

Rahab Believed

Name: _____

In previous chapters, we have seen examples of faithfulness from Moses, Joseph, Jacob, and our father in faith, Abraham. In the Book of Joshua, God provides us with another example of great faith, this time from a Gentile woman. “Gentile” is a term in the Bible that describes someone who was not Jewish and not a member of God’s Chosen People, the Israelites.

Read the story below and answer the questions that follow.

Joshua was about to lead the Israelites, God’s Chosen People, across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. He knew there were many powerful cities in the land. Joshua sent two men into the Promised Land as spies. He instructed them to gather information on the cities, especially the mighty city of Jericho. The two men snuck into Jericho and came upon a woman named Rahab. Rahab welcomed the two spies into her house.

Jericho’s king became aware of the spies and sent messengers to Rahab, saying, “Bring forth the men that have come to you, who entered your house; for they have come to search out all the land” (Josh 2:3). Rahab told the messengers that she had seen the men, but they had already left. However, Rahab had brought them up to the roof of her house and hid them under stalks of grain. After the king’s men left, Rahab came back to the two spies and asked them to care for her father’s house.

Josh 2:9-13

2 ⁹“I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt. . . .” And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any man, because of you; for the LORD your God is he who is

God in heaven above and on earth beneath. ¹²Now then, swear to me by the LORD that as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father’s house, and give me a sure sign, ¹³and save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.”

Rahab, a Gentile, had come to believe in the one true God. She turned from the false worship of her people and put her faith in the God of Israel. Seeing Rahab’s faith in God, the two spies promised that the Israelites would deal with Rahab and her family kindly and faithfully when they conquered Jericho. Rahab then let the two men down through the window of her house, which was built into the city wall. She told them to flee into the hills and hide there for three days to avoid the king’s men searching for them.

The two spies told Rahab to gather her parents, brothers, and other family into her home. They told her to mark her home with a scarlet (red) cord in the window. As long as Rahab and her family hid in her home marked with the scarlet cord, they would be spared when Israel conquered Jericho. The two spies returned to Joshua and told him about Rahab and her family.

Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River and conquered Jericho with God’s help. After the walls of Jericho miraculously fell and the Chosen People had taken the city, Joshua commanded the two spies to find Rahab and her family and bring them to him. God looked at Rahab’s faith and had mercy on her and her family. He spared their lives and welcomed Rahab and her family into his family, the Chosen People.

1. What do you find most surprising about this account of Rahab in the Book of Joshua?

2. How was Rahab an example of faith?

3. What mighty deed from Israel's past inspired Rahab to have faith in God?

4. How did God show Rahab and her family mercy because of her faith?

The New Testament compares Rahab's faith with Abraham's faith (see Jas 2:18–26). God's mercy toward Rahab and her family should remind us of one of God's promises to Abraham.

5. What was the third promise God made to Abraham? (Hint: see page 106 of the Student Text.)

6. How do you see God continuing to fulfill this promise in Rahab's story?

Saint Matthew included Rahab in Jesus' genealogy to show that Jesus had Gentile *and* Jewish ancestors. **Turn to Matthew 1 on page 1 of the Student Text. Underline or mark in some way Rahab's name in Jesus' genealogy (see verse 5).**

7. What do you think this detail reveals about Jesus' mission?

The Church sees in Rahab an example of God's plan to invite all peoples and nations into his family, the Church. Most of us are Gentiles, meaning we are not physical descendants of God's Chosen People. But God welcomes all people who, like Rahab, learn of his mighty deeds, turn away from sin, and put their faith in him.

8. What mighty deeds of God have you read about in the Old Testament that strengthened your faith in God?
