

# Rahab

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(R. L. Allan)

What an instance does the case of Rahab afford us of the long-suffering of God being salvation, as Peter speaks!

The camp of Israel had accomplished their journey, a journey of forty years. At the beginning of it, a mixed multitude followed them out of Egypt. Very soon after they had entered on it, and were clean delivered from Egypt, Hohab, the Midianite, joined them. But now, at the very end of it, yea, something even beyond that, when the desert had been fully traversed, and the appointed or penal term of forty years was fully spent, in an interval of delay or long-suffering, the ransomed of the Lord lingering on the confines of the desert and the land, this harlot of Jericho joins them.

This is full of meaning. The entrance of Israel into Canaan was to be the judgment of that people. But the moment is delayed. Was it that the Lord was slack concerning His promise that the inheritance of that land was to be made sure to the children of the Genesis-fathers? No; but this delay was salvation. God delayed the day of visitation on the peoples, that He might call His elect to repentance.

This history is a vivid expression of that great principle.\* Joshua, however, does not appear to have been in the secret of God's grace; as Peter was not in the secret of His grace to the Gentiles, nor Paul in the secret of His grace to Europe. (Acts 10 - 16) It is to spy out the land Joshua sends these two men. No mission of mercy to the people seems to animate his action or guide his thoughts. But the grace of God, in a way unlooked for by His people, worked then and works still. It passed over to the Gentiles before Peter did; it passed over to Macedonia before Paul did; and it now crosses the Jordan before Joshua.

\*The 120 years of Noah's preaching was another season of delay or salvation — a time of similar long-suffering. (1 Peter 3)

But further. If Joshua be not in the secret of God's grace, the spies whom he sends cannot be in the commission of it. They are, however, prepared for such a service. This is truly blessed. They were not entrusted with such a business, or under orders concerning it; but they fulfil it at once without reserve, without suspicion as to their title to do so, and in all possible confidence and decision. Precious beyond thought this is! They heard nothing from their captain about such a thing, but they pledge deliverance to Rahab, and make the security of that Canaanite as ample and as perfect as that of any Israelite in the camp, as rich and full even as their own. God was their title, though uncommissioned by Joshua; for, in His eyes, the feet of the publishers of grace on the mountains, even on defiled Canaan, are beautiful. (See Rom. 10)

Who can tell the gospel-comfort of this? But again. The spies themselves, in a day or two afterwards, enter the land in quite another character. They were now going there at the peril of their lives: in a day or two they would go under the conduct of the ark and in company with the glory. They were now going as the witness and the channel of blessing to a poor sinner of the Place; in a day or two they would go to execute the judgment of the Lord and to share the spoils and the inheritance. They were now in weakness and danger, thankful for the shelter of some stalks of flax to hide them from the pursuer: but they were speedily to be in victory and honour in the same, place.\*

\*What a sample, I may say, we get of the same mysteries in the apostle, who was let down the wall of Damascus in a basket, and yet in a rapture taken up to the third heaven!

Wonderful in its value to us is all this, in its consolations and encouragements.

Further, however, as to Rahab. Let the glory thus enter the land, and the judgments conduct their solemn work, she is safe. She had believed the word of the spies about the scarlet line, and been faithful to them in the hour of their weakness and degradation.

This is to be much observed. She had not uttered their business, and she is, therefore, as safe as they are; that is, she had been faithful to them in their time of weakness and danger and degradation; and now, in the day of their victory and strength, when all things are changed, she is as they are, their victory is her victory, their security is her security, their inheritance her inheritance.

"Our life for yours," say the spies to Rahab, "if ye utter not this our business." How strikingly the great principle of the gospel expresses itself there! For faith was demanded by that word of the spies, as faith is that which is true to Christ's humiliation, and weakness, and sorrow. It is faith which understands that precious gospel mystery. It is faith which holds to Jesus in the hour of His cross. Christ crucified is faith's secret. The abandoning of that secret would be death. "If ye continue in the faith," says the apostle. To give up the hour of the Lord's weakness — for "He was crucified through weakness" — is to forfeit everything. But faith is true to that mystery, as Rahab uttered not the business of the spies, nor betrayed them in the hour of their degradation, weakness, and peril.

This, surely, is full of meaning for us.

And again. Her pledge was in the midst of the scene of judgment, but it had been appointed by the executors of judgment. It was they who had passed it to her. No, necessity could be higher. As in the paschal night of Egypt, the sword is borne by the hand of Him who had ordained the blood on the lintel. No security could surpass that. But such as it, and equal to it, is the security for a sinner by the gospel. As it is written, "herein is love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because, as He is, so are we in this world." We are in the world, the place of judgment, and Jesus is on high; nevertheless His safety is ours: "as He is, so are we in this world."