

“The Scarlet Cord”  
Joshua Chapter Two

This chapter demonstrates again that Christ is the *heart* of the Old Testament (John 5:39). Spies are sent to view the land, especially Jericho. This walled city was about seven miles west of the Jordan River and would be a formidable obstacle to Israel as they advanced into the Promised Land. Joshua had been one of the twelve (Numbers 13) sent by the command of God to spy out the Land. He does the same with two men like he and Caleb. Faith in God includes using the wisdom He gives to us in planning the means to accomplish His work (Luke 14:28-32).

The spies arrive at Jericho and stay at Rahab’s house. Ancient Sumerian and other sources inform us that harlotry was often practiced in the inns frequented by travelers. That the spies would lodge (Acts 17:26) there would be unnoticed but providential as she is the one who becomes part of the lineage of Christ (Matt. 1:5) and in the hall of faith (Heb. 11:31)! Her salvation is like the Samaritan woman (John 4) who believed in Jesus, the Savior who had a forgiving *heart* for sinners (Luke 7:37; John 8:3-11).

The faith of this woman is most remarkable. There was a terror that caused the inhabitants of the land to be fainthearted (verse 9), but her faith is based on the *fact* of the works of God (verse 10), for the Christian faith is *historical* (Luke 1:1-5; Acts 1:1-3). She acknowledges (verse 11) that the LORD (*Yahew*, the personal name of God) is the God (*Elohim*, the common name for God, which is plural in number) of heaven and earth! Such faith leads to works that verify the reality of her faith (James 2:21-25). Jesus spoke of faith greater than that found in all of Israel (Matt. 8:5-10).

The issue of Rahab’s lying must be addressed in the context of God’s character and nature. He *cannot* lie (Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2) because He is the *Truth* (John 14:6) and commands (Ex. 20:16) those who follow Him to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15, 29). Rahab exercised great faith in acknowledging God and hiding the spies (Ex. 2:1-3). Her faith wavered as the trial came, but as God’s child she was forgiven and restored (Phil. 1:6).

The scarlet cord has *redemption* significance. The same word for scarlet is used for our sins (Isa. 1:18). Those who sprinkled their doors with the blood were saved (Ex. 12:1-13). Rahab obeys by faith like Noah and his family entering the ark and all are saved (Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9-13).

