

Enter at Your Own Rest

Studies in the Book of Joshua

"Full blessing in the Christian life is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in to receive it"

Alan Redpath

Text

Joshua 2:1-24

Topic

Rahab tells a lie to protect the two spies who have come to her inn seeking information about the condition of the people of Canaan

Title

"Spy vs. Lie"

Joshua 2:1 Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.

Joshua 2:2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

Joshua 2:3 So the king of Jericho sent 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 country."

Joshua 2:4 Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they *were* from."

Joshua 2:5 And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them."

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

Joshua 2:7 Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

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

Joshua 2:9 and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you."

Joshua 2:10 For 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 who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

Joshua 2:11 And as soon as we heard *these things*, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He *is* God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

Joshua 2:12 Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token,

Joshua 2:13 and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

Joshua 2:14 So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

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

Joshua 2:16 And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way."

Joshua 2:17 So the men said to her: "We *will be* blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear,

Joshua 2:18 unless, *when* we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home.

Joshua 2:19 So it shall be *that* whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood *shall be* on his own head, and we *will be* guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head if a hand is laid on him.

Joshua 2:20 And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear."

Joshua 2:21 Then she said, "According to your words, so *be* it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

Joshua 2:22 They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought *them* all along the way, but did not find *them*.

Joshua 2:23 So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them.

Joshua 2:24 And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

Introduction

Many of you work at a place where your employer posts a list of job opportunities available for you to apply and test for. You regularly peruse the listings looking for something that will both challenge you and further your career.

It strikes me that there are 'job postings' in the Bible. As you peruse its pages you see that being a Christian is compared to many different occupations including being a soldier, a farmer, a priest, or an athlete. You can probably think of some others.

A major difference between your employer's job listings and God's is that you are expected to be **all** of the things you read in the Bible. You are an athlete *and* a soldier; a priest *and* a farmer. Each comparison teaches you something different about the Christian life.

There are a couple of interesting 'job opportunities' in our text. **You can be a spy or you can be a former harlot!**

If we are called upon to wear many hats then let's wear them well. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Sometimes You're The Spy Operating Among The Enemy, and #2 Sometimes You're The Former Harlot Oppressed By The Enemy.

#1 Sometimes You're The Spy Operating Among The Enemy

Does the number **two** ring a bell? When twelve spies were sent into the land forty years earlier only two returned with a good report. The number was symbolic. I suggest Joshua hand-picked two guys he could trust.

Some ministry can be **tried**; but some requires **trusted** men.

These two guys were pilgrims and farmers who would be soldiers during the conquest of the land. For a time they were called upon to be spies operating among the enemy. Their stated mission was

simply (in verse one) **to view the land, especially Jericho**. Their spiritual mission turned out to be reassuring a Gentile prostitute of her salvation.

We're like spies when we are out in the world. We are on a mission to assure sinners that they can be saved.

Joshua 2:1 Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.

Rahab's house was more like an inn. It would be the perfect place to blend in and to hear news from travelers from all over.

I'm not recommending we frequent brothels and bars! I would only note that we need to hear what is happening out in the world in order to reach sinners with the good news about Jesus. And that we give the benefit of the doubt to believers God has called to minister among groups that we find somewhat unsavory.

Joshua 2:2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

Joshua 2:3 So the king of Jericho sent 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 country."

- being changed to bring change -

The king of the city-state of Jericho had his own spies. It seemed as though the two spies were about to assume a new occupation as prisoners of war.

There is a lot of counter-espionage in the spiritual realm. The god of this world, the devil, has his agents of false doctrine. He has his cults and philosophies and -isms to confuse people and keep them from salvation. You can feel outnumbered and outgunned as the Lord's spy. Not to worry! Rely upon the Word of God.

Since we're following the spies let's drop down to verse fourteen. Rahab hid them and asked them to spare herself and her family during the invasion.

Joshua 2:14 So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

They were absolutely convinced of victory over Jericho. So should you and I talk to others with confidence knowing the Lord has conquered sin and death and is coming for His church.

They promised themselves as surety for Rahab when they said **our lives for yours**. Jesus is called our **surety** in Hebrews 7:22. Thus we can be assured and assure others they can and will live forever.

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

These guys were in great shape and well trained. To get to Jericho they had to swim across a swollen Jordan River probably at night. Now they had to rappel down a wall.

If we want to be tapped as spies we need to be in great spiritual shape.

Joshua 2:16 And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way."

Joshua 2:17 So the men said to her: "We *will be* blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear,

Joshua 2:18 unless, *when* we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down...

The Jews were delivered from Egypt by putting the blood of the sacrificed lamb on their doorposts. The death angel saw the blood and passed over them. This scarlet cord was a similar token. When God's destruction came to Jericho the soldiers would see the cord and all inside would be spared. It was a way of representing that Rahab was saved by grace through faith in the sacrifice of a substitute.

Joshua 2:18 ... and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home.

Joshua 2:19 So it shall be *that* whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood *shall be* on his own head, and we *will be* guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head if a hand is laid on him.

Joshua 2:20 And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear."

There is only one way to be saved. There is only one household of faith. We are to declare the simply message of salvation by grace through faith in our sacrifice and substitute, Jesus. Those who come in are saved. Those who do not face the wrath to come.

Joshua 2:21 Then she said, "According to your words, so *be* it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

Joshua 2:22 They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought *them* all along the way, but did not find *them*.

Joshua 2:23 So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them.

Joshua 2:24 And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

Add mountain climbing to the list of physically challenging activities!

This was their debrief. They focused on what the Lord was doing in the land among the nonbelievers.

Are the **inhabitants of the country fainthearted because of us**? They ought to be! God's judgment is coming.

If we do not inspire the fear of God in nonbelievers then we must be giving them the wrong impression. They must see us as a group of campers along the border rather than an army about to invade. They must see us as tourists rather than spies.

Let's commit to soldiering and spying in these last days.

#2 Sometimes You're The Former Harlot Oppressed By The Enemy

If you are a Christian you are a former something! The apostle Paul wrote,

1 Corinthians 6:9 ... Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

1 Corinthians 6:10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:11 **And such were some of you.** But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

In fact we were all harlots like Rahab, but in a spiritual sense. As Gentiles we were outside of God's chosen nation and of His covenant promises. We were spiritual adulterers and adulteresses seeking after other gods. If you are a Christian and are saved you are thus a former spiritual harlot.

Before we say anything else we need to deal with Rahab's lie. The Bible reports it without condoning it. She was a new believer, saved from a pagan culture, and responded under pressure by lying.

Should we lie in a similar situation? Ah, that is the problem in a nutshell. The Bible does not teach situation ethics. The end doesn't justify the means. It is never right to do what is wrong. We therefore should not lie.

Maybe we should consult someone who was in a similar situation. Corrie Ten Boom hid Jews during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. She tells a story of being stopped one night on the way to a secret Bible meeting. When asked where she was going she responded, "I'm going to the reading of my brother's will." Stopped by the same soldiers on her way back and asked how it went she said, "I got everything!"

God could have protected the spies some other way. Rahab could have evangelized the soldiers. Or God may have let them be captured! Her story includes her lie but is not a text on ethics.

She hid the two spies then sent the pursuing soldiers on a wild goose chase. Let's take a quick look at her words to the spies.

Joshua 2:8 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof,
Joshua 2:9 and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.

Joshua 2:10 For 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 who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

Joshua 2:11 And as soon as we heard *these things*, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He *is* God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

Rahab's inn received many travelers. Forty years ago she had heard about the crossing of the **Red Sea** and the destruction of the Egyptian army. More recently the new generation of Jews had overcome the **two kings of the Amorites**. As a result Rahab was already saved by the time of the arrival of the spies:

1. Her words indicate she believed in one God.
2. Her words indicate she believed the one God was a personal God.
3. Her words indicate she believed the one, personal God was the God revealed to and through Israel.
4. Her words indicate that she believed the one, personal, God of Israel was the God of all heaven and all the earth.

It is so gracious that God saves a Gentile and her family right as the Israelites go in to start killing everyone! It is an emblem of His not willing any should perish and it's a reminder that they will if they do not repent and believe.

As far as we know she was the first Gentile converted under the Law. Hers is the first recorded conversion of a woman in the Bible.

And God puts her in His family as she goes on to marry an Israelite. There is even some speculation that her husband, a guy named Salmon, might have been one of the spies.

Not only that: She is in the line of Jesus – one of only four women mentioned in His genealogy. She is only one of two women named in Hebrews 11 – the great faith chapter. What a picture of grace – placing us into God’s family, then bringing fruit from our lives.

A lot of the time we are going to play the role of the former harlot. Like Rahab we live in a degenerate society that is headed for God’s judgment. The enemy will oppress us. We will find ourselves in many situations where we are tempted to do wrong. With God’s help we can navigate the difficulties. We can bind a scarlet cord around our lives and invite others to come in to the house of the Lord and to the place of spiritual safety.

