



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
AUGUST 17 2019

behind the walls

Scripture Story: Joshua 2; 5:13-15; 6; 7.
Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets (or Beginning of the End)*, chapter 45.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

It was the dawning of a new day for Rahab, once a Canaanite prostitute, and now a part of the great Israelite nation. But what would God have in store for her as an alien in a land conquered by foreigners? We don't know how long she lived in the Israelite camp before she married Salmon and started a family. But what we do know is that God had something very special in mind for this very special woman. "Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David the king" (Matthew 1:5, 6, NASB).

This woman, who had more faith than the Israelite nation itself, who believed in a God not her own, was rewarded in a marvelous way. Although she did not live to see the day that David was crowned king, this woman was honored through history with being in the ancestry of King David and of the Messiah.

Behind the walls of that evil city was a woman with faith, with a belief in the power of God. It saved her. And that same belief will save us. Maybe we as Adventists should search in the unexpected places for people who are ready to hear the truth. People like Rahab.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Discover the power of faith and what it does in people's lives as shown in the life of Rahab. *(Know)*

- Sense that there is more than just thinking there is a God; one must have faith that He can do the impossible once one puts their life in His hands. *(Feel)*
- Take the opportunity to put their trust wholly in God, then watch Him work! *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

- Grace
- Conviction
- Trustworthiness/betrayal

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Many years ago there was a Frenchman. This Frenchman had a high-strung talent, a very unique talent. He was a tightrope walker, but not just any ordinary tightrope walker; this man did *tricks* on the tightrope. Blindfolded, he could push a wheelbarrow across a tightrope and not miss a step. An American promoter heard about him, was impressed and wrote the Frenchman a letter saying that if he would come to America, he would pay him a large sum of money to walk on a tightrope over Niagara Falls. The Frenchman

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had never been to America, nor had he seen the falls, but he agreed to the deal quite gladly.

The promoter didn't really believe the man could do it, but he set up the equipment and finally the day came for the big event. Crowds had gathered, and drums rolled as the man, "tightly" blindfolded, began walking across the rope that stretched across the falls, from the American side to the Canadian side!

He finished the walk with ease and then asked the promoter if he now believed that he could do it. The American said that of course he believed; he had just seen him do it. But the Frenchman was not satisfied. He asked again if the man *really* believed. Again the man said that he did. "Good," the Frenchman answered, "then get into the wheelbarrow."

How many times do we say that we believe God, yet are reluctant to get into the wheelbarrow? Still, He works such great things in the lives of those who *do* put their trust in Him.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

When God honors people, He honors them well. While to outside eyes it might seem that Rahab is a woman of doubtful character, God knew her character and the strength of her faith. Think of what faith has done and still does in people's lives. What does it take to have faith like that? What does the word "faith" mean? How does it affect your life? How does it affect those around you?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Why do you think that the Israelite spies came to Rahab's house?
- Was it just faith that saved Rahab? Or more?
- Is there another case in the Bible of a Canaanite woman becoming a part of the Israelite nation? Was hers also a case of faith? How did God honor her?
- Have you seen someone risk their reputation for their faith? Their life?
- What does the story tell you about the character of Rahab? Of God?

There are many things in this story that are

unusual; it should be easy for the students to point them out. As they make their observations, discuss a little deeper the implications and outcomes of the situation. Use this as an opportunity to take the discussion into these areas:

1. Notice that the spies went directly to Rahab's house; there was no dillydallying in looking for a respectable place to stay. The men must have known that to stay in another man's house would arouse suspicion and create a dangerous situation, whereas two strangers staying in a prostitute's house wouldn't be all that unusual. It was safer to stay with her than anywhere else.
2. A big question has arisen from this particular story: Is it OK to lie in a life-and-death situation? Rahab lied to save the men's lives, but in the Bible lying about anything is a sin. Are there times when you can compromise? Or is it just black and white? Could God have protected the spies even without Rahab lying? (Don't discuss this in depth—it can go into a big discussion—but do bring it to the group's attention.)

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. In Joshua 2:15 the verse says that Rahab's house was on a city wall. This is important to remember in the course of events that follow. When the walls fell at the end of the seven days, whose house should have crumbled along with the rest? Rahab's! But apparently it didn't. God spared Rahab and her family, and they lived as a part of the Israelite nation after that. Strangely enough, when the city of Jericho was excavated some years back, they found that the walls had fallen out instead of in. When a wall falls under the strain of being hit with a battering ram it falls in, but these walls fell out—an impossible event unless there was a divine hand behind it all.
2. While prostitution was definitely looked down upon by Israelites, and while women who slept with men not their husbands were put to death, the paid prostitute was not punished. But marrying a prostitute was a different matter. There are two instances in the Bible that stand out the most: that of Hosea's wife, a prostitute, and that

- of Rahab, who married Salmon. Read the story of Hosea and his wife in Hosea, chapter 1, and discuss why God directed him to marry a prostitute.
3. While the passage in *Into the Word* is about Rahab's initial meeting with the spies, this week's Scripture story and the commentary from *Patriarchs and Prophets* are about the complete fall of Jericho, including the sin of Achan (Joshua 7). The following passage from the *Bible Background Commentary* gives some interesting information regarding the total destruction that God commanded for Jericho.
 4. *Joshua 6:21-24*—“devoted to the LORD” (*herem*). “The ‘ban’ is sometimes chosen as the English word to represent the concept of total destruction that is commanded here in verse 2 and elaborated on in verses 5-6. Just as there were some types of sacrifices that belonged entirely to the LORD while others were shared by priest and offerer, so some plunder was set aside as belonging solely to the LORD. Just as the whole burnt offering was entirely consumed on the altar, so the ban mandated total destruction. Since the warfare was commanded by Yahweh and represented His judgment on the Canaanites, the Israelites were on a divine mission with Yahweh as their commander. Since it was His war, not theirs, and He was the victor, the spoil belonged to Him. Although the divine warrior motif occurs throughout the ancient Near East, the *herem* concept is more limited—

the only other occurrence of the term is in the Moabite Mesha inscription, but the idea of total destruction is also in the Hittite material. Some sites, such as Gezer, feature a distinct burn layer in association with the Late Bronze period. Under siege conditions sanitation is at its worst and disease is often rampant. The practice of burning everything after the defeat of a city thus also had an element of health connected to it. The best analogy for us to understand *herem* is to think in terms of radiation. A nuclear explosion would destroy many things and irradiate much more. The abhorrence and caution with which we would respond to that which has been irradiated is similar to what is expected of the Israelites regarding things under the ban. If radiation were personified, one could understand that once something was given over to it, it was irredeemable. It was this condition that Achan exposed himself to by taking things under the ban.”

—*Bible Background Commentary*, © 2000 by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas. Database © 2006 WORDsearch Corp.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

There are times when you can't “judge a book by its cover,” or tell what kind of character someone has

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson. Invite students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Key Text**

Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Flashlight**

*Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from *Out of the Story*.*

- **Punch Lines**

Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Debriefing

There are many activities and object lessons that can create an experience for students that will tie the point of the lesson firmly in their minds. The key to tying the experience to the learning that is desired is appropriate debriefing.

In this lesson “trust” could be experienced through the following short, hands-on activity. Have two volunteers stand up, one behind the other. Tell the person in front to close their eyes and slowly fall backward without bending their knees, trusting the person behind to catch them. (Note: It is easier to catch someone who trusts and stays straight than to catch someone who does not trust and buckles or flails around. However, please make the environment as safe as possible for this kind of activity.) When several pairs have tried this, debrief the experience by asking the following types of questions:

Reflect: Questions that help them reflect on their experience. (How did it feel when . . . ?)

Interpret: Questions that help them interpret the experience. (Why was it more difficult when . . . ?)

Apply: Questions that help them apply what they learned from the experience to their lives. (What are ways that we . . . ?)

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by their reputation, their occupation, or their looks.

Have the students write down the kinds of people they want to reach out to this week. Perhaps the homeless man on the street, or the angry kid at school.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Rahab’s story is both powerful and touching. It gives hope to the people who have messed up the most, and it shows others that maybe there is more to a person than meets the eye. When God reached out to Rahab, He reached out to the many other people who are in her situation today, or worse. He reached out to those who look down on “those kinds of people,” hoping to give us the message that He loves everyone, and that no matter who someone is or what they do, they are His child.

Rahab’s story challenges us to have faith: “If a prostitute had faith like that, so can I!” Her faith saved so many lives; maybe your faith will lead you to save lives. With faith in God you can do the impossible, and reach out to the impossibilities.



Remind the students about the reading plan, which will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets (or Beginning of the End)*, chapter 45.



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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Joshua 2; 5:13-15; 6; 7.

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behind the walls



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flashlight

“God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much in their own wisdom, and do not give the LORD an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him”
(Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 493).

key text

“The city [Jericho] shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.”

(Joshua 6:17, NASB)

what do you think?

Are there some people today who, because of their professions or previous actions, are thought unworthy of being lights for God?

The Bible includes many stories of people with bad reputations, sinful pasts, and unfavorable circumstances who have come to know God and their lives had been changed by His saving power. As a result, they became channels of God's love to others, showing that our heavenly Father restores broken people who accept His marvelous gift of grace!

did you know?

The inhabitants of Canaan had been granted ample opportunity for repentance. Forty years before, the opening of the Red Sea and the judgments upon Egypt had testified to the supreme power of the God of Israel. And now the overthrow of the kings of Midian, of Gilead and Bashan, had further shown that Jehovah was above all gods. . . . All these events were known to the inhabitants of Jericho, and there were many who shared Rahab's conviction, though they refused to obey it, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, "is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 492.

INTO THE STORY

"Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim."

"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.' . . .

"She said, 'Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. 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.' (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.)

"Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof 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. We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea 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. 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. 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 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.'

" '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.'

"So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. . . .

"Now the men had said to her, 'This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us 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.' "

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

(Joshua 2:1, 3-6, 8-15, 17, 18, 21, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

How would you describe Rahab: wise or foolish? smart or stupid? loyal or a traitor? Explain your answers.

What would you have done if you had been Rahab? What would you have done if you were the spies?

List the “out of the ordinary” events that occurred in this story:

How did God honor Rahab for what she did that day? (See Matthew 1:5.)

Why was she honored? (See Hebrews 11:31.)

Of what event in Israel’s history does the scarlet cord remind you? (See Exodus 12:12, 13.)

How are we saved from our “doomed neighborhood”? (See Romans 5:1, 2.)

punch lines

“By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace” (Hebrews 11:31, NASB).

“In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?” (James 2:25, NASB).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NASB).

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our LORD Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1, 2, NASB).

“Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified” (Galatians 2:16, NASB).

further insight

“It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died. . . . There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*,

pp. 13, 18.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read **Joshua 2:9-13** and **Daniel 9**.

Rahab's plea about honoring God and then pleading for her salvation is similar to the prayer of Daniel, when he is pleading for the lives of his people. In fact, this was the way all the Israelites prayed when in need of help. Notice how Daniel starts the prayer: by honoring God. List the similarities and differences between Daniel and Rahab's plea.

Similarities:

Differences:

Sunday

Read **Esther 2-8**.

Esther was another woman who had faith in God. She had no idea what would happen when she went to the king when he had not called her. But she trusted God to take care of it all! Because of her faith, thousands of people were spared, and in Israel today, they still celebrate "Purim," a day that was turned from sorrowful to joyful; all because Esther and her people had faith.

Is there a situation in your life that you need to go forward in and trust God to take care of it?

Monday

Read **Numbers 14**.

In the *Flashlight* section of this week's lesson, Ellen White brings an issue to our attention. The Israelite nation as a whole had

gone through times when they trusted more in themselves than in God. In fact, their lack of faith in God and their trust in themselves set them back a whole forty years, which they spent wandering around in a dry desert! Some land of milk and honey! The fertile land of Canaan could have been theirs, except for their inability to have faith in God.

What warning can you heed for your life from today's reading?

Tuesday

In Monday's lesson Israel's lack of trust was mentioned. It's interesting to note that Rahab was saved by her faith in God; quite the opposite from Caleb and Joshua's generation, who wandered around in the wilderness until they all died. Read the *Punch Lines* for this week and notice the ones dealing with faith. Which one speaks to you the most?

Wednesday

Read **Joshua chapters 2 and 6**.

This week's lesson is indeed a fascinating one; a bit puzzling, too. Make a list of all the things that are out of the ordinary. You can find it in Joshua chapters 2 and 6. Look up "Rahab" in Ellen White's writings and see what else you come up with!

Thursday

Read **Galatians 2:16**.

Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 45, "The Fall of Jericho." In this chapter

are described the trials and victories that the Israelites had because of their faith. When they didn't follow God, and instead followed their own plans, they failed miserably, and lives were lost. But when they trusted in God and had faith in His power as Rahab did, they were victorious! Faith is so crucial in life. You can't survive without it!

Can you think of circumstances in your life in which you followed your own plan and failed? or when you trusted in God and were victorious?

Friday

Read **Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 5**.

This week we have been talking a lot about trust, faith, and our salvation by grace through faith. It is God's grace, and the faith in that grace, that saves us. In today's reading we see how God saves even the most sinful of sinners if they just believe in Him. Like Rahab, we have the evidence of what God can do if we trust Him, and like her, we ought to give Him a chance.

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this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 45.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.