

Rahab's Faith, Window, and Household — December 8, 2024

Joshua 2 and 6; Jericho as the Condemned World; Spies and Messengers; The Window, the Door, and the Scarlet Thread; The Household of Blessing; and 1 John 5

Scripture Reading: Joshua 2:1–21; 6:21–25; 1 John 5:1–5, 19–21; 1 Corinthians 10:7, 14

“For Jehovah your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.” (Joshua 2:11)

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1 John 5:4)

Egypt and Jericho: Two Aspects of the World

Egypt speaks of the world in one aspect — the place of enslavement from which the Lord delivered his people, a place with attractions that can entice the heart back toward bondage. Even after Israel was delivered from Egypt, they hankered after its food, its leeks and onions and garlic, so much so that some expressed willingness to return to slavery for those things. Egypt represents the world's power to hold by its attractions.

Jericho speaks of the world in a different aspect. It is the world already under condemnation for having rejected Christ. The sentence has already been given. John 3 tells us that those who do not believe are already judged. The destruction has not yet fallen only because the Lord is not willing that any should perish and he tarries. But Jericho was not merely an enticement; it was an obstacle. The

children of Israel could not enter into the good of the land God had given them until Jericho was dealt with. So too, the world in its Jericho aspect seeks to prevent the believer from entering into the full enjoyment of all that Christ has given. It does not have to be overtly sinful. It is the weight of things — the entanglements, the concerns, the preoccupations — that keep the soul from coming into the rest and inheritance that God has for it.

Spies and Messengers: The Dual Character of the Witness in the World

The two men sent to Jericho are called spies in Joshua and Hebrews, but messengers in James. Both words are right for different aspects of their mission. To Jericho they were spies — their presence was itself a portent and a testimony of the coming judgment. The king knew it: men have come here to spy out the land so they can destroy us. As spies, their presence said to the inhabitants: a sentence is coming.

To Rahab they were messengers — they brought news of deliverance, of God's grace operating even in a city under sentence. The story does not unfold as a formal gospel presentation; the spies did not announce their purpose at Rahab's door. But the Lord had already prepared her heart, and they were the means through which the grace of God reached her.

This dual character belongs to every believer in the world. Is my life a testimony — as the spies' presence was a testimony — that a sentence of destruction has been pronounced on this world and God in righteousness will carry it out? If I blend entirely into Jericho without distinction, where is that testimony? And equally, do I carry a message of grace to those whom the Lord has prepared to hear? Abraham besought the Lord for Sodom: if there be but five righteous, will you spare the city? Angels were sent to extract the one righteous person before judgment fell. Messengers were present at Sodom too, and their presence brought

out the wickedness of the city and confirmed that God was just in destroying it.

The Window, Not the Door: Rahab's Faith and Its Direction

When the king came looking for the spies, Rahab told him they had gone out through the door and left by the city gate. This was not true. They went out through a window — the window through which the scarlet cord later hung. The distinction between the door and the window carries moral weight. The door opened onto Jericho, the world under condemnation. To go out through the door was to go back into that. The window opened in a different direction. Rahab's house was on the city wall, and her window looked toward where the army of the Lord was assembling. Her window represented the direction of her faith — toward God, toward the God of Israel who is God of the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

Daniel's window is another that points in the right direction. When the law was passed that no one could pray to anyone but the king, Daniel opened his window toward Jerusalem and prayed. His was not a window toward the city of Babylon; it was a window toward the city of God. Eutychus, on the other hand, fell out of a city-facing window while the apostle Paul was ministering in the room behind him. He was there in body but his gaze was elsewhere. And Lot, when Abraham offered him a choice, looked out and chose what seemed naturally attractive — a looking that led toward Sodom. What matters is not simply that there is a window, but where the window faces. Rahab's window faced toward deliverance.

The sign that marked her window was a scarlet thread — the cord by which the spies had been let down. When they returned with the armies of Israel, that window with the scarlet mark was the sign of preservation. It speaks of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the mark of his atoning death, the token by which those within are preserved from the judgment that falls on all who are outside. The

mark was not on the door, as the blood was on the door lintel and posts at the Passover in Egypt. This mark was on the window. Rahab's faith had a heavenward look.

The Household of Blessing

The terms of the spies' oath were generous: whosoever shall be with thee in the house shall be preserved. Any of her family who came into her house would be safe. The Lord delights to bless in households. A concordance search on house and household through the New Testament will yield a dozen households mentioned — house churches, the household of Stephanas, couples known for hospitality, the house that was the center of Christian assembly. The Lord's pattern is to bless households.

Rahab's response was not to say, can we do this at my father's house? Her father's house was just another house in Jericho. The household of blessing was her house — the house where there was faith, the house where the God of Israel was acknowledged, the house toward which the scarlet thread pointed. The Lord would not go to Jericho to search out those who should be saved; they had to come to the house where his mark was.

This is the pattern. It is my house that should be the household of blessing, the place where the Lord is known and his mark is seen. I do not need to go into Jericho and fellowship there so that the Lord can bless. The Lord will prepare hearts, and the prepared hearts will come to where the blessing is. My responsibility is that my house actually is a household where the Lord is prominent and from which those who come may learn of him. Rahab's faith, her window, and her household together tell one story: this is how one person in a condemned city was preserved and brought into the inheritance.

The Victory That Overcomes the World: 1 John 5

First John 5:4 states the principle that underlies Rahab's whole history: whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Rahab's faith overcame Jericho for her. She was not delivered by strategy or by alliance or by her own ingenuity. She was delivered by the faith that identified her with the people of God and recognized that Jehovah was God.

First Corinthians 10:7 adds the warning: neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them — the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. That is identified as idolatry. Not the golden calf directly, but the eating and drinking and playing without God. Idolatry is any object other than Christ. It may be the smallest thing — food, leisure, family, work, reputation. When it occupies the place that belongs to Christ, it is an idol. Cain went out from the presence of God and built his city, making himself comfortable in the world without God. The same temptation comes to those who know the Lord: not to be drawn out by the attractions of Egypt, but to become comfortable in Jericho without that heavenward window, without the scarlet cord, without the testimony that this world is under judgment and deliverance is on its way.

*Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.
— And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*