

THE SPIES RECONNAISSANCE

We will divide Joshua 2 into two sections for study.

- The first section Josh.2:1-14 The Spies Reconnaissance.
- The second section Josh.2:15-24 The Spies Report.

While today's lesson is entitled, Spies Reconnaissance, the subject of the text is a Gentile woman named Rahab (Josh.2:1, 3, 4, 6, 8-13, 14).

Her name in Hebrew means 'broad'. It is possible that it was used as a slang word like in English. She is known in the Book of Joshua as Rahab, the Harlot (ha zonah) (Josh.2:1; 6:17, 23, and 25).

We will begin by examining our lesson text by the following five homiletical points.

- Rahab, the harlot (Josh.2:1) Covering for spies
- Rahab's hindrance (Josh.2:2-5) Counter-intelligence of Jericho
- Rahab hides spies (Josh.2:6-7) Collaborating with enemy
- Rahab's herald (Josh.2:8-11) Cognizance of the true God
- Rahab's hope (Josh.2:12-14) Covenant with spies

It is interesting that Joshua was one of the 12 spies sent on a similar reconnaissance 40 years earlier (Num.13).

This lesson will study SEVEN aspects of the Spies Reconnaissance of Jericho and the covenant they made with Rahab.

1. Two spies were sent to Jericho on a reconnaissance mission. They were to survey the land and the military strengths and weaknesses of Jericho.

They had three days before Israel would cross the Jordan to take possession of land (Josh.1:11; 2:22; 3:2).

Biblical historians believe that one of these two spies was named Salmon who later married Rahab (Ruth 4:21; Matt.1:5).

2. Jericho was a strategic military frontier outpost for the Canaanites.

It was well fortified by a large wall. It is believed that Fort Jericho's circumference was less than six acres.

Jericho's military intelligence was immediately aware of two Hebrew spies within the walled city and had been spotted at Rahab's business (Josh.2:2-3).

However this same sharp military intelligence made the mistake of being naïve regarding the conspiracy within its citizenship. They didn't suspect that Rahab would be collaborating with their enemy.

It is obvious that Rahab, herself was pretty smart in gathering intelligence. (Josh.2:9-11).

3. Rahab lied to avert suspicion of her conspiracy from herself as well as from further search of her premises (Josh.2:5-7).

Psychologists tell us that there are two basic reasons why people lie:

- to mislead, delude, or deceive.
- to create a false or misleading impression.

Rahab's reason for lying was similar to the Egyptian midwives reasoning in Ex.1:15-22. It involved being sympathetic towards God's Will rather than to man's. (Josh.2:9-11)

In both cases, what they failed to understand was that God is sovereign in all situations of His Will. Therefore we never have to lie for God's Will to be completed or fulfilled. GET IT?

It is interesting that both Rahab and the two spies entered into a covenant called, "a Pledge of Truth." It was an oath of fidelity or truth with the Lord as their witness. (Josh.2:12) (NAS).

4. As a Gentile resident of a frontier military town of Canaan, Rahab was experiencing the reality of what God had promised, only to the Hebrews (Josh.2:9-11).

This promise had been given to the Jews 40 years earlier. It had gone unclaimed because of their lack of faith. (Deut.1:21-33) Rahab heard it and believed it immediately (Heb.11:31).

It is also interesting that rumors about the Hebrews produced fear in the land of Canaan (Josh.2:9-11) which is exactly what God had promised! (Deut.2:25; 11:25; Ex.15:14-16; 23:23, **27-29**).

It produced a 'heart meltdown in the enemy' just like God promised 40 years earlier.

5. What produced this 'heart meltdown', in others turned Rahab's heart toward 'faith' in the one true God (Josh.2:11).

Courage and cowardice are both a state of mind that either enables or disables a person amidst tribulation (Josh.1:6-7).

The person either becomes faint-hearted or faith-hearted. It depends on the 'working object' of their faith. (Deut.20:1-4, 8; Rom.10:17; Heb.11:1).

6. Rahab's "pledge of truth" showed that she believed.

In fact, she put her life on the line for what she believed she had heard about God's Plan. (the working of PV at God consciousness).

She believed that Israel's God would deliver her and her household (Josh.2:12-14). She operated from faith and not from fear in dealing with the Hebrew spies on the basis of what she believed about God (Ps.73:26-28)

7. God honored her "pledge of truth" with the spies on the basis of her faith and not on the basis of her good deeds.

Her good deeds were the result of her faith and not the cause of her faith (James 2:22-25; Rom.3:28; Gal.2:15-16). "For He chose us (Rahab) in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." (Eph.1:4) (NIV)

"In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory." (Eph.1:11-12)

Later God will promote Rahab to the messianic genealogy hall of faith in Matt.1:5.