

The Bible Hour - Joshua Ch. 2 and 6

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Joshua: the 'New Moses,' a man of faith and courage is selected by God to lead the new generation across the Jordan to conquer and possess the Canaanite territory/Promised Land.

Previously known as Hoshea "Salvation": new name Joshua "Yahweh saves" (Yeshua)

Joshua's strength as a military leader and strong spiritual influence are rooted in his obedience to the LORD.

Jericho: one of the oldest cities in the world, 5 miles west of Jordan river. Fertile, spring-fed oasis in middle of hot, desert valley 840 ft below sea level. Fortified city with high, formidable walls (maybe double). Controlled important migration routes between north/south. Occupied by Canaanites (morally corrupt; especially in terms of sex (Lev. 18) and child sacrifice (Deut. 12:29-31). Stronghold city rife with idol worship, especially Ashtaroth (moon).

Chapter 2

Rahab Hides the Spies

2 And Joshua the son of Nun sent^[a] two men secretly from Shittim ("Acacia Grove") as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. ²And it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." ³Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." ⁴But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from." ⁵And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." ⁶But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. ⁷So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

Secretly: Joshua trusted God but not men (disastrous result last time)

- May have drawn criticism (Numbers 13)
- May have been a more private arrangement
- Help determine strategy: on foot vs. fortified city with advanced warfare ability

Spies: unknown age; led by God to Rahab's house

Rahab's house:

- Built into city wall
- Provided concealment (spies assumed to be customers) and intel from others; Rahab
- Ideal for quick escape w/o passing gate
- Word got out to the king of Jericho of 'people who aren't from around here'
- No suggestion of improper relationship

Rahab: Female, Gentile prostitute in a Canaanite city; resourceful, articulate, courageous; trusted in the LORD; a symbolic foreshadowing or "type" of the church and Gentile believers

Lyng: not addressed, neither is it commended

- Forgiven because of her faith
- Not an Israelite, did not have the law
- Normal/acceptable practice in warfare
- Broke one principal (truth-telling) to uphold another one (protect God's people).

Fords: Shallow area for crossing, river swollen

Chapter 2 (continued)

⁸ Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof ⁹ and said to the men, “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

¹² Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt **kindly** with you, you also will deal **kindly** with my father's house, and give me a sure sign ¹³ that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” ¹⁴ And the men said to her, “Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the LORD gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.”

The LORD's reputation is well known among inhabitants of the land (Moses' concern of Num 14:15 proved right)

Other people groups living in Canaan know the acts of Israel's God, also know He promised to give His people that land: no wonder their hearts are melting

Rahab reveals:

- Remarkable awareness of Israel's history
- surprising faith and understanding of who the One True God is (as a Canaanite in a polytheistic society)
- She uses the Divine name, Yahweh
- An accurate confession of how her people are feeling
- She knows what's coming: defeat (confidence that what Yahweh has promised will take place)
- Motivation for her bravery (family): makes a deal with the spies to get on victorious side
- God works thru someone others are inclined to reject

Remembered as the first recorded Gentile convert, saved by faith (Heb. 11:31); commended for demonstrating her faith with her good works (James 2:25); and included in Matthew's genealogy as ancestor of Christ (Matt 1:5)

- Good works: protection and hospitality
 - Hospitality commanded of Israelites
 - Displays her moral quality

Rahab uses the word “**hesed**” (kindness/kindly): term Israelites associated with God's own commitment, kindness, and loyalty to his people.

Fulfillment of “Song of Moses' in Ex. 15:14-16: was true at the crossing of the Red Sea, also prophetic of what will happen in Jericho

The spies' response reflects the gracious character of Yahweh: salvation based on faith/loyalty to the LORD.

Chapter 2 (continued)

¹⁵Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. ¹⁶And she said^[d] to them, “Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way.” ¹⁷The men said to her, “We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. ¹⁸Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. ¹⁹Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. ²⁰But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear.” ²¹And she said, “According to your words, so be it.” Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

²²They departed and went into the hills and remained there three days until the pursuers returned, and the pursuers searched all along the way and found nothing. ²³Then the two men returned. They came down from the hills and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they told him all that had happened to them. ²⁴And they said to Joshua, “Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us.”

Agreement with spies is conditional

- Secret arrangement, no turning on them
- Scarlet cord in the window (only one way to be saved)
- All the family must be in the house during battle

v. 15 Built into the city wall: A thicker outer wall and thinner inside wall; connected by transverse walls to create internal chambers

v. 18 Scarlet cord: Hebrew word “*tiqva*”

- translated as ‘cord’ here, translated as ‘hope’ elsewhere in OT
- Link to blood of the Passover lamb on doorposts (Exod 12:7, 13)
- Blood/Cord is the only way of salvation, action made in faith; those without lost lives
- Both symbols are red, public, and foreshadow Christ’s red blood of substitutionary atonement

Household salvation: parallel to Noah’s ark and the Philippian jailer’s home (Acts 16:31)

v.22 Into the hills: high, rugged hills in the area’s mountain ridge provided caves good for cover and concealment of the spies

v. 24 ‘all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us.’

- Rahab’s own words of v.9
- Stark contrast to the 10 spies’ report many years earlier (Num. 13)

Chapter 5:13-15

The Commander of the LORD's Army

¹³When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” ¹⁴And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped^[a] and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” ¹⁵And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

Chapter 6

The Fall of Jericho

6 Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. ²And the LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. ³You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. ⁴Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat,^[a] and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.” ⁶So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.” ⁷And he said to the people, “Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD.”

5:13 a man: identity:

- ‘man’ (*ish*); general term for man
- ‘commander’ (*sar*); leader, representative of a king; also translated ‘prince’ in Isa. 9 (Prince of Peace) describing Messiah
- prompts Joshua’s posture of worship

With his drawn sword: this phrase is seen when describing ‘the angel of the Lord’ in Numbers 22:23 (Balam and donkey) and 1 Chron 21:16 (David sees)

Who is the man? Some say: Theophany (God in human form) or Christophany (pre-incarnate Christ)

- Similar to Gen 32:24 (Jacob wrestling): man later called God (*Elohim*) to bring submission
- Compare to Ex 3:5 (Burning bush)
- Place you are standing is holy: because God is holy, and where he appears is holy.
- Fulfillment of Ex 23:20-24

God accommodates his appearance to the situation of the servant: To Moses the shepherd at Mt. Sinai; To Joshua the earthly commander of Israel’s army he appears as military commander.

6:2 I have given: Victory has already been won, assurance that Joshua can fight FROM a position of victory; not fight FOR victory. Joshua must only obey the LORD’s ‘unique’ battle plan instructions

v.3 You shall march: ceremonial/ritual, daily march for 7 days – seems like psychological warfare (see also Exodus 23:27)

- 7 priests, 7 rams’ horns/trumpets
- Levites (Kohathite clan) carries the Ark
- On 7th day, 7 circuits before shouting

Before the ark – without the presence of God the efforts would not be successful.

Why do it this way?

God uses weakness/apparent foolishness to defeat His enemies and glorify His name. Joshua and the Israelites cannot take credit for the victory. It was not their plan, it was God’s. See 1 Cor 1:27, 31.

Joshua Ch. 6 (continued)

⁸And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Lord went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the Lord following them. ⁹The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually. ¹⁰But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout." ¹¹So he caused the ark of the Lord to circle the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

¹²Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. ¹³And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the Lord, while the trumpets blew continually. ¹⁴And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

¹⁵On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. ¹⁷**And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction.** Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. ¹⁸But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it.

V. 8-10 Test of faith, patience, self-control and complete obedience that they wait 7 days before invasion.

V. 12-16 emphasis is on obedience of Joshua

[NIV Study Bible article "*The Conquest and the Ethical Question of War*"]: "[Joshua is] the story of how God, to whom the whole world belongs, at one stage in the history of redemption reconquered a portion of the earth from the powers of this world that had claimed it for themselves...the Lord's triumph over the Canaanites testified to the world that the God of Israel is the one true and living God, whose claim on the world is absolute. It was also a warning to the nations that...the kingdom of God would ultimately disinherit all those who opposed it, giving place in the earth only to those who acknowledge and serve the Lord."

v. 17 and 21: Then they devoted all in the city to destruction:

[ESV Study Bible notes]: "Only the cities within the Promised Land are to be devoted to complete destruction. God is the victor, and the spoils of war belong to him. This kind of destruction is a sign of **final judgement**. The order to destroy every living thing was not a license to kill indiscriminately in other warfare situations...Rather, this was a specific order intended to punish the Canaanites, whose wickedness had become complete (Gen.15:16; Lev. 18:1-3). The degree of destruction was also to **protect the Israelites from worshipping other gods because of Canaanite influence** (Deut. 7:1-6). Jericho's destruction was not a general guideline for the conduct of war. Instead, it is a picture of what will happen in the final judgement to all who continue to rebel against God. Nor can the destruction of Jericho or of the Canaanites in general be seen as a case of ethnic cleansing, for the Lord warns that if Israel does not totally destroy Jericho, the camp of Israel itself will become a thing for destruction."

3 parallel stories of final judgement with salvation:

Noah's Ark

Crossing of the Red Sea

Destruction of Jericho

Chapter 6 (continued)

¹⁹ But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.” ²⁰ So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. ²¹ Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

²² But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, “Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her.” ²³ So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴ And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. ²⁵ But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

²⁶ Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, “Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.

“At the cost of his firstborn
shall he lay its foundation,
and at the cost of his youngest son
shall he set up its gates.”

²⁷ So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

Moses stated that all the inhabitants of Canaan would be executed for their idolatry, evil practices and moral corruption (Deut. 20:16-18)

v. 23 Amidst the chaos of battle, Rahab and her family are saved by God's grace. God spares those willing to turn to Him. The Canaanites knew about the one true God because they heard of His power and exploits, but they did not turn from their idolatry like Rahab did.

v.24 They burned the city: Jericho was 1 of only 3 cities that were burned. (Jericho, Ai, Hazor). All the others were kept for occupation.

v. 24 silver and gold: These are not to enrich the people but to beautify the Tabernacle and its services.

v. 26 Cursed: This curse was fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34 during reign of King Ahab

Significance of the victory in Jericho:

1. Served to confirm Joshua as the true leader and successor of Moses in the eyes of Israel
2. Sparked further demoralization of the Canaanite opponents (see Joshua 5:1)
 - Proved that Israel's God was not only superior to the Canaanite gods but also invincible
3. Serves as tithe in victory, or firstfruits offering of land

Rahab as 'type' / foreshadowing of the church:

1. Saved by her faith in 'God in heaven above and on the earth below' (by grace we have been saved thru faith – Eph 2:8)
2. Exemplified her faith by action (James 2) in hanging the cord out her window (public declaration 'confess with your mouth' Romans 10:9-10)
3. Only way to be saved was the scarlet cord (salvation is found in no one else, no other name under heaven Acts 4:12)
4. 'You who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.' Ephesians 2:13-19 - Rahab's story is an Old Testament picture of this truth
5. After her rescue, Rahab becomes a child of God, worthy of grace and part of Christ's lineage (just as our slate is wiped clean upon salvation/confession)

Take Home thoughts:

1. Israel set out to enter the Promised Land: we also must 'cross over' from old life to new, put off selfish desires and possess all God has for us
2. Strategic hospitality can advance the mission of God
3. Conflict with evil is inevitable, we should be merciless in destroying sin in our lives
4. Like Joshua, Christians also fight against a defeated enemy!
5. God's work done in God's way will bring his success; we need to pursue his standard for success (not the world's)
6. God redeems individuals irrespective of past sin.
7. War is a terrible curse the human race brings on itself as it seeks to possess the earth in its own unrighteous ways...But it pales before the curse that awaits all those who oppose the rule of God and reject his offer of grace. (NIV Study Bible notes)