

TEXT SUMMARY

In our text, <u>Hebrews 11:30-31</u>, the writer sketches two of the events associated with Israel's defeat of the city of Jericho: the faith of the people of Israel in following God's instructions and the faith of the prostitute Rahab in sheltering the scouts Israel sent to spy out the Land.

Jericho was an ancient city even in Joshua's day. Its oldest fortified walls date from the Early Bronze Age (3000-2200 BC). Jericho stood as the first obstacle to conquering the Land God had promised to the forefathers of the Hebrews, and its walls were formidable.

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

For context, read the story of Rahab's hiding of the scouts (Josh 2) and the fall of Jericho (Josh 5-6).

- 1. Read Rahab's testimony to the spies (Josh 2:8-11): What was Rahab's motive in siding with Israel? What had she heard that prompted her to turn against her own people?
- 2. The writer's reference to the walls falling "by faith" is intriguing. Whose faith was at work in that miracle?

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

In ancient times, it was unusual for a woman to be included in a list of heroes, even more so a foreigner in a document aimed at an ancient Jewish audience, far more so a prostitute. Yet the Gentile prostitute Rahab is given a place of honor in this rehearsal of the heroes of the faith. She also has a place of honor in Matthew's genealogy of the Messiah (Matt 1:5-6, 16) and in James' discussion of faith that works (James 2:25).

How were Rahab's words and actions an indication of her notable faith?

DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE



SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

 Charles Spurgeon observed that "it is no faith which believes and does nothing." The ancient Hebrews surely wondered how marching around the city of Jericho every day would accomplish any military objectives, yet they did what Yahweh told them to do.

We all have experienced that "hitch," that moment between resolving in our heart to believe God and stirring ourselves to obedient action.

- What are some of the factors that have made you hesitate in the past to do what you knew you ought to do?
- How have you resolved that tension in the past?
 Did your faith often prove to be fruitful or barren?
 Why?
- 2. If Rahab hadn't hidden Israel's two spies, her story would have turned out so differently. She and her family would have been destroyed, she wouldn't have joined the community of Israel, and she wouldn't have been one of the ancestors of the Messiah.
 - Can you think of a time in your past when you obeyed (or didn't obey) God at a critical juncture in your life, and the trajectory of your life was changed?
 - What risks did you take (or fail to take) in your trust in and obedience to God?
 - How did that decision change the trajectory of your life? (If you faltered at the critical moment, how have you dealt with that decision and its consequences?)

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