

Two Signs

2 Facets of Salvation

Two Other Themes First: Fear And Faith

Joshua 2:1-24 The Two Spies In Jericho

I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. 2:9

When we heard of it (The drying up of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Amorite kings), our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. 2:11

They said to Joshua, The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us. 2:24

Rahab responded to what she knew by faith about the God of Israel, hiding the spies and saving herself and her family. The writer to the Hebrews commends her with these brief words, *By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.* Her fear did lead to faith.

Joshua 4:1-5:1 The 12 Stones From The Jordan

That day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they revered (feared) him all the days of his life, just as they had revered (feared) Moses. 4:14

He did this (dried up the Jordan as he had dried up the Red Sea) so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God. 4:24

Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until we had crossed over, their hearts melted and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites. 5:1

Two Facets Of Salvation: Looking Forward and Looking Backward

Rahab's fear was a faith that **looked forward** to her salvation from a city that was to be destroyed. The fear of faith that God desired to build into the coming generations of Israelites through the pile of 12 stones was a faith that **looked back** to what God had accomplished for them. As we look back at what God has done for us we can also look forward with faith to the saving of our souls and that of many others.

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1 Rahab had not yet seen Jericho destroyed nor her family saved but her surety and certainty grew out of the evidence, God's drying up of the Red Sea and his destruction of the Amorite kings, Og and Sihon.

The following references tell us that the Lord taught his people to fear him. This is the fear of faith.

Commands To Fear The Lord

Fear the Lord your God, serve him... Deuteronomy 6:13 NIV

... but to fear the Lord your God. Deuteronomy 10:12

... and learn to fear the Lord your God Deuteronomy 31:12

I will show you whom you should fear ... (the One who could destroy both body and soul in hell) Luke 12:5

Benefits Of Fearing The Lord

The fear of the Lord is pure ... Psalm 19:9 NIV

The fear of the Lord leads to life. Proverbs 19:23 NIV

Other blessings: no fear of evil Ps. 23:4; fear of no one Ps. 27:1; the terror of night Ps. 91:5; the beginning of wisdom Ps. 111:10; the angel of the Lord camps about them ps. 34:7; adds length of days Pr. 10:27; a fountain of life Pr. 14:27; it teaches a man wisdom Pr. 15:33; through it a man avoids evil Pr. 16:6; it leads to life Pr. 19:23.

*A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
Proverbs 31:30 NIV*

Examples Of Those Who Feared The Lord

*(The Messiah) ...will delight in the fear of the Lord.
Isaiah 11:3 NIV*

*(Job) ... a man who fears God and shuns evil... Job
1:8 NIV*

The Reality Of The Fear Of The Lord

*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living
God. Hebrews 10:31 NIV*

B. 2:1-24, The 2 spies in Jericho

- Red Sea was dried up.
- The Lord is God in heaven and earth.
- **The red cord hung as a sign.**
- “The people are melting in fear because of us.”

Saved From...

Salvation is also a major theme in both the Old and the New Testament and it speaks to both what we have been *saved from* as well as what we have been *saved to*. Notice that the Lord *saved* Hezekiah both *from* Sennacherib and *to* his own guidance, in *2Chronicles 32:22 Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other, and guided them on every side. AV/KJV* In the Psalms we read of God’s people being saved from distress. *Psalm 107:13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, [and] he saved them out of their distresses. AV/KJV* In Isaiah we read about the Lord saving them to his care. He bore them along and carried them. *Isaiah 63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. AV/KJV*

Elements Of A Spy Novel

Novels are made of these elements! There were spies in this story. There was a prostitute in the story. There were close calls. There was hiding on roof tops. There were rumors flying around the land.

Joshua, son of Nun, sent 2 spies to spy out the land and especially Jericho. Why? Was God looking for those who might look to him for mercy? In all of Jericho apparently there was no one who listened to all that God had done for Israel and desired to know or be rescued by that God. It seems only Rahab, the harlot, was open and prepared to seek him.

A Prostitute

Rahab was a harlot or prostitute and some might question why they went there. Doesn't this present a moral problem? That the 2 spies entered her house does not mean they went there looking for sinful pleasures. It may have been the most convenient place to hide.

Jericho was to be spied out or explored. Eventually it was to be destroyed entirely and devoted to God. Nothing was to be taken from it or remain intact, except Rahab's house and family. Jericho was the city of destruction and reminds us of the city from which Christian fled in the book, Pilgrim's Progress.

Lying?

The king of Jericho asked after the spies that hid in Rahab's house. Another moral problem arises here. Rahab lied to the king or to his messengers, but remember the spies did not. She was, after all, a prostitute. Lying might be expected of such a person. Because she believed in Jehovah does not mean that every area of her spiritual and moral life had been sorted out! Even mature believers have areas of their lives which are still weak.

Owth Is A Sign

Rahab asked the spies for a sign (2:12, 13), 12. *Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign 13. and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death" (NIVUS).* The word used in this text was the word 'owth, which meant sign.

Other Old Testament Signs:

Genesis 4:15 So the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, lest anyone finding him should slay him.

Genesis 9:12 ¶ And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; Genesis 9:13 I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.

Genesis 17:11 "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.

Exodus 3:12 And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent

you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

Exodus 12:13 'And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy [you] when I strike the land of Egypt.

Numbers 16:38 "As for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered sheets for a plating of the altar, since they did present them before the LORD and they are holy; and they shall be for a sign to the sons of Israel."

Numbers 17:10 But the LORD said to Moses, "Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they should not die."

Deuteronomy 6:8 "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

Deuteronomy 11:18 ¶ "You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

Deuteronomy 28:45-47 45 ¶ "So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the LORD your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. 46 "And they shall become a

sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever.
47 "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things;

Judges 6:36, 37. 36 Then Gideon said to God, "If Thou wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken, 37 behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that Thou wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken."

1 Samuel 2:34 And this will be the sign to you which shall come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them shall die.

1 Kings 13:5 The altar also was split apart and the ashes were poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

Isaiah 20:3 And the LORD said, "Even as My servant Isaiah has gone naked and barefoot three years as a sign and token against Egypt and Cush,

Ezekiel 4:3 Then get yourself an iron plate and set it up as an iron wall between you and the city, and set your face toward it so that it is under siege, and besiege it. This is a sign to the house of Israel.

Ezekiel 20:12 And also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.

Don't Miss The Sign!

Have you ever missed the sign on the restroom door and walked into the wrong restroom? Cathy's mom and dad accompanied us to Mt. Morris, Michigan to visit my aunt Dorothy. We went to have breakfast at a Bill Knapp's Restaurant. I dropped the others off at the entrance and parked the car. When I went into the restaurant I proceeded to the men's room but mistakenly opened the door to the women's and there in front of the mirror was my mother-in-law combing her hair. I gulped, made a squeaky embarrassing noise and backed out as fast as I could!

South Of The Border

Anyone who has traveled up and down Interstate 95 on the east coast of the United States through North and South Carolina will know what "South of the Border" refers to! As you travel towards the border between these two states huge billboards with Mexican themes appear one after another, after another! The signs are big, splashy and colorful. They beckon you onwards to a "special experience". At one of the exits on the border you can find restaurants and other eating establishments, as well as, various amusements with Mexican themes. Those signs tell you about the numerous facilities available there.

Judgment Stopped At The Sign Of The Red Cord

The scarlet cord by which Rahab let down the two spies was the same cord she left hanging in her window on the city wall, the sign of her future salvation. The scarlet cord was the sign of escape from destruction (v. 18).

Joshua 2:18 ... unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house (NIVUS).

Traffic lights are signs, which tell the motorist to stop, be cautious or proceed. The red is for stop, the amber for caution and the green for proceed. While there is no direct correlation it is interesting to note that the red traffic light is what brings the vehicles to a stop and it was a red cord hanging out Rahab's window which stopped God's judgment at her house. While the walls of the rest of the city of Jericho fell her section remained intact.

Do Not Walk On The Grass

If you have ever been in a public park you may have seen a sign that said, "Do Not Walk On The Grass". You may walk on all the paths around and through the park but there is a line drawn between the paths and the lawns. When the red cord was hung from Rahab's window God drew a line there. God was about to destroy Jericho but the red cord said, "Do Not Destroy This House". Just before Israel left their 400 years of slavery in Egypt God told them to kill a lamb and spatter the blood on the lintel and doorposts of their homes. It would be a sign to the angel of death, which said, "Do Not Kill The First Born In This House" (Exodus 12).

Rahab's Testimony

In verses 8 to 11 Rahab spoke to the spies of the fear that the Canaanites were experiencing because of what they had heard God had done for Israel, drying up the Red Sea and destroying the kings on the east of Jordan. She made it very clear that it was Jehovah who had done these things.

A Wandering Sheep Saves The Family

In verses 12 and 13 Rahab pleaded for herself and her father's household. Why did she not plead for her mother's household? Did they live in another city? Were they all dead? Had they disowned her, maybe because she was a prostitute? Was it because she had explained what she believed to them and they rejected her ideas but she knew her father's side of the family were open to these ideas and wanted to be saved? No, apparently she was pleading for her parents and siblings. She pleaded for her siblings and all they had. The wandering sheep of the family becomes its means of salvation.

The Grapevine

How could she say with authority that all the inhabitants of the land were melting in fear because of Israel? Was she in the postal system of the day? No. But in another sense she was. She was a key point on the grapevine of Canaan. The house of a prostitute was frequented by outsiders, and often by those who were traveling. She would get news from all over the land.

Prostitutes Go To Heaven Before Others?

How is it that a prostitute would respond positively to Israel and Israel's God and the more decent citizens would

not? Often it is found that those who are less enamored with the status quo are open to new things. Now for sure there were other prostitutes in Jericho I would imagine who were not willing to do what Rahab did. They were happy, more or less, with things as they stood. There may have been citizens in the city who wanted to make peace with Israel but were afraid they might be seen as traitors or cowards.

In the New Testament there is a parallel in the person of Matthew, the tax collector. Jesus made it clear to the religious leaders who challenged his going to dinner with Matthew and his colleagues that he had come to heal the sinners, not the righteous. Would this identification with Rahab be one of the reasons why Matthew included Rahab and certain women in his genealogy of Christ in Matthew chapter one? Rahab was a prostitute and so were some of Matthew's friends. Rahab was a foreigner and so was Ruth the Moabite. Matthew worked for the foreigners and was considered one himself, virtually.

Can any of us point the finger, who struggle with lust? It is one of the areas of our lives, which can hold us back and even ruin our ministries.

Rendel To The Rescue!

Rahab mentions the fear that Canaan experienced. She said their hearts melted and there was no courage left in any of them! Fear does things to people. We think the reason my brother used to wake at night around 9pm was because he was having nightmares and these were connected with lions. We had lions in our district in

northern Nigeria and we could hear them howling even at a distance of 5 miles from our house.

Here in Canaan the inhabitants could hear the lion of God howling and roaring and they were terrified. I remember the terrified face of a boy. One night at a boarding school which we attended in Nigeria, at around 9pm, I heard screams coming from the opposite end of the boys' dorm where the younger boys lived. I was sure it was my brother. Often I had gone down to wake him from his nightmares.

I ran down the hall and as I passed dorm rooms along the hall I could hear friends whisper loudly, "Rendel to the rescue!" I raced into my brother's room flipping on the light switch as I entered. If it were not for the screams I would have broken down in laughter. My brother was standing in the middle of the room. He was quite tall and big compared to most of his classmates. My brother had hold of the end of a sheet and was pulling on it. He wasn't screaming! The other guy was! He was sitting up in his lower bunk bed hanging onto the other end of the sheet and wearing his lungs out. He was the tiniest boy in the class and brother's best friend. He didn't know who this ghostly giant was who was dragging off his sheets and, who knows, but what would drag him off too. He was terrified!

I took the sheet out of Jim's hand and covered his friend. His tiny friend went back to sleep. Then I helped my brother get back into bed.

The Canaanites felt a lion was breathing down their necks or a giant was “yanking off their covers”.

Windows

There is a window in this story (2:14-21). It was on Rahab’s house, on the walls of Jericho. The two spies escaped through that window and the scarlet cord by which they escaped, the sign, was placed hanging out that window. We know walls and windows of that kind from the movies we see of medieval times. We also have windows on many of our computers. After working many hours on our computers some of us would like to escape from those windows too. Some do this by escaping through the windows on the computer and into a computer game!

The spies make an agreement with Rahab, a pact. If she kept the cord hanging in the window, on the day they took the city, her house and those in it would be spared. If those in the house were harmed then their lives for her life and that of her father’s household. Trust was given and received here.

The cord she hung from the window has two meanings in Hebrew! The word *tiqvah* {tik-vaw'} meant, 1) *cord* and 2) *hope or expectation*.

One might ask how these men communicated with her since they probably spoke different languages. Maybe Joshua chose the spies because they knew a common trade language used. Could it have been Egyptian? The Canaanites were vassals to Egypt. So was this word for

cord the same in the language they used? Did ancient peoples use a cord to tie around an object or a part of their body to remind them of something in the future?

Threading The Suitcase

My aunt on my wife's side once gave me some light blue thread to tie around the handles of my suitcases when visiting them in Portland, Oregon. When my luggage appeared after the flight I could easily spot which cases were mine. My wife was visiting her brother in Arizona and he picked her up from the airport. Cathy had described to John what her suitcase looked like and that it had a light blue thread tied to the handle. Suddenly across the baggage area he saw someone carrying off a black suitcase with a blue thread on the handle, just like Cathy had described. He bounded across the room jumping over luggage and grabbed the case from behind just as the man carrying it off was about to leave the airport building. For a moment the man and his wife stood in shock looking at John, my brother in law. John is a big man! Then John explained that it was Cathy's case and that he knew it by the blue thread! The man was so apologetic. He was British and on holiday, or vacation. We had bought our case in England and he had one just like it, so the mistake on his part. That's how we retrieved the suitcase before it disappeared half way across Arizona! The small light blue thread had saved the day!

Assurance Of Victory

Rahab sent those chasing the spies on a wild goose chase to the Jordan while the spies hid in the mountains (2:22). The spies hid in at least two places during their spying on

Jericho, under the flax on Rahab's roof and in the mountains. Verses 23 and 24 tell us the spies reported back to Joshua. They gave a positive report, not like the 10 spies of former days. They gave glory to God saying that truly the Lord was giving them the land for the terror of them had fallen on its inhabitants.

Joshua 2:24 They said to Joshua, "The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us" (NIVUS).

Signs:

Signs of the end about which the disciples ask in Mark 13. We once saw a sign in Algeciras, south Spain, in a very special kind of English, "It read 'bungalows' for sale."

The star was a sign to the wise men showing where Jesus would be.

The sign of the cross used by RC.

The Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign from heaven.

Signs with the hand and fingers such as the victory sign.

Sign language.

Nike check mark.

Tombstones are signs.

The sign of the cross on a church building steeple.

Most interesting sign you have ever seen?

D. 4:1-5:1, The 12 stones from the Jordan.

- The Jordan was dried up.

- What the Lord did to the Jordan & the Red Sea.

- **12 stones raised as a sign.**

- "... that you might always fear the Lord."

Saved to...

In the New Testament, in Acts we are told that when we are saved we are saved into the church. *Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47 AV/KJV)*. In Romans Paul writes that we are justified by the blood of Jesus and saved from wrath. *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Romans 5:9 AV/KJV)*. In Ephesians Paul writes that being saved is being made alive. *... even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) ... (Ephesians 2:5 NKJV)*. Paul wrote to Timothy telling him that salvation was a holy calling, and a gift of God's purpose and grace. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ... (2Ti 1:9 AV/KJV)*.

Finally we know that when God saved us he came to live with us by his Spirit, so we can enjoy his *presence* personally, and not only that but that he would drive out of our lives the influence of the old man or the flesh. Just as God's people Israel were at war with the decadent and sinful nations of Canaan, so the Spirit in us from God is at war with the flesh within us. Paul describes this whole scenario of spiritual war in Galatians 5:16 to 26.

16 *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

17 *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*

18 *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

19 *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,*

20 *idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,*

21 *envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

23 *gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

24 *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

25 *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

26 *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. NIV*

New Testament Signs:

Matthew 12:38 ¶ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

Matthew 16:4 "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them, and went away.

Matthew 24:30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

Matthew 26:48 Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him."

Luke 2:12 "And this [will be] a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger."

Luke 23:8 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.

John 6:14 When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world."

Jesus' miracles were signs and meant to lead us to faith in him as the Christ and Son of God according to John 21:30 and 31.

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. AV/KJV

Billboard Signs

As we drive the highways, especially in America, we see sign after sign along the highways which we call billboards. These are signs which help us locate eating places, gas or petrol stations and stores like MacDonalds, Burger King, Red Lobster, Mobile, BP, Speedway stations, and malls along the highway. The pile of stones taken from the Jordan on the banks of that river acted something like a billboard sign. It reminded Israel of what the Lord did by drying up the waters of the Jordan so that Israel could walk over on dry land. Billboards are like a “shouting sign”! The pile of stones by the Jordan was to be a “shouting sign” to Israel!

“Ramp to the Beach”

We had been told the sands on Daytona Beach, Florida were so firm you could drive your car on the beach with no fear of getting stuck. We didn't know how to get to the beach but finally located a sign that said, “Ramp to the Beach”. Sure enough, we could drive on the beach and allowed to cruise at 10 miles per hour. That was 1997. Driving on Daytona Beach is no longer allowed but I enjoyed it one time.

God never opened up the Jordan again for the whole nation to cross but it happened once, when Joshua entered, with the nation, into their inheritance.

Zebra Crossing

If you have never lived in Britain you might think “Zebra Crossing” refers to a ford in an east African river where the zebra cross. It refers to a pedestrian crossing and is called a Zebra Crossing because it is marked out with alternating black and white stripes set at an angle. Once a pedestrian sets foot into one of these crossings the traffic is obligated to stop and allow the pedestrian to cross first. Once the pedestrian has crossed the traffic is allowed to flow again. The Zebra crossing is a sign on the ground for pedestrians and drivers.

The pile of stones, from the Jordan, set up on the bank, was a sign about the crossing that the Lord opened up for “pedestrian Israel” while the water “traffic” of the Jordan stopped flowing. The minute the feet of the priests stepped into the water the waters stopped flowing just like the traffic stops when the pedestrian sets foot in the Zebra Crossing. Joshua 3:13

