

Joshua Chapter 2: Investigating the Land

Introduction

- Remember, the notes used for this lesson are taken from John MacArthur's commentary.
- OPENING QUESTION: MacArthur presents a thoughtful question at the beginning of this lesson: Think of a time in your life when you had to completely put your faith and trust in someone or something. How did that turn out for you?
- This is the situation that Joshua and the Israelites find themselves in regarding Jericho.
- Read Chapter 2.

The Context

- Jericho was the first city in Canaan that stood in their way as they entered the land.
- Joshua was a strong and successful military leader and wanted to gain information about Jericho before encountering the city in battle.
- He sent two spies to gather intelligence about the inhabitants and defenses of Jericho.
- The Bible does not tell us what information the spies learned, but this did not matter in the grand scheme of God – because the LORD had plans for Jericho's destruction that did not require military prowess or human strategies.
- Jericho was surrounded by two walls, one behind the other. Between the walls were houses that were built into one or both walls, and those houses frequently had windows that opened through the city's defensive walls.
- The inhabitants of these houses were usually poor people and the houses nearest to the city gates would be ideal locations for prostitutes because of the constant merchant traffic into and out of the city.

The Spies Mission and Result

- The spies enter Jericho and hide in the house of a prostitute named Rahab.
- They did not enter Rahab's house for illicit purposes but because it offered anonymity and a good hiding place from the hostile army of Jericho.
- Uniquely (as this does not often happen in Scripture) God led the spies to the prostitute's house because God intended to rescue Rahab and redeem her.
- Rahab took risk hiding the spies that would have certainly cost her life if she had been caught. She took this risk because she had made up her mind to join Israel and make their God her God.

- ETHICAL QUESTION: Is lying okay when the outcome is good? This is Rahab's dilemma.
- ANSWER: No. It is not okay with God that we lie to protect the lives of others. It must be pointed out that God knows our hearts and God saw the faith of Rahab.
- How do we know Rahab put her faith in God? Because in verses 9 and 11 she tells the spies that she knows God has given the land to them and that "the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below" (NIV).
- We also learn of the compassion of Rahab in the request to save her family (v. 13).
- The scarlet thread would be the marker to save Rahab and her family and is a reminder of the Passover sacrifice that the Israelites had known in Egypt and points to the coming Messiah who would be the perfect lamb and a sacrifice to protect all who believe in Him.

Conclusion

- Rahab is one of the examples mentioned in Hebrews 11:24-31 (READ).
- Remember our recent study of Hebrews on Wednesday nights – the central theme of Hebrews 11 is the fact that service to God requires faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (v. 6).
- The definition of "faith" from verse 1 as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen".
- The person of faith chooses to believe in that which is "not seen" simply because God has promised it is true.
- Thinking back to our opening question – if you put your trust and faith in other people (or even yourself) you have experienced betrayal and failure.
- BUT, if you have put your faith and trust in God, that which is "not seen" based upon His promises you have truly had faith.
- The miraculous faith of God's people to obey God and march around the walls of Jericho and shout to bring them down while, simultaneously the faith of Rahab in the same God of Israel protected her and her family from certain destruction would include Rahab in the lineage of King David and ultimately Jesus Christ (see Matthew 1:5).
- Next week we will look at Chapters 3 and 4 and the crossing of the Jordan into Canaan.