

## Old Testament Stories

# "Rahab and Jericho"

Joshua 2 & 6

☞ What would you like to praise God for today?

☞ Pray for God's guidance as you study



1. When you were younger, what was one of the most daring things you tried?
2. Why do you think the two spies stayed at a prostitute's home?
  - a. for the same reason others would
  - b. because she operated an inn
  - c. being in the city wall, it was the first place they came to
  - d. a prostitute was the least likely to be suspected
  - e. God led them to her
  - f. it was a good place to pick up news of the city
3. Why did Rahab risk her own safety to provide safety for the spies?
  - a. she was a daredevil
  - b. she was a traitor
  - c. she had great foresight
  - d. She knew they would owe her one
  - e. she had faith in their God
4. What phrases in Joshua 2:8-13 indicate that God has prepared the way for Israel to enter this area? How does Rahab describe Jericho's fear of Israel?

What phrases indicate faith on the part of Rahab?

5. We've read about the miracle of the Red Sea. Another miraculous victory was Israel's total victory over Sihon (king of the Amorites) and Og (king of Bashan). This story is recorded in Numbers 21:21-35. No one likes going through hard, scary experiences. What is one possible reason, God allowed Israel to go through these trials?

What can others learn about our faith by watching us confront hard times?

6. What promise do the spies make Rahab? What are the conditions for their promise?
7. When did Rahab tie the scarlet cord in her window? How was this an outward sign of Rahab's faith?

8. Jump ahead to Chapter 6. What was the unlikely attack strategy God instructed Joshua to follow for his invasion of Jericho? (6:1-5)
9. Think back to the last time you were in a group of people and what took place. How difficult it would be to keep an army quiet?

Now imagine the response of the citizens of Jericho as day after day unfolded. What might have been happening on Day One? Day Two? Day Five?

10. On the right day, at the right time, how did the march change? (6:15-21)

Which was the greater victory of faith: the silent, obedient marching as God commanded, or the victorious shout of testimony?

What parallel lessons of life witness can we extract from the victory of Jericho?(James 2:20-26)

How does the experience in Jericho parallel the Christian experience before Christ's return? (Heb. 12: 1-3 and Rev. 14:1-5)

11. What happened to Rahab and her family because of her faith? (6:17, 22-23)
12. The New Testament refers to Rahab in three places. Look up these verses and describe what we learn about her or why she is mentioned.

Matt. 1:5

Heb. 11:1, 2 & 31

James 2:25

12. What is the biggest personal challenge for you from this story?

**Prayer:** For one another

## ***LIFE GROUPS***

*A safe place to build friendships and grow spiritually.*

- L** ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
- I** ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
- F** ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
- E** ♦ Evangelism..... reaching others with the hope of Christ



## DID YOU KNOW?

The first major excavation of the site of Jericho, located in the southern Jordan valley in Israel, was carried out by a German team between 1907 and 1909. They found piles of mud bricks at the base of the mound the city was built on.

It was not until a British archaeologist named Kathleen Kenyon re-excavated the site with modern methods in the 1950s that it was understood what these piles of bricks were. She determined that they were from the city wall which had collapsed when the city was destroyed!

The story in the Bible goes on to say that when the walls collapsed, the Israelites stormed the city and set it on fire. Archaeologists found evidence for a massive destruction by fire just as the Bible relates. Kenyon wrote in her excavation report: *"The destruction was complete. Walls and floors were blackened or reddened by fire, and every room was filled with fallen bricks, timbers, and household utensils; in most rooms the fallen debris was heavily burnt."*

What caused the strong walls of Jericho to collapse? The most likely explanation is an earthquake. But the nature of the earthquake was unusual. It struck in such a way as to allow a portion of the city wall on the north side of the site to remain standing, while everywhere else the wall fell.

Rahab's house was evidently located on the north side of the city. She was the Canaanite prostitute who hid the Israelite spies who came to reconnoiter the city. The Bible states that her house was built against the city wall. Before returning to the Israelite camp, the spies told Rahab to bring her family into her house and they would be saved. According to the Bible, Rahab's house was miraculously spared while the rest of the city wall fell.

This is exactly what archaeologists found. The preserved city wall on the north side of the city had houses built against it.

The timing of the earthquake and the manner in which it selectively took down the city wall suggest something other than a natural calamity. A Divine Force was at work. In the New Testament we read: *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days. By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient."* (Heb. 11:30-31)

In the spring of 1997, two Italian archaeologists conducted a limited excavation on the ancient tell of Jericho. Lorenzo Nigro and Nicolo Marchetti, working under the auspices of the new Palestinian Department of Archaeology, excavated for one month on the fringes of Kathleen Kenyon's west and south trenches. Their dig was the first foreign expedition in the Palestinian-controlled areas of the West Bank since self-rule began in 1994.

After their excavation, Nigro and Marchetti announced they found no evidence for a destruction from the time of Joshua. While it is too soon for the academic community to see details of their discoveries, their announcement suggests their excavation was conducted to disprove the Biblical account of Joshua's capture of the city. Is it further possible that the Palestinian Authority supported this dig for the express purpose of denouncing any Jewish connection to the site?

As to their evidence, Dr. Bryant Wood, Director of the Associates for Biblical Research and one of the leading experts on the archaeology of Jericho, recently responded: *"It matters little what the Italian archaeologists did not find in their month-long dig. The evidence is already in. Three major expeditions to the site over the past 90 years uncovered abundant evidence to support the Biblical account."*

As Wood went on to point out, John Garstang (1930-1936) and Kathleen Kenyon (1952-1958) both dug at Jericho for six seasons and a German excavation directed by Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger dug for three. All found abundant evidence of the city's destruction by fire in a layer related to the Biblical date of 1400 BC

In September 1997, Dr. Wood visited Jerico and examined the results of the Italian excavation first hand. Incredibly, he found the Italians had uncovered the stone outer revetment wall at the base of the tell with part of the mudbrick wall built on top of it still intact. In the balk of the Italian excavation, at the outer base of the revetment wall, Wood noticed the remains of the collapsed mudbrick city walls which had tumbled. Not only did the Italians find the same evidence uncovered in the earlier excavations, it fits the Biblical story perfectly!

Author: Bryant Wood and Gary Byer of Associates for Biblical Research