



**Week Three: Joshua 2:1-24**

**“Scarlet Cord”**

Study Guide for the week of  
October 2, 2022

**Some questions to answer and discuss:**

1. Under what circumstances do people usually try to make a deal with God?
2. Why did Joshua send spies to Canaan? ([2:1](#))
3. What were Rahab’s beliefs about the God of Israel? ([2:11](#))
4. Who received the credit for the Canaanites’ fear of the Israelites? ([2:24](#))
5. What is one Christian value that you feel you need to take a stand on to be a more effective witness for Christ?
6. What does the conclusion of this passage teach us about God’s faithfulness to believers who take risks because of their faith?
7. What is one small risk you think God might want you to take in sharing your faith or standing up for what is right?

**Going deeper: More questions for discussion and reflection:**

1. What keeps me from believing the truth that despite my baggage, failures, and fears, God sees me and cares about me?
2. Where have I seen God’s faithfulness to me though I have been unfaithful to Him?
3. How could surrendering to Jesus bring healing, hope, and courage into my present situation?
4. What am I facing that requires God-fueled courage?

**Life Application Bible Notes**

[2:1](#) Why did Joshua send the spies secretly? As far as he knew, he would be attacking a heavily fortified city using conventional warfare tactics. He needed strategic information about the city for the upcoming battle. But he also knew that this might draw criticism from the other leaders. After all, the last time spies were sent, the report they brought back caused disastrous problems (see [Numbers 13:1-14:4](#)). While he did not want to move ahead without information, he also did not want to cause the people to stumble and question his wisdom and ability to lead the nation.

[2:1](#) Why would the spies stop at the house of Rahab, a prostitute? (1) It was a good place to gather information and have no questions asked in return. (2) Rahab's house was in an ideal location for a quick escape because it was built into the city wall ([2:15](#)). (3) God directed the spies to Rahab's house because he knew her heart was open to him and that she would be instrumental in the Israelite victory over Jericho. God often uses people with simple faith to accomplish his great purposes, no matter what kind of past they have had or how insignificant they seem to be. Rahab didn't allow her past to keep her from the new role God had for her. [2:4, 5](#) Was Rahab justified in lying to save the lives of the spies? Although the Bible does not speak negatively about her lie, it is clear that lying is sin. In [Hebrews 11:31](#), however, Rahab is commended for her faith in God. Her lie is not mentioned. Several explanations have been offered: (1) God forgave Rahab's lie because of her faith; (2) Rahab was simply deceiving the enemy, a normal and acceptable practice in wartime; (3) because Rahab was not a Jew, she could not be held responsible for keeping the moral standards set forth in God's law; (4) Rahab broke a lesser principle—telling the truth—to uphold a higher principle—protecting God's people. There may have been another way to save the lives of the Israelite spies. But under the pressure of the moment, Rahab had to make a choice. Most of us will face dilemmas at one time or another. We may feel that there is no perfect solution to our problem. Fortunately, God does not demand that our judgment be perfect in all situations. He simply asks us to put our trust in him and to do the best we know how. Rahab did that and was commended for her faith.

**Spy Mission to Jericho:** Two spies left the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove, crossed the Jordan River, and slipped into Jericho. The city was built around an oasis in the midst of a hot and desolate valley 840 feet below sea level. Jericho was the first major city the Israelites set out to conquer.

[2:6](#) Flax was harvested in the fields and piled high on the rooftops to dry. It was then made into yarn, which was used to make linen cloth. Flax grows to a height of three or four feet. Stacked on the roof, it made an excellent hiding place for the spies.

[2:8-13](#) Many would assume that Rahab—a pagan, a Canaanite, and a prostitute—would never be interested in God. Yet Rahab was willing to risk everything she had for a God she barely knew. We must not gauge a person's interest in God by his or her background, lifestyle, or appearance. We should let nothing get in the way of our telling people the Good News.

[2:11](#) Rahab recognized something that many of the Israelites did not—the God of heaven is not an ordinary god! He is all powerful. The people of Jericho were afraid because they had heard the news of God's extraordinary power in defeating the armies across the Jordan River. Today we can worship this same powerful, miracle-working God. He is powerful enough to destroy mighty, wicked armies, as he did in Jericho. He is also powerful enough to save us from certain death, as he did with Rahab.

[2:15](#) In Joshua's day it was common to build houses on city walls. Many cities had two walls about 12 to 15 feet apart. Houses were built on wooden logs laid across the tops of the two walls. Rahab may have lived in such a house with a window that looked out over the outside wall.