

The Fear of the LORD
Joshua 2

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Joshua 2: Introduction

Joshua, following the example of his mentor, sends spies to search out the land, especially the city of Jericho. While the spies were not able to fulfill all their mission, what they discovered was enough to convince Joshua that the LORD was with them.

The fear of God is a powerful affection. Rahab feared God enough to seek deliverance from His wrath, while the spies feared Him and overcame the fear of men and danger. God is to be feared because of Who He is and what He is capable of doing. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and that's as true today as it was in Joshua's day.

Joshua 2 also offers glimpses into the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. While the people of Joshua's day would not have been able to understand the significance of these matters, we who look back through Jesus at all God's Word can see the divine hand at work and God's eternal plan unfolding right on schedule.

We're pleased to make this resource available for personal or group study at no charge, and we hope you will find this series helpful in realizing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God.

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1 Sending the Spies

Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. Joshua 2.1

Reflect.

1. Do you suppose Joshua would have had any reluctance in sending out these two spies? Explain. Why did he do it?
2. The conquest of Canaan began in the home of one of Jericho's less-respected citizens. Is there anything in Jesus' ministry to compare with the blessing of Rahab, and thus to connect Jesus' work with that of Joshua?

Think about it.

We note that Joshua sent out two spies only, not twelve, as Moses had done (Num. 13). Doubtless this was because the scope of their mission was smaller, and two would have been less conspicuous. But I can't help but think Joshua may have had his previous experience in mind as well: only two spies, he and Caleb, had been faithful forty years earlier.

The spies sought out the home of a harlot. This makes sense, because doubtless many who traveled to Jericho on business or just passing through did the same. They would not have aroused much suspicion by doing so. It is telling in many ways that God led His people into the land of promise through the agency of one of the "least of these," rather than, say, through some powerful person. Rahab portends the fulfillment of one of God's promises to Abram (Gen. 12.1-3) as we see the covenant blessings being extended beyond Israel to a Gentile. As Jesus hobnobbed with sinners of all sorts, so these forerunners of Israel did the same. While their motive was merely to keep from being detected, God clearly had other, larger ideas in mind (cf. Matt. 1.2-6), which would only become clear much later in the unfolding of His redemptive plan.

Meditate and discuss.

1. Sending out spies to view the land and learn the situation in Jericho made sense. Joshua wanted to know what they were up against. He would be satisfied at hearing the report of his faithful spies. Is there a principle in this, perhaps one suggested in 1 Chronicles 12.32 and Ephesians 5.15-17? Explain.
2. The conquest of Canaan began in the least likely of places – the parlor of a harlot. Is there a Kingdom principle at work here? Do we see anything like this in the work of the greater Joshua, our Lord Jesus? What should we learn from this?
3. Imagine the courage those two spies must have had! How would their example have encouraged the rest of the people of Israel? How should their example encourage us?

"Jesus [Joshua], the leader, who had led the people out of Egypt; Jesus [Joshua], whose name means Savior, after the death and burial of Moses in the land of Moab in the land of Arabia—that is, after the law was dead—Jesus desires to lead his people into the gospel and sends out two men on secret mission to Jericho. Two messengers he sends: one to the circumcised; the other to the Gentiles, Peter and Paul. Jericho seeks to kill them; the harlot takes them in, meaning, of course, the church gathered together from the Gentiles." Jerome (347-420 AD)

Lord, today You are sending me out among people who do not know You. Grant me courage, Lord, so that I...

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Pray Psalm 53.

We don't need to look upon our unsaved neighbors as *fools*, even though this is how God sees them. Pray that God would cause His salvation to "come out" from you, and rescue lost souls from captivity to the devil to salvation in Jesus.

Psalm 53 (*Leoni: The God of Abraham Praise*)

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God at all!"
Corrupt are they in whole and part, unjust and small.
Not one of them does good; God sees their wicked ways.
None understands the Word of God or gives Him praise.

Have all these wicked men no knowledge of God's grace?
The Church they hate with passion and seek not God's face.
Lord, strike their hearts with fear, where fear was not before.
And scatter all who camp so near Your holy door.

The wicked flee in shame; their ways our God rejects.
Renew Your people in Your Name with great effects!
Let great rejoicing sound once we renewed have been,
And let salvation's Word resound from us again!

2 All Jericho Troubled

And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country." Joshua 2.2, 3

Reflect.

1. An echo of these verses appears in Matthew 2.1-8. As Joshua's presence troubled the pagan king of Jericho, so Jesus' birth troubled the pagan king of Judea. Is this similarity intentional? Explain.
2. Put yourself in Rahab's place. What would be going on in your heart and mind as you heard this message from the king?

Think about it.

We do not know how the spies' mission was exposed. It probably wasn't too hard for someone to figure out that those two strangers, observed coming through the city gate, were probably from the Israelite camp on the other side of the Jordan. Their mission would have been obvious. They weren't there just to have a good time.

Naturally, a report would have been given to the king, and, naturally, he would have wanted to apprehend the spies. The king's action indicates something of what Rahab will reveal in verses 8-11, that a mood of fear and dread had settled on the people of Jericho. They would have had plenty of time to hear about Israel's approach to Canaan, of the conquests on the east side of the Jordan, and of the encampment looming just across the river. They knew what was coming, and the terror of it had fallen on the people of Jericho, from the king on down.

The king had to do something. We don't fault him for trying to apprehend the spies. His actions give us a glimpse of God's promise, already in the process of being fulfilled (Deut. 7.17-24). God was at work on behalf of His people even before they put their first foot on Canaanite soil.

Just so, He goes before us each day, readying hearts and opportunities for us to seek and advance His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Meditate and discuss.

1. Do you believe that God goes before you each day as you go out into your Personal Mission Field? If you did believe that, how would you expect it to affect your walk with and work for the Lord each day?
2. If the king was experiencing fear in this situation, much more must Rahab have been afraid. Why?
3. Rahab had a choice to make. As we shall see, she chose wisely. Whenever, because of our faith in Jesus, we are confronted with the fear of men, we have a choice to make. How can we be sure to make the right choice?

"Rahab was a harlot who secretly admitted the spies of Joshua when they visited Jericho and let them out by another exit so that they should not be captured. Her name means 'pride.' She was converted by God's generosity and deserved to obtain mercy. She is a type of the church, which takes in souls endangered by the vice of pride, and lets them out into life by another route, the way of humility and patience." Cassiodorus (ca. 485-580 AD)

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O heavenly Father, let me not hide the Gospel for fear of men, but give me grace to...

Pray Psalm 118.1-9.

As you pray, let the Lord bring before your mind any situations in the coming day that might cause you to fear men. Claim the Lord's presence and promise now, before you enter those situations, so that you will be ready to stand firm for Him.

Psalm 118.1-9 (*St. George's Windsor: Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*)

Thank the Lord, His love endures!
All to whom His love is sure,
All who fear Him day by day,
let them thanks and praise now say!
Out of my distress I cry;
He will hear me from on high.
He will free me from all fear.
What can man do to me here?

For the Lord stands next to me;
He will give me victory!
Over all who hate my life
I will triumph through the strife!
In His grace I refuge find;
in His steadfast love so kind.
Trust not princes, trust not men –
Christ shall be our haven then!

3 Whom to Fear

Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued 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, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." Joshua 2.4-11

Reflect.

1. Meditate on Luke 12.4, 5. Why should we fear God? Do you fear God as much as you fear what others might think of you or do to you?
2. Meditate on Deuteronomy 10.12, 13. To what actions should the fear of God lead us?

Think about it.

We can imagine the king's agents downstairs, demanding that the Hebrew spies be brought forth, while Rahab is upstairs, busily hiding her guests on the roof. The scene is charged with tension.

Rahab was undoubtedly afraid: the hard pounding on the door, the loud voices insisting on speaking to the owner, the demand that anyone who knew anything about spies had better come forward. She was no doubt greatly afraid.

But she feared God, Whom she'd never known or seen, more than the immediate danger downstairs. And fearing God led her to courageous action, not only for her own sake, but for the sake of those she loved.

Hurrying downstairs, Rahab said, "Yes, yes, they were here! But now they are without the gate, and if you want to find them, you'll need to hurry." That wasn't entirely false – they were on the roof of a home overlooking the city wall – but it wasn't entirely true, either.

We can see her, trembling with relief, wiping away a tear, as she heads upstairs to check on her guests; and in her report to them, we see the power of the knowledge of God, as He makes Himself known for and through His faithful people.

Meditate and discuss.

1. How did Rahab describe the condition of her people, knowing that Israel was camped just across the Jordan from them? Why did this knowledge have such an effect on these people?
2. Do the churches in your community give your unsaved neighbors any reason to fear God? Or to be drawn to Him (Mic. 4.1-8)? Explain.
3. Like Shiphrah and Puah before her (Exod. 1.15-20), Rahab stretched the truth to do what was right. Would it be appropriate to say that Pharaoh (in Exod. 1) and the king of Jericho had no right to the truth? God blessed the Hebrew midwives (Exod. 1.20). Did He bless Rahab (Matt. 1.5)? How do we reconcile

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Rahab's action and God's blessing with the ninth commandment?

“Scripture not only recalls nothing virtuous about her but even speaks of her immorality. Yet for her lie alone, whereby she chose to conceal the spies rather than betray them, she deserved to share an eternal blessing with the people of God. If she had chosen to speak the truth or to be concerned for the safety of her people, there is no doubt that she and her whole household would not have escaped the approaching destruction and that she would not have deserved to be included among those responsible for the Lord's birth, to be numbered on the roll of the patriarchs, and, through her offspring, to beget the Savior of all.” John Cassian (360-432 AD)

Lord, help me to be strong and courageous whenever I feel the fear of man coming on, so that I...

Pray Psalm 12.1-8.

In deceitful, lying, and treacherous times, we must take refuge in the truth of God. As you pray, ask God to show you how the words of this psalm will apply to you today.

Psalm 12.1-8 (*Hamburg: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*)

Help, Lord! The godly cease to be; they who believe in Christ are few.
Falsely the wicked confidently flatter, deceive, and mock Your truth.

Stop, Lord, the lips that utter lies, all those who speak with boasting tongue!
See how Your holy Word they despise, while their own praises they have sung.

Rise up, O Lord, and rescue all Your precious children sore distressed.
Save those who faithfully on You call; grant them deliv'rance, peace, and rest.

Your words are pure and proven true, like silver seven times refined;
You will preserve Your Word ever new, and keep the heart to You inclined.

Proudly the wicked strut and stand; Your indignation builds on high.
Men may exalt their wicked plans, but You will judge them by and by.

4 Rahab's Kindness

"Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you." Joshua 2.12-14

Reflect.

1. The fear of the Lord moved Rahab to act kindly toward the Hebrew spies. Is fear a proper motive for getting people to do good?
2. In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25.14-30), one servant's fear of his master led him to *inaction*. Why? Why did the master fault him? For fearing him?

Think about it.

This is a very complex passage. Let's begin by acknowledging that God approved everything that transpired in Joshua 1.1-14, including the deceit, the outright lying, the deal-making, and the dispiriting of the hearts of His enemies. It's all good. For all its complexity and even apparent contradictoriness, this is God working out His covenant promises for His people. Indeed, His ways are not our ways, and His ways are past finding out (Is. 55.8, 9; Rom. 11.33; Eccl. 3.11).

Now let's examine today's verses more closely. Notice that Rahab acted in kindness toward the spies without any promise of reciprocation (v. 8-12). This was an act of faith, motivated solely by the fear of God. What a powerful affection the fear of the Lord can be! No wonder God requires it of His people (cf. Deut. 10.12, 13; Ps. 86.11).

Next, Rahab opens a window on God's covenant promises that has been rarely glimpsed to this point: the incorporating of Gentiles into His favor. She probably did not know that God had actually promised this (Gen. 12.1-3). Otherwise, she might have reminded the spies. This is God's grace at work in her. Moreover, she dares to go beyond what might be reasonably expected – the sparing of her own life – to include all the members of her family as well. This is daring faith, indeed!

Third, the spies grant her request, but not without conditions (v. 14). One does not enter the covenant of God without conditions. Further, they would not have been able to do what she asked apart from God's grace flowing to them according to His promise (v. 14, cf. Josh. 1.1-5; Deut. 7.12-24). They understood that they would only be able to act kindly toward Rahab once God had acted kindly toward them.

Finally, Rahab requests "a true token" (Hebrew, *אֵימָן*, a sign, pledge, or symbol) from the spies as a tangible reminder of her kindness performed and their kindness promised. Entering into covenant with God always involves some token to provoke remembrance of deeds accomplished and promises yet to be realized.

Meditate and discuss.

1. In this situation, clearly an act of kindness flowed from a heart of fear. Do you think if Christians were more conscious of fearing the Lord they might act more consistently with kindness toward their neighbors? Why or why not?
2. From verses 1-14, describe the relationship between fear, faith, obedience, blessing, and hope in the life of faith. Do you think churches are as consistent as they should be in teaching these matters? Explain.

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3. How do the sacraments function as “true tokens” for God and His covenant people?

“Rahab is a prefigurement of the church, which was at one time mixed up in the prostitution of the demons and which now accepts the spies of Christ, not the ones sent by Joshua the son of Nun, but the apostles who were sent by Jesus the true Savior. ‘I learned,’ she says, ‘that your God is up in heaven and down on the earth, and that apart from him there is no God.’” John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)

Lord, use me today as a token of Your grace and kindness by...

Pray Psalm 128.

As you pray, meditate on God and His works. Ask Him to unite your heart to fear Him (Ps. 86.11), and thank Him for the blessings promised to all who do.

Psalm 128 (*Fountain: There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood*)

How blest are they who fear You, Lord,
Who walk within Your ways!
Rejoicing in Your bounteous Word,
They prosper all their days!
They prosper all their days, they prosper all their days!
Rejoicing in Your bounteous Word,
They prosper all their days!

Their homes with happy children bloom
Who fear Your holy Name;
Their tables and their every room
Declare Your glorious fame!
Declare Your glorious fame, declare Your glorious fame!
Their tables and their every room
Declare Your glorious fame!

O Lord, from Zion send Your peace,
And prosp'rous make our ways;
Thus may Your blessings e'er increase
Upon us all our days!
Upon us all our days, upon us all our days!
Thus may Your blessings e'er increase
Upon all us all our days!

5 The Scarlet Sign

Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way." So the men said to her: "We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear." Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window. Joshua 2.15-21

Reflect.

1. Can you identify the images in this passage which point to Jesus?
2. It is important that the Scriptures come to us from *beyond time into time*, at one particular *time* or another. Thus, the full meaning of all Scripture is complete from the beginning, even though Scripture was given through men in stages, at various times. Reflect on John 5.39. Why are we justified in seeing references to Jesus throughout Scripture, such as we do here?

Think about it.

The spies want to make sure they can fulfill their promise to Rahab. We're not sure whether they produced the line of scarlet thread or whether that was the rope she used to let them down through the window (the Hebrew uses two different words, but they overlap in meaning). The cord was scarlet so that it could be easily recognized, but, of course, as a means of deliverance for Rahab and her family, the color has a larger significance.

Rahab helps the spies escape to safety by lowering them from a window in her home to the ground outside the city wall. The apostle Paul experienced a similar "salvation" during his time in Damascus (Acts 9.23-25).

After three days' hiding, the spies will be able to return to the camp on the east side of the Jordan. Three days in the earth and their mission would be fulfilled, and they could return to him who sent them with a report of certain victory.

Those who would not shelter under the scarlet thread would have to bear their own guilt (v. 19). Rahab's job was to tell the plan to her family and do everything in her power to secure them within her home. That might not have been as easy a task as you might think. Rahab was, after all, a harlot, and it's not improbable that she may have been estranged from her family. The story she would relate to them would be fantastic enough at any rate. Thus, some effort at persuasion would be required for her to bring salvation to her family – and perhaps to be reconciled with them together under the scarlet cord.

Meditate and discuss.

1. Three days, a scarlet cord, salvation for those who would abide under that token: How should such details help us in appreciating the divine provenance of Scripture?
2. How was Rahab's task like that with which we are commissioned as witnesses to Jesus Christ (Acts 1.8)?
3. Read Genesis 15.12-18. Can you see any similarities between this act of covenant-making and that which the spies entered into with Rahab?

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“So, too, with a mystic reference to the shedding of blood, it was a scarlet cord which the harlot Rabab (a type of the church) hung in her window that she might be saved at the destruction of Jericho.” Jerome (347-420 AD)

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but Your blood, Lord Jesus! Help me today to proclaim Your salvation to...

Pray Psalm 126.

Do you have a vision for sowing the Good News of Christ’s salvation to the people in your Personal Mission Field? Should you expect that this will be an easy task, or one that you can complete in a short time? As you pray this psalm, ask the Lord to give you a *vision* for reaping, and a plan for *sowing* the Good News of Jesus.

Psalm 126 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

When God restored our fortunes all,
We were like those who sweetly dream.
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,
Made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said,
“The Lord has done great things for them!”
Indeed, great things our God has done,
Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King!
Let grace like flowing streams prevail.
All they with tears of joy shall sing
Who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow
And cast their seed on every hand,
With joy shall reach their heav’nly home,
And bring the harvest of their land.

6 Done Deal

They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought them all along the way, but did not find them. So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us." Joshua 2.22-24

Reflect.

1. The spies were relying only on the word of a single woman. Why did they consider this sufficient?
2. How did the report of these spies differ from Joshua's own report forty years earlier (cf. Num. 14.6-9)?

Think about it.

The spies ascended a hill to defeat the intentions of their pursuers. Then, after three days, they descended the hill and "crossed over" to bring their report. Paul picks up on this language of ascending and descending in Ephesians 4.8-10. Can you see a prefiguring of Jesus in this?

We note that the spies first reported "all that had befallen them." That is, they told Joshua they had not been able to see all the land, which was their commission (v. 1), but were only able to do the "especially Jericho" part of their assignment. Then, after having reported the facts of their mission, they offered their conclusion in verse 24. Note the double use of "all" in that verse. The spies were convinced by their experience that what was true in Jericho was true throughout Canaan.

Mission accomplished. In the minds of those spies, the conquest of Canaan was a done deal.

Meditate and discuss.

1. The spies apparently regarded a sampling of the situation in Canaan as evidence that God's Word was true, and that He had "delivered all the land" into their hands. This was a conclusion reached by faith, based on what God had promised and what they had observed on a small scale. Is there a lesson here to guide us in our walk with and work for the Lord?
2. Meditate on 2 Peter 1.4 and 2 Corinthians 1.20. We have barely sampled the promises of God (Gen. 12.1-3). But should we regard them all as a "done deal"? Why, and what are the implications of doing so?
3. The spies spoke as if God had already "delivered all the land" into the hands of Joshua and Israel. Yet a good bit of work remained before that would be so. Meditate on Philippians 2.12, 13. What is the relationship between our more fully realizing the promises and salvation of God and the works for which we have been redeemed by Jesus Christ (Eph. 2.8-10)?

"Those spies, who are sent before the face of Jesus [Joshua], can also be considered the messengers of God, just as it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your paths.'" Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)

Pray Psalm 132.13-18.

Seek the Lord today to lay hold on more of His promised blessings and to grow and flourish as His lamp to the world.

Psalm 132.13-18 (*Finlandia: Be Still My Soul*)

God dwells among us, and He will forever,

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To meet our needs and clothe us with His grace.
He has to us sent Jesus Christ, our Savior,
And made us His eternal resting-place.
His foes are banished from His presence ever,
But we shall reign with Him before His face.

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Read Joshua 2

Reflect.

1. Review Genesis 12.1-3. Do you see how God had Gentiles in mind to participate in His promises? How does Rahab fit into God's plan for blessing the nations?
2. The story of Rahab shows us the power of God's works. Being made aware of the works of God can have powerful effects on people, even those who do not believe. Is this still true today?

Think about it.

We should not underestimate the power of fear as a human affection. While fear can overwhelm and destroy, when properly focused, it can be a source of blessing.

Imagine what it must have been like to be living in Jericho, knowing that the armies of Israel were camped just across the Jordan. The people of Jericho and all Canaan had heard the report, some forty years previous to Joshua 2, of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt (v. 10). More recently, Israel's destruction of kingdoms on the east side of the Jordan had created a sense of alarm and dread among the inhabitants of Canaan. We note from Rahab's comments that it was not merely Israel the Canaanites feared, but Israel's God, working in and through His people (v. 11).

Rahab was as fearful as everyone else. But her fear led to a different action from that of the king of Jericho. Both had drawn the conclusion that the fate of those nations Israel had already defeated awaited the people of Jericho as well. The king resolved to resist that fate, while Rahab determined to escape it. By hiding the spies, she hoped to find favor with the armies of Israel. The focus of her concern was on saving her life and the lives of her family (vv. 12, 13). She does not appear to have been interested in anything more than that, and this is perhaps because she had no idea that anything more than just staying alive might be possible.

She acted out of fear of the LORD, appealing to His servants to spare her life and doing what she could to show good faith toward them and their cause. She reckoned that the God Who destroyed the lives of those who opposed Him might show favor to those who helped His people. There is in her actions a seed of faith, albeit an imperfect one. People often come to saving faith by degrees, in small steps. At some point, Rahab's faith matured, such that one of God's own people felt free to take her to himself in marriage (Matt. 1.5). From that union our Lord Jesus was descended.

We must appreciate the courage of these two nameless spies. Their lives were in danger from the moment they entered Canaan. Theirs must have been a harrowing experience. But the fear they felt did not prevent them from fulfilling their mission, and it did not cause them to be so focused on themselves alone that they could not show grace to Rahab. Evidently, they feared God as well – feared failing Him, as had the faithless spies of a previous generation. Fearing God can move us to acts of faith and obedience. It is perhaps, therefore, no wonder that God Himself requires this of us (Deut. 10.12, 13).

Meditate and discuss.

1. What is the fear of God? Should Christians fear God? How should the fear of God operate in our souls?
2. Meditate on Deuteronomy 10.12, 13. Can we truly love God if we don't fear Him? Explain.
3. How did Rahab and the spies turn the fear of God to good use? From their examples, what can we learn

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about the fear of God as a stimulus to faith and obedience?

“Though she belonged to a different race and was a harlot, [Rahab] relied solely on their reputation, accepted their religion, abandoned her own beliefs and entrusted herself to strangers. ‘We have heard,’ she said, ‘what things the Lord your God has done to the Egyptians, and fear of you fell on us.’ Accordingly, she made a pact with the spies and sealed it with an oath.” Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD)

Lord Jesus, You have commanded us not to be afraid of men, but to fear and obey You. Help me today to...

Pray Psalm 105.

As you pray and sing through this psalm, consider the role that praise, thanksgiving, and recalling God’s mighty works can have in helping you to overcome the fear of men. Think through the coming day, and prepare yourself in prayer to deal with any fear of man you might anticipate.

Psalm 105 (*Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our Lord, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard – His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

He brought His people from Egypt alive, and made their joy and song revive.
He made the nations’ land their own, and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land, the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far, He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

The Fear of the LORD
Joshua 2

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. What is the fear of God, and why does it matter?
2. Why are unbelieving people today so generally unaware of the works of God? Do you think they would be more open to believing in Him if they were more aware of His works? Explain.
3. How can we see God's covenant unfolding, just as He had promised, in Joshua 2?
4. What can we learn from Joshua 2 about overcoming the fear of man?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Joshua 2? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

For prayer:

The Fear of the LORD
Joshua 2

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.