



A Systematic Expository Study on the book of JOSHUA

STUDY 4: DILIGENT SEARCH AND STUDY BEFORE PROGRAMMED EXECUTION

Joshua 2:1-7.

God's Word is a Book of wisdom, giving us divine blueprints for living a successful life. While the word of God teaches us not to lean on our understanding but to trust in God, it also encourages us not to throw away common sense as we seek to perform our God-given duty (Proverbs 16:20; Luke 14:31). The passage of study today appears to be a simple narrative. Joshua sends out two spies to secretly search out Jericho. They came to the house of a harlot where they hope to gather necessary information about the city. The king, notified about them and their mission, sent to capture them but Rahab hid them and told a lie to protect them. The messengers of the king left the house and pursued after them to overtake them! A simple story that contains great and important lessons.

Simple as it appears to be, the passage raises a number of questions in the mind of the Christian. Why did Joshua send out spies? Didn't God say, "**Arise, go over ... unto the land which I do give to ... Israel**"? (Joshua 1:2). Should he not have instructed them to move forward immediately especially since the people had pledged their obedience? With faith in God, did Joshua need to make any investigation? Why did he send only two spies when Moses had sent twelve some years earlier to search out the land? Why did these Israelitish spies go to the house of a harlot? Would the Lord use an unbeliever (Rahab) to accomplish His purpose? How can we understand Rahab's unpatriotic action against her native land? Will her lies be justified in the sight of God? Should we do evil that good may come? If the spies had real faith in God why did they take cover, hidden under the stalks of flax upon the roof?

Much wisdom is hidden in the whole procedure. Christian leaders who work in sensitive areas of the world will learn and receive wisdom. The just will be taught and will increase in learning (Proverbs 9:9). To be victorious in spiritual warfare, to be fruitful in Christian ministry and evangelism, to be successful in capturing Jericho or bringing down the strongholds, to be triumphant over peculiar trials and temptations, we need to read Joshua carefully, learn prayerfully and wisely apply and practise what we learn. Come without pre-conceived ideas and pray that God will open your eyes to discover the secret of spiritual breakthrough.

SEARCH FOR USEFUL INFORMATION

Joshua 2:1; Numbers 13:1-3, 17, 21; Numbers 14:6-8,38; Deuteronomy 1:22,23; Matthew 10:1,16; Job 29:16; Proverbs 25:2; Proverbs 20:18; Ecclesiastes 10:15.

Joshua sent out two spies to search out and obtain useful information concerning the city of Jericho – the gateway into the Promised Land. God's promise, presence and power with us is not an excuse or licence to neglect prudence and necessary preparations in performing our duty. Moses had earlier sent twelve spies to search out the whole land. The present search was only for a city and so two spies were sufficient. We need to get all necessary information before embarking on a new assignment. The leader may not always be able to get the information himself. Leaders often must see with other people's eyes, which makes it necessary that they be very prayerful and careful in the choice of those who represent them. These two men readily and willingly accepted to go upon this hazardous enterprise. Dependent upon the power and wisdom of God, zealous for sacrificial service on behalf of God's people, they promptly obeyed their leader, Joshua.

God does not place any premium on ignorance at any time. In order to accomplish what God wants us to do, we must diligently acquire all the information or knowledge necessary for its accomplishment. There can be no effectiveness in ministry without some effort, no progress without prudence and preparation, no extraordinary achievements without using the ordinary gifts God has given us. In all areas of life, you must **look before you leap**. Before you cross Jordan, be well informed about Jericho on the other side of Jordan. Once again, **look before you leap**.

SUPERVISION: AN UNUSUAL ILLUSTRATION.

Joshua 2:2,3; Revelation 1:5,6; Ezekiel 3:17; 33:6,7; John 6:39; 17:12; Hebrews 13:17b; Acts 20:28-31; Revelation 3:2; 1 Kings 20:39,40.

Can we learn anything from the vigilance, watchfulness and alertness of the king of Jericho? Yes we can and indeed we must. We are kings and we are watchmen over the sheep in Christ's fold. Christ Himself has taught us through His unparalleled Example as a Shepherd who watched carefully over His sheep. As watchmen, we must be vigilant so we can protect the children of God from spiritual danger. We must be prompt in making urgent investigation if we hear of anything that may threaten the spiritual (and even physical) life of any of the brethren.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, does not want us to forget that it is **"while men slept"** (that) **his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.**" (Matthew 13:25). When Church leaders sleep, Satan, our enemy and Christ's enemy, will have ample chance to plant his children and emissaries in the Church and among the workers.

We must not allow spies from the enemy camp, people from outside, with another spirit, preaching another gospel, to infiltrate and destroy the Church. **"False brethren who come in privily to spy out our liberty"** or our unity and source of our strength must not be allowed to stay in our midst undetected (Galatians 2:4,5). No one with false doctrine, **"speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them"** should be allowed to hide in our congregation (Acts 20:29,30).

In our personal and spiritual lives, we must learn to act promptly like this king. Immediately we receive the first alarms of conscience of the approach of temptation, we must quickly nip the danger while it is still in the bud. Arrest the situation while you may; if you wait, the allowance of one sin will lead to other sins and cause total defeat and irreparable ruin. **"Watch and pray"**.

SERIES OF UNRECOGNISED INIQUITIES

Joshua 2:4-6; Romans 3:7,8; Genesis 31:17-19, 22-24, 30-37; 1 Samuel 15:19-21; 21:1,2,8,9 with 22:17-22; Jeremiah 7:8-11; Romans 6:1,2.

The two spies "came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there" (Joshua 2:1). They did not go there to commit sin, otherwise God would not have protected them. Knowing that many people could be there with much loose talk going on, securing needed information would be easy. **"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord"** (Psalm 37:23). Rahab happened to be the only one in Jericho who had desire and decision to become part of God's covenant people. And she gave the information that the spies were seeking to know (Joshua 2:9-11,24).

But she told a lie! Was her lie justified and approved by God? No. Doesn't the success of her protective lie show that her lie was not counted as a sin? No. Though water flowed from the rock which Moses smote in his anger, yet that was no proof that God approved of his wrong action in smiting the rock twice. God sovereignly overruled Rahab's conduct, yet that did not vindicate her. If Rahab had told the truth, would not the spies have lost their lives? No. The same God who dried up the hand of Jeroboam when he ordered the arrest of the man of God from Bethel (1 Kings 13:4), who sent an angel to destroy 185,000 Assyrians in one night (Isaiah 37:36), who used two angels to blindfold the Sodomites and protected Lot when he later went out to warn his in-laws (Genesis 11:19-14); the same God who protected Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the furnace of fire (Daniel 3:22-25), who preserved Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6:22,23), who delivered Peter from the prison miraculously (Acts 12:5-11) and sent an angel to smite Herod with sudden death (Acts 12:20-23) could have delivered the spies. God does not need us to commit sin in order to fulfil His holy purpose.

Rahab had no Bible to read, no religious book, tract or literature. She had no preacher or teacher of God's righteous truth. She had only heard of the power of the God of Israel (Joshua 2:9-11). Her sin of lying is not an excuse for a Christian who has been taught and **"nourished up in the words of faith and of a good doctrine"** (1 Timothy 4:6). We have no excuse; **a good motive can never render a sinful action desirable or justified.** Those who sin, thinking they are doing good thereby are still guilty before God. Sins of ignorance must be confessed, forsaken and atoned for if we want to maintain a right relationship with God (Leviticus 4:13-15, 20, 22-26, 27-29,35).

*If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we'd like to hear from you.
You can email the pastor@deeperlife-liverpool.org.uk with your comments.*