

Lesson 3—September 20, 2026

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 108

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Joshua 6; 8:26; 10:28-43; 11:1-23; Deuteronomy 7:1-26

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 11:6-9, 16-23

Key Verse: For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses. (Joshua 11:20, KJV)

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For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (Joshua 11:20, NIV)

Fighting among the Nations



Teacher's Resource Kit

- Townsend Press Targeted Teaching Tips for Sunday School Teachers
- Townsend Press Flashlight Commentary
- Bible Studies for Adults
- Bible Studies for Young Adults

LESSON AIMS

Upon the completion of this lesson, students should be able to do the following:

1. Discover that God is with us in both our triumphs and struggles.
2. Understand that God guides us each step of the way in life.
3. Show faithfulness in all that they do and praise God.



KEY TERMS

Attacked (verse 7)—Hebrew: *nâphal* (naw-fal'): overwhelmed; cast down; knocked out; “fell upon” (KJV). God commissioned Joshua to attack the massive army of the Canaanite kings at the waters of Merom.

Captured (verse 17)—Hebrew: *lâkad* (lawkad'): seized; caught; grasped; “took” (KJV). Joshua captured all the kings from Mount Halak toward Seir and Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon.

Deliver (verse 6)—Hebrew: *nâthan* (naw-than'): to bestow, bring forth, give up (over); “hand . . . over” (NIV). The Lord informed Joshua not to be afraid of the kings of Shimron and Akshaph or the Canaanites, the Amorites, Hittites, or Perizzites because He was going to give them into his hands the next day.

Inheritance (verse 23)—Hebrew: *nachălâh* (nah-khah-lah):

possession; estate, patrimony, portion, or an heirloom. God gave the land of Canaan to the people of Israel as an inheritance.

Mercy (verse 20)—Hebrew: *techinnâh* (*tekhin-naw'*): supplication for “favour” (KJV); grace; entreaty; plea. The Lord did not allow there to be any mercy offered to the cities against which Joshua waged war.

***(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 4)**

Preparing the Lesson

- Refer to the *Townsend Press Targeted Teaching Tips for Sunday School Teachers* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and “Your World!”).
- This guide offers two options for leading your class.
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- See page 7 for how to plan each week’s lesson.
- See page 6 for a student *Personal Growth Plan*.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

As with Joshua, God is with us in our triumphs and in our struggles by guiding us each step of the way so that we can be faithful in all that we do and praise God.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Joshua 11 summarizes Israel’s battles in the land and brings the conquest narrative to a close. The text presents sweeping language of victory that offers parallel to the struggles and victories of African Americans who were battling for their constitutional rights throughout the mid-twentieth century. Rather than glorifying destruction, the passage reflects Israel’s later theological reflection on obedience, identity, and failure. This lesson helps teachers guide learners through careful engagement

with difficult Scripture. The battles are framed as part of a larger covenant story in which faithfulness to God is central. The text looks backward, interpreting past events considering Israel’s later struggles with idolatry and assimilation. Although African Americans in the mid-twentieth century did not face idolatry, there were many experiences of assimilation that have impacted our communities well into the twenty-first century. The lesson invites reflection on how Scripture speaks through complexity as it spoke through the hearts of African Americans as they fought for their rights. God’s presence remained central for the Israelites as well as the African American community.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

Joshua 11 was written long after Israel had settled in the land. The author reflects on the conquest from the perspective of later generations who struggled to remain faithful to the covenant. The language of total defeat underscores the seriousness of covenant loyalty rather than offering a complete historical record.

Deuteronomy provides the theological framework for Joshua. Through Moses, Israel was commanded to drive out the nations and avoid treaties that would lead to idolatry. Obedience brought life and stability, while disobedience led to loss and disorder. After Moses’ death, Joshua inherited this mandate and led the Israelites across the Jordan into Canaan. His leadership is consistently described as acting just as the Lord commanded Moses, reinforcing continuity between the two important leaders.

Historically, Israel encountered powerful Canaanite coalitions. Joshua 11 describes the northern campaign against Jabin of Hazor and his allies. Victory came through obedience to God rather than military strength alone. Joshua 11 functions as cautionary reflection rather than celebration of violence. The text urges loyalty to God as the essential foundation for Israel’s identity and survival.

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Have you ever struggled with a biblical passage that made you uncomfortable?
2. Why do you think Scripture includes difficult stories rather than hiding them?
3. How can faith remain strong when understanding feels incomplete?
4. What is an example of how you have responded when God warned you about something?
5. How did the warning take place? Was it through a friend, a dream, or someone with whom you did not know?
6. How has God brought stability into your life through obedience?

INSIGHTS

Joshua 11:20 emphasizes God's sovereignty within covenant history. The text calls attention to faithfulness rather than military success. Joshua modeled unwavering obedience, carrying out everything the Lord commanded through Moses. His leadership demonstrated that Israel's victories depended not on their own strength but on their response to God's directives. The people followed Joshua's lead, and together they experienced the fulfillment of God's promises. Israel's history reveals seasons of faithfulness and failure. Joshua 11 preserves a moment of alignment between leaders and people, offering later generations a standard to remember. This insight helps students approach difficult passages with humility.

EXPLORATION

This lesson invites reflection on how believers engage challenging Scripture with honesty and faith. Difficult passages often raise questions about God, justice, and obedience. Rather than avoiding these texts, faith communities are called to wrestle with them thoughtfully. Teachers can guide students to consider what practices help sustain trust when understanding feels incomplete. Prayer, shared discussion, and humility before Scripture create space for growth rather than fear. Honest wrestling does not weaken faith; it can deepen trust by acknowledging God's mystery. This

passage encourages interpretation grounded in prayer and community, reminding believers that faith matures through patience, listening, and commitment to God's purposes.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY FOR THE TEACHER

Commentary on Joshua 11:6-9

KJV

6 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

7 So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them.

8 And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephothmaim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

9 And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

NIV

6 The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them, slain, over to Israel. You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots."

7 So Joshua and his whole army came against them suddenly at the Waters of Merom and attacked them,

8 and the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel. They defeated them and pursued them all the way to Greater Sidon, to Misrephoth Maim, and to the Valley of Mizpah on the east, until no survivors were left.

9 Joshua did to them as the LORD had directed: He hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots.

God's word to Joshua comes at a moment of significant threat. A coalition of northern kings

has gathered with “a large army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore” (verse 4). The military imbalance would have been overwhelming. Yet God speaks first, addressing what Joshua might feel: “Do not be afraid of them.”

This command echoes earlier in Joshua’s commission. Fear is natural when facing overwhelming opposition, but it must not determine action. God’s promise frames everything: “by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them, slain, over to Israel.” The outcome is assured not by Israel’s military strength but by God’s intervention.

The instructions that follow are specific and strategic: “You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots.” Hamstringing horses means cutting their leg tendons, rendering them unable to be used in warfare. Burning chariots destroy military equipment. These commands serve a theological purpose: Israel must not depend on military technology for security. Trust belongs to God alone, not to superior weaponry. Joshua obeys immediately. The element of surprise is part of the strategy, but the key phrase follows: “and the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel.” Victory comes from divine action, not human planning.

The pursuit is thorough, the geographical details in verse 8 emphasize completeness. The threat is removed entirely. The text attributes this to God: “Joshua did to them as the LORD had directed.”

This passage raises complex questions about violence, divine sovereignty, and human agency. Rather than providing simple answers, invite students to sit with the tension. How do we understand texts where God commands actions that disturb us? Faithful engagement means neither avoiding difficulty nor accepting it uncritically.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question(s):**

What difficulty or challenge are you facing in your

life today? How might trusting God’s presence help you respond with courage rather than fear?

- **Young Adult Question(s):**

Do you recognize God in this text? Was ethnic cleansing necessary to fulfill God’s promise to His chosen people?

Commentary on Joshua 11:16-20

KJV

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;

17 Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.

18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle.

20 For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

NIV

16 So Joshua took this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah and the mountains of Israel with their foothills,

17 from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and put them to death.

18 Joshua waged war against all these kings for a long time.

19 Except for the Hivites living in Gibeon, not one city made a treaty of peace with the Israelites, who took them all in battle.

20 For it was the LORD himself who hardened

their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Israel's conquest is summarized with sweeping geographical language. "So Joshua took this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah and the mountains of Israel." The description emphasizes comprehensiveness. Joshua's military campaign covered extensive territory, establishing Israel throughout the land.

Yet verse 18 adds crucial context: "Joshua waged war against all these kings for a long time." This was not quick or easy. The idealized summary of conquest in earlier chapters is now qualified. Possessing the land required sustained effort, patience, and ongoing faithfulness. This detail aligns with the more complex picture found elsewhere in Scripture, including Judges, which acknowledges that conquest was incomplete.

Verse 19 notes an exception: "Except for the Hivites living in Gibeon, not one city made a treaty of peace with the Israelites." Gibeon's story (Joshua 9) shows that treaty was possible. Other cities chose war. The text explains this theologically: "For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel."

This language troubles many readers. How can a loving God harden hearts? The theological concept appears elsewhere in Scripture, notably with Pharaoh in Exodus. It reflects ancient Israel's understanding that God is sovereign over all things, including human decisions. Although we may understand divine sovereignty differently, the text clearly attributes outcomes to God's purposes.

The stated reason is equally difficult: "so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses." This language reflects the historical context of covenant faithfulness and warnings against idolatry. The attention to faithfulness and the caution regarding idolatry are also lessons for us as believers as we live according to God's will and

serving God with our whole hearts. The narrative functions as theological interpretation, explaining why Israel must remain distinct from surrounding peoples and practices. Such a distinctness can apply to our lives as believers. In fact, God requires that we operate as a distinct people in a world that engulfs sameness.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question(s):**

How do you respond when Scripture raises difficult questions? What helps you engage challenging passages faithfully rather than avoiding them or oversimplifying their meaning?

- **Young Adult Question(s):**

How does conflict over holy land play out today?

Commentary on Joshua 11:21-23

KJV

21 And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.

22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

NIV

21 At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns.

22 No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive.

23 So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war.

The passage concludes by noting Joshua's defeat of the Anakites, a people remembered in Israel's tradition as giants who once terrified the spies Moses sent into Canaan (Numbers 13:33). The earlier generation refused to enter the land because of fear. Now, under Joshua's leadership, Israel defeats what their parents feared. This reversal demonstrates that faithfulness leads to what fear once prevented.

The text notes that "no Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive." This detail is significant. Complete elimination did not occur. The narrative acknowledges limits to conquest, which becomes important in later biblical texts. The Philistine cities mentioned here will play major roles in Israel's story, particularly during the time of David when Goliath, a giant from Gath, challenges Israel.

The final verse provides theological summary: "So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war." The phrase "just as the LORD had directed" emphasizes obedience. Joshua fulfilled what God commanded. The land becomes "inheritance," a covenantal term indicating permanent gift rather than temporary possession. Most significantly, "the land had rest from war." Rest (Hebrew: *shaqat*) suggests peace, quietness, and an end from conflict. This rest fulfills God's promise and provides what the people desperately needed after years of wandering and warfare. Yet readers of Joshua know this rest was not permanent. Judges will soon describe renewed conflict and spiritual decline.

Physical rest from war was real but temporary. Spiritual rest in God's presence remains available across all circumstances. The passage also reminds us that God's faithfulness is constant even when our obedience is imperfect. Joshua's generation experienced God's promise partially fulfilled,

pointing forward to fuller rest found ultimately in Christ. How do we live faithfully while waiting for God's complete restoration? It is also important to note that God's rest leans into a process of trust.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question(s):**

Where do you long for rest in your life? How might trusting God's promises help you move toward peace, even after experiencing seasons of struggle or uncertainty?

- **Young Adult Question(s):**

What does it look like to trust God's promises when the process of getting there feels longer or harder than expected?

LIFE APPLICATION

- **Refer to Adult Book**

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—Identify a situation in your life that feels complicated or unresolved. Spend time this week reflecting on how God is present with you in it. Write a brief prayer or journal entry expressing your questions and believe that your honesty with God will deepen your faith and spiritual growth.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—Many people struggle with faith when they encounter violence or injustice. Share how taking Scripture seriously, even when it raises hard questions, has shaped your trust in God. Make space for hopeful conversation and invite others to explore a faith that asks questions while continuing to trust God's promises.

- **Refer to Young Adult Book**

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—Even when we're afraid, God is always with us. Our lives are a living witness to our Creator's faithfulness. Meditate on a time when you felt scared, unsure, or unsettled

about a situation and how God intervened to assure you of His presence. Share your experience with a trusted friend or classmate.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

The violent narratives in our biblical texts shouldn't be excluded from the lectionary. As a church, unpacking these atrocities gives us space to grow and engage in open dialogue. Churches should consider inviting local theologians and

academicians to talk candidly about these "texts of terror" from various points of view.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, September 27, 2026, is "Joining Forces with Unlikely Allies." The Devotional Reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the Background Scripture is Joshua 2; 6:16-25, and the Print Passage is Joshua 2:8-13; 6:16-17.



Closing Prayer

Lord, guide us as we engage in difficult Scripture with humility and faith. Teach us to seek Your purposes beyond our understanding and ability. Your presence amid complexity. Strengthen our commitment to faithfulness and discernment as we follow You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY , September 21	"Welcoming Strangers"	(Joshua 2:1-7)
TUESDAY , September 22	"Faith without Works Is Dead"	(James 2:18-26)
WEDNESDAY , September 23	"May the Nations Know God's Salvation"	(Psalm 67)
THURSDAY , September 24	"Faith to Live By"	(Hebrews 11:1-2, 29-31)
FRIDAY , September 25	"God Shows No Partiality"	(Acts 10:34-48)
SATURDAY , September 26	"Rahab's Faith in Israel's God"	(Joshua 2:8-14)
SUNDAY , September 27	"Rahab Is Spared"	(Joshua 6:6-17)

INTERACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH

YOUNG ADULT FOCUS

This lesson plan provides tools to support an interactive teaching approach for today's lesson. The focus is on student-teacher involvement. Teachers may formulate the lesson plan for use with the *Bible Studies for Young Adults* quarterly.

Materials Needed:

- Blank paper and colored markers
- Bibles
- Sticky notes
- Smartphone or device with GPS/map app

Interaction—Introducing the Lesson (10 minutes)

- Introduce today's topic: "Fighting among the Nations."
- Have someone read aloud the "Life Happens" section on page 17 and then, as a class, discuss the related questions.
- Share the Unifying Principle: "As with Joshua, God is with us in our triumphs and in our struggles by guiding us each step of the way so that we can be faithful in all that we do and praise God."

Exploring the Word (25-30 minutes)

- Begin with a prayer, asking for guidance and understanding.
- Have students read Joshua 11:6-9 and Joshua

11:16-23 aloud, with different people reading different verses.

- Briefly discuss the historical and cultural context of these passages.
- Watch the video by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie—"The Danger of a Single Story"—at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg&t=212s>.
- Have students discuss in groups for 5 minutes then share insights with the class.
- Summarize the key points from the lesson.
- Allow participants to share any final thoughts or questions.

Life Application (5 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your Life" section on page 20.
- Ask students to reflect on this proverb in relation to the lesson: "Until the lion learns to tell his own story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." What role does power play in storytelling in this week's scripture?

Life Response (5 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your World!" section on page 20.
- Encourage the students to share their wonderings and concerns about the text.
- Close in prayer and remind the students to prepare for next week's lesson.

Lesson 4—September 27, 2026

DEVOTIONAL READING: Matthew 25:31–46

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Joshua 2; 6:16–25; Matthew 1:5; James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 2:8–13; 6:16–17

Key Verse: And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. (Joshua 6:17, KJV)

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The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. (Joshua 6:17, NIV)

Joining Forces with Unlikely Allies



Teacher's Resource Kit

- Townsend Press Targeted Teaching Tips for Sunday School Teachers
- Townsend Press Flashlight Commentary
- Bible Studies for Adults
- Bible Studies for Young Adults

LESSON AIMS

Upon the completion of this lesson, students should be able to do the following:

1. Understand how God works using unlikely means.
2. Discover God's ways by studying the stories of His acts of salvation.
3. Recognize God's hand in the events of their lives.



KEY TERMS

Accursed (6:17)—Hebrew: *chêrem* (khay'-rem): banned; completely destroyed; exterminated; consecrated, dedicated, or "devoted" (NIV) for destruction. God declared the destruction of the entire city, but He spared Rahab and her household for her protection of the spies sent by Joshua.

Courage (2:11)—Hebrew: *rûwach* (roo'-akh): spirit, wind, breath; figuratively, life or spirit; vivacity, vigor.

Faint (2:9)—Hebrew: *mûwg* (moog): to melt, literally and figuratively; to fear, be fainthearted; flow down; "melting in fear" (NIV). Rahab informed the spies that those who lived in the country feared (and did faint because of) the spies.

Kindness (2:12)—Hebrew: *cheçed* (kheh'-sed): piety; goodness; favor; mercy; reproach.

Shout (6:16)—Hebrew: *rûwa'* (roo-ah'): to raise a sound, cry out; split the ears, used in the sense of blowing an alarm, or crying out.

***(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 4)**

Preparing the Lesson

- Refer to the *Townsend Press Targeted Teaching Tips for Sunday School Teachers* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week's student assignments ("Your Life" and "Your World!").
- This guide offers two options for leading your class.
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- See page 7 for how to plan each week's lesson.
- See page 6 for a student *Personal Growth Plan*.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

We can learn about how God works using unlikely means by studying the stories of God's acts of salvation so that we can recognize the Lord's hand in the events of our lives.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Rahab appears in the story of Israel at a moment of risk and transition. As Israel prepares to enter the land, God's work unfolds through a woman who exists on the margins of society. Rahab is identified as a Canaanite and a prostitute, yet she demonstrates remarkable discernment by recognizing the power and presence of Israel's God.

This lesson helps teachers explore how God's purposes are often advanced through unlikely allies. Rahab's decision to hide the spies is not motivated by self-preservation alone, but by faith in what God is doing. She chooses allegiance to God at great personal risk, trusting in promises she has only heard about. The lesson invites reflection on how faith is lived out through action. Rahab's courage challenges comfortable definitions of righteousness and high-lights hospitality as a faithful response. Teachers can guide learners to consider how God may be working through people and situations they least expect. Rahab's story invites exploration of how faith emerges in unexpected places and how God's

grace extends beyond human boundaries. This lesson challenges assumptions about who is "in" and who is "out" regarding God's work. For adult learners, Rahab's example encourages openness to recognizing faith wherever God plants it.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

Joshua 2 is set during Israel's reconnaissance of Jericho. It describes two spies sent by Joshua to scout Jericho around 1406 BC, shortly before Israel's entry into Canaan. They lodge with Rahab who was living in the city wall. She hides the spies from the king's agents. It is Rahab's protection, and her knowledge of Israel's earlier victories, that shapes the mission's success. Rahab's home also becomes the setting for God's work. While the spies arrive with military intent, the narrative shifts quickly to Rahab's theological confession.

Rahab acknowledges the Lord as God "in heaven above and on earth beneath." Her confession anticipates Israel's victory and reflects deep spiritual insight. Rahab's inclusion in later biblical texts underscores the significance of her faith. She appears in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:5), is commended for her works (James 2:25), and is listed among the faithful (Hebrews 11:31). These references show that God's grace transforms past circumstances and creates new futures.

As a woman of great faith who trusted God for her life and her future, she is a touching example of choosing obedience to God against the odds. Her obedience to God landed her in key places in Scripture that serve to remind us of the importance of following God's will.

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Have you ever been surprised by someone who demonstrated courage or faith when you least expected it?
2. Why do you think Scripture highlights stories of unlikely individuals?
3. What risks are involved in extending hospitality or protection to others?
4. In what ways has Rahab's story influenced you to walk in obedience to God?

5. How was God's grace displayed in Rahab's life?
6. What are three ways in which you can actualize your faith similar to Rahab's demonstration?

INSIGHTS

Joshua 6:17 reveals that Rahab's deliverance is tied to her faithful response. Faith is not merely internal belief but active trust expressed through courageous action. This insight invites reflection on how faith becomes visible through obedience, even in difficult circumstances. Rahab's confession reveals that faith can emerge from hearing about God's works. She becomes a model of transformative faith. Her story teaches: (1) God welcomes anyone—regardless of background—who turns to God in trust; (2) Faith often requires courageous, counter cultural obedience; and (3) God can weave redemption from the most unexpected lives; Rahab becomes an ancestor of King David and Jesus. Her faith invites bold trust in God, resisting cultural pressures, and believing that God can rewrite any story.

EXPLORATION

This lesson encourages reflection on how faith challenges boundaries. In spite of Rahab's personal circumstances, she exemplified her faith to God through her commitment to and courage in hiding the two spies. Her faith speaks volumes about her character and is a representation of living purposefully. Where might God be calling the church to recognize faith outside familiar categories? How do hospitality and discernment reflect trust in God's work? This lesson invites reflection on hospitality as spiritual practice. Rahab welcomed strangers at great personal risk. How might God be calling us to extend radical welcome? What would it look like to practice hospitality that reflects God's inclusive grace?

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY FOR THE TEACHER

Commentary on Joshua 2:8-13

KJV

8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;
9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is

fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

NIV

8 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof

9 and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.

10 We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.

11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

12 "Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign

13 that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death."

Rahab climbs to her roof to speak with the spies before they sleep. Her timing is deliberate as nighttime provides cover, and privacy allows honest conversation. What she says next reveals the depth of her understanding. “I know that the LORD has given you this land,” she begins. This is not speculation or hope. It is conviction. Rahab has reached a conclusion about God’s purposes based on what she has heard.

She continues by describing the fear that has gripped Jericho: “a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.” The Hebrew word for “melting” (*mug*) suggests liquefying or dissolving. Fear has not merely worried the people; it has undone them. Their confidence has collapsed. What makes this remarkable is that Jericho was a fortified city with defensive walls. Yet psychological terror has already breached their defenses.

Rahab explains the source of this fear in verse 10. These victories demonstrate that God’s power continues beyond the exodus event. For Rahab, hearing leads to believing. She has not witnessed these events personally, but testimony has convinced her. Her response differs dramatically from her neighbors. While others in Jericho react with paralyzing fear, Rahab responds with faith. She recognizes that Israel’s God is real and powerful, and she chooses to align herself with God’s purposes rather than resist.

For teachers, this section highlights how God can work through hearing testimony. Rahab’s faith emerges from stories told about God’s acts. This encourages believers to share their own experiences of God’s faithfulness, trusting that someone listening may respond as Rahab did.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question(s):**

Who do you tend to overlook or underestimate in your community or daily life? Ask God to help you see where faith may be growing in unexpected people around you.

Who are you asking God to protect or to restore? Think of someone and pray for that person. Then, trust God to work in their life.

- **Young Adult Question(s):**

Rahab’s allyship was a sacrifice. How do you think Rahab’s family reacted to her working with the spies?

How do you think Rahab felt being the only house spared after her entire city was destroyed?

Commentary on Joshua 6:16-17

KJV

16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

NIV

16 The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, “Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!

17 “The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent.”

When the walls of Jericho fell, Joshua’s instructions took effect. The city and everything in it was the Lord’s and the people were not to use this victory for personal gain. The battle was God’s to fight and win, not for Israel’s bragging rights. However, one name is spoken with mercy: Rahab. She and her entire household would be spared because she hid the Israelite spies.

This is where Rahab’s earlier faith and risk meet God’s rescue plan. Her protection of the spies was not a small favor; it was a costly act of alignment with God’s purposes. The promise made to her came just as the Lord’s judgement was about to be rendered

on her nation. Yet, God's faithfulness shows up not only in judgment, but in deliverance and grace.

By acting with courage, discernment, and loyalty to God when others in Jericho resisted him, Rahab emerges as an unexpected leader in biblical times. Her willingness to follow God, even at great personal risk, offers the modern church a powerful example of faith that moves beyond words into bold action.

Rahab's story also challenges the way we evaluate people. The church must be careful not to write people off as hopeless or unworthy. She is labeled by her past, yet God sees her present trust and her future purpose. Scripture later remembers her as an example of faith, and her name becomes part of the larger story of salvation. For believers, this section invites two responses. First, it calls us to honor our commitments. The spies promise is kept and God's word is obeyed. Second, it calls us to practice hospitality shaped by God's heart. God makes room for the outsider who turns toward Him. In Christ, we see this same mercy extended to all who believe.

The siege of Jericho reaches its climax on the seventh day. After circling the city seven times, the priests sound the trumpet blast and Joshua commands: "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!" The verb tense is significant—God has given, present perfect. The outcome is already determined. What remains is for Israel to receive what God has granted.

Joshua immediately adds a crucial instruction: "The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD." The Hebrew word *herem* describes something set apart for God, often through destruction. Nothing in Jericho is to be taken for personal gain. This is not a raid for plunder but an act of devotion. The city and its contents belong to God, not to Israel.

Yet one exception stands out, Rahab and her family in verse 17. In the midst of total destruction, mercy is extended to one household. Rahab's earlier act of faith and kindness is honored. The promise made to her is kept. While the city falls and its inhabitants perish, Rahab and her family are protected.

The text does not hide Rahab's identity. She is explicitly called "the prostitute" even in the moment of her salvation. Scripture does not sanitize her story

or pretend she came from a respectable background. Yet God's grace reaches her anyway. Her past does not disqualify her from God's mercy. Instead, her faith makes her part of Israel's future.

Later texts confirm that Rahab was fully incorporated into Israel. She married an Israelite named Salmon and became the mother of Boaz, who would marry Ruth. Through this line, she becomes an ancestor of King David and ultimately of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5). What begins as protection from judgment becomes full inclusion in God's covenant people. Rahab's rescue points forward to the gospel message that God saves those who turn to Him in faith, regardless of their past.



DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question(s):**

Is there someone you have written off because of their past? Ask God to refocus your view and look for one way to show them hospitality.

- **Young Adult Question(s):**

Has God ever used someone unexpected in your life to show you something about His character? What did that experience teach you about how God works?

LIFE APPLICATION

- **Refer to Adult Book**

(See Student lesson "Your Life" section)

—Think about someone outside of your usual circle this week. Take a step to show them kindness or care. Pray for courage to act faithfully and for openness to see "others" differently. Reflect on Rahab's faith and think about what it teaches you about obedience to God and courage.

(See Student lesson "Your World!" section)

—Share with someone outside of your congregation a time God surprised you by using an unlikely person to help you. Invite them to read Joshua 2 and talk about Rahab's faith. Ask to pray with them and tell them about

Jesus who welcomes “outsiders” and makes new beginnings possible.

- **Refer to Young Adult Book**

(See Student lesson “Your Life” section)

—Rahab was a committed ally, a co-conspirator in service of God’s plan for God’s people. She did this with courage and at great risk of being shunned further in her larger community. Consider what you are willing to risk—access, status, friends, professional opportunities, etc. to be faithful and follow God’s will.

(See Student lesson “Your World!” section)

—There have been unlikely allies of God’s work

found outside of the walls of the church. They may not be buttoned up or a polished speaker, but their heart’s desires are aligned with God’s purposes. Consider the work of unlikely allies in your broader community. How have you seen God’s hand at work in what they do?

NEXT WEEK’S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, October 4, 2026, is “Do Not Conform to the World.” The Devotional Reading is Jeremiah 31:27-34, the Background Scripture is Joshua 23–24, and the Print Passage is Joshua 24:18-27.



Closing Prayer

Lord, open our eyes to see faith wherever it appears. Give us courage to respond faithfully and extend hospitality without fear. Teach us to trust Your work beyond our expectations and align our lives with Your redemptive purposes. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY , September 28	“Hold Fast to the Lord”	(Joshua 23:1-11)
TUESDAY , September 29	“Reaffirming the Covenant”	(Joshua 24:1-13)
FRIDAY , September 30	“Obey Christ’s commandments”	(1 John 1:8–2:5)
THURSDAY , October 1	“No Turning Back”	(Luke 9:57-62)
FRIDAY , October 2	“The Greatest Commandments”	(Matthew 22:34-40)
SATURDAY , October 3	“God, Redeem Your People”	(Psalm 25:12-22)
SUNDAY , October 4	“We Will Serve the Lord”	(Joshua 24:14-27)

INTERACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH

YOUNG ADULT FOCUS

This lesson plan provides tools to support an interactive teaching approach for today's lesson. The focus is on student-teacher involvement. Teachers may formulate the lesson plan for use with the *Bible Studies for Young Adults* quarterly.

Materials Needed:

- Blank paper and colored markers
- Bibles

Interaction—Introducing the Lesson (10 minutes)

- Introduce today's topic: "Joining Forces with Unlikely Allies."
- Have someone read aloud the "Life Happens" section on page 22 and then, as a class, discuss the related questions.
- Share the Unifying Principle: "We can learn about how God works using unlikely means by studying the stories of God's acts of salvation so that we can recognize the Lord's hand in the events of our lives."

Exploring the Word (25-30 minutes)

- Begin with a prayer, asking for guidance and understanding.
- Have students read Joshua 2:8-13 and Joshua 6:16-17 aloud, with different people reading different verses.
- Briefly discuss the historical and cultural context of these passages.
- Read Matthew 1:5 and discuss what it means that of the four women named on Jesus' family tree, two of them were not Israelites (Rahab,

a Canaanite and Ruth, a Moabite). Then read Hebrews 11 and James 2:25-26, paying attention to the mention of Rahab. What does it say about God's acceptance and love that a Canaanite prostitute is honored as a model of faith? How is this different from the way people from other cultures are treated or represented in the rest of the book of Joshua?

- Ask the group to suggest other stories in the Bible that show God working through unlikely situations or people.
- After 5 minutes, have groups share their insights with the class.
- Summarize the key points from the lesson.
- Allow participants to share any final thoughts or questions.

Life Application (5 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your Life" section on page 25.
- Pair the class with two or three people around them and ask each group to take turns sharing a story from their own lives about ways God has worked through unexpected means.

Life Response (5 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your World!" section on page 25.
- Ask the students to pay attention over the next week to ways God may be working through unexpected means or through unlikely people. Ask them to report back what they notice.
- Close in prayer and remind the students to prepare for next week's lesson.