

JOSHUA

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Joshua chapter 2 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw the death of Moses and the mantle of leadership pass on to Joshua. And God encourages Joshua not to be afraid, to be strong in the Lord as he is going to lead the children of Israel to boldly go where they have not been before, the Promise Land! And the chapter concluded with the 2½ tribes who were going to remain on the east side of the Jordan River promise to assist their brethren in the battles in this land of Canaan and then they will return home to the east side of the Jordan River. They will follow Joshua as long as Joshua follows the Lord!

Now they have 3 days to prepare themselves to enter into the land and as we will see this evening, there is another reason for these 3 days. With that as our background, let's begin reading in Joshua chapter 2, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

JOSHUA 2**VERSE 1**

1. Now some 40 years earlier Moses tried this and sent 12 spies and 10 came back with a bad report and these 10 discouraged the rest of the nation so much that they refused to enter into the land of promise! And because of their unbelief, all those who were 20 years old and up, except for Joshua and Caleb, died in the wilderness! Think about that, out of maybe 1.5 million people in this age group, only 2 entered in that were above the age of 20 all because of unbelief! Now Joshua sends in two spies, maybe he thought he would have better luck with two than 12!

2. Joshua sent these two spies into the Promise Land to spy out the city of Jericho, the first place they were to battle with. And you might think of this as a military reconnaissance mission, but that is not what God was doing. You see, these men will return with no battle plans, no strategies to defeat the enemy. Then why did they go in? I believe God's plan and purpose was for a rescue mission as He was preparing to destroy Jericho.

Thus, these two men were not really spies but witnesses and specifically for a woman named Rahab and her family. Folks, think about how this relates to us. God is preparing to judge this world and the earth dwellers and He did not send spies into this world to see how we should defeat it, but He sent us in as witnesses to rescue as many people from the coming judgment! You see, if you have the wrong perspective, it will cause you to focus on the wrong issue. It is not saving this world, but the people who are in this world!

3. We are told that these two men came to the city of Jericho and stayed at the house of Rahab, who was a harlot. That may seem odd to us today but many times the harlot's home were also places for visitors to stay. Yes, they did practice their profession there also, but that was not the only reason that people came to stay, as it is with these two spies. Also, her home was on the wall of the city, easy for everyone to see, to locate, and that many times was the locations of these harlot's homes. And listen to Origen who wrote back in the second century regarding this event, "As the first Joshua sent his spies before him and they were received into the harlot's house, so the second Joshua sent his forerunners, whom the publicans and harlots gladly received." That is our Lord, our Joshua. He came to save sinners; He came to save you and me!

4. What is amazing to me is that Rahab was the great, great grandmother of King David! You see, Rahab and Salmon had a son named Boaz. When we get to the book of Ruth we will see that Boaz marries Ruth and they have a son named Obed. And Obed had a son who was named Jesse. And, of course, Jesse had a son named David! Yes, Joshua sent these men in as spies but God sent them in as a witness as we will see! That is why they had the 3-day wait before entering into the land, Rahab need to be rescued! We often have ideas of why we are doing this or that, but God has a better plan and it is usually after the fact that we see what God was doing that was far better than what we were doing.

5. And here's the thing. God uses all kinds of people, not perfect people! If you doubt that, then listen to the genealogy of Jesus:

- Tamar – sexual immorality, prostitution.
- Rahab – prostitution.
- Ruth – Moabite.
- Bathsheba – adulterous relationship.

Folks, none of us are worthy to be used by God, but God is gracious and He is merciful and He uses imperfect people to fulfill His work. He uses people like you and me!

VERSES 2-7

1. From Jericho they could see the camp of Israel and thus, as they heard that the Jewish spies had entered the city, the city of Jericho went to DefCon 1 - Maximum military readiness. All forces are active. DefCon 1 is considered to be the "total war" level! The city was going under lockdown, no one in or out! You see, they heard the stories of what God was doing with His people, the victories they had against the other nations and they rightly believed they were the next target!

2. So the king, upon hearing of the spies in their city, sends his men to the house of Rahab because that is where visitors would go. And she lies to these men, she said that they were there but they left right as the city was going to be locked down! And she encouraged them to go after them and they might catch these two spies! But Rahab knew where these men were; they were hidden on her roof underneath stalks of flax. Now that may seem strange but that was normal to place these stalks on the roof. You see, first they would harvest them, then they would soak them in water for 3 or 4 days so the fibers separated and then they would place them on the roof to dry out. After they were dry the flax was made into linen cloth. So it was not uncommon to have these stalks of flax on the roof, the only difference here is that these two spies were hiding under them!

3. Now Rahab lied and some feel that it was okay for her to lie, a kind of situational ethics. First of all she only knew of the God of the Jews, she did not have God's Word, so she was young in the Lord you might say. And please understand that God does not commend her for lying, but for her faith! We are told in Hebrews 11:31, "**By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.**" And lastly, Jesus said in John 8:44, "**You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.**" You see, if you have to lie to help God out, how big is your God? And the reality is, the Devil is the father of lies and we are not children of the Devil but we are children of God and thus, we should not lie!

VERSES 8-14

1. Do you see how the city of Jericho was terrified because they heard the stories and they realized that they were no match for the God of Israel! And folks, the God who worked in and through the children of Israel is the same God who works in and through us today! In Acts 17:6 we are told, “. . . **‘These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.’**” This is not exactly correct. Maybe from the unsaved they saw it like this, but the reality is, apart from Christ this world is upside down and it is only the Lord who can turn it right side up again! And it is the Lord who uses people like you and me to do that. We should bring terror to the people of this world because of who we are standing with, the Creator of Heaven and Earth and no one can stand against Him and win! May our lives show the power of God and impact those around us for Jesus!

2. Now here is something to think about, was Rahab the harlot saved by her good works? Absolutely not! Keep in mind that she was a harlot and I know that some would say that her actions with the two spies were her good works that saved her, but I disagree. Her good works didn't save her they were the evidence for her faith! That is what we read in Hebrews chapter 11! Think of it like this. She knew who God was. She also knew who she was, a harlot, a sinner. And she placed her life into the hands of the living God to save her! That is the same for us today. Yes, her faith was not perfect, but she did believe and she was young in the faith. And notice that she is going to leave that old life behind and follow God, follow God's people, just what God desires of us today!

VERSES 15-21

1. Joshua, the leader of the children of Israel is coming to bring judgment upon the inhabitants of Jericho. And he is also coming as a savior to all who are in the house of Rahab and there is a scarlet cord or line that is placed in her window by faith. Now here's the thing. For us today, Jesus, our Joshua, is coming back to judge the inhabitants of this earth, the earth dwellers but He is also coming back to save us from this coming judgment. Who are rescued? All who believe by faith in the Messiah and have applied the scarlet line or his blood upon their life by faith, they are rescued. Interestingly enough, the Hebrew word for "**line**" is first used here in Joshua and all the other times it is used in the Scriptures it is translated "hope." In other words, it is the scarlet hope that saves us, saves sinners. Apart from the blood there is only judgment but we have hope that His blood cleanses us from our sins. In fact, John tells us in Revelation 1:5-6, "**and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**"

2. In regards to this hope, Dr. W. A. Criswell wrote, "Rahab the harlot is an example of the grace of God at work. Her salvation was not based on her character or merits: she lived in a doomed city, practiced a condemned profession, engaged in subversive activities, and falsified [lied about] her actions. Nevertheless she acted upon faith, and was spared the judgment of God which was executed at the hands of the Israelites."

Thus, her faith causes her to act and place the scarlet line or hope in her window so the invading army could see it and spare her and those who are in her home. And her love for her family is so strong that she will bring them into her home, under the protection of the blood you might say. And yes, some may have felt it was foolish to place their faith in this scarlet hope, but all who entered in, were saved and those that did not died in the judgment!

VERSES 22-24

1. What military strategy did these two spies bring back with them? Absolutely nothing! What they did bring back were words of encouragement because if Jericho falls, all the land is theirs just as God promised them. Fear had come upon the inhabitants of Canaan and specifically Jericho and the faith of the children of Israel was growing as they were learning to walk by faith and not by sight and we will see that even more specifically in Joshua chapter 3.

2. Remember that 40 years earlier the report of the 10 of the 12 spies was bad, they couldn't do it, their cities were fortified, there were giants in the land, Jupiter was not aligned with Mars or whatever excess they could think of so they didn't have to walk by faith. Thus, fear paralyzed them and they refused to walk. It wasn't that they couldn't walk; they just refused because of unbelief! Now, 40 years later we see that this next generation has grown, they are willing to walk by faith, as they trust in the Lord. What about you? Has the situation or situations that you are facing paralyzed you to the point that you refuse to walk? If so, bring it to the Lord and walk by faith. Trust in Him and walk as he is leading. Learn to walk by faith and not by sight!

3. One last point here. Do you think those two spies entered Jericho thinking they would see someone saved there, especially a harlot? Obviously not! My point is this. There may be family, there may be friends, there may be co-workers that you are not expecting to see saved, it seems hopeless and yet, it can happen! He saved Rahab and He saved you! All He wants you to do is walk by faith and see what He will do in you and through you for His glory!

JOSHUA 3

VERSES 1-2

1. This is not an additional 3 days as some may think. Joshua is recapping for us the events leading up to their camping at the Jordan River. You see, Acacia grove or Shittim was located about 7 miles east of the Jordan River. Now the nation is on the banks of the Jordan River and the time of year was spring. It is during the spring, with the spring rains and the melting of the snow from Mount Hermon that this river swells up and overflows its banks. Normally the Jordan River spills some 6 million tons of water into the Dead Sea per day and normally it is only some 100 feet wide and not very deep. But at this time of year, with this increased water supply, it could be as wide as a mile now, obviously overflowing its banks!

How in the world are they going to get 2 to 3 million people across this river and to the other side? Well, Joshua called an emergency meeting of the Army Corps of Engineers to come up with a solution! No, he didn't do that because the answer to their problem was not going to come from the wisdom of man but by the power of God! Folks, as impossible as a situation may be to us, Jesus said, “. . . **‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’**” Matthew 19:26. This again was not going to be done by the power of man, because of his intellect, but by God and thus, they were to wait three days by this river. You see, **“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.”** Isaiah 40:31.

They spent 3 days contemplating what they were going to do, trying to rectify in their minds how this was going to happen, how they would get across this river and now it was time for God to work. They had to come to the conclusion they couldn't accomplish this on their own. It is as Paul tells us regarding our strength and what God can do in those who are weak in II Corinthians 12:10, "**Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**" May we look to Him to be the strength of our life!

VERSES 3-4

1. What does Joshua mean when he says that, "**you have not passed this way before**"? During their wilderness wanderings they were led by the Shekinah glory or the presence of God. In Exodus 13:21-22 we are told, "**And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.**" The visible presence of God was directing them. When the pillar of fire moved, they moved, when it stopped they stopped! But now they are going to learn to walk by faith and not by sight. How were they going to do that? The same way we do today.

You see, the Ark of the Covenant was to lead them now and inside the Ark of the Covenant was the Word of God. And so no longer a visible sign to lead them but the Word of God would be directing their steps! Remember what the Lord told Joshua in chapter 1, **“Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”** Joshua 1:6-9.

Tragically today people once again want to be lead by a visible sign and they negate the Word of God. Let me give you a few examples to show you what I mean and there are many to say the least, I am sad to say!

The late John Wimber, who was the head of the Vineyard ministries says this, "Calvaryites [those who attend Calvary Chapel] are sometimes a little too heavily orientated to the written word, I know that sounds a little dangerous, but frankly they're very Pharisaical in their allegiance to the Bible. They have very little life, and growth and spontaneity in their innards. Sometimes they're very rigid and can't receive much things of the Lord." (John Wimber, Church Planting Seminar).

And with that kind of theology, experience that is placed over the word of God, we now see what can happen. We see new revelations from God that are contrary to scripture and is not of the Holy Spirit. Rodney Howard-Browne, who has headed this Holy laughter revival, put it this way, "But I'd rather be in a church where the devil and the flesh are manifesting than in a church where nothing is happening because people are too afraid to manifest anything...And if a devil manifests, don't worry about that either. Rejoice, because at least something is happening!" (Rodney Howard- Browne, *The Coming Revival*, 1991, p.6).

And T. A. McMahon makes these remarks that accurately describe where the Church is at today. He wrote, "The chief error today in the evangelical church is that experiences (feelings, emotions, passions, intuitions, etc.) have become the guide for entering into and attempting to establish true spirituality. Rather than subjective feelings and emotions being present as a result of one's adherence to sound doctrine, they have become the judge of whether or not something is truly Christian. Instead of testing a teaching or practice or situation by the Word of God, the arbiter becomes "how one feels about it." This puts the human imagination in the seat of judgment. That thought alone should provoke an emotion in the heart of every Bible-believing Christian: sheer horror! Doctrinally however, it's even more frightening. (McMahon, T. A., *The Berean Call*, February 1, 2007).

The Bible tells us that those that take in the Word of God and apply it to their lives are complete, ready for service! May we get back to God's Word to direct our lives!

2. Also note that they were to stay about 5/8 of a mile behind the Ark of the Covenant, why? First of all to show respect for the Ark, that it contained the Words of God. Also, so it could be clearly seen by all. Folks, again we see God's Word covered by so much garbage today that people cannot clearly see it. They put so much psychobabble, earthly philosophy that it is no wonder that people can't walk today, they don't know where they are going!

VERSE 5

1. The battles that they were facing were not going to be physical battles but spiritual battles that would manifest itself in physical ways. Thus, they needed to sanctify themselves, to set themselves apart unto God, for His use, that their entire lives would be placed in His hand for His use! In other words, get your eyes off the physical and focus on the Lord and see the salvation He will bring to the situation!

VERSE 6

1. I find this interesting. They crossed over the Jordan River during the time of the barley harvest, in the month of Nisan, which corresponds to our March/April. And it was the 10th of Nisan that they crossed over. We call it Palm Sunday when Jesus rode through Jerusalem as the Messiah. How do I know that? Because in Joshua 4:19 we are told, **“Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.”** And in Joshua 5:10 we are told, **“Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.”** Just an interesting coincidence?

VERSES 7-8

1. God was going to show the people that Joshua was His man and their leader and in Joshua 4:14 we see how it played out, **“On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.”**

VERSES 9-17

1. The name **“Jordan”** means, “judging” and it is the place where we must judge and put to death the flesh. You see, the Jordan represented death to self. As Paul said in Galatians 2:20, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

Thus, as they crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land, the land of Canaan, it represents the new life, the life of the spirit. Paul said in Romans chapter 6, **“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.”** Romans 6:4-7. Thus, the crossing of the Jordan represents death to the life of the flesh and entering into the life of the spirit.

2. Now I guess I should share this with you, but it is just the foolishness of man in trying to figure out Almighty God. You see, some say that this miracle God did was accomplished through natural phenomena. They point to December 8, 1267 in which an earthquake caused the high banks of the Jordan to collapse near Tel-ed-Damiyen, damming the river for about 10 hours. Then on July 11, 1927 another earthquake near the same location blocked the river for 21 hours.

Yes, I do believe that God uses natural phenomena to accomplish His work, but the problem here is that in verse 17 we read that the priests, **“stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.”** Thus, like the crossing of the Red Sea not the Sea of Reeds, the crossing of the Jordan River was a miracle of God. Imagine once again, some 2 to 3 million people crossing over on dry land. The priests could have been standing in the midst of the Jordan River for hours and hours before the last person crossed over! But it was a step of faith on their part, for these priests had to step in before the waters were stopped and could you imagine the noise of those waters as they were held back and the sight it was. For many it would have reminded them of the crossing of the Red Sea and what God did there. And folks, as pastors and teachers today, we too need to step forward with the Word of God and let people take those steps of faith as we lead the way! Instead of looking at physical solutions to our spiritual problems, may we look to the Lord and see the work He can and wants to do in our lives!

JOSHUA 4**VERSES 1-9**

1. All the children of Israel had crossed over the Jordan River, into the Promise Land.

Now Joshua tells one member from each of the 12 tribes of Israel to gather a stone from the midst of the river and place it on the land, in Gilgal, as a memorial to what the Lord has done! Keep in mind that there were battles to fight in the land and Gilgal was to be their headquarters for all their combat missions. Thus, as they prepared for battle they would see this memorial to encourage them in the battle that they were about to face. If God had done this for them in the past He surely will continue to see them through in the present situations they are facing and that would be an encouragement to them!

2. Also, they were to be a testimony to future generations to show what God had done. That is important folk's. How often do we see future generations turn away from God because they have not seen the things that God is doing in our lives. We need to let them see the power of God, the truth of God, the faithfulness of God working in our lives to encourage them to walk by faith!

3. Now why the 12 stones in the midst of the Jordan River, who would see that? It is possible that during times of drought, as the water level dropped, there would be these stones seen by all who passed by and it would be a witness of God to them. In our own lives, we do go through those dry seasons and it is then that those stones of witness are exposed to encourage us to go forward, knowing that God's past faithfulness will encourage us in our present situation no matter how dry things may seem!

VERSES 10-18

1. In verses 12-13 we see Ruben, Gad, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh send their representative armies. The rest of the people from these tribes remained on the east side of the Jordan River to protect their families. The population of males in those tribes 20 years old and up totaled some 110,550 since we can't take all the tribe of Manasseh, for only half remained on the east side of the Jordan River, (Numbers 26:7, 18, 34). So the 40,000 soldiers that came to fight represented about 36% of the adult population. It would make sense that they needed to keep some of the fighting men back to help protect their families while they were fighting in the Promise Land with their brethren, but that would not be a problem if they would have entered into the Promise Land! Again, they were being faithful to what they had promised to Moses, that they would fight with their brothers, to defeat their enemies, and then they would return to their homes on the east side of the Jordan River, opposite the land of promise.

2. Can you imagine the noise, the roaring thunder as these waters of the Jordan River began to flow once again downstream! What a sight for the children of Israel and I wonder what the people of Jericho were thinking when that heard that thunderous noise! And I wonder if they could see the heap of waters piled up as the children of Israel were crossing over!

VERSES 19-20

1. As they set up their base camp in Gilgal, the first thing they do is set-up these memorial stones as a witness of what God has done, the great works of God to encourage the people in the work that was ahead.

VERSES 21-24

1. Men, I am sorry but it is your responsibility to teach your children the things of God by your words and your deeds! I think we many times teach them about football, baseball, computer games and-so-on, but do we put that much time and effort in teaching them the things of God? Do they see that the Lord is the most important thing in your life or do other things cloud the picture? And please understand ladies that I am not saying that you don't train up your children, you do. But I think today, many men are falling short of their responsibilities and not testifying of the great things that our God has done!

2. Yes, those memorial stones were dead but folks, we are living stones, a witness not only to our children, but also to the world. Look again at Joshua 4:24, **“that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”** You see, they were to be a witness to the world!

Peter makes this point about us in I Peter chapter 2 as he wrote, **“you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. . . . But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”** I Peter 2:5, 9-10.

Notice now what the Lord is doing – He is building a spiritual temple not with stones or brick, but living stones, you and me! We are told in I Kings 6:7 as Solomon’s temple was being built, **“And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.”** Thus, as you are going through this life and you feel like you are getting hammered, you feel like there goes another chip off the old block, understand what the Lord is doing! He is working on you down here in the quarry of life hammering and chipping away so that when you get to heaven there will be no sound of a hammer or chisel, you will fit in perfectly!

Now here is the thing, with all these privileges that God has given to us, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, having obtained the mercy of God, we are now to go out and proclaim what God has done in our lives, praise Him and let others see what God has done in us and through us so others may enter in!

But those who don't will be judged for their disobedience. Too many times today people think of God as getting pleasure in destroying the wicked. That He can't wait to put them to death. That is not the heart of God. Listen to what He says in Ezekiel chapter 18, **“Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?’ Says the LORD GOD, ‘And not that he should turn from his ways and live?’ . . . ‘For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ Says the LORD GOD. `Therefore turn and live!’”** Ezekiel 18:23, 32. That is the heart of God and His desire for our lives is that we would be living stones, memorial stones to what God has done in our lives and we are to point people to Him, to Jesus!