

30 AMAZING BIBLE STORIES YOU MAY NOT KNOW

#9 – Rahab, the Harlot God Used | Joshua 2

REMEMBERING THE STORY | JOSHUA 2:1-24

- Verse 1 –
 - The word **secretly** is of the same root as the word *deaf*. According to Rashi, they were to “Disguise yourselves as deaf-mutes (חרשים) so that they will not conceal their affairs from you.”
 - The spies were to **see the land, even Jericho**. Literally, “see the land and Jericho.” There are several examples in the Hebrew of pointing out a specific that lies within the general in order to emphasize that specific. See, for example, [2 Samuel 2:30](#) (where Asahel is one of the 19), and [1 Kings 11:1](#), where Pharaoh’s daughter is one of the foreign women.
 - Then we meet **Rahab** who is introduced as having a **harlot’s house**. A few teach that she was an *innkeeper*, but the Hebrew word is conclusive, and the New Testament commentary is as well. In [Hebrews 11:31](#) and [James 2:25](#) we have the same mention, though Rahab is there mentioned as a woman of faith.
 - Among Jews, Rahab is considered to be one of the four most beautiful women of history. The others are Sarah, Abigail, and Esther. In one Jewish work it is taught: “The Sages taught...Rahab aroused impure thoughts by her name, i.e., the mere mention of her name would inspire lust for her.” (*Megillah*, 15A).
- Verses 2-3 - We are not told how the information came to light about the spies, nor how it was known that they were with Rahab, but the king immediately sent word to Rahab to **Bring forth the men**.
- Verses 4-6 - Rahab was not only a harlot, but also a liar!
 - The **stalks of flax** indicates that the time of Passover was near, for flax and barley are both associated with Passover. See [Exodus 9:31](#) and [Joshua 5:10](#).
 - A few things we may consider:
 - The Bible presents its characters in honesty, not trying to “shine them up,” but just present them as they are.
 - Many times, the Bible does not speak to the morality of the situation. This is because the Bible is not a book of morals, but a book of the revelation of God and His unfolding plan.
- Verse 7 - Presumably, the fords of Jordan was the location at which the Hebrew nation would cross. The nation was on the other side of the river, and the men who pursued the spies must have assumed that they had crossed back over the Jordan and were safely in Moab.
- Verses 8-13 –
 - Rahab gave a heartfelt testimony and prayer. Her testimony clearly showed that she believed that the God of the Israelites had given the nation the land of Canaan.

- It is said that Rahab was 50 years old at this point and had heard of the Lord’s work with Israel since she was 10. Even though practicing harlotry, she was a woman who trusted that the God of the Israelites was able to do what He planned to do.
- With faith and insistence, she asked for **kindness unto my father’s house** as well as asking the men to **give me a true token** (v. 12). She would receive both.
- Verses 14-18 –
 - The men quickly made an agreement with Rahab: **Our life for yours**.
 - The **cord** (v. 15) by which she helped the men escape would be the same cord that would save her life. It was a **line of scarlet thread** by which the men were let down, and that same line would be her hope.
 - The word **line** is תְּקוּוּהָ [hatikva], which is the word for *hope*. See [Psalm 71:5](#), for example.
- Verses 19-24 - Rahab was instructed to be saved *by works*, for if she did not do her part, the spies insisted **we will be guiltless** (v. 19). However, for those who were in her house, the men said, **his blood shall be on our head** (v. 19). This aligns perfectly with [James 2:25](#).

THE REST OF THE STORY

- In the book of Joshua – Joshua 6:22-25
- In the Hebrew teaching – there is some teaching that Joshua himself married Rahab, and that their descendants included Huldah the Prophetess (2 Kings 22:14) and Ezekiel the prophet.
- In the New Testament –
 - There is a *Rachab* mentioned in Matthew 1:5 whom most assume to be *Rahab*. The Greek spelling is different from the mentions in Hebrews and James, and the chronology is virtually impossible.
 - Hebrews 11:31 puts Rahab in the most honorable chapter in the New Testament, the “Hall of Faith.”
 - James 2:25 says that Rahab was **justified by works**.

UNAVOIDABLE (AND ENCOURAGING) LESSONS

- Is it *ever* appropriate to lie? One must consider the consequences of telling the truth. Sometimes more harm is done by the truth than the lie.
- If God can show grace to a woman like Rahab, the only person He cannot show grace to is the one who refuses to accept it.
- If (as some teach) Rahab became the wife of Joshua and the ancestor of Huldah and Ezekiel, then even a “flawed” mother can make a great impact for good. It only takes one generation to make a generations-long change.