

Joshua 2 Commentary

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LAND ALLOTMENTS
(Joshua 13-21)
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JOSHUA			
A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST			
HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS			
CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND		DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND	CLOSE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE
ACTION		ALLOCATION	APPEAL
Josh 1:1-5:15	Josh 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:45	Josh 22:1-24:33
WARLORDS IN CANAAN		LANDLORDS IN CANAAN	

ENTERING CANAAN	CONQUERING CANAAN	DIVIDING CANAAN	
SECURING THE LAND		SETTLING THE LAND	
Preparation	Conquest	Possession	Consecration
ca. 1 Month	ca 7 Years	ca. 18 Years	

[See also more detailed Chart by Charles R Swindoll](#)

Joshua 2:1 Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, "**Go, view** the land, especially Jericho." So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.

NLT Joshua 2:1 Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove. He instructed them, "Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho." So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night.

- **Shittim:** ("stream of acacias") Nu 25:1 33:49
- **secretly:** Nu 13:2,17-21 Jud 18:2,14,17 Mt 10:16 Eph 5:5
- **especially Jericho:** Jos 5:10 6:1-24
- **house of a harlot:** Jos 6:17,25 Mt 1:5, Rachab, Jos 21:31 Heb 11:31 Jas 2:25
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Outline of Joshua 2 - Irving Jensen

THE SPIES	VERSES	RAHAB
1. Spies are dispatched	Josh 2:1	
2. Spies are protected	Josh 2:2-7	Rahab's works
3. Spies are informed	Josh 2:8-11	Rahab's faith
4. Spies promise safety	Josh 2:12-22	Rahab's reward
5. Spies give report	Josh 2:23-24	

Related Passages:

Matthew 1:5+ (**A REDEEMED HARLOT IN THE LINEAGE OF THE REDEEMER! AMAZING GRACE INDEED!**) Salmon was the father of Boaz by **Rahab**, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse.

Hebrews 11:31+ (**RAHAB SAVED BY FAITH IN THE MESSIAH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**) By faith **Rahab** the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

James 2:25+ (**RAHAB'S FAITH SHOWN GENUINE BY HER WORKS**) In the same way, was not **Rahab** the harlot also justified (MEANS SHOWN TO BE JUSTIFIED = HER WORKS PROVED SHE WAS JUSTIFIED!) by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

Joshua 6:17 (**RAHAB WAS A HARLOT DESPITE SOME WHO SAY SHE WAS NOT!**) "The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD; only **Rahab the harlot** and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent (THIS "FRUIT" DEMONSTRATES THE "ROOT" OF HER FAITH WAS GENUINE!).

Joshua 6:25 However, **Rahab the harlot** and her father's household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

Hebrews 11:31+ By faith **Rahab the harlot** did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she

had welcomed the spies in peace.

James 2:25+ In the same way, was not **Rahab the harlot** also **justified** (**SHOWN TO BE RIGHTEOUS** - USED THIS WAY OF GOD IN Roman 3:4+) by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

Shittim located Directly East of Jericho

SPIES SECRETLY SENT PROVIDENTIALLY TO A PROSTITUTE!

Observe the overview charts above, noting especially that these first 5 chapters are preparation for conquest of the promised land.

Don Anderson - This is the story of two men and a prostitute named ab, whose lives demonstrate SACRIFICIAL SERVICE the magnitude of the grace of God. The men's names are unknown and **usually that's the case with real servants**.

Bob Marcaurelle subtitled this section "Rahab in Rehab" or "The Scarlet Woman's Scarlet Thread."

Wikipedia Note on the [Scarlet Letter "A" on forehead](#) in the famous novel - The Scarlet Letter A: In the beginning of the novel Hester's letter A is a representation of her sin and adultery. However, as time progresses, the meaning of the letter changed. It now represented, to some, able. It states "The letter was the symbol of her calling. Such helpfulness was found in her—so much power to do, and power to sympathize—that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification. They said that it meant Able, so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength" (129).

Hampton Keathley - Humanly speaking, how difficult was the task that confronted Joshua and the people with regard to entering the land of Canaan? What were some of the obstacles Joshua and the people faced? As the leader, Joshua faced following in the steps of a leader like Moses and leading a stubborn, stiff-necked group of people. All of them together faced fortified cities, giants, and a flooded Jordan. Everything Joshua and the people were called to do, humanly speaking, was far beyond their ability. From the crossing of the swollen and turbulent waters of the Jordan to conquering the fierce, powerful, ungodly people who occupied the land. Regardless of these obstacles, by believing the promises of God, by applying the principles of God's Word, and by counting on the presence of God's person, Joshua courageously moved ahead and secretly sent two men to spy out the land to gather needed strategic and tactical information that any military commander would need to plan a successful strategy for taking the land.

Bob Marcaurelle sees three steps in the crossing of the Jordan:

1. The Meticulous Preparations (Joshua 1:10–3:13)
2. The Miraculous Passage (Joshua 3:13–17)
3. The Memorial Pillars (Joshua 4:1–18)

Then - **Then** is an expression of time which should always draw our attention. It will force us to examine the **context** and discern what is the progression of events in a text. Joshua is taking preliminary steps in preparation for the occupation of the land.

Keil and Delitzsch - "Although Joshua had received a promise from the Lord of His almighty help in the conquest of Canaan, he still thought it necessary to do what was requisite on his part to secure the success of the work committed to him, as the **help of God does not preclude human action, but rather presupposes it.**" ([Joshua 2 Commentary](#)) (ED: Once again we see the Biblical principle of God's sovereignty and Man's responsibility)

Don Anderson - The word "**then**" ties us into Joshua 1 where the Lord speaks, Joshua speaks, and the two and a half tribes speak. Now we are ready to move into action, and Joshua's first item of business is a **secret mission** for two of his very reliable men. He didn't make it public. It is interesting to note that he sent only two spies. (COMMENTING ON THE "TWO" OPTIMISTS JOSHUA AND CALEB IN Nu 13-14 Anderson says) Those who submitted the entirely negative and pessimistic majority report looked at the multitude of their enemies through the magnifying glass of fear and unbelief. The optimistic minority gained a true perspective through their faith in the omnipotent God Who had already displayed His power. **All twelve spies had seen exactly the same sights. The ten viewed God through the difficulties. The two viewed the difficulties through a God to whom nothing was impossible.** On this occasion Joshua sends only two. He didn't send twelve. These two They know 'uJO spies are willing to lay it all on the line. that one mistake, they get caught and shot. One is reminded of the spy by the name of NATHAN HALE who served George Washington. He was a 21 year old school teacher who volunteered to go behind British lines and collect

information for George Washington during the Revolutionary War. When he was caught, he faced death. With a rope hanging around his neck, he said, "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country." In a lot of ways this truly is a MISSION IMPOSSIBLE . These men must carefully cross a flooded river and then disguise themselves adequately during the daylight hours and get into the city without causing any alarm on the part of its citizens.

Doubt sees the obstacles,
Faith sees the way;
Doubt sees the darksome night ,
Faith sees the day.
Doubt dreads to take the step,
Faith soars on high;
Doubt whispers, "Who believes?"
Faith answers, "I!"
-- Author Unknown

Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying - Remember that in the Septuagint **Joshua** is translated with the word **iesous**, the word translated "**Jesus**" in the New Testament. The Septuagint translates **men** with the noun **neaniskos** which means young men in the prime of life. **NLT** - "Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove." Contrast Joshua's two spies with the twelve sent out "from the wilderness of Paran" by Moses (Numbers 13:3-16), only two of whom proved faithful. It is also notable that **Shittim** (means "Acacias") was the same place Israel fell into immorality and idolatry, Numbers 25:1+ recording "While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab." But it is a new day and now Israel was being prepared to eradicate the pagan idolaters rather than commingle with them! How ironic that the **two spies** from Shittim went to the house of a harlot! God does have a gracious sense of humor.

The Hebrew word **secretly** is **cheresh** (from **charash** = to be silent) and is used only here in the OT in NAS (although in KJV is found in 1Chr 4:14; Neh 11:35; Isa 3:3). **Cheresh** describes doing something without giving it public exposure and thus keeping it from certain persons. The Septuagint has the verb *kataskopeuo* (not found in NT - related verb *kataskopeo* in Gal 2:4+) which means to spy out, to inspect, to survey (Only used in Lxx of Ge 42:30; Ex 2:4; Dt. 1:24; Jos. 2:1; Jos. 2:2; Jos. 2:3; Jos. 6:22; Jos. 6:23; Jos. 6:25; Jos. 14:7)

Minorities, since time began
Have shown the better side of man,
And of ten in the lists of time
One man has made a cause sublime
--- P. L. Dunbar

Ryrie on secretly - Joshua, having learned an important lesson from his experience at Kadesh-barnea (Num. 13-14), concealed the spy mission even from the Israelites so that, if an unfavorable report were returned, the people would not be disheartened.

THOUGHT - For Joshua this was purely a military maneuver but God supervened and made it into one of the great spiritual maneuvers in the entire Bible. He used it to save a pagan harlot. We need to be aware that when we are doing what appear to be "ordinary" things in our life, we should not be surprised if God uses a godly life doing normal things to bring about some supernatural things! When we walk with Jesus, walking by His Word and His Spirit, the "normal" Christian life is anything but normal!

Moshe Weinfeld - "Sending out men for reconnaissance was a widespread phenomenon in the east. Moreover, a prostitute's or innkeeper's house was the accustomed place for meeting with spies, conspirators, and the like. Thus, for example, we read in Hammurabi's Code: 'If scoundrels plot together [in conspiratorial relationships] in an innkeeper's house, and she does not seize them and bring them to the palace, that innkeeper shall be put to death' (law § 109). In a Mari letter we read about two men who sow fear and panic and cause rebellion in an army. Also, the pattern of a three-day stay in an area when pursuing escapees has support in ancient eastern sources; for example the instructions to the Hittite tower commanders specify that if an enemy invades a place he must be pursued for three days. In the same collection of instructions we find that it is forbidden to build an inn (*arzana*) in which prostitutes live near the fortress wall, apparently because of the kind of danger described in Joshua 2." ([The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelites, pp. 141-43](#))

Davis and Whitcomb on secretly - "He had learned by experience that spy reports should be brought to the leaders only, for the people did not have sufficient orientation or experience to properly evaluate such a report." ([Israel From Conquest to Exile](#))

John Butler - Joshua sent only "**two**" spies. Twelve were sent in the previous spy mission. Sending fewer spies here was done "because the people of Canaan were now more alarmed than in Moses' time, and more suspicious of all strangers" (Matthew Poole).

Some are critical of Joshua for sending the spies. The critics say it was not an act of faith. But God's promise of victory for Israel did not eliminate Israel from going to battle. And if they must go to battle, they will have to study the enemies' situation in order to have good strategy in battling them. So Joshua did not send the spies out because of unbelief. Rather, he sent them out to help him make wise plans for conquering Canaan—the task God had given him to do. "The help of God does not preclude human action, but rather presupposes it" (Keil). ([Joshua: The Conqueror of Canaan](#))

Constable - Their mission was to explore the area Israel would enter, especially Jericho. Jericho is possibly the lowest city on earth, lying about 750 feet below sea level. [Note: See The New Bible Dictionary, 1962 ed., s.v. "Jericho," by Kenneth A. Kitchen.] Their object was to determine when and how to attack, not whether to attack....Jericho was not a large city, but it had strong fortifications and a strategic location on the eastern frontier of Canaan. It lay just a few miles west of the Jordan River in the Jordan Valley. If the Israelites were to gain a foothold in Canaan, they would have to defeat Jericho. ([Joshua 2](#))

Keathley - We might wonder, why Joshua sent out the spies. Was this necessary if he was really trusting in the Lord? After all, had not God promised Joshua that He would give him success? Why didn't he just go ahead knowing God would somehow supply? After all, the battle is the Lord's ... isn't it? Joshua had the precedent of the leadership and example of Moses for this action, an action which was the result of God's own command in Numbers 13:1-2. By application, Joshua was living and acting on the precepts of Scripture as he was commanded in Joshua 1:7-8. While Joshua had the promise of God's deliverance, he had not been given instruction on just how God would defeat the enemies they would face. As a wise military leader, he was simply gathering information concerning the layout of the enemies defenses, the condition of their moral, and other factors that would be important to any military campaign. Moreover he was not to presume on the Lord. He was to trust the Lord implicitly, but in that trust, he was also to use the resources God gave him: the training, the men, and the wisdom he had gained. See Matt. 4:6-7. **Principle:** Faith in the Lord's provision should never lead to presuming on God's decrees or sovereign actions, our intuitive feelings, or on our wants and desires. Faith looks for the principles of Scripture that might be applicable, gathers information or the facts needed in making wise decisions, and then, based on biblical principles and the facts known, moves ahead trusting in the provision and directions of the Lord (cf. Luke 14:31). If the Lord wants to intervene in some miraculous way as with Jericho, that's great, but we should never presume on His sovereign ways.

Keathley on the secrecy - Sometimes it is wise for the leaders to do what is needed to keep the eyes of their people on the Lord and His promises rather than on the problems. The need is to encourage one another. We sometimes have to face the problems, but we must learn to do so through the eyes of faith in God's person, promises, principles, and purposes. This was a matter of discretion and God's leading through studying and knowing what was best in this particular situation. Sometimes it is good to call everyone's attention to the problems, other times it is not (cf. Neh. 2:4-17).

Guzik comments on Joshua's sending out the **two men as spies** - This kind of careful preparation shows faithfulness, not a lack of faith. God's promises of success to us should never lull us into inaction. They should spur us on to a step out in godly activity.

THOUGHT - Guzik's comment reminds me of the common saying "Let go, Let God." This saying is not Biblical. God's commands and instructs do not call for us to be passive participants. A more accurate phrase is "Let God, Let's go," which links God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, a more accurate saying. See related discussion of "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)"

Shittim to Gilgal to Jericho - about 15 miles
[Click to Enlarge](#)

"Go, view the land, especially Jericho" - Joshua takes charge and issues two commands to the two men to go on a covert [reconnaissance](#) mission. Notice in the map above that Jericho was directly west of Israel's camp at Shittim. Although we cannot be dogmatic regarding the distances, **Shittim** lay approximately 15 miles east of **Jericho**. **Jericho** was the walled city which was the key citadel in the Jordan Valley and it commanded the passes into the central highlands ([see map of military conquests at top of page](#)), the first area into which Joshua would lead his forces. It follows that clearly this first battle was viewed by Joshua as critical and he wanted to leave **no stone unturned**! (By the way, that's a pun, cf Joshua 6:20+) As an aside Joshua's actions were not evidence of lack of faith but evidence of good military strategy. In contrast to the 12 spies sent out by Moses, these two were not to spy out the whole land. Joshua already knew what the land looked like (cf Nu 14:7-8+) [Jericho](#) (means "fragrance") is thought to be the oldest city in this part of the world (about 7000 B.C.) and was called the **city of palms**.

THOUGHT - The first step in any military campaign is to know the enemy! This is not unbelief on Joshua's part, but wisdom on his part! The greater the knowledge of the enemy the greater the chance for victory. General George Patton defeated the previously invincible [Desert Fox, General Erwin Rommel](#), in North Africa in World War II. Why was Patton so successful? The simple answer is that Patton had read Rommel's book [Infantry Attacks](#), his classic study of the art of war, in which Rommel analyzed the tactics that lay behind his success. It was first published in 1937, and quickly became a highly regarded military textbook and in fact

brought Rommel to the attention of Adolph Hitler. Paul gives similar advice in 2Co 2:11+ (in context of possible unforgiveness) "so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are **not ignorant of his schemes.**"

It is interesting that some writers suggest the 2 spies were to take measurements of the walls and record details about the defensive battlements of the city, but that seems quite unlikely in view of the fact that God had said He would give them victory. And it would not have been easy to scout out the city defenses without being noticed. The more useful information was the report of the morale of the Canaanites which in fact would be evidence that Jehovah had already begun to prepare the land for Israel's victory. In Dt 1:30 Moes had told the people "The LORD your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes."

So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there- The spies obey without hesitation, clear evidence that they are "strong and courageous," for they knew this was enemy territory and that they were essentially [taking their life in their hands](#). And remember the Jordan was at flood stage and the current undoubtedly swift which would have called for these men to be strong, able swimmers (it is possible however that they found a **ford**, a spot on the river where a crossing could have been undertaken - cf Josh 2:7). And notice immediately we see the good hand of Jehovah (in some way) providentially guiding the two spies to **the house of a harlot!** ([What is divine providence?](#)) God had promised to go before Israel and here we see one tangible way He went before them! While their primary purpose was to gather information for military purposes, as subsequent events would demonstrate, they would also prove to be "messengers of mercy," or God's "agents of grace"! Little did they know that this **harlot** would not only be physically saved but spiritually saved and even enter into the lineage of the Messiah as the mother of Boaz, the great-grandfather of David (Mt 1:5+, cf Heb 11:31+, Jas 2:25+)! The omniscient eye of Yahweh saw one sinner in Jericho that He would save and He used men to bring about her salvation. While some writers feel that **Rahab** is better described as an innkeeper, virtually every English translation refers to her as a prostitute or **harlot**. ([zanah](#); Lxx = [porne](#)). And think about it for a moment -- what two men entering into a harlot's house arouse much suspicion? It is also interesting that Rahab is the very first person Scripture introduces us to in the Promised Land.

Providence of God

Not casual coincidence but

Supernatural Serendipity!

The spies acted quite freely, by their own volition, and yet Ps. 37:23 says

The steps of a man are established (ordered) by the LORD, And He delights in his way.

Grant - As an aside the language used is carefully chosen by the Spirit of God to give no impression of sexual misconduct on their part. "When Samson visited a harlot for sexual reasons, the language is different from that employed here: "Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her" (Jdg 16:1). The emphasis is upon the harlot, rather than her house. This careful use of language is maintained when the behaviour of the spies is described. They "lodged" in Rahab's house, with the word indicating that they "rested or lay down" (sakab = put oneself in a reclining position when sleeping - Ge 19:4, Dt 6:7, etc; Septuagint = kataluo = to take up one's quarters, to lodge). This word (sakab) is also used of sexual relations, but only when accompanied by the preposition "with" and the name or designation of another person. The inference that could be drawn from the youth of these men, and their presence in a harlot's house, is avoided by this discreet use of language." ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua](#))

THOUGHT - Have you ever considered yourself as God's "messenger of mercy" or "secret agent of grace?" Well, beloved, you are! You have been saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+), have shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15+) and now have the privilege (cf Eph 2:10+) of bestowing God's the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24+) on a lost sinner in desperate need of God's saving grace. **Today** is the day of salvation for those who don't know Jesus (2Cor 6:2+). But for us who know the Truth (personified), **today** is the day we should "Let our speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that we will know how we should respond to each person." (Col 4:6+) Dear disciple of Jesus, may **today** be the day you are "salty salt" (Mt 5:13+) and "pure light" (Mt 5:14-16+), to those who walk in (spiritual) darkness and need to see a great Light (Jn 8:12), a Light that will shine on them and in their heart (Isa 9:2+) bringing them "the Light of life." (Jn 8:12) Would you consider praying today for filling with the Spirit of Jesus (Eph 5:18+), for He will supernaturally enable the boldness (Acts 4:31+) you need to go to the "**Rahab's**" in your sphere of influence and bear fruit that will endure throughout eternity (Jn 15:16). "Ask of the Father in Jesus' name that He may give to you" (Jn 15:16b) a "**Rahab**" to speak to **today** about Jesus.

What the Bible Teaches on the salvation of Rahab - She was plucked from the obscurity of Jericho, a city that would be destroyed and cursed, and brought into a wonderful sphere of blessing. In this she is a picture of the work of the Lord in saving Gentile sinners,

as Paul says: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). Yet in His grace and mercy, the Lord has brought the gospel to the ears of Gentile sinners throughout the world and "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col 1:13). ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua](#))

Utley on harlot - Later Judaism tried to make her an "innkeeper" (Meg. 14b, 15a; Josephus; Rashi), but this is typical of their attempts to remove embarrassing events from the OT (cf. Exodus 32). The term is definitely "harlot" (BDB 275). This would have been one place the spies could go as strangers and be welcome without question.

Donald Campbell - Some, from the time of Josephus to the present, have attempted to soften the situation by arguing that Rahab was only an innkeeper, but the New Testament references to her (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25) indicate that she was an immoral woman. This in no way impugns the righteousness of God who used such a person in the fulfillment of His purposes. Instead this incident serves to bring His mercy and grace into bold relief (cf. Matt. 21:32; Luke 15:1; 19:10). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Matthew Henry Concise Comments - Verses 1-7. Faith in God's promises ought not to do away, but to encourage our diligence in the use of proper means. The Providence of God directed the spies to the house of Rahab. God knew where there was one that would be true to them, though they did not. Rahab appears to have been an innkeeper; and if she had formerly been one of bad life, which is doubtful, she had left her evil courses. That which seems to us most accidental, is often overruled by the Divine providence to serve great ends. It was by faith that Rahab received those with peace, against whom her king and country had war. We are sure this was a good work; it is so spoken of by the apostle, James 2:25; and she did it by faith, such a faith as set her above the fear of man. Those only are true believers, who find in their hearts to venture for God; they take his people for their people, and cast in their lot among them. The spies were led by the special providence of God, and Rahab entertained them out of regard to Israel and Israel's God, and not for lucre or for any evil purpose. Though excuses may be offered for the guilt of Rahab's falsehood, it seems best to admit nothing which tends to explain it away. Her views of the Divine law must have been very dim: a falsehood like this, told by those who enjoy the light of revelation, whatever the motive, would deserve heavy censure.

Harlot ([02181](#)) **zanah** is a verb meaning to fornicate, to prostitute and refers to marital infidelity or unfaithfulness. It was word used elsewhere in the OT to describe prostitution (Lev 21:7; Pr 7:10). Many of the uses of **zanah** are figurative describing Israel 's (Jehovah's "wife") commission of "spiritual prostitution" by having "intercourse" so to speak with other gods (cp 1 Co 6:16). Indeed, idolatry is looked upon as prostitution (Isa 50:1, 2, 3; 54:6, 7, 8; Jer 2:1, 2, 3; 3:1ff; Hos 2:1ff; Jas 4:4⁺; Rev 2:4⁺). In addition **zanah** describes Israel's improper relationships with other nations (Isa. 23:17; Ezek. 23:30; Nah. 3:4). "The thought seems to be of having relations with these nations for the sake of political and monetary benefit, although in the case of Nineveh the added element of alluring, deceitful tactics leading on to oppressive dominance is implied." "A third figurative meaning is found in Isa 1:21, where the Israelites' departure from God's approved moral standards is called harlotry." ([TWOT](#)) **Zanah** is most often used for women and only twice in reference to men (Nu 25:1⁺) **W E Vine** adds that "**zanah** means "to go a whoring, commit fornication, be a harlot, serve other gods." This is the regular term denoting prostitution throughout the history of Hebrew, with special nuances coming out of the religious experience of ancient Israel."

Harlot/Prostitute ([4204](#)) **porne** from **perano** - to sell. Porno-, as prefix in pornographic) is a woman who practices sexual immorality as a profession. **BDAG** adds it can be used figuratively of " a political entity hostile to God, prostitute, whore, fig. ext. of 1 (Isa 1:21; Isa 23:15f; Jer 3:3; Ezk 16:30-31, 35) as the designation of a government that is hostile to God and God's people Rv 17:15-16." **Babylon** is called **pórne**, the great harlot, being the chief seat of idolatry since **porneía** is symbolic of idolatry (Rev. 17:1, 5, 15, 16; 19:2). [What is the whore of Babylon / mystery Babylon? | GotQuestions.org](#) **All uses of porne in the Septuagint - Note 4x in Joshua all referring to Rahab-** Gen. 34:31; Gen. 38:15; Gen. 38:21; Gen. 38:22; Lev. 21:7; Lev. 21:14; Deut. 23:2; Deut. 23:17; Deut. 23:18; Jos. 2:1; Jos. 6:17; Jos. 6:23; Jos. 6:25; Jdg. 11:1; Jdg. 16:1; 1 Ki. 3:16; 1 Ki. 12:24; 1 Ki. 21:19; 1 Ki. 22:38; Prov. 5:3; Prov. 6:26; Prov. 29:3; Isa. 1:21; Isa. 23:15; Isa. 23:16; Isa. 57:3; Jer. 3:3; Jer. 5:7; Ezek. 16:30; Ezek. 16:31; Ezek. 16:35; Ezek. 23:43; Ezek. 23:44; Hos. 4:14; Joel 3:3; Nah. 3:4;

Bob Marcaurelle - This woman had heard about Israel's God, believed Israel's God was God, trembled before Him and wanted mercy from Him. She was ready to respond to the little bit of gospel light she had received, as best she could. And God saw to it that His messengers got to her. That's what true evangelism is. It is not begging and forcing people to accept Christ. It is being willing to be used of God to find those precious people He has made ready to receive Him. Jesus told His disciples He **HAD** to go through Samaria to get to Judah. Why? Because there was a woman there, much like Rahab. She had had five husbands and now had a live-in boy friend. But she had a heart hungry for God and by a well Jesus led her to faith and salvation (Jn. 4). In Acts 8 we see Philip leading a great revival, years later in Samaria. God comes to him and sends him down to a lonely desert road. Why? Because there is an Ethiopian man down there, a foreigner to the people of God and he is riding in his chariot reading a Bible he doesn't understand. And so Philip sees him, runs to him (we get excited over soul winning when we see God at work), preaches Jesus to

him, and places him beneath the baptismal waters, a new convert to the Lord.

Related Resources:

- [What is the significance of Shittim in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- The Providence of God
- [What is the significance of Jericho in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Jericho](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Jericho](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Jericho](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Jericho \(2\)](#) [Jericho](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Jericho](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Jericho](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Jericho](#) [Jericho \(2\)](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Jericho](#)

Related Resources - Rahab

- American Tract Society [Rahab](#)
 - Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Rahab](#)
 - Easton's Bible Dictionary [Rahab](#)
 - Fausset Bible Dictionary [Rahab](#)
 - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Rahab](#)
 - Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Rahab](#)
 - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Rahab](#)
 - Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Rahab](#)
 - McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Rahab](#)
-

USE OF NUMBERS IN JOSHUA -

- 3 days (Joshua 1:11, 2:22; 3:2, 9:2)
- 3 sons of Anak (Joshua 15:14)
- 3 men from each tribe (Joshua 18:4)
- 2 cities (Joshua 15:60, 21:25, 27)
- 2 spies (Joshua 2:1, 4, 10, 23, 6:22);
- 2 kings of the Amorites (Joshua 9:10)
- 2 tribes (John 14:3, 4, 21:16)
- 4 cities (Joshua 19:7, 21:18, 22, 24, 29, 31, 35, 37, 39)
- 5 kings (Joshua 10:5, 16, 17, 22, 23)
- 5 trees (Joshua 10:26)
- 5 lords (Joshua 13:3)
- 6 days march around Jericho (Joshua 6:3, 14);
- 6 cities (Joshua 15:59, 62)
- 7 priests to lead the march (Joshua 6:4, 6, 8, 13);
- 7 trumpets (Joshua 6:4, 6, 8, 13)
- 7 times (Joshua 6:4, 15 - twice)
- 7 tribes (Joshua 18:2)
- 7 portions (Joshua 18:5)
- 7 divisions (Joshua 18:6, 9)
- on the seventh day the people marched seven times around the city (Joshua 6:16);
- on the seventh day Jericho fell (Joshua 6:17);
- 9 tribes (Joshua 13:7, 14:2)
- 9 cities (Joshua 15:44, 54, 21:16)
- 10 cities (Joshua 15:57, 21:5)
- 10 portions (Joshua 17:5)
- 10 sons of Kohath (Joshua 21:26)

- 10 chiefs (Joshua 22:14)
- 12 men and memorial stones (Joshua 4:2);
- 110 years old (Joshua 24:29)
- 3,000 soldiers against Ai (Joshua 7:3);
- 36 soldiers were killed (Joshua 7:5);
- 40 years old - Caleb (Joshua 14:7)
- 85 years old - Caleb (Joshua 14:10)
- 30,000 soldiers fought against Ai (Joshua 8:3).
- There are a few other numbers but these are most

QUESTION - [Why did the Israelite spies visit the house of Rahab the prostitute?](#)

ANSWER - Before Israel's battle against the city of [Jericho](#), Joshua sent two spies into the city to investigate ([Joshua 2](#)). When these two spies' presence was discovered, the spies hid in Rahab the harlot's house to avoid capture.

It may seem strange that the spies found refuge in the house of a prostitute—what were *they*, people of God, doing *there*? The answer may be quite simple. To state the obvious, perhaps the spies were seeking the services of a prostitute. There is another possible explanation, however. The house of a harlot was probably a good place to avoid detection—a couple of travelers entering such a house would probably not arouse much suspicion. The spies, seeking anonymity, figured a house of prostitution would be a good place to find it. Also, Rahab's house was situated on the city wall (Joshua 2:15), providing an escape route. As it turned out, the spies' choice of a hiding place was God-ordained.

Rahab's assistance to these spies was of tremendous importance. She hid the spies on her roof, and, when the king's guards came to her house, she sent the guards in a different direction. Thus, she protected the lives of the two Israelite spies. In her conversation with the spies, Rahab declared her faith, saying, "The LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below" (Joshua 2:11).

As a result of Rahab's faith and actions, the two men promised to protect Rahab and her family when the Israelites returned. They told her, "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land" (Joshua 2:14).

At the battle of Jericho, the walls of the city fell down, and the people of Jericho were defeated. Rahab's family, however, was spared: "But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day" (Joshua 6:25).

Rahab's name would later be mentioned in three important places in the New Testament. First, Matthew 1:5 mentions her as the mother of Boaz, making her the great-great-grandmother of King David. More importantly, Rahab was a direct ancestor of Jesus Christ.

Rahab is mentioned in the "hall of faith" of Hebrews 11. Verse 31 notes, "By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient."

Rahab's actions are mentioned in James 2:25–26 as an example of true, living faith: "Was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." Her actions saved lives and revealed her heart of faith. Despite her background, her faith and actions worked together to reveal her as a woman who believed in God.

Rahab's example helps us still today. No matter our past, God asks us to believe in Him and live out our faith through action. When we do, God can use us in powerful ways to change lives both now and for eternity. [GotQuestions.org](#)

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

1. And Joshua the son of Nun sent, &c. Or, Heb. וישלח *vu-yishlah*, had sent. The original will well admit of this rendering, and it is adopted by the current of commentators. Luther's translation is very express in this sense; 'But Joshua the son of Nun had previously sent spies,' &c. And this seems, on the whole, the most probable construction. Nothing is more frequent in the sacred writings than such transpositions (technically termed *hysterology*), so that interpreters have felt warranted to state as a general canon, that there is no certain order, no former nor latter, in the histories of the Scripture. Masius contends that the whole series of events mentioned in this chapter occurred prior to the order given by Joshua, ch. 1:10, for providing food and getting ready to cross the Jordan within three days. But even if this view be admitted, it is somewhat difficult to determine the precise date of the sending forth of the spies. Each of the following suppositions has its advocates. (1.) The spies were dispatched and returned to the camp before the order, ch. 1:10, was issued. The objection which Schmid brings to this is, that it would suppose Joshua to have acted in

this matter without Divine direction; for there is no hint in the narrative of his having received any express intimation relative to his movements prior to the instructions given in the first chapter, and it is quite improbable that Joshua would have decided upon such a step upon his own responsibility. He, therefore, with many others, adopts the following alternative. (2.) On the morning of the same day on which the breaking up of the encampment is announced, Joshua sends forth the spies. This he did in obedience to a Divine suggestion, which, though not recorded, is, like many other things, to be inferred from the execution. The spies came to Jericho in the afternoon of the same day, which the distance, according to Josephus, would well admit, and intended to lodge with Rahab that night. But being alarmed on account of the search ordered by the king of Jericho, they fled to the mountains the same evening, and remained there in concealment that night and the whole of the next day, and in the early part of the third day returned to the camp east of the Jordan. It is indeed said, v. 22, that they 'abode three days' in the mountains; but this may properly be understood of one whole day, and parts of two others, as is evident from the case of our Saviour, who is said to have lain three days in the earth, Mat. 27:63, which is obviously to be understood in the same way. Comp. Mat. 12:40. If this be the right explanation, Joshua may be supposed to have commenced his march on the evening of the third day, or on the morning of the fourth, and still have accomplished his purpose of setting out within the time specified, as we have already remarked that the phrase 'within three days' may imply the period of three days complete. This is the solution maintained by Masius and most of the Jewish commentators, and is perhaps the most probable, although it is still liable to one objection. Joshua's sending out the spies implies that his movements would be governed by their reports. But he could have had no assurance that he should receive this report within the space of three days, and yet he gives peremptory orders for moving forward within that time. Of what use then was the information which was to be gained from the reports of the spies? To this it may be replied, that as the distance from the encampment to Jericho was but of a few hours' travel, three days' time was so large an allowance for the accomplishment of their mission, that he could not reasonably be supposed to run any risk in fixing the time of departure at the close of that period. This is perhaps sufficient, and as every mode of understanding the matter is clogged with some difficulty, we are content to abide by that now given.

Out of Shittim. Called elsewhere Abel-Shittim, unless the latter were the name of the adjoining valley. Its precise location cannot now be identified, and nothing more is known of it than that it was situated in the extensive plain of the Jordan. It is supposed to be the Abila of Josephus, and lay, according to him, about sixty stadia, or little upwards of seven miles from the Jordan, within the boundaries assigned to the tribe of Reuben. See Note on Num. 25:1. It is supposed to have derived its name from the great quantity of trees, called Shittim-wood, growing in the vicinity.

Two men to spy secretly. The Heb. term for 'spies' is מרגלים meraggelim, from רגל regel, a foot, implying those who travelled on foot, for the purpose of espial. See Note on Gen. 42:9. The original of 'secretly' is חָרָשׁ hēresh, signifying in strictness silently, and has reference either to the manner of their being sent, viz. in a secret, silent way, without the privity of the people; or to the mode of discharging their duty, that is, noiselessly, stealthily. The former is probably the leading import, as it is a matter of course, and unnecessary to be intimated, that spies should perform their errand in a secret manner. But it was not superfluous to mention that the spies were sent out without the knowledge of the people, as from the recollection of his own case when dispatched by Moses, Joshua might have apprehended very disheartening effects upon the timid minds of the Israelites when they came to hear the reports brought back. On the general policy of sending these spies on this occasion, when an express assurance had been given to Joshua that every place on which the sole of his foot should tread should come into his possession, and that no man should be able to stand before him, we may remark, that it is but in accordance with the ordinary arrangements of infinite wisdom as displayed in the history of its dispensations; and we must consider Joshua, in all this transaction, as acting not from himself, but from the impulse or the express direction of a higher power. The certainty of a promised or predicted issue does not supersede the use of prudent means in the attempt to compass it. To neglect the use of the appropriate means is to contravene the established order of the Divine councils, and to tempt God rather than honor him. Even when a cloudy pillar was vouchsafed to the Israelites, to conduct their march through the wilderness, yet it would seem from Num. 10:31, that scouts were employed who were to serve as 'eyes' to the congregation by going before and designating the proper places for encamping. In the present instance Joshua is prompted to do just what any discreet and skilful leader would have done in similar circumstances. Being about to besiege a fortified place, he takes the requisite measures for acquainting himself with its true position, its strong and its weak points, that he may order his tactics accordingly. He was indeed well aware that his victory was certain, and that it was the arm of Jehovah, and not his own, that would achieve it; but he was equally assured that faith did not preclude effort, and that he was to proceed in the enterprise just as if every thing depended on his unaided prowess and skill. This is ever the true mode of evincing a believing dependence on the Divine blessing; to act as if all were owing to ourselves, to feel and acknowledge that all is owing to the favor and effectual working of God himself.

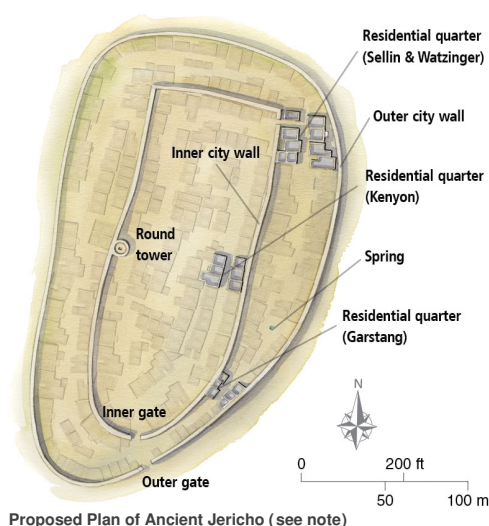
View the land, even Jericho. Heb. 'The land and Jericho.' Explore the land or country about Jericho, but more especially the city itself. Thus 1 Kings 11:1, 'But king Solomon loved many strange women, and the daughter of Pharaoh,' i. e. especially the daughter of Pharaoh. 2 Sam. 2:30, 'And when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men, and Asahel.' Mark 16:7, 'Go your way, and tell his disciples and Peter,' &c., i. e. especially inform Peter. They were to observe its site, its various localities, its avenues of approach, its fortifications, the state of the inhabitants—every thing, in fine, which would be of service to them in concerting the best mode of attack. The Heb. form of the name of this city is יריחו yeriho (elsewhere ירֵחו yērēho).

and יריחו yeriho), and is derived, according to Gesenius, from ירח yârēah, the moon, from the shape of the plain on which it stood, or more probably according to others from ריח riah, scent, smell, from the sweet smell of the balsam, or palmtrees, the latter of which abounded there in such profusion that it is sometimes spoken of as the 'city of palm-trees,' Deut. 34:3; Judg. 1:16. It seems not to have been situated immediately upon the river, but at the distance of six or eight miles, at the base of the Quarantina range of mountains. The modern Jericho, now called Rihah, is a miserable village of about fifty dwellings and two hundred inhabitants; but according to the most intelligent travellers it does not occupy the site of the ancient city. The latter is believed to have stood at least four miles nearer Jerusalem, at the very foot of the mountains, although it is admitted to be impossible distinctly to identify it. The modern Jericho is thus described by Prof. Robinson (Trav., Vol. II., p. 279): 'We now returned through the village, which bears the Arabic name of Eriha, or, as it is more commonly pronounced, Riha, a degenerate shoot both in name and character of the ancient Jericho. Situated in the midst of this vast plain, it reminded me much of an Egyptian village. The plain is rich and susceptible of easy tillage and abundant irrigation, with a climate to produce any thing. Yet it lies almost desert; and the village is the most miserable and filthy that we saw in Palestine. The houses or hovels are merely four walls of stones taken from ancient ruins, and loosely thrown together, with flat roofs of cornstalks or brushwood spread over with gravel. They stand quite irregularly, and with large intervals; and each has around it a yard enclosed by a hedge of the dry thorny boughs of the Nubk. In many of these yards are open sheds with similar roofs; and the flocks and herds are brought into them at night, and render them filthy in the extreme. A similar but stronger hedge of Nubk branches surrounds the whole village, forming an almost impenetrable barrier. The few gardens round about seemed to contain nothing but tobacco and cucumbers. One single solitary palm now timidly rears its head, where once stood the renowned "City of Palm-trees." Not an article of provision was to be bought here, except new wheat unground.' The plain upon which Jericho stood is very extensive, and as numerous ruins are strewed over at a greater or less distance from the fountain by which it was distinguished, it is probable that in consequence of the malediction denounced against him who should rebuild its gates, the location was subsequently changed, and perhaps more than once.

And lodged there. Heb. וישכבו va-yishkebū shāmmāh, and lay down there. That is, they went in with the design of lodging there, and probably had actually lain down and composed themselves to rest, when the arrival of the king's messengers defeated their purpose, interrupted their repose, and made it necessary for them to save themselves by flight. Thus Gen. 37:21, 'And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands,' i. e. he purposed to deliver him.

Joshua 2:2 It was told the king of Jericho, saying, '**Behold**, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.'

- the king: Ps 127:1 Pr 21:30 Isa 43:13 Da 4:35



THE MISSION OF THE SPIES IS COMPROMISED

It was told the king of Jericho, saying, '**Behold**, ("Note well" - NET) men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land' - Note that not only are the two spies identified as Israelites but their purpose was also discovered. How did the men of Jericho know there were Israeli spies? The text does not tell us, but supposedly they had an unusual appearance (Jewish facial features are often quite distinctive, their speech or their dress), which drew attention of the citizens. And from the following context it is clear the two spies were followed to Rahab's house. The major cities of Canaan were in reality small "kingdoms," each ruled by a local king (attested also in the [Amarna letters](#) of the 14th century B.C.)

Utlei on **king** - This was the common Canaanite governmental city-state title (like the Philistines). He was very nervous over such a large body of people camped so close to his city, especially in light of what they had done to the native kingdoms on the eastern side of the Jordan.

Spurgeon reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

Believers Study Bible - (vv. 2-7) Note the remarkable nature of Rahab's faith in view of her background and her situation (cf. 2Co 4:18). Her ethics must be viewed in light of that faith and that background. Pr 12:22 expresses how much God values truth. Nevertheless, the N.T. praises the faith that motivated her lie (Heb. 11:31).

Behold (02009) **hinneh** is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). The first use of **hinneh** in Ge 1:29 and second in Ge 1:31

All the uses of hineeh in Joshua - Jos. 2:2; Jos. 2:18; Jos. 3:11; Jos. 5:13; Jos. 7:21; Jos. 7:22; Jos. 8:20; Jos. 9:12; Jos. 9:13; Jos. 9:25; Jos. 14:10; Jos. 22:11; Jos. 23:14; Jos. 24:27

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

2. Behold there came men—to search out the country. This could have been only a conjecture, yet they affirm it as a matter of absolute certainty. As they could conceive of no other motive for which they had come, it was perhaps natural that they should confidently assign this as the true one

Joshua 2:3 And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, "**Bring out** the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land."

- **Bring:** Jos 10:23 Ge 38:24 Lev 24:14 Job 21:30 Joh 19:4 Ac 12:4,6
- **to search:** Ge 42:9-12,31 2Sa 10:3 1Ch 19:3
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE KING'S DEMAND FORCES RAHAB TO MAKE A LIFE CHANGING DECISION

And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." - The King of Jericho was accurate in his assessment. His royal command forced Rahab to make a choice, a choice that ultimately would affect her eternal destiny! This was a crisis not of her own making, but brought her to the point of decision. Was there some risk in choosing the side of the spies? Possibly, for if she were discovered to be lying, she surely would have been executed (but see Campbell's comment below).

Campbell points out that "In keeping with oriental custom the privacy of even a woman such as Rahab was respected and the king's men refrained from bursting into her house and searching it." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

A W Pink has a parallel with the Samaritan woman in John 4 - The needs be for those spies entering Jericho reminds one of John 4, and there are some striking parallels between what is recorded there and the case of Rahab . First, we are told of the Lord Jesus that "He **must** needs go through Samaria" (Jn 4:4KJV+). That "**must**" was not a geographical but a moral one. From all eternity it had been ordained that He should go through Samaria. There was one of God's elect there, and though she was "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel", being a Samaritan, yet she could not be ignored: "other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring" (John 10:16) declared the good Shepherd. There were those in Samaria whom the Father had given Him from before the foundation of the world, and them He must save. ([Gleanings in Joshua](#))

3. For they be come, &c. This seems to have been said by way of answer to anticipated objections on her part, as if it were the height of treachery to her guests thus to deal with them. 'But no, you need have no scruples on this score, for the men are not good men, as you may have supposed; they have come hither as enemies and spies, whom it will be no breach of the laws of hospitality to deliver up to justice.'

Joshua 2:4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.

- Ex 1:19 2Sa 16:18,19 17:19,20 2Ki 6:19
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GOD PROTECTED THE TWO SPIES

But the woman had taken the two men and hidden ([tsapan/sapan](#)) them - In some manner, Rahab had determined the two men were not on native to the city and was led to hide them rather than expose them. She made the choice to risk her life temporally, not knowing this would be part of her journey of faith to save her life eternally! Rahab had taken the first steps on the path of divine blessing!

And she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from- Rahab speaks some truth here admitting the men had come to her home. When she says that she does not know where they are from, this was the beginning of her lying.

Ryrie - Rahab's actions, though not in conformity with the scriptural prohibition against lying, were evidence that she believed the God of Israel was the true God (vv. 10-13). The Bible commends her faith, not her lying (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25). God's grace is remarkably demonstrated in giving her faith, sparing her, and including her in the messianic line (Matt. 1:5).

Hidden (concealed) ([06845](#)) [tsapan/sapan](#) means primarily to hide, to keep secret, to conceal something often of great value with a definite purpose (for protection or for sinister purposes). In Job 23:12+ and Ps 119:11+ it speaks of hiding (as one would precious treasure) the Word of God in one's heart.

Norman Geisler - JOSHUA 2:4-5—How could God bless Rahab for lying?

PROBLEM: When the spies came to Jericho, they sought refuge in the house of Rahab. When the king of Jericho commanded Rahab to bring out the men, she lied saying that the men had already gone and that she did not know where they went. However, when Israel finally destroyed Jericho, Rahab and all her family were saved alive. How could God bless Rahab for lying?

SOLUTION: Some argue that it is not clear that God blessed Rahab for lying. God certainly saved Rahab and blessed her for protecting the spies and assisting in the overthrow of Jericho. However, nowhere does the Bible explicitly say that God blessed Rahab for lying. God could have blessed her in spite of her lie, not because of it. Actually, Rahab's act of protecting the spies was a demonstration of great faith in the God of Israel. She firmly believed that God would destroy Jericho, and she exhibited that belief by siding with Israel against the people of Jericho when she protected the spies from being discovered.

Others insist that Rahab was faced with a real moral conflict. It may have been impossible for her to both save the spies and tell the truth to the soldiers of the king. If so, God would not hold Rahab responsible for this unavoidable moral conflict. Certainly a person cannot be held responsible for not keeping a lesser law in order to keep a higher obligation. The Bible commands obedience to the government (Rom. 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13), but there are many examples of justified civil disobedience when the government attempts to compel unrighteousness (Ex. 5; Dan. 3, 6; Rev. 13). The case of the Hebrew midwives lying to save the lives of the male children is perhaps the clearest example (see comments on Ex. 1:15-21).

[Hard Sayings of the Bible](#) - Was Rahab Right to Lie?

Does God approve of dubious actions to accomplish his will in certain perilous situations? Can strong faith go hand in hand with the employment of methods which are alien to the integrity of God's character and word? Are Rahab's treason and lying in any way justifiable, perhaps as a "white lie"?

The Bible is unhesitating in its praise of Rahab. Hebrews 11:31 praises her faith in God, while James 2:25 praises her for lodging

and then sending off the spies in a different direction from those seeking them. But approval of Rahab in these areas does not mean that she enjoyed God's approval in every area of her life. The areas of Rahab's faith must be strictly observed.

She won recognition by biblical writers because she trusted in the God of Israel more than she trusted her own king of Jericho. She had heard what God had done for Israel at the Red Sea and in defeating the two kings of the trans-Jordan (Josh 2:8–12). And she demonstrated her faith by receiving the spies and sending them out another way. Even Joshua 6:25 notes her actions and contrasts her response with that of Achan.

No guilt should be assigned, therefore, to her treason in abandoning her people, who like herself had great reason for trusting the God of the Hebrews. When it comes to choosing between serving God or a local king, the answer must always be to serve the higher power, God (Acts 4:19).

Rahab's lie, on the other hand, cannot be so easily dismissed. She said, "I don't know which way they went." That was palpably false. Romans 3:8 warns us not to say, "Let us do evil that good may result." Neither should we argue, especially from a descriptive or a narrative passage, that a text validates deceit under certain conditions.

The so-called dutiful lie ignores how precious the truth is in God's sight. Even lies told for very good purposes are not free from divine disapproval. Moreover, even if in the de facto providence of God, Rahab's untruth allowed the two spies to escape harm, this does not therefore justify such a method. God is not reduced to unholy acts to fulfill his will. At most God allowed his purposes to be fulfilled in this most unusual manner, because his grace can operate in spite of the sinful maneuverings of men and women. Untruth cannot be vindicated simply because it is closely tied to the total result.

To argue for lying in this manner would be not only poor exegesis and theology but worse theodicy. Any other conclusion would eventually validate David's adultery because the next heir in the Messianic line, Solomon, resulted from David's union with Bathsheba. We are specifically told that David's sin was abhorrent to God. It happens we are not told the same about Rahab's sin. This is no reason to vote differently in the two cases; each violates a clear commandment of God.

We cannot say that protecting innocent lives is a greater good than the demand always to tell the truth. Scripture nowhere advocates or allows for such hierarchy. To do so would pit part of God's nature against other parts of his nature. To say that lying is a lesser evil than being involuntarily implicated in murder is again an artificial and subjective construct. We need to follow all of God's Word, and that Word involves respect for both life and truth, as difficult as that is in a world that often pits one moral absolute against another.

Truth-telling is not only a covenantal responsibility (that is, a responsibility to those who are part of the family of God), but a universal responsibility for all times, all peoples, in all places. We must not form our own subjective hierarchies or personal priorities in assigning what we believe is the greater good or lesser evil.

On the other hand, we may not surrender innocent lives just because an army or police force demands it. Rahab should have hidden the spies well and then refused to answer the question whether she was hiding them. She could, for instance, have volunteered, "Come in and have a look around," while simultaneously praying that God would make the searchers especially obtuse.

It is possible to maintain a position of non-conflicting absolutes. God will provide a way to avoid the conflicts (1 Cor 10:13).

Joshua 2:4 Unexpected Help

The woman took the two men and hid them. — Joshua 2:4

Today's Scripture: Joshua 2:1-14

In 1803, Thomas Jefferson commissioned Lewis and Clark to lead an expedition across an unexplored America to the Pacific coast. The expedition was called "Corps of Discovery"—and it lived up to its name. It cataloged 300 new species, identified nearly 50 Indian tribes, and traversed terrain that had never been seen by Europeans.

They were joined along the way by a French fur trader and his wife Sacajawea. They soon found her to be invaluable as an interpreter and guide.

During the trip, Sacajawea was reunited with her family. Her older brother had become the tribe's chief, and he helped them acquire horses and a map of the uncharted West. Without Sacajawea's and her brother's unexpected help, the expedition may not have succeeded.

The Bible tells of an expedition that also received unexpected help. The Israelites had sent spies into Jericho, a city in the land promised to them. Rahab agreed to ensure their escape in exchange for her family's protection when Jericho fell. In this way the sovereign God of grace used her to prepare the way for a victory in Israel's conquest and settlement of the Promised Land.

Are you in the middle of a challenge? Remember, God can provide help from unexpected sources. By: Dennis Fisher [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When trials seem impossible
And we can't face the day,
The Lord extends His helping hand
And makes for us a way.
—Sper

When there seems to be no way, God can make a way.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

4. And the woman took the two men and hid them. Heb. וַתִּצְפֶּנּוּ vattilzpeno, hid him, i. e. each one of them; implying probably that she hid them separately, at some distance from each other. The original for 'took,' should probably be rendered 'had taken,' and the whole clause inclosed in a parenthesis. She had, in all likelihood, learnt soon after their arrival the object of their errand, and aware of the danger to which they would be exposed if discovered, she had, at an early hour, conveyed them to a place of concealment; not, however, before rumors of their presence began to circulate about the city. This is justly celebrated by the apostle as an instance of high and heroic faith, Heb. 11:31. So strong was her persuasion of the truth of what had been announced to her, so fully was she convinced, from what she had heard of the wonders wrought for Israel, that their God was the only true God, and consequently that his declared purpose in regard to Canaan would surely come to pass, that she ventures her life upon her faith. She knew that harboring them was exposing herself to the death of a traitor to her country, and yet she runs the risk. 'She contemns her life for the present, that she may save it for the future; neglected her own king and country, for strangers which she never saw; and more feared the destruction of that city before it knew that it had an enemy, than the displeasure and mortal revenge of her king.' Bp. Hall. It was thus that her faith justified itself by works. Had she merely assured the spies, that though she believed that both Jericho and Canaan would fall into their hands, yet in her circumstances she could show them no kindness, her faith would have been dead and inactive, and would not have justified her. James 2:25. But her conduct showed that it was active and lively, and the event proved that it was efficacious to her salvation. So, unless our faith leads us to incur hazards and make sacrifices for God, it is to be accounted of no avail.

There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were. Thus far, perhaps, her answer contains no violation of truth. She admits that two men came to her house, but at the time of their coming, she knew not whence they were. The verb in the original is in the past tense, and should be so rendered—'I knew not.'

Joshua 2:5 "It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them."

- **shut:** Jos 2:7 Ne 13:19 Isa 60:11 Eze 47:1,2,12 Rev 21:25
- **the men went out:** Jer 50:20 Ro 3:7,8
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

RAHAB'S SECOND "FIB"

A [fib](#) is a small lie, but a lie is still a lie! Proverbs 6:16-19 says a lying tongue is one of the things God hates.

It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went: Rahab weaves her web of deceit to fool the king's men. She has at least two lies here and in addition misleads the king's men, so in a sense is also guilty of civil disobedience (cf Ro 13:1-2) Notice the lie, while still a falsehood, was clever, for it forced the king's men to begin their hunt for the spies outside of the city walls and afforded the two spies an opportunity to escape.

Guzik on Rahab's lie - Rahab's lie is not justified, but it does show courage. Consider that she was a pagan sinner in a city and culture wholly given over to the worship of false gods and immorality, with no previous contact with the word of God or the things of God. What is your excuse?

[Don Anderson](#) speculates on Rahab's lie (he may have a point) - Lying is a natural part of Rahab's profession. There have been many times that wives have unexpectedly appeared at her door wondering if their husbands are in residence and Rahab has had to use deception over and over again to cover their tracks. It is second nature to her to lie and to deceive.

Irving Jensen - There can be no question but that Rahab lied. Her lie was the protection of the spies. Did therefore the end

(protection) justify the means (lying)? The answer must be negative, since lying is always sin, and sin is never justified by God. Rahab's actions must be interpreted in light of the total picture. First, one must believe that God could have protected the spies without Rahab's lie. Further, the commendation of Rahab's words in James 2:25 is not commendation of the lie which she adopted in the weakness of her flesh (and not beyond the scope of God's forgiveness), but of the selfless act of doing something to help God's cause in defiance of her own national ties. Compare also the actions of the Hebrew midwives (Exodus 1:17ff.) and the woman at Bahurim (2Sa 17:18-20) ([Rest-Land Won -- Everyman's Bible Commentaries](#))

Keil and Delitzsch comment correctly that "a lie is always a sin. Therefore even if Rahab was not actuated at all by the desire to save herself and her family from destruction, and the motive from which she acted had its roots in her faith in the living God (Heb. xi. 31), so that what she did for the spies, and thereby for the cause of the Lord, was counted to her for righteousness ('justified by works,' James ii. 25), yet the course which she adopted was a sin of weakness, which was forgiven her in mercy because of her faith."

John Calvin - "It has often happened, that even when good men have endeavored to keep a straight course, they have turned aside into circuitous paths. Rahab acted wrongly when she told a lie and said that the spies had gone; and the action was acceptable to God only because the evil that was mixed with the good was not imputed to her. Yet, although God wished the spies to be delivered, He did not sanction their being protected by a lie." ([Joshua 2 Commentary](#))

Davis - For one to lie in this manner is for one to assume that he knows the outcome of a situation which, in fact, he does not. God has control of every situation and therefore it might well be the will of God that the spies should die. It is the job of the believer to represent the truth and allow the Lord to care for that situation." ([Israel From Conquest to Exile](#))

Donald Campbell - To argue that the spies would certainly have perished if Rahab had been truthful is to ignore the option that God could have protected the spies in some other way. To excuse Rahab for indulging in a common practice is to condone what God condemns. Paul quoted a poet of Crete who said that Cretans were inveterate liars, and then added, "This testimony is true. For this cause reprove them severely that they may be sound in the faith." (Titus 1:3). The lie of Rahab was recorded but not approved. The Bible approves her faith, demonstrated by good works, but not her falsehood. ([No Time for Neutrality](#))

Pink makes an excellent point - But, it may be asked, Did not the workings of providence in the sequel go to show God approved of Rahab's policy? did He not give success to the same? Answer, His providences are no Rule for us to walk by or reason from: though water flowed from the rock which Moses smote in his anger, yet that was no proof God approved of His servant's display of temper. God indeed graciously overruled Rahab's conduct, yet that did not vindicate her.

Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them - Here she even promises the king's men assurance that they will overtake them!

Compare James 2:25 which says "In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she **received** ([hupodechomai](#)) the messengers and sent them out by **another** ([heteros](#)) way?" Notice two "works" that show her faith was genuine.

First she **received** the two spies where received is the Greek verb [hupodechomai](#) which means she took them under her care (as if placing the hands or arms under a person) and which pictures her receiving them with hospitality and kindness!

Second, she sent them out by **another way**, which could refer to their departure by a rope let down from her house on the wall rather than departing through the city gate which is presumably how they had entered Jericho. **Another way** could also mean that Rahab sent them in a different direction, a direction opposite to the one she knew the king's men would be searching ("**on the road to the Jordan**"). In Joshua 2:16 she told the two spies to "**Go** to the **hill country**, so that the pursuers will not happen upon you, and hide yourselves there for three days until the pursuers return. Then afterward you may go on your way." The **hill country** would be in a direction different ([heteros](#)) than the road to the Jordan River (see [further explanation below](#)).

Joshua 2:6 But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof.

- **to the roof:** Jos 2:8 Ex 1:15-21 De 22:8 2Sa 11:2 Mt 24:17
- **hidden them:** Ex 2:2 2Sa 17:19 1Ki 18:4,13 2Ki 11:2 Jer 36:26 Col 3:3 Heb 11:23
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SOME OF THE WORKS

OF RAHAB'S FAITH

But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof- Her faith is shown to be genuine by not only welcoming the spies (See [note below](#) on Hebrews 11:31) but bravely hiding them and then later by putting out the scarlet cord.

Rahab was willing to risk everything she had for a God she barely knew.

That is genuine faith in action!

Campbell explains that "the stalks of flax which had been placed on her flat roof for drying. After flax stalks were pulled up at harvest time, they were soaked in water for three or four weeks to separate the fibers. Then, after drying in the sun, the flax was made into linen cloth. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Life Application Notes - Flax was harvested in the fields and piled high on the rooftops to dry. It was then made into yarn, which was used to make linen cloth. Flax grows to a height of three or four feet. Stacked on the roof, it made an excellent hiding place for the spies.

Keil & Delitzsch add that these stalks of flax would "grow to the height of three or four feet in Egypt, and attain the thickness of a reed, and would probably be quite as large in the plain of Jericho, the climate of which resembles that of Egypt, and would form a very good hiding-place for the spies if they were piled up upon the roof to dry in the sun".

[A W Pink](#) has an interesting comment - In Joshua 2:6 we are told that she brought them up to the roof of the house and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof". As there is not a superfluous nor meaningless word in the Scriptures, why then has the Holy Spirit specified the particular kind of straw which Rahab used to cover and conceal the two spies? Now "**flax**" was laboriously gathered by the industrious women, laid out on the flat roofs of the houses to dry, and was then used for spinning and weaving. The presence of a quantity of it "laid out" on Rahab's roof was an evidence she was now living a useful life. But that is not all the presence of the "**flax**" tells us. If we go to the trouble of searching our concordance and comparing Scripture with Scripture, we discover something yet more praiseworthy. In the last chapter of the book of Proverbs we are supplied with a fulllength portrait of "a virtuous woman", and one of her features is that "she seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands"! Such we are assured was now the character and occupation of this outstanding monument of mercy

Joshua 2:1-14 Three Tenses Of Trust

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. — Hebrews 11:31

Today's Scripture: Joshua 2:1-14

Rahab had a remarkable faith. Although it seemed incredible that Joshua's unequipped army would be able to break down or scale the walls of Jericho, she remembered what God had done for the Israelites in the past. So she put her trust in Israel's God by protecting the spies, and by staking her future on the hope that God would do what seemed impossible. Her trust in God involved the past, the present, and the future.

I have ministered to suffering and dying believers who have handled their pain with serenity and who faced death with hope. Some may consider such people naive or gullible, but they do so because they don't know the three tenses of trust.

Concerning the past, we know that God has proven His love and power, especially in giving His Son to die for our salvation (Rom. 5:8) and in bringing Him back to life (Rom. 1:4). In the present, He speaks to us through His Word (Heb. 1:1-4), hears our prayers (Mt. 7:7-11), and provides grace in our trials (2 Cor. 1:3-4). For the future, He promises that we will live with Him forever (1 Th. 4:17).

Remember, trust involves three tenses. Reflect on God's faithfulness in the past and present. You'll have good reason to trust Him for the future. What a wonderful God! Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

In the past the Lord has helped us,
Guiding, loving all the way;
Let us therefore trust His promise:
Grace sufficient for each day!
—Anon.

Feeling tense about the future?
Remember that God is always present.

Joshua 2:1-14 Even Her?

Was not Rahab the harlot also justified? — James 2:25

Today's Scripture: Joshua 2:1-14

Imagine looking through your family tree and finding this description of your ancestor: "A prostitute, she harbored enemies of the government in her house. When she was confronted by the authorities, she lied about it."

What would you do about her? Hide her story from anyone inquiring about your family? Or spotlight and praise her in the legends of your family's story?

Meet Rahab. If what we read about her in Joshua 2 were all we knew, we might lump her in with all of the other renegades and bad examples in the Bible. But her story doesn't stop there. Matthew 1:5-6 reveals that she was King David's great-great grandmother—and that she was in the lineage of our Savior, Jesus. And there's more. Hebrews 11:31 names Rahab as a woman of faith who was saved from the fall of Jericho (see Josh. 6:17). And in James 2:25, her works of rescue were given as evidence of her righteous faith.

God's love is amazing that way. He can take people with a bad reputation, transform their lives, and turn them into examples of His love and forgiveness. If you think you're too bad to be forgiven or if you know someone else who feels that way, read about Rahab and rejoice. If God can turn her into a beacon of righteousness, there's hope for all of us.: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Redemption's price our Savior paid
When all our sins on Him were laid;
He took our guilt, He bore our shame
That we may glorify His name.
—D. DeHaan

Whether our sins are great or small, Jesus is able to forgive them all.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

6. She had brought them up to the roof of the house. This verse is also parenthetical, and designed to explain more particularly the circumstances of the concealment mentioned, v. 4. The roofs of houses were then, as they still are in that country, flat, and being furnished with such battlements or parapets, as were commanded to the Jews, Deut. 22:8, were made use of for walking or sleeping upon, or for depositing any kind of goods or chattels which could not be conveniently bestowed elsewhere. See my 'Illustrations of the Scriptures,' p. 159, 414, 461.

Hid them with the stalks of flax, &c. This was probably laid upon the roof, in order to dry in the sun, preparatory to beating and dressing it for the wheel on which it was to be spun. Had she kept a public-house, as some have supposed, she would have been less likely to have had her roof spread over with such an article. The original is explicit in saying that the flax had been spread out or laid in order 'for herself,' as if for her own use; from which the inference is, we think, not inaptly drawn, that she possessed one at least of the characters of the virtuous woman, viz. that 'she sought wool and flax, and wrought willingly with her hands,' Prov. 31:13, and perhaps, at this time, supported herself in a way of honest industry.

Joshua 2:7 So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the [fords](#); and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate.

- **the fords:** Jud 3:28 12:5
- **they shut the gate:** Jos 2:5 Ac 5:23
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE KING'S MEN
"BUY THE LIE!"

So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the [fords](#); and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone

out, they shut the gate - The king's men [bought the lie](#) of Rahab, [hook, line and sinker](#)! Apparently the **gate** of Jericho had been open and allowed the two spies easy access, but now the **gate** was closed presumably out of fear of the Israelites. Now the only route of escape from the city had been removed and the two spies were totally at the mercy of Rahab, who literally [held their lives in her hand](#)! The New Testament does not commend her for her lies, but on the other hand makes no mention of Rahab's lies, but instead places her in the Hebrews hall of faith (Heb 11:31+)! This is nothing short of amazing divine mercy, forgiveness and grace!

Donald Campbell on Rahab's lying - Was Rahab wrong to lie since her falsehood protected the spies? Are there some situations in which a lie is acceptable? After all, some say, this was a cultural matter, for Rahab was born and raised among the depraved Canaanites among whom lying was universally practiced. She probably saw no evil in her act. Further, if she had told the truth the spies would have been killed by the king of Jericho. But such arguments are not convincing. To argue that the spies would certainly have perished if Rahab had been truthful is to ignore the option that God could have protected the spies in some other way. To excuse Rahab for indulging in a common practice is to condone what God condemns. Paul quoted a prophet of Crete who said that Cretans were inveterate liars, and then added, "This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13). The lie of Rahab was recorded but not approved. The Bible approved her faith demonstrated by good works (Heb. 11:31), but not her falsehood. (However, some explain Rahab's lying by saying that deception is allowable in war.) ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

What the Bible Teaches adds "It is a mistake to admire the outcome of Rahab's lies, and from that point work back to her conduct, and view it as being acceptable to the Lord. Her motive in deceiving the soldiers, however noble, was misplaced as it put her wisdom and deceit in place of the overruling hand of the Lord. This can be a temptation for any servant of the Lord facing a situation that is seemingly impossible. Surely the Lord would understand and allow a servant to lie, if it is to work out the purpose of the Lord? To adopt this view is to forget the character of God. The Lord hates "a lying tongue" (Prov 6:17) and "lying lips are abomination to the Lord" (Prov 12:22). The end does not justify the means when it comes to the service of God, and all that Rahab's lies did was to deprive her of seeing how the Lord would deliver the spies out of the hand of the king.".....**to the Jordan to the fords** There are indications in Scripture that the Jordan could be forded at certain times and in certain places (Judg 3:28; 12:5-6). However, this does not mean that the nation of Israel could have forded the river without the intervention of the Lord, since the sheer scale of the crossing would have made that impossible, especially at that time of the year (Jordan 3:15). ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua](#))

Holman Bible Commentary on **ford** - n a stream or river that permits crossing by foot. The Romans were the first to build bridges in Palestine. Before their time river crossings were generally limited to fords. Fords are mentioned in connection with three rivers in Palestine: the Arnon (literally "rushing torrent" Isaiah 16:2), the Jabbok (Genesis 32:22), the Jordan. All three rivers have swift currents and offer few fording places. Fords were thus strategic points. To secure the fords meant success in battle (Judges 3:28; Judges 12:5-6); their loss meant defeat (Jeremiah 51:32).

[International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#) on **ford** (ma`abar) (Genesis 32:22; "pass" (of Michmash), 1 Samuel 13:23; "stroke" (the Revised Version, margin "passing"), Isaiah 30:32); מעברה , ma'bārāh (Joshua 2:7; Judges 3:28; Judges 12:5 , Judges 12:6; Isaiah 16:2; "pass" (of Michmash), 1 Samuel 14:4; "passages" (the Revised Version, margin "fords"), Jeremiah 51:32); עברה , 'ābhārāh (2 Samuel 15:28; 2 Samuel 17:16; "ferry-boat" (the Revised Version, margin "convoy"), 2 Samuel 19:18); עבר , 'ābhar , "to pass over"; compare Arabic 'abar , "to pass over" and ma'bar , "a ford"): In the journeyings of the children of Israel, in addition to the miraculous passages of the Red Sea and the Jordan, they had other streams to pass over, especially the Zered (Hisa') and the Arnon (Maujib) (Numbers 21:12 , Numbers 21:13; Deuteronomy 2:24). The Jabbok (Zarka) is frequently referred to, particularly in connection with Jacob (Genesis 32:22). The most frequent references are to the Jordan which, in time of flood, was impassable (Joshua 3:15). The lower Jordan is about 100 ft. wide, and from 5 to 12 ft. deep, so that in the absence of bridges, the places where it was possible to ford were of great importance. The passage of the Jordan is referred to in connection with Jacob (Genesis 32:10), Gideon (Judges 8:4), the children of Ammon (Judges 10:9), Abner and his men (2 Samuel 2:29), David (2 Samuel 10:17; 2 Samuel 17:22), Absalom (2 Samuel 17:24), and others. Jesus undoubtedly crossed the Jordan, and John is thought to have baptized at the ford of the Jordan near Jericho. The **fords of the Jordan** are specifically mentioned in Joshua 2:7 in connection with the pursuit of the spies who were hidden in Rahab's house, and in 2 Samuel 15:28; 2 Samuel 17:16 in connection with the flight of David. In the last two passages we have 'ābhārāh , the same word which, in the account of David's return (2 Samuel 19:18), is rendered "ferry-boat" (the Revised Version, margin "convoy").

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

7. Unto the fords. Heb. על המעברות al hammaberoth, at the passages, or crossing places; whether such places were crossed by boats, or bridges, or fording. Probably there were several such places, and the pursuers may have divided themselves into different companies, and directed their course to each of them.

Shut the gate. Doubtless with especial care, and perhaps setting an extra guard, both to bar out enemies that might be lurking in

the neighborhood, and to prevent the escape of the spies, if perchance they still remained in the city.

Joshua 2:8 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof,

- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

AN AMAZING ROOFTOP MEETING

Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof - NLT - "Before the spies went to sleep that night." Note that the Septuagint has the verb [koimao](#) which means to fall asleep which agrees with the NLT paraphrase and clearly this meeting is under the cover of darkness. The spies were confident in Rahab's protection, so confident that they were able to **lay down** and sleep.

Matthew Henry Concise Comments - Verses 8-21. Rahab had heard of the miracles the Lord wrought for Israel. She believed that his promises would certainly be fulfilled, and his threatenings take effect; and that there was no way of escape but by submitting to him, and joining with his people. The conduct of Rahab proved that she had the real principle of Divine faith. Observe the promises the spies made to her. The goodness of God is often expressed by his kindness and truth, Psalms 117:2; in both these we must be followers of him. Those who will be conscientious in keeping promises, are cautious in making them. The spies make needful conditions. The scarlet cord, like the blood upon the doorpost at the passover, recalls to remembrance the sinner's security under the atoning blood of Christ; and that we are to flee thereto for refuge from the wrath of a justly offended God. The same cord Rahab used for the saving of these Israelites, was to be used for her own safety. What we serve and honour God with, we may expect he will bless, and make useful to us.

James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - RAHAB Joshua 2:8–24

"Bone-weary on my wretched quest,
An aching heart still longs for rest;
Dark memories my soul appal,
And old sins like to fire-sleet fall;
I lay me, Lord, at Thy Cross down,
Guilty, hell-worthy, all I own."

Joshua sent spies to view the land, but this did in no way help the promise of God. His Word is true whether we see it or not. We walk by faith, not by sight. No one can justify Rahab's doubtful dealings with the King of Jericho (vv. 3–6); but no one is an angel because they are seeking after salvation. The God of all grace knows that it is only out of the depths of darkness and guilt that any one can come into the light of life. Let him that is without the sin of pretending to be what he is not cast the first stone. Let us follow her step by step into the higher life. She—

I. Heard. "We have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea for you," etc. (v. 10). The tidings of God's great salvation had reached her ears. How shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? Tell out His wondrous doings among the people. The opening up of the Red Sea, and the opening up of the new and living way through the atoning blood of Christ, these things were not done in a corner.

II. Confessed. "As soon as we heard our hearts did melt because of you" (v. 11). The tidings of what the Lord had done for His own people broke the backbone of their pride and caused their self-confident hearts to melt like wax within them. Oh, that it were so now! She makes honest confession of her utter helplessness and hopelessness. There is no attempt at self-justification. Without strength.

III. Believed. "I know that the Lord hath given you the land" (v. 9). The terror of the Lord had fallen upon all the inhabitants of the land, but Rahab only believed. Hers was a faith produced by fear, but such faith will save as well as the faith that works through love. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord we persuade men.

IV. Prayed "Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord," etc. (v. 12). Having believed she now pleads for a place in this great deliverance that Jehovah was accomplishing for His people. It was a great request for a condemned harlot to make, but her faith made her bold. "By faith," the apostle says, "the harlot Rahab perished not" (Heb. 11:31). Her request was not only for herself, but also for her "father's house," and even that was not all. She pleaded for an assuring evidence that her request would be granted, for she added, "and give me a true token." There is a delightful simplicity about this sinful but anxious inquirer. An assuring token every believer may have (Heb. 6:18). The Spirit also beareth witness with our spirit. He is the TRUE TOKEN.

V. Received. “The men answered her, Our life for yours, we will deal kindly and truly with thee” (v. 14). She has now received the promise. If she rested on the promise of men, surely the promise of God is greater. Faith lays hold on the Word of God. If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. “He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar.”

VI. Worked. “She let them down by a cord through the window” (v. 15). The apostle James fastens on this deed to prove that she was justified by her works (James 2:15). Her works justified her faith in the sight of the men she was dealing with, and justified her most nobly and perfectly too. Show me your faith without works (impossible), and I will show thee my faith by my works. Faith without the works that manifest life is dead. We are justified before God without works by faith only; but faith in God will be justified before men by works of love and kindness. Faith which worketh by love.

VII. Obeyed. The men said, “Thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window, and bring thy father and thy mother,” etc. And she said, “According to your words so be it. And she bound the scarlet line in the window” (vv. 18–21). The sailor believes in the wind, so he spreads his sails to the breeze. Rahab honoured her father and mother by earnestly seeking their salvation as well as her own. The life of faith is a life of simple obedience. Put all right in the home of your heart, and take refuge under the scarlet line of Christ’s precious blood that ever speaketh for us. It is a fearful thing to count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing (Heb. 10:39). The scarlet line was to Rahab the sign of the covenant, so she bound it in the window immediately.

VIII. Triumphed. “Joshua saved Rahab, and all that she had, and she dwelt in Israel” (Josh. 6:25). She received exceeding abundantly above all that she did ask or think, for she afterwards became the wife of a prince in Israel, and the mother of Boaz, who took to wife the graceful Ruth. Thus she was brought into the honourable and glorious line of our Lord’s genealogy (Matt. 1:5). All who believe are made the sons and daughters of God, brought into His family, and made partakers of the divine nature. Rahab, through her faith, was both saved and sanctified.

Joshua 2:9 and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.

- **I know :** Ex 18:11 2Ki 5:15 Job 19:25 Ec 8:12 Heb 11:1,2
- **that the LORD:** Ge 13:14-17 15:18-21 Ex 3:6-8 De 32:8 Ps 115:16 Jer 27:5 Mt 20:15
- **that the terror of you has fallen on us** Ge 35:5 Ex 15:15,16 23:27 De 2:25 11:25 28:10 Jud 7:14 1Sa 14:15 2Ki 7:6
- **have melted away before you,** Jos 2:11 1Sa 14:16 2Sa 17:10 Ps 112:10 Isa 19:1 Na 2:10
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Exodus 23:27+ **(GOD'S PROPHETIC PROMISE FULFILLED AS IT ALWAYS IS!)** “I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.

Deuteronomy 2:25+ This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens, who, when they hear the report of you, will tremble and be in anguish because of you.’

Deuteronomy 11:25+ “No man will be able to stand before you; **the LORD your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot**, as He has spoken to you.

JERICHO WAS DEMORALIZED

Rahab’s faith is demonstrated in: the promise of Josh 2:9, the power of Josh 2:10, and the preeminence of Josh 2:11.

What the Bible Teaches - In the first eight verses of the chapter there has been no indication of why Rahab would risk her life for these spies. In this section she opens her heart and Scripture records one of the longest uninterrupted statements of a woman in the Bible, as she explains to the spies her motive in hiding them and her hopes and fears for the future. As the verses unfold in the narrative, it becomes clear why the writer to the Hebrews included Rahab in the catalogue of men and women of faith, spoken of as a cloud of witnesses (Heb 12:1)...In the most unlikely place, was this most unlikely woman, who had heard of and trusted in the God she had never seen. In this she is an example of faith for, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Ro

10:17). ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua](#))

The writer of Hebrews alludes to Rahab's reception of the two spies as a manifestation of her faith writing "By **faith** ([pistis](#)) Rahab the **harlot** ([porne](#)) did not perish along with (sunapollumi from [sun/syn](#) = with + [apollumi](#) = destroy) those who were **disobedient** (disbelieving), after she **had welcomed** ([dechomai](#)) the spies in peace." (Hebrews 11:31+) Note that those who perished, which were all the citizens of Jericho (minus Rahab's household), were described as **disobedient** ([apeitheo](#)) which means they did not believe in the truth about Jehovah. Notice also that Rahab's **faith** was demonstrated by her "work" of "**putting out the welcome mat**" (which is the sense of the verb [dechomai](#)) for the two spies.

And said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land- This is amazing. She basically knew Yahweh's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give Israel the land of Canaan! The **NET** says "I know the LORD is handing this land over to you." The Septuagint is even stronger because **given** is in the perfect tense, indicating **given** in the past with the effect enduring. Rahab speaks with complete assurance that the conquest of the land and the transfer of the "title deed" (so to speak) was **as good as done!**

The Hebrew verb for "**I know**" is [yada](#) which speaks of an intimate understanding (cf use in Ge 4:1 - "Adam **knew** Eve his wife and she conceived") and in the Lxx is translated with the Greek verb [epistamai](#) which describes the acquisition of knowledge about something.

How did Rahab acquire this knowledge? The text does not give us any insights. In some way Yahweh had made sure she was aware of this promise. It is very possible that the two spies gave a testimony to the promise of God to give Israel the land. James 2:25+ does not say Rahab received the two spies but that she "**received the messengers**." The word "**messenger**" is the Greek word [aggelos/angelos](#) which can describe an envoy or one who is sent, often with a message. This designation would support the premise that the two spies gave a testimony describing Yahweh and she received their message (see [discussion of "She Was Informed" in the sermon by Mike Minnix](#)). However, we cannot be dogmatic. Notice that this pagan harlot uses the Name **LORD** (instead of saying "your God") implying she personally knew something about Yahweh.

ESV Study note - Rahab shows a remarkable awareness of Israel's history and of the Lord's intention to give Israel the land of Canaan (cf. Josh 1:2). Her confession is filled with the language and theology of the Pentateuch, especially Deuteronomy, and echoes Josh. 1:2. The narration itself does not clarify whether her confession implies spiritual conversion or simply recognition of the supreme power of Israel's God, but her later integration into Israel (Joshua 6:17, 25) favors a genuine conversion (**ED**: And of course both Heb 11:31 and James 2:25 "seal the deal!").

[Utley](#) on "**the LORD has given you the land**" - How did a Canaanite prostitute know (1) God's covenant name; (2) the covenant stipulations; and (3) their exodus experience? Apparently she heard by word of mouth from her customers.

Rahab believed the promise – what did she believe? The Abrahamic Covenant. In Ge 12:7 "The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." Notice she does not say "I think God has given" but "**I know that the LORD has given you the land.**"

Joshua repeatedly mentions the truth that God has given Israel the land - Joshua 1:2, 11, 15, Joshua 2:9, 24.

And that the terror of you has fallen on us- **NET** renders it "We are absolutely terrified of you!" Even without electronic communication, "bad news" travels fast, and as Rahab explains in the next verse, Israel's defeat of two powerful kings Og and Sihon was "bad news" for the pagans living in the land Yahweh promised to Israel! This demoralization of their enemy would have been "**music to the ears**" of the two spies.

That terror would fall on the land was a **fulfillment of the prophecy** in Moses' song of deliverance...

"**Terror and dread** fall upon them; By the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone; Until Your people pass over, O LORD, Until the people pass over whom You have purchased. (Ex 15:16+)

God again predicted terror in the land in both Exodus and Deuteronomy...

Exodus 23:27+ (**HE WOULD PERSONALLY SEND TERROR!**) "**I will send My terror** ([eman](#)) **ahead of you**, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.

Deuteronomy 2:25+ 'This day **I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens**, who, when they hear the report of you, will tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

So the fact that terror had fallen on the people of the land would have been a clear sign of God's keeping His word in the prophecies (see above) He had given to Moses. This would serve to increase their faith that He would also fulfill His promise to give Israel the

land.

Butler has an interesting comment - "Yahweh had proved himself more powerful than any other claimants to deity. The irony of the situation existed in the fact that Israel's enemies recognized this when Israel did not." ([Joshua, 1-12, Vol. 7A, 2nd Edition Word Biblical Commentary](#))

And that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away (mug) before you - This was priceless military intelligence! Joshua would soon hear the news in Joshua 2:24+ that not only were the citizens of Jericho demoralized but so were all the inhabitants of the land! The picture she painted was of a city of completely disheartened and demoralized citizens (and leaders) and [ripe for the picking](#)!

[Don Anderson](#) - In these next verses we see the development of Rahab's faith: v. 9

- In Joshua 2:9 - she believes in the PROMISE.
- In Joshua 2:10 - she believes in the POWER.
- And in verse 11 - she believes in the PREEMINENCE OF GOD .

Believer's Study Bible - Rahab's faith was based on the knowledge of the Lord's mighty acts (Josh 2:9, 10). On that basis she decided that He alone is God (v. 11), and she acted on that decision to seek refuge in Him (vv. 12, 13). She is an example of the grace of God at work. Her salvation is not based on her character or merits: she lived in a doomed city (Lev. 18:24-26), practiced a condemned profession (James 2:25), and falsified her actions. In addition to her deliverance, Rahab was rewarded beyond measure when she was joined to Israel (6:25) and married into the household of Nahshon (Matt. 1:4, 5), whose sister Elisheba was married to Aaron (Ex. 6:23). Nahshon was assigned the first place in the order of Judah's host during the wilderness encampment (Num. 2:3; 7:12, 17; 10:14). By Salmon, Rahab became the mother of Boaz (Matt. 1:5) and ancestress of David (Ruth 4:21, 22; 1 Chr. 2:10-12) in the messianic line (Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38). As one of the four women listed in the genealogy of Matt. 1, Rahab is in the company of Tamar, who acted as a harlot (Gen. 38:1-30), and Ruth, who was a virtuous Gentile.

A Bad Joke about the man who went to the barber to get a shave. It seems the barber's wife, Grace, was working in his place. She shaved the man and charged him \$100.00. He started to complain about the price but decided against it. The next day he noticed that he did not need to shave again. Then the next day he also did not need a shave. This went on for two weeks. He went back to the barber shop and told the barber the amazing story. The barber said, "Oh, that was Grace who shaved you. Don't you know that when you've been shaved by Grace, it is once shaved always shaved!" Well, hallelujah, though a shave may not last forever, the price Jesus paid for your sins does last forever! She had an eternal redemption.

One of the great stories from the history of California involves a aged silver miner who died. He spent all his life searching for silver in the mountains of the Old West. He had become so obsessed with his search that his wife and children had left him. When he died the handful of people who came to bury him found in his possessions a note instructing them to bury him under his cabin. As the earth was overturned a lustrous gray material began to appear. It became known as the largest silver vein in California history. The miner had been a millionaire all his life, but he had never been able to claim his wealth.

Someone here today has been searching for the meaning of life. Well, it is right under you nose. You will find it in Jesus. Rahab found it. Mel Trotter found it. Charles Colson found it. So can you. Just come to Him today by faith - believe and be saved. ([Mike Minnix](#))

Terror (dread) ([0367](#)) **eman** from **ayom** = dreadful, terrible) means fear, terror, dread, or horror and thus describes the dread of the darkness that fell on Abraham in Ge. 15:12. In Josh. 2:9 it was Jericho's fear of Israel. (cf Ezra 3:3). Eman is used to describe the terror of the Lord's judgment (Ex. 15:16; Ex 23:27; Job 9:34), the dread of the wrath of an earthly king (Pr 20:2) and something fearsome (Job 39:20). Figuratively Jeremiah wrote "it is a land of idols, and they are mad over **fearsome** idols." (Jer. 50:38).

Eman - 17v - dread(2), fear(1), fearsome(1), terrible(1), terrified(1), terror(8), terrors(3). Gen. 15:12; Exod. 15:16; Exod. 23:27; Deut. 32:25; Jos. 2:9; Ezr. 3:3; Job 9:34; Job 13:21; Job 20:25; Job 33:7; Job 39:20; Job 41:14; Ps. 55:4; Ps. 88:15; Prov. 20:2; Isa. 33:18; Jer. 50:38

Melted away ([04127](#)) (**mug**) is a verb meaning to dissolve, to melt away; to faint, to become weak, to become disheartened. Mug describes the reaction to the awesome power of Yahweh - "Mountains quake because of Him and the hills **dissolve**" (Nah 1:5), "The Lord GOD of hosts, The One who touches the land so that it **melts**" (Amos 9:5) Amos 9:13 describes the topography in the Millennium when "all the hills **shall melt**." The mountains and hills totter, tremble, and shake at the sound of his voice (Nah 1:5; Ps 46:6; Ps 75:3). As all the forces of heaven and earth fought on the Lord's side in the past, so in the day of the Lord's future, final triumph even nature must tremble at his approach. **Mug** is figuratively describes the demoralization of the people of Canaan at the

thought of Israel (Ex 15:15 = was like a prophecy that was now becoming true) and the city of Jericho (Josh. 2:9, 24). **Mug** describes the weakening and falling away of warriors in battle (1Sa 14:16; Isa 14:31; Jer 49:23). It refers to the shattering and dissolution of a nation or person before God's actions (Job 30:22; Ps 107:26; Amos 9:5). The people of the entire earth melt in fear before the Lord in Ps. 46:6 and Ps 75:3. Literally mug describes rain softening the earth in Ps. 65:10.

Mug is used in 16v - disheartened(1), dissolve(2), dissolved(2), melt(3), melted(2), melted away(4), melts(1), soften(1). Exod. 15:15; Jos. 2:9; Jos. 2:24; 1 Sam. 14:16; Job 30:22; Ps. 46:6; Ps. 65:10; Ps. 75:3; Ps. 107:26; Isa. 14:31; Jer. 49:23; Ezek. 21:15; Amos 9:5; Amos 9:13; Nah. 1:5; Nah. 2:6

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

9. I know that the Lord hath given, &c. I know and am assured; I am perfectly satisfied; I have not a doubt. An emphatic declaration implying much more than a shrewd conjecture or strong suspicion from existing circumstances that such would be the result. The words are expressive of the strength of her faith. The sources from which she had obtained this information and assurance are sufficiently detailed in what follows, v. 9–12.

Your terror. The dread of you. See Ex. 23:27; 34:24; Deut. 11:25; 28:7.

All the inhabitants of the land faint. Heb. 'are melted, dissolved, liquefied.' Precisely the same expression is used, Ex. 15:15, in reference to this very event: 'all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.' It expresses, in the strongest manner, the effect of the general consternation which had seized upon the devoted nations, in view of contending with such a powerful foe—one which was under the special conduct and protection of an Almighty arm. Their very hearts quailed before the approach of Israel, in a certain fearful looking for of judgment and vengeance at their hands. It was probably something more than a mere natural dread of a formidable enemy; it was a supernatural panic sent upon their spirits by the immediate power of God, a fearful presage of the destruction that awaited them.

Joshua 2:10 "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.

- **For we have heard:** Jos 4:24 Ex 14:21-31 15:14-16
- **what you did to the two kings of the Amorites** Nu 21:21-35 Dt 2:30-37 Dt 3:1-8
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Joshua 4:23-24+ "For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the LORD your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed; 24 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

BAD NEWS OF ISRAEL'S VICTORIES

For - Term of explanation. Rahab explains the reason for the terror and the disheartening of the citizens of Jericho. This also helps understand how she had some knowledge of Yahweh and His Name.

We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea(See [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** ([charam](#)) - Rahab's faith was based on hearing, not on seeing (Ro 10:17+, cf Heb 11:1+, 2Co 4:18+). As Jesus later said "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." (Jn 20:29) Rahab accepts by faith (not sight - 2Co 5:7+) the miracle by Yahweh in drying up **the water of the Red Sea**. It was the power of Israel's God that could perform such an incredible act that was especially frightening to the superstitious godless pagans. So despite the fact that the Red Sea miracle had been 40 years earlier, the victory of Israel over the most powerful nation on earth (Egypt) was still "bad news" to the pagans! Not only was the Egyptian army utterly destroyed, but also were the powerful nations ruled by **Sihon and Og** (see Nu 21:21–35+; Dt 2:30-37+ Dt 3:1-8+). We do well to recall that **Og** king of Bashan was a remnant of the Rephidim, a line of physical giants. The point is that the second generation of Israel had defeated what the majority of the first generation had feared (cf Nu 13:33+).

Rahab accurately states that Israel did not just defeated the two Amorite kings, but showed no mercy and **utterly destroyed** them! And notice that unlike many today who are skeptical of God's ways ("*How could God` [exterminate](#) an entire group of people?*") Israel had basically annihilated them including the men, women and children so that they left no survivor (Dt 2:34+, cf Dt 3:6+). Israel's overwhelming victories was bad news for the Canaanites. Rahab obviously comprehended the fact that Israel would not compromise with Canaanites but obliterate them.

Blaikie - The woman has had an eye to see and an ear to hear. She has not gazed in stupid amazement on the marvellous tokens of Divine power displayed before the world, nor accepted the sophistry of sceptics referring all these marvels to accidental thunderstorms and earthquakes and high winds. She knew better than to suppose that a nation of slaves by their own resources could have eluded all the might of Pharaoh, subsisted for forty years in the wilderness, and annihilated the forces of such renowned potentates as Sihon and Og. She was no philosopher, and could not have reasoned on the doctrine of causation, but her common sense taught her that you cannot have extraordinary effects without corresponding causes. It is one of the great weaknesses of modern unbelief that with all its pretensions to philosophy, it is constantly accepting effects without an adequate cause. Jesus Christ, though He revolutionised the world, though He founded an empire to which that of the Cæsars is not for a moment to be compared, though all that were about Him admitted His supernatural power and person, after all, was nothing but a man. The gospel that has brought peace and joy to so many weary hearts, that has transformed the slaves of sin into children of heaven, that has turned cannibals into saints, and fashioned so many an angelic character out of the rude blocks of humanity, is but a cunningly devised fable. What contempt for such sophistries, such vain explanations of facts patent to all would this poor woman have shown! How does she rebuke the many that keep pottering in poor natural explanations of plain supernatural facts, instead of manfully admitting that it is the Arm of God that has been revealed, and the Voice of God that has spoken! ([Joshua 2 The Spies in Jericho](#))

Abraham Kuyper has an interesting note - "The people who in Rahab's time most frequently used such houses of prostitution were the traveling merchants. From them she had repeatedly heard of the marvelous nation which was approaching from Egypt, and of the God of Israel who had perfected such striking miracles." ([Women of the Old Testament](#))

J Vernon McGee - Notice: "We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you." How long ago was this? That happened forty years before they arrived at the Jordan River! During those forty years God had been giving the people of Canaan an opportunity to turn to Him. How do we know that? Because God had said to Abraham that his seed would be strangers in a foreign land for four hundred years; then in the fourth generation they would come again because "... the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16). That was 420 years before this. In other words, God was going to give the people of Canaan 420 years to decide whether or not they would turn to Him. The critic declares that the God of the Old Testament was a great big bully, that He was cruel and barbaric. When God gave the people of Canaan 420 years to repent, in my opinion, that is long enough. But God extended the time by forty more years and saw to it that they heard how He had revealed Himself by delivering His people from Egypt. God did not destroy a people that had not heard about Him. He gave them ample opportunity to turn to Him. My question, Mr. Critic, is—how much longer do you think God should have given them? In the New Testament God has not changed. He has made it very clear that those who reject Jesus Christ are going to hell. Does it shock you to hear that in this very "civilized" society that discounts the existence of hell? When God's judgment falls, I am sure there will be some soft-hearted and soft-headed folk on the sideline who will say, "He should have given them more time." More time? My friend, over 1900 years have gone by. God is patient; He is slow to anger; He is merciful. How much longer do you want Him to give us? He has been giving the world ample opportunity to turn to Christ. ([Joshua 2](#))

Related Resources:

- [Why did God command the extermination / genocide of the Canaanites, women and children included? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Sihon, king of the Amorites? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Og king of Bashan? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Listen to this powerful, practical sermon by Charles Spurgeon - [Driving Out the Canaanites and Their Iron Chariots](#)

Utterly destroyed (destroyed completely)([02763](#)) **charam** means to destroy, to doom, to devote. This word is most commonly associated with the Israelites destroying the Canaanites upon their entry into the Promised Land (Deut. 7:2; Josh. 11:20). It describes the practice of completely destroying the spoils of war as a way of consecrating them to a deity (Joshua 6:17 uses the related word [02764 herem](#)). Surrendering something irrevocably to God = devoting to service of God, excluding it from use or abuse of man &/or putting it under a ban for utter destruction. [Dt 7:2, 20:17] Usually haram meant a ban for utter destruction, compulsory dedication of thing impeding or resisting God's work which is considered to be accursed before God. Uses in Joshua - Jos. 2:10; Jos. 6:18; Jos. 6:21; Jos. 8:26; Jos. 10:1; Jos. 10:28; Jos. 10:35; Jos. 10:37; Jos. 10:39; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 11:11; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:20; Jos. 11:21. **Related Passages that use charam**

Deuteronomy 2:34 "So we captured all his cities at that time and **utterly destroyed** ([charam](#)) the men, women

and children of every city. We left no survivor.

Deuteronomy 3:6 "We utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon **utterly destroying** ([charam](#)) the men, women and children of every city.

Deuteronomy 7:2 and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall **utterly destroy** ([charam](#)) them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them.

Deuteronomy 13:15 you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, **utterly destroying** ([charam](#)) it and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword.

Deuteronomy 20:17 "But you shall **utterly destroy** ([charam](#)) them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you,

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

10. For we have heard, &c. The first of these events, the drying up of the Red Sea, had happened forty years before, and though it had produced a deep impression at the time, on all the surrounding nations, yet in the lapse of that long interval, which was a season granted them for repentance, it is not unlikely that their alarm had in great measure died away, till now it was revived again by their nearer approach, and by the recent overthrow of the two Amoritish kings. The convictions of sinners are apt to come and go with the alarming or afflictive dispensations of God's providence. So it is said of Israel of old, Ps. 78:34-37, 'when he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned (changed their mind) and inquired early after God. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.'

Joshua 2:11 "When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

- **When we heard it, our hearts melted:** Jos 5:1 7:5 14:8 De 1:28 20:8 Isa 13:7 Na 2:10
- **no courage remained in any man:** Heb. rose up, Rev 6:16
- **for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath** De 4:39 1Ki 8:60 Ps 83:18 102:15 Jer 16:19-21 Da 4:34,35 Da 6:25-27 Zec 8:20-23
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 4:39 (**NOTE SIMILARITY OF RAHAB'S WORDS TO THOSE OF MOSES!**) "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, **He is God in heaven above and on the earth below**; there is no other. (See also Acts 14:15; 17:23-28)

RAHAB'S DECLARATION OF FAITH IN JEHOVAH

When we heard it - Heard what? 40 years earlier about the Red Sea and probably more recently the defeat of the Sihon and Og.

Our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you - Notice the phrase **we heard** implying that while other Canaanites heard ("**we**"), it was only Rahab who responded in faith! (cf Mt 7:13, 14+) (Listen to Spurgeon's sermon [Rahab's Faith](#) where he describes her "singular faith" - see [transcript below](#)). Rahab reiterates how news of the acts of Israel's God disheartened, demoralized and discouraged the citizens of Jericho. This is almost like saying they were already defeated! As someone has quipped they may have even started singing "This Land Is Your Land!"

God's miraculous acts and displays of great power prompted fear in the people, but it was only a fear like the demons' fear James described writing "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder (tremble)." (James 2:19+) They were like Felix when he heard the Gospel, Luke recording "But as he (PAUL) was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you." (Acts 24:25+)

For the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath - Rahab confesses that Yahweh is the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all that exists (cf. Dt 4:39+; Acts 14:15+; Acts 17:23-28+). Clearly Rahab believed in the miracle working

God of Israel. Miracles don't save by themselves but they can be used by God to bring souls to belief in the One Who performs the miracles. Most of Israel sadly failed to believe in Jesus despite His countless miracles. Her statement is noteworthy, since the Canaanites worshiped multiple deities (see Exod 23:24, 32–33; 34:15; Deut 11:16, 28; 12:2–3, 30–31).

Don Anderson - The PROMISE of faith and the POWER of faith has now led to this great statement - the PREEMINENCE of the Lord God .

It is interesting that Rahab's description of God was similar that which Moses declared to the children of Israel "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is **God in heaven above and on the earth below**; there is no other." (Deut 4:39+)

THOUGHT - God knew the "soil" of Rahab's heart and He sent two men to bring salvation to this soul. Are we open to similar providential circumstances in our live, in which God may bring a person (even a very unlikely candidate) into our path who needs to hear the Gospel and is prepared to received the Word implanted which is able to save their soul? (James 1:21+) All followers of Jesus need to be on the "lookout" for the "Rahab's" in our life who are "good soil" who hear "the word (THE GOSPEL) in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance." (Lk 8:15+)

Donald Campbell asks "how could Rahab have such a remarkable faith and still be a harlot, and so glibly tell lies? The answer would seem to be that as she responded in belief to the message she heard about God's works, she later responded to further messages concerning God's standards of life and obeyed. After all, spiritual maturity is gradual, not instantaneous. Even [John Newton](#), who wrote the gospel song "Amazing Grace," continued for some time after his conversion in the slave trade before he was convicted about this base and degrading practice and gave it up. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Rahab the harlot would have agreed with John Newton's great hymn [Amazing Grace](#)...

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Francis Schaeffer asks how did she know **He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath**? We are not told. Often in Scripture we find that people knew things, though we are not told how they came to know them. But Rahab knew! And what she knew was totally against her culture. She believed in a new God, a God totally and diametrically opposed to the gods of Jericho but a God above all other gods, a universal God. In the midst of the Canaanites, the Ammonites, the Amorites – in the midst of their horrible, polluted worship, laden with sex symbols and sex practices – Rahab affirmed a true theological proposition about who God really is.

[Utley](#) on **He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath** - This is a strong theological statement of God's transcendence and imminence. This is the paradox of YHWH as "the Holy One of Israel" and on the other hand, the ever present God of creation. This is an affirmation of monotheism.

William Blaikie - Rahab made a most explicit confession of her faith, not only in Jehovah as the God of the Hebrews, but in Him as the one only God of heaven and earth. It would have been nothing had she been willing to give to the Hebrew God a place, a high place, or even the highest place among the gods. Her faith went much further. "The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath." This is an exclusive faith—Baal and Ashtoreth are nowhere. What a remarkable conviction to take hold of such a mind! All the traditions of her youth, all the opinions of her neighbours, all the terrors of her priests set at nought, swept clean off the board, in face of the overwhelming evidence of the sole Godhead of Jehovah! ([Joshua 2 The Spies in Jericho](#))

Henry Morris - God in heaven above. It is remarkable that Rahab, living in a pagan culture all her life, somehow had enough knowledge about the true Creator God to recognize Him as the God of Israel, apparently even exercising saving faith in Him (Hebrews 11:31)--a faith which gave her courage to stand alone against her countrymen.

Donald Campbell - It is not hard to imagine Rahab hurrying to gather her family in her house on the city wall. The door of her house was a door to safety from the judgment soon to fall on Jericho. In the days of Noah, there was safety for those who entered the door of the ark; in Egypt there was freedom from judgment for those gathered inside the doors sprinkled with the blood of the Passover lamb. Jesus said, "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). **Safety from eternal judgment**

depends on entering the right door! George Whitefield, the eloquent preacher of the Great Awakening in North America (1738-1740), was peaking once on the text, "The door was shut." There were two flippant young men in the congregation, and one overheard to say to the other in sarcastic tones, "What if the door is shut? Another will open!" Later in the sermon the evangelist said, "It is possible that there may be someone here who is careless and trifling, and says: 'What matter if the door be shut? Another will open!'" The two young men looked at each other in alarm. Mr. Whitefield proceeded, "Yes, another door will open. It will be the door to the bottomless pit--the door to hell!" ([No Time for Neutrality](#))

Wiersbe - Bible Personalities - Because of her faith, Rahab was part of the ancestry of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5), was named in the faith "Hall of Fame" (Heb. 11:31), and was used by James as an example of faith leading to good works (James 2:25). Her spiritual experience was like that of the believers in Thessalonica.

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God (1Th 1:9+)

Moses had sent twelve spies into Canaan and only two of them, Caleb and Joshua, had faith to believe God could give Israel the land (Num. 13). Perhaps that is why Joshua sent only two spies into Canaan!

Rahab's faith possessed her entire personality. She had fear because she heard how Israel's God had delivered the Jews from Egypt and destroyed the Gentile nations. She knew enough facts about God to want to trust him. "I know that the LORD has given you the land" (Josh. 2:9). She willingly confessed her faith in the living God and proved her faith by her works. Alas, many people hear the Word and tremble but never act upon what they know. Even demons can do that (James 2:19+ - **ED: RAHAB TREMBLED AND BELIEVED - THE DEMONS BELIEVE AND TREMBLE!**)

In one of his early sermons (1857 -[Rahab's Faith](#)), Charles Haddon Spurgeon described Rahab's faith in an alliterated outline, something unusual for him. Her faith was:

- saving faith
- singular faith—she alone was delivered with her family
- stable faith—nothing moved her
- self-denying faith—"She dared to risk her life for the sake of the spies"
- sympathizing faith—she wanted mercy for her family as well
- sanctifying faith—she never returned to being a harlot

In a later sermon focusing on the scarlet cord from the window (Josh. 2:17–21), Spurgeon saw Rahab as an example of a true believer. She had obedient faith and immediately tied the cord from the window. She believed the promise that the spies made to her and proved her faith by her works. She made an open declaration of her faith. Her whole house was dedicated to the Lord. ([Joshua 2:21 The Scarlet Line in the Window](#))

In a third sermon, Spurgeon amplified the uniqueness of Rahab's faith. She was not in a believing nation, her parents had given her no instructions, and her knowledge of the true God was very slender. What she had to believe was very difficult—that the Jordan River would open up so the Israelites could cross (**ED: LIKE GOD DID WITH THE RED SEA** - Joshua 2:10), and that the strong city of Jericho would fall. However, Spurgeon believed that as great as her faith was, it was still flawed because she lied to the men who asked about her visitors. "But at the same time, please to recollect that she did not know that it was wrong to lie." ([Rahab](#))

John Newton had a similarly remarkable conversion. Losing his mother when he was 7 years old, he went to sea at the age of 11. "I went to Africa," he said, "that I might be free to sin to my heart's content." And that he did! During the next few years, Newton's soul was seared by the most revolting of all human experiences. He fell into the pitiless clutches of the press-gang. Later, as a deserter from the navy, he was flogged until the blood streamed down his back. He became involved in the unspeakable atrocities of the African slave trade. And then, going from bad to worse, he actually became a slave himself. He was sold to a woman slave who, glorying in her power over him, made him depend for his food upon the crusts she tossed under her table. In the epitaph that he composed for himself, Newton said that he was "the slave of slaves." And then it happened! In 1748, on board a ship about to founder in the grips of a storm, the Lord came from on high and delivered him out of deep waters. When the ship went plunging down into the trough of the seas, few on board expected her to come up again. As Newton hurried to the pumps, he said to the Captain, "If this will not do, the Lord have mercy upon us!" His own words startled him. "Mercy!" He said to himself in astonishment. "Mercy! Mercy!" On the 10th of March, 1748, Newton sought mercy, and found it!

The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. —Joshua 2:11

Today's Scripture: Joshua 2:1-14

The story of Rahab, a harlot in Jericho, is puzzling. She welcomed the spies from Israel, hid them on her roof, and helped them escape. Then her own life was spared and she was honored by becoming part of the family line of the Messiah (Mt. 1:5). Why did God choose her?

I found some insights about Rahab in a prayer letter from Mary Tapley, who works with Campus Crusade for Christ. Mary wrote, "She proved to be a woman that God had completely prepared to put her faith in Him. She was already convinced of His existence and knew of His character (Josh. 2:11). When the spies came to her house, she immediately allied herself with God."

In her letter, Mary then told about witnessing to her new friend, Bliss. When she first talked with her about Jesus, Mary moved cautiously, not wanting to scare her away. But Bliss was ready, and before that initial conversation was over she asked Mary, "Will you teach me how to become a Christian?" In a few moments she was on her knees, asking Jesus to forgive her sins and become her Savior.

Rahab was ready, and Bliss was ready. Around you may be people who are ready to trust in Christ. Maybe all they need is a word from you! By: David C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Take control of my words today,
May they tell of Your great love;
And may the story of Your grace
Turn some heart to You above.
—Sees

You can never speak to the wrong person about Christ.

Joshua 2:11 One Option We Don't Have

The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. — Joshua 2:11

Today's Scripture: Joshua 2:1-14

James A. Meads Jr. began his sermon with this statement: "The reason you and I cannot ignore God can be stated in one word: Israel. No other nation has been known as a 'chosen people.' No other nation has as much to say about the love, the patience, and the anger of God. Through Israel, God has given the world an object lesson about His nature."

Centuries ago, Jericho's king might have said, "Israel is coming—so what!" But we read that when he and his people heard what God had done at the Red Sea, and that two Amorite kings had been destroyed, the hearts of the people "melted" (Joshua 2:10-11).

Jericho's king had at least two options, however. He could flee for his life, or he could repent, believe in God, and plead for His mercy. That's what Rahab did, and she and her family were spared (vv.12-13). But the one option the king didn't have was to ignore Israel, and therefore he couldn't ignore God.

Many people seem to get along well without God. But just as the world today can't ignore Israel, so also it can't ignore Jesus Christ, who came from Israel. As the One who created the universe, He is God (Colossians 1:15-17). As the One who died on Calvary's cross, He is the world's Savior and Redeemer (vv.13-14). Trust Him to save you today. By: Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We can't ignore God's only Son,
He is the Lord, the Holy One;
He is the source of life and grace,
The One who died and took our place.
—Fitzhugh

Everyone must face God as Savior or as Judge.

Storytime - Joe Stowell - Did you ever wonder why Rahab, the prostitute who lived in the pagan city of Jericho, opened her home to the Israelite spies? And what gave her the courage to name the God of Israel as her own?

This unlikely of conversions was prompted by the stories she had heard about the reality and power of God. Though thoroughly steeped in paganism and immorality, her heart was drawn to God. As she told the spies, "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 the two kings of the Amorites" (Josh. 2:10).

Under normal circumstances, the highly fortified city of Jericho would have been virtually unconquerable. Yet it became vulnerable because of the compelling stories of God's power. Long before God's people arrived, the self-sufficient pride of this hostile culture dissolved in fear when faced with those who belonged to the God they had heard so much about (v.11). And within the walls, one pagan heart turned to receive the God of Israel and played a strategic role in Israel's stunning victory.

Let's boldly tell the stories of God's greatness. You never know whose heart may be ready to respond! [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Christ is coming, over the world victorious—

Power and glory unto the Lord belong:

Praise Him! Praise Him! Tell of His excellent greatness!

Praise Him! Praise Him! Ever in joyful song.

—Crosby

Don't be shy; tell the stories of God's greatness.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

11. And as soon as we had heard these things, our heart did melt. Heb. ונשמע וימס לבבנו vannishma vayimmas levâvënu, and we heard, and our heart did melt; spoken as if the whole nation were one person, having one heart. The original word for 'melt,' though not precisely the same with that in v. 9, is yet of kindred import, the metaphor being taken from the melting of metals before the fire.

Neither did there remain any more courage in any man. Heb. ולא קמה עוד רוח באיש velo kâmâh ôd ruah bâish, neither any more stood there up spirit in any man. That is, no man's spirit was erect within him; every one's courage failed, and he became cowering and faint-hearted.

Because of you. Heb. מפניכם mippenêkem, from before you; i. e. by reason of your presence; a frequent idiom of the Hebrew.

He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. As much as to say, 'The Lord your God is both omnipotent and omnipresent,' a remarkable confession considering the previous ignorance and darkness of her mind. It was at once an acknowledgment of the true God, and a condemnation of the false gods and idolatrous worship of her countrymen, and showed a supernatural influence of God upon her soul. He can cause the rays of truth to penetrate the thickest shades of that moral midnight which broods over the minds of the unenlightened heathen, though we have no evidence that he ever does this, except in connexion with some kind of external instrumentality.

Joshua 2:12 "Now therefore, please **swear to me by the LORD, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth,**

- **swear:** Jos 9:15,18-20 1Sa 20:14,15,17 30:15 2Ch 36:13 Jer 12:16
- **will:** 1Sa 20:14-17 24:21,22 Es 8:6 2Ti 1:16-18 Jas 2:13
- **my father's household:** Jos 2:13 Ge 24:3,9 Ro 1:31 1Ti 5:8
- **give me a pledge of truth:** Jos 2:18 Ex 12:13 Eze 9:4-6 Mk 14:44
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

1 Corinthians 1:27-29+ (**GOD CHOOSES A HARLOT**) but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God.

**RAHAB REQUESTS RECIPROCAL
KINDNESS & AN OATH**

Now therefore, please **swear to me by the LORD** - KJV has "Now therefore I pray you swear." Notice she invokes the Name Yahweh as "Witness" of the oath she is requesting from the spies. It is also notable that in her lengthy evening discourse (Joshua 2:8-13) on the roof this is Rahab's fourth mention of the Name **LORD** ([Yahweh, Jehovah](#)).

[Uitley](#) on "**swear to me by the LORD**" The VERB (Niphal IMPERATIVE) is common in Deuteronomy and Joshua. - God swears, Joshua 1:6; 5:6 (twice); 21:43, 44, His people swear, Joshua 2:12, 17, 20; 6:22, 26; 9:15, 18, 19, 20; 14:9 but do not swear by their gods, Joshua 23:7.

Since I have dealt kindly (hesed) **with you, that you also will deal kindly** (hesed) **with my father's household** - Rahab requests [reciprocal](#) kindness (hesed) from the two spies - hesed for hesed! She is pleading for "covenant mercy." **Dealt kindly...deal kindly** is hesed, a covenant term (here used by a pagan harlot!!!), which is apropos for she had in effect entered into the Abrahamic Covenant by grace through faith. Rahab's dealing **kindly** with the spies did not merit her salvation, but was evidence of her salvation. Faith alone saves but the faith that saves is not alone. As James 2:25+ says "was not Rahab the harlot also justified (SHOWN TO BE JUSTIFIED) by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way (THAT IS, WHEN SHE DEALT KINDLY WITH THEM)."

Notice she does not say "that you also will deal kindly with ME," but **with my father's household** demonstrating her incredible unselfishness! She reminds me of Paul's words in Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

While the circumstances are not identical, Rahab's response to God and her desire for assurance in asking for an oath reminds me of another women, Ruth the Moabitess who declared to her Jewish mother in law Naomi...

Ruth 1:16-17+ "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. **Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.** "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me."

And give me a pledge (['oth](#)) **of truth** - NET = "Give me a solemn pledge." KJV = "Give me a true token." NLT = "Give me some guarantee that..." ESV = "Give me a sure sign."

Campbell on **kindly** (hesed) - Found about 250 times in the Old Testament, **hesed** means loyal, steadfast, or faithful love based on a promise, agreement, or covenant. Sometimes the word is used of God's covenant-love for His people and sometimes, as here, of relationships on the human level. Rahab's request was that the spies make a *hesed* agreement with her and her father's family, just as she had made a *hesed* agreement with them by sparing their lives. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

I once was an outcast
Stranger on earth
A sinner by choice
And an alien by birth

But I've been adopted
My name's written down
I'm an heir to a mansion
A Robe and a Crown

I'm a Child of the King

Kindly (02617) [hesed/chesed/heced](#) is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the OT refers to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel. **Vine** writes that "In general, one may identify three basic meanings of **hesed**, and these 3 meanings always interact -- **strength**, **steadfastness**, and **love**. Any understanding of **hesed** that fails to suggest all three inevitably loses some of its richness. **Love** by itself easily becomes sentimentalized or universalized apart from the covenant. Yet **strength** or **steadfastness** suggests only the fulfillment of a legal (or similar) obligation. **Hesed** refers primarily to mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations between the parties of a relationship (especially Jehovah and Israel). But hesed is not only a matter of obligation but is also of generosity. It is not only a matter of loyalty, but also of mercy. **Hesed** implies personal involvement and commitment in a relationship beyond the rule of law." **Hesed** is used in Joshua 2:12 and Joshua 2:14.

Pledge (0226) ['oth](#) means a signal, a mark or a miracle used to describe amazing events such as God bringing Israel out of Egypt (Ex 4:8, 9, Nu 14:22). A sign serving to authenticate the message as from God (1Sa 2:34, 10:7, 9). A sign given to Moses by God to

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12. Swear unto me by the Lord This proposal still further displays the sincerity and the strength of her faith. While the people of Israel, with the miracles of the Divine power constantly before their eyes, were incessantly prone to stagger at the promises and give way to unbelief, she, upon the mere hearsay report of these wonders, is so firmly persuaded of their truth, that she desires to enter covenant with the spies for her own preservation and that of her family. Though they were now in perilous circumstances, shut up within the walls of Jericho, and surrounded by enemies, yet she treats with them as if they had already stormed the city, and had the power of life and death in their hands. So earnest is she in this matter, that she would have them ratify by an oath their agreement to save her. In like manner, a deep-rooted conviction of the danger hanging over the head of the sinner from the curse of a violated law, will prompt him to give all diligence to flee from the wrath to come and lay hold on eternal life, by joining himself to God and his people.

Have Showed you kindness, Heb. עשיתי עמכם חסד *âsithi immâkem hesed*, have done you kindness; and so in the next clause, 'That ye will also do kindness,' &c.

Give me a true token. Heb. אות אמת *ôth ëmeth*, a sign or token of truth, well rendered according to the sense; 'a true token,' i. e. a token which shall not deceive me; one which I may produce as a witness of this agreement; one on the sight of which the Israelites shall forbear to hurt either me or mine.

Joshua 2:13 and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death."

- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

RAHAB'S INTERCESSION FOR MERCY ON HER FAMILY

And - Rahab continues her request of the two spies.

Spare (KJV more literal = will save alive) **my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver (natsal) our lives** (lit - souls) **from death** - Rahab specifies the conditions of the oath were to include sparing her immediate family. While primarily she is referring to physical salvation, one cannot exclude that she also sought their spiritual salvation. But how would they have been saved? It would have been the same way that Rahab was saved which was by faith (cf same with Abraham - Ge 15:6). Note that in Joshua 2:18 it reads that Rahab was to "gather to yourself into the house" your relatives. The relatives had to make a choice based on faith in Rahab's "good news" to come together in her house. They were saved by faith.

Guzik - Joshua would be a savior for Rahab, but a judge of the rest of Jericho. In the same way Jesus is a Savior for those who trust Him, but a Judge for those who reject Him. Rahab's destiny was to marry one of the princes of Judah and be found in the lineage of King and David and Jesus Himself.

Treasury of Scripture Knowledge - It is observable that in this enumeration of her kindred, there is no mention made of a husband. It is most likely that she was a single woman or widow, who obtained an honest livelihood by keeping a house for the entertainment of strangers; and not a woman of ill fame, as some have supposed. The spies sent on this occasion were certainly some of the most confidential persons that Joshua had in his host, and their errand was of the greatest importance; is it then not most likely that they lodged at an inn?

Deliver (Septuagint uses [exaireo](#) = take out, rescue)([05337](#)) [natsal](#) means primarily to deliver, snatch away, pluck out, often by the power of one entity overcoming another. Deliverance from enemies, trouble or death, from the hand or power (Ge 32:11, Hos 2:10). Idols and human might cannot deliver (1 Sa 12:21, Ps 33:16). Uses in Joshua - Jos. 2:13; Jos. 9:26; Jos. 22:31; Jos. 24:10;

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13. That ye will save alive my father and my mother. Heb. חיייתם *ha'hayithem*, will make or cause to live. On the peculiar import of this word, see Note on ch. 6:25. It will be observed that she makes no mention of her husband, from which it is to be inferred that

she was now a widow, or had never been married. In either case, the fact militates altogether against the hypothesis of her being a hostess, for nothing could be more abhorrent from Eastern notions and usages, than a single woman's following such an occupation, even had the occupation been known among them. But a practical remark of more importance suggests itself in this connexion. The same feelings which warn us to flee the coming wrath and make our own peace with God, will also incite us to do all in our power to promote the salvation of our families and kindred, by bringing them also within the bonds of the covenant. We shall feel that our work is but half done when our own souls are safe.

Joshua 2:14 So the men said to her, "Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it shall come about when the LORD gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."

- **Our life for yours** 1Ki 20:39
- **when the Lord:** Jos 6:17,25 Ge 24:49 Nu 10:29-32 Jdg 1:24,25 1Sa 20:8 2Sa 9:1 Pr 18:24 Mt 5:7
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE TWO SPIES SWEAR AN OATH

So the men said to her, "Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours- The spies are make an oath to death saying "If you die, may we die too!" As the passages below show their oath is conditioned on Rahab keeping two stipulations - (1) she was to hang a scarlet cord so the israelites could identify her (Joshua 2:18) and (2) she was not to disclose any information about their mission. Failure to meet these conditions would [annul](#) the oath of the spies.

And it shall come about when the LORD gives us the land that we will deal kindly(hesed) and faithfully with you - If she agreed not to report their mission, they would keep the hesed agreement. One wonders how they could have discovered she broke her silence? Note the confidence of the spies who state not "if the Lord gives..." but **when** (not IF) **the LORD gives us the land** Their discovery that the Canaanites were fearful and demoralized would have bolstered their assurance that God would fulfill His promise to Israel.

Faith is demonstrated when our **IFS** become **WHENS**.

What the Bible Teaches - Three elements of the covenant between the spies and Rahab (v. 14)

1. "Our life for yours". Rahab had already risked her life for theirs and so the undertaking was a reciprocation of her kindness to them. By making this statement they placed their lives as forfeit should anything befall her in the conquest of Canaan. They would protect her, as she had protected them.
2. "If ye utter not this our business". The covenant was conditional upon Rahab continuing her protection of the spies, which was necessary for them not only to get out of the city, but to escape over Jordan.
3. "And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee". This third element of the covenant gave her the timescale of her deliverance and entrance into the fold of the children of Israel. She asked for kindness and a true token and the spies now undertake to give her both when they come in conquest. ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua](#))

Kindly (in lovingkindness; Lxx = [eleos](#)) ([02617](#)) [hesed/chesed/heced](#) is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the OT refers to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel (His "loyal love" to His "Wife" Israel [cp Hos 2:18, 19, 20-see [note](#), Is 54:5, Je 31:32] = His "loyalty to covenant").

Faithfully (Lxx = [aletheia](#)) ([0571](#)) ['emeth](#) from the verb aman = to confirm, support, believe, be faithful) is a feminine noun meaning truth, faithfulness, that which gives complete reliability. It is frequently connected with lovingkindness (Pr 3:3; Hos 4:1, 40:11, 61:7, 69:13, 85:10, 86:14, 89:14, 108:4) and occasionally with other terms such as peace (2Ki 20:19); righteousness (Isa. 48:1); and justice (Ps. 111:7).

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

14. Our life for yours. Heb. נַפְשֵׁנוּ תַחְתִּיכֶם לָמוֹת naphshēnu tahtēkem lâmoth, let our soul be to die instead of you (pl.) That is, we pawn and pledge our lives for the security of yours, and those of your relatives; may our lives be destroyed, if we suffer yours to be injured. This language affords no warrant for those thoughtless imprecations which are often introduced in discourse in order to give

more emphasis to the speaker's promises or declarations.

If ye utter not this our business. That is, if neither thou nor any of thy kindred ('ye') betray us when we are gone, or divulge this agreement, so that others may avail themselves of its conditions. 'They that will be conscientious in keeping their promises, will be cautious in making them, and may perhaps insert conditions which others will think frivolous.' Henry.

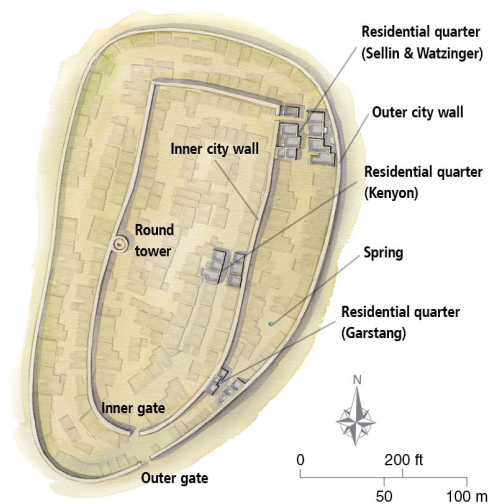
And it shall be, &c. The preceding clause is properly parenthetical, and these words should be read in immediate connexion with what goes before, translating 'that' instead of 'and'—'Our life for yours (if ye utter not this our business), that it shall be, when the Lord hath given,' &c. The present mode of punctuation gives a wrong, or at least an inadequate view of the precise scope of the passage under consideration.

Joshua 2:15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall.

- **she let them:** 1Sa 19:12-17 Ac 9:25 2Co 11:33
- **for her house:** Jos 6:20
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 11:32-33+ In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, 33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.



Plan of Ancient Jericho ([see note](#))

THE GREAT ESCAPE!

Then - Normally **then** marks progression, but in this context the sequence of events is somewhat difficult to determine. It is possible that at this point she let them down and they then continued the conversation in Joshua 2:16-21.

She let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall
Centuries later another Jewish man escaped death the same way for "his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket." (Acts 9:25+)

Notice once again the Providence of God in her home being located on the city wall! No accidents in this "redemption story!"

Utiley notes that "The term **"rope"** ([chebel](#)) in Joshua 2:15 is different from the term ([tiqwah](#)) used in Josh 2:18 and Josh 2:21. The first ([chebel](#)) implies a corded strong rope, the second ([tiqwah](#)) a much smaller, weaker rope, or thick thread. By putting out this small rope/thread it did not draw undue attention to her home by the inhabitants of Jericho. The color **scarlet** ([saniy/shaniy](#)) is often associated with the tabernacle color, but must have also been a common color for thread (cf. Ge 38:28, 30). These spies may have had it with them. The dye color came from a worm

It is interesting that two ropes hung from the harlot's house resulted in two "salvations," first of the two spies and then of Rahab and her household.

Constable - Archaeologists have discovered houses within the ruined walls of ancient Jericho.

Rope (02256)(chebel from chabal = to bind, pledge) is a "masculine or feminine noun meaning cord, pangs, region, company. This word has many meanings, depending on the context. The most basic meaning is a rope or a cord, such as the rope the spies used to escape through Rahab's window (Josh. 2:15) or the cords used to bind Jeremiah in the dungeon (Jer. 38:11–13). Although these cords may be decorative (Esth. 1:6), they are usually used to bind and control objects, such as animals (Job 41:1[40:25]) or buildings (Isa. 33:20). This word is also used symbolically to speak of the cords of sin and death (2Sa 22:6; Ps. 18:4, 5 Pr 5:22) or the pangs of childbirth (Isa. 13:8; Jer. 13:21; Hos. 13:13). It can even be translated "destruction" (Job 21:17). This word is also used to describe a dividing line (2 Sam. 8:2; Amos 7:17); a geographical region (Deut. 3:13, 14; 1 Kgs. 4:13; Zeph. 2:5, 6); or an allotment of an inheritance (Deut. 32:9; Josh. 17:5; Ps. 105:11). In a few instances, this word describes a company of prophets (1 Sam. 10:5, 10)." (Baker - [The Complete Word Study Old Testament](#))

Chebel - 47v - allotment(1), coast(1), cord(2), cords(13), group(2), line(4), lines(2), measurement(1), measuring line(1), noose(1), portion(3), portions(2), region(5), rope(1), ropes(7), seacoast*(2), tackle(1). Deut. 3:4; Deut. 3:13; Deut. 3:14; Deut. 32:9; Jos. 2:15; Jos. 17:5; Jos. 17:14; Jos. 19:29; 1 Sam. 10:5; 1 Sam. 10:10; 2 Sam. 8:2; 2 Sam. 17:13; 2 Sam. 22:6; 1 Ki. 4:13; 1 Ki. 20:31; 1 Ki. 20:32; 1 Chr. 16:18; Est. 1:6; Job 18:10; Job 36:8; Job 41:1; Ps. 16:6; Ps. 18:4; Ps. 18:5; Ps. 78:55; Ps. 105:11; Ps. 116:3; Ps. 119:61; Ps. 140:5; Prov. 5:22; Eccl. 12:6; Isa. 5:18; Isa. 33:20; Isa. 33:23; Jer. 38:6; Jer. 38:11; Jer. 38:12; Jer. 38:13; Ezek. 27:24; Ezek. 47:13; Hos. 11:4; Amos 7:17; Mic. 2:5; Zeph. 2:5; Zeph. 2:6; Zeph. 2:7; Zech. 2:1

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE [Masoretic Text](#) and Septuagint (Lxx)

Joshua 2:15 - "Then she lowered them *[on a rope]* through the window *[for her house was on the face of the wall for she was living inside the wall]*". The Septuagint has a much shorter reading as the italicised phrases are omitted.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

15. Then she let them down, &c. That is, by the help of her friends or domestics. In like manner Paul made his escape from Damascus, 2 Cor. 11:33. The conversation mentioned in the succeeding verses appears to have taken place previous to their being let down from the window; for which reason Adam Clarke remarks, that the natural place of this verse is immediately after the first clause of v. 21. It is very unlikely that she would dismiss them before the above-mentioned conditions were agreed upon; or that she would discourse with them of matters of so much moment after they were let down, and were standing under the window, where others might overhear them; or that she would commence speaking to them in her chamber, and not finish till they had left the house.

Joshua 2:16 She said to them, "Go to the hill country, so that the pursuers will not happen upon you, and hide yourselves there for three days until the pursuers return. Then afterward you may go on your way."

- **Go to the hill country**, Jos 2:22 1Sa 23:14,29 Ps 11:1
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

In the Foreground are ruins of Jericho- Note the "hill country" that is directly west
© Phoenix Data Systems

RAHAB'S SAGE ADVICE FOR SAFETY

As explained in the note on v15, it appears that this conversation which extends through verse 21 was continued once the spies had been let down by the rope.

She said to them, "Go to the hill country, so that the pursuers will not happen upon you, and hide yourselves there for three days until the pursuers return. Then afterward you may go on your way - Not only did she let them down by a rope, but she gave them wise advice to assure that they would not be discovered by the king's men. The **hill country** would have been

toward the west (see the picture above) the opposite direction from that the king's men had gone to conduct their "[wild goose chase](#)" (cf Joshua 2:7)! Why does she say **three days**? I am not sure and the text does not tell us. The fact that she says **Then afterward you may go on your way** makes it sound like she has some information that is indisputable. Did God somehow put this truth in her mind? Did she hear the king's men make a specific pronouncement?

Keil & Delitzsch feel that the hill country is most likely "the range on the northern side of Jericho, which afterwards received the name of Quarantana (Arab. Kuruntul), a wall of rock rising almost precipitously from the plain to the height of 1200 or 1500 feet and full of grottos and caves on the eastern side. These mountains were well adapted for a place of concealment; moreover, they were the nearest to Jericho, as the western range recedes considerably to the south of Wady Kelt".

God sometimes works in unexpected ways through unexpected people.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

16. Get you to the mountain. Heb. לחורר לכו hâhârâh lëku, mountainwards go ye. That is, to the mountainous region in the vicinity; not to any particular mountain. This is an extremely frequent sense of the word 'mountain' in Scripture. The Greek has here εἰς τὴν περὶν, to the mountainous region, Jericho, as we have seen, was encompassed by a range of high hills (see picture above). In some of the caves of these they might conceal themselves for the time specified.

Joshua 2:17 The men said to her, "We shall be free from this oath to you which you have made us swear,

- Jos 2:20 Ge 24:3-8 Ex 20:7 Lev 19:11,12 Nu 30:2 2Sa 21:1,2,7
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

FIRST STIPULATION REGARDING THEIR OATH

The men said to her, "We shall be free from this oath to you which you have made us swear- Now the spies give the stipulations to their oath to protect Rahab and her family.

As an aside one recalls Yahweh's command in Dt 7:2 in which Moses said "when the LORD your God delivers them (CANAANITES) before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor ([chanan](#)) to them." This instruction does not seem to apply to the two spies for it refers to instructions after the Israelites had invaded and defeated their pagan enemy. Also the agreement with Rahab was not an agreement to allow her to continue practicing her pagan beliefs, but ultimately was part of her entering into the Abrahamic Covenant by grace through faith.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

17. We will be blameless of this thine oath. It shall not be our fault if the said oath be not kept, provided the annexed conditions be punctually observed on thy part. We will be free from the reproach of being unfaithful to our engagements. These conditions they go on to state in the next verse.

Joshua 2:18 unless, when we come into the land, you tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window through which you let us down, and gather to yourself into the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father's household.

- **scarlet thread:** Jos 2:21 Lev 14:4 Nu 4:8 19:6 Heb 9:19
- **father:** Jos 2:13 6:23 Ge 7:1 12:2 19:12-17 Es 8:6 Lu 19:9 Ac 10:27,33 Ac 11:14 2Ti 1:16
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE SCARLET CORD of SALVATION IN THE "SAFE HOUSE"

Safe house "is, in a generic sense, a secret place for [sanctuary](#) or suitable to hide people from the law, hostile actors or actions, or from retribution, threats or perceived danger."

Unless, when we come into the land, you tie this cord ([tiqwah](#)) of scarlet ([saniy/shaniy](#)) thread ([chut](#)) in the window through which you let us down, and gather to yourself into the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father's household - The spies make it clear that if there is no **cord of scarlet thread**, they cannot assure her salvation. Their instruction is to remain in her house while the Israelites are destroying the population of Jericho. The **cord of scarlet** hanging from her window would be clearly seen by the Israelite soldiers again and again as they would march around the walls (Joshua 6:12-15). Obviously every Israeli soldier would have been clear instructions to spare every soul in the house marked with the scarlet cord.

Compare the instructions in Exodus the night of the Passover...

"And you shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and **none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning**. 23 "For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and **when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you**. (Exodus 12:22-23+)

It would be a measure of Rahab's faith whether she would keep the cord in the window and retain her family in her house. And in a similar way it would be a measure of her relative's faith if they actually came into her home during the siege of the Israelites began. Seven times around the city would have allowed every soldier plenty of exposure to the "safe house."

Paul Apple - Turning the shame of the [scarlet letter A](#) for *adulteress* into the trophy of the scarlet thread of God's redemption and deliverance

Keith Andrews - She was told to leave a **scarlet** rope, the color of blood. This was no coincidence. Throughout the Scriptures blood is shown to cover our sin. Without the shedding of blood there is no redemption of sin. It is the blood of Christ that rescues us from destruction.

Utley on **cord** ([tiqwah](#)) - The term "**rope**" ([chebel](#)) in Joshua 2:15 is different from the term ([tiqwah](#)) used in Josh 2:18 and Josh 2:21. The first ([chebel](#)) implies a corded strong rope, the second ([tiqwah](#)) a much smaller, weaker rope, or thick thread. By putting out this small rope/thread it did not draw undue attention to her home by the inhabitants of Jericho. The color **scarlet** ([saniy/shaniy](#)) is often associated with the tabernacle color, but must have also been a common color for thread (cf. Ge 38:28, 30). These spies may have had it with them. The dye color came from a worm

Utley on **gather to yourself into the house** - In the OT salvation has to do with physical deliverance. Notice Rahab's whole family is delivered by her act of faith. This corporate concept is not only common in the OT, but extends to the "household" conversions of the NT (cf. Josh 2:2; John 4:44, 53; Acts 11:14; 16:14-15, 31-33; 18:8; 1Cor. 1:16). (**ED: OF COURSE NO INDIVIDUAL IN A HOUSEHOLD IS SAVED WITHOUT PERSONAL FAITH IN MESSIAH!**)

Francis Schaeffer - "In the preaching of the Christian church, all the way back to Clement of Rome . . ., this has been taken as a sign of the blood of Christ, the Lamb."

George Bush on the **cord of scarlet thread** - It answered, therefore, the same purpose with the blood sprinkled upon the doorposts in Egypt, which secured the first-born from the destroying angel.

What the Bible Teaches has an interesting note - There has been much written and preached about the scarlet thread mentioned by the spies. It was used by Rahab to let the spies down from the window and was to be retained by her and displayed in the window of her house. Some have thought that it is a fitting picture of the death of the Lord Jesus, in a similar way to the application of blood from the lamb of the household, to the door posts and lintel in Egypt, prior to the passover night (Ex 12:7). There may well be that typology within the narrative, however, it is not something that the New Testament supports and therefore cannot be pressed. The salvation of Rahab in the New Testament is a picture of faith and works and not of sheltering under the blood of Christ. It is a mistake to read more into the narrative than is supported by the New Testament simply based on the colour of the cord. ([What the Bible Teaches - Joshua](#))

Related Resources:

- See discussion of [Typology-Study of Types](#)
- [What is biblical typology? | GotQuestions.org](#) - **Excerpt** - We should point out the difference between an **illustration** and a **type**. **A type is always identified as such in the New Testament**. A Bible student finding correlations between an Old Testament story and the life of Christ is simply finding illustrations, not types. In other words, typology is determined by Scripture. The Holy Spirit inspired the use of types; illustrations and analogies are the result of man's study. For example, many people see parallels between Joseph (Genesis 37-45) and Jesus. The humiliation and subsequent glorification of Joseph seem to correspond to the death and resurrection of Christ. However, the New Testament never uses Joseph as a

Scarlet (08144) **saniy/shaniy** is a masculine noun always used for the color scarlet. In Isa 1:18 God says Israel's "sins are as **scarlet**" but promised that "They will be as white as snow." (the implication being that they would be forgiven if they repented and believed in the Messiah). See discussion of **tola** where the two Hebrew words (**saniy/shaniy** and **tola**) occur juxtaposed in many of the passages in Exodus that describe the **scarlet** decorations of the Tabernacle. **Saniy/shaniy** describes the **scarlet** thread on the twin Zerah, who was listed with his twin Perez in the line of Messiah, these twins being born to Tamar after Judah had illicit relations with her, thinking she was a harlot (Mt 1:3). In Josh 2:18 we see another harlot Rahab, where **saniy/shaniy** described the scarlet thread she was to show from her window so that she would be spared ("redeemed" so to speak) by the Israelites when they utterly destroyed Jericho. So in both of these uses we see the **scarlet** is part of the so-called "**scarlet thread of redemption**" which many writers see beginning in Genesis 3:15 (although there is no specific mention of a scarlet color, there is an implication that blood was spilled to prepare animal skin coverings for Adam and Eve). The uses of **saniy/shaniy** in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are essentially identical to the uses described in more detailed under the word study of **tola**. In Isaiah 1:18 Jehovah refers to Israel's "sins are as **scarlet** (**saniy/shaniy**)."

Saniy - Ge 38:28, 30; Ex 25:4, 26:1, 31, 36; 27:16; 28:5f, 8, 15, 33; 35:6, 23, 25, 35; 36:8, 35, 37; 38:18, 23; 39:1-3, 5, 8, 24, 29; Lev 14:4, 6, 49, 51-52; Num. 4:8; Num. 19:6; Jos. 2:18; Jos. 2:21; 2Sa. 1:24; Pr. 31:21; Song 4:3; Isa. 1:18; Jer. 4:30

Cord (08515) (**tiqwah** from **qavah** - to wait for) meaning "**cord**," is only found in the story of Rahab (Josh. 2:18, 21). The two Hebrew spies told her to put a scarlet **tiqwāh** outside her house's window on the city wall. The presumed root of this word has a Biblical Hebrew meaning of "to wait for," a derived sense of the more primitive meaning "to twist," "to stretch". There may be some intentional double meaning of this term, since in Biblical Hebrew the word **tiqwah** in other contexts usually means "**hope**". (e.g., Ps 62:5) (See **Definition II** below)

Baker ([The Complete Word Study Old Testament](#)) gives the two definitions of this Hebrew word - **I. A feminine noun referring to a cord**, a line. It refers to a piece of rope or a cord made of bright red thread with a tinge of orange that Rahab placed in her window (Josh. 2:18, 21).

II. A feminine noun referring to hope, expectation. It refers to an attitude of anticipation with the expectation that something will happen, e.g., the hope of bearing a child (Ruth 1:12). A manner of life raises hope of certain consequences (Job 4:6). Because God cares for the oppressed and hopeless, even they have hope (Job 5:16; Ps. 9:18[19]). Hope can be equivalent to a longing or a desire (Job 6:8). The righteous person's hope is ultimately and completely in God (Ps. 62:5[6]); the same cannot be said of the wicked (Prov. 10:28). The fear of the Lord gives hope (Prov. 23:18). A self-conceited person or a person wise in his or her own thinking is more hopeless than a fool (Prov. 26:12). Even when they were in exile, God let His people know that He had a hope to give them, a positive future (Jer. 29:11). The hope for the success of Israel was lost in her captivity (Ezek. 19:5); but God gave Israel hope to return from there (Ezek. 37:11). Hosea speaks of Israel's recovery and hope of full restoration (Hos. 2:15; Zech. 9:12).

Tiqwah - 33x

(I) NAS with sense of **cord** = Jos. 2:18; Jos. 2:21

(II) FOLLOWING VERSES USE **TIQWAH** WITH MEANING OF "**HOPE**" NAS - expectation(3), hope(28), longing(1) = Ruth 1:12; Job 4:6; Job 5:16; Job 6:8; Job 7:6; Job 8:13; Job 11:18; Job 11:20; Job 14:7; Job 14:19; Job 17:15; Job 19:10; Job 27:8; Ps. 9:18; Ps. 62:5; Ps. 71:5; Prov. 10:28; Prov. 11:7; Prov. 11:23; Prov. 19:18; Prov. 23:18; Prov. 24:14; Prov. 26:12; Prov. 29:20; Jer. 29:11; Jer. 31:17; Lam. 3:29; Ezek. 19:5; Ezek. 37:11; Hos. 2:15; Zech. 9:12

Note Hosea 2:15 = "Then I will give her her vineyards from there, And the **valley of Achor** as a door of **hope** (**tiqwah**)..." What a dramatic "turnaround" from the use of **Achor** in Joshua 7:24, 26!

Thread (02339) (**chut**) means thread, cord, line. "A masculine noun referring to a thread, a cord, a ribbon, string. It was a light, fine, string-like material placed together. It can mean an insignificant piece of material of little worth (Gen. 14:23). It was used of larger and broader pieces of material of various colors (Josh. 2:18; Song 4:3) or strong cords or ropes (Judg. 16:12; Eccl. 4:12). It was used in a proper size and form as a measuring line (1 Kgs. 7:15; Jer. 52:21)." (Baker - [The Complete Word Study Old Testament](#))

Gilbrant - Seven times the OT uses this noun with the meaning, "thread," "cord," "string" or "line."

After rescuing **Lot** by defeating the four-king alliance that had plundered Sodom, **Abraham** returned the booty to the king of Sodom. He refused to take even a **thread** or a thong of a sandal, so that the monarch of this

notoriously sinful city would never be able to claim that he was responsible for the patriarch's wealth (Ge 14:23).

Rahab used a scarlet thread to save her family after the two Hebrew spies escaped from Jericho. In order to escape the fate of the other inhabitants of the city when the Israelites attacked, she was to gather her family inside her house and have this cord tied in the window (Josh. 2:18). A scarlet thread is also mentioned in the poetry of the Song of Songs, as something to which the lips of the beloved lady are likened (Song 4:3).

Delilah, in seeking to discover the secret of, and remedy to, Samson's strength, once bound him with new ropes. Nevertheless, on being warned that he was in danger of a Philistine attack, **Samson** snapped these ropes as though they were a single **thread** (Jdg. 16:12).

This Hebrew word is used of a line used to measure the twelve-cubit circumference of the hollow bronze pillars in the Temple. The term is mentioned in the context of both the pillars' construction (1Ki. 7:15) and their later destruction by the Babylonians (Jer 52:21). In the latter reference, the RSV and NIV translate simply "circumference," while the KJV reads, "and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it."

The term also occurs in the well-known proverb, "A threefold cord is not easily broken" (Ecc. 4:12). ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

Chut - 7x - circumference*(1), cord(1), line(1), thread(4). - Gen. 14:23; Jos. 2:18; Jdg. 16:12; 1 Ki. 7:15; Eccl. 4:12; Song 4:3; Jer. 52:21

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE [Masoretic Text](#) and Septuagint (Lxx)

Joshua 2:18 - The [Masoretic Text](#) runs: "Look, when we come into the land ...". The Septuagint has a different reading here: "Behold, we shall enter into the outskirts of the city"

ILLUSTRATION - The story is told of a man passing through a village in Basutoland. To his surprise he noticed some chickens with little red ribbons fastened to their backs between their wings. He asked the owner of the chickens what was the purpose of those red ribbons. He answered and told the traveler that the red ribbons protected his chickens from hawks that would normally attack them. During his fifteen years in the village, no chicken was taken by a hawk if it had that red ribbon on his back. Yet, many chickens that did not have the ribbon were carried off by the hawks. Blue, green, and other colors did not work except the red. What a lesson for us. The scarlet ribbon of Christ's blood protects us from the wrath and doom that awaits the unbelieving sinner and keeps us from the onslaughts of Satan who desires to take us captive at his will. Thank God for the blood of Christ!

Theodore Epp - Faith in Action

It is significant that it was a scarlet cord, or rope, that Rahab was to display in her window. This was symbolic of the blood of Christ, which, according to 1 John 1:7, cleanses us from all sin.

In Hebrews 9:22 ([note](#)) we are told that "almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

The protection that came to Rahab's household reminds us also of the incident of the Passover in Egypt. God instructed His people to sprinkle blood on the doorposts of their houses.

He assured them that when the death angel came to slay the firstborn in Egypt, the houses protected by the blood would not be entered. They would be spared.

The scarlet cord in Rahab's window protected her household just as the blood on the doorposts protected the Israelites in Egypt.

The New Testament makes special mention of Rahab with regard to this. James wrote: "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" (James 2:25).

Rahab had a faith that worked. She aided the spies in their escape from Jericho and hung a scarlet cord from her window. This was faith in action.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (see note Hebrews 11:1).

QUESTION - [What is the significance of a scarlet thread?](#)

ANSWER - The Bible mentions a scarlet thread in several different contexts, from an unusual childbirth to the high priestly garments to the conquest of Canaan.

One reference to the scarlet thread in the Bible occurs during the birth of the twin sons of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38:27–30). As Tamar was giving birth, the arm of one twin, Zerah, reached out of the birth canal, and immediately the midwife tied a scarlet thread to the baby's wrist to designate Zerah as the firstborn. As it turned out, however, Zerah was not the firstborn; the arm was withdrawn into the womb, and the other twin, [Perez](#), was born first.

In the case of Perez and Zerah, the scarlet thread was to indicate who was to have the designation and privileges of the firstborn. To all appearances, Zerah seemed to be the one, but God had different plans, and Perez was the firstborn. In God's providence, it was through Perez that the line of the Lord Jesus Christ proceeded (Matthew 1:3).

The Bible also mentions scarlet thread or scarlet yarn as part of the tabernacle's curtains (Exodus 26:1) and the high priest's [ephod](#) (Exodus 28:6), along with threads of gold, blue, and purple. Scripture does not comment on the significance of those colors in the curtains or ephod, but some commentators surmise that the gold, blue, and purple foreshadow Christ's glory, heavenly origin, and kingly position, while the scarlet thread represents Christ's atoning work on the cross through the shedding of His blood.

Another significant mention of scarlet thread is in Joshua 2. Two spies had been sent to Jericho in advance of the Israelites' taking of that city. The spies were hidden in Jericho by [Rahab the harlot](#), who expressed her faith in Israel's God and protected the spies (see Hebrews 11:31). Rahab allowed the Hebrew spies to escape from Jericho by letting them down through her window by means of a rope made of scarlet thread. As they departed, the spies told Rahab, "Tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window" (Joshua 2:18), with the promise that she and her household would be kept safe in the coming invasion. By faith, Rahab obeyed: "And she tied the scarlet cord in the window" (verse 21).

Later, when the walls of Jericho fell down and the Israelites took the city, Joshua commanded that Rahab and her family be spared (Joshua 6:22–23). Marking her home was, of course, the "cord of scarlet thread." It's easy to dismiss the color of Rahab's rope as mere coincidence, but the scarlet color is significant. The rope in her window was a sign of her faith and led to her salvation, as she was not destroyed with the rest of Jericho. The scarlet rope—the color of blood—worked for Rahab much as the blood of the [Passover lamb](#) had worked during the exodus: every home marked with blood was spared death that night (Exodus 12:13). God's mercy and forgiveness of Rahab the harlot was signified by a rope of scarlet thread, which becomes a symbol of the blood of Christ.

Theologians and Bible students sometimes refer to "the scarlet thread running through the Bible." By this they mean that the Bible's theme is Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for the redemption of mankind. The [blood of Christ](#) runs throughout the entire Bible, symbolically. It is seen in the animals killed in Eden to provide garments for Adam and Eve, the ram that took Isaac's place on the altar of Moriah, the Passover lamb, the institution of the sacrificial system, the scarlet rope of Rahab, and the thousands of years of sacrifices performed at the tabernacle and temple. The scarlet thread runs all the way up to John the Baptist's declaration, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) and to the foot of the cross, where Jesus finally says, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

"Without the [shedding of blood](#) there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22), and that's why the symbolism of the scarlet thread in the Bible is significant. The scarlet thread is the theme of atonement found throughout the pages of Scripture. [GotQuestions.org](#)

A T Pierson - The Line of Scarlet Thread - In the British navy there is a scarlet thread running through every line of cordage, and though a rope be cut into inch pieces, it can be recognized as belonging to the government. So is there a scarlet thread running all through the Bible—the whole book points to Christ. In the promise made to Adam appears, as it were, the first twig of the tree. Twig after twig is added, till we can count not only 200 direct promises of the Messiah, but 1,500, direct and indirect. Then as history comes to fulfill these predictions, each little twig in turn is set on fire, yet not consumed, till finally the whole tree becomes a great burning bush, and we take off our shoes and stand in awe, for it is holy ground.

F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - Joshua 2:18 This line of scarlet thread.

It speaks of the precious blood of Christ. Scarlet is the color of Calvary. Twine it round the window through which thou lookest out on thy foes, and away to the river of death. Nothing can hurt the soul which has put the precious blood of Christ between it and condemnation or alarm. Let every outlook to the future be associated with a remembrance that his blood was shed for thee, and be thou thankful.

Rahab is the type of Gentile sinners who are permitted to share in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to sit with Him in the heavenlies. That scarlet thread had been the means of salvation to the spies. By it they had been let down to the ground and saved

from death. It must have been strong. So the blood of Christ avails, not only for us, but for all who shelter with us in the household of faith, and for others who find it the means of life as they receive it from our hands.

Let us see to it that, like Rahab, we gather father and mother, brethren and friends, to share with us the shelter and safeguard of the precious blood.

But, after all, it was not the cord that saved — that was only the emblem and type. Behind it on the one hand was God's oath, spoken through the spies, and on the other was Rahab's faith. The true safety of that house on the wall stood in the moral attitude of one woman in it. Rehab believed God who had dried up the water of the Red Sea, and who was God in heaven above and in earth beneath. This faith raised her afterwards from her life of shame to become the ancestress of Christ. Such wonders does the blood of Christ work in outcasts from the commonwealth of Israel, bringing them nigh.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

18. This line of scarlet thread. Rather 'this cord,' i. e. a line or cord, consisting of such a number of threads or braids, that when twisted together, they should be capable of sustaining the weight of a man's body; for it seems to have been the very same cord with which they were let down from the window. This was to be a mark upon the house, of which the spies would inform the camp of Israel, so that no soldier, however fierce and eager he might be in the work of destruction, should offer any violence to the place thus distinguished. **It answered, therefore, the same purpose with the blood sprinkled upon the door-posts in Egypt, which secured the first-born from the destroying angel.**

Thou shalt bring thy father and thy mother, &c. Heb. תאספי taasphi, thou, shalt bring together, assemble. In no other way could Rahab's kindred be distinguished from those who were to be devoted to the sword. If they would not 'perish with them that believed not,' they must convey themselves to the only place of safety. If any of them had been met in the streets by the slaughtering Israelites, it would have availed them nothing to say, 'We belong to the house of Rahab.' The answer would be, 'If you belong to the house, why are you not in the house? We know you not.' So those who professedly belong to the church of Christ, if they would be saved, must keep close to the society of the faithful. If they are found mingled with the world in spirit and pursuit, they have reason to fear being overwhelmed in its destruction.

Joshua 2:19 "It shall come about that anyone who goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be free; but anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him."

- **anyone who goes out of the doors of your house** Ex 12:13,23 Nu 35:26-28 1Ki 2:36-42 Mt 24:17 Ac 27:31 Php 3:9 Heb 10:29 1Jn 2:27,28
- **his blood:** Lev 20:9,11 2Sa 1:16 3:28,29 Eze 33:4,5 Mt 27:24,25 Ac 18:6 Ac 20:26
- **his blood:** Jos 2:14 2Sa 4:11 1Ki 2:32 Mt 27:25
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE STIPULATION TO STAY IN THE HOUSE

It shall come about that anyone who goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be free - Salvation is a choice and anyone who left the safe confines of the harlot's house would lose their life.

One commentator says "notice the conditional covenant related to the faith of Rahab." While there is truth in that statement, it could be misinterpreted to suggest that Rahab's works (meeting the spies conditions) resulted in her salvation. To be sure had she failed to put out the scarlet cord, she would not have been saved. But why did she put it out? Because she had faith in Yahweh and knew He would give Israel the land and victory over the city of Jericho. In short her faith saved her, but her works demonstrated that her faith was genuine ("saving faith"). In other words belief in YHWH will motivate abiding by the three conditions of the spies in Joshua 2:18–20.

But anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him - The two spies repeat the oath saying if Rahab's family obeys their stipulations and one is harmed, they themselves (the spies) would be guilty of the death of that family member.

THOUGHT - Our faith is demonstrated when our IFs become WHENs.

Bob Marcaurelle - The blood red line of salvation runs all the way from God killing the first animal in Genesis 3:15, 21+ to cover the

nakedness of Adam and Eve, to Revelation where Jesus, the Lamb of God, slain for Rahab and you and me, stands, with the scars of slaughter still on his beautiful body (Rev. 5:9+). In Him is the only place of safety.

We must needs go home
By the way of the cross
There's no other way but this
We will ne'er catch sight
Of the gates of light
If the way of the cross we miss.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

19. His blood shall be upon his head. The guilt of his blood-shedding shall rest wholly upon himself. He shall have no one else to blame. He has failed to perform the conditions of the covenant, and so must suffer for it.

If any hand be upon him. That is, so as to slay him. See a like phraseology, Deut. 17:7, Est. 6:2, Job. 1:12.

Joshua 2:20 "But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be free from the oath which you have made us swear."

- **But if you tell this business of ours,:** Pr 11:13
- **we shall be free from the oath** Jos 2:17

SECOND STIPULATION REGARDING THEIR OATH

But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be free from the oath which you have made us swear- The spies demand that Rahab maintain complete silence about their mission or otherwise their oath would be invalidated.

Joshua 2:21 She said, "According to your words, so be it." So she sent them away, and they departed; and she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

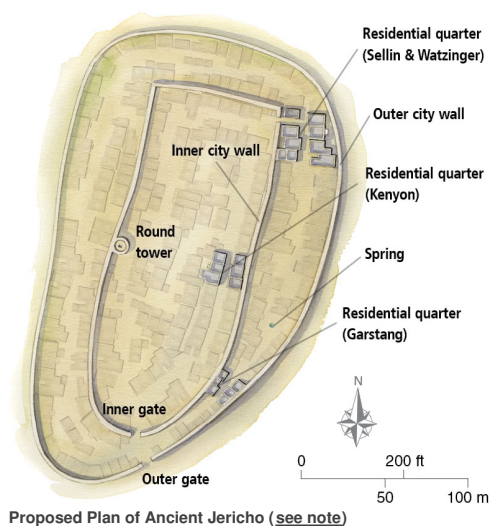
- **she tied the scarlet cord** Jos 2:18 Mt 7:24 Joh 2:5
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Exodus 12:7+ Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

Exodus 12:23+ "For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.

Hebrews 9:19; For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and **scarlet wool** and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,



RAHAB'S SIGNAL OF THE SCARLET CORD

She said, "According to your words, so be it." - Rahab agrees to the conditions which must be kept in order to assure the oath by the spies would remain binding and none of her family would die.

So she sent them away, and they departed; and she tied the scarlet cord ([tiqwah](#)) in the window - From this text it appears that Rahab put the **scarlet cord** in the window immediately. Since Jericho was shut tight, no one would have been suspicious or inquisitive about this cord for they were all within the city walls.

The **scarlet cord** ([tiqwah](#)) reminds us of the sacrificial lamb's blood on the doorpost, which cause the death angel to pass over all the souls in that house during the slaying of all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. (Exodus 12:7+ Exodus 12:23+)

Utley on **cord** ([tiqwah](#)) - The term "**rope**" ([chebel](#)) in Joshua 2:15 is different from the term ([tiqwah](#)) used in Josh 2:18 and Josh 2:21. The first ([chebel](#)) implies a corded strong rope, the second ([tiqwah](#)) a much smaller, weaker rope, or thick thread. By putting out this small rope/thread it did not draw undue attention to her home by the inhabitants of Jericho. The color **scarlet** ([saniy/shaniy](#)) is often associated with the tabernacle color, but must have also been a common color for thread (cf. Ge 38:28, 30). These spies may have had it with them. The dye color came from a worm

Joshua 6:25 that after the destruction of Jericho Rahab "lives among the Israelites to this day." She became a part of the family of God and the people of God and in the most amazing display of grace was placed in the lineage of the Messiah.

Rahab went from the Old Jericho House of Shame
to New Jerusalem Hall of Fame.
-- Bob Marcaurelle

This **scarlet cord** ([tiqwah](#)) , the color perhaps speaking of the blood of sacrifice, was thus Rahab's only hope of deliverance for herself and her loved ones. All others in Jericho perished when the children of Israel took it several days later (Joshua 6:25). They had heard much of the same truth that Rahab had heard about Israel and its God, but all rejected it choosing rather to traverse the broad road to eternal destruction (Mt 7:13-14+)

THOUGHT - Have you "tied the scarlet cord" over your "house," your body? Have you come under the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, and into the shelter of salvation—the only ark of safety?

Irving Jensen - On Rahab's acceptance of the conditions, the spies departed into the wilds of the nearby mountain, while she lost no time in binding the scarlet thread in the window, sealing her deliverance. What a beautiful picture of the believer's salvation, very much like the earlier experience of the Israelites in Egypt, when God said to them, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13). When Joshua's army saw the scarlet thread, they would spare the lives of all in the house.

Campbell - The door of her house was a door to safety from the judgment soon to fall on Jericho (cf. Ge 7:16; Ex. 12:23; John 10:9)....Jericho at this time was surrounded by two walls about 15 feet apart (**SEE DEPICTION OF JERICHO ABOVE**). Planks of wood spanned the gap and then houses were built on this foundation. Probably due to the pressure of space in the small city, Rahab's house was one of those built "on the wall." In this way it was "part of the city wall" (Joshua 2:15). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Doug Goins: It's interesting how the Israelite armies that advanced were to know which house was hers. The location of that house in or on the city wall would make it easy for the spies to escape and also for the house to be recognized by the advancing army. For about 250 years biblical critics claimed that this story was mythological, or at best historical fiction, because there was no evidence that there were houses built into city walls in the ancient near east. But the excavations in Jericho after the turn of the century showed that the city was surrounded by double walls with twelve feet between them. And they found evidence that simple houses were built on top of timbers that were spread between the two walls. These were like poor squatter's houses sitting on top of the city wall. . . (See [Biblical Sites: Three Discoveries at Jericho](#))

Johnny Hunt - Often in biblical covenants, God appointed some physical or material token to remind the people of what had been promised. EXAMPLES: Abraham - sealed by the rite of circumcision; Moses- cloud and pillar of fire; Noah - rainbow; Jesus - broken bread and cup of wine; Rahab- scarlet cord. The scarlet cord out the window of her house, which was built on the wall, would identify her house as the "house of safety." Just as Egypt's blood on the doorpost marked a house that the angel of death was to pass over, so Rahab's scarlet cord.

Constable - Rahab's protection of the spies demonstrated the sincerity of her faith (Josh 2:6; cf. James 2:25). Her confidence about her preservation from the coming judgment rested on the promise given to her by God's spokesmen (v. 21; cf. John 6:47).

Hess - "If Joshua represents the Israelite male who finds guidance and success through faith in the LORD God, does Rahab represent his counterpart, the Canaanite female who also finds guidance and success through faith in the LORD God? In one of the most nationalistic books in the Hebrew Bible, does it not serve the purposes of the promise to Abraham that 'all peoples on earth will be blessed through you' (Gn. 12:3) to place side by side with the choice of a military leader and his initial preparations for battle, the story of a foreign woman who believed and was saved without arms or bloodshed?" ([Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

Madvig - The spies violated God's explicit command that none of the people living in the land were to be spared (Dt 7:1-6+, Dt 20:16-18+). Rahab, however, turned to God and sought deliverance. Her experience is proof of the gracious saving purpose of God. His overarching decree is that 'everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved' (Joel 2:32). This is one of the most dramatic examples of grace in the OT and is set in bold relief by the questionable aspects of Rahab's profession and conversion. The salvation of Rahab is an example of what God would have done for others also. The king and the other citizens of Jericho knew all that she knew, but they did not turn to Israel's God for mercy. The fear that drove her to beg for mercy drove them in their stubborn rebellion. Accordingly, the others are called 'the disobedient' in Hebrews 11:31 ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - "She bound the scarlet line in the window." —Joshua 2:21

Rahab depended for her preservation upon the promise of the spies, whom she looked upon as the representatives of the God of Israel. Her faith was simple and firm, but it was very obedient. To tie the scarlet line in the window was a very trivial act in itself, but she dared not run the risk of omitting it. Come, my soul, is there not here a lesson for thee? Hast thou been attentive to all thy Lord's will, even though some of his commands should seem non-essential? Hast thou observed in his own way the two ordinances of believers' baptism and the Lord's Supper? These neglected, argue much unloving disobedience in thy heart. Be henceforth in all things blameless, even to the tying of a thread, if that be matter of command.

This act of Rahab sets forth a yet more solemn lesson. Have I implicitly trusted in the precious blood of Jesus? Have I tied the scarlet cord, as with a Gordian knot in my window, so that my trust can never be removed? Or can I look out towards the Dead Sea of my sins, or the Jerusalem of my hopes, without seeing the blood, and seeing all things in connection with its blessed power? The passer-by can see a cord of so conspicuous a colour, if it hangs from the window: it will be well for me if my life makes the efficacy of the atonement conspicuous to all onlookers. What is there to be ashamed of? Let men or devils gaze if they will, the blood is my boast and my song. My soul, there is One who will see that scarlet line, even when from weakness of faith thou canst not see it thyself; Jehovah, the Avenger, will see it and pass over thee. Jericho's walls fell flat: Rahab's house was on the wall, and yet it stood unmoved; my nature is built into the wall of humanity, and yet when destruction smites the race, I shall be secure. My soul, tie the scarlet thread in the window afresh, and rest in peace.

THE SCARLET LINE IN THE WINDOW A Sermon PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28TH, 1909, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"She bound the scarlet line in the window."—Joshua 2:21.

EVERY little incident in a remarkable conversion like that of the harlot Rahab is worthy of notice. The apostle James selected her as an illustration of the fact that faith is always attended by good works, and he asks, "Was she not justified by works when she had received the messengers?" while Paul quotes her as an instance of justification by faith, and says, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not." If both these eminent apostles found an illustration of an important doctrine in her life, we,

surely, may do the same. If the hiding of the spies under the flax had some significance, so also had the hanging out of the scarlet line.

The two spies whom Rahab had concealed made an agreement with her that she should hang out a scarlet line in the window by which she had let them down, that they might know, in the day of battle, the house in which she dwelt. She fulfilled their request, and displayed the chosen emblem. In connection with that scarlet line, I observe four things.

I. First, I see here AN OBEDIENT BELIEVER.

She was told to tie the scarlet thread in the window, and she did it; there was exact obedience. It was not merely a thread, a line, but the scarlet line. She did not substitute a blue, or a green, or a white line. The order was this scarlet line, not another, and she took that particular one. Obedience to God will be very much seen in small matters. Love always delights to attend to the little things, and thereby makes the little things great. I have heard of a Puritan who was charged with being too precise, but his answer was excellent, "I serve a precise God."

The Lord our God is a jealous God, and he is very jealous of his commands. It appeared a little mistake that Moses made when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it, and yet he could not enter into the promised rest because of his offence. A small action may involve a great principle, and it is for us to be very cautious and careful, searching out what the Master's will is, and then never halting or hesitating for any reason whatever, but doing his will as soon as ever we know it. Christian life should be a mosaic of minute obediences. The soldiers of Christ should be famous for their exact discipline.

I commend scrupulous obedience to all of you, and especially to those young people who have lately made a profession of their faith in Christ. Do not be as your fathers were; for the generation which is now going off the stage neither reads its Bible nor cares to know the Lord's will. If people searched the Scriptures, we should find them come together in union; but the least-read book in all the world, in proportion to its circulation, is the Word of God. It is distributed everywhere, but it is read scarcely anywhere with care and attention, and with a sincere resolve to follow its precepts at all hazards. You come and listen to us, and we give you little bits taken from it here and there, but you do not get a fair notion of it as a whole. How can you? Ministers make mistakes, and you follow them without enquiry. One elects this leader, and another that, to the creation of varieties of opinions and even of sects, which ought not to be, and would not be if all stood fast by the standard of inspired truth. If the Bible were but read, and prayed over, many errors would die a speedy death, and others would be sorely crippled. Had that inspired Book been read in the past, many errors would never have arisen. Search ye, then, the Book of God, I pray you; and whatever you find there, be sure to attend thereto. At all costs, keep to the Word of God.

Notice, next, that hers was obedience in a very small matter. She might have said, "I do not think it is essential to tie a piece of line in my window. Can I not be preserved just as well without it, seeing that I believe in the God of Israel? I have faith, and I have shown it by my works by hiding the spies, you cannot suppose for a moment that I shall perish simply because I have not complied with a regulation about a scarlet line." In this way many, nowadays, enquire whether they may not omit those duties which they consider to be non-essential to salvation. Now, this is a question which I never intend to answer for anybody else, because I never intend to ask it on my own account. Whether or no a believer will perish because some known duty or Scriptural ordinance is neglected, is a question which only selfishness would raise. Are we only to do that which will procure our progress, or secure our salvation? Are we so grossly selfish as that? Does a loving child say, "If I refuse to do my father's will, shall I not still be my father's child? Shall I not still be fed and clothed by him?" Only an evil child would talk thus. The true son enquires, "What would my father have me do? I will do it cheerfully for his sake. What doth my father forbid? for what he forbids shall be hateful to me." Rise above all questions concerning essential and non-essential, and learn to obey in all things; if it be only tying a scarlet thread in the window, or washing in water, do as you are bidden, and in nothing rebel against the Word of the Lord.

Remember, too, that this small matter of obedience, as some call it, had an important symbolical signification. I am not sure that the spies meant by it that the scarlet thread should be the same to Rahab as the blood on the lintel and on the two side posts had been to Israel in Egypt, but it does strike me as being very probable. Those two men were so acquainted with the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, and the consequent preservation of all in the house, that it was very natural that they should give Rahab a sign akin to the token which God had ordained for his people Israel when his angel passed them by in the day of doom. Therefore, trifling as the colour of the cord might seem, it had a deep significance; and even so commands of God, which are little in themselves, are great in symbolic teaching. Great errors have come into the Christian Church by the alteration of simple points in God's commands; and, therefore, since a little thing in the sign may involve a great thing in the substance, it becomes us to cultivate exact obedience.

"Oh!" says one, "but I fear we shall always be in error." Assuredly we shall, unless we endeavour to avoid it. Unless we give abundant attention to the Word of God we shall fall into mistakes beyond number; errors are unavoidable if we do not study our perfect Chart, even as it is certain that a man will lose his way if he never enquires about it. At any rate, we need not rush into mistakes by omitting to use our judgment, and to inform our understanding. Ask the Lord to teach you by his Holy Spirit, and you will

not be taught wrongly. Commit yourself to his instruction, and be willing to do what he teaches you, and you will not go amiss.

This woman's obedience also arose out of real faith, and was the exponent of that faith; for, when she tied the scarlet line in the window, she expressed her confidence in the fact that Jericho would be destroyed, and that she would be saved because she had received a promise to that effect. She would not have hidden the spies if she had not believed in their God; and after having done so, if her faith had failed her, she would not have complied with the covenant requirement to hang the scarlet line in the window. Beloved, obey in faith. The obedience of the slave is worth little; the obedience of the child is precious, for it is the fruit of love. That keeping of God's commands which comes of slavish fear lacks the very heart and bowels of obedience, for love is absent; but, as God's dear children, resting alone in Jesus, confiding in your Father's promise, feel that because you believe you must obey, not because you dread hell, or expect to-win heaven through any works of your own, but because you have believed in Jesus to the salvation of your soul, and therefore, it is your joy to do his bidding.

Thus I have enlarged upon the first point of the text, that, in the hanging out of the scarlet line, I discern an obedient believer.

II. Now, secondly, I see here AN APPROPRIATED COVENANT.

These men had made a covenant with her that she should have her life spared, and the lives of her family, if she concealed their secret, and if she tied a scarlet line in the window. As she tied up that line she did, as it were, say, "I claim the covenant that you have made with me." Beloved, let us speak about this for a moment, for we want more and more to be able to appropriate covenant blessings. How do we appropriate Jesus? By simple faith. Faith is the hand which touches the head of the great sacrifice, and lays sin upon it, that sin may no longer lie upon the sinner. Faith grasps Jesus as the Bread of life, and makes that Bread to be our own, that we may feed upon it, and may live for ever. Thus the grand thing for appropriating Christ is to obtain faith, and to gain more and more faith. Do you remember when first of all you tied a scarlet line in your window, and said, "Christ is mine"? I do remember the very hour and the precise spot, but many cannot tell the moment or the occasion, nor need they agitate themselves about it if they still continue to tie that line in its place. Still, you do remember that there was such a time when you could say, "Jesus is mine." You apprehended Christ because he had apprehended you. If such an hour as that has never come to you, may it come even now! Jesus Christ can save you, but he must be appropriated, or he will be no Saviour to you. Remember that God the Holy Ghost himself, though he is the Author of faith, cannot believe for you; you must believe personally for yourself. Certain persons talk very much of repentance as the gift of the Holy Spirit, and their witness would be true if they would not exaggerate it so as to leave the impression on men's minds that the Holy Ghost repents, and that the sinner has little or nothing to do with it, for that is not true, since it is clear that the Holy Spirit has nothing to repent of, that repentance is an act of the repenting sinner's own soul, and faith a personal exercise of the heart, "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." If we do not ourselves repent and believe, Christ is not ours, and we are none of his, neither shall we obtain any benefit from his life and death. Tie the scarlet line in your window, for it will not be tied there for you; you must do it with your own hand. And I do pray that, even now, you may have boldness through Christ to say, "Yes, Jesus shall be mine; I dare with humble confidence to appropriate him for myself, since he is given freely to poor needy sinners, and I am such a sinner."

Faith is the first and grandest way of tying the scarlet line in the window, but let your faith follow on in the use of the ordinances and means of grace, for these assist her in laying hold upon Jesus. I have often found it most blessed to sit at the communion table, and feel, while I ate the bread and drank the wine, that faith was in active exercise, so that I said to myself, "Yes, as certainly as this bread is put into my mouth, and goes into my bodily system, so as to become a part of myself, so that nobody can ever take it away, even so I have by faith believed on and received into my soul the incarnate God, and in that way has he become mine, so that none can separate him from me, or me from him." The ordinance itself will not give you Christ, but often does the symbol blessedly enable the soul to realize Jesus, and contemplate him so as to partake of him. In that draught of wine, so typical of his blood, how often has our soul said, "I rest entirely upon the Redeemer's bloody sacrifice. His substitutionary pangs, griefs, and merits are all my trust before God, and I receive them as my sole reliance for the remission of sin, and take them into my very self, just as I drink of this cup, and thereby the juice of the vine courses through my veins." Continue, beloved friends, thus to appropriate Jesus Christ, and let every communion season be a tying of the scarlet line afresh in the window.

Let your whole life be a course of action correspondent to the belief that Christ is yours. I am afraid many believers live as though Jesus Christ did not belong to them at all, nor yet the blessings of the covenant. Do you think that we should be so desponding when we have losses in business if we really believed that all things are ours, and if we had tied the scarlet line in the window, and appropriated all things as ours in Christ? Do you think we should be so soon fluttered, and made to doubt whether we are saved or not, in times of temptation, if our faith took a firm grip of Christ, and tied the scarlet line in the window fast and firm, by claiming the covenant of grace as ours? Beloved, some of you have only appropriated a part of Christ. You believe you are pardoned, but you scarcely know that you are justified. You are justified, and covered with his righteousness, but you have not laid hold upon the sanctification which Jesus gives you. You have a measure of grace, but you have not yet believed that Christ can sanctify you wholly, spirit, soul, and body. We are stunted and stunted, lean and lethargic, because of our failure to grasp with holy confidence the infinite treasure which is stored up in our all-sufficient Lord. He is ours, and all things are ours in him. "According to your faith be it

unto you," is the rule of that great house over which Christ presides. This woman took the covenant which she had made with these men to be hers, and showed that she did so by tying up the scarlet line in the window. The covenant was made with her, and she knew it, and believed it; in like manner, O brother in Christ, by a living faith, grasp the promises of God, and claim them as your own!

Here let me also say, let us do this by displaying a corresponding restfulness. After Rahab had tied the line in her window, we do not read that she did anything else, except bring her father, and her mother, and her brethren under her roof. She did not make preparations to defend the house against the siege; there is no notification that she appealed to the king to have a special guard to protect that part of the wall. I do not believe that she had a solitary fear, or a moment's terror; the scarlet line was in the window, and she felt secure: she had appropriated the promise, and she believed it would not be broken. It is a high privilege to dwell peaceably and quietly in the finished work of Christ, and in the sure immutable promise of God, who cannot lie. Why fret ye yourselves, and question ye yourselves, and go about with a thousand anxieties when salvation's work was finished on the accursed tree, and Christ has gone into the glory, and has carried in his perfect work before his Father's face? Why mourn ye, and suspect your safety, when the Lord hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in him? We who have believed do enter into rest; the peace of God is ours; so let us, by our resting, show that we have tied the scarlet line in our widow, have claimed the finished work of Christ, and therefore rest henceforth from our own works as God did from his.

III. Thirdly, I see here AN OPEN DECLARATION.

Rahab tied the scarlet line, not in some secret part of the house, but in the window. It was her public declaration of faith. I do not say that everybody understood what she meant by that; only those understood it who were in the secret with her, and that sufficed. She hung out the red signal from the window, where it could be seen by those who needed to see it. It was not that she was ostentatious, and wished to attract attention; but she was bound to make a public sign, and she did it. Now, some of you believe in my Lord Jesus, and yet you have never united with his people. You are resting in him, but you are mightily afraid that anybody should know it. Be not ashamed of Jesus! The wonder is that he is not ashamed of you. If he was not ashamed to take upon him your nature, and die for you, you need never blush to own his name. Come forward, ye trembling ones, tie the scarlet line in your window, and say, "We are his, and we confess it."

Let it be a scarlet line that you tie in the window, however, namely, an avowal of true faith in his precious blood, a declaration of confidence in atonement by blood; for there are some who profess a sort of faith, but it is not faith in the substitution of Christ. It is unfashionable, nowadays, to believe in the old doctrine of atonement. Modern "culture" has expunged it, or altered it in such a way that no real atonement is left. There are many who are too advanced to avow the old-fashioned gospel; but, as for us, we tie for ever the scarlet line in our window, and stand by the truth once delivered to the saints. Our declaration of faith is that we believe in the real and literal substitution of Christ, who died, "the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." In the midst of a thousand new gospels, none of them worth the breath that utters them, we hold to that ancient gospel of the prophet Isaiah, "the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Beloved believer, if the doctrine of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and his substitutionary atonement be indeed your hope, avow it; avow it boldly, and let there be no mistake about it in these evil times; tie the scarlet line in your window, and if nobody else will see it, your brethren will mark it, and be encouraged. If nobody else will be pleased with it, your God will smile upon you, and you will be a sweet savour unto him. No man, that I know of, saw the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts, at the dead of night, in the land of Egypt, for there were none abroad to look upon it; but God saw it, and it is written, "When, I see the blood, I will pass over you." When God sees our simple confidence in his dear Son, and perceives us resting upon his Word, without the admixture of human reason and opinion, then, beloved, he will accept us in the Beloved, and our house shall stand when others fall.

Every Christian ought to make his faith in the precious blood visible in many ways. It ought to be manifest in our common conversation; if we are resting in the blood of Jesus, we ought not to be able to talk a quarter of an hour without thoughtful persons perceiving that we are indeed followers of Jesus. I have heard of a man who was so entertaining and instructive in his conversation that it was said that you could not stand under an archway for five minutes with him, to get out of a shower of rain, without learning something from him. Every Christian man ought to be of this sort, in a higher style, so that you cannot be with him many minutes without perceiving him to be a man of God. Of course, in the Church of Christ, the Christian man ought to hang a scarlet line out of his door at once, and let his fellow-worshippers see that he is decided and resolute for the Lord his God; but he ought to do the same in his business. Customers should soon see that in your shop the common tricks of trade are detested. The scarlet line is over this door. In the house, the mistress in the management of her servants, the master as a husband and as a father, should be known to be better than others. There is a certain sect of people called "the peculiar people"; I wish we were all peculiar people in this respect, that the blood-mark set us apart as not our own, but bought with a price. The Lord grant that it may be so with us!

IV. The last point is this. Here was A DEDICATED HOUSE,—a house with a scarlet line in its window.

Coming here, the other afternoon, and walking down one of the back streets, I amused myself by observing how many houses were insured. I noticed the marks of the different Insurance Companies. There was the sun on one, with his bright face looking down upon

us, as much as to say, "There shall be no loss here." The globe, the star, the Phoenix, all were there as seals of safety. Now, there was only one house in Jericho that was insured, and that had for its symbol and mark of insurance a scarlet line tied in the window. What a mercy it is when houses are insured by the grace of God, and dedicated to the Lord,—the very houses, and much more the inhabitants of those houses. How can you dedicate a house? I was reading, the other day, that, in Cromwell's time, you could go down Cheap-side, at a certain hour in the morning, and you would see the blinds down at every house and hear the families singing, all the way along, "for," says an old divine, "in those days, a drawn blind was the scarlet line in the window." People knew, as they passed along, that there was an altar erected to God in that house. I am afraid that there are a great many streets in our towns and cities which you might traverse at any hour of the day, and not discover a solitary sign of family prayer going on. The practice has gone out of fashion even among many who profess to be the people of God, and farewell to any progress in godliness till we bring it back again.

I believe that, when the house and the church pull together, things are right; but when religion is made to be a thing of the church, and not of the house, when the priest is looked to instead of the father, when men cease to be priests in their own houses, then the very sinews of vital godliness have been cut. If I had to give up all week-day services, and shut up every place of worship in Christendom from Sunday to Sunday, I would prefer to do that rather than lose the morning and evening gatherings of devout households worshipping God. How much Scotland owes to her family devotions! You need not that I remind you of "The Cotter's Saturday Night." It is the very glory of that country that they do there worship God in their houses. "There is much formality about it," cries one. Well, was there ever anything good which did not degenerate here and there? But I have witnessed, full many a time, the hearty devotion of morning and evening prayer in the North. I wonder how many houses represented by you come up to Matthew Henry's third standard. He says, "Those who pray, do well." You get up to that, I hope. "Those that read the Scriptures and pray, do better. Those that read the Scriptures, and pray, and sing, do best of all." I think so. This is the scarlet line with the threefold cord to it, and I would that every house hung out that scarlet line as meaning, "This house belongs to King Jesus. The devil need not trouble himself to come here, for the strong man armed keeps his goods in peace."

The beauty of it was that all inside Rahab's house were saved. "Come in, dear mother," said she. Who among us could bear the thought of our mother being lost? It breaks our hearts to think of such a thing. My mother lost? Oh, no, that must not be! And your father lost? Oh, have you an unconverted father? I beseech you, give no slumber to your eyelids till you have done all you can to set before him the way of peace, and have pleaded for him before God with sighs and tears. And then she said, "Come in, dear brothers and sisters." I delight in Rahab for loving her household. If you have brothers and sisters who are not yet under the scarlet line, pray to God to bring them in, that all your house may be dedicated to the Most High, and, without exception, all may dwell beneath the blessed blood-red token which infallibly preserves all who are sheltered beneath it.

I leave this point to notice that there are other things besides family prayer which should be like the scarlet line in the house. For instance, there should be, in every Christian house, a scarlet line put up in the selecting of the company that is kept. The Christian should carefully select his friends and associates. He should say, "He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." As for the drunkard and the swearer, and those who use unchaste language, let them be what they may, they shall not visit within our doors, we will not tolerate them. If we are masters of our household, we try to find our children friends whom we should like to be their companions in eternity. Some parents introduce their children to young men and young women who happen to be "very respectable", as they say, but who are worldly and ungodly, and thus they do much to ruin them. It should not be so. Hang the scarlet line over the door, and if they do not love that scarlet line, religious conversation will before long make the place too hot for them. If you talk much of Jesus, the frivolous will consider that they have notice to quit.

A Christian man's house should have a scarlet line over its reading. I confess to great sorrow whenever I see, in a Christian man's house, commonly laid about for the use of the girls, that dreadful rubbishing yellow stuff which pollutes every railway bookstall, much of it downright ungodliness, and the best of it abominable nonsense, the reading of which is a sheer waste of time. When there are thousands of good and interesting books to be read, it seems a pity that Christian people should give their time to reading which cannot profit them. Let the asses have their thistles, I never grudge them; and so I will not say that worldlings should not read such books; they suit them, let them have them. I have never murmured at a farmer when I have seen him going along with his great mash of all manner of garbage to give to his hogs; so long as he did not give me a basin of it for dinner, I was satisfied to let the swine have their food; and there are a great many romances and a vast mass of literature which it is vain to deny to ungodly people, for it is after their nature; but as for us, let us have none of it. I should as soon expect to see the archangel Gabriel feeding out of a hog's trough as to see one who is a joint-heir with Christ finding his pleasure in books that are half lewd and the other half absurd. Hang a scarlet line over your library door as well as everywhere else.

So let it be with all amusements. There are some amusements that we cannot say are absolutely bad in themselves, but they lead to evil. They go up to the edge of the precipice, and there are many who only need to get so far and they are sure to fall over. Besides, they make the Christian so like the worldling that nobody could tell which is which. Now, tie the scarlet line up. I would do so even as to what pictures I would hang up in my house. I am often sad to see, especially in the houses of the poor, Roman Catholic pictures exhibited on the walls, because they happen to be rather pretty and very cheap. Popish publishers have very cleverly managed to

get up pictures of the Virgin, and the lying fable of her assumption to heaven and all sorts of legends of saints and saintesses; and being brightly coloured, and sold very much under price, these vile things have been introduced into thousands of houses. I have seen, to my horror, a picture of God the Father represented as an old man, a conception almost too hideous to mention, yet the picture is hung up in the cottages of England; whereas the Lord has declared that we should make no image of him, or represent him in any way, and the attempt is blasphemous. If you have a bad picture, no matter how good a work of art it is, burn it; and if you have a bad book, no matter how much it may be worth, do not sell it for somebody else to read, tear it in pieces.

Let the Christian hang up the scarlet line, and make certain that nobody shall be debauched in mind or body by anything that he tolerates in his house. I may seem to be too severe; but if my Master were to speak out of heaven, he would not rebuke that as a sin on my part; far rather would he say that we need to be much more precise and decided about evil things.

Well, you shall do what you please, you have your own liberty; but, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," and the blood-red line shall be in my window. My father's father, do I not remember how, when I was a child, I used to hear his prayers for my father and for me? Well do I remember my father's conversion in answer to my grandfather's prayers. And my father, can I ever forget how he wrestled for us at the mercy-seat; and God forbid it should happen that in my son's house, in years to come, there should be no altar to my God! I would sooner be without a tent for myself than without an altar for the Lord. Wherever we are, we must hang up the scarlet line. We cannot expect a blessing if we do not. Of course, I am not speaking to those who are not fathers or heads of households. If they are servants, they cannot help what is done in the house. If they are underlings who have not the power, they cannot arrange as they would; but I am speaking to those who fear the Lord, and can do it. Do, beloved, dedicate your house to God from the garret to the cellar. Let there be nothing even in the cellar which you would be ashamed for Jesus Christ to see. Let there be nothing about the house but what shall be so ordered that, if your Lord should come, you could open your door, and say, "Come and welcome, Master, there is nothing here that thy servant desires to conceal."

Believe in Jesus, O ye who know him not; and ye who know him, practise what you know; and God bless you! Amen and Amen.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

21. According to your words so be it. I readily agree to the terms; they are reasonable, and I have nothing to say against them. And she bound the scarlet line in the window. Probably not immediately, for fear of exciting suspicion, but in season to avail herself of the benefit of it.

Joshua 2:22 They departed and came to the hill country, and remained there for three days until the pursuers returned. Now the pursuers had sought them all along the road, but had not found them.

- **but had not found them** 1Sa 19:10-12 2Sa 17:20 Ps 32:6,7
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

They departed and came to the hill country, and remained there for three days until the pursuers returned - The two spies do exactly as Rahab had instructed. Clearly they trusted her with their lives.

Now the pursuers had sought them all along the road, but had not found them - The king's men would have been searching the most logical route of escape which would have been along the road to the Jordan River.

Campbell an interesting note - "Scarcely a half-mile west of Jericho are limestone cliffs about 1,500 feet high, honeycombed with caves. Here the spies hid (in the hills) for three days (cf. Joshua 1:11) until the soldiers of Jericho gave up the hunt. Then under cover of darkness the spies swam back across the Jordan (**ED: THEY POSSIBLY COULD HAVE GONE ACROSS A 'FORD'** - [SEE NOTE](#) ON Joshua 2:7), made their way quickly to the camp at Shittim (cf. Joshua 2:1), ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#) or [Here](#))

Blaikie on three days - A little explanation is needed respecting the time when Joshua said the Jordan must be crossed – **“within three days.”** If the narrative of the first two chapters be taken in chronological order, more than three days must have elapsed between the issuing of this order and the crossing of the river, because it is expressly stated that the two spies who were sent to examine Jericho hid themselves for three days in the mountains, and thereafter recrossed the Jordan and returned to Joshua (Joshua 2:22). But it is quite in accordance with the practice of Scripture narrative to introduce an episode out of its chronological place so that it may not break up the main record. It is now generally held that the spies were sent off before Joshua issued this order to the people, because it is not likely that he would have committed himself to a particular day before he got the information which he expected the spies to bring. ([Joshua 2 The Spies in Jericho](#))

Matthew Henry Concise Comments - Verses 22-24. The report the spies brought was encouraging. All the people of the country faint because of Israel; they have neither wisdom to yield, nor courage to fight. Those terrors of conscience, and that sense of Divine wrath, which dismay the ungodly, but bring not to repentance, are fearful forebodings of approaching destruction. But grace yet abounds to the chief of sinners. Let them, without delay, flee to Christ, and all shall be well.

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

22. Abode there three days. Not three entire days, but one whole day and part of two others. They were sent out on the sixth day of the month Nisan, and escaped from Jericho the same night. The seventh day they spent in the mountains. On the eighth they returned to the camp. These three days are reckoned in the same manner as the three days of our Lord's burial. Matt. 27:64.

Joshua 2:23 Then the two men returned and came down from the hill country and crossed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they related to him all that had happened to them.

- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then - **Then** is an expression of time which should always draw our attention. It will force us to examine the **context** and discern what is the progression of events in a text. In context this is after the spies had remained in the hill country for 3 days and after they had crossed back over the Jordan river to meet Joshua at Shittim.

The two men returned and came down from the hill country and crossed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they related to him all that had happened to them - The fact that the spies report to Joshua and not to all of Israel (as in Numbers 13-14) indicates that this had been a "top secret" mission by Joshua who wanted to avoid any chance of a Kadesh-Barnea debacle of doubt and disbelief. The hill country is most likely a reference to the mountainous terrain, with many caves, west of Jericho, which would have been the direction opposite where the search had been concentrated.

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23. Passed over. Over Jordan.

Told him all things that befell them. Heb. 'all things that found them.' They probably made their report to Joshua alone, or to him in company with the elders, without whose concurrence no matter of importance seems to have been concerted or undertaken.

Joshua 2:24 They said to Joshua, "Surely the LORD has given all the land into our hands; moreover, all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us."

- **Surely the LORD has given all the land into our hands** Jos 1:8 21:44,45 Ex 23:31 Nu 13:32,33 Pr 25:13
- **all the inhabitants:** Jos 2:9-11 Ps 48:5,6 Rev 6:16,17
- **have melted away before us** Jos 2:9,11 5:1 Ex 15:15
- [Joshua 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

LXE (English of the Septuagint) And they said to Joshua, The Lord has delivered all the land into our power, and all the inhabitants of that land **tremble** (perfect tense = this was their state; Greek = katapthesso: 3SPA1: crouch down : all uses in Septuagint: Jos 2:24, Pr 28:14,29:9,30:30) because of us.

SPIES' REPORT AFFIRMS GOD WOULD GIVE THEM THE LAND

They said to Joshua, "Surely the LORD has given all the land into our hands- The spies had heard God's promise of the land but now their faith was undergirded by facts, the facts including one pagan's (Rahab) confidence that Yahweh had indeed given Israel the land.

Moreover, all the inhabitants of the land have melted away ([mug](#)) before us - This would have been great news for Joshua for

there is nothing more deadly in an army than fear. It is the antithesis of being strong and courageous! This news would have strengthened Joshua's faith that Yahweh would surely make good on His promise.

Contrast the report of the two spies with that of the majority of the 12 sent out from Kadesh-Barnea (interesting that Joshua did not send out 12 spies!!!)

But the men (10 SPIES) who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." (Num. 13:31+)

William MacDonald sums up Rahab the harlot - Rahab's "works" and not her "words" justified her (Jas. 2:25). The Bible does not commend her deceit (vv. 4, 5) but it does commend her faith (Heb. 11:31). James also calls her deed a work of faith (Jas. 2:25). She risked her life to save the lives of the spies because she believed in the power and sovereignty of their God. So in our Lord's day some outside the commonwealth of Israel showed more faith than those who were eyewitnesses of His glory (Luke 7:2-9). Great faith, wherever it is found, is always rewarded (see chap. 6), for it is pleasing to God (Heb. 11:6). ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Guzik - There was another purpose at work in sending the spies: to save Rahab. In this, we see the extent God goes to in bringing one woman and her father's house to salvation—Someone seemingly "impossible" to save.. You may know some that seem "impossible" to save, but God's hand is not short to save people like Rahab, and He can work in amazing ways to bring salvation.

Irving Jensen - An important lesson for Christian living derived from this chapter of Joshua concerns the Christian's knowing the enemy. Trust in God's help for Christlike living does not preclude being forewarned of the tactics of Satan and being alert to this one who goes about seeking whom he may devour, as he works through such destroyers as lust, pride, disobedience, doubt, discouragement, and neglect. Just as the demons despaired in the presence of Jesus, enemies which need to be driven from the Christian's life will melt for fear, and thus be conquerable, when they see God as Lord of the Christian's heart leading His child to victory by faith. It behooves the Christian thus to live daily following God his Lord. ([Rest-Land Won -- Everyman's Bible Commentaries](#))

George Bush - [Notes Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua - Chapter 2](#)

24. Do faint because of us. Heb. 'are melted before our faces.' From this they drew the assured conclusion, that God was about to deliver the country into their hands. Those that were then deprived of their courage, would soon be deprived of their possessions. 'Sinners' frights are sometimes sure presages of their fall.'—Henry.

C H Spurgeon - **Rahab's Faith** (or listen to the audio [Rahab's Faith](#))

"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."—Hebrews 11:31

In almost every capital of Europe there are varieties of triumphal arches or columns, upon which are recorded the valiant deeds of the country's generals, its emperors, or its monarchs. You will find, in one case, the thousand battles of a Napoleon recorded, and in another, you find the victories of a Nelson pictured. It seems, therefore, but right, that faith, which is the mightiest of the mighty, should have a pillar raised to its honor, upon which its valiant deeds should be recorded. The apostle Paul undertook to raise the structure, and he erected a most magnificent pillar in the chapter before us. It recites the victories of faith. It begins with one triumph of faith, and then proceeds to others. We have, in one place, faith triumphing over death; Enoch entered not the gates of hades, but reached heaven by another road from that which is usual to men. We have faith, in another place, wresting with time; Noah, warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, wrestled with time, which placed his deluge a hundred and twenty years away; and yet, in the confidence of faith, he believed against all rational expectation, against all probability, and his faith was more than a match for probability and time too. We have faith triumphing over infirmity—when Abraham begetteth a son in his old age. And then we have faith triumphing over natural affection, as we see Abraham climbing to the top of the hill and raising the knife to slay his only and beloved son at the command of God. We see faith, again, entering the lists with the infirmities of old age and the pains of the last struggle, as we read, "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff." Then we have faith combating the allurements of a wealthy court. "By faith Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." We see faith dauntless in courage when Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, and equally patient in suffering when he endured as seeing him who is invisible. We have faith dividing seas, and casting down strong walls. And then, as though the greatest victory should be recorded last, we have faith entering the lists with sin, holding a tournament with iniquity, and coming off more than a conqueror. "Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." That this woman was no mere hostess, but a real harlot, I have abundantly proved to every candid hearer while reading the chapter. I am persuaded that nothing but a spirit of distaste for free grace would ever have led any commentator to deny her sin.

I do think this triumph of faith over sin is not the least here recorded, but that if there be any superiority ascribable to any one of faith's exploits, this is, in some sense, the greatest of all. What! faith, didst thou fight with hideous lust? What! wouldst thou struggle with the fiery passion which sendeth forth flame from human breasts? What! wouldst thou touch with thy hallowed fingers foul and bestial debauchery? "Yea," says faith, "I did encounter this abomination of iniquity; I delivered this woman from the loathsome chambers of vice, the wily snares of enchantment, and the fearful penalty of transgression; yea, I brought her off saved and rescued, gave her purity of heart, and renewed in her the beauty of holiness; and now her name shall be recorded in the roll of my triumphs as a woman full of sin, yet saved by faith."

I shall have some things to say this morning concerning this notable victory of faith over sin, such as I think will lead you to see that this was indeed a super-eminent triumph of faith. I will make my divisions alliterative, that you may recollect them. This woman's faith was saving faith, singular faith, stable faith, self-denying faith, sympathising faith, and sanctifying faith. Let no one run away, when I shall have expounded the first point, and miss the rest, for you can not apprehend the whole power of her faith unless you remember each of those particulars I am about to mention.

I. In the first place, this woman's faith was SAVING FAITH

All the other persons mentioned here were doubtless saved by faith; but I do not find it specially remarked concerning any of them that they perished not through their faith; while it is particularly said of this woman, that she was delivered amid the general destruction of Jericho purely and only through her faith. And, without doubt, her salvation was not merely of a temporal nature, not merely a deliverance of her body from the sword, but redemption of her soul from hell. Oh! what a mighty thing faith is, when it saves the soul from going down to the pit! So mighty is the ever-rushing torrent of sin, that no arm but that which is as strong as Deity can ever stop the sinner from being hurried down to the gulf of black despair, and, when nearing that gulf, so impetuous is the torrent of divine wrath, that nothing can snatch the soul from perdition but an atonement which is as divine as God himself. Yet faith is the instrument of accomplishing the whole work. It delivers the sinner from the stream of sin, and so, laying hold upon the omnipotence of the Spirit, it rescues him from that great whirlpool of destruction into which his soul was being hurried. What a great thing it is to save a soul! You can never know how great it is unless you have stood in the capacity of a saviour to other men. Yon heroic man who, yesterday, when the house was burning, climbed the creaking stair-case, and, almost suffocated by the smoke, entered an upper chamber, snatched a babe from its bed and a woman from the window, bore them both down in his arms, and saved them at the peril of his own life, he can tell you what a great thing it is to save a fellow-creature. Yon noble-hearted youth who, yesterday, sprang into the river, at the hazard of himself, and snatched a drowning man from death, he felt, when he stood upon the shore, what a great thing it was to save life. Ah! but you cannot tell what a great thing it is to save a soul. It is only our Lord Jesus Christ who can tell you that, for he is the only one who has ever been the Saviour of sinners. And remember, you can only know how great a thing faith is by knowing the infinite value of the salvation of a soul. "Now, by faith, the harlot Rahab was delivered." That she was really saved in a gospel sense as well as temporally, seems to me to be proved from her reception of the spies which was an emblem of the entrance of the word into her heart, and her hanging out of the scarlet thread was an evidence of faith, not inaptly picturing faith in the blood of Jesus the Redeemer. But who can measure the length and breadth of that word—salvation. Ah! it was a mighty deed which faith accomplished when he bore her off in safety. Poor sinner! take comfort. The same faith which saved Rahab can save thee. Art thou literally one of Rahab's sisters in guilt? She was saved, and so mayest thou be, if God shall grant thee repentance. Woman! art thou loathsome to thyself? Dost thou stand at this moment in this assembly, and say, "I am ashamed to be here; I know I have no right to stand among people who are chaste and honest?" I bid thee still remain, yea, come again and make this thy Sabbath house of prayer. Thou art no intruder! Thou art welcome! For thou hast a sacred right to the courts of mercy. Thou hast a sacred right; for here sinners are invited, and thou art such. Believe in Christ, and thou, like Rahab, shalt not perish with the disobedient, but even thou shalt be saved.

And now there is some gentleman in the audience who says, "There's a gospel for you; it is a kind of sanctuary for wicked men, unto which the worst of people may run and be saved." Yes, that is the stale objection which Celsus used against Origen in his discussion. "But," said Origen, "it is true, Celsus, that Christ's gospel is a sanctuary for thieves, robbers, murderers, and harlots. But know this, it is not a sanctuary merely, it is an hospital too; for it heals their sins, delivers them from their diseases, and they are not afterwards what they were before they received the gospel." I ask no man to-day to come to Christ, and then continue his sins. If so, I should ask him to do an absurdity. As well might I talk of delivering a Prometheus, while his chains are allowed to remain upon him and bind him to his rock. It cannot be. Christ taketh away the vulture from the conscience, but he taketh away the chains too, and maketh the man wholly free when he doeth it all. Yet, we repeat it again, the chief of sinners are as welcome to Christ as the best of saints. The fountain filled with blood was opened for black ones; the robe of Christ was woven for naked ones; the balm of Calvary was compounded for sick ones; life came into the world to raise the dead. And oh! ye perishing and guilty souls, may God give you Rahab's faith, and you shall have this salvation, and shall with her stand yonder, where the white-robed spotless hosts sing unending hallelujah to God and the Lamb.

II. But mark, Rahab's faith was a SINGULAR FAITH.

The city of Jericho was about to be attacked; within its walls there were hosts of people of all classes and characters, and they knew right well that if their city should be sacked and stormed they would all be put to death; but yet, strange to say, there was not one of them who repented of sin, or who even asked for mercy, except this woman who had been a harlot. She, and she alone was delivered, a solitary one among a multitude. Now, have you ever felt that it is a very hard thing to have a singular faith? It is the easiest thing in the world to believe as every body else believes, but the difficulty is to believe a thing alone, when no one else thinks as you think; to be the solitary champion of a righteous cause when the enemy mustereth his thousands to the battle. Now, this was the faith of Rahab. She had not one who felt as she did, who could enter into her feelings and realize the value of her faith. She stood alone. Oh! it is a noble thing to be the lonely follower of despised truth. There be some who could tell you a tale of standing up alone. There have been days when the world poured continually a river of infamy and calumny upon them, but they stemmed the torrent, and, by continued grace, made strong in weakness, they held their own until the current turned, and they, in their success, were praised and applauded by the very men who sneered before. Then did the world accord them the name of "great." But where lay their greatness? Why, in this, that they stood as firm in the storm as they stood in the calm—that they were as content to serve God alone as they were to run by fifties. To be good we must be singular. Christians must swim against the stream. Dead fish always float down the stream, but the living fish forces its way against the current. Now, worldly religious men will go just as every body else goes. That is nothing. The thing is to stand alone. Like Elijah, when he said, "I only am left and they seek my life;" to feel in one's self that we believe as firmly as if a thousand witnesses stood up by our side. Oh there is no great right in a man, no strong-minded right, unless he dares to be singular. Why, the most of you are as afraid as you ever can be to go out of the fashions, and you spend more money than you ought because you think you must be respectable. You dare not move in opposition to your brethren and sisters in the circle in which you move; and therefore you involve yourselves in difficulties. You are blindfolded by the rich fabric of fashion, and therefore many a wrong thing is tolerated because it is customary. But a strong-minded man is one who does not try to be singular, but who dares to be singular, when he knows that to be singular is to be right. Now, Rahab's faith, sinner as she was, had this glory, this crown about its head, that she stood alone, faithful among the faithless found."

And why should not God vouchsafe the same faith to thee, my poor, sinning, but contrite hearer? You live in a back street, in a house which contains none but Sabbath breakers, and irreligious men and women. But if you have grace in your heart you will dare to do right. You belong to an infidel club; if you should make them a speech after your own conscience, they would hiss you; and if you forsook their company, they would persecute you. Go and try them. Dare them. See, whether you can do it; for if you are afraid of men, you are taken in a snare which may prove your grief and is now your sin. Mark you, the chief of sinners can make the most daring of saints; the worst men in the devil's army, when they are converted, make the truest soldiers for Jesus. The forlorn hope of Christendom has generally been led by men who have proved the high efficacy of grace to an eminent degree by having been saved from the deepest sins. Go on, and the Lord give you that high and singular faith!

III. Furthermore, this woman's faith was A STABLE FAITH, which stood firm in the midst of trouble,

I have heard of a church clergyman who was once waited upon by his church warden, after a long time of drought, and was requested to put up the prayer for rain. "Well," said he, "my good man, I will offer it, but it's not a bit of use while the wind is in the east, I'm sure." There are many who have that kind of faith: they believe just so far as probabilities go with them, but when the promise and the probability part, then they follow the probability and part with the promise. They say, "The thing is likely, therefore I believe it." But that is no faith, it is sight. True faith exclaims, "The thing is unlikely, yet I believe it." This is real faith. Faith is to say, that "Mountains, when in darkness hidden, are as real as in day." Faith is to look through that cloud, not with the eye of sight, which seeth nought, but with the eye of faith, which seeth every thing, and to say, "I trust him when I can not trace him; I tread the sea as firmly as I would the rock; I walk as securely in the tempest as in the sunshine, and lay myself to rest upon the surging billows of the ocean as contentedly as upon my bed." The faith of Rahab was the right sort of faith, for it was firm and enduring.

I will just have a little talk with Rahab this morning, as I suppose old Unbelief did commune with her. Now, my good woman, don't you see the absurdity of this thing? Why, the people of Israel are on the other side of Jordan, and there is no bridge: how are they to get over? Of course they must go up higher toward the fords; and then Jericho will be for a long time secure. They will take other cities before coming to Jericho; and, besides, the Canaanites are mighty, and the Israelites are only a parcel of slaves; they will soon be cut in pieces, and there will be an end of them; therefore, do not harbor these spies. Why put your life in jeopardy for such an improbability? "Ah," says she, "I do not care about the Jordan; my faith can believe across the Jordan, or else it were only a dry-land faith." By-and-by, they march through the Jordan dry shod, and then Faith gets firmer confidence. "Ah!" says she, secretly within herself, what she would willingly have said to her neighbors, "Will you not now believe? will you not now sue for mercy?" "No," they say; "the walls of Jericho are strong; can the feeble host resist us? And lo on the morrow the troops are out, and what do they do? They simply blow a number of rams' horns; her neighbors say, "Why, Rahab, you do not mean to say you believe now? They are mad." The people just go round the city, and all hold their tongues, except the few priests blowing rams' horns. "Why, it is ridiculous. It were quite a new thing in warfare to hear of men taking a city by blowing rams' horns." That was the first day; probably the next day Rahab thought they would come with scaling-ladders and mount the walls; but no, rams' horns again, up to the seventh day; and this woman kept the scarlet thread in the window all the time, kept her father and mother, and brothers and sisters in the

house, and would not let them go out; and on the seventh day, when the people made a great shout, the wall of the city fell flat to the ground; but her faith overcame her womanly timidity, and she remained within, although the wall was tumbling to the ground. Rahab's house stood alone upon the wall, a solitary fragment amid a universal wreck, and she and her household were all saved. Now would you have thought that such a rich plant would grow in such poor soil—that strong faith could grow in such a sinful heart as that of Rahab? Ah! but here it is that God exercises his great husbandry. "My Father is the husbandman," said Christ. Any husbandman can get a good crop out of good soil; but God is the husbandman who can grow cedars on rocks, who can not only put the hyssop upon the wall, but put the oak there too, and make the greatest faith spring up in the most unlikely position. All glory to his grace! the great sinner may become great in faith. "Be of good cheer, then, sinner! If Christ should make thee repent, thou hast no need to think that thou shalt be the least in the family. Oh! no, thy name may yet be written among the mightiest of the mighty, and thou mayest stand as a memorable and triumphant instance of the power of faith.

IV. This woman's faith was A SELF-DENYING FAITH.

She dared to risk her life for the sake of the spies. She knew that if they were found in her house she would be put to death; but though she was so weak as to do a sinful deed to preserve them, yet she was so strong that she would run the risk of being put to death to save these two men. It is something to be able to deny yourselves. An American once said, "I have got a good religion; it's the right sort of religion; I do not know that it costs me a cent a year; and yet I believe I am as truly a religious man as anybody." "Ah!" said one who heard it, "the Lord have mercy on your miserable stingy soul, for if you had been saved you would not have been content with a cent a year"—a halfpenny per annum! I hazard this assertion, that there is nothing in the faith of that man who does not exercise self-denial. If we never give any thing to Christ's cause, work for Christ, deny ourselves for Christ, the root of the matter is not in us. I might call some of you hypocrites: you sing,

"And if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I could give him all."

Yes, but you would not, though; you know better than that, for you do not, as it is, give all, no, nor yet half, nor yet the thousandth part. I suppose you think you are poor yourselves, though you have got some thousand pounds odd a year, and so you keep it yourself, under the notion that "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." I don't know how else it is you make your religion square with itself, and be at all consistent. This woman said, "If I must die for these men, I will; I am prepared, bad name as I have, to have a worse name still; as a traitor to my country I am prepared to be handed down to infamy, if it be necessary, for having betrayed my country in taking in these spies, for I know it is God's will it should be done, and do it I will at every hazard. "O men and brethren, trust not your faith, unless it has self-denial with it. Faith and self-denial, like the Siamese twins, are born together, and must live together, and the food that nourisheth one must nourish both. But this woman, poor sinner as she was, would deny herself. She brought her life, even as that other woman, who was a sinner, brought the alabaster box of precious ointment, and broke it on the head of Christ.

V. Not to detain you too long, another point very briefly. This woman's faith was A SYMPATHISING FAITH.

She did not believe for herself only; she desired mercy for her relations, Said she, "I want to be saved, but that very desire makes me want to have my father saved, and my mother saved, and my brother saved, and my sister saved." I know a man who walks seven miles every Sabbath to hear the gospel preached in a certain place—a place where they preach the gospel. You know that very particular, superfine sort—the gospel, a gospel, the spirit of which consists in bad temper, carnal security, arrogance, and a seared conscience. But this man was one day met by a friend, who said to him, "Where is your wife?" "Wife?" said he to him. "What! does she not come with you?" "Oh, no," said the man; "she never goes anywhere." "Well, but," said he, "don't you try to get her to go, and the children?" "No; the fact of it is, I think, if I look to myself that is quite enough." "Well," said the other, "and you believe that you are God's elect, do you?" "Yes." "Well, then," said the other, "I don't think you are, because you are worse than a heathen man and a publican, for you don't care for your own household; therefore I don't think you give much evidence of being God's elect, for they love their fellow-creatures." So sure as our faith is real, it will want to bring others in. You will say, "You want to make proselytes." Yes; and you will reply, that Christ said to the Pharisees, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte." Yes, and Christ did not find fault with them for doing so; what he found fault with them for was this—"When ye have found him ye make him tenfold more the child of hell than yourselves."

The spirit of proselyting is the spirit of Christianity, and we ought to be desirous of possessing it. If any man will say, "I believe such and such a thing is true, but I do not wish any one else to believe it, I will tell you, it is a lie; he does not believe it, for it is impossible, heartily and really to believe a thing, without desiring to make others believe the same. And I am sure of this, moreover, it is impossible to know the value of salvation without desiring to see others brought in. Said that renowned preacher, Whitefield, "As soon as I was converted, I wanted to be the means of the conversion of all that I had ever known. There were a number of young

men that I had played cards with, that I had sinned with, and transgressed with: the first thing I did was, to go to their houses to see what I could do for their salvation, nor could I rest until I had the pleasure of seeing many of them brought to the Saviour." This is a first-fruit of the Spirit. It is a kind of instinct in a young Christian. He must have other people feel what he feels. Says one young man, in writing to me this week, "I have been praying for my fellow-clerk in the office; I have desired that he might be brought to the Saviour, but at present there is no answer to my prayers." Do not give a penny for that man's piety which will not spread itself. Unless we desire others to taste the benefits we have enjoyed, we are either inhuman monsters or outrageous hypocrites; I think the last is most likely. But this woman was so strong in faith that all her family were saved from destruction. Young woman! you have a father, and he hates the Saviour. O! pray for him. Mother! you have a son: he scoffs at Christ. Cry out to God for him. Ay, my friends—young people like myself—we little know what we owe to the prayers of our parents. I feel that I shall never be able sufficiently to bless God for a praying mother. I thought it was a great nuisance to be had in at such a time to pray, and more especially to be made to cry, as my mother used to make me cry. I would have laughed at the idea of any body else talking to me about these things; but when she prayed, and said, "Lord, save my son Charles," and then was overcome, and could not get any further for crying, you could not help crying too; you could not help feeling; it was of no use trying to stand against it. Ah! and there you are young man! Your mother is dying, and one thing which makes her death-bed bitter is, that you scoff God and hate Christ. Oh! it is the last stage of impiety, when a man can think lightly of a mother's feelings. I would hope there are none such here, but that those of you who have been so blessed, as to have been begotten and brought forth by pious men and women may take this into consideration—that to perish with a mother's prayers is to perish fearfully; for if a mother's prayers do not bring us to Christ, they are like drops of oil dropped into the flames of hell that will make them burn more fiercely upon the soul for ever and ever. Take heed of rushing to perdition over your mother's prayers!

There is an old woman weeping—do you know why? I believe she has sons too, and she loves them. I met with a little incident in company, the other day, after preaching. There was a little boy at the corner of the table, and his father asked him, "Why does your father love you, John?" Said the dear little lad, very prettily, "Because I'm a good boy." "Yes," said the father, "he would not love you if you were not a good boy." I turned to the good father and remarked that I was not quite sure about the truth of the last remark, for I believed he would love him if he were ever so bad. "Well," he said, "I think I should." And said a minister at the table, "I had an instance of that yesterday. I stepped into the house of a woman who had a son transported for life, and she was as full of her son Richard as if he had been prime minister, or had been her most faithful and dutiful son." Well, young man, will you kick against love like that—love that will bear your kicks, and will not turn round against you, but love you straight on still? But perhaps that woman—I saw her weep just now—had a mother, who has gone long ago, and she was married to a brutal husband, and at last left a poor widow; she calls to mind the days of her childhood, when the big Bible was brought out and read around the hearth, and "Our Father which art in heaven" was their nightly prayer. Now, perhaps, God is beginning some good thing in her heart. O! that he would bring her now, though seventy years of age, to love the Saviour! Then would she have the beginning of life over again in her last days, which will be made her best days.

VI. One more head, and then we have done. Rahab's faith was a SANCTIFYING FAITH.

Did Rahab continue a harlot after she had faith? No, no, she did not. I do not believe she was a harlot at the time the men went to her house, though the name still stuck to her, as such ill names will; but I am sure she was not afterward, for Salmon the prince of Judah married her, and her name is put down among the ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ. She became after that a woman eminent for piety walking in the fear of God. Now, you may have a dead faith which will ruin your soul. The faith that will save you is a faith which sanctifies. "Ah!" says the drunkard, "I like the gospel, sir; I believe in Christ;" then he will go over to the Blue Lion to-night, and get drunk. Sir, that is not the believing in Christ that is of any use. "Yes," says another, "I believe in Christ;" and when he gets outside he will begin to talk lightly, frothy words, perhaps lascivious ones, and sin as before. Sir, you speak falsely; you do not believe in Christ. That faith which saves the soul is a real faith, and a real faith sanctifies men. It makes them say, "Lord, thou hast forgiven me my sins; I will sin no more. Thou hast been so merciful to me, I will renounce my guilt; so kindly hast thou treated me, so lovingly hast thou embraced me, Lord, I will serve thee till I die; and if thou wilt give me grace, and help me so to be, I will be as holy as thou art." You cannot have faith, and yet live in sin. To believe is to be holy. The two things must go together. That faith is a dead faith, a corrupt faith, which lives in sin that grace may abound. Rahab was a sanctified woman. O that God might sanctify some that are here! The world has been trying all manner of processes to reform men: there is but one thing that ever will reform them, and that is, faith in the preached gospel. But in this age preaching is much despised. You read the newspaper you read the book; you hear the lecturer; you sit and listen to the pretty essayist; but where is the preacher? Preaching is not taking out a manuscript sermon, asking God to direct your heart, and then reading pages prepared beforehand. That is reading—not preaching. There is a good tale told of an old man whose minister used to read. The minister called to see him, and said, "What are you doing John?" "Why, I'm prophesying, sir." "Prophesying; how is that? You mean you are reading the prophecies?" "No, I don't; I'm prophesying; for you read preaching, and call it preaching, and I read prophecies, and, on the same rule, that is prophesying." And the man was not far from right. We want to have more outspoken, downright utterances of truth and appeals to the conscience, and until we get these, we shall never see any very great and lasting reforms. But by the preaching of God's word, foolishness though it seem to some, harlots are reformed, thieves are made honest, and the worst of men brought to the Saviour. Again let me affectionately give

the invitation to the vilest of men, if so they feel themselves to be,

"Come, ye needy, come and welcome,
God's fine bounty glorify:
True belief and true repentance—
Every grace that brings us nigh—
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy."

Your sins will be forgiven, your transgressions cast away, and you shall henceforth go and sin no more, God having renewed you, and he will keep you even to the end. May God give his blessing, for Jesus sake! Amen.

David Jeremiah - [Heroes of the Faith](#) RAHAB LIVING ON THE WALL OF JERICHO (JOSHUA 2)

Joshua was certainly a model of faith for us today in many respects. But our second hero in the story of Jericho is a model of a different sort. Compared to Joshua, Rahab knew next to nothing about the God of Israel. Yet she stepped out in faith on the little she knew—and found herself in God's Hall of Faith.

Joshua 2 tells us Rahab was a citizen of Jericho, a woman who made her living as a harlot (Joshua 2:1). She had met two of Joshua's spies whom he sent into the city to check it out prior to the conquest. The spies were discovered and Rahab hid them in her house until they could escape. But that's not the reason she is noted in Hebrews 11:31.

The Confession of Faith (Joshua 2:8–11)

What you may not know about Rahab is that God had been working in her heart long before Joshua ever came near the city. Her amazing confession of faith takes place on the roof of her house where she had hidden the spies. Here is a woman who has had no contact with Israel or her God, and yet just on the basis of the rumors through the grapevine she has a sense that the God of these invading people is the one and true God—the God of heaven and earth. She had heard about Israel's passage through the Red Sea, the defeat of the Amorites, Sihon and Og. We might wonder how she possibly knew so much about Israel before they ever arrived in Canaan. Remember—she was a prostitute. She had travelers coming in and out of her house all the time who talked about this nation of a couple million people who had come out of Egypt 40 years before and who had their eyes fixed on Canaan as the place they were going to live. Maybe it was just fear, the desire to stay alive. But somehow the word about the works of the God of Israel had changed her heart.

The Covenant of Her Faith (Joshua 2:12–14; 17–21)

Rahab made a covenant with the two spies (verse 12). She agreed to protect them if, when Joshua returned with his army, she and her household would be protected. The spies agreed, and a covenant was made between them. Because her house was located on the wall of the city, the spies told her to hang a scarlet cord from her window so they would know which house was hers. That red cord became like the red blood of the Passover lamb in Egypt which protected the inhabitants from death. Their covenant was sealed, and the spies made it safely back to Israel's camp.

The Completion of Her Faith (Joshua 6:17, 22–23, 25)

Joshua was told of the covenant and agreed to keep Rahab and her family safe (verse 17). Out of that entire city, the lone family of Rahab was going to be saved—by her faith. Do you see now why Rahab was included in the Hall of Faith? The ratio of her faith to her knowledge would put many modern believers to shame! She knew practically nothing and yet managed to save herself and her household from destruction. All it took was a few insights into the power and character of the God of Israel for her to know that He was the One who could save her. Compare her situation with ours. We are overflowing with knowledge about the faithfulness of God and yet find it hard to trust Him in our own experiences of spiritual battle.

When Rahab came out of pagan life in Jericho she was assimilated into the nation of Israel and married a man named Salmon. We discover in Matthew 1:5–6 that Salmon and Rahab were the parents of Boaz, who fathered Obed, who fathered Jesse, who fathered David the king of Israel. And from the loins of David of Israel came the line from which the Lord Jesus Christ received His royal right to rule over Israel as king. So Rahab the harlot, by faith, finds herself in the lineage of the Savior of the world.

What better place to end our studies of God's Hall of Faith than with the life of Rahab, a woman who stepped out in faith with the little she knew. May God give you, and me, the conviction to do the same. May we someday meet in God's eternal Hall of Faith.

It must have been very evident to Joshua that the large and strong city of Jericho, which lay embosomed among its palm trees on the other side of the river, must be the first object of his operations on entering the land of Canaan. Very much depended upon the result of this initiatory step. Jericho was, for that age, a strongly walled town; and we have already had occasion to observe that the Israelites were considerably afraid of walled towns—though such as lay in plains, like this Jericho, were, doubtless, less formidable to them than such as were stationed upon the hills. It was obviously desirable, therefore, that, before commencing operations, they should endeavor to receive such information as might tend to their encouragement in this great enterprise. We cannot, indeed, question that the Hebrew host had been put in good heart by its victories on the east of the Jordan; but still they probably entertained, from the traditions of the spies, most exaggerated notions of the power of the proper nations of Canaan, and they very probably supposed those whom they had overcome on the east of the river to be less mighty than the ancient nations on the west. It was evidently under the influence of such considerations, and less for his own information than to give confidence to the people, that Joshua concluded to dispatch two men on the delicate and dangerous task of entering the city, and of bringing back a report of its condition. The expedition is full of curious and interesting indications of Eastern manners and usages—some of which well deserve to engage our attention.

Although it is likely that considerable vigilance was exercised in the presence of an enemy separated from the city by little more than the breadth of the river, yet the two spies succeeded in getting into the town. As there was no friend in the place to receive them, and as it might have been dangerous to go at once to a public khan or caravanserai, they went to lodge at the house of a woman named Rahab. They had not been there long, before an alarming intimation reached them that their presence, not only in the town, but in that very house, was known, and that their errand also was more than suspected; for messengers came from the king of Jericho requiring the woman to produce them. In modern Europe the officers of the government would have entered the house without wasting the precious time in parley. But formerly, as now, in the East, the privacy of a woman was respected, even to a degree that might be called superstitious; and no one will enter the house in which she lives, or the part of the house she occupies, until her consent has been obtained, if, indeed, such consent be ever demanded. In this case it was not asked. Rahab was required not to let the messengers in, but to bring out the foreigners she harbored. The keen-witted woman, gathering, from what the messengers said, who her guests were, at once determined to save them; for, from a consideration of the wonders the Lord had wrought for Israel, her confidence in their ultimate success was so strong that she concluded to take advantage of this opportunity, by laying the men under such obligations as would ensure the safety of herself and friends. She withdrew from the window, whence probably she had heard the messengers for a moment; and hurrying the spies to the flat roof of the house hid them under the stalks of flax which had been laid out there to dry, probably informing them at the moment, that the king's messengers were at the door inquiring for them. In this we see, what has not hitherto appeared, that the houses were at this time, as they still are, flat or terraced; and then as now, formed an important part of the economy of oriental life. This is the place where, in the cool of the day, the fresh air is breathed, by a people who never walk out expressly for air or exercise. Here they sleep during the nights of summer, when the interior apartments are too hot and sultry for refreshing repose, and when the coolness then enjoyed, enables the constitution to bear up against the heat of the day. These were especially important matters in the almost tropical climate of the plain of Jericho. Here, also, such matters as required to be dried by the heat of the sun are laid out in a situation which effectually protects them from depredation or even notice, and at the same time exposes them in the completest manner to the action of the solar heat.

The woman then returned to the messengers, and assured them, that although the two men had come to her house, they had not tarried till then. In the dusk, just before the time for shutting the town gate, they had departed. Whither they went she knew not, but they had gone so recently, that she thought they would be overtaken if vigorously pursued. The men believed her; for not only could there be no perceivable reason to them why she should seek to shelter such deadly foes—but the falsehood was ingeniously framed to deceive, for nothing could be more natural than that the men should take their departure at the time she indicated, when the shades of evening would allow them to pass out without any close inspection. Some have thought from this instance that gates were shut only in time of war—or when danger was apprehended from a foe: but it appears to us that gates were then—as at present in the East—always shut in the evening and opened in the morning, it being necessary even in times of peace, to guard against the night incursions of plunderers and beasts of prey. Not only are the gates in the East habitually thus closed in the evening—generally, as in this case, when it becomes dusk—but so rigidly is the keeping them closed enforced, that the guards themselves usually cannot open them to admit any persons without a special order from the governor of the place, which is not often obtained unless by persons of some consideration. Hence it not seldom happens, even in winter, that persons arriving too late are obliged to spend all the night outside the walls—and the apprehension of being shut out of the place to which they are going, makes all travellers push on briskly towards the close of day.

But what is to be said of Rahab's being so ready with a lie—declaring that the men were gone, when they were really in the house? That sense of truthfulness which is the growth of Christian culture, is shocked at an untruth so circumstantial—and we cannot allow the motive as an excuse, seeing that it is forbidden to do evil that, good may come. It has been urged that by her act she had taken part with the Israelites, and that what would have been done by them in regard to their enemies might be done by her—it being lawful to deceive an enemy in war, as was often done by good men among the Israelites. Without discussing this closely, and simply

observing, that the mere fact that the state of war renders “lawful” so many practices which the truth of Christian principle condemns, is one of the strongest arguments against war itself—we pass on to observe that among the ancient Heathen, as among those which still remain in the world, lying was scarcely regarded as a venial error, much less as a crime. There was no principle of truthfulness; and although men generally spoke truth where there was no benefit to gain or evil to avert by telling an untruth, as without this the common intercourse of social life could not be carried on—yet the slightest inducement was sufficient to drive them to the resort of a lie. An oath was obligatory—and for the most part a man might be believed as to what he affirmed on oath—but a mere word was but lightly regarded. It is observed by missionaries among the heathen, that so weak is the feeling of obligation as to the observance of strict veracity, that even apparently sincere converts have the greatest difficulty in freeing themselves from the habit of equivocation, and need continual watching and admonition in that respect. It is among the most important of the many social advantages which Christianity has conferred upon mankind, that to its teaching we owe the feeling—prevalent among all Christian nations—that a falsehood is a disgrace and a sin; and that a man is bound no less, religiously and morally, by his word than by his oath.

All this was unknown, however, to poor Rahab; who, having been brought up among a people so unprincipled as the Canaanites, had probably never heard that there was the least harm in lying—much less when an apparently good end was to be answered by it. These considerations may be fairly urged in extenuation of Rahab’s falsehood. God himself claims from us according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. In us, who have opportunities of better knowledge, untruthfulness must be judged by a different standard here and hereafter.

When all was safe, Rahab went to the risen, and relieved them from the flax. She told them that the people of the land were stricken with terror at the presence and known designs of the Hebrew host—having fully heard of all the marvellous deeds which has, been wrought in their behalf. She was perfectly assured that by the might of their God they must prevail—and in that confidence she exacted a pledge of safety for herself and for hers in consideration of the aid she had afforded. This was readily given by the men. She was to tie a scarlet cord which they gave her to a particular window of her house. This was to enable them to recognize the house; and they pledged themselves for the safety of all who might be in that house when the city should be taken. We have little doubt that the sign was chosen by the spies with some reference to their own passover solemnity, when the door-posts were sprinkled with blood, to denote that the destroying angel had passed by the doors so marked when the first-born of Egypt were slain.

Meanwhile the gates had been shut after the pursuers had gone, and they were probably guarded with unusual care to prevent the escape of the spies should they still be in the city. But the house of Rahab being situated upon the town wall, at a distance from the gate, she was enabled to let them down by a cord from one of the windows, in the very same manner as that in which Saul made his escape from Damascus. II Corinthians 11:33. They made their way to the wild mountains which border the plain of Jericho, as Rahab had advised; and when the pursuit after them had cooled, they returned to the camp. They felt they had discharged their mission; for the intelligence they brought as to the alarms of the Canaanites was in the highest degree encouraging to the people.

Rahab - Francis Schaeffer ([The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer](#))

In the last chapter we focused on the continuity of the national portion of the Abrahamic covenant as it flowed down to the time of Joshua and beyond. Is there anything in the crucial moment of history in which Joshua lived which can show us the continuity of the spiritual blessing? Indeed there is: Rahab the harlot.

The Spies’ Perspective

While the Israelites were camped at Shittim, Joshua sent two spies across the Jordan. “And they went, and came into an harlot’s house, named Rahab, and lodged there” (Josh. 2:1). Why did the two spies go to a harlot’s house? The answer is simple: they went where they could easily “get lost,” where they could find shelter with some degree of freedom. There is no place like a harlot’s house for people coming and going. There is no indication whatever that they went there for any immoral purpose; this simply does not exist in the story.

Rahab gave the spies two things. First, she gave them shelter. They were filled with thankfulness that she had hid them and saved their lives, not only because they escaped personally, but because her help made possible the success of their venture. Second, she spoke the words which provided the key to the spies’ report to Joshua:

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 [literally, melt] because of you. 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, who were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 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. (Josh. 2:9–11)

In this remarkable set of words Rahab verbalized the truth to these two spies. The spies came to a most unlikely place, and the words of this woman told them exactly what the situation was.

There was a parallel event in the life of Gideon. God told Gideon that Gideon would save Israel from the hand of the Midianites, and Gideon asked for two different signs to confirm this. After responding to Gideon's request, God gave him one more sign that he did not ask for. God told him to go down at night to the camp of the Midianites. So Gideon went down with his servant. Standing on the periphery of the camp, they heard two Midianites talking:

And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshiped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. (Judg. 7:13–15)

As with the two spies and Rahab, what Gideon heard was giving encouragement through the words of an enemy. This convinced him of the final outcome, thus enabling him to say with courage, "There is no question that we are going to be victorious." From the mouth of somebody on "the other side" came a verbalization that completely settled the situation.

The spies had real faith. For when they responded to Rahab's request, they told her that her life would be saved "when the Lord hath given us the land" (Josh. 2:14). Not if but when. These men understood that God's promises were going to stand sure. This was a complete contrast to the ten spies at the time of Moses.

Also a great contrast to the failure of thirty-eight years before was the reply the two men gave to Joshua: "Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us" (Josh. 2:24). This sounds almost exactly like what Joshua and Caleb had said. The two spies sent to Jericho were faithful, not just in the sense of having good eyes, but in the sense of believing the promises of God.

Rahab's Perspective

Rahab was a harlot in a heathen land. Some people have been embarrassed by this and have tried to tone it down, but it is impossible to do so. That is really what she was. It is the only thing the Hebrew word in Joshua 2:1 can mean.

When she had the men in her house, Rahab besought them in this way:

Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token; 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. And the men answered her, Our life for yours if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. Then she let them down by a cord through the window; for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned; and afterward may ye go your way. And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window by which thou didst let us down; and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed; and she bound the scarlet line in the window. (Josh. 2:12–21).

There is no mention here of husband or children. Those designated to be saved are of her "father's household." Verse 18 shows that none of her family lived with her. This is consistent with the word Scripture uses to describe her. Later, when Jericho was taken, who did the spies bring out? "Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren ... all her kindred ... Joshua saved Rahab, the harlot, alive, and her father's household" (Josh. 6:23, 25). We miss the whole point of the story, therefore, if we become embarrassed and soften it: Rahab was a harlot in a heathen land.

But Rahab had two things going for her. First, she had heard something propositional. She had heard what had happened in space-time history when the Hebrews came out of Egypt and when they had fought against Sihon and Og, two nearby powers.

Second, in her presence were two spies who represented to her the whole Israelite nation. This is one reason why it was important that the two men did not go to her because she was a harlot. To her they were representatives of God's people. And they did not waver in their faith before this woman (Josh. 2:14). What she had was the message and the tangible contact with two spies.

Surrounding Rahab, however, was a hostile and awesome environment: Jericho, the mighty fortress, with its great walls. Jericho had stood for hundreds of years; it was impregnable, or so its inhabitants thought. So, though Rahab had heard a propositional message and though she had the two spies standing before her, she was still surrounded by a monolithic mentality, an entire world-view. She

was pressured by a powerful city and an ancient culture continuing on in its normal life—eating, drinking, marrying and so forth. At that moment she could see nothing with her eyes which indicated it would fall.

What did Rahab do? In the midst of this tension, Rahab believed. This is the crux of the story. “I know that the LORD has given you the land,” she said. “The LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Josh. 2:9, 11). Her statement about God was universal and total.

How did she know that? We are not told. Often in Scripture we find that people knew things, though we are not told how they came to know them. But Rahab knew! And what she knew was totally against her culture. She believed in a new God, a God totally and diametrically opposed to the gods of Jericho, but a God above all other gods, a universal God. In the midst of the Canaanites, the Ammonites, the Amorites—in the midst of their horrible, polluted worship, laden with sex symbols and sex practices—Rahab affirmed a true theological proposition about who God really is.

Abraham in his day believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Joshua also made a personal choice: “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood [that is, on the other side of the Euphrates], or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15). Rahab stood in exactly the same position. Surrounded by those who worshiped the Canaanite and Amorite gods, she made her decision: “By an act of the will, on the basis of the knowledge that I have, I declare in faith that God is the God of Heaven above and the earth beneath. He is the universal God.”

Peter preached to the Jews on Pentecost that the covenant was fulfilled in the coming of Christ, but that each person had to believe individually. As Paul preached throughout the Roman Empire, non-Jews began to believe. At the time of Joshua, Rahab stood in the stream of the spiritual portion of the covenant as a believing non-Jew. She stood where the Gentiles stood in the New Testament when they first believed the gospel in Antioch. She stood exactly where most Christians stand today, for most of us are non-Jewish believers.

This non-Jew believed and passed from the kingdom of the Amorites to the kingdom of the Jews. But she did something much more profound than exchanging one human citizenship for another. She also passed from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God’s dear Son. The book of Hebrews makes a tremendous statement about Rahab, paralleling her to other heroes of the faith: “By faith the harlot, Rahab, perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Heb. 11:31). There were those who did not believe, but she did believe; so she did not perish. More than this, she became something that not all the Jews were, because, as we have seen, not all the Jews were spiritual Jews. Many who stood in the natural line of the covenant never partook of the spiritual blessings because they did not make Rahab’s choice. So curiously enough, she who had been a non-Jewish heathen suddenly became not only a part of the nation of Israel, but also a part of the true Israel. With one act of faith, she stepped into the nation and beyond many of the Jews themselves to become a member of spiritual Israel.

The Scarlet Cord

In Joshua 2 we also find the interesting story of the scarlet cord. This cord, on which Rahab let the spies escape from her house, was also to be the mark upon her house to show that she was different from all the rest. Joshua 2:21 says that the spies departed, and she hung the scarlet line in her window. It seems to me that this indicates that she did not want time to pass without that mark upon her house. So we can imagine her, after she let the spies down, pulling up the rope and tying it to her window.

In the preaching of the Christian Church, all the way back to Clement of Rome (perhaps earlier, but we do not know), this has been taken as a sign of the blood of Christ, the Lamb. One should not be dogmatic about it because the Bible does not explicitly make this connection; nevertheless, many in the Church have emphasized over the centuries that the scarlet cord was a mark of something beyond itself.

Because she placed this mark upon her house, she dwelt in safety. This clearly paralleled the Passover lamb. The Israelites killed the Passover lamb, put its blood on their houses, and then were perfectly safe as the angel of death passed over Egypt. The mark of the blood covered them and their households. The Passover lamb, of course, was looking forward to the coming Messiah. So there is, after all, a parallel between the cord and the blood of the Lamb.

We can imagine Rahab rushing out and gathering all her family into her house upon the city wall. We can imagine her going through the city and calling out, “Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! Come under the mark of the scarlet cord!” Lot did the same thing in Sodom, you remember, but without success. He went throughout the city trying to gather in his family, including his sons-in-law. But they refused and laughed at him; so they died in the city’s destruction. In the days of Noah, those who were gathered into the ark were safe. In Jericho, Rahab’s family, gathered in the house marked by the scarlet cord, were safe.

We see the spiritual element of the covenant blessing flowing on. When the children of Israel were about to leave Egypt, they were given the blood of the Passover lamb under which to be safe. When the people were about to enter the land, they were met by a

different, but parallel, sign—a red cord hanging from the window of a believer.

Faith in Action

The Bible expressly says that Rahab demonstrated her faith by her works. The spies did not take her away with them. She had to remain in the kingdom of the Amorites between the time when she declared her allegiance to the living God and the time when judgment fell. In Joshua 2 we are reminded forcefully that there was a king in Jericho; and if he had known what had occurred, undoubtedly he would have killed Rahab in the cruelest fashion he could have thought of. “And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house” (Josh. 2:3). Here was war—war between the king of Jericho and the king of the Jews; that is, between the king of Jericho and God.

In the book of James, Rahab is the only person paralleled to Abraham: “Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar?... In like manner also was not Rahab, the harlot, justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?” (Jas. 2:21, 25). To properly exegete the book of James, we need to understand that Abraham had faith, but it was a faith open to demonstration. In fact, it was demonstrated at a tremendous cost: he was willing to trust God and to offer his son. Rahab, too, had a faith that had teeth in it, structure to it, strength in it. She was willing to suffer loss to demonstrate that her faith was valid.

This woman Rahab stood alone in faith against the total culture which surrounded her—something none of us today in the Western world has ever yet had to do. For a period of time she stood for the unseen against the seen, standing in acute danger until Jericho fell. If the king had ever found out what she had done, he would have become her chief enemy and would have executed her.

Just before the Israelites came out of Egypt, they sacrificed the Passover lamb. They did it “with loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand” (Ex. 12:11), and they became pilgrims. One cannot partake of the Passover lamb without being ready to see the world as a place of pilgrimage and war. Rahab is an even greater illustration of our position in regard to this, because until Jericho fell she lived as a pilgrim surrounded by her old alien culture.

This is exactly how the Christian lives, and Rahab is a tremendous example for us. Though you and I have stepped from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, we are still surrounded by a culture controlled by God’s great enemy, Satan. We must live in it from the moment we accept Christ as our Savior until judgment falls. We, too, are encompassed by one who was once our king, but is now our enemy. It is just plain stupid for a Christian not to expect spiritual warfare while he lives in enemy territory.

Rahab: Ancestor of Christ

But there is even more to Rahab’s story of the spiritual continuity of the covenant. Joshua 6:25 says of Rahab: “She dwelleth in Israel even unto this day.” She lived the rest of her life as a citizen among God’s people. Not only that, she married among these people and became an ancestor of Jesus Christ!

Study the genealogy of Jesus as Matthew records it: “And Nahshon begot Salmon; and Salmon begot Boaz of Rahab; and Boaz begot Obed of Ruth; and Obed begot Jesse; and Jesse begot David, the king” (Matt. 1:4–6). David, of course, was a forebear of Christ.

Rahab’s position is mentioned by implication in the book of Ruth: “Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab, and Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon, and Salmon begot Boaz [of Rahab, as Matthew says], and Boaz begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David” (Ruth 4:18–22). (See also the parallel in 1 Chronicles 2:11–12.)

The book of Numbers provides a key to Nahshon’s identity. When the tabernacle was raised in the days of Moses (about thirty-nine years before the events involving Rahab), twelve princes came, one from each tribe, and made a special offering. The first one who came was of the tribe of Judah: “And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah” (Num. 7:12). So Nahshon was a great prince of the tribe of Judah, and his son, Salmon, married Rahab. Chronologically, it fits; the timing is just right. Isn’t that tremendous? The harlot who became a believer became the wife of a prince of Judah!

Unhappily, some people ask, “But is it fitting that this woman should become a princess and an ancestor of Christ?” I would reply with all the strength that is in me: it is most fitting! In having been unfaithful to the Creator, is not the whole human race a harlot? Indeed, it is most fitting that Rahab should stand in the ancestral line of Christ. Matthew mentions five women in the genealogy he records, and moral charges were brought against every one of them. Jesus Christ did not come from a sinless human line. All, including Mary, needed the Savior. Even she said, “My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior” (Luke 1:47). All the men and all the women in the ancestral line of Christ needed Christ as their Savior.

After all, Rahab did not stand with the people of God as an unclean harlot. She had come under the blood of the coming Christ; she

was the harlot cleansed. Is Rahab any worse than we? If it is not fitting that she should be the ancestress of Christ, is it fitting that we should be the bride of Christ? Woe to anybody who has such a mentality as to be upset by Rahab! Such a person does not understand sin, the horribleness of the whole race turning into a prostitute against the living Creator.

We all stand in Rahab's place in the sight of the holy God. Probably we are even worse, for she had little knowledge. There is probably no one reading this book who has as little knowledge as Rahab had when she made her step of faith. We are all sinners. Each one of us is like this woman living up there on the wall. Each of us deserves only one thing—the flaming judgment of God. If it were not for the spiritual portion of the covenant of grace and Christ's death on Calvary's cross, we would all be lost.

If we do not cast ourselves upon Christ, and His finished work, then we are not as wise as that harlot in a heathen land. We are under the judgment of God and will stay under it until we do what Rahab did. She believed. She came under the work of the real Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ. And she passed from the midst of unredeemed humanity to redeemed humanity on the basis of His blood.

So it always is. Jesus Christ stands before all men in one of two capacities (there is no third): either he is Savior or he is judge. When he stood as captain of the Lord's host, for one woman and her household he was Savior; for the rest of Jericho, he was judge.

Let those of us who have believed in Christ ask God to help us so that our works will prove our faith, even if this means a threat to us, even if this places us in as much danger as it did Rahab. By God's grace, may our faith have such a structure that even if it is at great cost, even if we are facing danger, we stand fast. Many thousands of our brothers and sisters in Christ are this day facing danger. The great persecutions did not just occur in the past in the land of Caesar. In North Korea, Africa, Vietnam, Laos and other places, Christians are being killed for being Christians. And many more are not always physically killed, but "killed" by being alienated from their own families.

It is hazardous to be a Christian in an age like ours, in a culture that is increasingly alienated from God. But if we have believed, even if we are surrounded and threatened by the kingdom of our previous king, the evil one, may our faith be like Rahab's, observable by courage and by works. Rahab blazes abroad as a tremendous example for all of us.

The Bad Girl Who Made Good - Stuart Briscoe

Scripture: Joshua 2:1–21, especially verse 1b: So they . . . came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.

Introduction: In the conquest of Canaan, Joshua sent spies to determine the strength of Jericho. Arriving there, the men went to the house of the harlot Rahab, and she received them and made a remarkable confession of faith—that their God was the true God. She made it abundantly clear that she wanted to disassociate herself from her society and commit herself to the Lord. In the process, she became the means of helping the spies escape. They told her that if she would tie a scarlet cord through her window, she would be spared during the conquest. When we come to the New Testament, we find that Rahab is mentioned three times, which brings a new aspect to the whole story, letting us know that God does indeed work in unusual ways through unusual people to accomplish His eternal purposes. Rahab's transformation is one of the most remarkable in Scripture.

1. The Factors that Contributed to Her Transformation.

A. The Prudence of Joshua. God had previously told Joshua, in effect, "You're going into battle and facing an appalling conflict, but you can be certain of one thing—you've already won!" Joshua said, "I am a man of God who believes the promises of God, but I'm also a general in the army, responsible for engaging in solid military practice." So he sent spies into Jericho to spy out the land. It's not a contradiction to believe the promises of God while, at the same time, going about in a practical way finding out how the promises of God are to be worked out. God accomplishes ends through means. Matthew Henry says that to ignore the means through which God works out His divine ends is not trusting God but testing God. If it hadn't been for the prudence of Joshua, the spies would never have met Rahab, there wouldn't have been a crimson cord in the window, and Rahab would not have been saved.

B. The Providence of Jehovah. The spies had all Jericho before them, yet God knew where there was a hungry heart. This is the overruling outworking of God's providence. He knows the hungry heart, and He is able to send a suitable servant to the hungry heart, and in the process, to accomplish eternal ends. You'll find many instances of this in Scripture. God says to you and me: "If you're in a situation of being a suitable servant, I am in the situation of working eternal ends in hungry hearts, and My eternal ends will be worked out through you."

2. The Facts that Accentuated Her Transformation

A. The Kind of Person She Was. Rahab was a born liar. When soldiers come after the spies, she looked them straight in the eye and they believed her story. In so doing, she became a traitor who sold her city down the drain. She was a prostitute, a born liar, and a traitor.

B. The Kind of People She Belonged To. She was a Canaanite, a people so rotten and mixed up that they were of no redeemable value.

C. The Kind of Profession She Followed. She was a harlot, yet she became an ancestor of our Lord and a New Testament illustration of faith. These are the facts that accentuate her transformation. Maybe you feel your life is a mess. Perhaps you're a born liar. Perhaps you've got such inherent tendencies that you worry yourself sick. The Lord is looking for people just like you.

3. The Fame that Followed Her Transformation. Rahab is mentioned three times in the New Testament, as:

A. An Illustration of Genuine Faith. In Hebrews 11:31, she comes in the same breath as Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Abraham, and Samuel. Genuine faith is hearing the good news, recognizing it as truth, and responding to it.

B. An Illustration of Gracious Forgiveness. James 2:25 tells us that Rahab was justified, that God looked on her as if she had never sinned at all. God can cleanse us as pure as fresh-fallen snow.

C. An Illustration of God's Faithfulness. In Matthew 1:5, we find her in Jesus' genealogy. God knows how to get hold of broken, wasted, sinful lives and use them to work out His eternal ends.

Conclusion: I'm glad Rahab is in Scripture, for it reminds me that God finds and uses the most unusual people—like you, like me.