

The Unlikely Ancestor

Joshua 2



God promised Abraham 3 things (Gen. 12:1-3): 1) He would give him the land, 2) He would establish his descendants, and 3) He would make Abraham a blessing, spiritually, to all the world. Although the book of Joshua tends to focus on the first part of that promise, the story of Rahab emphasizes the third. And while the average Israelite in Joshua's day probably gave little thought to this episode, God chose to give it great importance in His Word.

God had given Israel the land of Canaan, yet it still had to be taken – by force, with God's help. In this section, Joshua begins that warfare the way any good commander would – by getting information about the enemy. He sends spies to determine the situation in the enemy camp; yet in the process they encounter an unexpected, and unlikely, ally, who turns out to be a model for the 20th century believer.

- *The Mission (2:1)*
- *The Crisis (2:2-7)*
- *The Deal (2:8-21)*
- *The Escape (2:22-24)*

What does it say?

What does it mean?

Joshua 2:1-24



¹ Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

² The king of Jericho was told, "Look! Some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." ³ So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from." ⁵ At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." ⁶ (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) ⁷ So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the

Using your map at the front of the study guide, answer these questions:

Where is Israel at the beginning of this episode? (Which side of the Jordan?)

Why does Joshua send the spies to Jericho?

In sending two spies, Joshua might have been reminded of another, similar event. Read Numbers 13:1 – 14:10. What occasion was that?

Who were the 2 spies?

What does it say?

fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

⁸ Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof ⁹ and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. ¹⁰ 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 Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.

¹¹ When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. ¹² Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign ¹³ that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death."

¹⁴ "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land."

¹⁵ So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. ¹⁶ Now she had said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."

¹⁷ The men said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us ¹⁸ unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. ¹⁹ If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on

What does it mean?

In light of that event, what kind of men do you think Joshua would have chosen this time, 40 years later?



Some interpreters have tried to say that Rahab was just another "innkeeper," not a "prostitute," but that would be a wrong translation. Why do you think the spies would stay with a prostitute? (see also verse 15)

2:2-7 Describe this crisis:

- ◆ The problem: (vs. 2-3)

- ◆ The solution: (vs. 4-7)

What is the moral dilemma?

What is your answer to the moral dilemma?

2:8-21 In vs. 8-11, Rahab reveals the reason behind her courageous action. What is it?

What does it say?

his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him.²⁰ But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

²¹ "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

²² When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them.²³ Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them.²⁴ They said to Joshua, "The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us."

"And moreover they (the spies) gave her a sign, that she should hang out from her house a scarlet thread, thereby showing beforehand that through the blood of the Lord there shall be redemption unto all them that believe and hope in God. Ye see, dearly beloved, not only faith, but prophecy, is found in the woman."

Clement of Rome, AD 95

What does it mean?

In vs. 12-21, Rahab and the spies strike up a "deal." What is it?



2:22-24 The spies conclude their mission. Was it successful?

How could you tell?

The "Rest of the Story". Look up these other references to Rahab and see why she is one of the most remarkable characters in Scripture.

- Joshua 6:22-25
- James 2:25
- Hebrews 11: 6, 31
- Matthew 1:5



APPLICATION — So What Does This Mean In My Life?

1. God could have picked anyone for the spies to stay with, yet He chose Rahab, someone we wouldn't expect to end up as a model for our faith. Why do you think He chose her, and how does that affect your thinking about grace?
2. Rahab made a big decision on a little knowledge. Often we have more knowledge, but less faith than she had. This week, how can you act in faith on one truth you know?

3. What things about Rahab can you admire? Imitate?

4. **For Further Study:** Note the other women listed in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew chapter 1. What do they have in common with Rahab? How are they different?

“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.”

Francis Schaeffer

