

## Joshua 2:1 - Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

(1) Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.

- Just this one verse creates numerous questions, all of which have very intriguing and fascinating answers, in how they apply to our lives today.
- For example, why would Joshua send spies out in the first place, and why two and not twelve, and why doesn't he want the Israelites to know?
- To make matters more scandalous why do they go to a prostitute's house? They don't just go there they actually end up staying the night there?

- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a bit as I attempt to answer these questions, and in so doing, uncover the why behind the questionable what.
- First, Why does Joshua send out spies to begin with? Wasn't he running the same risk of having them return as Moses did? Well, yes and no!
- In other words, while there's always an inherent risk, I would suggest that the two are being sent out more as witnesses, than they are as spies.

Luke 10:1 NIV After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

- This also answers the question of why Joshua sends out two instead of twelve like Moses did, he is sending them on ahead of him into Jericho.
- Furthermore, Joshua is demonstrating outstanding leadership in his diligence to strategically prepare them, for that which is prepared for them.
- Also, notice that conspicuously absent are the names of these two witnesses. Why? The thought is that Joshua didn't want them to know who.

- Now the question becomes, why did Joshua do it so secretly, so as to not let the Israelites know? I believe Joshua was protecting the Israelites.
- Let me explain, if the Israelites know, not only that Joshua was sending them out but who Joshua was sending out it would've messed them up.
- It would've tripped them up, and held them up in the sense that they'd take a wait and see approach before setting out to cross over the Jordan.

- Now we know the why behind the what of sending them out, but what about this Rahab woman? Why in the world would they go to a prostitute?
- At the risk of sounding sensational and unspiritual, I would suggest that if the truth be known, we actually don't want them going anywhere else.
- Here's why, this was brilliant militarily, and poignant applicably, as we'll see momentarily. Consider what going to a prostitute would've provided.

- This prostitute would have provided the greatest anonymity. Where else but a house of ill repute are you able to remain anonymous, nameless?
- This prostitute would have provided the most security. Where else but a house of ill repute can you find a place where nobody bothers you?
- This prostitute would have provided the best society. Where else but a house of ill repute will you hear the latest on who's doing what where?

- Ok, you say, but how, pray tell, does all of this, apply to us? I am so very glad you asked! There's so much of a take away from just verse one.
- First, the two witnesses. We would do well in everything we do, and everywhere we go, to establish it in the presence of two or more witnesses.
- You may remember that ancient proverb that says; "if one man calls you a donkey, pay no attention, if two call you a donkey, go buy a saddle."

Matthew 18:15-17 NIV "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. (16) But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' (17) If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

- As for Joshua doing this confidentially, the wisdom in this is not only protecting the Israelites, but it also had the effect of not hindering Joshua.
- It's important to understand that there is a distinction between a leader and a manager in that the leader leads, but the manager manages.
- By way of illustration, the leader has to make decisions on the direction of the railroad track, whereas the manager keeps the train on that track.

- If Joshua, as the visionary, had to first run all this by the congregation of the Israelites, he would have been rendered impotent and not done it.
- The children of Israel would form a "two witnesses committee," then, upon completion of their findings would submit them to the spy committee.
- Once the spy committee reviews it, which takes several committee meetings over a period of eleven months, it goes to a congregational vote.

There's a fictitious and humorous story that goes like this; "A certain congregation was about to erect a new church building. The building committee, over the course of several lengthy meetings passed the following resolutions: 1. We shall build a new church. 2. The new building is to be located on the site of the old one. 3. The material in the old building is to be used in the new one. 4. We shall continue to use the old building until the new one is completed."

- I certainly don't wish to sound derogatory towards those denominations in which the church government is either board or congregationally run.
- However, I do wish to reiterate why it is, as the pastor of this phenomenal church, I chose this affiliation when I came here to plant this church.
- Had I not, I would not be your pastor, and I would venture to say that this church here in Kaneohe wouldn't exist. Simply put, I'm not a hireling.

Pastor Chuck Smith in his book, "The Calvary Chapel Distinctives," had this to say; "I believe that God's model is that the pastor is ruled over by the Lord and recognized by the congregation as God's anointed instrument to lead the church, with the Board guiding and directing. Complementing this is the role of the assisting pastors. They are there to minister to the spiritual needs of the people on a daily basis. With these components in place, there is a great form of church government where you, as the pastor, are not in the position of a hireling. Becoming a hireling is a real danger when the church is run by a Presbyterian kind of a government, and the Board is ruling over the church. The pastor is hired by the Board and can be fired by the Board in the same fashion. With that kind of rule the pastor becomes a hireling. The same is true with congregational rule. A pastor is hired by the congregation, rather than ordained by the Lord who is the Head of the body. He's not appointed by Jesus Christ, the Head of the body, but instead he's elected or selected by the Board or by the congregation. Here again, the pastor becomes a hireling. I don't believe that anyone can do his best work as a hireling. ...I've observed that those churches ... so often are not really looking for a pastor as much as they're looking for a hireling. Their idea of a pastor is, "Someone who is going to come in and dance to our beat. We'll pull the strings and as long as you respond and react, you're a fair-haired employee. But if you dare to want to step out on your own, then it's a different story."

- Be that as it may, dare I say, had Joshua done what we read in verse one, he'd be fired for insubordination, and subsequent excommunication!
- Instead of studying the book of Joshua about all that God did, we would be studying the book of Committee and all they would have never did.
- Suffice it to say, this remained confidential, rightfully so, because Joshua would have been hindered by their knowledge of it, and opinions on it.

- Let's now round the corner from a ruling congregation, to scandalous prostitution. You'll forgive me for being so dramatic, and you'll see why.
- I am unspeakable grateful that these two witnesses, whom some believe were Caleb and Eliezar, go to and stay with a prostitute named Rahab.
- Here's why, this prostitute gets saved. That gives me hope because God is attracted to the down and out, the broken and contrite, not the elite.

- Actually, this is God's modus operandi, a.k.a., His M.O., if I can say it that way. This is Who God is, this is how God is, this is how God operates.
- In fact, this is how God incarnate, chose to come into this world, and bring salvation to this world. He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
- It's evidenced in not just "that" God sent His only begotten Son, it's "how," it's "where," and it's to "whom," that God sent His only begotten Son.

**Luke 2:6-18 NKJV** So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. (7) And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (8) Now there were in the same country **shepherds living out in the fields**, keeping watch over their flock by night. (9) And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. (10) Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, **I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.** (11) For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (12) And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." (13) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: (14) "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (15) So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." (16) And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. (17) Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. (18) **And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.**

- I know that I'm asking a myriad of questions, so, here are some more; why would God choose to have Jesus born in this way, and in this place?
- Honestly, why would the Savior come at night, as a newborn baby, in a little obscure town, then, have it announced to filthy lowly shepherds?
- Shouldn't the Savior of the world be born in a cleaner and nicer place, in a better town? Can't it at least be announced to society's elite instead?

- No! It could not! Here's why I say that, were God to do that, then it wouldn't have brought "peace, goodwill, and good tidings of great joy, to all!"
- If it would not have gone first to these lowly shepherds, then the "good tidings of great joy which will be to all people," wouldn't have been true.
- In other words, if this will bring great joy to lowly shepherds then it will bring great joy to "all people," from all walks of life, even the nobody's.

- If it went first to society's elite, then instead of great joy to "all people," it would only for "some people." It's only for somebodies, not nobodies.
- This explains why God does what God does in the way God does it. It demonstrates how it is that God is attracted to the Rahab's of this world.
- In Luke 5:31 Jesus, as the great physician, said He came for those who are in need of a physician, not the ones who don't need a physician.

- Here's what I'm thinking, just as salvation came first to the shepherd in Bethlehem, so too does salvation come first to the prostitute in Jericho.
- Let me take it a step further and submit that not only is the Lord comfortable with the lowly conversely, He is uncomfortable with the haughty.
- The reason being that God Himself is humble, thus Jesus Christ in human likeness was the personification of a lowly humility, and meekness.

**Philippians 2:5-8 NIV** Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

- What if I told you that this prostitute named Rahab, here in the book of Joshua, was actually in the lineage of the Savior of the entire world?

**Matthew 1:5-6 NIV** Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

- This may sound like an infomercial but, that's not all! What if we included this prostitute name Rahab, at no extra charge, in the hall of faith?

**Hebrews 11:31 NIV** By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

- That's not all, James, the half brother of Jesus Himself, in the same way, uses this Rahab, "the prostitute," as an example of what faith really is.

**James 2:25 NIV** In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

- I don't know how else to say it except that God takes the nothing, and is able to do everything and anything. I don't know how, I just know that.
- Not only that, I can also know why. He does it in His way, in His time, and according to His will, so there can be no mistake that it's for His glory.
- Replete throughout the pages of Holy Writ, we find one example after another of why it is and the way it is, that all the glory belongs only to Him.

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31 NKJV** (26) For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called.* (27) But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; (28) and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, (29) that no flesh should glory in His presence. (30) But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— (31) that, as it is written, "HE WHO GLORIES, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD."