

Rahab



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WYLDWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

LADIES' BIBLE STUDY

The Bible is one wonderful story from beginning to end. The common thread weaving through every page is the **red thread of redemption**.

Redemption is found in both Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

In the Old Testament, **redemption** involves deliverance from bondage (slave or servant) based on the payment of a price by a redeemer.

In the New Testament, **redemption** of sinful humanity is paid through Jesus of Nazareth.

Deliverance of humankind from its alienation from God has been accomplished through the death and resurrection of Christ

*<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/what-is-redemption.html>

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself... 2 Corinthians 5:18

In this study of Rahab, we will ask ourselves:

- What does this Bible passage teach us about God and His plan for redemption?
- How does this passage point to Jesus and the gospel?
- What lessons do we learn from a very real woman in the Old Testament

The children of Israel spent 400 years as slaves in Egypt. The book of Exodus tells how God delivered them from captivity and the Egyptian army by miraculously parting the Red Sea.

You would think they would then trust God to lead them safely through the wilderness to the Promised Land. But, no...

In the book of Numbers, Moses had sent some spies to the Promised Land and they brought back a report that terrified the people. Numbers 13:31-33 says that the spies felt like little grasshoppers compared to the people already living in the Promised Land. **The spies are really saying that they didn't trust that God could protect them!** However, two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, gave a wonderful report!

In response to the unbelief and disobedience of the people, God prohibited them from entering the Promised Land and they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness until all the people, except Joshua and Caleb, had passed away.

Read Joshua 2 here, or in your Bible.



Joshua 2

1 Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two men as spies from the Acacia Grove, saying, “Go and scout the land, especially Jericho.” So, they left, and they came to the house of a woman, a prostitute named Rahab, and stayed there.

2 The king of Jericho was told, “Look, some of the Israelite men have come here tonight to investigate the land.”

3 Then the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab and said, “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, for they came to investigate the entire land.”

4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. So, she said, “Yes, the men did come to me, but I didn’t know where they were from.

5 At nightfall, when the gate was about to close, the men went out, and I do not know where they were going. Chase after them quickly, and you can catch up with them!”

6 But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them among the stalks of flax that she had arranged on the roof.

7 The men pursued them along the road to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as they left to pursue them, the gate was shut.

8 Before the men fell asleep, she went up on the roof

9 and said to them, “I know that the Lord has given you this land and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and everyone who lives in the land is panicking because of you.

10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings you completely destroyed across the Jordan.

11 When we heard this, we lost heart, and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on earth below.

12 Now please swear to me by the Lord that you will also show kindness to my family, because I showed kindness to you. Give me a sure sign

13 that you will spare the lives of my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all who belong to them, and save us from death.”

14 The men answered her, “We will give our lives for yours. If you do not report our mission, we will show kindness and faithfulness to you when the Lord gives us the land.”

15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, since she lived in a house that was built into the wall of the city.

16 “Go to the hill country so that the men pursuing you won’t find you,” she said to them. “Hide

yourselves there for three days until they return; afterward, go on your way.”

17 The men said to her, “We will be free from this oath you made us swear,

18 unless, when we enter the land, you tie this scarlet cord to the window through which you let us down. Bring your father, mother, brothers, and all your father’s family into your house.

19 If anyone goes out the doors of your house, his blood will be on his own head, and we will be innocent. But if anyone with you in the house should be harmed, his blood will be on our heads.

20 And if you report our mission, we are free from the oath you made us swear.”

21 “Let it be as you say,” she replied, and she sent them away. After they had gone, she tied the scarlet cord to the window.

22 So the two men went into the hill country and stayed there three days until the pursuers had returned. They searched all along the way but did not find them.

23 Then the men returned, came down from the hill country, and crossed the Jordan. They went to Joshua son of Nun and reported everything that had happened to them.

24 They told Joshua, “The Lord has handed over the entire land to us. Everyone who lives in the land is also panicking because of us.”

As we begin our study of Rahab in Joshua we find God's people are finally preparing to enter the Promised Land. In Joshua 2:1-2:

- **WHO...**

- Is speaking? _____
- Is being spoken to? _____

- **WHAT...**

- Significant event just happened?

- Instructions did God give to Joshua?

- **WHEN...**

- Is this taking place? _____

- **WHERE...**

- Is Joshua when God gives this message?

- **WHY...**

- Is God speaking to Joshua?

- **HOW...**

- Does God want Joshua to respond to Him?

Prior to this, God gave promises to Joshua.
Read Joshua 1:3-5

3 I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses. **4** Your territory will be from the wilderness and Lebanon to the great Euphrates River—all the land of the Hittites—and west to the Mediterranean Sea. **5** No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or forsake you.

Underline the promises God made to Joshua.
How awesome!

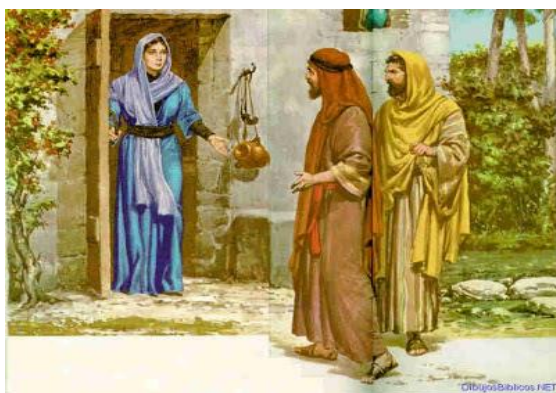
Read Joshua 1:6-7, 9 **highlight** the repeated words or phrases:

6 “Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance. **7** Above all, be strong and very courageous to carefully observe the whole instruction My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. **9** Have not I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

God had given Joshua a task that was bigger than Joshua could handle in his own strength. There would be many battles and struggles ahead, and the people of Israel would face many enemies.

If you had told me at the beginning of 2020 that we would be sheltering at home for months and wearing masks everywhere we go because of a global pandemic, I would have thought you were crazy! But here we are! This is one of the most difficult times of our life, and by ourselves, we are unequipped to handle it. With God's help, we can go forward in faith that He will protect us!

Rahab is the first person introduced in Scriptures in the Promised Land! I had never realized that before!



How is she described in Joshua 2:1?

We learn something about Rahab right away.

The Bible does not disguise her occupation at all!

Some Bible scholars say Rahab was just an innkeeper. The Hebrew word in Joshua 2:1 is *zonah* which means *prostitute*. Rahab's profession is also listed twice in the New Testament. See what it says in: Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25.

By faith Rahab the prostitute received the spies in peace and did not perish with those who disobeyed. Hebrews 11:31

And in the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by a different route? James 2:25

The Greek word used in those two verses is ***PORNE*** which means *prostitute or promiscuous woman*.
There is no doubting what Rahab did for a living!

Rahab lived in Jericho, an important city in Canaan. The Canaanites worshiped many gods with shrines, temples and idols which included ritual prostitution and child sacrifice. Rahab was part of that culture, yet God chose her to be a part of His story.



Jericho, which literally means "fragrant place," has a pleasant climate with plenty of sunshine and a lush oasis watered by Elisha's Spring. The city is located north of the Dead Sea, 17 miles from Jerusalem.

It is the oldest-known city in the world, with archaeological finds that date to at least 9000 BC!

As one of the few gateways into the Judea Mountains, Jericho was a natural place for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. After crossing the Jordan, it was the first city they defeated.

From Jericho, the main road to Jerusalem (sometimes called the Jericho Road) winds through the Judea Wilderness to the west. Many Bible characters traveled this way to Jerusalem.

The Bible makes several references to Jericho. It was the city: called the city of palm trees (Deuteronomy 34:5).- where Rahab received the spies (Joshua 2) - where Elijah ascended to heaven (2 Kings 2:4-15) and where Jesus met Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-20).



<https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/jericho>

As we read the Bible, it is important to remember that it is a book about God, not about us.

The Bible does not tell us how or why Rahab became a prostitute or how she felt about her occupation.

- What do we learn about God from His inclusion of Rahab?
- What does it tell us about the type of people that God chooses to use?

Read Joshua 2:2-7.

It did not take long for news of the Israelite spies to reach the king of Jericho. Rahab probably did not have much time to react.

- How did Rahab hide the spies?
- What was Rahab risking by hiding the spies?
- How did Rahab respond to the king's men?



Now, we will see what motivated Rahab to put her life on the line to hide the spies. Read Joshua 2:8-11.

- What reason did Rahab give the spies for why she was helping them?
- What are the two events she mentions?
- What words are used to describe how the people of Jericho felt?

Different Bible versions say:

- terrified,
- fear upon us,
- terror upon us,
- you frighten us,
- overwhelmed with fear,
- all afraid,
- terror and dread,
- shaking with fear

Write verse 11: _____

In the Old Testament when LORD is written in all caps, it signifies the Hebrew word YAHWEH, the Jewish name for God – the personal name that refers to the God of Israel. It is not a name the Canaanites would have known or used.

Even though Rahab had grown up in a pagan culture, she chose to place her trust or faith in God because of the stories she had heard. She was willing to put her life on the line for this trust. She knew the strength of her fortified city of Jericho, yet she trusted the God of Israel would triumph.

In Numbers 14:8, Caleb and Joshua tell the people of Israel: **“If the LORD delights in us, He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey.”**

In Joshua 2:9, Rahab tells the two spies: **“I know that the LORD has given you the land.”**

- **What are the similarities in those two verses?**

It is ironic that while the children of Israel doubted that God’s strength that they had personally witnessed could take them into the Promised Land, but here in a pagan city was a woman who based her trust in God from the stories she had heard! Rahab was acting on what she believed. Her faith was living, not dead.



What is Flax? It is a plant with yellowish stems and bright blue flowers used to make a yarn and linen cloth. Egyptians cultivated flax before the Exodus.



The production of linen was a common chore in biblical times, but it was labor-intensive. First, separate the flax fibers from the seeds. Next, arrange the flax into bunches, soaking them until the fibers are softened. Then lay them in the sun to dry, and re-soak them so they can be bleached and softened. To dry flax, it was often stacked on rooftops to lie in the sun. After it is dry, use a hackle (a comb or board with long teeth) to separate the outer fibers from the inner core. Comb it several times until it is clean and can be made into a thread for weaving. Leftover short and tangled fibers can be made into twine, coarse fabric, or burned as torches and lamp wicks.



Not only did the stories of God's people impact Rahab's life, it impacted her entire city!

Read Joshua 2:8-14.

- What was Rahab risking by her actions?
- Did she know what would happen to the people of Jericho?
- Why did she choose this path of action?
- Write out Rahab's request to the spies in your own words: _____

- List 4 ways Rahab dealt kindly with the spies:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
- Who did Rahab ask to be spared?
- How would Rahab's life change after the fall of Jericho?



Highlight all forms of the word kind below
in Joshua 2:12-14:

12 Now please swear to me by the Lord that you will also show kindness to my family, because I showed kindness to you. Give me a sure sign

13 that you will spare the lives of my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all who belong to them, and save us from death.”

14 The men answered her, “We will give our lives for yours. If you do not report our mission, we will show kindness and faithfulness to you when the Lord gives us the land.”

The word kind used in these verses is the Hebrew word hesed which speaks of God’s loyal and unending love for His people. It describes the love that moves God to pursue us relentlessly and persistently. It is God’s faithfulness to keep His promises to His people that He loves. While we might be unfaithful, God’s love is everlasting. We also use the word mercy to describe this love.

In Joshua 2, Rahab hangs a scarlet cord or red thread, out her window as a sign for the Israelite army that she and her household would be spared. I do not think it is a coincidence that a scarlet thread was used. It pictures the blood of Jesus Christ that save us all from sin!



Read Joshua 2:12-21. There is a sense of urgency in this passage. Through her actions, Rahab gave an example of obedience – ***all the way and right away!***

- How do the men respond to Rahab's plea for mercy?
- List the 4 conditions Rahab must follow to keep the oath binding:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
- Did the spies require Rahab to change her profession to be spared?
- What did Rahab do after the spies left that shows she took them at their word?
- What would disobedience have looked like?
- What would have been the result?
- When we are disobedient, what is the result?

Thankfully, God accepts us just as we are, unclean and sinful, with His loving kindness and forgiveness.

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool. Isaiah 1:18

Read Joshua 2:16-24. Rahab took the spies at their word. She did all they required. She also had to **WAIT**! After she gathered all her family into her home, they ALL waited, with the scarlet cord hanging outside the window, until the Israelites returned.

- Did Rahab know how long she had to wait?
- Why was always it necessary to stay in the house?
- What might it have been like inside Rahab's house as they waited?

Now let us jump forward to Joshua 6. It is the familiar story of the march around Jericho. **As you read it, think of the people inside the city and how they must have felt as they watched the marching Israelites and listened to the trumpets. As you read these verses, imagine Rahab's perspective.**

- 1 Now Jericho was strongly fortified because of the Israelites—no one leaving or entering.**
- 2 The Lord said to Joshua, "Look, I have handed Jericho, its king, and its fighting men over to you.**
- 3 March around the city with all the men of war, circling the city one time. Do this for six days.**
- 4 Have seven priests carry seven ram's-horn trumpets in front of the ark. But on the seventh day, march**

around the city seven times, while the priests blow the trumpets.

5 When there is a prolonged blast of the horn and you hear its sound, have all the people give a mighty shout. Then the city wall will collapse, and the people will advance, each man straight ahead.”

6 So Joshua son of Nun summoned the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant and have seven priests carry seven trumpets in front of the ark of the Lord.”

7 He said to the people, “Move forward, march around the city, and have the armed troops go ahead of the ark of the Lord.”

8 After Joshua had spoken to the people, seven priests carrying seven trumpets before the Lord moved forward and blew the trumpets; the ark of the Lord’s covenant followed them.

9 While the trumpets were blowing, the armed troops went in front of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard went behind the ark.

10 But Joshua had commanded the people: “Do not shout or let your voice be heard. Do not let one word

come out of your mouth until the time I say, 'Shout!' Then you are to shout."

11 So the ark of the Lord was carried around the city, circling it once. They returned to the camp and spent the night there.

12 Joshua got up early the next morning. The priests took the ark of the Lord,

13 and the seven priests carrying seven trumpets marched in front of the ark of the Lord. While the trumpets were blowing, the armed troops went in front of them, and the rear guard went behind the ark of the Lord.

14 On the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

15 Early on the seventh day, they started at dawn and marched around the city seven times in the same way. That was the only day they marched around the city seven times.

16 After the seventh time, the priests blew the trumpets, and Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city.

17 But the city and everything in it are set apart to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and everyone with her in the house will live, because she hid the men we sent.

18 But keep yourselves from the things set apart, or you will be set apart for destruction. If you take any of those things, you will set apart the camp of Israel for destruction and bring disaster on it.

19 For all the silver and gold, and the articles of bronze and iron, are dedicated to the Lord and must go into the Lord's treasury."

20 So the people shouted, and the trumpets sounded. When they heard the blast of the trumpet, the people gave a great shout, and the wall collapsed. The people advanced into the city, each man straight ahead, and they captured the city.

21 They completely destroyed everything in the city with the sword—every man and woman, both young and old, and every ox, sheep, and donkey.

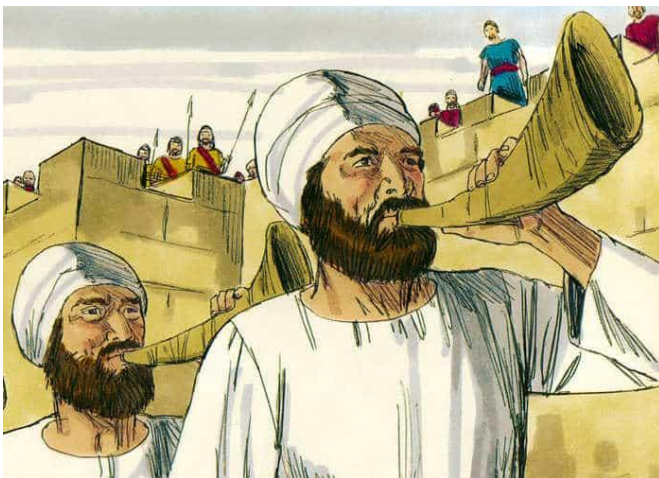
22 Joshua said to the two men who had scouted the land, "Go to the prostitute's house and bring the

woman out of there, and all who are with her, just as you promised her.”

23 So the young men who had scouted went in and brought out Rahab and her father, mother, brothers, and all who belonged to her. They brought out her whole family and settled them outside the camp of Israel.

24 They burned up the city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the Lord’s house.

25 However, Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, her father’s household, and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent to spy on Jericho, and she lives in Israel to this day.



Look at Joshua 6:1 –

- Jericho is described as _____
- What do you think was going on inside the city?

I would imagine the people inside were experiencing the same emotions that we felt when we were told to stay home because of COVID. Some were skeptical, some were angry, some were very frightened.

Rahab knew what was coming – death and destruction for the city, but she had assurance that she and her family would be spared.

Since Rahab's house was in the wall, she had a window to watch the events. But the view out her window was only a small part of the big picture.

Like our view of the troubling events taking place in our world today, we have a limited and finite perspective. We do not have the whole picture.

**** We do not have God's perspective! ****

- What is the difference between our perspective and God's?
- How do you remind yourself to trust God when events seem to show destruction?

Read Joshua 6:15-27.

- What famous miracle is told in these verses?
- What happened to Rahab and her family?
- Why was it necessary for Rahab and her family to be put outside the camp?

Rahab and her family had to be outside the camp, at least temporarily, because they were ritually unclean and had to be purified according to Jewish law before they could join the Israelites.

This is a foreshadowing of what Jesus did for us. Hebrews 13:12 says: “**Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the gate, so that He might sanctify the people by His own blood.**” When Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself, He became unclean. He went “outside the camp” so that He could bring us in to be the people of God. When He was resurrected, Jesus overcame sin and death for us. When we trust Him for salvation, we are made clean and pure in Him!

- What happened to the rest of the people of Jericho?
- How do you feel about this?
- How do we feel about people around us that are headed for destruction without God?
- What can we do for them?



And now “happily ever after” ...

Read Matthew 1:1-17. This is the genealogy of Jesus. Some of the names are unfamiliar, but they serve to remind us that every person is important to God. These names matter to God. They were a part of His plan of redemption.

- Whose name is paired with Rahab?
- How many generations come before Rahab?
- What names come right after Rahab?
- What is the last name given before Jesus?

We are also a part of His plan of redemption. God knows just where we fit into His eternal plan and we are important to Him.

Rahab was not rescued from Jericho and then left to live her life outside the camp. She was richly blessed by God, married into an Israelite family, and made a part of the community of faith. Some Bible scholars have speculated that her husband, Salmon, was one of the two spies that she hid...ah, romance!



Hebrews 11:30-31 says:

“By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down after being encircled by the Israelites for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute received the spies in peace and didn’t perish with those who disobeyed.”

- According to the verses, what outcome did Rahab deserve?
- What saved her from death?

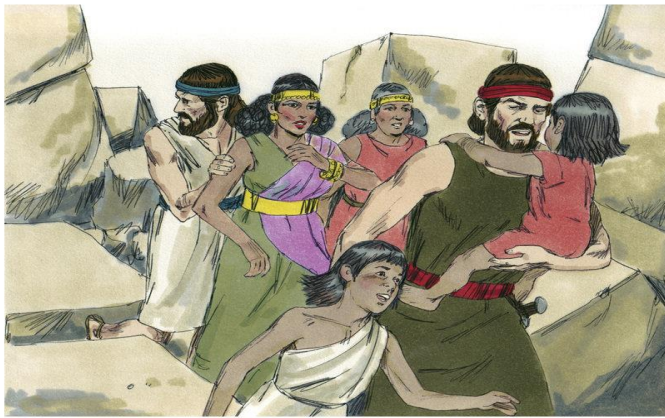
James explains about this kind of faith as “saving faith” and Rahab is given as an example.

Read James 2:24-26:

“You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way, wasn’t Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by a different route? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

The verse above says we are justified by works. That means we have been declared to be righteous. Our sins are no more.

According to Bible teacher Warren Wiesersbe, “True saving faith can never be by itself: it always brings life, and life produces good works.” However, that does not mean we are saved by our works or what we do. We are absolutely saved by the grace of God, expressed through our faith.



Rahab was a changed person. She had been saved by her trust and faith in the God of Israel. She had seen her city destroyed, but her family rescued. **She would never be the same person again!**

However, Scripture does not let us forget who she had been.

- **Why do you think she is always referred to as ‘Rahab the prostitute’?**
- **How are we like Rahab?**
- **What lesson are we to learn from that?**

We are to be transparent about our past sins and tell others how God has changed our life; then, others will know that we understand – that we have been there, too. God wants to use us and our story!

Much of this material came from Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth’s book, **Rahab: Tracing the Thread of Redemption**, c2020 by Revive Our Hearts.

This lesson will be posted with the others on mywbc.net under Ministries: Ladies’ Bible Study.

Thank you for sharing Rahab's story with me.



"Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall."

JOSHUA 2:15

Next month we will study the Samaritan Woman at the Well in John 4:4-26.



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