

Joshua

The Leadership of Joshua

- ❑ Read Hebrews 11:30-31. These verses refer to Israel's entrance into the promised land (*Joshua 1-6*). Though Joshua's name is not listed in Hebrews 11, the Israelites entered the promised land under his leadership. *Faith* was demonstrated by Joshua, the Israelites he led, and even a prostitute named Rahab.

The Faith of Rahab

- ❑ Rahab lived in Jericho, the first city in the promised land that God gave to the Israelites. The story of Rahab is recorded in Joshua 2:1-24 and 6:15-25. Rahab believed God's promise – that He would give the land to the Israelites (2:9). So she hid the Israelite spies who came to Jericho, and then helped them escape (2:4-7, 15).¹ In return, when the Israelites destroyed Jericho, Rahab and her family were rescued (2:12-21; 6:17, 22-23), and Rahab lived among the Israelites (6:25).
- ❑ In Matthew 1:5, Rahab is listed in the genealogy of Jesus, as the great-grandmother of David.



Crossing Barriers, By Faith

- ❑ Read Joshua 1:1-3. The LORD told Joshua to be “strong and courageous” (1:6, 7, 9) and to know and obey God's written word (1:7). The LORD would be with them (1:5, 9). Joshua sent spies into Jericho, to look it over (2:1). (This is where the story of Rahab fits.)
- ❑ Read Joshua 3:1-17. The Jordan River was a barrier between the people and the promised land. God said He would stop the flowing water so that the Israelites could cross on dry land (3:13).² However, *faith* was needed.

Discussion Questions

1. The flowing water would not stop until the priests “set foot in the Jordan” (3:13, 15). They had to take the “step of faith” *before* God cleared the way. This is *not* what we typically want! How do we usually feel about stepping out in faith before everything is sure?³ Explain.
2. Do you think the priests' step of faith was “blind faith?”⁴ Do you think the Bible ever promotes “blind faith?” Explain.

¹ Because of this, James wrote, “...was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?” (James 2:25, NIV)

² The river was at flood stage. Thus it was a greater barrier than normal (Joshua 3:15).

³ This applies to the person thinking about receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. How much does that person need to know? How many questions must that person have answered? This also applies to Christians thinking about doing what they believe God wants them to do, like a particular ministry, task, major change, etc.

⁴ By “blind faith” I mean “faith without good reason or sound basis.” Did the priests have sound basis for believing that the river would stop? Did the people have sound basis for believing that the river would *remain* stopped while they crossed? If so, what was that basis?

- The priests carried the “ark of the covenant” into the river. The ark symbolized the presence of God. In a sense, the LORD went with the priests into the river, and the people followed the LORD (3:3-4, 11-13). God’s presence made the difference. Likewise, we step out in faith with God’s presence and guidance.
3. The Israelites needed to cross the river “by faith” in order to enter the promised land. What is the “risk” of stepping out in faith? What is the “risk” of *not* stepping out in faith? As a Christian, what have you learned about stepping out in faith before you had all of the answers?

 4. Joshua chose men to gather stones from the middle of the river, and then build a memorial on the west side of the river (4:1-7). Read Joshua 4:20-24. What was the purpose of this memorial? Whom would it benefit? What types of “memorials” can we use today to remind us, and our descendents, of God’s work in our lives?⁵

Felling Walls, By Faith

- ❑ Read Joshua 6:1-5. The LORD told Joshua how Jericho would be delivered into their hands. As a military strategy, it sounds ridiculous. But Joshua followed God’s instructions (6:6-20).
 - 📖 “When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.” (Joshua 6:20, NIV)
5. Even today, God’s ways of accomplishing things may seem ineffective (or even ridiculous) relative to the ideas and methods of the world.⁶ What can we learn from the Jericho story? How might this apply today? Can you think of examples?



“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.” (2 Cor. 10:3)

Reflection/Application

- As a non-Christian, are you thinking about “crossing the river” – I mean, receiving Christ as your Savior and Lord? Are you reluctant because you still don’t have all the answers? There are some things you will never know or experience until *after* you take the step of faith.
- As a Christian, do you believe God wants you to do something, but you are afraid to take the first step of faith? Are you waiting for everything to clear up before you step out? Maybe you need to take the step of faith now. Commit this to prayer. If God so leads, “step into the river” by faith.

⁵ Though crossing the river was a challenge, the Israelites would face many more obstacles and challenges in the land beyond the river. How would their experience at the river help them? How does this apply to us?

⁶ 2 Corinthians 10:1-5.