

*How does one get from Jericho to Bethlehem?*

*How does one get from idolatry to true worship?*

*How does one get from a “working girl” to a Savior?*

# By Faith

By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish  
along with those who were disobedient,  
after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

(Hebrews 11:31)

# Rahab

part one

OUR WALK IN GOD’S DIRECTION can include moments of doubt—even shame. We remember our untidy history; we remember who we were before we came to Christ. We know all too well the dark thoughts and unseemly temptations that course through our minds, those hooks into our fragile soul with which Satan is all too familiar.

With unbounded mercy, God has included in His word stories of real, flesh-and-blood people—people who were just as weak in the ways of the flesh as some in this generation. Sometimes more. That in itself is remarkable—that such corruption

and weakness would be included in God’s document of record. But He goes further. These individuals are not just included as examples of how we, as believers, are not supposed to behave. They are included in His word to demonstrate the Lord’s grace—and, by extension, be an encouragement to believers today—in that these sinful human beings were used by Him to accomplish His over-arching plan for man’s salvation.

## Qualified

The writers of Scripture, working through the breath of the Holy Spirit, did not

concern themselves with “political correctness,” or effective P.R. practices. They didn’t spin things to their, or anyone else’s, advantage. If they had, they certainly would have left out a few characters from the lineage of Jesus. After all, what good purpose would be served to go public with all the skeletons loitering about the family tree of Joseph, the husband of Mary.

The story of Rahab is rich with human drama and the compassionate grace of God. It is the story about a woman who began as a prostitute in a heathen city and ended up as part of the human line of the Savior.

By an act of faith, Rahab, the Jericho harlot, welcomed the spies and escaped the destruction that came on those who refused to trust God. (Hebrews 11:31 *The Message*)

But the Spirit said, “Put it all down. Don’t clean it up.” So they faithfully put down the facts. And as a result, we know that in the line that eventually led to a Bethlehem stable was a common woman of the Jericho street.

Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah... Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

(Matthew 1: 1:5-6,16)

The life of Rahab tells us that no one’s past disqualifies them for the Savior, for there are no boundaries to His mercy, forgiveness, and grace.

## Searching

While, on the surface, the daily business of living continued in Jericho, a palpable fear hung over the city like a black rain cloud. Everyone had heard—not only in Jericho, but in all the surrounding city-states of the area—of a vast moving sea of people who enjoyed the favor of a powerful God—a God who supplied their physical needs but, worse (for the citizens of Jericho), protected them in battle.

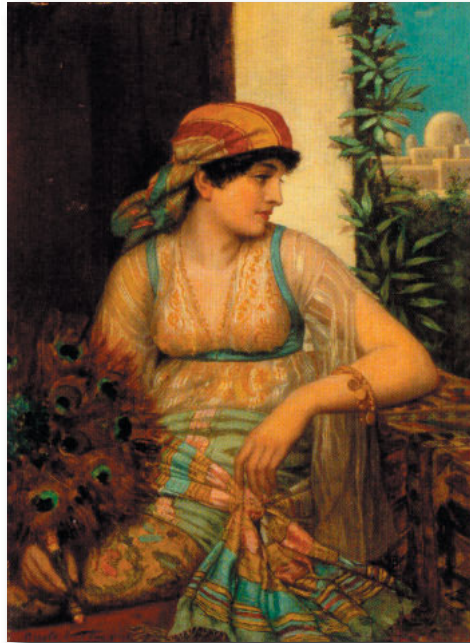
And now word had come to the inhabitants of Jericho that these Israelites were approaching their very city, and were camped just beyond the Jordan in Shittim. Jericho was a fortress, but the inhabitants were still filled with terror over the prospect of facing these people and their all-powerful God.

At least one person, however, wasn’t afraid to consider that there might be something more at work here than just one nation invading another. Perhaps there really was a strong, personal God behind this approaching army. If so, He clearly possessed greater strength than the sad clay figurines perched in the tiny worship

alcove of her house. So, recognizing an unsatisfied hunger in her life for something better, Rahab took in the men. Risking her own life, she offered them sanctuary.

Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.

(Joshua 2:1)



## Breaking the Law

It was told the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come

to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.” But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords; and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate.

(Joshua 2:2-7)

Before there was Gandhi, before there was Martin Luther King, there was Rahab—a woman who understood, even in her infant faith, that there were some things which superseded civil law. However she reached the conclusion—whether through divine insight, feminine intuition, or just playing the odds—Rahab realized that there was a law higher and more worthy of her respect than that of the king of Jericho. So she broke one law to protect another, and in the process risked her life.

And it was one of her descendents who broke the law when He stormed into the Jerusalem temple one day, furious that the house of worship had evolved into a marketplace. Religion to the highest bidder. Pigeons and goats on sale today. His heart could not bear to see the Father’s house so desecrated, so He righted the wrong with His bare hands, thus sealing His fate at the hands of the religious rulers. ✦

(Continued in next issue)

*Oh God, thank you for forgetting my past. Thank you for taking me as I am: clothed in nothing but faith and the blood of Jesus Christ. In my own life replace complacency with an intense desire to know You more. Replace the blinders of this world with a searching vision of Your truth. And when given the opportunity, let me welcome into my life Your emissaries. Lord, help me to obey the institutions ordained by Your hand, to respect those who carry the burden of law. But give me discernment to know when those laws have been drawn up against You and Your kingdom, and how to stand against them in Your name. Then give me the courage to accept the consequence of my stand.*