

Sent: Sunday, April 02, 2017 1:54 PM
Subject: MOB Study on Faith of Joshua and Rahab

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days! By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who were disobedient, after she welcomed the spies in peace!" (Hebrews 11:30-31)

The Book of Joshua picks up the story where Deuteronomy left off! With the passing of Moses--and after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness--God charged Joshua, Moses' successor, to now lead the children of Israel "across the Jordan River" into the "promised land," the land of Canaan! It was a land inhabited by Canaanites and other pagan people who had "defiled the land" through their "abominations"!

The first city they needed to conquer was the most defended one in all the land--Jericho, a highly-fortified city strategically located directly in the path of the advancing Israelites, in the fertile plains of the Jordan valley! But God promised Joshua that He "would be with him just as He had been with Moses" and that He would "give them possession of the land which He had sworn to their fathers"! Only Joshua "needed to be strong and courageous"--and "careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you!" And specifically said: "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it! For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success!"

Great faith was obviously required on the part of Joshua--first in leading all the people to cross over the Jordan, where God parted the water, just as He had done for them 40 years earlier in crossing the Red Sea! And then in learning of--and actually carrying out--God's "battle plan" for conquering Jericho!

The city of Jericho was surrounded by not one, but two great walls--the outer one six feet thick, the inner one feet thick! And the city was "tightly shut" and the "king and his mighty warriors" totally ready and waiting to defend it!

But God gave Joshua a highly unorthodox strategy to conquer it: one that resembled more of a "liturgical celebration" than a military engagement! You know the story! Seven days of marching around the city, with armed men followed by seven priests blowing trumpets, followed in turn by the ark of the covenant! And then, at just the right moment, giving a great "shout"! And seeing the walls come "a tumbling down"! Wow! Who would have thought!

Not to be lost in the story, of course, was the role played by Rahab the harlot--who risked her life to save herself and her family, by hiding the two spies who had earlier been sent to check out the city! Then working out a deal to be spared by hanging out a scarlet cord! After having heard how the God of Israel led the children of Israel out of Egypt "passing through" the Red Sea, she "believed" that the Lord God was "the God of Heaven above and on the earth beneath" (Josh, 2:11) and thus opted to place her "faith and hope"--her whole destiny--in His hands, and with His people!

Joshua demonstrated his faith by following God's instructions to the letter! His faith was evidenced by his complete obedience--and God rewarded his faith by causing the walls to fall! This would be the first of many instances where victory for God's people in conquering the land would only be possible by trusting and obeying Him! Judges 2:7 says: "The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, which He had done for Israel!"

And Rahab too forever occupies a place of prominence among the great heroes of the faith! But more than that, she became the first recorded Gentile convert, foreshadowing the "great ingathering" of Gentiles into the kingdom of God! And, because she was a former prostitute, she provides great testimony, and a stark reminder, of God's mercy and grace! Through her example, we realize that no matter how great the sinner, or how despicable the sin, God's grace is sufficient to save "to the uttermost" those who come to Him--in simple faith!

How ironic and amazing that Rahab would go on to marry a man named Boaz, of the tribe of Judah, and be included in the lineage of King David! And even more amazingly, become what every Israelite woman hoped to become--a mother in the line of the Messiah--our Lord Jesus Christ! And have her name recorded in lineage of Christ, as recorded in Matthew 1:1-6!

Well, "what more can we say"? We'll try to do that next week, in our last lesson on Hebrews 11--and the heroes of the faith!

Live by faith this week, men and be a blessing!

Lowell