

Rahab and the Spies

Two Israelite spies enter Jericho and are hidden by Rahab, a prostitute who believes in their God and is promised safety.

Joshua 2:1-24

CHARACTERS: Rahab, The two spies, Joshua

THEMES: Faith from unexpected places, God's grace to outsiders, Courage

JOSHUA SENT TWO spies to view the land, especially Jericho. They entered the city and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab, where they stayed.

Word reached the king of Jericho: 'Israelite spies have come!' He sent orders to Rahab: 'Bring out the men who came to you. They are spies.'

But Rahab had hidden the men on her roof under stalks of flax. 'Yes, men came to me,' she told the king's messengers, 'but I didn't know where they were from. They left at dusk, before the gate closed. Hurry after them!' The pursuers headed toward the Jordan fords.

Before the spies settled down for the night, Rahab went up to them on the roof. 'I know the Lord has given you this land,' she said. 'All who live here are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two Amorite kings. When we heard it, our hearts melted. The Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

'Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters.'

'Our lives for your lives!' the men assured her. 'If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly when the Lord gives us the land.'

She let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was part of the city wall. They told her, 'Tie this scarlet cord in the window and gather your family inside. Anyone in the house with you will be safe. But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath.'

'Agreed,' she said, and she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

The spies hid in the hills for three days until the pursuers returned, then reported to Joshua. 'The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands. All the people are melting in fear because of us.'

Rahab, a Gentile and a sinner, is later listed in the genealogy of Jesus. Her faith saved her household and inserted her into the lineage of the Messiah.