



October 2/3, 2010
Hebrews 11
"Faith Lessons" Part 4
Pastor Gary Hamrick

This study is part four of a five part series. In this study we'll look at the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites taking Jericho and Rahab.

Israelites Crossing the Red Sea

1. This account is found in the book of Exodus, and centers on God's miraculous deliverance of the Israelites, who had been slaves for 400 years.
2. **Exodus 2:23-25** - *"The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them."*
 - a. God raised up Moses, a deliverer who would lead the people out of their slavery back to the Promised Land of Israel.
 - b. God used a series of Ten Plagues to break Pharaoh.
3. It's interesting to note that the plagues were God's direct assault against the false gods the Egyptians worshipped.
4. **Exodus 12:31-32** - *"During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me."*
5. **Exodus 13:17-18** - *"When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said,*

'If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.' So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea."

- a. The reason God didn't take the Israelites on the shortest route was because the shortest route was plagued with difficulty.
 - b. They would have faced war with the Philistines if they had gone the "easy" way and God knew they were not prepared for that, so he led them by way of the Red Sea.
6. The Faith Lesson we learn is that sometimes God takes us the longer route to do a deeper work in our hearts. (See [Exodus 14:21-31](#))

Israelites Taking Jericho

7. After the Israelites spent 40 years wandering the wilderness of the Sinai, because of their disobedience to God, Joshua finally brought the people into the Promised Land by crossing the Jordan River from east to west.
8. The first city they came to was Jericho.¹
9. In [Joshua 6:1-5](#), the Lord gives instructions on how to take the city.
- a. *"Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the LORD said to Joshua, 'See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in.' "*
10. [Joshua 6:15-16, 20](#)² - *"On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, 'Shout! For the*

¹ The city of Jericho is considered to be the oldest city in the world. Damascus, Syria is considered to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world.

² The archeological evidence supports the Biblical account. 1. [Joshua 6:5](#) - The wall will collapse and every man will "go up." The walls of Jericho were double walls built on an inclining rampart, so when they collapsed, the Israelites would have gone up. 2. [Joshua 6:18-19](#) says that only the precious metal was to be taken and put into the treasury of the Lord; nothing else was to be taken because the town was under God's judgment. Huge earthen jars full of grain were found in almost every building in Jericho, which suggests that the conquerors did not plunder the city. 3. [Joshua 6:24](#) indicates they were to "burn the whole city." Archeologists have found at the strata level, which dates to about 1400BC - the time of this account - a three-foot lay of ash covers the area of the entire city!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xU6sW74HvZs&feature=related>

LORD has given you the city!’ When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.”

11. The Faith Lesson is that the Israelites had faith in God and obeyed him even when God’s plan didn’t make sense.

Rahab

12. Rahab and her family were the only ones spared in the entire city of Jericho, and it was all because Rahab had faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even though she was a Gentile prostitute!
13. Joshua sent two spies³ into Jericho to do a reconnaissance mission before they took the city, and Rahab welcomed them at a brothel.
14. When Rahab found out they were Israelite spies, she made a bold statement about God’s reputation having preceded them, and that she has heard about the mighty miracles God had performed.⁴
 - a. **Joshua 2:11** - *“... for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.”*
15. She asked the spies to make a commitment to spare her life and the lives of her family when they came to take the city.
16. They gave her their word and they told her to place a red cord at the window of her home as a sign, so that when any Israelite saw the red cord, they would know to spare the home and its inhabitants.
 - a. **Joshua 6:22-23** - *“Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, ‘Go into the prostitutes house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her.’ So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.”*
17. Rahab had faith in the God who welcomes prostitutes, drunks, drug addicts, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, convicts, liars, cheats, and whatever label you can think of.

³ These spies were godly men, who went to the brothel to gather information and intelligence.

⁴ She heard about the miracles God had performed during the 40 years of Israel’s wilderness wandering: the food and water supply, the fact that their clothing and sandals didn’t wear out, the Red Sea crossing, etc.

18. She believed the God who replaces every label with a new one: Forgiven!
19. The Faith Lesson is that we need to leave a life of sin and have faith in the God who changes lives.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Hebrews 11:29-31](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. What was your reaction to Bill Maher's comments Pastor Gary heard in a recent interview with Bill O'Reilly on Fox News?
 - a. "Faith is the purposeful suspension of critical thinking."⁵
 - b. Have people who reject faith in Christ and the Word of God labeled you a non-thinker, anti-intellectual, etc.?
 - c. How did you respond to their insults?
 - d. Have these situations forced you to become a better apologist?⁶
 - e. How do you think Bill Maher and others would react if they told you that the Israelites walked across the Reed Sea through six-inches of marshy, only to have you respond that this would have been a greater miracle since the entire Egyptian army was drowned in six inches of water?!
4. Spend time talking about these quotes from Pastor Gary's teaching.
 - a. "Faith is not asking you to make a leap into the darkness; it's stepping into the light."
 - b. "Faith is not opposed to reason or to evidence, but faith will not be reduced to reason or evidence; it's about exercising trust and confidence."
5. Review and discuss [Exodus 2:23-25](#); [Exodus 12:31-32](#); [13:17-18](#).
 - a. When you read that God led the Israelites the long way, instead of the 110-mile, thirteen-day journey, does it cause you to think about the way the Lord has led you in life?
 - b. Spend time talking about times when you wanted the shortest route, the quickest fix, and the easiest solution.
 - c. How did you come to find that, in the end, God really knew best?

⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-S77CUFQPPg> (September 30, 2010 Fox News - Maher's quote is found at approximately 6:10 of the 6:52 interview)

⁶ "[One] who speaks or writes in defense of another." <http://1828.mshaffer.com/d/search/word/apologist>

- d. Looking back, can you now see that God was at work to perfect your heart and demonstrate his power?
 - e. Has there been an illness, a struggle in your marriage or other relationship, some ongoing problem, etc., that makes you ask the question, “How long, Lord?”
6. Read and discuss [Psalm 13:1-6](#).
7. Read and discuss [Joshua 6:1-5](#).
- a. If you were a soldier in the Israelite army, what would you have thought about God’s “battle” plan for victory?
 - b. Allow the people in your group to share experiences about times when they have felt foolish when they followed God’s leading.
8. The story of Rahab the prostitute is a common one, and similar aspects can be seen in people whose past lives have done great damage to them, but they still retain a hunger for God, and they long for a change that only God can bring.
- a. Allow time for people to share their story or the life story of someone they know that mirrors Rahab’s story.
 - b. How has the Lord worked in your life to remove your “label” and replace it with a new one – Forgiven?
9. Close your time with prayer and allow the Holy Spirit to help each person: trust God to lead them, even when it’s the long route; trust God even when his ways seem to make no sense; and to determine to live a life of faith and trust in the God who changes lives.