

JOSHUA ENTERING CANAAN

Joshua 2:1 - 5:1

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Joshua, two spies, and Rahab the prostitute

Key-locations: East bank of the Jordan River (across from Canaan), and Jericho

Key-repetitions:

- Spies: Joshua sent two spies to Jericho (Jos 2:1); someone told Jericho's king that Israelites came to spy out the land (Jos 2:2); king sent for spies (Jos 2:3); king's men set out in pursuit of spies (Jos 2:7); Rahab spoke to spies (Jos 2:8).
- Rahab confessed facts: I know the Lord gave your people this land (Jos 2:9); we are terrified/afraid (Jos 2:9, 11); we heard how the Lord acted (Jos 2:10); we heard how you conquered kings east of the Jordan River (Jos 2:10); your God is God of heaven and earth (Jos 2:11).
- Rahab made request: spare my family (Jos 2:13); show my family mercy (Jos 2:12).
- The Lord gave the land to the Israelites: Rahab knew the Lord had given the land to the Israelites (Jos 2:9); spies told Joshua that the Lord had given them the land (Jos 2:24).
- Water: priests were to step into the water of the Jordan River and flowing water would be cut off (Jos 3:13); priests' feet touch Jordan River's edge (Jos 3:15); upstream water stopped flowing (Jos 3:16); as soon as the priests exited the Jordan, the waters resumed flowing (Jos 4:18).

Key-attitudes:

- Spies' challenge.
- Canaanites' terror of the Israelites.
- Rahab's fear and courage in helping the spies.
- Priests' courage to be the first to step into the flooding Jordan River.
- Israelites' respect for Joshua.

Initial-situation:

The forty years of the Israelites' wilderness wandering had come to an end. Moses died. God informed Joshua of Moses' death and that the time had come for the Israelites to take possession of the Promised Land. The Israelites were camped along the east bank of the Jordan River. On the other side of the river was Canaan, the land the Lord had promised them.

Initial-problem:

Joshua chose two men as spies and sent them to the city of Jericho.

Final-situation:

The Israelites crossed the Jordan River into Canaan. The kings west of the Jordan River were terrified of the Israelites. Manna stopped coming the day the Israelites ate food from Canaan.

BIBLE STORY**Rahab and the Israelite Spies**

Joshua chose two men as spies and sent them to the city of Jericho. Joshua told the spies, "Go across the river and find out as much as you can about the town of Jericho."

The two spies went to Jericho and spent the night at the house of a prostitute named Rahab. Someone told the king of Jericho, "Some Israelite spies came here tonight."

The king sent soldiers to Rahab's house to arrest the spies. Rahab hid the two men on top of her flat roof, under some piles of flax plants that she had put there to dry. Soldiers came to Rahab's house and demanded, "We want the men who are staying at your house. They are spies."

Rahab answered the soldiers, "Some men came to my house. I didn't know where they came from. They left about sundown, just before the city gates closed. I don't know where they're heading, but if you hurry, you may catch them."

The soldiers headed toward the Jordan River looking for the spies.

Rahab went back up to her roof and told the spies, "I know the Lord has given your people this land. We're terrified of you. We heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you left Egypt. We heard how you destroyed the kings east of the Jordan River. The Lord your God is God of the heaven above and of the earth below. We're afraid to fight you.

"Swear to me by the Lord that you'll spare my family, including my parents, my brothers and sisters, and their families. I showed you mercy; now show my family mercy."

The spies promised, "Our lives for your lives! We'll spare your lives."

Rahab's house was built on the city wall. She used a red rope to lower the men through a window.

The spies told Rahab, "When we enter the land, you must tie this red rope out the window through which you lowered us, and bring all your family into your house."

The two spies returned to Joshua and told him, "The Lord has given the whole land into our hands; all the people are terrified of us" (Jos 2:1-24).

Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua told the people, "Make yourselves holy for the Lord; tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you."

The Lord told Joshua, "Today Israel will know that I am with you just as I was with Moses."

Joshua addressed the Israelites, "Attention! You will see proof that the living God is with you. The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go ahead of you into the Jordan River. The priests who carry the ark of the Lord will enter the water and the

Jordan River will stop flowing. Water flowing downstream will be cut off and pile up in a heap as if a dam were there."

The Jordan River was at flood stage during harvest. But the feet of the priests who carried the Ark touched the Jordan River's water, and the water stopped flowing. The water piled up in a heap a great distance away. The priests stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan River while all Israel walked across on dry ground (Jos 3:1-17). The people crossed the Jordan River, then the priests carried the Ark the rest of the way across the Jordan River with the people watching. As soon as the priests exited the Jordan River, the waters of the Jordan River resumed their course, flowing over all the banks as before (Jos 4:11-18).

That day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; the Israelites respected Joshua just as they had respected Moses (Jos 4:14).

The kings west of the Jordan River were terrified of the Israelites (Jos 5:1).

The Israelites ate food grown in that country. The manna stopped coming the day they ate food from that land (Jos 5:2-12).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Joshua send two men to Jericho?
2. Who did God use to help the Israelite spies in Jericho?
3. Why would Rahab be considered an unlikely person to help achieve God's mission?
4. Who are some people we consider as unlikely people for God to use?
5. What does Rahab, the prostitute, teach us about the kind of people God can use to accomplish his mission?
6. How did the Israelites cross the Jordan River?
7. Why was it dangerous for the priests to be the first to step into the waters of the Jordan River?
8. Do you have any "Jordan Rivers at flood stage" in your life that you can only cross with God's divine intervention?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Do not judge people's interest in God by their background, life-style, or appearance.** Rahab, the prostitute, was an insignificant citizen of Jericho and she

lived a sinful lifestyle. Yet, Rahab recognized that the God of heaven was an all powerful God and she was willing to risk everything she had for a God she barely knew (Jos 2:1-13).

2. **The pre-conditions for a sinner to be forgiven and to become an instrument used by God are: trust God, confess confidence in God, and take a stand to serve him.** The prostitute Rahab had faith in God, confessed her faith to the Israelite spies, and helped them. Her life was spared (Jos 2:9-11). Her faith resulted in God considering her a righteous person, and it produced action that benefitted God's people. Her name is included in the list of the heroes of faith (Heb 11:31). She became an ancestor of King David and of Jesus Christ (Mat 1:5-16).
3. **God is sovereign; he has the power to do whatever it takes to carry out his plans.** God had the power to stop the Jordan River from flowing, and he enabled the Israelites to walk across the riverbed on dry ground (Jos 3:1-17).
4. **A new leader should lead his followers beyond where the former one took them.** Moses led the people out of Egypt and through the wilderness. Joshua led them across the Jordan River and led them to conquer Canaan.
5. **God may provide no solution to difficult problems until his people trust him and take the first step toward obeying him.** During the spring floods, the Jordan River could reach a width in excess of 100 feet and a depth of ten feet. It was risky for the priests to obey God and be the first to step down into the water. The weight of the Ark increased the risk of their being swept away by the current. The only solution for their barrier was the miracle promised by God. The priests carrying the Ark placed their feet in the water and the river stopped flowing (Jos 3:15).
6. **God's provisions include necessities which he enables people to get for themselves.** The Israelites crossed the Jordan River and ate food grown in Canaan. Manna stopped coming the day they found food in Canaan (Jos 5:2-12).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Chant:

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

All	
“By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient” (Hebrews 11:31 NIV).	
Group 1	Group 2
By <u>faith</u>	By believing the <u>All-Powerful God</u>
the prostitute <u>Rahab</u>	A <u>prostitute?</u>
Because she <u>welcomed</u> the spies	She put <u>action</u> to her faith.
Was <u>not killed with</u> those who were <u>disobedient.</u>	Not punished but <u>saved.</u>
All	
“By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient” (Hebrews 11:31 NIV).	

2. Music:

After telling the Bible story of Rahab, have someone sing the song “Three Wooden Crosses” or play the CD of Randy Travis singing, “Three Wooden Crosses on the Right Side of the Road.” After hearing the song, ask, “How does the song relate to the Bible story of Rahab?”

3. Drama:

Invite four listeners to pretend they are priests carrying the heavy Ark as they take the first steps into the flooding Jordan River.