



Lesson 2  
**Spying on Jericho; Rahab Rescuing  
the Spies**  
**(Joshua 1:1-2:24)**

**I. Scripture Reading:**

Joshua 1:1-2:24

**II. Synopsis:**

**1. God Commissioned Joshua (1:1-9)**

The main theme of the book of Joshua is summed up by these verses from chapter 1:1-9. It begins with “After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD ...” (1:1). Moses served the house of Israel faithfully and he led the Israelites out of Egypt into the wilderness where they wandered for 40 years. However, Moses was not able to enter

the Promised Land himself. Before his death, God allowed him, from Mount Nebo, east of the Jordan River, to view the land of Canaan from afar. His lifelong service was to lead the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan the land of Promise. (ref: Exo 3:8) But he was not allowed to enter the land of Canaan. Moses knew God had chosen Joshua to be his successor. He then followed God's order and laid his hands on Joshua's head. (ref: Num 27:15-23) By handing over the leadership to Joshua, Moses set an excellent example for us to follow. It reminds us that serving God is not about our own ambition. It is all about accomplishing and inheriting the great cause of God's kingdom, also obeying God's choice.

Although Joshua was a brilliant and courageous warrior and is the main character in the book of Joshua, this book is not an account of his heroism. Joshua 1: 3, 6 says, "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses ... Be strong and courageous; for you shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them." Therefore, the main character of the book is God! The strength and courage of Joshua came from God, and it was God who enabled the Israelites to enter into the land of Canaan. While the Israelites camped out at Shittim, east of the Jordan River, God commanded Joshua to lead His people to cross the Jordan River because this land was

given to the Israelites according to what He had promised. (ref: Jos 1:2-3)

Around 2000 B.C., God called Abraham, formerly known as Abram, to leave his homeland and go to the land of Canaan: "Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.'" (Gen 12:7) Three times, God repeated His promise and said, "... I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God." (Gen 17:8) This is known as the "Abrahamic Covenant." God again reassured Abraham's son, Isaac, and Isaac's son, Jacob, of the covenant, that the land of Canaan would be an inheritance for them and their descendants. It was God, out of His own volition to bestow such a blessing. During the time of the patriarchs, the Israelite population was very limited. It would not have been possible for them to rule the land. Five hundred years later, at the time of Joshua, the Israelites had become a large army. However, for Israel to undertake and pursue this promise, they had to persevere with faith in God's words through the ages, that indeed God would fulfill His promise one day. There was no doubt in God's mind that the Promised Land belonged to the Israelites. However, unless Joshua and the Israelites, by faith alone, prepared themselves to cross the Jordan River and set their feet on the land on the other side, they

would still be lingering outside the Promised Land. Likewise, for today's Christians who have received Jesus Christ and understand God's eternal promise to us, we should live a life with total faith and march on, in order to experience the reality of God's promise.

As the Israelites entered Canaan, they came face to face with formidable military challenges in engaging battles with the fearsome enemies. For Joshua, their leader, to lead the Israelites to war, he had to have strong will power and very exceptional courage. Would the Israelites put their trust in Joshua the same way they did with Moses? The brave Canaanites with their fighting skills certainly would not surrender their land in submission. We can imagine how weary and fearful Joshua felt under these internal and external pressures.

It was in such stressful moment that God comforted and encouraged Joshua and said, "No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you." (1:5) God repeatedly urged Joshua to "only be strong and very courageous" (1:7). He instructed Joshua to "[be] careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go." (1:7) God specifically wanted Joshua to understand that the key to success was to meditate on

His words day and night and to follow his commands wholeheartedly. Everyone of God's children must also remember this secret key in receiving and holding onto the abundance abundant life in Christ Jesus. He is faithful, and His words never fall fail. After reading the book of Joshua, we will see how this His words came true on Joshua.

## **2. Joshua Assumed Command (1:10-18)**

Joshua gathered the officers of the people, as instructed by God, and said, "Pass through the camp, and command the people: 'prepare your provisions; for in three days you are to cross over the Jordan, to go to take possession of the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess.'" (1:11) The officers went around and instructed the people accordingly. Forty years ago, when the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, the Egyptian army was closing in from behind, and they were unprepared and in panic. This time Joshua gave them three days to get ready to cross the Jordan River. All the officers followed Joshua's order and instructed the people that after three days they will cross the Jordan River and to take Canaan for their inheritance.

This short narrative shows an atmosphere without confusion and panic, reflecting that the Israelites were equipped with the organization and discipline of that of a military. The officers executed their orders when instruct-

ed, and the people obeyed the officers and got themselves ready to cross the Jordan River. It is worth noting that Joshua only instructed the Israelites to get ready with food. He did not tell them to build boats or construct bridges. Joshua had complete faith and trust in God that all battles to be fought belonged to Him, and God would lead them into the Promised Land by His almighty power.

The next thing Joshua did was to call on the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to fulfill their agreement made before by Moses. (ref: Num 32:20-32; Deu 3:18-20) These tribes had to select their strongest warriors, fully armed. They were to join their brothers from the other nine-and-a-half tribes to cross the Jordan River and fight alongside with them, “until the LORD gives rest to your kindred as well as to you, and they too take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land and take possession of it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan to the east.” (1:15) Although the two-and-a-half tribes decided to claim the fertile land east of the Jordan as their share of the inheritance, God’s Promised Land was in fact on the west side of the Jordan River. It was God’s desire to see that all 12 tribes of Israel be united, and none of them should attend to their own matters only, neglecting the needs of the others.

The two-and-a-half tribes responded to Joshua’s re-

quest with obedience and courage, just like how they obeyed Moses previously. They said to Joshua, “Whoever rebels against your orders and disobeys your words, whatever you command, shall be put to death.” (1:18)

This unity and selfless determination reflected their total trust in God’s promise. Furthermore, they too encouraged Joshua to “Only be strong and courageous” (1:18). God encouraged Joshua through His people. And this is the most relevant interpretation of this chapter. Only to have faith in God and obey His word, we too can be a “strong and courageous” Christian.

### **3. Rehab Rescued the Spies (2:1-24)**

After crossing the Jordan River, the Israelites immediately faced a tough battle that was to attack Jericho. The location of Jericho has a very important strategic significance. It is located west of Jordan River, North of Dead Sea, and is a vital pass and entrance into Canaan. The city was built with thick and tall walls and heavily fortified. It was easy to defend and difficult to attack. Joshua sent two spies to survey the land of Canaan and to gather military intelligence on the city of Jericho. They entered the city and stayed at the house of Rahab, a prostitute. The reason the spies chose to stay at Rahab’s place could be that by hiding in her house, a brothel frequented by many unfamiliar faces, their identities would not be revealed. Also,

Rahab's house was built on the city wall, making it an easy escape route from the city. As soon as the King of Jericho heard of these spies, he sent soldiers to hunt them down. At the most critical moment, Rahab risked her life by lying to protect the two spies because she recognized the God of Israelites is the Lord of heaven above and earth beneath. (ref: 2:11) Her decision brought salvation eventually to herself and her entire family. In fact, she became an ancestor of Jesus Christ, and her name is recorded in the genealogy of Jesus. Because this event happened prior to the actual fighting between the Israelites and the Canaanites, its significance is worth our attention.

First, the fear in the hearts of the Canaanites. These people dwelled in a fortified and secured city with thick and tall walls. On the surface, their agriculture-based civilization was more advanced than the nomadic life of the Israelites. However, they feared the Israelites because they heard the God of Israel had accomplished tasks that no human thought could be possible. He parted the Red Sea, so the Israelites could cross, and He helped them to defeat the Amorite King Sihon and the Bashan King Og. Just as Rahab said, "As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you." (2:11)

Second, Rahab chose to trust in Jehovah. Jericho is one of the oldest cities in the world. Human occupation

was found there since 8000 B.C. with numerous idols the inhabitants worshiped. Rahab although a prostitute despised by many, she knew only Jehovah as the "God in heaven above and on earth below". She turned away from idol worship and chose to trust the God of Israel. Her repentance is fittingly summarized in I Corinthians 1:28-29, "God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God."

Third, Rahab saved by faith. Her faith in Jehovah God led her to take action to protect the two spies. She made an agreement with the spies that when the Israelites attacked the city she would tie a red rope on her window as a sign for the soldiers not to kill her and her household. This sign is reminiscent of what God told the Israelites to do before the exodus from Egypt. When the Angel of God saw the lamb's blood splashed on the doorframe, the firstborn of that house would not be killed. (ref: Exo 12:21-23) In a same manner, Rahab and her family were saved.

### III. Video Viewing:

DVD session "2. God Appointed Joshua"

DVD session "3. Outline"

DVD session "4. Entering the Promised Land - Spying on Jericho; Rahab Rescuing the Spies"



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**3. Discussion and Sharing:**

(1) What was the motivation behind Rahab’s decision to hide the two spies? What would be her risk if the spies were caught? Besides herself, who else did Rahab saved? What kind of character do we see in Rahab?

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(2) If you were Joshua, how would you have reacted when you found out the responsibility to lead the Israelites would be on you after the death of Moses?

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(3) As you serve in the church wholeheartedly, how do you avoid mistaking the task that God entrusted us as a chance to accomplish our own ideal ambition?

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**Bible Study Process  
for Bible Study Group or  
Sunday School**

This part supplies a reference for Bible study group leaders and Sunday school teachers. If needed, please refer to Appendix: “Instruction for Bible Study Group Leaders and Instructors”. Please feel free to adjust the process according to time limits.

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**A. Preparation (5-15 minutes)**

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**1. Icebreaker / introduction:**

The group leader leads the group to play a game “Bible-verse puzzle.”

a. Materials:

- Write a verse from chapter 1,2 in the book of Joshua on the back of a Christmas card, postcard, or old photo. Remember to put the chapter and verse as a reference. Cut each card into 4 or 5 pieces. The total number of all pieces should equal to the total number of participants.
- Place all the pieces in a small box or bag.

b. How to play the game:

- Place all the pieces in a box and shake well. Allow each member to draw one piece.
- Find the other members who hold the other pieces. And try to put the pieces together and read the Bible verse.
- When the group leader says “go”, the members go and find their partners. As soon as they have found all pieces of the puzzle, they sit down and read the verse. (If the group is large, the group leader can write more than one scripture verse on one card. The group leader may also use multiple cards, with one card for each group, and write one scripture verse on each card.)

Note:

- 1) As you cut the card, you may cut curve or any irregular shapes.
- 2) If you have a large group, divide the participants into groups of 4 or 5 accordingly, and arrange each group to draw from one card/verse/box.
- 3) The group leader may need to adjust the number of cards depending on the number of participants.

## 2. Opening Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, as we get together and study your words, please be with us and bless us. May the Holy Spirit prepare our hearts and help us to understand your words. May you open our ears so that we can know your will, follow your lead and be blessed by you. Please give us wisdom and strength through your words, so that we can live a life that is pleasing to you. We also want to seek after your heart and be a blessing to the people around us. We pray all these in Jesus' name. Amen.

## 3. Last Week's Scripture Memorization:

“This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful.” (Jos 1:8)

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## B. Development (40-90 minutes)

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### I. Scripture Reading:

Joshua 1:1-2:24

## II. Synopsis:

1. God Commissioned Joshua (1:1-9)
2. Joshua Assumed Command (1:10-18)
3. Rahab Rescued the Spies (2:1-24)

## III. Video Viewing:

- DVD session “2. God Appointed Joshua”  
DVD session “3. Outline”  
DVD session “4. Entering the Promised Land - Spying on Jericho; Rahab Rescuing the Spies”

## IV. Study Questions:

1. Fill in the Blanks: Questions (1) – (4)
2. Scripture Study: Questions (1) – (3)
3. Discussion and Sharing: Questions (1) – (3)

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## C. Conclusion (5-15 minutes)

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1. **Summary:** Rahab although a prostitute despised by many, she knew only Jehovah is the “God of Heaven above and the Earth below.” She honored this supreme almighty God and chose to leave the false gods and to trust in the God of Israel. She and her household were saved because of her faith. Her name was listed in gene-