

# Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story

## Lesson #46 - "The Reconnaissance Mission" - Joshua 2:1-24

### • HANDOUT •

► This lesson: While the people excitedly wait for Day 3, busying themselves with getting their supplies ready, Joshua secretly deploys two men to go into the land on a reconnaissance Mission. He tells them to "view the land, especially Jericho." It is Joshua's desire to know exactly what they will face once Israel sets foot on the Jericho side of the Jordan River. This will become a common practice for him and in no way is he questioning God's instructions. Joshua knows that the Lord God is going to be with him, and with the people. God has even promised him success. But, the promise of divine aid never rules out human responsibility. In other words: Commander Joshua is preparing to enter the Land just as God has commanded, but he is doing it by being a good military man.

Does Joshua expect miracles from God? Of course he does. For the last 42 + years God has shown Joshua that He is a God of miracles. But, there is no way Joshua could ever conceive of the wonders God has in store for Israel.

#### The Reconnaissance Mission begins and, with it, many questions emerge...

► Joshua 2:1-2 • Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho."

So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

Q: The text states that Joshua kept the deployment of the two spies a secret from the Israelites. Why would he do that?

#### So the spies left Israel's camp and went to Jericho. They immediately went to the house of a prostitute named Rahab, where they stayed.

Q: Really? Why in the world would they go to Rahab's house when they were commissioned by Joshua go into the land and check it out? How could going to see a prostitute be considered as "looking over the land?"

Q: The text says the two spies "stayed there." What does that mean?

#### But the spies were seen and recognized as Israelites. The king of Jericho was told and he demanded Rahab turn the spies over to him.

► Joshua 2:3 • The king of Jericho was told, "Look! Some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

Q: If this was such a great plan to enter the land secretly, how did their cover get blown so quickly?

## Rahab responds to the King of Jericho with the truth wrapped in some lies ...

► [Joshua 2:4-5, 7](#) • But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them."

So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

Q: Why would Rahab protect the spies from Israel & act against her own people. Isn't that treason?

Q: Why is there such an emphasis placed on the fact that the "gate was shut" after the King's men went to the road that led to the Jordan in pursuit of the spies?

## Rahab tells us why she was willing to risk so much in the next scripture passage.

► [Joshua 2:8-11](#) • Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.

We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

Q: What is remarkable about what Rahab reveals to the two spies?

Q: How would the spies receive such a confession?

► [Exodus 15:15b-16](#) • The people of Canaan will melt away; terror and dread will fall upon them. By the power of your arm they will be as still as a stone-- until your people pass by, O LORD, until the people you bought pass by.

## Rahab & the Spies Negotiate a Covenant ...

► [Joshua 2:12-14](#) • Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death."

"Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land."

Q: What did Rahab mean when she asked the spies to swear by the Lord that they would show “kindness” to her family? What is significant about the use of the word “kindness?”

Q: In the sentence, “If you don't tell” the pronoun “you” is plural. What does that tell us?

### The Covenant is made between them followed by Rahab providing the Spies escape path ...

► [Joshua 2:15-21](#) • So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. Now she had said to them, "Go to the hill country so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."

Before leaving, the men said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

"Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

Q: Why would Rahab send the Spies to hide in the hill country for three days before they headed back to Israel's Camp on the East side of the Jordan?

Q: What were the three conditions the spies requested from Rahab to demonstrate her faith?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q: Why did the Spies specify she had a "scarlet cord" in the window?

### Remarkably, the Spies trusted Rahab to keep her word and they implicitly followed her directions ...

► [Joshua 2:22-24](#) • When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them. Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them. They said to Joshua, "The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us."

Q: What are the two summarizing facts that the Spies reported back to Joshua?

- 1.
- 2.

Q: The part of Rahab's story that is difficult for many is the fact that she lied and committed treason, yet, in the end she was blessed. How are we to understand this, in light of God's Law?

**► Of course there is a conclusion to Rahab's story  
but that will be later in Joshua's story.  
What comes next is Israel crossing the Jordan ...**



Next Time • Lesson #47  
“Crossing the Jordan”

