

Joshua

The LORD is Salvation

Chapter 2 *Rahab and the Spies (Messengers?)*

2:1 The Israelites were encamped on the plains of Moab, between Beth Jeshimoth and Abel Shittim (just NE of the Dead Sea, W of Mt. Nebo and E across the Jordan from Jericho) ^{Numbers 33:49}. Joshua sent two “spies” (*kataskopos*: spies ^{Hebrews 11:31}; *angelos*: messengers ^{James 2:25}) to “look over the land”. The men were led by the Spirit to the house of Rahab, the harlot ^{James 2:25}.

The Ark of the Covenant was made of acacia wood ^{Exodus 37:1} (Abel Shittim = Acacia Grove).

Jericho (*Bet Yerah*: house of the moon god) was the Amorite capital and main Canaanite city.

2:2-3 The King of Jericho found out the men had gone to Rahab and commanded she deliver them.

The city-state king's reaction may have resulted from his knowledge of the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah ^{Genesis 19:24-25} or the Israelite's conquests of the Amalekites ^{Exodus 17:8-13}, as well as the nations of Heshbon & Bashan ^{Deuteronomy 29:7-8} (Kings Sihon & Og ^{Numbers 21:21-35}).

2:4-7 Rahab hid the men on her roof underneath flax (showing she was a hard worker ^{Proverbs 31:13}), and then saved their lives by cleverly lying to the king's men. She admitted they were there, but had already left the city. The king's men headed toward the shallows of the Jordan River.

Rahab lied (a sin ^{Exodus 20:16, Proverbs 12:22}) - a case of situational ethics? However, in the end, Rahab was saved, as all are ^{Ephesians 2:8-9}, not by her actions, but by her faith ^{Hebrews 11:31}.

2:8-11 Rahab's speech to the spies begins with her incredible confession of faith ^{v.9,11, John 20:29} and her (and the city's) knowledge and fear ^{Exodus 15:15} of the LORD ^{v.10}, because of God's support for Israel against the Egyptians at the Red Sea and the nations of Heshbon/Bashan (Sihon/Og).

Having lived in pagan Jericho, Rahab's statements about God's promise to Joshua ^{Joshua 1:2} concerning the fact that “the LORD had given [the] land” to Israel and her saying that “the Lord ... is God in heaven ... and earth” ^{Genesis 1:1} must have been supernaturally revealed to her.

Although surrounded by a culture in opposition to God, Rahab made her choice to follow Him.

The fear of the Canaanites was in contrast to the Israelites' fear 38 years earlier ^{Numbers 14}.

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2:12-13 In light of aiding the spies, Rahab's first request was for the safety of her family ^{1 Timothy 5:8}.

2:14 The men replied positively to Rahab: she would be treated "kindly and faithfully" ^{Genesis 24:49}.

Speaking in great faith, the spies did not say "if", but "when the LORD gives [them] the land".

2:15-16 Rahab, who lived in the city wall, helped the spies to escape by lowering them with a rope.

Before they left, Rahab instructed the men to hide in the hills for three days ^{Matthew 12:40}

(indicating a possible prior knowledge of the length of time the king's men would search).

Both David ^{1 Samuel 19:11-12} and Paul ^{Acts 9:23-25} had similar escapes from threats to their lives.

Rahab's living within the city wall provided both the worst and the best of locations. Why?

2:17-20 The spies swore an oath that Rahab and her family would be safe, if they met 3 conditions:

(1) Rahab would display a scarlet cord in her window ^{v.18}, (2) she and her family would be in and stay inside her home ^{v.18-19} and (3) she would not divulge what the spies were doing ^{v.20}.

Obviously, Joshua had given the spies his blessing & authority to do whatever was necessary, because they were able to make the promises to Rahab without having to consult with Joshua.

2:21 Rahab agreed with the conditions, sent them away and placed the rope in the window.

Note the similarities of the scarlet rope in the window protecting Rahab and family with the lamb's blood on the door protecting the Israelites at Passover in Egypt ^{Exodus 12:7,13,22-23}.

2:22-24 As Rahab had predicted, the king's men stopped searching for the spies after three days.

The spies then returned across the Jordan River to Joshua to report about the people's fear, which was prophesied in the song of Moses and Miriam ^{Exodus 15:14-16}.

The 2 messengers who helped Rahab to salvation, were $3\frac{1}{2}$ days in the hills before getting back to Joshua. Could this be an allusion to the two witnesses in Revelation ^{Revelation 11:3-12} ?

Final Thoughts:

James ^{James 2:18-25} contrasted the salvation of "god's friend" Abraham and the "harlot" Rahab in order to illustrate the principle that "God does not show favoritism" ^{Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11}.

Also, Rahab later married Salmon ^{Matthew 1:5}, son of Nahshon, a prince of Judah ^{Numbers 10:14}.

Salmon and Rahab gave birth to Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer for Ruth (& Naomi) ^{Ruth 4:9,13}, linking Bethlehem with the house of David. Rahab is in the genealogy of Jesus ^{Matthew 1:4-6}.

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