

# Sermon Outline

## “AND THE LORD GAVE THEM REST”: A CHRISTIAN READING OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

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### A SURE SIGN (JOSHUA 2:15-21)

#### I. Savior of the Unlikely

#### II. Rahab Helps the Spies Escape (Joshua 2:15-16)

#### III. The Spies State Their Terms (Joshua 2:17-20)

- A. The spies give Rahab their terms.
- B. The spies remind Rahab that her safety is conditional on loyalty to the spies and to Israel: “We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear” (v 17).
- C. The spies instruct Rahab to tie a scarlet cord at her window to identify her house to Israel (v 18).  
—The cord makes Rahab’s a sanctuary for people who live there.
- D. The spies ask Rahab to gather her family into her house.
- E. The spies warn Rahab that they will not be liable for family members who leave the house and go out in the streets when the invasion occurs (v 19).
- F. But the spies also say that Israel will be guilty of murder if anyone in the safe-house is injured (v 19).

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What were the terms and conditions that the spies gave to Rahab? (2) What was the purpose of the scarlet cord?

#### IV. Digression: Killing, War, and the Sixth Commandment

- A. When God says to Israel, “You shall not murder,” God does not mean that absolutely no killing is allowed.
  - 1. What the Sixth Commandment condemns is not killing in general but *unjust killing*.

2. Killing by itself is not the issue. The issue is *why* it is done. Is it done by God's clear command? Is it done for a righteous cause? Is it done by a legitimate authority and for a legitimate reason?
- B. While war is not the final answer to our problems, there are times when loving people means protecting them from those who seek to harm them. During some of those times, the only way to protect our neighbors may well be to kill their enemies.
  - C. In this day and age, God has not given his Church the permission to punish his enemies with the sword.
  - D. God has entrusted the sword to the earthly government to protect the common good, not just the Church's (Rom 13:1-5).
  - E. Christians can join the army or police with a clear conscience, knowing that they are doing honorable work.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Why does God give the Church wisdom about public ethics? Why is it important for Christians to grapple with these issues? (2) Why can Christians join the army or the police with a clear conscience? (3) Has God given the Church today the right to use the sword to fight for him? (4) "'You shall not murder' does not mean 'You shall not ever kill.'" Do you agree with this idea? Why or why not?

## V. Sealing the Pact (Joshua 2:20)

- A. The spies warn Rahab for a third time: "But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear" (v 20).
- B. Rahab agrees: "According to your words, so be it" (v 20).

## VI. Our Lord Jesus in the Account of Rahab and the Spies

- A. What meaning can we gain from this text? How are we to apply a spy story like this one to our lives today? There are two important lessons.
  1. God is teaching us through Joshua 2 on how to think ethically about war.
  2. God is teaching us through Joshua 2 on the value of keeping our word—even to our enemies.

- B. But the most important truth is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. We must place Joshua 2 in the context of Ephesians 2:4.  
—Rahab was saved in Jesus Christ.
  2. Christ Jesus was represented in *the scarlet cord*.  
—Just as the cord protected Rahab’s house from God’s judgment, the cross of Jesus protects those who trust in him from God’s final judgment.
  3. Christ Jesus was represented in *the promise* of the spies.
    - a. The spies represented Joshua, who represents Christ.
    - b. Their promise to Rahab is Christ’s promise to her.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What does Ephesians 2:4 teach us about Rahab’s salvation? (2) Why do we say that Jesus Christ was represented in the scarlet cord and the promise of the spies?

*Even though our heavenly Father teaches us how to think ethically about war and about the importance of keeping our promises even to our enemies, the most important truth that comes out of this account is still the Lord Jesus Christ himself. We see in Rahab’s own experience the personal ministry of Jesus himself. Through the promise of the spies and the sign of the scarlet cord, God joins Rahab to his Son Jesus and confirms his promise of mercy to her. In our case, God joins us to Christ not by the word of spies or a scarlet cord; but by the word of his apostles, the death of Jesus himself, and the signs of baptism and the Lord’s Table.*

*But in order for us to benefit from God’s promise and signs, we need to continue believing in Jesus Christ and keep faith in God. If we betray Christ by walking away from him, the promises and signs no longer apply to us. We can only expect judgment. Only those who maintain a fundamental allegiance to God and his Christ will continue to enjoy the forgiveness of sins and the hope of glory. So let us heed our Father’s Word. Keep your loyalty to God the Father. Continue trusting in his appointed leader, Jesus Christ, for your salvation.*

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