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SENIOR Quarterly

THE SOUL
of a Nation

Senior Scholar Sunday School Quarterly

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THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

EDITORIAL STAFF

REV. DR. RODERICK BELIN, Publisher

REV. DR. GARLAND PIERCE,
Editor

REV. FAITH WATERS, Lessons

A.L. STANFIELD, Copy Editor

M.E. RUSSELL, Layout/Design

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

AME Discipline

OVERVIEW

Theme: The Soul of a Nation

Unit 1

FROM NOMADIC
TRIBES TO SETTLED
PEOPLE

LESSONS 1 - 4

LESSON 1: SEPT. 6, 2026

Title: The Covenant
Continues

LESSON 2: SEPT. 13, 2026

Title: Remember
God's Actions

LESSON 3: SEPT. 20, 2026

Title: God's
Complicated Promise

LESSON 4: SEPT. 27, 2026

Title: God's
Compassion for
Rahab

Unit 2

LACKING
LEADERSHIP AND A
MORAL COMPASS

LESSONS 5 - 8

LESSON 5: OCT. 4, 2026

Title: Radical
Commitment to
God's Way

LESSON 6: OCT. 11, 2026

Title: God Works
Despite Evil

LESSON 7: OCT. 18, 2026

Title: God Works
Through Ehud

LESSON 8: OCT. 25, 2026

Title: God's Works
Are Not Forgotten

Unit 3

SAMUEL: PROPHET,
PRIEST, JUDGE, AND
KING-MAKER

LESSONS 9 - 13

LESSON 9: NOV. 1, 2026

Title: The Lord Calls
Samuel

LESSON 10: NOV. 8, 2026

Title: The Glory
Departs

LESSON 11: NOV. 15, 2026

Title: Samuel: God's
Prophet and Judge

LESSON 12: NOV. 22, 2026

Title: Samuel: A King
Maker

LESSON 13: NOV. 29, 2026

Title: David's
Coronation and
Capture of Jerusalem

The Covenant Continues

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1:1-11

KEY VERSE: [The Lord said,] “I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

WORDS TO KNOW

COURAGEOUS – to stand firm, act boldly, and remain faithful in the face of fear, danger, or uncertainty because God is with you

STRONG – inner fortitude, spiritual toughness, and God given strength to endure, obey, and overcome

PROSPEROUS – success, flourishing, and well being that comes from walking in God’s ways

EUPHRATES – pronounced: *you-FRAY-teez*

HITTITES – pronounced: *HIT-ites*

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JOSHUA 1:1-11

- ¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses's assistant, saying,
- ² "My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites.
- ³ Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses.
- ⁴ From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory.
- ⁵ No one shall 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 not fail you or forsake you.
- ⁶ Be strong and courageous, for you shall lead this people to possess the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them.
- ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go.
- ⁸ This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful.
- ⁹ I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
- ¹⁰ Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people,
- ¹¹ "Pass through the camp and command the people, 'Prepare your provisions, for in three days you are to cross over this Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess.'"

INTRODUCTION

The fall quarter is titled “Soul of a Nation.” In Unit 1, we study the book of Joshua as he leads the people of Israel into the Promised Land. It is a military and spiritual challenge. Joshua never achieved unity for God’s people, and leaving the complete possession of Canaan unfulfilled at the end of his life sets the stage for the period of Judges. In Unit 2, we study three lessons in Judges that highlight Israel’s tendency to ignore God and God’s ways. In Unit 3, we have five lessons, and we are introduced to Samuel. His faithfulness to the Lord as prophet and judge plays an important role in Israel’s history. His life and ministry set the stage for the reign of King David.

In today’s lesson, Israel has a new leader. *How would the people respond to Joshua? What challenges do we foresee Joshua facing? What is the biggest issue that arises when we have to complete an important plan?*

BIBLE STORY

(View video at: <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-joshua/#joshua-1-5-israel-enters-the-promised-land>)

News flash! Moses is dead! What happened next? God appointed Joshua to lead the nation of Israel across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. There would be many challenges and struggles to overcome. Joshua urged the Israelites to obey God’s commands in the Torah. Moses had given the people instructions regarding what God required of them. If they obeyed God’s commands, the nation would be successful in possessing the land. It was called the Mosaic covenant.

Because we easily forget things, Joshua reminded them of what they agreed to do. It was essential that the people obey God and not turn away to worship the false idols of the Canaanites. It would break the covenant. They would also face other insurmountable problems.

God knew what lay ahead for Joshua and the nation of Israel. God's covenant remained active. The leader may have changed, but God's commands were the same. This is why God reminded them that he was with them just like he was with Moses. God had to encourage Joshua to be "strong and courageous" multiple times.

God commanded the people to "meditate on the law day and night." This way, the Word would be hidden in their hearts, enabling them to resist the evil one. Plus, God was with them wherever they traveled. We need not fear when God is with us. Our God has promised us prosperity and success.

What causes us to fear as believers? How can we overcome these fears? How can we reflect strength and courage in the midst of life's challenges?

SANKOFA

Marjorie Stewart was born on October 24, 1896, in the small mountain town of Monterey, Virginia. She grew up in extreme poverty with twelve siblings, though only three survived to adulthood. When she was eight years old, her family moved to Dayton, Ohio, where her father found work as a teacher. Her parents soon divorced, and young Marjorie lived with different relatives for several years. In 1912, at age sixteen, she moved to Chicago to join her mother.

In Chicago, Marjorie needed to earn money to help support her household. She worked as a waitress and a domestic servant while learning the beauty trade. In 1916, she became the first African American to graduate from the A.B. Molar Beauty School in Chicago. The school only offered a few weeks of classes with little hands-on practice, and all the training focused on styling white women's hair. Joyner opened her own salon in Chicago's South Side to bring her new skills back to her community but didn't know how to work with black hair. Her mother-in-law encouraged her to attend a lecture by Madam C.J. Walker, a successful businesswoman in the hair care industry. Marjorie paid \$17.50 to enroll in Walker's beauty school in Chicago.

Madam Walker must have recognized something special in her ambitious young student. Walker was born into slavery and worked as a washerwoman for years before starting her own hair care company. By the time Marjorie met her, Walker had a successful business that employed thousands of African American women across the country. Within months of meeting, Walker recruited Marjorie to become her national spokesperson and adviser. The two became close friends, and Walker asked Marjorie to act as an adviser for her national network of beauty schools.

When Walker died in 1919, Marjorie continued her work with the company. Over the next several decades, she led a network of 200 beauty schools that trained over 15,000 stylists. As she traveled to different schools and taught students in Chicago, she noticed a persistent issue. The popular hairstyle at the time was the Marcel wave, but it took stylists a long time to do because it required curling a small section at a time with a curling iron.

On May 16, 1928, Marjorie filed her patent application, “the construction of a simple and efficient machine that will wave the hair of both white and colored women.” She was awarded U.S. Patent No. 1,693,515 later that year, making her one of the first African American women to receive one. In 1929, she also patented a scalp protector device to make the waving process more comfortable for clients. She assigned the rights to both patents to the Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company.

How did facing poverty, loss, and school setbacks shape Marjorie’s future success? She created her permanent wave machine for use on “both white and colored women’s hair.” What does this say about how she tackles problems?

Read the full article at: 28DaysofBlackHistory.com
For more info about Joyner’s life and travels, watch:
Beyond Borders in the Archives: Marjorie Stewart Joyner
<https://youtu.be/1mseWH5cPdc?si=5HrANs8thkXOBQFB>

REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

Explore the meaning of covenant for today's Christians. How can one know whether they have violated God's covenant? What is required to fulfill God's covenant?

Compose a prayer of confession recognizing our shortcomings and failure to uphold God's covenant. (Can be written on a separate sheet of paper.)

SUMMARY

The Mosaic covenant remained in effect even after Moses' death. Joshua had to uphold the covenant and urge the people of Israel to do the same. Obedience was the key to their success. When entering into the place God has promised you will possess, God's presence is with you. All we need to do is have faith and rely on God's strength to accomplish his plans. God's promises are eternal.

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: *Lord, give us the courage and strength to fulfill your plans and purposes. Amen.*

Song: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"
(AMEC Hymnal #54)

Remember God's Actions

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Joshua 4

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: Joshua 4:14-24

KEY VERSES: [Joshua said] “When your children ask their parents in time to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.’” Joshua 4:21b-22

WORDS TO KNOW

EXALTED – to be lifted to a place of great honor, authority, or glory

AWE – a deep sense of reverence, wonder, or holy fear in the presence of God

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT – the sacred wooden chest overlaid with gold that held the tablets of the covenant (Ten Commandments) and symbolized God's presence with Israel

GILGAL – pronounced: *GILL-gal*

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JOSHUA 4:14-24

- ¹⁴ On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses all the days of his life.
- ¹⁵ The Lord said to Joshua,
- ¹⁶ “Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant to come up out of the Jordan.”
- ¹⁷ Joshua therefore commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.”
- ¹⁸ When the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord came up from the middle of the Jordan and the soles of the priests’ feet touched dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.
- ¹⁹ The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.
- ²⁰ Those twelve stones that they had taken out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal,
- ²¹ saying to the Israelites, “When your children ask their parents in time to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’
- ²² then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.’
- ²³ For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we crossed over,
- ²⁴ so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty and so that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”

INTRODUCTION

On special occasions such as birthdays, graduations, and holidays, parents take pictures to capture the moments. In the days, months, and years that follow, those pictures act as a reminder of that extraordinary moment. If these pictures are digital, they can be shared with others to keep the memories alive across generations.

In today's lesson, God tells Joshua to make a memorial to remember the Israelites' crossing of the Jordan into the Promised Land.

What pictures do you have stored on your phone that capture a special moment or occasion? When was the picture taken? What was the special moment or occasion?

BIBLE STORY

The Israelites crossed the Jordan River in a miraculous way (3:14 – 17). The priests' feet, who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant touched the waters of the Jordan, and the water stopped flowing. They stood in the middle of the Jordan River until the entire nation of Israel crossed over on dry ground. The miraculous crossing of the Jordan River is just like how God used Moses to part the Red Sea.

God directed Joshua to choose twelve men to carry one stone each from the middle of the Jordan near the place where the priests stood. Joshua chose one man from each of the twelve tribes to carry a stone from the Jordan River over into their camp in Gilgal. Joshua would use the stones to build a monument.

Joshua obeyed God and had faith to cross the Jordan River and lead the nation to the Promised Land. The Israelites trusted Joshua's leadership. His position as their leader was confirmed by God. God exalted Joshua, and Israel honored him like they honored Moses.

Joshua set up the twelve stones, taken out of the Jordan, in Gilgal as a monument and place of worship. The mighty God had provided redemption and had brought his people into their inheritance. Fathers were responsible for teaching their children the meaning of the stones and for serving as models of right behavior, obeying God's laws. This was an occasion to give thanks to God and to worship him for his goodness and power.

Who did God exalt and why? What can we do to remember God's actions and faithfulness?

SANKOFA

Maggie Lena Walker grew up in Richmond, Virginia. Her mother, Elizabeth Draper Mitchell, was a formerly enslaved woman who worked as a laundress after gaining her freedom. Young Walker grew up watching her mother and other black laundresses gather to talk through problems facing their community. She learned that the relative independence their careers afforded them, paired with the way they supported one another, helped black women keep one another safe.

As a teenager, Walker joined the First African Baptist Church and became a member of Good Idea Council #16 of the Independent Order of the Sons and Daughters of St. Luke, a fraternal organization focused on mutual support, moral values, and helping members through hardship. In 1885, she helped launch a Juvenile Division within the Order to organize the youth. She kept rising through the organization's ranks, and by 1899, when St. Luke's was struggling financially, she was at the top. She launched membership drives that expanded their work across 24 states and traveled the country giving speeches about economic independence and the power of black-owned businesses.

In 1902, she founded *The St. Luke Herald*, a weekly newspaper that served the Order. Within a few years, it had 4,000 subscribers and published popular editorials, many of which spotlighted stories of black women in Richmond and beyond. Between 1904 and 1906, the paper became a platform for civil rights advocacy and

helped garner support for a boycott of Richmond's segregated streetcar system.

During this time, Walker also apprenticed at the Merchants' National Bank of Richmond, where she learned banking and accounting from the ground up. In November 1903, she chartered the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank, becoming the first African American woman in the United States to found, charter, and serve as president of a bank. The bank opened with more than \$9,000 in deposits. Within three years, that number had grown to \$170,000, allowing the bank to extend loans to black homeowners and businesses. By 1920, it had financed more than 600 home loans to residents in Jackson Ward, the historically black neighborhood just north of downtown Richmond.

When the stock market crashed in 1929, she guided St. Luke Penny Savings Bank through a merger with two other black-owned Richmond banks, forming Consolidated Bank and Trust. She served as chair of the Board until her death on December 15, 1934, at age 70.

After Walker's death, her daughter-in-law, Hattie, remained in the Leigh Street house until 1971. In 1978, Walker's granddaughter deeded the property to the National Park Service in the hope that it would become a historic site accessible to the public. The property became the country's first national park dedicated to an African American woman.

The Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site stands because her family and community fought to keep her story alive. Is there someone in your family or community whose story should be better known? What steps are needed to ensure it is not forgotten?

For the full article, go to: <https://www.28daysofblackhistory.com/>

REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

What event or person can you pinpoint in your life that has drawn you closer to God? How? Brainstorm ideas that can be used to help remind us of God's actions in our lives.

Create a bracelet using the beads and elastic string given to wear as a reminder of God's faithfulness. Every day when you wear it, give thanks to God for his love, kindness, and faithfulness. Alternative activity: Draw a picture depicting God's faithfulness to you!



SUMMARY

The connection between God's saving act in parting the Red Sea in Exodus 14 and God's redemptive intervention in parting the waters of the Jordan River in Joshua 4 is also evident. God's power was displayed among all the people of Israel. The people paused to recognize God's provision and to mark the place of entry into God's Promised Land with twelve stones. The monument was built in remembrance of God's actions, and the entire nation worshiped together. When we worship together, it reflects our shared faith and hope for the future.

Do you recall special occasions when your church or family gathered to give thanks and worship God? How did it feel? What are other ways to commemorate God's favor and actions?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: *God, we are grateful for your protection and care. We promise to live by faith as a reflection of our gratitude. Amen.*

Song: "Thank You, Lord!" Christina Bell

YouTube: https://youtu.be/T1pNXQBBWrs?si=hCw9LLAyE3_UrUTM

God's Complicated Promise

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Joshua 6; 8:26; 10:28-43; 11:1-23; Deuteronomy 7:1-26

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: Joshua 11:6-9, 16-23

KEY VERSE: It was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts so that they would come against Israel in battle, in order that they might be utterly destroyed, and might receive no mercy, but be exterminated, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. Joshua 11:20

WORDS TO KNOW

HAMSTRUNG – to cripple, disable, or cut the tendons of the legs so something (usually horses) can no longer run or be used in battle

MERCY – God's compassionate action toward the undeserving; his loyal love that withholds judgment and gives kindness instead

ALLOTMENT – land portions given to Israel's tribes as an inheritance by God

MISREPHOTH-MAIM – pronounced: *mis-REH-foth-MAH-yeem*

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JOSHUA 11:6-9, 16-23

JOSHUA 11:6-9

- ⁶ And the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will hand over all of them, slain, to Israel; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire."
- ⁷ So Joshua came suddenly upon them with all his fighting force, by the waters of Merom, and fell upon them.
- ⁸ And the Lord handed them over to Israel, who attacked them and chased them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and eastward as far as the valley of Mizpeh. They struck them down until they had left no one remaining.
- ⁹ And Joshua did to them as the Lord had commanded him; he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

16-23

- ¹⁶ So Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland,
- ¹⁷ from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He took all their kings, struck them down, and put them to death.
- ¹⁸ Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.
- ¹⁹ There was not a town that made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all were taken in battle.
- ²⁰ For it was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts so that they would come against Israel in battle, in order that they might be utterly destroyed and might receive no mercy but be exterminated, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.
- ²¹ At that time Joshua came and wiped out the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their towns.
- ²² None of the Anakim was left in the land of the Israelites; some remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.
- ²³ So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet and social media have made it easy for people to say and post anything anonymously. It is easy for people to bully because they may never have face-to-face contact with the person they are bullying. There are hate groups that threaten politicians, churches, lawyers, minority groups, corporations, colleges, etc. Some students use AI to create fake pictures of someone they dislike and share them without the person's knowledge to embarrass them.

How can we handle the daily attacks, threats, fears, and trials of life? In today's lesson, we learn to remain faithful, knowing God is with us through the good and the bad.

How has social media affected your personal life? What are some ways we can remain strong and courageous in the midst of life's struggles?

BIBLE STORY

After Moses died, Joshua was commissioned by God to be his successor and lead the people into their inheritance (1:1 – 18). He was given assurance of God's divine presence and success, conditioned on obedience. God told Joshua to be strong and courageous. Joshua took charge and spoke to the people. The Israelites promised obedience.

Joshua and the people crossed the Jordan River on dry ground as the priests stood holding the Ark of the Covenant in the middle of the river. The monument was built as a memorial. The people worshiped God for providing deliverance and bringing them into their inheritance (Joshua 4). The conquest of Jericho and the crumbling of its fortified walls were a miracle of faith. Joshua relied on the power of God rather than human works (6:1 – 19). Moreover, the capture of Ai also demonstrated the power of God. God commanded Joshua to stretch out his spear toward the city continuously until he completely destroyed all the residents (8:17 – 27). This demonstrated the presence of God, who gives us complete victory.

God continued to demonstrate miraculous power by giving Israel victory over southern Canaan, producing intense cold and hailstones in a normally hot climate (10:7 – 15; 28 – 43). All five kings were executed. Eventually, all the inhabitants of southern Canaan submitted to Israel's authority. In chapter 11, we see the conquest of northern Canaan. Joshua was divinely directed by God to hamstring all the horses and burn the chariots (11:6 – 9). God was teaching Joshua to trust him. Joshua did not destroy the small cities, only Hazor. In chapter 11, verses 16 through 23 provide a summary of the conquests. In verse 20, God "hardened their hearts," which means their enemies were under the authority of God. Just like their previous enemies, the Egyptians.

What was the key to victory for Israel? How did God demonstrate his power?

SANKOFA

The Historic Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Alabama, was an instrumental part of the Civil Rights Movement. Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church began as a prayer movement in 1866, in the homes of the forefathers of some present-day members. This movement was organized into an AME Church in the basement of the Albert Hotel in Selma.

Brown Chapel AME Church was admitted into the AME Connection in 1867. The first frame structure was erected on the present site in 1869 and re-erected in 1908. It is the only building remaining by A.J. Farley, an early 20TH-century black builder from Dallas County.

During the 1960's, the church became known throughout the world for its role in the Voting Rights Movement, which brought about the "Bloody Sunday" confrontation with state and local law enforcement, and the subsequent march from the church to the state capitol in Montgomery. God's presence throughout the years of struggle empowered the people to keep fighting until they gained victory. Brown Chapel, its leadership and members, and many in the Civil Rights Movement endured much suffering before victory came with the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

How can we use Brown Chapel's story to encourage us to overcome the current setbacks regarding the Voting Rights Act?

Read the history of Historic Brown Chapel and see photos from over the years at: <https://brownchapelame.org/history/>

REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

Using the scriptures from today's text, we will create blackout poetry (also known as erasure poetry). Follow the teacher's instructions (or do a search for: blackout poetry) and then write your poem below. Perfect grammar is not important. Let the words speak to you.

SUMMARY

Joshua obeyed God's commands. He led Israel in battle against the Canaanite nations in response to God's guidance and in fulfillment of God's promise of victory. Just as Joshua was supported by God in both victories and challenges, God is with us too, guiding us constantly so we can remain faithful in everything and give praise to him. We will face insurmountable challenges in life, but God will not abandon us. Seek God, and whatever is needed, God is able to provide. God is trustworthy.

What does it mean to be "strong and courageous?" How can we overcome our fears? What can we do to help others facing difficult life situations?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: *God, I will not fear because you are with me. I trust you for the victory. Amen.*

Song: "Father, I Stretch My Hands to Thee"
(AMEC Hymnal #317)

God's Compassion for Rahab

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Joshua 2; 6:1-25; Matthew 1:5; James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: Joshua 2:8-13; 6:16-17

KEY VERSE: “The city and all that is in it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live because she hid the messengers we sent.” Joshua 6:17

WORDS TO KNOW

DREAD – a deep, overwhelming fear, sometimes terror, or sometimes reverent awe

KINDLY – it is to show loyal, covenant rooted goodness, the kind of kindness that reflects God's own character

FAITHFULLY – to live with consistent loyalty, truthfulness, and dependability, mirroring God's unwavering faithfulness

AMORITES – pronounced: *AM-uh-rites*

SIHON – pronounced: *SY-hon*

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JOSHUA 2:8-13; 6:16-17

JOSHUA 2:8-13

- ⁸ Before they went to sleep, she came up to them on the roof
- ⁹ and said to the men, "I know that the Lord has given you the land and that dread of you has fallen on us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you.
- ¹⁰ For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.
- ¹¹ As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you. The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below.
- ¹² Now then, since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the Lord that you in turn will deal kindly with my family. Give me a sign of good faith
- ¹³ that you will spare my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them and deliver our lives from death."

6:16-17

- ¹⁶ And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city.
- ¹⁷ The city and all that is in it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live because she hid the messengers we sent."

INTRODUCTION

No matter who you are or what you do, people will label you. Think about it. What labels does the world give the church and those who are Christians? What does the world call people who play sports? How does the world view students who achieve excellent grades? What type of life does the world believe rap artists lead? When someone in school has sex with many different people, what do others believe about them? If someone you know posts sexually explicit pictures on social media, what would you label them?

We are quick to label people before we truly know them. In today's lesson, God uses an unlikely woman to save two Israelite spies sent to Jericho.

How can labels harm people's reputations? What can we do to communicate friendliness to everyone?

BIBLE STORY

Joshua was commissioned by God to lead the Israelites after the death of Moses. God told Joshua, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall lead this people to possess the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them" (1:6). The people vowed to follow and obey Joshua.

As Joshua prepared to enter the Promised Land, he needed to understand what the Israelites were about to confront. Joshua assigned two spies to view the land, specifically the city of Jericho (2:1). Rahab, a prostitute, welcomed them to stay the night at her house. This reveals that the spies were not concerned about what she did for a living. And Rahab was not afraid to welcome the strangers into her home. Rahab protected them, hid them on her roof, and misdirected the king's soldiers who were searching for them (2:2 – 5). This was an act of dangerous courage—she risked her life.

Rahab spoke with the two spies before they went to sleep. Rahab told the spies, "I know that the Lord has given you this land"

(2:9a). She had heard of God's power and believed in him before Israel ever entered the city. Her faith was based on what she heard, not on what she saw (2:10 – 11). "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

Rahab knew she had demonstrated faith by helping the spies. Therefore, she felt confident asking the spies to deal kindly with her and her family (2:13). Rahab negotiated protection for herself, her parents, her siblings, and everyone in her house. The scarlet cord she hung in her window became the sign of their deliverance (2:21). When Jericho fell, Rahab's household was the only family spared (6:16 – 17). She was brought into Israel and lived among God's people.

Why did Rahab have faith in the God of Israel? How was her faith put into action?

SANKOFA

Judge Greg Mathis, the youngest elected judge in Michigan's history, was born on April 5, 1960, in Detroit, Michigan. Raised by his mother, Mathis' troubled upbringing and membership in the Errol Flynn gang are documented in his 2002 autobiography *Inner City Miracle*. After attending Herman Gardens Elementary School, Peterson Seventh Day Adventist School, and Wayne Memorial High School, Mathis earned his GED through Operation PUSH while on juvenile probation in 1977. Mathis received his B.S. degree in public administration from Eastern Michigan University in 1982 and his J.D. degree from the University of Detroit Law School in 1987. Mathis led the Free South Africa and voter registration campaigns at Eastern Michigan University.

In 1983, Mathis joined the staff of Detroit City Councilman Clyde Cleveland, volunteered for Operation Push, and worked on Reverend Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign. In 1986, Mathis, his wife Linda, and some friends formed Young Adults Asserting Themselves (YAAT) and four preschools in Detroit. Chosen to head Reverend Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign in Michigan, Mathis later worked as the manager of Detroit's

Neighborhood City Halls for the late Mayor Coleman A. Young. In 1995, Mathis was elected to Michigan's 36TH District Court, and in 1998 Warner Brothers Television launched the *Judge Mathis Show*.

Featured prominently in both print and electronic media, Mathis has received many awards and honors. A chairman of Rainbow/PUSH-Excel board, a lifetime member of the NAACP, and a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference board, Mathis and his wife, and college sweetheart, Linda, have raised four children.

What does Judge Mathis' background inform people about him? How can people change their lives and be used by God?

For more information:

<https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/honorable-gregory-mathis>

<https://justicefaces.com/judge-mathis-biography/>

REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

Who Are You?

Social media is a tool people use to gain information about others. If you dig long enough, you can find out the name, address, phone number, employment history, criminal record, and marital status. In addition, any videos posted by the person or about them are available.

We are in church with other members almost every Sunday. But do we really know who they are? Choose a partner and interview each other. Write down the info you discover on the index cards. We will share surprising facts we discover about each other in ten minutes.

God desires all people to come to love him through his Son, Jesus Christ. Think about a part of our world where you have a bias about the people. Take a sticky note and write a two-sentence prayer for that country and its people. Post your note on the front

board and read your prayer aloud. All people are welcomed by God!

SUMMARY

God's actions on behalf of his people in Egypt and the destruction of his enemies spread around the world. Rahab believed in Israel's God based on what she had heard before the spies' visit. Her position in society as a prostitute did not matter. Rahab demonstrated her faith by hiding the spies and keeping them safe. Her request to keep her family safe was granted. Rahab is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:5, and her name is listed among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:31. Even now, we continue to lift up her story as a model of faith and the unlimited grace of God.

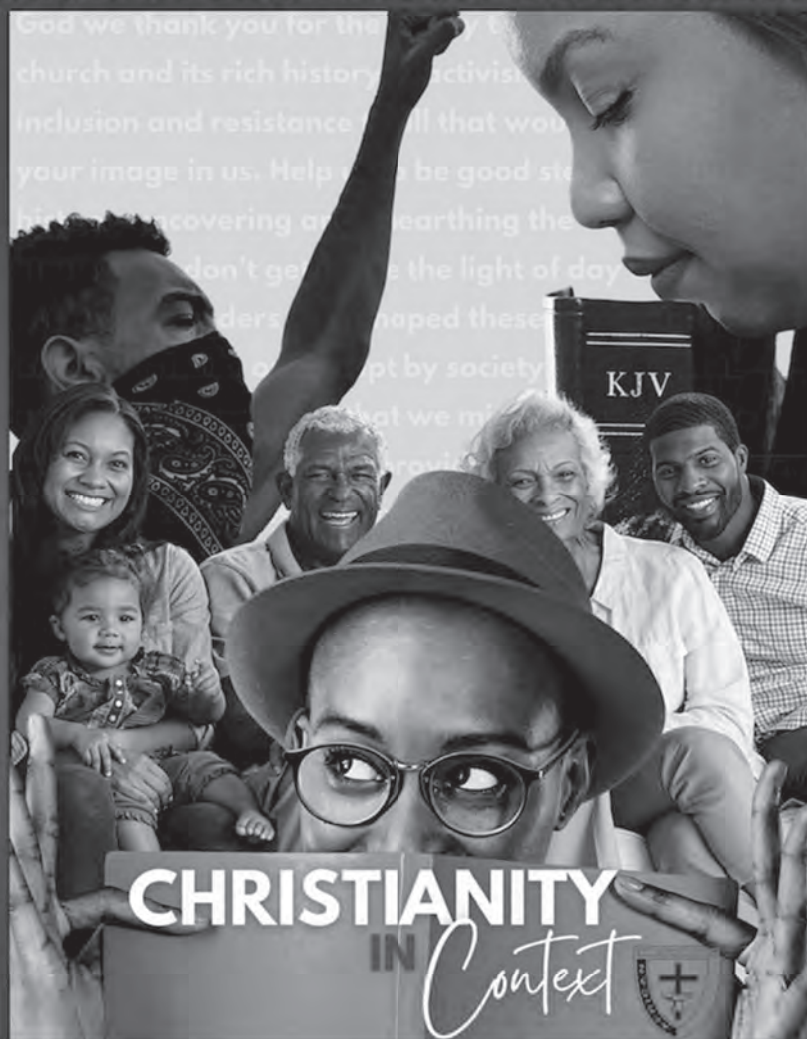
How would the modern-day church have dealt with Rahab? What bias does the church show that needs to be confronted and eliminated?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: *God, help us to love and welcome all people into your family. Amen.*

Song: "A Charge to Keep I Have"
(AMEC Hymnal #242)

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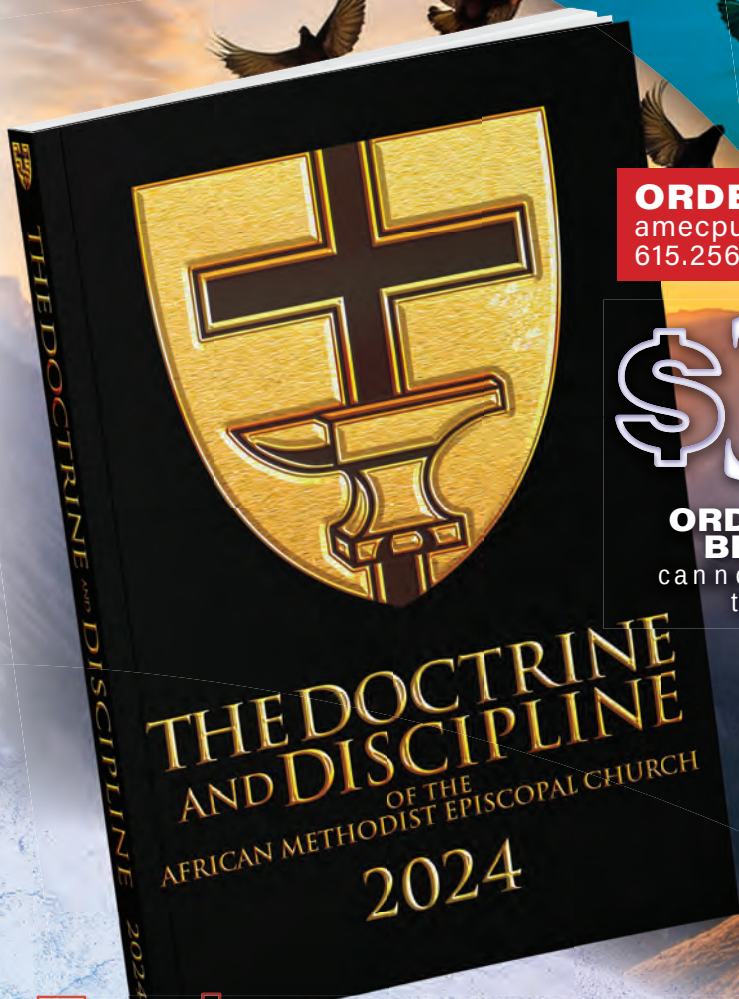
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