

JOSHUA

The Faith of a Harlot

Joshua 2:1-24

Ephesians 2:11-13

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¹¹ Therefore remember that formerly you, the *Gentiles in the flesh*, who are called “*Uncircumcision*” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time *separate* from Christ, *excluded* from the commonwealth of Israel, and *strangers* to the covenants of promise, *having no hope* and *without God* in the world.



Joshua 2:1

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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.

Question:

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Does the sending
of the spies
constitute a lack of
faith on the part of
Joshua?

One Commentator said:

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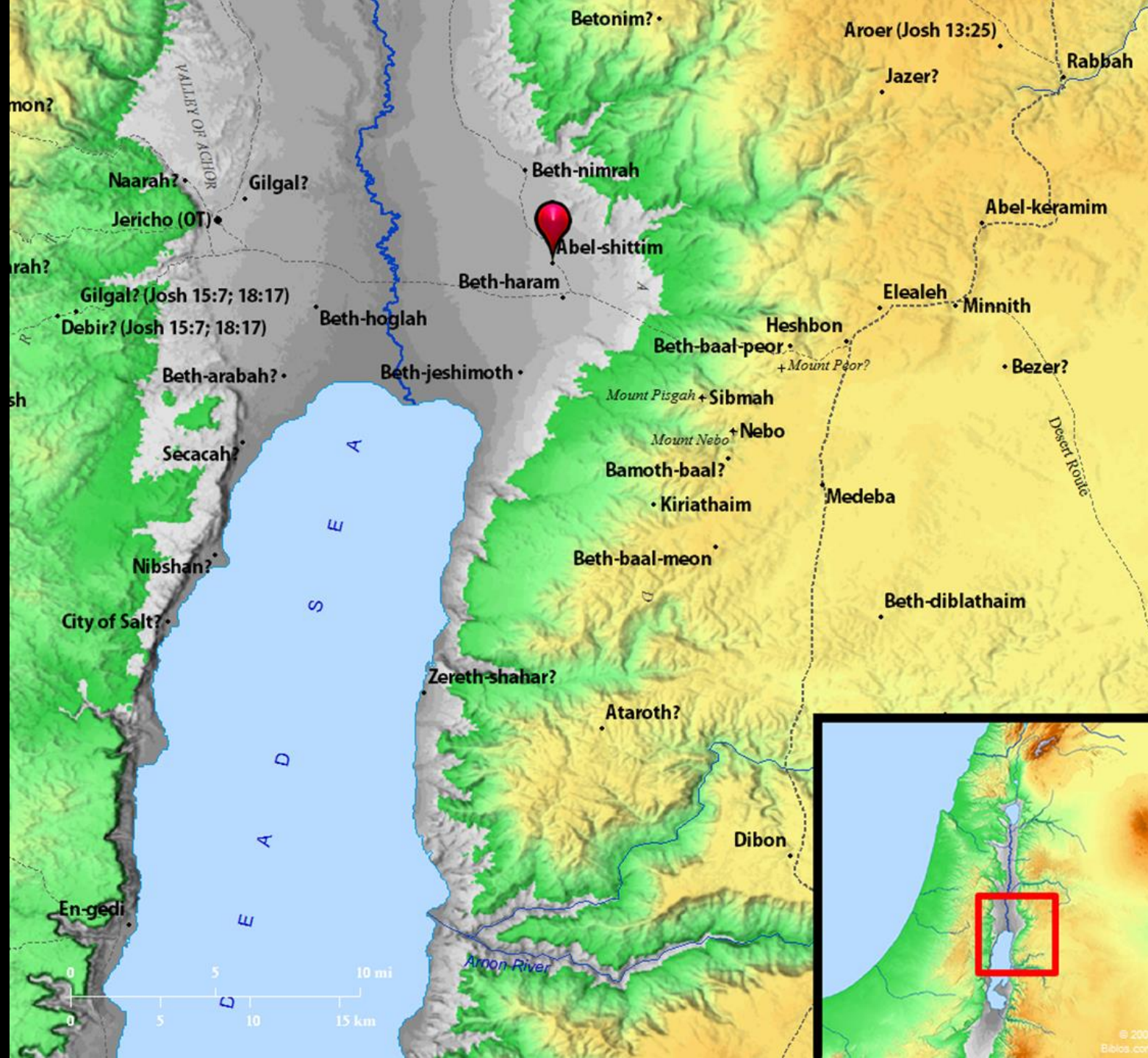
“Faith is manifested by an active, persevering use of means (Jam 2:22); and accordingly Joshua, while confident in the accomplishment of the divine promise (Jos 1:3), adopted every precaution which a skillful general could think of to render his first attempt in the invasion of Canaan successful.”

Understand:

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The mission of the spies was
to explore the area in and
around Jericho.

Their object was to
determine *when* and *how* to
attack, not *whether* to attack.



Rahab's House

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- Was likely a way station or tavern of sorts (and probably a brothel).
- So, it would have been a logical place for travelers to frequent, as a public gathering place and a potential source of information.
- Very important: there is no suggestion in the text that the spies are in Rahab's house for immoral purposes despite her occupation.

Spies sent “secretly”

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But we read in verse 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.”

Joshua 2:3

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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.”

This statement gives us some insight into the mindset of the king.

Joshua 2:4-6

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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. 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.” 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. 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.

Rahab is Not Impartial

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- She knows the mission of the spies and is sympathetic to it.
- She has hidden the two men before the agents of the king even arrive.
- She then lies to protect the two spies.



Did Rahab Sin? |

Exodus 20:16

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“You shall not bear false witness
against your neighbor.”

I would argue that the
commandment is constructed in a
very specific way.

And I would posit that not all lying
is wickedness.

James 2:25

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25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

This is Rahab in Joshua 2:4-8.

Joshua 2:7

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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.

Next, We Read

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**One of the Great
Confessions of
Faith in All of
Scripture.**

Joshua 2:8-11

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8 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, 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. 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. 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.

Hebrews 11:31

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31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

This is Rahab in Joshua 2:8-11.

Joshua 2:10

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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.

Abraham Kuyper:

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“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.”



A. Delaboulaye

Joshua 2:11a

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11 When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you

This explains the king's paranoia in v. 2.



Joshua 2:11b

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**“for the Lord your God,
He is God in heaven
above and on earth
beneath.”**

This is HUGE.

Remarkable Because:

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1. Rahab affirmed that Israel's God had dominion over the realms of the heavens and the earth.
2. **Rahab stated explicitly: "the LORD your God is God."**
3. The last part of her affirmation – the phrase "in the heavens above and the earth beneath" – is found only three times prior to this (Ex. 20:4; Deut. 4:39; Deut. 5:8), all in contexts that affirm God's exclusive claims to sovereignty

“Thus, when we read these words coming from Rahab’s mouth, we cannot escape the implications: she was doing far more than merely trying to save her skin or that of her family. She was acknowledging that this God she had heard about was the one and only true God, the only one—out of dozens that she as a good Canaanite knew about—who was worthy of worship and allegiance.”

One More Thing:

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- Rahab is a prime example of a Gentile who responded in faith to Yahweh.
- In the NT, she is included with four other women in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus: Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary.
- All but Mary were foreigners who became part of Israel.

Question:

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If all of Jericho would
have responded as
Rahab did, would they
have been spared
destruction?

Joshua 2:12-13

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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, **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.”

Some Would Say:

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By entering into a covenant with Rahab, they were violating Mosaic Law, and this interaction with Rahab was sinful.

Rahab's Faith Saves Her

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- She has cast her lot with Yahweh.
- She has made herself an Israelite, so to speak.
- It is not until she makes her confession of faith that the Israelite spies enter into agreement with her.
- And most convincingly, her presence in the genealogy of the Messiah and the hall of faith in Hebrews is evidence of her true conversion.

This Is:

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The Abrahamic Covenant at Work!

Joshua 2:14

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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.”

The Israelites lay their own lives on the line as a guarantee of their promise contingent upon the obedience of Rahab.

Both parties deal faithfully with one another.

Joshua 2:15

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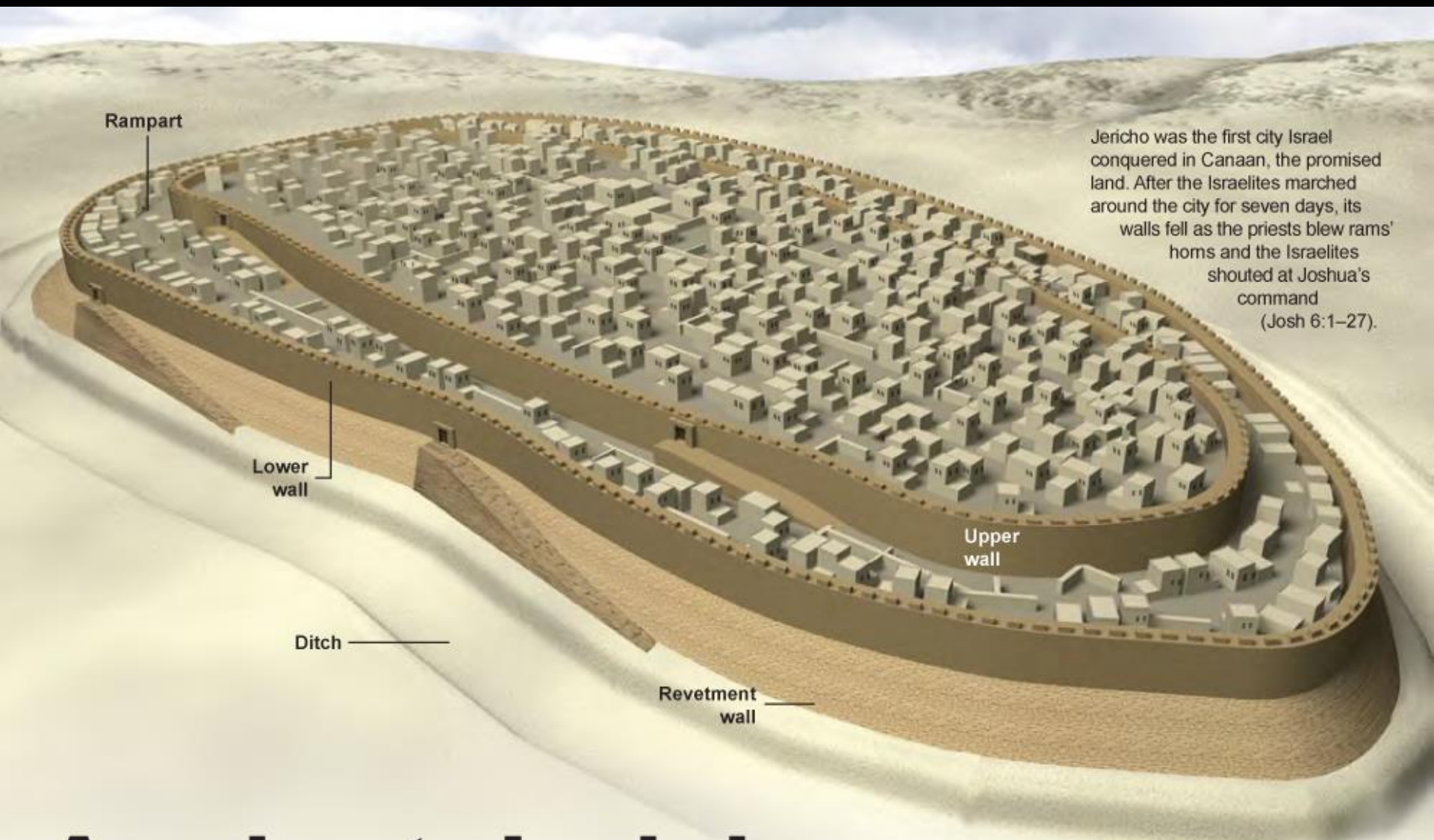
15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall.

Where did Rahab live?

NASB: “on the wall”

KJV: “upon the wall”

ESV: “in the wall”



Jericho was the first city Israel conquered in Canaan, the promised land. After the Israelites marched around the city for seven days, its walls fell as the priests blew rams' horns and the Israelites shouted at Joshua's command (Josh 6:1-27).

Ancient Jericho

Joshua 2:16

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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.”



Joshua 2:17-21

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17 The men said to her, “We shall be free from this oath to you which you have made us swear, **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. **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. **20** But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be free from the oath which you have made us swear.” **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.

Restating the Deal (Why?) JOSHUA

1. The Scarlet Cord
2. Gather the Family into the House
3. If Rahab Betrays the Israelites, the Covenant is No Longer Binding

The Scarlet Cord

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Dating back to the early church, this is a favorite “type” in the OT, as the thread is the color of blood.

In other words, Rahab is the church and the scarlet cord is the shed blood of Christ.

The Scarlet “Cord”

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תִּקְוָה (*tiqvah*)

In Joshua 2:18 & 21, it is translated
“cord” or “rope.”

But almost every other time it is
used in Scripture, it is translated:

HOPE

OT Connection

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- The Passover in Exodus 12.
- Likewise, Rahab's scarlet cord was to be a sign for the Israelites as they entered Jericho to destroy it.
- Furthermore, in both cases, those being protected were not, under any circumstances, to venture outside their houses.

Rahab's Family

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Did they have faith,
as well?

Or were they simply
fortunate to be
related to Rahab?

Joshua 2:22-24

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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. **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. **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.”

The Spies' Report

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- Is simple, confident, and direct:

“Surely the Lord has given all the land into our hands; moreover, all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us.”

Honestly, these “spies” didn’t bring back much of a scouting report...

But...

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What a contrast with the report of the spies in Numbers 13!

In spite of their lack of “military intelligence,” these men possess a faith that should be commended.

And notice they quote Rahab virtually word for word.



The Hope
of this
Chapter is
Built on
the Faith
of Rahab!

Joshua 6:25

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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.

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