" (Romans 5:18, 4:25). Jesus took the punishment for our sins when He died on the cross (Romans 5:21). We can't do anything to earn this. Only through Christ can we receive this forgiveness of sins and be made "justified."

11. Why can't we be justified by our works? Ephesians 2:8-9
12. Do you ever try to earn God's approval by "doing good"? How? What if this was possible?
13. Do you doubt God's love for you because of how "bad" you are?
14. Read Hebrews 11:6. What is needed to please God?
15. Read the Hebrews "Hall of Faith" in chapter 11:1-40. How many women are mentioned? What are all these people commended for?
16. What did Rahab and Sarah have in common? (Hebrews 11:11, 31)

Rahab's faith was the most important thing in her life. Rahab was a Gentile and a prostitute, but she showed her faith by her works. She actually risked her life by lying, for if she was found out, the king surely would have had her killed. Rahab is an example of the grace and mercy of God. Jesus came to save sinners, not "good" people. Rahab also "dwelleth in Israel unto this day," says Joshua 6:25. She lived the rest of her life as a citizen of God's people. Not only that, she married among these people and became an ancestor to Jesus Christ.

This ends our lesson for today. Our "**Reason to Rejoice**" is that God has justified us, through His Son, Jesus Christ. By His blood we are declared ... Innocent!

Fourth Day

Review your memory verse.

1. Read Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:4-6, Ruth 4:18-22, and 1 Chronicles 2:11-12. How is Jesus related to Rahab?
2. What is the significance of Rahab being in Jesus' family tree? Was He ashamed?
3. Is there anyone in your family that you are embarrassed of? What should be your attitude?

Rahab is a wonderful example of a sinner through whom God accomplished His divine purpose, and in whose heart He worked a change. If He can use a harlot, why can't He use you and me? Rahab is someone who would have been rejected by society, looked down upon by those in her community. God is not partial, nor is He a respecter of people (Romans 2:11, Acts 10:34). Jesus came to save sinners, not "good people." We are all in the place of Rahab, sinners saved by grace. Rahab was a guilty harlot, yet she was cleansed and forgiven by the blood of the Lamb. Now she was a part of spiritual Jerusalem.

4. Take a look at your own heart. Do you find yourself being partial to certain people? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and see if you are a "respecter of persons."
5. Is there anything in your past that you feel makes you "too bad" to be in God's family? What does Romans 5:6 say about it?

God doesn't want perfect men and women to do His work. He chooses the simple to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). This way God will get all the glory for the work that is done.

6. In Joshua 2:12, Rahab asks for a "true token." What does she mean?

Rahab was not only concerned for herself, but for her family. She wanted assurance for them, which would spare their lives. She was looking for a promise of safety for them. A "**true token**" is a pledge of sincerity.

7. Are you as concerned for your family as Rahab was for hers? How concerned are you for their spiritual safety? Are you praying for your parents persistently, encouraging them in the Lord whenever possible? Are you training your kids in the ways of the Lord?

Parents have a tremendous responsibility to teach Christ to their children. Mrs. William Booth, wife of the founder of the Salvation Army, raised 8 children. She used to say, "**I refuse to bring any children into the world to be damned in hell in the end.**" I pray that you, like Rahab, are concerned about the eternal safety of your family and friends.

Rahab's "**true token**" was her assurance that she and her family would be saved. God gave Noah a rainbow as a "**true token**" of promise. His "**true tokens**" to us are the promises in His Word. We can look in His Word for the assurance we need to continue to walk in faith.

8. What "**true token**" are you looking for? What are you asking God to give you assurance of? Have you looked in His Word?

9. What are some examples of other "**true tokens**" He has given you?

10. How did Rahab let the spies out of her house?

Rahab lived on the city wall. Many houses were built on wooden logs laid across the two walls of the city. After the spies left her house, they fled to the mountains (vs16). Five miles from Jericho was a mountain range called "Quarantania," which was filled with caves, making this a great hiding place for the spies.

We will end here for today. Isn't this story exciting? I rejoice that God is not a respecter of persons. I rejoice that He can use sinners like us, don't you?

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory. How did this verse minister to you?

1. Continue reading Joshua 2:17-24.
2. What was the symbol of the covenant Rahab made with the spies?
3. How was that symbol a proof of her faith? Why was that also a courageous act?
4. What was the reward of her faith?

The scarlet cord sealed her and her family's deliverance. This is a great picture of a believer being sealed by the Holy Spirit. The cord also reminds us about the Passover Lamb. The Israelites were required to sprinkle blood on the doorposts to show the angel of death which houses to spare (Exodus 12:13, 22-23). Similarly, Christians today must be sprinkled with the blood of Christ to avoid the penalty of death. Just as Rahab had to obey the terms and conditions of the covenant, we also must obey the terms of our covenant with God. We are declared righteous when we believe (Genesis 15:6).

The scarlet cord set her house apart from the others. It secured the life of all those in the house and enabled her to be at rest. The blood of Christ secures our faith, as well as sets us apart from the rest of the unbelieving world, allowing us the privilege of resting in Christ.

5. Is your life "set apart" from the world? Has the blood of Christ had an effect on your life? What's the difference between your life and that of an unbeliever? Have you made the commitment to Christ and thrown out the scarlet cord?
6. How long did the spies hide in the mountains?
7. What was their report to Joshua?
8. How was their faith revealed by their response? (2:14, 24)
9. Is your faith revealed by your response to the situations you find yourself in?
10. How was their response an encouragement to Joshua?
11. What are some of the main spiritual lessons we can learn from this chapter?
12. What was the main lesson that God taught you?

Remember that God saves people, not because of their own righteousness, but because of one's faith. I pray that Rahab continues to be a reminder to us that God has rich rewards for those who put their faith in Him. **Rejoice!**