

Joshua 2

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles, go with me to the book of Joshua, Joshua chapter 2, Joshua chapter 2. Boy, this one is sensitive, isn't it? Joshua chapter 2, sorry about that, I didn't mean to hit it. So we're just continuing to make our way through the Old Testament, and we have just recently come into the book of Joshua.

We've looked at it a couple of times. We will be looking at the second chapter in its entirety this evening. Again, an account that I think at times we're very familiar with, a person that we're familiar with or we ought to be familiar with in Scripture, someone that is mentioned several times throughout Scripture and always with a kind of a caveat of description of this individual. And we understand it, we see it, but it is just this great picture that we see in the book of Joshua. Historically, remember, the nation of Israel is really on the edge of going into the promised land. And I told you, as we gathered together last time, that the events in the second half of the first chapter, so Joshua's command or charge to the commanders to tell the people to prepare themselves, and Joshua's charge to the two and a half tribes staying on the eastern side of the Jordan River, those events took place in connection with the events found in Joshua chapter 3, because Joshua chapter 3 tells us that the people move from Shittim to the edge of the Jordan River, and they're on the banks of the Jordan River.

Here, we find out kind of what bridges the gap, so what takes place before they move. And it shows us in this second chapter, kind of what we would call the reconnaissance mission or Joshua's preparation.

[1 : 46] Now, we don't want to look at this as being rebellion or rebellious, as what happened some 38 years prior to this at Kadesh Barnea, because God has really encouraged the faith of Joshua.

God has challenged him and said, Be strong and courageous. You're about to go into the promised land. You're going to lead this people. Joshua's not a religious leader. He is a political leader, or he is a physical leader.

He is leading the people as commander, and he is there to kind of fulfill God's purpose of leading his people into the promised land and distributing the promised land. He is one who has walked hand in hand with Moses.

Moses is introduced in the book of Joshua as the servant of the Lord, and Joshua is introduced as the servant of Moses. By the time we get to the end of the book of Joshua, Joshua will be stated as Joshua the servant of the Lord.

So he is really moving from serving Moses and being kind of the helper or the assistant to Moses to going into that position of God using him for what he's been preparing him for.

[2 : 53] All those years of serving and assisting Moses and being kind of around him has prepared him for this ultimate purpose, the one who bridges the gap from the exodus to the entry.

He is the one who brings them in. God uses him. Now, we've also understood as we get to the book of Joshua that his given name was Hosea, which means salvation.

Moses changes his name to Joshua, which means Yahweh saves. So he himself is not the Savior. He is the one who demonstrates to them that Yahweh saves, and it is his promise, that is Yahweh's or God's promise, that brings the people into the nation or the land of Canaan and distributes it among the nation of Israel.

So here we begin to start seeing those first few steps in Joshua chapter 2. The text says, 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. It was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land. And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, Bring out the men who have come to you and who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.

[4 : 17] 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. It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark that the men went out, and I do not know where the men went.

Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them. 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. 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.

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

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.

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. 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, and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sister with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.

[5 : 37] 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. Then she led them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall.

She said to them, Go to the hill country, so that the pursuers will not happen upon you, and hide yourself there for three days, until the pursuers return. Then afterward, you may go on your way. The men said to her, We shall be free from this oath to you, which you have made us swear, 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 and to the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father's household. 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. But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be free from the oath which you have made us swear.

[6 : 41] She said, According to your word, so be it. So she sent them away, and they departed, and she tied this scarlet cord in the window. 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 they had not found them. 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.

So 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. Joshua chapter 2. We read the account of the two spies going into the land of Canaan and spying out the land, especially Jericho, which will be the first place which Joshua plans to attack.

A couple of things that we see significant here is he no longer sends a multitude and he doesn't send them publicly. It tells us very clearly that he sends them out privately. Many Bible scholars believe, and I think accurately so, that the reason Joshua sent them privately is in case they came back, they didn't come back and report to the multitude of the nation their findings, they came back to Joshua himself and report it.

And in case they came back with what would be considered an unfavorable report, it wouldn't discourage the people as had happened at Kadesh Barnea 38 years before this. And we also see that they go into the land, they come back to Joshua and tell them and say, yes, absolutely, we're going to go in.

[8 : 00] Joshua is not doubting what God has commanded him to do. This isn't a reconnaissance mission of seeing if we should go into the land. This is a mission of preparation and since God has called us to go in, we need to be fully equipped.

Remember, we looked at that when we introduced the book that faith always leads us to work, right? We do not earn our way through works, but because of our faith, we do work. That is, he took the steps that he himself needed to take as a military and political leader to be fully prepared for what awaited them on the other side.

This is why they go into Jericho. This is one of the most amazing stories that we find in scripture in its entirety because we understand, two times it tells us in this text, that Rahab's house was on the wall.

She lived on the wall. And you do remember that the walls of Jericho fell down except for where Rahab's house was, right? It was spared. And that's the beautiful picture of this.

Historians and archeologists and scholars will tell you that because she told them to go into the hill country, to the western side of Jericho, would have been the hilly terrain that had a bunch of caves in it.

[9 : 10] And more than likely, she was encouraging them to go reside in those caves for those three days. Now, what side of Jericho did I say that was on? It was on the western side because in the Old Testament, when you go east, you what?

You always go away from the presence of God, right? Remember that? So on the western side, it's amazing when you start reading these consistent themes. She is more than likely situated on the western side of the city of Jericho.

And it is there that she sends them into that land of the hill country so that they can elude the grasp of the men who came to go find them. But more than all those things, what we have before us here is the hope of the sinful outcast.

We have the hope of the sinful outcast because God is giving the land to his people. And if we want to argue the reality that God is not a big mean God, we're not here to argue those things, but if we want to counter the argue of the God of the Old Testament is a big mean God, then there would be no hope for anyone other than God's special select people.

God's actions and God's mercies and grace are exhibited through his people, right? This is why we always have, even when they left Egypt, there was a mixed multitude that went with them.

[10 : 27] Their people are always blessed through God's people. Here, going into the promised land, Rahab, probably the least likely candidate to find hope and salvation and security in a holy God among a holy people or what was to be a holy people, be holy as I am holy, she finds it here.

Here is one of the great signs, if you will, or not signs, or one of the great accounts of the hope of all of sinful mankind, especially in particular in light of the soon coming and looming destruction.

Jericho is one of the cities that was committed to utter destruction. If something could be burned, then it would be burned. If something could pass through the fire, it was to be given to the Lord.

Everything was consecrated in Jericho. It utterly belonged to the Lord. There were to be no spoils of the battle among God's people.

This is what gets Achan in trouble, right? Because Achan sees something, it looks good, and he takes it. We are getting ahead of ourselves, but he took some of the spoils. Everything in Jericho is devoted to the Lord God.

[11 : 38] It is the firstfruits of their battles, and the first always belongs to God. And in that place of firstfruits, when all of the inhabitants were committed to, we have to say it, utter destruction, and everything was completely his, we see hope to the most unlikely of individuals extended and fulfilled.

We see the hope of the sinful outcasts. Because the mercies of God ring true even in the judgments of God.

And is God right in committing these to utter destruction? Yes, because God is always right. Can we comprehend it in our flesh? No, not all the time, but we also don't want to ever dismiss the sinfulness of man in light of the holiness of God.

And yet even there in man's sinfulness, we see this individual with a hope that she clings to and ultimately realizes later on when the walls of Jericho do fall and her house still stands.

And it is a realized hope. It's no longer just a promised hope, but it is a realized hope. And then the ensuing position which she has among the Jewish people.

[12 : 54] This individual is an amazing story. And we'll see a number of things. The first thing we see is the sinful reputation that she has or the sinful reputation of Rahab.

Now, many scholars, even in the first century, it goes all the way back to the early church. People tried to reconcile the realities that God would not allow prostitution or harlotry or any of those things. And yet in Scripture, we find one that is referred to as Rahab the prostitute. Tony Evans is right in saying that every time her name is brought up, her past is as well. Right? She's always defined as that.

She always has this kind of marquee over her name. You remember Rahab the prostitute. You remember her. You know all about her. And even starting in the early stages of church history, church people wanted to reconcile that, so they tried to redefine the wording here, and they tried to make the language appear as if Rahab was an innkeeper because that word prostitution and innkeeper seems to be a little similar in the original language.

And they would try to say that she had an inn on the wall. Now that's something that still resonates even in today's biblical criticism and scholarship is that people try to make it that way. But you have to do a lot of twisting and configuring of the original language to make it say that because Scripture is very clear.

[14:14] Rahab had a past. And the reason the two spies could go into Rahab's house was not because it was an inn. It was because it was a place where strangers went in all the time. And it was a place where people didn't really pay a lot of attention to.

And they ended up in Rahab's house. And we want to read it as it is clearly stated. Rahab, the prostitute, one with this sinful reputation.

And it is that house that God not only ordained but also allowed these two men to go into. Now Rahab is not what we would call kind of a ideal citizen or even an ideal candidate for God's mercy. She's probably the least likely. Because all throughout Scripture harlotry is always referred to. By the way, the word that is used to describe Rahab is only used in the prostitution act or in the act of God's people committing harlotry with him and their rebellion against him.

It's never used anywhere else in Scripture for being an innkeeper or one who welcomes in residents. Now she was welcoming in people but it was her business. Now we don't want to separate the sinful reputation from the individual because by softening it a little bit we really are not exalting Rahab we're diminishing God's grace.

[15:44] When we try to ease the reputation what we're doing is making it easier for God to allow her in. But it's only when we see it as it is that we really understand the extent and the reach and the greatness of God's forgiveness and mercy and redemption.

Because this Rahab is the mother of Boaz. Boaz is the one who took in Ruth. So Rahab the outcast was the mother of a man who understood what it was like to take in an outcast.

So Boaz saw Ruth the outcast the Moabitess the one that nobody else wanted anything to do with and Boaz took care of Ruth. Boaz ultimately marries Ruth and Ruth has a child right?

And then Ruth's child is Obed and Obed is the one who ends up giving birth to David's dad. So Obed is David grandfather. So we see all this lineage here.

This one with this past is not only the mother of Boaz in which we read the book of Ruth and see such great and wonderful accounts and he is the kinsman redeemer and he is so upright and righteous in his standing.

[16:57] He's a great citizen of the nation of Israel. She's also in the lineage of David a king after God's own heart which means she is also in the lineage of Jesus Christ.

She is one of five women included in the lineage of Christ in the gospel of Matthew. This one. And this is why God is so clear in her sinful reputation because it is a true demonstration of his mercy and his grace and his forgiveness and would be just like Paul would say.

Paul said Christ died for the sinners of whom I am chief. And if Christ died for me then he died for everyone, right? Then anyone, no one is outside the reach of that mercy.

And we see it here. If Rahab is welcomed not only in but really fully brought in then isn't there hope for all?

Isn't there hope for every outcast throughout the land of Canaan? And she stands as a shining example not only of salvation for herself but for the whole household of her father.

[18:19] Her whole father's household because of her faith. And we see this sinful reputation. As she brings them in we read of the shocking report because she tells them that they have heard.

She said we've heard from beginning to end, right? We've heard about the parting of the Red Sea. We've heard about the death and annihilation of Sihon and Og. We've heard of everything the Lord

your God has done.

We've heard how you came out of Egypt. We've heard how you've marched through the wilderness. We've heard how he's provided for you. We've heard the victory that he's given you on the other side. Because be sure of this. People always hear what God is doing through his people. because the reasoning for God calling the nation of Israel to himself was so that the world may know. Now this is a good piece of information because if Rahab has heard, she says we have heard.

We have all heard to the point that no strength or no willingness remains in any man. That the hearts of every man has melted. That they're afraid because of what they have heard.

[19 : 25] So we can't say that God just came in here and you know just unfairly or unknowingly just annihilated all of them. They heard the report but they didn't respond to it.

She did. They heard about what was going on and this shocking report that is just resonating throughout the land. And this shouldn't surprise us either because the reason this is going on is because God says the report about you coming will go ahead of you, right?

He says that I will melt the hearts of the inhabitants of the land. That I will put the fear of you in their hearts because they will know that you are coming. God tells his people as they're getting ready to go into the promised land, you're not going to come in and do a surprise attack.

They're going to hear about you and they're going to know about you and they're going to be afraid of you. I will put the fear and dread of you in the hearts of every man. And this is exactly what Rahab says. We heard the shocking report because what God does through his people is ultimately public knowledge.

and it begins to resonate and share throughout the land. And they're not so much hearing about the nation of Israel, right? They're hearing about the God of the nation of Israel.

[20 : 35] They're hearing about what he is doing, how he parted the Red Sea, how he led them to be victorious over the two kings, how he is providing for his people. It is not the fear of man, but it is the fear of the Lord God that is going with the man because the report is resonating.

People are talking about it and they're hearing about it and God is literally fulfilling his word. And as the two spies hear this, they have to be comfort with the reality that what God said was going to happen is happening.

They're hearing about us and we're not even here. We came in secretly but we found out as they already know. They're hearing what God is doing. And this shocking report leads us to the third thing and that is this staggering realization because she says when we heard this, the fear and dread of you came over every person.

But then there's this great realization that really we can only attribute to divine revelation that she says. She makes this proclamation. She says for the Lord your God is God of heaven above and earth below.

Now she is not a part of the nation of Israel yet. She lives in Jericho which is in the land of Canaan which is inhabited by a lot of little kingdom states and one of those or kingdom cities.

[21 : 56] One of those who has its own king is Jericho. It's not a very small, it's not a very large city. It's a small city. But in the land of Canaan there's this paganistic worship. So she's from a paganistic land and they're worshiping bells and Asherah and Chennai and all these other false gods and there's all this false worship of these false gods.

But yet she makes this startling realization and it says this, the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and on earth below. And the reason this is so amazing is because this is the very thing that God reveals about himself at Mount Sinai to his people.

He declares to them, I am the God of heaven and the God of earth. He declares to them that he is God above and God below. And the only way that they understand that he is not a God confined to some place, much like when Balaam tried to come and curse God's people and he thought that he could get to a particular place and curse them or even, you know, throughout the Old Testament we see these things coming about where they think gods are located in a single place and they're contained within a certain geographical region.

God declares to his people, listen, no space contains me, nothing holds me. I am God in heaven above and I'm God on earth below. I am the Lord God overall. And God reveals that about himself to his people.

So for Rahab to say that shows us that she does not come to this realization on her own. This is another sign of God's great mercy.

[23 : 34] Because this is something that would have been very uncommon to any of the inhabitants of Canaan. what we see here is a divine revelation to the most unlikely of people of who God really is.

And she makes this testimony. She doesn't just say he's a great God. She doesn't just say he's the God of Israel. She doesn't say he is the God of the wilderness.

She makes this great testimony. She says he's the God of everything. He's God in heaven above and on the earth below. He reigns over all.

This is a staggering realization from the most unlikely of individuals. Because she sees it not, you know, if this was something that could have been understood from the report being heard, why is she the only one saying it?

See, head knowledge doesn't always lead to heart revelation. Just because we hear something, just because we know some facts about what God is doing, will not always bring us to the point of understanding who he is.

[24 : 45] Yet we see it in her. She understands. And she testifies to that reality to the two spies and says, this is who your God is. Think of the assurance that must have rushed over them when they heard that, right?

Now, she's not the most upbeat of moral individuals we understand by her practice, but she also has a habit of lying and kind of deceiving and she hit them on the roof. I know where in scripture do we see God saying it was okay that she lied.

She is commended for her faith, not for her actions. Okay? She is commended for her faith. It says that by faith in the book of Hebrews, Rahab the harlot hid the two spies.

By faith. It doesn't say that she shouldn't have lied or any of those things because we always have this question. Well, is it right? Is it okay to lie when you're doing it the way Rahab did? Or is it okay to lie at certain times?

And we just kind of have to say that by faith she did what she did. And we stand on this. And the reason she did it is because this realization that she understood who God is.

[25 : 49] And that understanding led to this fourth thing, a simple request. She says, when you come into the land, not if, not if by chance, but when you come into the land, since I have dealt kindly with you, it says in the American Standard, since I have dealt kindly with you, you deal kindly with me and my father's house.

Now the word kindly there is the Hebrew word chesed. Chesed. Quite often referred to in the Old Testament as loving kindness. Very, very, very uncommon for that word to be used in reference to how an individual responds to another individual.

As it deals with God's interactions with man, God's loving kindnesses are new every morning. God's loving kindness is displayed to his people. That word chesed or chesed there, loving kindness, means everything that is for our good.

God deals with us in loving kindness. He deals with us in everything that is chesed to us or for our good and ultimate benefit. That's his dealings with his people.

We find in the prophetic works that his loving kindnesses are new every morning. That every morning he gets up and he's going to do what is for our good for us today. That's pretty reassuring, right?

[27 : 11] That everything that is going to be for my good and benefit, the Lord God is going to do today. And then tomorrow he'll do it again and then tomorrow he'll do it again and tomorrow I'll do it again. And it says his loving kindness or his chesedness never ceases.

It never stops. So he will always continuously, always do everything that is for my good. Even though I may not understand it, even though I may not comprehend it, ultimately I have to rest in his loving kindness or chesedness to me.

Now here she says, since I have been chesed with you or loving kind to you, you be loving kind to me. Since I have dealt and done for you everything that was for your good, I've hidden you, I've informed you, I've kept you and I'm telling you where to go, then you do everything that is for my good.

That's a simple request. Right? And this request is based upon the reality of who it is they serve, not who it is they are. Because she says, promise me in the Lord.

In the name of the Lord your God, do all that is good for me. So she understands who God is and she understands the commitment that he has to lead his people. And she makes this covenant

agreement with them that they will deal kindly with her.

[28 : 33] And they make this promise and they say, you know, if you don't make this matter known, if you don't inform anybody, whoever's in your house, right? Remember the promise that you need to bring your father and your whole father's household, everyone and all their families in your house.

We need to pay attention to that because if they're not in the house, they won't be safe. If they leave the house, their blood's on their own heads. If they're in the house, their blood is on our hands. And so we will deal kindly with you.

Simple request that she made based upon the realization of who God is because she knew there was a coming judgment and a coming destruction. When we come to Christ, it's much the same thing.

In light of the coming judgment, in light of the realization of who we are, we must ask him to deal with us according to what is good for us or in chestedness or hastedness.

Simple request. The last thing we see in this is this sign of reassurance because they agree to do what it is that she asked of them to do.

[29 : 38] And in that agreement, they said, we will as long as you don't tell it, as long as you have everybody in your house. And she lets them down through a window. We could just do a whole Bible study about people who were let down through windows or fell out of windows, right?

People that were ropes and all this other stuff. It's great. Just Bible study going through scripture. If you look at people in windows, let them down through a window according to the rope. And they say, when we come, tie this cord of scarlet thread in your window.

Easily recognizable, easily seen. They would have known the window and the wall. They would have seen that scarlet thread there. Let's not ever lose the reality of that cord of scarlet that was to be over the household because the protection was only given to those in the house, right?

In the house. Because if you leave the realm that was covered by the scarlet thread, then there was no guarantee. He said, when we come into the land, now notice this.

When we come into the land, tie the cord of scarlet thread in the window. That's what they say, right? That's what they say. But did you notice what she did?

[30 : 46] As soon as they left, she tied the cord of scarlet thread in the window. She didn't wait till the last minute. She didn't wait till she saw the dust clouds coming.

She didn't wait for what we would call a deathbed conversion. She went ahead and tied the cord of scarlet thread in the window. She made preparations that day for the coming day.

She made sure on that day that she would see the sign of an assured promise until the coming day. She didn't wait until they got close.

She didn't wait until they came into the land. Before they even left the region, she tied the cord in the window. Because the greatest of sinners needs the hope of an assured promise.

And the hope of the assured promise is the cord of scarlet that runs throughout scripture. And it is the blood of Christ. And ultimately, we must not wait until the last day to tie that cord of scarlet thread.

[31 : 49] It is each and every day that that scarlet thread must be hung that we may see the hope of an assured promise until the day of realization when that scarlet represented promise is brought to fulfillment.

She could have waited to the last moment. I'm sure we don't know how many days transpire. We know that there are three days still to be on the bank of the Jordan. We know that when they cross the Jordan, they will circumcise their males, which will give them at least another three days.

Right? We know they observe the Passover and all this stuff before they come into Jericho. We know they march around the city walls seven days. So we can count a number of days. Right?

There's this meeting between the captain of the Lord's army, which by the way, I think is the Christophany, a picture of Christ in the Old Testament, and Joshua. There's all these days. There's a number of days. But there were a lot of days that cord of scarlet thread could have hung up there and people could have said, why is that there?

She said, well, there's a day coming when I'm going to need it. I'm trusting in that promise. See, there's the hope for the sinful outcast. And it's that scarlet thread that runs throughout scripture, which is the blood of the lamb.

[33 : 03] And ultimately, man doesn't need to wait until the last day to tie it up. That's something that must be claimed on the very day it's offered.

The very moment the promise was given, she tied it in the window and waited and waited until the promise was fulfilled. And it was, which we will see as we make our way through the book of Joshua.

We see here in God's mercy, in his grace, even in his forgiveness, hope for the sinful outcast. Where a holy God not only welcomes him, but completely redeems, restores, and renews the most unlikely of people.

Because this is the God of scripture. From Genesis to Revelation, this is who he is. And we rejoice in that, because that is who we are.

That's who we are. We are the Rahabs. We are the outcasts. We are the greatest sinners who need the promise.

[34 : 14] We need the assurance that when that day of destruction comes, we have something to hope in. And we see it here. Record it for us in scripture. Joshua chapter 2.

Thank you guys. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.