

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

April 9

2023

“Rahab Lied, How Can She Be A Faith Hero?”

When we read Joshua 2, amid the excitement of spies in Jericho, them almost being caught, and a narrow escape, people notice that Rahab lied about the location of the spies when questioned by the king (Josh 2:4-5). At first glance, this seems like something a harlot would do. I am sure in her profession, “discretion” (for lack of a better word) would be a top priority, even if this means lying to keep certain people’s whereabouts a secret. She may have lied about other men in the past. Why would it be any different to lie about these men?

If this is all we ever read about Rahab, it might be easy to dismiss her as a helpful person (by giving the spies information about the morale of the people, Josh. 2:9-11) but nothing more. Where people take exception is the fact that she is mentioned in the lineage of Christ (Matt. 1:5), as a person of faith (Heb. 11:31), and commended for her works in saving the spies (Jas. 2:25). How can this woman, a harlot, and a liar, be in “faith’s hall of fame”? How can she be mentioned in the same breath as Abraham (Jas. 2:22-25)? Didn’t God condemn “all liars” (Rev. 21:8)? Isn’t adultery a sin that will cause us to lose our souls (I Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Heb. 13:4)? Some have wondered if perhaps God believes in situation ethics, where sin is justified if it helps His cause. Is this what we are to learn from Joshua 2? Of course, not.

What are we to learn? Let’s begin by noting that God does

not believe in nor promote situation ethics. His word is truth (Jn. 17:17), and He makes a clear and unmistakable difference between truth and error. Second, “it is impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2). Lying is of Satan, not God (Jn. 8:44). Therefore, He will not justify or approve of any lies (Jas. 1:13). God inspired Solomon to write, “A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin” (Prov. 26:28). I have heard Christians say that they felt justified in lying if it meant protecting a wife or other family members from some hypothetical harm. If you believe this, you have fallen for the false doctrine of situation ethics, where you allow your environment to dictate your morals. Please understand that if you lie, even if it is “to protect others,” and do not repent of that sin, you will be lost in Hell (Rev. 21:8). Sometimes, folks use Rahab (Josh. 2-6), the Egyptian midwives (Ex. 1), and others as examples of “acceptable” lying. Yet, God never says lies are acceptable. Rahab was a faith hero because she hid the spies. The Egyptian midwives were blessed because they feared God and disobeyed the king’s command (Ex. 1:17, 21). Don’t forget that Amram and Jochebed hid Moses for three months and are also mentioned in Hebrews 11 (Ex. 2:2; Heb. 11:23). Did they lie at any time in those three months? If they did, would that justify us lying today? The truth is that these people were neither blessed nor accepted by God because they lied! People who say God blessed people for lying have ignored plain statements of Scripture and are reading their personal beliefs into the Scriptures.

“If God disapproved of what she did, why do we not read of God’s condemnation of Rahab, her ‘profession,’ and her lies in Joshua 2?” First, let us note that this is just one of many times where God speaks about people “warts and all.” The record only tells us about the person those spies met in Joshua 2 and does not comment on God’s view of her sin. Perhaps it is because He expected those Jews who would read Joshua later to remember passages like Exodus 20:14 and 16! Maybe God expects us in the 21st century to remember Scriptures like Colossians 3:9 and

Romans 13:9. Joshua 2 does not record a “value judgment” since this is found in other places. Joshua merely records who hid the spies and what she said. It is wrong for people to “read into” these Scriptures and assume God condoned everything she did or said.

“Matthew 1, Hebrews 11, and James 2 speak of Rahab in glowing terms and make no mention of her past. How can this be?” When questions like this are asked of me, I simply respond by asking, “Can she not repent?” Just because she sinned at the time does not mean she never changed her ways! My Bible says she married a man named Salmon (Matt. 1:5; Lk. 3:32), and through this union came Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David, and ultimately Christ. Undoubtedly, through her marriage and subsequent exposure to the Jews and following God, she repented of her sin.

“She lied, and the Bible says all liars go to Hell in Revelation 21:8, but Hebrews and James write like she was saved.” To this objection, I will remind you what was said earlier, that the Holy Spirit (through James) did not commend her lying, only that she hid the spies and got them out safely (Jas. 2:25; Josh. 2:16). Secondly, remember that Abraham was also mentioned in Hebrews 11 and James 2, and he was just as big a liar as she was! He even convinced his wife to lie (Gen. 12:13-14, 20:10-13)! Is Abraham doomed and damned to Hell because of what Revelation 21:8 says? If not, why not? Is Rahab any greater a liar than Jacob (Gen. 27:19-24)? Why can Abraham and Jacob be mentioned in Hebrews 11, but Rahab cannot? Is she any greater a liar than Peter (Matt. 26:69-75) or others in the New Testament? “But Peter and others repented,” might be the reply to my question. I agree wholeheartedly. Why couldn’t Rahab have done the same? By marrying Salmon, is she not repenting of her former life? Can she not repent of lying also?

Let us set Rahab and Joshua 2 in the Biblical context. God disapproved of her sin. This is without question. Joshua 2 merely records what she said and where she began when the Israelites

found her. Passages such as Matthew 1:5, Hebrews 11:31, and James 2:25 show she had to have learned more about Jehovah and His will and repented of sin. Finally, remember that Revelation 21:8 is a passage warning the unrepentant people of what awaits them. It is not written to the saved who have repented of those sins (ex: I Cor. 6:11)!

The examples of Rahab, Abraham, Moses, Peter, Isaac, Jacob, and countless others show us that God, in His perfection, can use man in his imperfection to accomplish His will. No one is sinless (Rom. 3:23), yet God can use us fragile, fallible, feeble folks to accomplish what He wants! This ought to encourage us. God’s will is accomplished today through these same kinds of people we read about in the Bible!

✍ Jarrod M. Jacobs

Gospel Meeting: April 9-14

Preacher: Jarrod Jacobs

7pm: Monday-Friday

Belleville church of Christ

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	4:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

Brad Phillips (765) 720-2816