

CONQUERING CANAAN

Date: 10.25.26 | Rahab
Scripture: Joshua 2

CENTRAL TRUTHS



PRESCHOOL:

God saves people who trust Him.

YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

God welcomes everyone who trusts Him, no matter who they are.

OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

Faith means believing God's promises and trusting Him enough to obey.

STUDENTS:

God's saving grace is available to anyone who places their faith in Him, and genuine faith is demonstrated through obedient action.

ADULTS:

God's sovereign grace transforms unlikely sinners into His people, demonstrating that salvation has always come by faith in His promises rather than by human merit.

MEMORY VERSE

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9



DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

How can we be saved? Only by faith in Jesus Christ and in his substitutionary atoning death on the cross; so even though we are guilty of having disobeyed God and are still inclined to all evil, nevertheless, God, without any merit of our own but only by pure grace, imputes to us the perfect righteousness of Christ when we repent and believe in him. Hebrews 11:31. NCC q. 29

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Joshua has now stepped into his official position as the leader of the Israelites, and in the second chapter of Joshua, he begins to take his first actions in charge. Joshua prepares to enter Canaan by sending two spies to scout out the land, especially the high walls around the city of Jericho, the first city the people would encounter. The spies were to gather intelligence about the hostile territory. This situation will be a stark contrast to Israel's failure to take possession of the land 40 years earlier (*Numbers 13–14 and Deuteronomy 1*). It will also be markedly different from the spies' report in *Numbers 13:25–33*.

Canaan at this time consisted of various city-states, each with a central (often walled) city surrounded by villages and farmland, each with its own king. As the spies enter Jericho, they spend their first night at the house of a woman named Rahab, a prostitute. Her home was most likely an inn or way station, making it a logical place for travelers to stay and gather information. While the spies intend to remain undercover, they are discovered. The king of Jericho hears that they are in Rahab's home and commands her to bring them out. Instead, Rahab hides the spies beneath stalks of drying flax on her rooftop and tells the king's men that the Israelites have already left the city. She sends the soldiers on a futile pursuit toward the Jordan River, where they hope to intercept the spies at one of the river's shallow crossing points.

Rahab's deceptive response toward the king and his men has been both condemned as a lie and defended as justified in this context. The narrative itself does not address the ethical issue. Instead, the New Testament commends Rahab for protecting the spies and never mentions the method she used. Similar instances of deception appear in *Exodus 1:15–21*, *1 Samuel 16:2*, and *1 Kings 22:19–23*. Because this passage is descriptive rather than prescriptive, it should not be used to establish ethical principles.



More importantly, the focus of *Joshua 2* is not Rahab's deception but her faith. Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute, an unlikely person to become one of the greatest examples of faith in Scripture. Long before the spies ever arrived, God had already been working in her heart. Forty years earlier, the Lord had delivered Israel from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and given His people miraculous victories over kingdoms much stronger than themselves. Those stories spread throughout Canaan, and Rahab believed them. She came to recognize that Yahweh alone is the true and living God, sovereign over heaven and earth, and that nothing could stand in the way of His promises.

After the king's men leave, Rahab goes up to the roof and tells the spies that the people of Jericho have heard about the Red Sea and how God had cared for Israel throughout the wilderness. She asks the spies to spare her and her family when Israel conquers the city. Rahab demonstrates a remarkable understanding of Israel's history and of the Lord's promise to give His people the land of Canaan. Her confession echoes the theology of the Pentateuch, especially Deuteronomy, and reflects the promise of *Joshua 1:2*. In *Joshua 2:11* she declares, "the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath," language that reflects *Exodus 20:4* and *Deuteronomy 4:39; 5:8*. Her words also fulfill the expectation found in the Song of Moses (*Exodus 15:14*), where Moses declared that the nations would hear of God's mighty acts and tremble before Him.

The narration does not explicitly state whether Rahab experienced spiritual conversion at that moment or simply acknowledged God's power. However, her protection of the spies, her profession of faith (*Joshua 2:9-14*), and her later incorporation into Israel (*Joshua 6:17, 25*) strongly suggest genuine faith and a new allegiance to Yahweh and His people. Unlike the unbelieving Israelites who refused to trust God forty years earlier, Rahab believed God's promises without seeing them fulfilled. Her faith was demonstrated through obedience as she protected the spies and followed their instructions.

The spies return to Joshua with a report completely unlike the discouraging report of *Numbers 13*. Instead of focusing on the strength of Jericho, they testify that "Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us" (*Joshua 2:24*). The emphasis is no longer on Israel's ability but on God's faithfulness to accomplish exactly what He promised.

Rahab's story is ultimately a story of God's grace. A Gentile, an outsider, and a notorious sinner becomes one of the four named women in the genealogy of Jesus (*Matthew 1:5*), is honored as an example of saving faith (*Hebrews 11:31*), and is praised for faith demonstrated through works (*James 2:25*). Her story reminds us that God delights in saving people who seem farthest from Him. Rahab did not earn God's favor through her background or her morality; she responded in faith to what she had heard about the Lord's mighty works. In the same way, salvation comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. God still uses the proclamation of His mighty works—the gospel—to draw sinners to Himself. Just as Rahab believed the good news of what God had done for Israel and entrusted herself to Him, we are called to believe the good news of what Christ has done through His death and resurrection. Her scarlet cord hanging from the window becomes a beautiful picture of God's salvation, pointing forward to the greater rescue accomplished through the blood of Jesus for all who trust in Him.

TELL THE STORY

Joshua 2



Hey-O! Stories of the Bible: The Walls of Jericho

Last week we learned that Moses had died, and Joshua became Israel's new leader. God promised Joshua, "Be strong and courageous...for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (*Joshua 1:9*). God had already promised to give His people the land of Canaan. Now it was finally time to begin.

The first city Israel would face was Jericho. It was a large city with tall walls that seemed impossible to defeat. Before leading the people there, Joshua secretly sent two spies into the city to learn more about it (*Joshua 2:1*).

The spies entered Jericho and stayed at the house of a woman named Rahab. Rahab was a prostitute, and she was not an Israelite. She was a Canaanite who had grown up worshiping false gods. If you were choosing someone who might trust God, Rahab probably would not have been your first choice—but God often works in the lives of unexpected people.

Before long, the king of Jericho heard that Israelite spies had entered the city and were staying at Rahab's house. He sent soldiers to tell Rahab, "Bring out the men who came to you!" (*Joshua 2:3*).

Instead of turning the spies over to the king, Rahab hid them on her roof under piles of flax that were drying in the sun (*Joshua 2:6*). Then she told the king's soldiers that the men had already left the city. The soldiers rushed out to chase them, but the spies were still safely hidden.

After the soldiers were gone, Rahab climbed up to the roof to speak with the spies. What she said is one of the most amazing confessions of faith in the Old Testament.

Rahab said, "I know that the Lord has given you the land...for we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt" (*Joshua 2:9-10*).

Think about that for a minute. Rahab had never seen the Red Sea part with her own eyes. She had only heard the stories. Forty years earlier, God had rescued His people from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and defeated powerful enemies. Those stories had spread throughout the land of Canaan. While many people heard those stories and chose to ignore God, Rahab believed them.

She continued, "The Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath" (*Joshua 2:11*).

Rahab understood something that many Israelites had forgotten. There is only one true God, and nothing can stop Him from keeping His promises.

Because she believed God, Rahab asked the spies to protect her and her family when Israel came to conquer Jericho (*Joshua 2:12-13*). The spies promised they would do so if Rahab kept their mission a secret and tied a scarlet cord in her window so the Israelite army would know which house belonged to her (*Joshua 2:14-21*).

Rahab lowered the spies out of her window with a rope because her house was built into the city wall (*Joshua 2:15*). She told them where to hide until the soldiers stopped searching for them. The spies obeyed her instructions, escaped safely, and returned to Joshua.

When they arrived, their report sounded very different from the report

the spies had given Moses forty years earlier. Instead of saying, “The people are too strong,” these spies said, “Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands” (*Joshua 2:24*). They were confident because they knew God would keep His promise.

Rahab’s story reminds us that God saves people because of His grace, not because they have earned it. Rahab was a sinner, an outsider, and someone most people would have overlooked. Yet she believed God, trusted Him, and obeyed Him. God welcomed her into His people.

Years later, Rahab would become part of the family line of Jesus Himself (*Matthew 1:5*). The New Testament also remembers her as an example of faith (*Hebrews 11:31*) and of faith that is shown through action (*James 2:25*).

Just as Rahab believed what she heard about God’s mighty works, we are called to believe the good news of what Jesus has done for us. Jesus died on the cross and rose again so that anyone who trusts in Him can be forgiven and become part of God’s family. God is still rescuing sinners by His grace through faith today.

REBUILD THE STORY

1. Why did Joshua secretly send two spies into the land of Canaan, and what city were they sent to explore? (*Joshua 2:1*)
2. Whose house did the spies stay in when they arrived in Jericho, and what was her occupation? (*Joshua 2:1*)
3. What did the king of Jericho tell Rahab to do when he learned the spies were at her house? (*Joshua 2:2-3*)
4. How did Rahab protect the spies from the king’s soldiers? (*Joshua 2:4-7*)
5. Why did Rahab choose to help the Israelite spies instead of the king’s men? (*Joshua 2:8-11*)
6. What agreement did Rahab make with the spies to protect her family? (*Joshua 2:12-21*)
7. How did Rahab help the spies escape from Jericho, and where did she tell them to hide? (*Joshua 2:15-16, 22*)
8. When the spies returned to Joshua, what report did they give about Jericho and God’s promise? (*Joshua 2:23-24*)



9. Rahab had only heard stories about God, but she chose to believe Him while many of her own people did not. Why do you think some people respond to God's truth with faith while others reject it? What can we learn from Rahab's response?
10. Joshua sent spies into Jericho, but the spies came back talking more about what God was doing than about how strong the city was. How can focusing on God's promises change the way we face difficult situations in our own lives?
11. Rahab's past did not stop God from using her in His plan, and she even became part of Jesus' family line (*Matthew 1:5*). What does Rahab's story teach us about God's grace and who He is willing to save?
12. Rahab's faith led her to take action by protecting the spies, and *James 2:25* says her faith was shown by what she did. What are some ways someone your age can show that they truly trust Jesus through their everyday actions?

GOSPEL EMPHASIS

In *Joshua 1*, God reminded Joshua that He would keep His promises and be with His people as they entered the Promised Land. In *Joshua 2*, we see that God's promises were already at work before Israel ever fought its first battle. While Joshua was preparing the Israelites, God was preparing the heart of Rahab. Although she was a Canaanite, a Gentile, and a sinner, Rahab believed what she had heard about the mighty works of the Lord. She trusted that Yahweh alone is the true God and demonstrated her faith by protecting the spies. Rahab did not earn God's favor because of who she was or what she had done. God graciously saved her because she believed Him. Our salvation is the same. We cannot earn God's acceptance through good works or by trying to be good enough. Instead, we are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Just as Rahab trusted God's promise of rescue from the coming judgment on Jericho, we trust in Jesus to rescue us from the judgment our sin deserves. God not only spared Rahab's life but welcomed her into His people, and she later became part of the family line of Jesus (*Matthew 1:5*). Rahab's story reminds us that no one is too far from God's grace. The God who faithfully kept His promises to Joshua is the same God who faithfully keeps His promise to save everyone who places their faith in Jesus Christ.



WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT GOD?

Use the attributes of God list and determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true change the way we live in Christ?

PRAYER PROMPTS

God, thank You for using sinful people like Rahab and like us to accomplish Your sovereign plans. Help us to pass on our own stories of your faithfulness and power in a way that shines the spotlight on You and Your gift of salvation.



THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING

Joshua 3-4