

About Spies and Lies.

Joshua 2:1-7.

Sunday evening, August 30,2009.

- I. “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” Vs. 1.
 - A. Some have found fault with Joshua sending out the spies.
 1. It is to be remembered that the Lord had not yet revealed that He would bring the walls of Jericho down supernaturally.
 2. In the absence of specific instructions regarding Jericho, and knowing that the Lord had called him to invade the promised land, Joshua works with the means at his disposal, just as we are all called to do.
 3. There was precedent for sending our spies, for the Lord had directed Moses to send out the 12 spies into the whole land earlier. Numbers 13:4.
 - B. The Lord provided great encouragement through the report the spies brought back.
 1. The people of the land had heard what great things the Lord had done for His people as far back as the passage through the Red Sea.
 2. The people were fainthearted and without courage because the dread of God was upon them. See Vs. 8-11 and 24.
 3. The spies were able to relate the Lord’s good hand of provision and protection upon them as they easily could have been killed. Instead they were preserved and safely returned.

Application:

The Lord knows how weak and fickle we are, and amidst our hardships and discouragements in life He does not leave us without encouragement. As you go through life do not only note all the things that are against you, but also the things that demonstrate the Lord’s presence and grace and provision for you. They are there too. The Lord would not have us swallowed up by overmuch sorrow. 2 Cor 2:7.

- II. “The house of a harlot named Rahab...” Vs. 1.

Difficulties have been perceived by this as well.

 - A. Presumably Joshua sent out reputable people; people of faith. Especially is this to be thought after the catastrophic report of the 10 spies a generation earlier, at which time Joshua was one of only two who brought back a faithful report.
 - B. So why did these two faithful men go into the house of a harlot?
 1. Remember that Jericho was being watched.
 2. These strangers could not check in at the local inn without raising suspicion.
 3. On the other hand men would go in and out of a harlot’s house all day long, especially strangers.
 4. Some have made Rahab an inn-keeper rather than a harlot; others have said that Rahab was no longer a harlot but was still known by that name which she got earlier in life while she was a harlot. None of these acrobatics with the text are necessary.
 5. Going into a harlot’s house does not mean that these two engaged in immoral behavior.
 6. Here we may have a lawful application of Paul’s dictum: “All things are lawful

- unto me but all things are not helpful (to his life's purpose); all things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." 1 Cor. 6:12.
- This was something useful to their life's purpose, namely protecting themselves while gaining useful intelligence on behalf of the Lord's people.
 - In the process they were not being brought under the power of unlawful sexual desires.
 - As such, theirs was a lawful and good "entering into the house of a harlot."

Application:

May we remember the "entering of these two spies into the house of a harlot" as we enter "houses of merchandise" and "houses of entertainment" and "houses of food and drink" which are designed to stir up so many lofty and proud and covetous desires in our souls. Let it always be an entering that is useful and in keeping with our life purpose to serve and please the Lord. And let us never be brought under the power of anything lest we serve the creature and the creation more than the Creator.

III. Rahab's lie about the spies identity and whereabouts.

- A. Rahab's lie has given rise to considerable debate about the appropriateness of lying under certain circumstances. "When it is for a good cause."
- B. This has gained respectability in light of two NT references:
 1. "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace." Hebr. 11:31.
 2. "Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?" James 2:25.
 These references ascribe Rahab's actions to faith and praise her for her faith.
- C. We should always bear in mind two truths when contemplating Rahab's actions:
 1. The very high value God Himself has placed on truth. He is truth and in

Him

is no falsehood at all. 1 John 1:5.

2. We should always remember that although faith was the governing principle in Rahab's heart, not everything flowing from that heart was pure. Her heart, a heart of faith, was yet a mixture, as are ours.
 - Rebecca acted in faith when she prevented Esau from getting the blessing as God had said "the elder shall serve the younger."
 - Abraham acted out of faith when he told Sarah to say she was his sister; after all in his seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Still by faith he was the friend of God.
 - Mordechai and Esther seem to have acted in faith when Esther married a pagan King, yet in doing so they went against the revealed will of God.
3. We conclude three things then:
 1. Faith was the governing principle in Rahab's heart for which she's
 2. In spite of her faith not everything flowing from her heart was pure.
 3. That the Lord has placed a very high premium on truth and we should seek to live out of that.

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