

Zoom Sunday School 30 August 2020: The book of courage

After Moses died, Joshua took over – and not surprisingly, the next book in the Bible is named *Joshua*, after him! His job was to lead the people into the promised land. This book is **the book of courage, of being brave**, because God is at work.

The first city which had to be dealt with because it was blocking their way was the city of Jericho. Before attacking it, Joshua sent two spies across the River Jordan to see what the land was like. They sneaked into the Jericho and discovered the perfect place to stay in the house of Rahab. Although Rahab had lived an ungodly life in an ungodly (heathen) city, she was a true believer. She knew that God's people would conquer the city, and she wanted to serve God **bravely** by helping them!

Someone saw the spies arrive and reported this. But, when Jericho's leaders came to drag the men out, Rahab became very vague and suggested that the men had gone back towards the river. Actually the men were safely hidden under the bundles of flax which were drying out on the roof of her house. Rahab had risked her life to serve God! As soon as the searchers went off towards the river, Rahab told the men that she knew God was going to give this land to his people and that everyone in the land was terrified. Then she let the men down from her window, warning them to hide in the hills for 3 days before aiming to cross the river. In return she asked for protection for herself and her family. The spies told her to hand a red cord out of her window. Anyone who trusted God enough to stay in Rahab's house on the day of battle would be saved.

The spies reported what Rahab had told them. This time the spies trusted God - not like the other 12 spies from long ago. So Joshua got the Hebrew people got ready to cross the Jordan River. None of them was old enough to remember crossing the Red Sea but they trusted Joshua and God. The priests were told to carry the holy wooden box (the 'ark') which stood in the tabernacle down to the river. (The ark held precious reminders of God's presence with them: the stone slabs of the 10 commandments, Aaron's rod and a jar of manna.) God was to be seen in the middle of this adventure too. But, even now, Joshua warned the people not to get too close to the ark. Their God was holy, their helper but not their mate.

Just as Joshua had told them would happen, as soon as the priests **bravely** put their feet in the water, there was a blockage upstream and a pathway through the river appeared. The priests marched to the middle and waited there while everyone crossed over. 12 men (1 from each family group) picked up 12 stones from the middle of the river bed where the priests had stood and stacked these on the bank as a monument so they would always remember how God had been with them and helped them.

At last! God's people were in the promised land. God was with them. If they were **brave** and trusted God, as Joshua always reminded them, the whole land would belong to them.

This story is full of amazing facts which show God was at work:

1. How amazing that Rahab believed in God.
2. How amazing that the spies chose to go to her house.
3. How amazing that the river dammed up at just that moment.
4. How amazing that God did this, although the Hebrews had let him down.
5. How amazing that God had just the right person, Joshua, to take over from Moses.
6. How amazing that a non-Hebrew sinner like Rahab became an ancestor of Jesus.

Our God is amazing!

Readings

Monday: Joshua is blessed: Joshua 1:5-9

Tuesday: The spies are saved: Joshua 2:1-6, 15-16

Wednesday: Rahab gives them God's message: Joshua 2:8-11

Thursday: Crossing the Jordan: Joshua 3:14-17

Friday: The people must always remember that God was with them: Joshua 4:1-7