

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: March 1, 2015

SUBJECT: THE TRAVELS OF THE CHOSEN CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: Entering into the Good Land

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1:1-11; 2:1-24; 3:1-17

AIM: To show the children that all those who have a believing, turning heart will receive mercy from the faithful Lord to have a new beginning.

MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:

Galatians 5:6b (“...but faith *avails*, operating through love.”); 1 John 1:9 (“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”); Lamentations 3:22-23 (“*It is* Jehovah's lovingkindness that we are not consumed, For His compassions do not fail; They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”); Joshua 1:9b (“...Be strong and take courage; do not be afraid or dismayed. For Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.”)

SONG SUGGESTIONS: 6103 (Rahab); 8328 BSS Moses Vol. 2 (We've Egypt Left); 8329 BSS Moses Vol. 2. (We Were Bound in Egypt); 20 (All Things are Possible When we Believe); 25 (I Believe God); 9410 BSS The Bible (I Believe the Promises of God)

APPROACH: Have you ever waited a long time for something? Perhaps you are going on an exciting school trip, or your parents are going to take you on vacation? Perhaps you look forward to turning a year older on your birthday?

BACKGROUND:

In previous lessons, we saw that the Lord chose Moses to lead the children of Israel out from Egypt into the promised good land. In their journey to the good land, there were many times that the people provoked the Lord: by murmuring and complaining, by idolatry (making a molten image), by criticizing the leaders He had chosen, etc. In spite of their defeats and failures along the way, the Lord had not forgotten His promise to Abraham: his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan.

This lesson takes place at the end of their forty-year journey. The old generation of the children of Israel had died, including Moses and Aaron. The Lord had now chosen Joshua to succeed Moses and he would be the one to bring the new generation into the land. Joshua commanded the officers of the people to tell them to prepare provisions. In three days they would cross the Jordan River to enter and possess the land.

CONTENT:

Two Spies Hidden by Rahab

Joshua sent two men to secretly spy out the land, especially the city of Jericho. There, two spies went into the house of a sinful woman named Rahab. The king of Jericho was told that some men of the children of Israel had come that night to search out the land, so he sent messengers into Rahab's house to look for them. The king's men were trying to catch the spies. But Rahab did not give them up. She told the messengers, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And when it was time to shut the gate at dark, the men went out; I do not know where the men have gone.” Rahab told the messengers to quickly pursue after the men outside the city gates. But actually, Rahab had already secretly hidden the spies among the stalks of flax on her rooftop. After she sent the messengers away, she made the spies swear to her that when Jehovah had given them the land they would show kindness to her and spare her and her household, her father and mother and brothers and sisters. She then told them to go hide in the mountains for three days until their pursuers had returned to Jericho. Because her house was built upon the city wall, Rahab let the spies down through the window by a rope. The spies told Rahab that when they came back to take Jericho she must tie a scarlet (bright red) cord in the window. This would be a sign not to harm anyone in that house. She was to gather all her family and her father's household into the house. The spies warned Rahab not to tell anyone about their business there. If she did, they would be free from the promise they made to her. She agreed to this and then sent them away. The spies went and hid in the mountains for three days as she had told them. The king's men who were pursuing the spies could not find them. After three days, the two spies were able to safely return to Joshua, and they reported everything that happened to them. They reported that indeed Jehovah had given them all the land.

Crossing the River Jordan

Joshua then moved the camp to the Jordan River. The river was overflowing its banks due to the spring rains and the melting snow. In spite of this difficulty, Joshua trusted the Lord and commanded the people of Israel to cross over. So, the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the river first. The people followed at a distance. When the priests' feet stepped into the Jordan, the waters that were flowing down from upstream were completely cut off! The waters stood in a heap! And as the priests stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan all the people crossed over the River Jordan. The priests stood there until every single person had completely crossed over the Jordan.

What a great encouragement the crossing of the Jordan River must have been to Joshua and all the people! Our faithful God had brought them into the good land!

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS:

- **When we side with God's people and believe in what the Lord can do, the Lord is able to turn around a bad situation.** Rahab was a sinful woman in Jericho who lived among sinful people. She could have died together with the people of Jericho. But instead, she had a believing heart (Hebrews 11:31). In the way she spoke to the two spies, even risking her own life for their safety, we can see her faith and firm belief in siding with the people of God. Because of her faith she and her whole household were saved, and they did not die when the people of God came to take over Jericho. Even though she was a sinful woman, her belief in God saved her life. This shows God's mercy to everyone who believes in Him. He is faithful to forgive and receive all who repent and turn to Him.
- **We can have a new beginning each day.** Despite many terrible mistakes, defeats and failures, the Lord granted the children of Israel a new beginning when they crossed the Jordan River. This shows us that when we fail, there is always a way to have a new beginning with the Lord. Whenever we sin, we should ask the Lord for forgiveness and say sorry to the person we offended. Maybe we had a bad day and did or said some bad things, but we can thank the Lord for a new day each morning.
- **We need to be patient and learn to wait.** Perhaps you may think 40 years is a long time. The people of Israel went through many experiences in the wilderness before reaching the good land that God promised. We probably don't have to wait 40 years for certain things, but sometimes, do we complain when we have to wait even a few minutes? Maybe you are hungry and want a snack, but your mom is busy with a baby or younger sibling. Or maybe you want to go to the park, but you can't go because the weather is bad. Perhaps you want to play, but are not allowed to until you have finished all your homework. Or maybe you are saving your allowance to get something special. It may be hard to wait, but we can ask the Lord to help us be patient and wait instead of complaining. The Lord gives us what we need, when we need it.

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ in God's Economy*—Vol. 4, *The Travels of the Chosen Children of Israel*, Lesson 9, and from the Church in New York City's Children's meeting lessons: 1/22/89; 1/29/89; 3/3/96; 2/29/04; 3/7/10