

## I. Entering the Land (1:1-4:24)

### B. Gathering needed information (2:1-24)

“In this chapter we have an account of the scouts that were employed to bring an account to Joshua of the posture of the city of Jericho. Observe here, I. How Joshua sent them (v. 1). II. How Rahab received them, and protected them, and told a lie for them (v. 2-7), so that they escaped out of the hands of the enemy. III. The account she gave them of the present posture of Jericho, and the panic-fear they were struck with upon the approach of Israel (v. 8-11). IV. The bargain she made with them for the security of herself and her relations in the ruin she saw coming upon her city (v. 12-21). V. Their safe return to Joshua, and the account they gave him of their expedition (v. 22-24). And that which makes this story most remarkable is that Rahab, the person principally concerned in it, is twice celebrated in the New Testament as a great believer (Hebrews 11:31) and as one whose faith proved itself by good works, James 2:25.” [*Matthew Henry’s Commentary II*, p. 6]

“As a preliminary point, observe that chapter 2 is really non-essential for telling the story of Israel’s entrance into the land. In fact, it would seem more logical to follow chapter 1 with chapter 3 immediately; this would make for a coherent narrative, with chapter 3 immediately fulfilling the expectations one has as he finishes reading chapter 1. (Someone will say, yes, but there is that little section in chapter 6 that mentions Rahab’s rescue. True, but that section, verses 22-25, could easily have been excluded without any disturbance to the flow of the narrative.) The fact that the writer deliberately turns aside to insert and relate the Rahab story shows that it must carry special significance for him. Why would he go out of his way, as it were, to select this material?

“This story then involves the conversion of a pagan — a Canaanite, even a harlot....yet she is welcomed into the church (6:22-25)! ‘But Rahab the harlot...Joshua saved alive; and she dwelt in Israel to this day’ (6:25).

“Now that can be offensive. We say we can’t have that; the church is only for respectable, clean, middle-class folks. But that is like saying that hospitals are only for doctors, nurses, and x-ray machines instead of sick people.... Who...should be in churches but sinners? The church is not a club but a refuge for sinners who have been touched by the grace of God. Apparently, Rahab’s past did not bother the writer of the first Gospel. Rather, Matthew seemed to see in Rahab a trophy of divine grace. Astounding, isn’t it, that the shady lady of Jericho should be the ancestress of Jesus the Messiah (Matt. 1:5)?” [Davis, p. 29]

“...The first story in Joshua is a story of God’s mercy rather than of his wrath. Joshua is a book of harsh conquest, and the premise for the particularly destructive nature of this conquest is that ‘the sin of the Amorites’ had reached its full measure (see Gen. 15:16). That is, the people were ripe for judgment. All through Joshua we see God commanding the Jews utterly to destroy the nations occupying the land, a judgment that has its closest parallel in the destruction of the people of the earth (except Noah and his family) at the time of the great flood. Yet even in this book of harsh and utter judgment, the very first story is about the salvation of the harlot of Jericho.

“This is a story of great mercy, because Rahab had nothing going for her, humanly speaking. This is so striking that it is worth listing Rahab’s liabilities.

“1. *She was a Gentile.* It is true that throughout the long history of the Jewish people, God demonstrated a marvelous tendency to reach out and save certain representatives Gentiles. We think of Ruth the Moabitess or Naaman the Syrian. Still, as Jesus later said, ‘Salvation is from the Jews’ (John 4:22).... Rahab....was a Gentile and was, therefore, as Paul later told the Ephesians was their case, a foreigner ‘to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world’ (Eph. 2:12).

“2. *She was an Amorite.* The Amorites were only one of many peoples who occupied Canaan at this time.... But among these many peoples, who were now to be destroyed for their wickedness, the

Amorites were singled out for particular condemnation for their sin. They were a corrupt, vile people, even sacrificing children in their depraved religious practices.

“3. *She was a prostitute....* There is no doubt that she was a prostitute, just as the Samaritan woman was also sexually immoral. It is merely another case inexplicable grace of God reaching out to save such a one.” [Boice, p. 29-30]

“Rahab was a harlot in a heathen land. Some people have been embarrassed by this and have tried to tone it down, but it is impossible to do so. That is really what she was. It is the only thing the Hebrew word in Joshua 2:1 can mean,” [*The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaffer II*, p. 205]

“Why some try to avoid the name *harlot*...I see not, unless it be that they think it disgraceful to be the guests of a courtesan, or wish to wipe off a stigma from a woman who not only received the messengers kindly, but secured their safety by singular courage and prudence. It is indeed a regular practice with the Rabbins, when they would consult for the honor of their nation, presumptuously to wrest Scripture and give a different turn by their fictions to anything that seems not quite reputable.... We are furnished with a striking display of divine grace which could thus penetrate into a place of shame, and draw forth from it not only Rahab, but her father and the other members of her family.” [*Calvin’s Commentaries IV*, p. 43-44]

“In Heb. xi.31, and in James ii.25, she is commended. This commendation has greatly perplexed some Bible students; but on what account is she commended? For her previous life? No.... For her falsehood regarding the spies? No. For what, then, is she commended? In Hebrews she is eulogized for her faith, and in James for her works.” [*The Speaker’s Bible II*, p. 218]

“Unhappily, some people ask, ‘But is it fitting that this woman should become a princess and an ancestor of Christ?’ I should reply with all the strength that is in me: it is most fitting! In having been unfaithful to the Creator, is not the whole human race a harlot? Indeed, it is most fitting that Rahab should stand in the ancestral line of Christ. Matthew mentions five women in the genealogy he records, and moral charges were brought against every one of them. Jesus Christ did not come from a sinless human line. All, including Mary, needed this Savior. Even she said, ‘My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior’ (Luke 1:47). *All* the men and *all* the women in the ancestral line of Christ needed Christ as their Savior.

“After all, Rahab did not stand with the people of God as an unclean harlot. She had come under the blood of the coming Christ, she was the harlot cleansed. Is Rahab any worse than we? If it is not fitting that she should be the ancestress of Christ, is it fitting that we should be the bride of Christ? Woe to anybody who has such a mentality as to be upset by Rahab! Such a person does not “We all stand in Rahab’s place in the sight of a holy God.... We are all sinners.... Each of us deserves only one thing — the flaming judgment of God. If it were not for the spiritual portion of the covenant of grace and Christ’s death on Calvary’s cross, we would all be lost.”

“If we do not cast ourselves upon Christ, and His finished work, then we are not as wise as that harlot in a heathen land. We are under the judgment of God and will stay under it unto; we do what Rahab did. She believed. She came under the blood 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.” [*The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaffer II*, p. 211]

“In Matt. i.5, we learn that she became the wife of Salmon, and the mother of Boaz, who was the grandfather of Jesse. Most writers suppose that Salmon was one of the spies whom she so greatly befriended at a critical moment in their lives; if so, see that that not only gratitude but a more tender passion toward her filled his soul.” [*The Speaker’s Bible II*, p. 218]

### 1. **The Spies Sent** (2:1)

“It was promised Joshua that he should lead Israel into the promised land; yet he knew it was unsafe to presume.... Heaven is promised to us, but not to our carelessness, infidelity, disobedience.” [Joseph Hall, *Contemplations on the Historical Passages of the Old and New Testaments I*, (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1833), p. 231]

“...Joshua commands his messengers to spy out Jericho, he is preparing to besiege it, and accordingly is desirous to ascertain in what direction it may be most easily and safely approached.” [*Calvin’s Commentaries IV*, p. 43]

“He that would be happy in this spiritual warfare, must know where the strength of his enemy lieth; and must frame his guard according to the other’s assault.” [Hall I, p. 231]

“...The duty which he laid on the two spies...to enter Jericho and bring a report of its condition, was perhaps the most perilous to which it was possible for men to be called. It was like sending them into a den of lions, and expecting them to return safe and sound... Young men they are called further on (Joshua 6:23)... The two men had courage for the risky enterprise. Doubtless it was the courage that sprang from faith! It was in God’s service they went, and God’s protection would not fail them. To be able to find agents so willing and so suitable was a proof to Joshua that God had already begun to fulfill His promises.

“Joshua had been a spy himself, and it was natural enough that he should think of the same mode of reconnoitering the country, now that they were again on the eve of making the entrance into it which they should have made nearly forty years before... .

“...Its purpose was twofold — to obtain information and confirmation. Information as to the actual condition and spirit of the Canaanites, as to the view they took of the approaching invasion of the Israelites, and the impression that had been made on them by all the remarkable things that had happened in the desert; and confirmation, — new proof for his own people that God was with them, fresh encouragement to go up bravely to the attack, and fresh assurance that not one word would ever fail them of all the things which the Lord had promised.” [Blaikie, p. 653]

”Moses had sent spies (Numbers 13) Joshua himself was one of them and it proved of ill consequence. Yet Joshua now sent spies, not, as the former were sent, to survey the whole land, but Jericho only; not to bring the account to the whole congregation, but to Joshua only, who, like a watchful general, was continually projecting for the public good, and, was particularly careful to take the first step well and not to stumble at the threshold... Faith in God’s promise ought not to supersede but encourage our diligence in the use of proper means. Joshua is sure he has God with him, and yet sends men before him. We do not trust God, but tempt him, if our expectations slacken our endeavors.

“...See how ready these men were to go upon this hazardous enterprise. Though they put their lives in their hands yet they ventured in obedience to Joshua their general, in zeal for the service of the camp, and in dependence upon the power of that God who, being the keeper of Israel in general, is the protector of every particular Israelite in the way of his duty.” [*Matthew Henry’s Commentary II*, p. 7]

“...The gates being shut, the city like a prison excluded the hope of escape.” [*Calvin’s Commentaries IV*, p. 48]

## 2. **The Spies Hidden** (2:2-7)

“It is probable that watchmen had been appointed to take notice of suspicious strangers, as it wont to be done in doubtful emergencies, or during an apprehension of war. The Israelites were nigh at hand; they had openly declared to the Edomites and Moabites that they were seeking a settlement in the land of Canaan; they were formidable for their number; they had already made a large conquest after slaying two neighboring kings; and as we shall shortly perceive, their famous passage of the Red Sea had been noised abroad. It would therefore have argued extreme supineness in such manifest danger to allow any strangers whatever to pass freely through the city of Jericho, situated as it was on the frontiers.

“It is not wonderful, therefore, that men who were unknown and who appeared from many circumstances to have come with a hostile intention, were denounced to the king... The king sends for them; they are lurking in the house; their life hangs upon the tongue of a woman, just as if it were hanging by a thread.” [*Calvin’s Commentaries IV*, p. 44-45]

“Where cannot the God of heaven either find or raise up friends, to his own causes and servants? [Hall I, p. 233]

“The providence of God directing the spies to the house of Rahab.... Rahab showed her guests more than common civility, and went upon an uncommon principle in what she did; it was *by faith* that she received those with peace against whom her king and country had denounced war, Hebrews 11:31.... She hid them upon the roof of the house, which was flat, and covered them with stalks of flax (v. 6), so that, if the officers should come thither to search for them, there they might lie undiscovered.... When she was examined concerning them, she denied they were in her house, turned off the officers that had a warrant to search for them with a sham, and so secured them.... Rahab not only disowned that she knew them, or knew where they were, but, that no further search might be made for them in the city, told the pursuers they had gone away again and in all probability might be overtaken, v. 4, 5.” [Matthew Henry’s Commentary II, p. 7]

“Thus Rahab acquired immortality...” [William Lyon Phelps, *Human Nature in the Bible*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922), p. 81]

“The mercy of our God doth not measure us by what we were, It. Would be wide with the best of us, if the eye of God should look backward to our former estate; there he should see Abraham an idolater, Paul a persecutor; Manasses a necromancer; Mary Magdalen a courtesan; and the best vile enough to be ashamed of himself. Who can despair of mercy that sees even Rahab fetched into the blood of Israel, and line of Christ?” [Hall I, p. 231-232]

“We are sure this was a good work: it is canonized by the apostle (James 2:25), where she is said to be *justified by works*, and this is specified, that *she received the messengers, and sent them out another way*, and she did it by faith, such a faith as set her above the fear of man, even of the wrath of the king. She believed, upon the report she had heard of the wonders wrought for Israel, that their God was the only true God, and that therefore their declared design upon Canaan would undoubtedly take effect and in this faith she sided with them, protected them, and courted their favor. Had she said, ‘I believe God is yours and Canaan yours, but I dare not show you any kindness,’ her faith had been dead and inactive, and would not have justified her. But by this it appeared to be both alive and lively, that she exposed herself to the utmost peril, even of life, in obedience to her faith.” [Matthew Henry’s Commentary II, p. 7]

“*Rahab and the spies*. — I. Joshua’s conduct. 1. He does not despise the use of means. 2. The use of ordinary means, where possible, is a law of God’s kingdom. II. The conduct of the spies. 1. They were unmurmuring on a task of the utmost peril. 2. They preferred duty to reputation. 3. They did not recklessly expose themselves to danger. III. Rahab’s conduct. 1. Her faith. 2. Her unselfishness. 3. Her falsehood....” —J. J. Lias in *Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I*, p. 563]

“And now her tongue hides them no less than her hand.” [Hall I, p. 233]

“...The writer....is not very interested in picky ethical questions based on verses 4-6, endless wranglings and discussions about whether it was right for Rahab to lie to the Jericho police, and so on. It is tragic when people snag their pants on the nail of Rahab’s *lie*, quibble endlessly about the matter, and never get around to hearing Rahab’s *truth* (vv. 8-13), which the writer has conspired to make the center of the whole narrative.... Naturally, the New Testament does not fall into this trap. It consistently stresses the *faith* of Rahab (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25).

“This does not mean that the biblical writer necessarily approves of Rahab’s lie or that he authorizes us to go and do likewise, He neither approves nor disapproves of Rahab’s lie’ rather, he ignores it (i.e., its ethical implications). Of course, Bible readers must always be careful to distinguish between what the Bible reports and what it recommends, between what it records and what it requires. The Bible reports that Jacob had four wives; it is hardly encouraging us to do the same.” [Davis, p. 26-27]

“It is plain that she deceived the officers that examined her with an untruth — That she knew not whence the men were, that they had gone out, that she knew not whither they had gone. What shall we say to this? If she had either told the truth or been silent, she would have betrayed the spies, and this would certainly have been a great sin; and it does not appear that she had any other way of concealing them that by this ironical direction to the officers to pursue them another way, which if they would suffer themselves to be deceived by, let them be deceived.... This case was

altogether extraordinary, and therefore cannot be drawn into a precedent..." [*Matthew Henry's Commentary* II, p. 8]

"...Although our purpose, be to assist our brethren, to consult for their safety and relieve them, it never can be lawful to lie, because that cannot be right which is contrary to the nature of God. And God is truth. And still the act of Rahab is not devoid of the praise of virtue, although it was not spotlessly pure.... The crafty proceeding, therefore, so far taints an act which was laudable in itself. And yet the particular fault does not wholly deprive the deed of the merit of holy zeal; for by the kindness of God the fault is suppressed and not taken into account. ... The bad mixed up with the good was not imputed." [*Calvin's Commentaries* IV, p. 47-48]

"The most dangerous of all moral dilemmas: when we are obliged to conceal truth in order to help the truth to be victorious. If this should at any time become our duty in the role assigned to us..., how strait must be our path at all times..." [Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings* translated by Leif Sjöberg and W. H. Auden, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), p. 147]

### 3. **The harlot protected** (2:8-21)

"...Rahab... bargains with so much presence of mind, and so calmly, for her own safety and that of her family. And in this composure and firmness her faith, which is elsewhere commended, appears conspicuous. For on human principles she never would have braved the fury of the king and people, and become a suppliant to guests half dead with terror. Many, indeed, think there is something ridiculous in the eulogium bestowed upon her both by St. James and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31) when they place her in the catalogue of the faithful. But any one who will carefully weigh all the circumstances will easily perceive that she was endowed with a lively faith.

"*First*, If the tree is known by its fruits, we here see no ordinary effects, which are just so many evidences of faith. *Secondly*, A principle of piety must have given origin to her conviction that the neighboring nations were already in a manner vanquished and laid prostrate, since terror sent from above had filled all minds with dismay...Rahab declaring in sincerity of heart that God has destined the land for the children of Israel....Rahab recognizes the operation of a divine hand in striking the nations of Canaan with dismay, and thus making them as it were by anticipation pronounce their own doom; and she infers that the terror which the children of Israel have inspired is a presage of victory, because they fight under God as their Leader.

"In the fact, that while the courage of all had thus melted away, they however prepared to resist with the obstinacy of despair; we see that when the wicked are broken and crushed by the hand of God, they are not so subdued as to receive the yoke, but in their terror and anxiety become incapable of being tamed. Here, too, we have to observe how in a common fear believers differ from unbelievers, and how the faith of Rahab displays itself. She herself was afraid like any other of the people; but when she reflects that she has to do with God, she concludes that her only remedy is to eschew evil by yielding humbly and placidly, as resistance would be altogether unavailing. But what is the course taken by all the wretched inhabitants of the country? Although terror-struck, so far is their perverseness from being overcome that they stimulate each other to the conflict." [*Calvin's Commentaries* IV, p. 48-50]

"It had been an ill nature in Rahab, if she had been content to be saved alone. That her love might be a match to her faith, she covenants for all her family, and so returns life to those of whom she received it." [Hall I, p. 234]

"The prophetic words of triumph in Moses' song were now fulfilled (Exod. xv.14-16; comp. also Deut. xi.25).... The inhabitants of the land had heard of two important events, which filled them with alarm; (a) the drying up of the Red Sea before the Israelites (cf. Ps. cvi.7, 9. 22; cxxxiv.13); (b) the defeat of Jahaz of Sihon, king of the Amorites and of Edrei of Og, the giant king of the district. —*Camb. Bib.* in *Gray & Adams Bible Commentary* I, p. 563]

"The woman had an eye to see, and an ear to hear. She had not gazed in stupid amazement on the marvelous tokens of Divine power displayed before the world, nor accepted the sophistry of skeptics referring all these marvels to accidental thunderstorms and earthquakes and high winds.

She knew better than to suppose that a nation of slaves by their own resources could have eluded all the might of Pharaoh, subsisted for forty years in the wilderness, and annihilated the forces of such renowned potentates as Sihon and Og. She was no philosopher, and could not have reasoned on the doctrine of causation, but her common sense taught her that you cannot have extraordinary effects without corresponding causes. It is one of the great weaknesses of modern unbelief that with all its pretensions to philosophy, it is constantly accepting effects without an adequate cause. Jesus Christ, though He revolutionized the world, though He founded an empire to which that of the Caesars is not for a moment to be compared, though all that were about Him admitted His supernatural power and person, after all, was nothing but a man. The gospel that has brought peace and joy to so many weary hearts, that has transformed the slaves of sin into children of heaven, that has turned cannibals into saints, and fashioned so many an angelic character out of the rude blocks of humanity, is but a cunningly devised fable. What contempt for such sophistries, such vain explanations of facts patent to all, would this poor woman have shown! How does she rebuke the many that keep pottering in poor natural explanations of plain supernatural facts, instead of manfully admitting that it is the Arm of God that has been revealed, and the Voice of God that has spoken!" [Blaikie, p. 654-655]

"Undoubtedly, there was much about the faith and history of Israel that Rahab did not know. She had heard only of God's acts in delivering the Jews from Egypt and of the victory he had given them over the two Amorite nations east of the Jordan. But that was enough! She did not have the adoption, the covenants, the law, the worship, or the promises. But she had ears, and she heard what God did and believed on him as a result....

"*Rahab put her life on the line....* If the messengers of the king had failed to accept her word that the spies had left before sundown and had entered her house and discovered the men on her roof, she would have immediately been dragged before the king, and probably have been horribly tortured before being killed." [Boice, p. 31-32] See Romans 10:17!

"The Canaanites had heard as well as she, of those mighty works of God, yet they believed not, but grew obstinate, and perished in their resolution to resist the Israelites, and therefore were exterminated. They heard to some degree of fear, 'for their hearts melted within them;' but they heard not to any degree of faith, for they submitted not, but prepared to resist the purpose of God, and his design of giving his people the land." [*The Complete Works of Thomas Manton XV*, (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1871), p. 32]

"If this poor inn-keeper knew of the sea dried up before Israel, and of the discomfiture of Og, and Sihon, surely this rumor was stale with the king of Jericho; he had heard it, and feared; and yet instead of sending ambassadors for peace, he sends pursuivants for the spies. The spirit of Rahab melted with the same report, wherewith the king of Jericho was hardened." [Hall I, p. 232]

"Here the image of Rahab's faith appears, as if reflected in a mirror, when casting down all idols she ascribes the government of heaven and earth to the God of Israel alone. For it is perfectly clear that when heaven and earth are declared subject to the God of Israel, there is a repudiation of all the pagan fictions by which the majesty, and power, and glory of God are portioned out among different deities; and hence we see that it is not without cause that two Apostles have honored Rahab's conduct with the title of *faith*.... Rahab does not speak hesitatingly, but declares, in absolute terms, that whatever power exists resides in the God of Israel alone, that he commands all the elements, that he orders all things above and below, and determines human affairs.... In surrendering herself to his power, she gives a proof of her election..." [*Calvin's Commentaries IV*, p. 51-52]

"...As Origen observed, she acknowledgeth what is past, believeth what is present, and foretelleth what is to come." [*The Complete Works of Thomas Manton IV*, p. 267]

"Rahab is dwelling with her people in a fortified city: and yet she commits her life to her terrified guests, just as if they had already gained possession of the land, and had full power to save or destroy as they pleased. This voluntary surrender was, in fact, the very same as embracing the promise of God, and casting herself on his protection. She, moreover, exacts an oath, because

often, in the storming of cities, the heat and tumult of the struggle shook off the remembrance of duty. In the same way she mentions the kindness she had shown to them, that gratitude might stimulate them the more to perform their promise. For although the obligation of the oath ought of itself to have been effectual, it would have been doubly base and inhumane not to show gratitude to a hostess to whom they owed deliverance. Rahab shows the kindliness of her disposition, in her anxiety about her parents and kindred.” [Calvin’s Commentaries IV, p. 52]

“Consider — I. The service she rendered. 1. What she did; 2. From what principle she acted (He. xi.31). II. The reward she obtained. 1. She and all her family were preserved; 2. She is enrolled amongst the number of God’s most eminent saints; 3. She was made an ancestor of the Messiah Himself. Learn — (1) There is no person so vile but he or she may become an eminent saint; (2) Faith, if true, will uniformly produce good works; (3) Whatever we do for God shall most assuredly be richly rewarded.” [Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I, p. 563]

“The matter is here settled between Rahab and the spies respecting the service she was now to do for them, and the favor they were afterwards to show to her. She secures them on condition that they should secure her.

“I. She gives them, and by them sends to Joshua and Israel, all the encouragement that could be desired to make their intended descent upon Canaan. This was what they came for, and it was worth coming for.... She lets them know that the report of the great things God had done for them had come to Jericho (v. 10), not only that they had an account of their late victories obtained over the Amorites in the neighboring country, on the other side of the river, but that their miraculous deliverance out of Egypt, and passage through the Red Sea, a great way off, and forty years ago, were remembered and talked of afresh in Jericho, to the amazement of every body.... She tells them what impressions the tidings of these things had made upon the Canaanites: *Your terror has fallen upon us* (v. 9); *our hearts did melt*, v. 11. (p. 8)... She hereupon makes profession of her faith in God and his promise.... ‘Jehovah your God, whom you worship and call upon, is so far above all gods that he is the only true God; for *he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath*, and is served by all the hosts of both.’... Heaven is not above his power, nor is earth below his cognizance. She believes his promise to his people Israel (v. 9): *I know that the Lord hath given you the land*....

“II. She engaged them to take her and her relations under their protection, that they might not perish in the destruction of Jericho, v. 12, 13... Her petition is very just and reasonable, that, since she had protected them, they should protect her, and since her kindness to them extended to their people, for whom they were now negotiating, their kindness to her should take in all hers. It was the least they could do for one that had saved their lives with the hazard of her own.... This Rahab was afterwards advanced to be a princess in Israel, the wife of Salmon, and one of the ancestors of Christ, Matthew 1:5. Those that faithfully serve Christ and suffer for him he will not only protect, but prefer, and will do for them *more than they are able to ask or think*.

“III. They solemnly engaged for her preservation in the common destruction (v. 14): ‘*Our life for yours*.’ We will take as much care of your lives as of our own, and would as soon hurt ourselves as any of you.” Nay, they imprecate God’s judgments on themselves if they should violate their promise to her. She had pawned her life for theirs, and now they in requital pawn their lives for hers.... 1. The promises they made her. In general, “*We will deal kindly and truly with thee*, v. 14. We will not only be kind in promising now, but true in performing what we promise; and not only true in performing just what we promise, but kind in out-doing thy demands and expectations.’...(p. 9) They will protect Rahab, and all her relations always, provided, (1.) That she tie the scarlet cord with which she was now about to let them down in the window of her house, v. 18. This was to be a mark upon the house, which the spies would take care to give notice of to the camp of Israel, that no soldier, how hot and eager soever he was in military executions, might offer any violence to the house that was thus distinguished. This was like the blood sprinkled upon the door-post, which secured the first-born from the destroying angel, and, being of the same color, some allude to this also to represent the safety of believers under the

protection of the blood of Christ sprinkled on the conscience. The same cord that she made use of for the preservation of these Israelites was to be made use of for her preservation. (2.) That she should have all those whose safety she had desired in the house with her and keep them there, and that, at the time of taking the town, none of them should dare to stir out of doors, v. 18, 19. This was a *necessary* proviso, for Rahab's kindred could not be distinguished any other way than by being in her distinguished house; should they mingle with their neighbors, there was no remedy, but the sword would devour *one as well as another*. It was a *reasonable* proviso that, since they were saved purely for Rahab's sake, her house should have the honor of being their castle, and that, if they would not *perish with those that believed not*. They should thus far believe the certainty and severity of the ruin coming upon their city as to retire into a place made safe by promise, as Noah into the ark...and should *save themselves from this untoward generation*, by separating from them.... (3.) That she should keep counsel (v. 14, 20): *If thou utter this our business*, that is, 'If thou betray us when we are gone, or if thou make this agreement public, so as that others tie scarlet lines in their windows and so confound us, then we will be clear of thy oath.'...

"IV. She then took effectual care to secure her new friends, and *sent them out another way*, James 2:25. Having fully understood the bargain they made with her, and consented to it (v. 21), she then *let them down by a cord* over the city wall (v. 15), the situation of her house befriending them herein... She also directed them which way to go for their own safety, being better acquainted with the country than they were, v. 16, she directs them to leave the high road, and abscond in the mountains till the pursuers returned, for till then they could not safely venture over Jordan.... Providence must be trusted, but not tempted. Calvin thinks that their charge to Rahab to keep this matter secret, and not to utter it, was intended for her safety, lest she, boasting of her security from the sword of Israel, should, before they came to protect her, fall into the hands of the king of Jericho and be put to death for treason: thus do they prudently advise her for her safety, as she advised them for theirs." [*Matthew Henry's Commentary II*, p. 8-10]

"They imprecate death upon themselves, if they do not faithfully make it their business to save Rahab.... They constitute themselves, therefore, a kind of expiatory victims, if any evil befalls Rahab through their negligence. The expression, *for yours*, ought, doubtless, to be extended to the parents, brothers, and sisters. They therefore render their own lives liable in such a sense, that blood may be required of them, if the family of Rahab do not remain safe. And herein consists the sanctity of an oath, that though its violation may escape with impunity, so far as men are concerned, yet God having been interposed as a witness, will take account of the perfidy....

"A condition, however, is inserted, — provided Rahab do not divulge what they have said. This was inserted, not on account of distrust, as is usually expounded, but only to put Rahab more upon her guard, on her own account. The warning, therefore, was given in good faith, and flowed from pure good will: for there was a danger that Rahab might betray herself by a disclosure. In one word, they show how important it is that the matter should remain, as it were, buried, lest the woman, by inconsiderately talking of the compact, might expose herself to capital punishment. In this they show that they were sincerely anxious for her safety, since they thus early caution her against doing anything which might put it out of their power to render her a service. In further distinctly stipulating, that no one should go out of the house, or otherwise they should be held blameless, we may draw the important inference, that in making oaths soberness should be carefully attended to, that we may not profane the name of God by making futile promises on any subject." [*Calvin's Commentaries IV*, p. 53]

"*The scarlet thread*, — I. A remembrance to her of mercy she was to expect. II. A remembrance to Israel of a great kindness done to the spies. III. A pledge of safety to all who were in the house. Learn — 1. So Israel of old was safe behind the blood-sprinkled doors; 2. So our salvation is secured by a crimson sign." [*Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I*, p. 564]

"In all ages of the Church, the deliverance of Rahab has been deemed typical of salvation through the blood of Christ. The scarlet line has always suggested the blood of redemption. ...The suggestion

has occurred to almost all students of Scripture and preachers of redemption. It is in line with the significance of the blood of the Paschal Lamb on the lintel and side posts of the doors of the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. The scarlet cord was the means of the salvation of the messengers, and later of the salvation of Rahab and her household. Only that scarlet cord could insure safety.... It is interesting that interpreters have so heartily agreed on the typical significance of the scarlet line. Thus we find Clement, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Theodoret all following and emphasizing this thought....

“Rahab was saved in precisely the same way that every sinner is saved. God has not different ways of deliverance in different ages. There is only one way — the way of faith... It is by the same scarlet line that every human soul escapes from the city of destruction and is drawn up to heaven. It is the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world that alone can cleanse from sin every human soul that trust in it, that alone can deliver it from the Divine wrath due to its sins....

“But what was dark and mysterious to Rahab is clearly revealed to us. She lived in an age of types and shadows. For her there was not, as yet, any real sacrifice for sin.... But Christ has come, and by His one all-sufficient sacrifice has turned shadows into realities, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.... Safer than the Israelites within their blood-sprinkled door-posts, safer than the priests under the red ram skin coverings of the tabernacle, safer than Rahab with the scarlet line hanging from her window will everyone be who has no confidence in the flesh, but trusts in the blood and righteousness of our Savior Jesus Christ.” [*The Speaker’s Bible* II, p. 220-221]

“Behold, this is the saving color! The destroying angel sees the door-cheeks of the Israelites sprinkled with red, and passes over. The warriors of Israel see the window of Rahab dyed with red, and save her family from the common destruction. If our souls have this tincture of the precious blood of our Savior, upon our doors or windows, we are safe.” [Hall I, p. 235]

“The scarlet line would not have saved Rahab if she had not fastened it in the window, to be the mark that her house, with its inmates, was to be spared.” [Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* XLII, (1896), p. 596]

“Virtual oath; may God put us to death if we fail thee.” [*Gray & Adams Bible Commentary* I, p. 564]

“The description of Rahab’s house as being upon the town wall (2:15) seems to be an evidence of antiquity. Excavation has shown that houses were build upon the walls...” [Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 174]

“Sometimes in Eastern cities houses are built on the walls with overhanging windows. Compare the escape of Paul from Damascus.” [*Gray & Adams Bible Commentary* I, p. 564]

“The advice of Rahab, to turn aside into the mountain, and there remain quiet for three days, shows that there is no repugnance between faith and the precautions which provide against manifest dangers. There is no doubt that the messengers crept off to the mountain in great fear, and yet that confidence which they had conceived, from the remarkable interference of God in their behalf, directed their steps, and did not allow them to lose their presence of mind.” [*Calvin’s Commentaries* IV, p. 53-54]

“**mountain**, Quarantania (how Jebel Karantul) 1,200 to 1,400 feet high. It is literally honeycombed with caves, so that a man might be concealed for months in the immediate neighborhood of Jericho without detection.” [*Gray & Adams Bible Commentary* I, p. 564]

#### 4. **The spies’ return** (2:22-24)

“We have here the safe return of the spies Joshua had sent, and the great encouragement they brought with them to Israel to proceed in their descent upon Canaan. Had they been disposed to discourage the people, as the evil spies did that Moses sent, they might have told them what they had observed of the height and strength of the walls of Jericho, and the extraordinary vigilance of the king of Jericho, and how narrowly they escaped out of his hands; but they were of another spirit, and, depending themselves upon the divine promise, they animated Joshua likewise.... ‘*All the inhabitants of the country*, though resolved to stand it out, yet *do faint because of us*, they

have neither wisdom to yield nor courage to fight,' whence they conclude, '*Truly the Lord has delivered into our hands all the land, it is all our own; we have nothing to do, in effect, but to take possession.*'" [*Matthew Henry's Commentary II*, p. 10]

"The advice of Rahab, to turn aside into the mountain, and there remain quiet for three days, shows that there is no repugnance between faith and the precautions which provide against manifest dangers. There is no doubt that the messengers crept off to the mountain in great fear, and yet that confidence which they had conceived, from the remarkable interference of God in their behalf, directed their steps, and did not allow them to lose their presence of mind." [*Calvin's Commentaries IV*, p. 53-54]

"This passage shows that Joshua was not mistaken in selecting his spies; for their language proves them to have been right-hearted men possessed of rare integrity. Others, perhaps, not recovered from the terror into which they had once been thrown, would have disturbed the whole camp, but these, while they reflect on the wonderful kindness of God, displayed in their escape from danger, and the happy issue of their expedition, exhort Joshua and the people to go boldly forward. And although the mere promise of possessing the land ought to have been sufficient, yet the Lord is so very indulgent to their weakness, that, for the sake of removing all doubt, he confirms what he had promised by experience. That the Lord had not spoken in vain, was proved by the consternation of the nations, when it began already to put them to flight and to drive them out, as if hornets had been sent in upon them. For they argue in the same way as Rahab had done, that the land was given to them, as the inhabitants had almost fainted away from fear." [*Calvin's Commentaries IV*, p. 55]

"...This was the most important part of their communication, that the inhabitants of the land were utterly dispirited and cast down." [*Gray & Adams Bible Commentary I*, p. 565]