

## Session 4: Crossing the Jordan, Judges and early kings

The session started with a recap of the story so far – Creation, rebellion, and God choosing to reconcile with humankind by using the family of one man – Abraham, Egypt and Exodus, Mount Sinai and the tabernacle.

The Israelites had reached the edge of the 'promised land'. Joshua then takes on the leadership.

Joshua 1: 1-9

**1** After the death of Moses .... the Lord said to Joshua ....<sup>2</sup>“Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them....<sup>3</sup>I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. <sup>4</sup>Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates....to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. <sup>5</sup>No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup>**Be strong and courageous**, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

<sup>7</sup>“**Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.** <sup>8</sup>**Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.** <sup>9</sup>Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous.** Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for **the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.**”

Note:

3 x **be strong and courageous** (red)

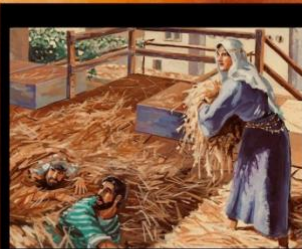
The promise that the Israelites will **inherit the land** – which they still seek today (green)

The promise of **God's presence** – from Abraham to Moses and now to Joshua (blue)

The promise of **God-given success and prosperity** (IF they keep the covenant!) (purple)

The **condition of the promise** (orange)

They send spies into the promise land – and we meet Rahab, who hid the spies.



AND Rahab gets mentioned in the New Testament as an example of faith and righteousness:

"By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient." Hebrews 11:31

"In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?" James 2:25

**Josh 2. 1-6**

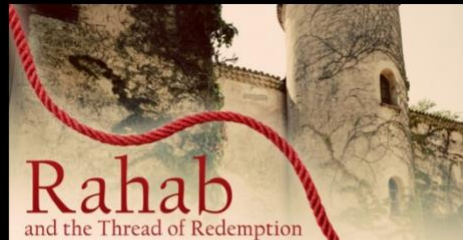
BUT ..... There's SOOOOO much more !



The German excavation of 1907-1909 found that on the north a short stretch of the lower city wall did not fall as everywhere else. A portion of that mudbrick wall was still standing to a height of 8 ft. What is more, there were houses built against the wall! It is quite possible that this is where Rahab's house was located. Since the city wall formed the back wall of the houses, the spies could have readily escaped.

### Rahab: Vital Statistics

- Rahab = Broad
- Prostitute/Conspirator
- Helped Israel's Spies from Being Caught
- Born: Circa 1400 BC
- Spouse: To be revealed
- Son: To be revealed
- Daughter-in-Law: To be revealed
- Contemporaries: Joshua

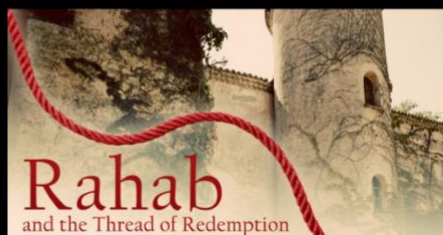


## Josh 6. 25

v25 "But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day."

Rahab, the Canaanite/Gentile prostitute not only lived with the Israelites after the Fall of Jericho in the 1400's BC but she married a Jewish man, Salmon, whose father had been with Moses.

Rahab and Salmon had a Son named Boaz who, also, intermarried with a Gentile named Ruth. The book of Ruth in the Old Testament is, perhaps, the oldest recorded love story. Ruth and Boaz had a child Obed who was the grandfather of King David



**MOST IMPORTANTLY,** Rahab the Prostitute/Harlot is a direct ancestor of Jesus of Nazareth, Our Saviour. Matthew's gospel opens with her name included in the genealogy of Jesus:

"This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was **Tamar**, Perez the father of Hezron, **Hezron** the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, **Amminadab** the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, **Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab**, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was **Ruth**, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife..."

Matthew 1:1-6

**Rahab**  
and the Thread of Redemption

**Tamar** .... who deceptively played a harlot in Genesis 38:12-23 .... And another scarlet cord is evident !!!  
**Ruth** .... From Moab – also, like Rahab, NOT Jewish.

In Matthew's gospel, 4 women are mentioned in the genealogy. This is quite rare – almost all genealogies are exclusively male:

- Tamar – she pretended to be a prostitute to get to sleep with her father in law
- Rahab – who was a prostitute in Jericho
- Ruth – who waited until middle aged Boaz was drunk before she sneaking into his bed
- Bathsheeba – who chose to bathe on her rooftop in full view of, amongst other places, the king's palace

We explored:

why the male descendants are dominant in genealogies – the household of the man was the family unit – hence why the genealogies are male. The household name was more important to them than the specific genetics – just a difference of emphasis between the Ancient Near East and us today.

levirate law and marriage – when a man dies, if he had no children his brother (usually the next brother in age) would marry his widow and any children would be considered as those of the dead brother – this was for care of the widow in later life and for passing down of inherited wealth. Boaz was not 'next in line' for Ruth, but he was in the family and so was a 'kinsman redeemer'. Tamar was cheated out of her inheritance, so she tricked her father in law, the one who had cheated her.

The genealogies in Matthew and Luke have differences – why? – some say that Matthew presents the paternal genealogy and Luke the maternal – but the words in the text don't fully support that. However, Talmud Hagiga 2 lists Heli as the father of Mary – so there may be possibility that this could be true. Some say that genealogical records were verbal and so often confused, so basically, it's a bit of a mess and probably neither are biologically accurate. Others suggest that there could be 2 genealogies – a physical one and a 'legal' or 'royal' one following the names of kings (I've never fully understood that suggestion!). Some suggest that Mary had no brothers, so Mary's father formally adopted Joseph so that his line and inheritance could pass to him (it was always to the male children)- this would be consistent with Levirate marriage laws. Another suggestion is that Heli— Joseph's father according to Luke's genealogy—and Jacob—Joseph's father according to Matthew's

genealogy—were either brothers or half-brothers. When one died, the other married his widow, producing Joseph and his offspring. This would leave Joseph with two fathers—both Heli and Jacob—one a natural father, and the other a legal father. From the text, we can't tell which one is his natural father and which one is his legal father (again – Levirite marriage).

And then ... we saw the Israelites enter the promised land:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqJIFF\\_eU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqJIFF_eU)



<sup>13</sup> And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD—the Lord of all the earth—**set foot in the Jordan**, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.”

<sup>14</sup> So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. <sup>15</sup> Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan **and their feet touched the water's edge**, <sup>16</sup> the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho.

We noted that the Jordan did not stop flowing until the priests had actually stepped into it – faith is sometimes about getting our feet wet rather than, like on the Red sea, waiting until we see that the water has parted.

We then considered a huge question – did God command and approve of genocide?

Deuteronomy chapter 7

<sup>1</sup>When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you— <sup>2</sup>and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then **you must destroy them totally**. Make no treaty with them, and **show them no mercy**. <sup>3</sup>Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, <sup>4</sup>for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. <sup>5</sup>This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. <sup>6</sup>For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

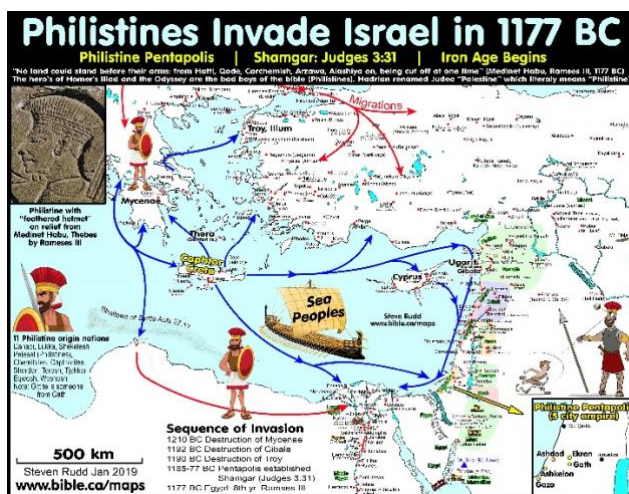
The last youtube clip gave us 2 possibilities: Israel as Gods agent for judgment on Canaanite wickedness and secondly the hyperbolic exaggeration of Ancient Near East writings. I added a 3<sup>rd</sup> from American theologian Walter Bruggeman – maybe the Jews THOUGHT that was what God wanted, but were mistaken (like Christians thinking Trump was God’s ‘saviour’). We too often suggest that God has decreed what we want to happen.

All 3 have different possibilities and consequences. We were encouraged NOT to simply choose one, but to keep the possibilities of all 3 alive in our minds.

### The book of Judges:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOYy8iCfIJ4>

A small diversion to look at the Philistines:



A seafaring people originally from the island of Crete (we know this by their burial customs being the same in Crete and near Israel.

Often a pirate people – and caused terror for the Egyptians in some eras of history.

The Jews were definitely NOT a seafaring people – part of their ongoing worldview was that God created order from chaos – back to Genesis 1 – the Spirit ‘hovered’ over the waters in Genesis 1.2. The Jewish worldview was that the waters were in chaos and God brought order. Their view of the battle of good and evil was that evil is seeking to turn the world back to chaos and water, or specifically the sea (with its unpredictability and constant movement), is a representative of that primordial chaos. So, sea = evil in the Jewish mindset. That means that the Philistines, as sea people, would have been seen by the Jews as more evil than all the land-dwelling tribes.

This understanding of the Jewish view of the sea is also critical in understanding Jesus walking on water (remember – as gods did in all surrounding civilizations) and more specifically calming the storm (which would have been seen more as a sea phenomenon than a wind phenomenon) thus demonstrating that Jesus not only has power and authority over the evil sea but more importantly is superior to it. All other nations had nature based gods who the people would seek to placate to get the weather phenomenon they wanted (and if you didn’t placate them sufficiently they’d send a storm or flood) – but THIS God, Jesus, simply commands and the sea (or wind/weather -but the Jews would have been more focussed on the sea) obeys.

## **1 Samuel**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJOju5Dw0V0>

and a quick introduction to the Temple – based on the design of the Tabernacle, designed by David but built by Solomon. Fundamental in Jewish thinking – it was the centre of their faith, civilisation, community, government and legal system. It was also symbolically the place where heaven touched earth – a ‘thin place’ where the barriers between heaven and earth were minimal.

More on the temple next week .....