

Joshua—Joshua 2

Spies in Jericho

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. Verse 1... AN HARLOT'S HOUSE—Many commentators have sought to soften this terminology by claiming that Rahab was an INNKEEPER. The Hebrew word is found 93 times in the Old Testament and I have read all of these verses and do not find the word used as INNKEEPER in any of them. It is the same term used of her in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25.
2. Verses 4-5... RAHAB'S LIE—"Rahab was a pagan who knew little or nothing about God. She had accepted the little evidence she had received. Her decision was to fight on God's side. Faith prompted this decision. Her method was the best she knew. Her faith, trust, and obedience were rewarded by a gracious God. The story of Rahab cannot be used to justify lying. The Bible clearly teaches God's people to be honest (Mt 5:37; Eph 4:25). The integrity of God must constantly shine in the words and conduct of God's people." [Eddie Cloer, in *Difficult Texts of the Old Testament Explained*, p. 263-64].
3. Verse 6... FLAX--Heb. *pishtah*, i.e., "peeled", in allusion to the fact that the stalks of flax when dried were first split or peeled before being steeped in water for the purpose of destroying the pulp). This plant was cultivated from earliest times. The flax of Egypt was destroyed by the plague of hail when it "was balled", i.e., was forming pods for seed ([Ex 9:31](#)). It was extensively cultivated both in Egypt and Palestine. Reference is made in [Jos 2:6](#) to the custom of drying flax-stalks by exposing them to the sun on the flat roofs of houses. It was much used in forming articles of clothing such as girdles, also cords and bands ([Lev 13:48, 52, 59](#); [Deu 22:11](#)). [*Easton's Bible Dictionary*].
4. Verse 9... YOUR TERROR—Ex 15:15-16; 23:27; Deut 2:25; 11:25; 28:10
5. Verse 20... WE WILL BE QUIT = We will be blameless (verse 17).

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: Period of the Conquest.

"Like Medieval castles, some cities of Palestine were surrounded with high, elaborate walls. Rahab's house was part of the wall of Jericho and she had a window facing out (Josh 2:15). It would have been high enough above ground level to keep anyone from climbing in." [*The Life and Times Historical Reference Bible*, p. 268].

III. Summary.

This chapter tells of the sending out of spies into Jericho by Joshua. This was done secretly. The men came to Rahab's house and she lodged them and protected them from being discovered when the King learned about their presence. Rahab told a lie to those sent by the king to take the spies. She had hidden the two men on her roof. She told the spies that all of Canaan was fearful because of what God had done to free them from Egypt and the victory Israel was given over the Amorites. She told the spies that their hearts did melt when they heard such things. She requested that the men remember her and her family when it came time to take the city of Jericho. The two spies agreed to protect her if she would stay inside her house and if she would not reveal that they had been there. A scarlet line would be bound outside her window so that her house might be identified easily. Following the advice of Rahab, the spies went out to the hills for three days, then were able to report back to Joshua.

IV. Outline.

1. Joshua sends out two spies to Jericho (2:1).
2. The King of Jericho learns of the spies and demands that Rahab hand them over (2:2-3).
3. Rahab hides the spies and lies to those seeking them (2:4-5).
4. The search for the spies is fruitless (2:6-7).
5. Rahab explains why she helped the spies and asks for favor (2:8-13).
6. The spies agree to spare Rahab and her family when Israel takes Jericho (2:14-20).
7. Rahab agrees to the conditions stated and lets the men down from her window (2:21).
8. The spies hide in the mountains as advised by Rahab for 3 days, then cross Jordan (2:22-23).
9. The spies give their report to Joshua, saying that the people of the land FAINT because of us (2:24).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The secret mission of the spies sent to Jericho did not remain secret for long.
02. _____ After three days, the pursuers of the spies went home.
03. _____ The spies were hidden by Rahab under the flax on the rooftop.
04. _____ Under certain conditions the spies would not be responsible if Rahab was killed in the attack upon Jericho.
05. _____ Rahab had heard about the Red Sea miracle.

Who or What? Who Said It? Who Did It?

06. _____ Stayed three days in the mountain.
07. _____ “Go view the land, even Jericho.”
08. _____ Sent a message to Rahab.
09. _____ Bound a scarlet line in the window.
10. _____ The son of Nun.

Fill in the Blanks

11. _____ 2:25--“Likewise also was not _____ the _____ justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out _____ way?”
12. “And if thou _____ this our business, then we will be _____ of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.”
13. “And as soon as we _____ these things, our hearts did _____, neither did there remain any more _____ in any man...”
14. A line of _____ would identify Rahab’s house when Israel came to take Jericho.
15. Rahab told the pursuers of the spies that they had left the city at about the time of the _____ of the _____.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to Lesson 01-68 ... [01—False, Ex 20:25; 02—True, Ex 20:5; 03—True, Ex 20:12; 04—True, Ex 20:19; 05—True, Ex 20:20; 06—c, Ex 20:2; 07—c, Ex 20:6; 08—a, Ex 20:11; 09—c, Ex 20:15,17; 10—c, Ex 20:21; 11—guiltless, vain, Ex 20:7 12—Moses, God, Ex 20:19; 13—adultery, Ex 20:14; 14—seven, Ex 20:17; 15—God, Ex 20:1.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **...sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly...** (Josh 2:1). These two spies were sent out SECRETLY. One commentator I read [K & D] suggested that perhaps one reason for the secrecy was that if they brought back an evil report (as the ten had done 40 years ago), their report would not cause all of the rest of the people to become faint-hearted. Perhaps this was part of the reasoning and perhaps not, but these spies did indeed bring back a very encouraging report to Joshua (v. 24).
2. **...came into an harlot's house, named Rahab...** (Josh 2:1). As stated above under the "Additional Scriptures" section, there does not seem to be any possibility of softening this term HARLOT, based upon the usage of the original word in the Old Testament. As these spies were seeking to be as little noticed as possible, this would probably be a logical place for them to stay. The two New Testament passages (Heb 11:31; James 2:25) definitely use a term which is appropriately rendered, "harlot."
3. **...but I wist not whence they were...** (Josh 2:4). For those who seek to find in this passage justification for lying, they are hard pressed to make their case. There is certainly no sign of God's approval for the lies that were told here. There are plain passages which teach against such (cf., verse listed un "Additional Scriptures").
4. **And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land,** (Josh 2:9). This information that is given to the spies evidently was the source of the report they gave back to Joshua in verse 24. This must have steadied these men and given them much encouragement that they were now very near to the point of having their own land. That the people in the land were fearful of their God would cause them to "smell victory" and be thankful that God had kept His promise (Ex 15:15-16). These spies would have good news to give to Joshua upon their return.
5. **...since I have showed you kindness...** (Josh 2:12). How seriously did Rahab believe that God would give her city to the Israelites. This verse makes it clear! She wanted to make arrangements to be spared before the time of the invasion began. Her faith was genuine and is held out as an example in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25.
6. **...Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land** (Josh 2:24). What a different report of these spies and the report given by the ten spies 40 years earlier (Num 14:31-33). What had changed in this amount of time? The Lord was the same Lord, the promise was the same promise, BUT the faith of the children of Israel had been strengthened and they were willing to launch out in faith to take that which the Lord had given them.

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

J O R D A N Q A Z X S W E D C V F R T G
 B G T Y H N M J U T A K E N U J M N H Y
 T G B V F R E D C X S W Q A Z E V I L A
 X S W E D C V F R T H E A R T S T T G B
 N H Y U J M N H D R F V C D E W L Q A Z
 Z X P M N B V C D E E D C V F R E T G B
 B G T U Y H N B G T L C D E W S M Z A Q
 W S X C D C D E R F V I B G T Y D Y H N
 U Y T E R E D S E A S X V C D D I E R F
 V B G T Y H I N H Y U J M E K D D I O P
 L M J U Y H N R R F V C D E R R W S H X
 Z A Q W S X C D D R F V B G T A Y H T N
 N H Y T G B V E C D E W S X A E Q A R C
 V F R T G B Y Y H N D R F V E H W S A X
 S E T I R O M A X C E C X Z Q W D C E R
 F V B G R C D E R C W V B N M K J G N F
 X Z U T T E R L Y C O N E V A E H N I B
 C V S E R F V B G T H Y H N B G T R F V
 C E D K I N D N E S S W S X Z A Q E D C
 D V F R T G B N H Y U J M K I O B G T R

[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

Joshua 2:10-13--¹⁰For we have heard how the LORD **dried up** the water of the **Red sea** for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the **Amorites**, that *were* on the other side **Jordan**, Sihon and Og, whom ye **utterly destroyed**. ¹¹And as soon as we had **heard** *these things*, our **hearts did melt**, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God **in heaven** above, and **in earth** beneath. ¹²Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have **showed** you **kindness**, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true **token**: ¹³And *that* ye will save **alive** my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and **deliver** our lives from death.