

# HEROES OF THE FAITH, THEN AND NOW

## Joshua & Rahab

TEXT: Heb. 11:30-31

Introduction: This lesson we look at two heroes of the faith. At first it seems that they could not be more different. One was a man, the other a woman. One was raised to know the one true God, YHWH; the other was brought up in a pagan land worshipping at the altars of idols. One served the Lord all of his life; the other was a harlot, a prostitute, much of hers. One was the attacker of a great city condemned by God for its wickedness; the other was a resident of that city.

But in spite of these great differences, they end up in much the same place. Both end up as a part of the people of God saved by grace through faith. Both end up with extraordinary ties to the coming Christ. Joshua would be a namesake of Yeshua, the Hebrew name of Jesus; Rahab would be one of the human ancestors of our Lord when He entered into human flesh.

Join me as we read the text about these two great heroes of the faith.

Hebrews 11:30-31 <sup>30</sup>By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. <sup>31</sup>By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

The text is short but their story is not. It is told in the book of Joshua in chapters 1 through 6. For the sake of time, allow me to summarize this extraordinary story.

God commanded Joshua to lead Israel across the Jordan River and begin to conquer the Promised Land that the Lord had declared belonged to the descendants of Abraham. The first city to be encountered was Jericho. Like his predecessor Moses, Joshua sent spies into the land, telling them to especially check out Jericho. The two spies did infiltrate the great walled city and they spent the night in the house of a harlot, whose residence was actually a part of the wall around the city. The woman's name was Rahab.

Someone became suspicious of the strangers, and soldiers came to Rahab's house looking for the spies. Rahab hid the Israelites on her roof under stacks of flax. She then sent the soldiers on a wild goose chase, telling them that the spies had fled, but they could be caught if the soldiers hurried behind them. Then when night fell, she told the spies how to avoid being captured and to safely return to Joshua and the people of Israel.

When the spies inquired as to the reason for her actions, she told them she had heard how their God had delivered all the people that opposed them into their hands. She asked that in return for her kindness to them, that all of her family be allowed to live when Israel took the city of Jericho. The spies agreed and left the city with the information sought by their commander.

Meanwhile, somewhere outside the hearing and seeing of the guards upon Jericho's walls, the new leader of Israel looked upon the mighty fortress, wondering about its seemingly unconquerable walls. It was here that, like Moses, he would be commanded to remove his shoes, for he was standing on holy ground in the presence of the Lord God Almighty. In what many Bible students believe to be a preincarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Himself, Joshua fell on his face in the presence of the Commander of the army of the Lord.

Joshua asked a wise question, "Whose side are You on? Are you for us or for our adversaries?" But he received a strange answer. The Commander of the Lord's Army said, "No." Joshua seemed to understand. The question was not whether God was on Israel's side, but whether Israel was on God's side. Then the Lord revealed His own purpose in the matter of Jericho:

**Joshua 6:2** And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor."

He then began to detail for Joshua God's plan for the battle: The priests carrying the ark of God and other priests carrying trumpets made of ram's horns were to march around the city. They would have the armed soldiers of Israel marching both in front and behind. For six days in a row, they were to march around the city, blowing the horns, but not making a sound with their voice. But on the seventh day, the army and the priests were to march around the city seven times. When the trumpets sounded on the seventh march, all the people were to shout, and the Lord said the walls of the city would fall down so that each man would be able to walk straight before his position and enter the city God was delivering into their hand.

It was a strange plan; but Joshua and his people had vowed as they stood a few miles away at the Jordan river,

**Joshua 1:16** ... "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go."

God sent them to Jericho and told them to march and blow the trumpets.

The first day they marched around the city, sounding the trumpet; and then in silence returned to their camp. The second day they marched around the city, sounding the trumpet; and again in silence returned to their camp. On the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth day they did the same. They arose early on the seventh day with a sense of keen anticipation. They marched as they had done each day before around the city in silence except for the blaring of the trumpets. But when the first march around was done, they circled again, and again, and again until they had marched six times around the great fortress of men who stood for everything against God. Then they began the seventh journey. And this time when the horns sounded with a mighty blast, the people shouted with a great voice "for the Lord and for Joshua" and before their eyes the unconquerable walls of Jericho began to crumble.

Josh McDowell tells us that from 1930-36, the archaeologist Garstang excavated the ruins of the ancient city of Jericho. In so doing he found something so startling he and members of his team signed a written statement concerning their discovery. Whereas usually excavations of the fallen walls of cities reveal that the walls fell inward, the walls of Jericho had fallen outward, allowing the soldiers of Israel to march each one from his position surrounding the city, straight ahead, over

the rubble and into the city God had defeated, just as God had told them they would be able to do.

And what about Rahab the harlot, the only one in Jericho to repent and believe? Well, God spared her and her family. Everyone else in the city died under the hand of God's fierce judgment, but believing Rahab was saved. She and her family moved into the camp with Israel. She put away her sinful past and received the forgiveness of her gracious God. After a while a Hebrew man named Salmon took Rahab to be his wife. They had a son named Boaz. Boaz knew that God's love and redemption was not just for the physical descendants of Abraham, and he took a distressed widow who was herself a Moabitess to be his wife. Her name was Ruth. Their son was named Obed. His son was called Jesse, and one of Jesse's sons was David, the wonderful Shepherd-King of Israel and the legal and physical ancestor of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There are a multitude of lessons concerning faith in this remarkable story. I will only point out three quickly:

## **I. RAHAB TRUSTED THE LORD IN SPITE OF HER HERITAGE.**

**A. Rahab was raised as a pagan.**

**B. But Rahab received the Word of the Lord.**

1. God's word came to her in spoken form.
2. All the inhabitants of the land had heard how God dried up the Red Sea.
3. Everyone was in dread of this God YHWH and His mighty power.

**C. Rahab chose to trust the Lord.**

1. Her confession was that Yhwh is the one true God!
2. Her faith was backed by action to join with the people of the one true God.

**D. God offers an opportunity to trust Him and be saved to everyone, regardless of their heritage.**

## **II. JOSHUA CHOSE TO BE ON THE LORD'S SIDE.**

**A. Joshua was no more saved by his heritage than Rahab was by hers.**

**B. The question is not "Is the Lord on my side?" but "Am I on the Lord's side?"**

**C. Have you chosen to be on the Lord's side by faith in Jesus Christ?**

## **III. JOSHUA TRUSTED GOD'S UNCONVENTIONAL WAYS.**

**A. By this time, Israel had a successful army.**

1. When Sihon, King of the Amorites who had conquered Moab, came out against Israel on their way to the promised land, Israel utterly defeated their famous army and

occupied all their lands. When King Og of Bashan did the same, they crushed his army as well.

2. In both of these battles and others, God sent them to fight and gave them victory in ordinary battle.

**B. But God said that the attack on Jericho was to be different.**

1. It was unprecedented.
2. It was illogical.
3. It was humiliating.
4. But it worked.

**C. God's way worked!**

**1. God's way always works.**

2. In our finances, God's way works.
3. In our marriage
4. In our business
5. In our relationships

**Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**

**CONCLUSION** Friend, let me ask you: Are you trusting God, even when His ways seem unconventional?

1. Husbands do you love your wife like Christ loved the church?
2. Wives, are you submitting to your husband and honoring him as the church submits to Christ?
3. Students, are you obeying and honoring your parents because God says that this is right?
4. Friend are you trusting God with your finances enough to tithe?
5. Friend, is Jesus the Lord of your business, Lord of your social life, Lord of all you do?
6. Have you chosen Him to be Lord at all? Have you chosen to be on His side by trusting in Jesus Christ? It does not matter what your heritage is. Have you chosen Christ?