

tribes had been made to Moses. Since Moses was dead, it was proper for the men of these tribes to give their pledge of allegiance to Joshua. They were willing to go over the Jordan and fight before they received their inheritance. They assured Joshua they would put to death any man among them who proved to be disloyal to Joshua. Their only prayer was for the Lord God to be with Joshua as He had been with Moses (1:17).

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 1

1. What was the normal period of mourning for a deceased person?
2. What was Moses' title in Scripture?
3. What was Joshua's title in Scripture?
4. Was Joshua given an unconditional promise of God's blessings?
5. Did Joshua have any of the written Word of God to guide him?
6. Did Joshua have any subordinate officers to help him?
7. Were the people still receiving manna from heaven when Joshua became their leader?
8. Who were the "eastern" tribes?
9. What kings had formerly dominated the land east of Jordan?
10. Who was Israel's high priest when Joshua was made leader of the people?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 2

- Vv. 1-7 *Rahab hides the spies.* The two spies sent out by Joshua found the house of Rahab to be a place where they could learn about the activities of the community. Although they must have taken every precaution to conceal their true identity, the king of the city learned of

their presence in his city and questioned Rahab about them. At the risk of her life, she hid the men on the flat roof of her house.

Vv. 8-21 *A covenant made with Rahab.* Rahab showed a remarkable insight into the signs of the times. She also made a noble confession of faith in the nature of God. The spies, therefore, hearkened to her request for protection. A sign by which she could identify her house was arranged, and the spies were let down over the city wall and sent on their way back to the camp of Israel.

Vv. 22-24 *The spies return to Joshua.* After hiding three days in the mountains around Jericho, the men made their way safely back east across the Jordan River to the spot where the waiting armies of Israel were poised under Joshua's command anticipating the first battle in the Promised Land. These two spies brought back an encouraging report, in contrast to the report brought back by ten of the twelve spies sent out by Moses forty years earlier.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The Lord, He is God.* Such was the confession of faith made by Rahab, the Canaanite harlot. One would hardly expect to find such faith in the heart of such a person. She recited how the inhabitants of the land had heard about the miracle at the Red Sea. They had also heard about the victories won by the armies of Israel as they fought against Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites who ruled on the east side of the Jordan. Surely sinners today can see the hand of God in the

affairs of men everywhere, and they should be willing to make this same good confession. Even more, they should accept Jesus Christ as God's Son and Savior.

2. *Our life for yours.* The spies had been saved by Rahab. As a result, they were willing to enter into an agreement whereby she could identify her house and spare the destruction of herself and her family when the battle was fought against Jericho. At the same time, they could not jeopardize the lives of their fellow soldiers. If Rahab betrayed them, they would not be bound by their agreement. Surely they were in a situation which was fraught with peril. It was a life-and-death matter. Christian workers are engaged in similar important activities every day. They have given their lives in the service of Christ as they seek to save the souls of those with whom they come in contact. No more important business can ever be conducted.
3. *God keeps His promises.* When the two spies returned to Joshua, they said, "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land" (v. 24). More than forty years before this time, six hundred thousand men of Israel had started on the journey to the Promised Land. Some lost faith along the way and died in the wilderness, but God never wavered. He brought the faithful into the land flowing with milk and honey. He will always be as steadfast to all who trust Him.

CHAPTER TWO

Rahab Hides the Spies 2:1-7

And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into a harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither tonight of the children of Israel to search out the country.

3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:

5 And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

7 And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone, they shut the gate.

1. *Why were the spies sent out secretly?* 2:1

This was naturally done to prevent the Canaanites from hearing about it. Partly it was done for the sake of Israel. If the reports should prove unfavorable, the people of Israel might have been thrown into despair as they had been before in the time of Moses. When Moses sent the twelve spies out from Kadesh-Barnea, the people had come to him with the suggestion that they send spies. Moses had inquired of the Lord concerning the advisability of this procedure, and with the Lord's blessings he had sent one man from each tribe to spy out Canaan (Deuteronomy 1:22 and Numbers 13:1 ff.). Since the people knew Moses had sent the spies out they were expecting to get a

report when they returned. Joshua's action would prevent this kind of anxious anticipation on the part of the people.

2. *What kind of city was ancient Jericho? 2:1b*

Jericho was a city within the borders of Canaan, lying something more than an hour's journey to the west of the Jordan. Its location was seven miles north of the Dead Sea, and about ten miles northwest of the mouth of the Jordan where it enters the Dead Sea. It was situated in the plain which was formerly very fertile and celebrated for its palm trees and balsam shrubs. It is now quite desolate and barren. The town lay eight hundred feet below sea level, making it some two thousand feet below the summit of Mount Olivet to the west. The Dead Sea, however, is twelve hundred and ninety feet below sea level, making Jericho to be situated on a hill that stood out above the plains surrounding the site. The town controlled the trade routes from the east as well as the road stretching up to the west to Jerusalem. Another road through the ancient site of Bethel and Shechem lay nearby, and a road to the south led down to Hebron. Its overthrow would naturally greatly alarm the Canaanites, and Joshua singled the town out of all the Canaanite tribes when he recounted Israel's victories (24:11).

3. *Who was Rahab? 2:1c*

Rahab is called a *zonab*, that is, a harlot, not an innkeeper, as Josephus, the Chaldee version, and the Rabbins interpret the word. The spies' entering the house of such a person would not excite suspicion. Moreover, the situation of her house against or upon the town wall was one which facilitated escape. The Lord so guided the course of the spies that they found in this sinner the very person who was the most suitable for their purpose. The tidings of the miracles wrought by the living God on behalf of Israel had made a deep impression on her. She informed the spies of the despondency of the Canaanites. With

believing trust in the power of the God of Israel, she concealed the spies from all the inquiries of her countrymen, though at great risk to herself.

4. *Who was the king of Jericho?* 2:2

Many of the principal cities of the Canaanites were governed by a king who would also take responsibility for some of the surrounding territory. Five of these kings formed a coalition against the Israelites and fought Joshua after the Gibeonites made peace with Israel. Another group of kings in the northern part of Palestine also banded together to oppose the conquest of the men under Joshua. There were at least five leading kings in this northern group as well. A summary of the kings who were overthrown by Joshua is given in chapter 12, where thirty-one different kings are named. Their principalities would be comparable to the city-states of ancient Greece. Their office would make them equal to the lords of the Philistines, who are mentioned frequently in the days of the judges. This important and powerful man sent to the home of Rahab demanding information about the spies who had come into her house.

5. *How had the king learned of the spies' mission?* 2:3

A report had been given to the king, but Joshua does not tell us who made the report. Although the coming of two strange men to the house of Rahab would not be sufficient grounds to arouse a lot of suspicion, the strange conduct of the men might have been the reason for someone's surmising that they were Israelite spies. They evidently did not enter Rahab's house for any immoral purpose. Even though she is called a harlot, she may have also provided a place of lodging for strangers. In modern society it is not unusual for women of immoral nature to ply their nefarious business in or about a perfectly legitimate lodging place. Such may have been Rahab's

arrangement. If the men of Israel were distinct by their speech, their dress, and their conduct, they may have aroused enough suspicion to cause someone to go to the king with the report that spies were in Rahab's house.

6. *Was she justified in lying?* 2:4

Rahab sought not only to divert all suspicion from herself, but to prevent any further search for them in her house. She wanted to frustrate the attempt to arrest them. Her deceit is not to be justified as a lie of necessity told for a good purpose. Neither can we avoid the problem by saying that before the preaching of the gospel a salutary lie was not regarded as a fault even by good men. Such cannot be shown to be "allowable," or even "praiseworthy," simply because the writer mentions the fact without expressing any subjective opinion. Even though Rahab was convinced of the truth of the miracles which God had wrought for His people and acted in firm faith that the true God would give the land of Canaan to the Israelites, she still is culpable in affirming an untruth, for a lie is always a sin.

7. *Why did she have flax on the roof?* 2:6

Flax is a herb-like plant which has been cultivated from the beginning of history. It is a herbaceous plant and grows to a height of some three feet, having blue flowers and very fibrous stalks. The tough fibers of the stalk after the decay and removal of the softer woody and gummy material made the crude flax. From the flax linen was made, and linen was in the earliest historic times a favorite material for clothes. The Jewish priestly garments were made of pure linen. The Egyptian mummies were wrapped in linen. Linseed oil, and oil cake were also useful products from the same plant. Since the roofs of the Palestinian houses were flat, the area was used for many different purposes. Roof tops made excellent places to spread out farm products for drying, and this was evidently

the reason why there were stalks of flax on the roof of Rahab's house.

8. *What gates were shut?* 2:7

Some have called Jericho the oldest city in the world. Numerous archaeological excavations have been made in and around the city. These have revealed an area covering some four or five acres surrounded by a double wall. Some of the walls even in the ruins are twenty-eight feet high. The walls themselves are at places in three sections with a base of clay, gravel, and small stones. Above this is a rubble wall and finally on top is a brick wall sometimes between six and eight feet in thickness. Not even Meggido, a famous military center of the ancient world, reveals workmanship of this kind. Those who built Jericho must have been masters in stonework and masonry. It is taken as a triumph of engineering skill which modern builders under the same circumstances could scarcely improve. Since the city was excellently fortified it would be necessary to have gates which could be opened and closed. Their practice evidently called for the closing of the gates at sundown in order for the city to be safe from attacks by night.

The Covenant Made With Rahab 2:8-21

8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

9 And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did here remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12 Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

14 And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

16 And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

17 And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

18 Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

19 And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.

20 And if thou utter this our business then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.

21 And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

9. *What was Rahab's view of God?* 2:9

Her confession of faith remained far behind the faith which Moses at that time demanded of Israel. She discerned in Jehovah a deity in heaven and upon earth. Although she had not yet thrown off her polytheism altogether, she had come close to a true and full confession of the Lord. She knew that all evidence pointed towards the victorious conquest of the land on the part of the Israelites. Although she could hardly have known of the promise given to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), she had witnessed how terror had fallen upon the members of her community as reports reached them of Israel's exodus from Egypt. The people of Canaan had fallen into great fear.

10. *How much of Israel's history was known to Rahab?*

2:10

Jacob and his descendants had gone out of Canaan four hundred years before the time of Joshua. Rahab demonstrates very little knowledge of the early history of Israel when she specifically mentioned how the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea on dry land. She also knew of the victorious campaigns they had waged against the kings east of the Jordan. She called Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, by name. These were kings whom the Israelites had conquered just shortly before the time of the death of Moses.

11. *How did Rahab describe God?* 2:11

Rahab said, "The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath." Rahab's confession of faith is very close to the cry made by the people of Israel on

Mount Carmel after God had sent fire from heaven to devour Elijah's sacrifice and altar. At that time the people of Israel cried out, "The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God" (I Kings 18:39). Even without the benefit of a great heritage among God-fearing people, Rahab came to the conclusion that the God of Israel was the God of the whole earth.

12. *What request did Rahab make of the spies? 2:12, 13*

Rahab was pleading for her life. She asked that the people of Israel save alive her father and mother, her brothers, her sisters, all that they had, and herself. When she asked them to give her "a true token," she was asking them to appoint some kind of sign which would assure her that they were favorably inclined towards her, or that she be allowed to give them some pledge of her allegiance.

13. *What kind of men were the spies? 2:14*

The men whom Joshua had sent to spy out Canaan were courageous, God-fearing, and appreciative men of war. They were honest and dependable. They were not sinful, covetous, or treacherous. They knew Rahab had spared their lives, and they were willing to make an agreement. They had a knowledge of God which led them to believe this God-fearing woman, though a sinner, would be accepted into the household of Israel if she believed on the Lord. They had not entered Rahab's house for any evil reason; and when they saw an opportunity to help a pagan to have faith in the true God, they were ready to act.

14. *What further actions did Rahab take? 2:14-16*

The covenant into which Rahab entered with the spies was a matter of life and death. Since she had spared their lives, they were willing to spare her life. If she tricked them later and caused them to be harmed, then they would harm her. If she failed to meet the conditions which they laid down to her, they were not to be bound

in any way to spare her or her family. When the covenant was completed, she let the men down over the city wall by a cord dropped out of the window of her house. Her house was on the town wall. She also instructed the men to hide in the mountain rather than to make an attempt to get back across the fords of the Jordan and to reach Joshua's camp immediately. In some way, she believed three days would be sufficient time for them to remain in hiding, evidently knowing the habits of expeditionary forces which went out from the city on such missions.

15. *What conditions did Rahab agree to meet?* 2:18-21

She was to do the following things:

- (1) When the town was taken, Rahab was to make her house known to the Israelites by binding the "cord of this crimson thread"
- (2) When the town was taken, Rahab was to collect together her parents, her brothers, and her sisters into her own house
- (3) She was to agree to all the propositions made to her, especially not to disclose the mission of Israel

The rope by which the spies had escaped out of Rahab's house was made of crimson threads. It was this kind of cord which she was to hang from her window. There could be no mistaking the unusual and significant sign. The Israelites were furthermore disavowing any responsibilities for any of her family who might be scattered throughout the town. This would prevent someone from falsely identifying himself as a member of Rahab's house. Naturally, she was not to make any mention of the spies' visit or in any way jeopardize their safe return. Rahab readily agreed to all of these propositions and was thus spared.

The Spies Return to Joshua 2:22-24

22 And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not.

23 So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them:

24 And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

16. *What kind of report did the spies make to Joshua?*
2:22-24

The report of the two spies to Joshua was quite different from the report which the ten spies had made to Moses forty years earlier. At the earlier time the ten spies said the land was one which ate up its inhabitants. They described themselves as being like grasshoppers in the sight of the men who lived on the land. They also affirmed they felt insignificant in the presence of the people who populated the territory. Joshua's two spies, however, came back with a glowing account of how they had entered into the city of Jericho and had been spared by the kindness of Rahab. Much of what they said was a report of what Rahab told them. They used the same expression in describing how the inhabitants of the country were fainting because of fear of them. All of this convinced the spies that the Lord would surely deliver all the land into the hands of the Israelites. Such a report must have given great courage to Joshua and the warriors of Israel. Although they had been forced to wait an extra three days for the return of the spies, they would certainly be enthusiastic about their mission as they made

final preparations to cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 2

1. How many men did Joshua send to spy out the land?
2. What was the name of the harlot into whose house they entered?
3. What kind of a ruler was over Jericho?
4. In the midst of what kind of farm produce did the spies hide?
5. What was the name of the king of the Amorites whom the Israelites had conquered?
6. What was the name of the king of Bashan whom Israel had conquered?
7. By what means did the spies escape from the harlot's house?
8. How long did the spies hide in the mountains?
9. By what sign was the harlot to identify her house?
10. What was the harlot's statement of faith in God?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 3

Vv. 1- 8 *God's instructions to Joshua.* Joshua and the people of Israel moved from their camp at Shittim to the banks of the Jordan. Just before they crossed over into Canaan, God spoke again to Joshua and gave him final instructions about the passage. A thrill of excitement must have run through the entire camp as they came to this thrilling moment.

Vv. 9-13 *Joshua's instructions to the people.* Joshua ordered the Levites which carried the Ark of the Covenant to go before the people but to stop at the edge of the river. Joshua also