

STRANGER THINGS IN THE BIBLE

Preparing for God

Can you remember watching A Christmas Carol? Some call it the story of Scrooge. He is visited by Three spirits. I bring this up because the whole story of Joshua and Jericho is like scrooge. Scrooge was going the wrong way. I suppose he was visited by four spirits if you include Bob Marley. Yet, each spirit pushed Scrooge further away from himself and closer to where God needed him to be. Joshua is visited by one spirit. This spirit is preparing Joshua to lead the Israelites through the promised land There are three stranger things that happen to Joshua before God could lead the way.

This story ends in Joshua 5 but it begins in Joshua 1. God has told Joshua that he will lead the people into the promise land. Yet, this young leader figured that he was the way through. Look at verse 16 of Joshua 1 *“Then they answered Joshua, “Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.”* The whole camp was on board with what Joshua commands. This young man was not as ready to lead the people as he thought. In Joshua 2:1 it says *Then Joshua, son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. “Go, look over the land,” he said, “especially Jericho.” So, they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.*” What is missing? It’s Joshua inquiring of the Lord.

Here is part one of the stranger Bible things. Joshua (on his own) decides to send in spies to the fortified city of Jericho. Clearly, the men in the city noticed the men of Israel. Within hours they were searching for them, why? It’s because they too had heard the stories of this powerful people of God. If Rahab the prostitute knew then they knew. I think Joshua made a

mistake. The Bible clearly states that they were noticed right off the bat. That's not great spying! Then she asks them to save her family when they take the city. Rahab then lowers them down a rope and protects these men.

This is so much like the Passover. These men ask her to put a marker on the window so that their raiding party will pass them by. How did she know of God and the Israelites? Why did she make her play to be saved? Somehow and some way God prepared a way for Joshua and his camp to start the process of taking the promised land through a prostitute. How can that not be a stranger thing. To further this, the line of Jesus comes through this woman. Although Joshua did not inquire of the Lord. God was setting a path through the promise land to the Messiah, Jesus

The second stranger thing is the Sea of Reeds. Today, the Jordan river is a stream. In Joshua's day it was said to be around three thousand feet wide. Some interpretations call a section of this river the Sea of Reeds. There are several lakes in this area called seas: Sea of Galilee and The Dead Sea to name a few. Was there another lake area called the Sea of Reeds? There are some who say that Moses crossed the Sea of Reeds. The same sea? I have stood in the Jordan river (stream). There were many reeds and it was about three feet across.

People forget that Joshua crossed a parted sea as Moses did. Joshua did not inquire of the Lord but the Lord came to Joshua and told him what to do. I do believe that Joshua had a good relationship with God. Yet, I fear there was a lack of maturity in the Lord with him. God held the water back of the Sea of Reeds all the way to the Dead Sea. This is a cool stranger things Bible story. The priests too the Ark of God into the water and God parted it. The people crossed dry land to get to the other side.

The third stranger thing is another visitation. I am curious that Joshua did not recognize the divine in this man who came to Joshua. There are several instances where a man of God was recognized as holy or divine like an angel. Joshua asked if he was a friend or foe? The man says Joshua must take off his shoes because he is on holy ground. This incident is why I wonder where Joshua's faith is at. He made errors a few times like at Ai. What is interesting in this story is that's it? We get no more story from this strange commander of the Lord. Some even say it's the pre-incarnate Jesus.

Theoretically, we have a fourth stranger thing. Chapter 5 has the Lord telling Joshua how to take Jericho. It's interesting that Joshua is not asking how to take it, yet he had already sent in spies. The Lord never told him to send in spies. That is the lesson in this stranger thing story. We say that we are godly and religious. Yet, we take God's plan into our own hands. Joshua 6:1 says *"But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things."* Little cracks in immature faith. Possibly a little greed, pride, and arrogance directly because God made them look invincible. Yet, our faith should look humble, feeble, and weak without God strengthening it. Some of Joshua's little failures were because he thought he was chosen because he was good enough.

Did you notice that God always sent His ark first? Joshua sent his spies first. At Ai Joshua again sent in spies first. Then he sent in the army. What was missing in the victory? The ark was missing. I would even go further and say that God first was missing. Joshua did not talk with God. He assumed he would win because he won in Jericho. Yet, the Bible says God did it and won in Jericho. God parted the Sea of Reeds. The lesson here is to put God first. Inquire of the Lord first. Maybe it becomes a stranger thing when we don't ask God first in our lives. What could possibly go wrong?