

I am a war-time bride. The first war-time bride mentioned in the Bible, for what it's worth. My husband I are one of the least-known, but most important couples in the entire world. One of our descendants is King David, and another is Jesus. I like to introduce myself this way... It sounds so much better than...than... admitting I was a prostitute and a traitor to my own people.

I grew up in Jericho. During my childhood, Jericho was a rich and powerful city. Our king was proud of the fact that our city was one of the oldest cities in the world. Jericho is on a trade route on the west side of the Jordan River, just north of where it enters the Dead Sea. It is in a strategic trading and military location.

To the west, the road rises to the tiny village of Jebus, later known as Jerusalem. From there the road continues west to the Mediterranean Sea. To the east, there are some shallow fords across the Jordan River that allow access to Moab and the King's Highway trade route.

The historian, Josephus, mentions that I kept an inn. But, in my time, there is a very close tie between inns, soldiers, liquor and prostitution. The Bible makes it clear that I was a prostitute. I had little choice if I was to provide for me and my father's household.

As an innkeeper, I kept up to date with all the juicy rumors. The rumors typically revolved around our king and his latest antics. He meddled in the lives of the citizens, and he caused trouble in the region by attacking weaker cities. He never visited my inn, but many of his advisors and soldiers did. It didn't take much effort to know more about Jericho and the king, than the king himself knew.

One of king's advisors was especially quiet and distracted one day. I urged him to talk, and he told me about a people known as the Hebrews. I had never heard of them, so I asked him to tell me more. He hesitated for a full minute, then gave me a history lesson I will never forget.

Less than fifty years ago, the Hebrews had been slaves in Egypt. Their God punished Egypt with plagues until the Pharaoh agreed to let them leave. After changing his mind, the Pharaoh and his army chased the Hebrews and trapped them against the Red Sea. Their God parted the sea and allowed the Hebrews to escape. On dry land, he said, but that seemed a little, I don't know...Anyway, when Pharaoh and his army continued the chase, the waters crashed over them. Destroyed them all.

The Hebrew God had promised the Hebrew people that they would own all of the land currently occupied by the Canaanites, including the city of Jericho. To prepare for the invasion of Canaan, the Hebrews sent twelve spies into our country. The spies found the land to be very productive, but they were afraid of the land's inhabitants. When the spies told this to the Hebrews, they refused to invade Canaan. They were afraid us. Since they refused to obey God, he punished them by making them wander in the wilderness for forty years.

That forty years came to an end... not long ago, and since then, the Hebrews have been preparing to invade Canaan from the east. They've already crushed the kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og, and may be moving to take up an invasion position to the east of Jericho. There are too many of them to count, and their God is very powerful. If they cross the Jordan River, nobody will be able to stop them.

After that history lesson, I asked why our king had not alerted our people. He told me that the king was scared to do that, the people might panic, and many of them might flee the city. The king was paranoid about the Hebrews sending spies again, so he had soldiers posted everywhere. He hoped the massive city walls would protect Jericho, as they always had.

That very night, I climbed to the top of the city tower and looked to the east. I saw a dim light in the distance. I looked down on the city walls, and I knew they would never hold against a powerful God. I made a vow. I vowed not to let my family die, no matter what it took.

Every night after, I climbed the tower and watched the light. It got brighter and brighter. Eventually, I could see that the light wasn't coming from campfires, but

from a giant cloud in the sky. The fire reflected off of the Jordan River, and made it look like the entire land was on fire.

Two strangers showed up at my inn pretending to come from Egypt. Hebrew spies. It didn't take long to figure that one out. I confronted them, and I asked to make a deal. I would protect them from discovery, if they would protect my family when Jericho was invaded. They agreed. I had to hang a red rope outside of my window when the Hebrews invaded. That was it. But if I didn't do that, they could not protect me.

We no more than agreed to that deal when I heard commotion outside my inn. I figured that the king's men were searching for the spies. I hid my two guests under a pile of flax on my roof. When the soldiers came to search my house, I ..uhhh...found ways... to keep them distracted and away from the spies.

I told them the two men had been at my house, but I didn't know who they were. I told them that the men had left the city through the gate to the east. The soldiers rushed away. They went as far as the Jordan River and didn't find anyone.

That night, I helped the spies leave the city. I lowered them out of my house window on the city wall, and sent them west to hide, the opposite direction from the Hebrew Camp. They waited three days, then the spies circled the city and made their way back to their camp in Moab.

Then one night, fire started coming from the ground on our side of the Jordan River as well as from the cloud on the other side of the river. I inquired of some soldiers, and learned that a giant dam must have been built across the Jordan, the water was backing up. The backed-up water was like a giant mirror, the cloud's fire reflecting everywhere. The Hebrew invasion was imminent.

Sure enough, the next day, the entire city could see the dust clouds from the approaching Hebrew masses. There were millions of people and animals. Everybody in Jericho prayed to our pagan gods for protection. Except me. I just hoped the Hebrews would not surround the city and try to starve us into submission. Nobody had enough food to last long.

From my window on the city walls, I could see the Hebrew camp. One morning, I saw the strangest thing. A parade. No, really, a *parade* started from the Hebrew camp.

It was led by an armed guard, seven men in funny looking costumes blowing on trumpets, five what looked to be priests carrying a gold box, and more armed guards. They were followed by a stream of rather dirty-looking men in dusty robes. They circled the city and went back into their camp. Quiet, nobody made a noise, well, except the men blowing trumpets. Next day, same thing. A circle around Jericho, and back to camp. After six days of this, the nerves of everyone in Jericho were stretched to the breaking point.

On the seventh day, the same parade started. This time, they didn't stop after they circled the city. They went around again. And, then a third time! On and on, the parade went, circling the city. Total silence from thousands and thousands of people, the costumed guys still blowing on trumpets. So bizarre.

They completed a seventh circle, and the silence came to an end. The thousands of men shouted as loud as they could. Made an Army - Navy football game sound like a grade-school playground.

A rumble started. Low frequency, you know. The walls began to tremble. Then shake. To say the people in Jericho feared for their lives is an understatement. Hundreds fainted from fear.

Portions of the wall around the city started to crumble. The rumble was now a roar. Deafening. It seemed to go on forever but wasn't really that long at all. Then silence. Everything was still. I was completely disoriented. I literally had no idea where I was. Open space everywhere in every direction, there were no walls! The walls that defined our city. The Jericho walls were gone. They had all fallen. Except...except one small section. The section with a red rope hanging out the window. My window.

The Hebrews swarmed into the city and slaughtered all of its inhabitants. *All* of them... except the household of Rahab, the prostitute. My house. With my family inside. My two spy guests came to protect my house with the approval of their commander, a man by the name of Joshua.

They took my family outside of the city and outside of the Hebrew camp. Then, they set fire to the city and destroyed everything that was not metal. Those metal things were saved for the Lord.

Me? What happened to me and my household?

A few days before Jericho was destroyed, the Hebrews circumcised all of their men below the age of forty, because they had not been circumcised while wandering in the wilderness. Days after the fall of Jericho, I asked for the males in my household to be circumcised, too. Joshua and the priests relented, and that very day, my family became Hebrews.

It wasn't too long before the head of one of the Hebrew families came to my house and spoke to my father. It seems they had fallen on hard times, and they had one son that they had not been able to marry off. When he stood before my father, I knew that he was the man the Hebrew God had been saving for me. He was pure, but I was not. With his purity, he would cover me. It wasn't long before we had our first son, and we named him...Boaz. Boaz who would one day become the husband of Ruth, and be the great-grandfather of King David.

God is so good.

My name is Rahab. I am a war-time bride. My husband and I are one the least-known, but most important couples in the entire history of the world. I was a prostitute and a traitor to my own people. But because of the goodness of God, I am the great, great grandmother of King David, and the 16th great grandmother of... Jesus.