

Lesson 30

Rahab, the Jewish Spies and Crossing the Jordan River

Joshua 2-4



Teacher, please remember that the commentary below is intended to help you in your study, not to be read to your students. Make your own list of applications, using the help from the commentary, but don't necessarily try to cover everything! Think of the students in your class, then be prayerfully selective.

Contents:

1. Preparation
2. Memory verses
3. Theme
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5. Verse by verse commentary (suggested location of activities included)
6. Suggested prayer to close
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8. Possible Activities to choose from
9. Bible Text (in full, without commentary)

1. Preparation

- 1) Choose memory verse
- 2) Select attention grabber to start off lesson / break the ice - optional, recommended for younger classes. See point 7.
- 3) Suggested activities- optional, recommended for younger children. See point 8.

2. Memory verse

JOSHUA 2:24

"And they said to Joshua, 'Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.'"

3. Themes

Our actions reveal our trust in God's faithfulness to us.

4. Lesson introduction

To the teacher: This is a **combined lesson** on Rahab and the spies, and the crossing of the Jordan River by the people of Israel. The children of Israel were ready to possess the land God had given them. Jericho would be the first city in Canaan that God would allow His children to capture. Jericho was a wicked city that had rejected God and His ways. Yet in their midst, there was one lone woman who turned from her sinful ways into the gracious love of a heavenly Father who would rescue her from the destruction which was to come. This woman's faith was revealed by the actions she was willing to take. **Our actions reveal our trust in God's faithfulness to us.**

Have you ever taken some time to look at old picture albums? They bring back a lot of memories, don't they? In our lesson, today, God will have Joshua, the new leader of Israel, set up an memorial for the people and their children to remind them of His mighty power and greatness, which God showed when He protected the spies through Rahab and brought the people over the Jordan River. Just like a picture album, the people will look back on this memorial and remember God's faithfulness.

5. Verse by Verse Commentary

JOSHUA 2:1

Joshua sent two spies out into the city of Jericho. God led these two men to stay at an innkeeper's dwelling, the house of Rahab, a harlot. Although Rahab was leading a sinful lifestyle in rejection of God's ways, God led His servants to her to lead her to Himself. God desires to use us—just like those two Jewish spies—as lights in this world of darkness to draw others to His salvation.

JOSHUA 2:2-7

The people of Jericho discovered the two spies and sought to capture them. Because Rahab knew God sent them, she hid them in her home and did not reveal their whereabouts.

JOSHUA 2:8-11

Rahab told the spies that the people of Jericho feared God. They had seen the supernatural evidences exhibited in the lives of the Israelites and in God's delivering them from Egypt.

What evidences of God can be seen through your life? Is God's love and mighty ways made manifest to the world around you through your life? **Our actions reveal our trust in God's faithfulness to us.**

The Canaanites saw God's power and might, and they feared Him, yet this rotten city was doomed for destruction. It is not enough to recognize there is a God, or to acknowledge that He is powerful. It is vital to turn from the wickedness of sin to the gracious love of the Savior. Rahab acknowledged that the Lord God is above all. She made a confession of faith as she committed her soul to God (Romans 10:9,10). God looked down into her heart and saw her love and desire for Him. God forgave Rahab of her sins and saved her from His judgment. Though we are sinners, when we confess the Lord as our Savior, trust that our sins have been forgiven because of the sacrifice of Jesus, and put our faith in Him alone, we shall be saved. **Our actions reveal our trust in God's faithfulness to us.**

JOSHUA 2:12,13

Rahab desired that her family would be saved because she loved them. As the spies were lowered out of the city and fled to hide in the mountains, they revealed the way she and her family could be saved.

JOSHUA 2:14-19

Rahab immediately obeyed the command to mark her home with the scarlet cord. Her faith was shown by her obedience. When we have a genuine faith in God, it will be seen outwardly by our obedience to His Word (James 2:25). **Our actions reveal our trust in God's faithfulness to us.** Rahab and her family were only made safe as they abided in their home marked by the scarlet cord.

This story is a picture for us. For in the same way, we as Christians are made safe in the Day of Judgment only when we abide in Christ and trust that His sacrifice has purchased our forgiveness. He alone is our Savior and Lord, our hope of salvation.

JOSHUA 2:23,24

God confirmed His Word to His people assuring them of His sovereignty and favor. Remember God's promise? God said, "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you...." Just as God gave Jericho to the Israelites, so has He blessed us with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3). Believe Him and by faith possess what God has already given you. Rahab was made righteous by faith. God even included her in the lineage of the Messiah! Believe in God and the salvation He has provided for you in Christ Jesus. And, as Rahab, let your inward faith be shown by your outward actions. **Our actions reveal our trust in God's faithfulness to us.**

JOSHUA 3:6-10

After the spies returned to the camp of the Israelites, the people had come to the Jordan River and needed to cross it to enter into the land God had promised to give them. God said He would establish respect in the hearts of the people for Joshua's leadership; they would know that He was with him just as He was with Moses. God then told Joshua to have the priests take the ark of the covenant, a golden box with the Ten Commandments inside, to the Jordan River. God would demonstrate His mighty power and faithfulness. His present miraculous intervention would assure them of His future miraculous intervention when they would face the inhabitants of the land--"the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites."

JOSHUA 3:14-17

Note, the priests were the first to step into the water. They did not step onto dry ground; they stepped into water. God could have dried up the river before the priests stepped into it; but instead, God wanted them to take a step in faith that God would surely do as He had promised, despite the circumstances. Sometimes God will ask us to do things that require us to "get our feet wet", to step out and trust Him despite the threatening circumstances we face. God promises He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). **Our actions reveal our trust in God's faithfulness to us.**

As the people headed into the water, the river was held back by God so that the Israelites could walk through on dry ground. God did exactly what He promised to do!

JOSHUA 4:1-7

God had the Israelites take 12 stones, one for each tribe, from the Jordan River bed. God knew that someday their children would ask about the stones, and the Israelites would tell them about His miraculous power: "We walked across the Jordan on dry ground." **Our actions reveal our trust in God's faithfulness to us.**

Perhaps your parents have relayed to you their many accounts of God's faithfulness through difficulties and seeming impossibilities. It is good to remind each other that God has been and will be faithful to us. Have you witnessed God's answers to your own prayers? Consider keeping a journal, a written-record, of God's faithfulness to you. Encourage and build faith in others by sharing with them the many times God has been faithful to you.

JOSHUA 4:11-14

God fulfilled His promise to bring the Israelites across the Jordan River and into the promised land safely. And, 40,000 men were prepared for war against Jericho. When God makes a promise, He will keep it.

JOSHUA 4:20-24

Joshua set up the 12 stones as a memorial of God's miracle--bringing His people across the Jordan on dry ground, just as He had brought them through the Red Sea when they escaped from Egypt. God is faithful. He has kept and will keep His promises. He can do incredible things for us! When He does, it is good to record them so we remember them and can tell others how God has been faithful to us. In that way we encourage both ourselves and others to believe God in difficult circumstances --- as well as any difficulty we may encounter in the future. Our God is mighty and able. He will not fail. **Our actions reveal our trust in God's faithfulness to us.**

6. Prayer:

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment that their genuine faith in God's faithfulness will be shown by their actions. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

7. Attention Grabbers

How Far?

Bring a telescope, magnifying glass, binoculars, or other "sight enhancers" to class for the kids to look through. Put a very small note or picture on the wall and let the kids read it or look at it from the opposite wall. Allow each child to take a turn. After everyone is finished, use this activity for discussion. Ask them how far do they think that God can see? How well can He see? What does He need in order to see into our hearts? What's in your heart? Do your actions reveal a heart of faith in God?

Water Pouring

What you will need:

A pitcher of water, a large bowl and a large towel.

Bring a pitcher of water and a large bowl and a large towel. Show how you will pour the water into the bowl. Just pour a trickle of water into the bowl. Then ask for volunteers to come try to stop the small trickle of water coming out of the pitcher. The children can try all kinds of ways. Explain: It is difficult to stop a trickle; however, God stopped the whole Jordan River at its peak while it was overflowing. It is amazing what God is willing to do for His people.

8. Activities:

What Does He See?

What you will need: As many 8 1/2 "x 11" sheets of white paper and construction paper as the number of children in your class. Construction paper, enough for your entire class.

Fold a red (or pink or purple) sheet of construction paper in half and cut out a heart shape leaving part of the fold connected for a "hinge." Open the heart and have the children write down what they would like for the Lord to see when He looks into their heart. Use this activity to describe what kinds of things should be in our hearts. Read Galatians 5:22,23 (the fruit of the Spirit).

Hide and Seek

Bring a large stuffed animal or other large object to class. Next, cover (or blindfold) your eyes and ask the children to hide the object. The aide can keep their eyes uncovered to assist the children. The children will quickly discover that it is very difficult to hide a large object in a sparsely furnished room. Explain that it is just as difficult to hide something in our hearts from God. He can always look into our hearts and know our innermost thoughts and feelings.

Memory Book

Cut one sheet of 8 1/2 "x 11" paper in half to form two 8 1/2 "x 5 1/2" pieces. Fold them in half and insert one inside the other like a little book. You can also have the children cut out a piece of construction paper the same size for a "book cover." Staple the spine with the open part of the staples inside the book. The book could have a title such as "God's Faithfulness to Me." Help the kids remember prayers that God has answered and ways He has provided for them. They can also include prayers that have not been answered yet and complete their book as their prayers are answered.

The Hand of the Lord

Trace your hand onto construction paper before class. You will need as many sheets as the number of children in your class. Let the kids cut it out and write the memory verse on it. Tell how the hand of the Lord is mighty and what that may mean in their lives. Ask the children for examples of the "mighty hand of the Lord" in their lives.

9. Bible text (NIV):

Joshua 2:1 Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

² The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." ³ So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. ⁵ At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." ⁶ (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) ⁷ So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

⁸ Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof ⁹ and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. ¹⁰ We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea ^[a] for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. ^[b] ¹¹ When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

¹² "Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign ¹³ that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death."

¹⁴ "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land."

¹⁵ So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. ¹⁶ She said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."

¹⁷ Now the men had said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us ¹⁸ unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. ¹⁹ If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them. ²⁰ But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

²¹ "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say."

So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

²² When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them. ²³ Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them. ²⁴ They said to Joshua, “The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us.”

Crossing the Jordan

Joshua 3:1 Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. ² After three days the officers went throughout the camp, ³ giving orders to the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. ⁴ Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits^[d] between you and the ark; do not go near it.”

⁵ Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.”

⁶ Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So they took it up and went ahead of them.

⁷ And the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. ⁸ Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’”

⁹ Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. ¹⁰ This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. ¹¹ See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. ¹² Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. ¹³ And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.”

¹⁴ So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. ¹⁵ Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, ¹⁶ the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

Joshua 4:1 When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ² “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, ³ and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.”

⁴ So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, ⁵ and said to them, “Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, ⁶ to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ ⁷ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.”

⁸ So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. ⁹ Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been^[d] in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.

¹⁰ Now the priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the LORD had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua. The people hurried over, ¹¹ and as soon as all of them had crossed, the ark of the LORD and the priests came to the other side while the people watched. ¹² The

men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over, ready for battle, in front of the Israelites, as Moses had directed them.¹³ About forty thousand armed for battle crossed over before the LORD to the plains of Jericho for war.

¹⁴ That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses.

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to Joshua,¹⁶ "Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan."

¹⁷ So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan."

¹⁸ And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before.

¹⁹ On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho.²⁰ And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan.²¹ He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?'²² tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.'²³ For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea^[e] when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over.²⁴ He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God."

Footnotes:

1. [Joshua 2:10](#) Or *the Sea of Reeds*
2. [Joshua 2:10](#) The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them.
3. [Joshua 3:4](#) That is, about 3,000 feet or about 900 meters
4. [Joshua 4:9](#) Or *Joshua also set up twelve stones*
5. [Joshua 4:23](#) Or *the Sea of Reeds*