

October 17, 2010 GOD PREPARES HIS PEOPLE FOR DELIVERANCE
Joshua 2: 1-21

Today, we will NOT be looking (specifically) at the DELIVERANCE God has provided for His people. **Today**, our focus will be on HOW God PREPARES His people FOR DELIVERANCE (more specifically WHO God has PREPARED).

The DELIVERANCE is set. The DELIVERANCE is **FIXED**. It cannot be altered. It will come about EXACTLY as God has ordained. **The** Final Glory of every sinner God has chosen and Christ has redeemed is CERTAIN. **But**, BEFORE Final Glory comes, God will PREPARE every sinner He has predestined for that Glory. **He** will (without fail) PREPARE His chosen, elect people in time in their appointed generation.

And, today we will answer this question: WHO has God prepared for such DELIVERANCE? **And**, we will answer it under these three points:

1. Those who **RECEIVE** His messengers (ambassadors) with peace (1-7).
2. Those who **RENOUNCE** their (former) safety (8-13).
3. Those who **REST** in God's provision (14-21).

The setting for our lesson today is Jericho. **Israel** is about to begin their conquest of Canaan, the land God had ALREADY given them. **Jericho** is the first city standing in the way of that conquest.

Let's read the first seven verses of our text.

Look at Joshua 2: 1-3, "**And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.**
2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.
3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country."

Joshua sent two spies to Jericho. **They** came to the house of Rahab. **The** king of Jericho learned of their presence in his city and in Rahab's house. **And**, he commanded Rahab to deliver these men into his hand.

Look at Joshua 2: 4-5, "**And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:**

5 And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them."

Rahab was not (exactly) truthful about her knowledge of the two spies OR, about their present whereabouts. **She certainly** knew they were from Israel. **And**, she **certainly** knew where they were. **But**, rather than expose them, she encouraged those sent by the king of Jericho on a "wild goose chase".

Look at Joshua 2: 6-7, "**But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.**

7 And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate."

Joshua sent these two men to spy out the land. **That** was HIS intention. **And**, the men he sent did that. **When** they returned to the camp of Israel, they were able to report that the heart of the inhabitants of Jericho was faint. **It** was weak. **They** were afraid for their lives. **So**, the spies fulfilled the mission Joshua had sent them on.

But, it is obvious from the context of Joshua 2 that God had a very different reason for sending these two men to Jericho.

As I have already told you, this message is about God PREPARING HIS PEOPLE FOR DELIVERANCE. **And**, we are answering the question, "WHO has God PREPARED for such DELIVERANCE"?

And, the FIRST point is: God has prepared for DELIVERANCE those who **RECEIVE** His messengers with peace.

In this Chapter of Scripture we learn some facts. **Jericho** is the first city Israel will come to in its conquest of Canaan. **That** makes Jericho the first OBSTACLE standing in the way of the natural descendants of Abraham POSSESSING the land they have already been given. **So**, Jericho is DOOMED for destruction. **Very** soon, this city will not just be destroyed. **It will** be UTTERLY destroyed (explain).

But, living in this city is one of God's ELECT people. **Her** name is Rahab. **She** is an harlot of Jericho. **And**, although Jericho is doomed for (utter) DESTRUCTION, Rahab is not to be a part of that DESTRUCTION. **Rahab** has been predestined for DELIVERANCE. **God** has sent these two men here to PREPARE Rahab for that DELIVERANCE.

In this point we see God PREPARING Rahab for DELIVERANCE from the impending doom of Jericho's destruction. **And**, the FIRST way He PREPARED her was by giving her (true) FAITH.

The king of Jericho wanted Rahab to "deliver" the spies into his hand (no doubt to destroy them). **But**, "by FAITH" Rahab **RECEIVED** them instead. "**By FAITH**" Rahab stood **with** these whom God had sent. **She** took sides **with** them and **against** those who would harm them. **The** writer or Hebrews tells us that what Rahab did was an act of (true) FAITH.

Look at Hebrews 11: 31, "**By faith Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.**"

In Rahab's mind she had **already** "come out from among" her people. **She** had **already** "separated" herself from their thinking. **She** had **already** taken sides with these men of Israel and with the God of Israel. **Spiritually**, she had **already** done what Paul commanded all believers to do in II Corinthians.

Look at II Cor 6: 14-16, "**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?**"

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And, here is what I wanted you to see from this context.

Look at verses 17-18, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Although Rahab still lived in Jericho, her FAITH was in the God of Israel. **God** had chosen her to be a vessel of His Sovereign mercy. **He had** given her (true) FAITH. **And**, believing, she “**perished not with them that believed not**”.

Think about how IMPOSSIBLE it would have been for Rahab to be delivered WITHOUT God’s intervention. **Joshua** did not know she lived in Jericho. **The two** spies did not know Rahab. **And**, if they had, they would not have known her to be one predestined for DELIVERANCE. **Rahab** is without ability or hope of delivering herself from the destruction that is imminent.

Rahab is a picture of what God does with each of His elect in each successive generation. **He** PREPARES them for DELIVERANCE from the (utter) DESTRUCTION of this world, as well as, the eternal DESTRUCTION that will fall on those left UNPREPARED. **In** themselves they are without help and without hope. **But**, God is their hope.

Look at Ephesians 2: 11-12, “**Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;**

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:”

Rahab is a Gentile woman, living in a city bound for (utter) destruction, without any (apparent) means of DELIVERANCE. **But**, God! (PREPARED her for DELIVERANCE).

And, how does God PREPARE His elect? **He** PREPARES them by sending them messengers of His Gospel of peace. **He** sends them ambassadors to declare His free and sovereign grace in Christ; that God has CHOSEN a multitude, that Christ has redeemed them by His obedience unto death; that their final glory is certain because of the work of Christ ALONE.

He PREPARES each of his elect in each generation for DELIVERANCE. **And**, the FIRST way He PREPARES them is by bringing each of them to **RECEIVE** His messengers (His Gospel) with peace.

Next! WHO has God PREPARED for DELIVERANCE? **He** has PREPARED those who **RENOUNCE** their former safety. **Having** diverted those sent from the King of Jericho, Rahab confronts these two men of Israel.

Look at Joshua 2: 8-10, **“And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;**

9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.”

The inhabitants of Jericho were not unaware of Israel’s presence in the world. **God** had promised Moses that the inhabitants of Canaan would FEAR Israel. **Rahab** is describing that fear.

Look at Deut 11:25, **“There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.”**

By God’s design, the inhabitants of Jericho are afraid of Israel. **They** have heard what Israel’s God has done to those who stand in their way. **And**, they (naturally) “fear” for their own safety.

But, Rahab displays a DIFFERENT kind of “fear”. **She** displays a “reverence” for the God of Israel.

Look at Joshua 2: 11, “**And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.”**

Having declared THEIR God to be God, Rahab pleads for HIS mercy. **She** sees what God has done for those in whom He “delights”; those who have found favor in His sight. **So**, she acts as one who sees that her ONLY hope is to be found in the favor (under the MERCY) of this God. **She** acts as one who understands that if she would be DELIVERED from the impending doom of her city, it will be because the God of Israel has determined to show her Mercy (and for NO other reason).

Look at Joshua 2: 12-13, “**Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:**

13 And *that* ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.”

Rahab is not demanding here, but pleading, (“**I pray you...**”). **And**, she is not just seeking the help of these men, but their God, (“**swear unto me by the Lord...**”).

Rahab demonstrates the attitude of one who is NO LONGER looking for safety in those things she once looked to for safety. **She** had a “god” in her mind before she knew of Israel’s God. **But**, she has (obviously) forsaken that “god” for the TRUE God. **She** lived in a WALLED city, one that had (up to now) provided her safety. **But**, she is no longer looking for safety in Jericho.

Rahab is demonstrating the attitude of a REPENTANT sinner. **She** is RENOUNCING what she once found her assurance and comfort in. **And**, in that she is PROVING her FAITH to be GENUINE.

Having given Rahab (true) FAITH, God then gave her an opportunity to demonstrate (or prove) that FAITH. **He** sent these two men **to her**. **They** came to **Jericho**. **But**, it is obvious, that God had sent them **to one of His elect**. **It is** obvious that God had sent these men to PREPARE **Rahab** for DELIVERANCE from the impending doom of Jericho.

In Hebrews we saw that Rahab moved “by faith”. **And**, James tells us that her “movement” (her actions) PROVED her FAITH to be GENUINE.

Look at James 2: 25, “**Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?**”

Rahab did not just **say** that her hope was in the God of Israel. **Her** works **PROVED** that her hope was in the God of Israel.

God PREPARED Rahab for DELIVERANCE. **He** showed her what He does for those in whom He “delights”. **He** brought her to see that her only hope was to be found an object of His Sovereign MERCY.

Rahab RENOUNCED what she once sought safety in. **She** sought MERCY from the true and living God. **And**, that is where God brings each of His elect in each generation.

Every Unregenerate sinner is seeking favor and acceptance with God from our confession, from our law keeping, from our religious zeal. (I.e. Somewhere other than the finished work of Christ alone.)

And, every **regenerate** sinner admits to that. **Every regenerate** sinner RENOUNCES that. **Every regenerate** sinner REPENTS of that. **Every regenerate** sinner seeks all acceptance and favor of God in the imputed Righteousness of Christ ALONE.

Paul expressed the attitude of every **regenerate** sinner in Phillipians 3:7, “**But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”**

Every regenerate sinner admits that what I once thought was gaining me God’s favor was **presumption** in light of the Righteousness worked out in the doing and dying of Christ ALONE.

Who has God PREPARED for DELIVERANCE? **He** has PREPARED those who **RENOUNCE** their former safety. **He** has PREPARED those who have REPENTED of all they once looked to for acceptance in light of the doing and dying of Christ ALONE.

Now! The LAST point of the message: **WHO** has God PREPARED for DELIVERANCE? **He** has PREPARED those who **REST** in His provision.

The two spies respond to Rahab’s plea for mercy.

Look at Joshua 2: 14,” **And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.”**

Rahab provides more proof (more EVIDENCE) that her allegiance is with these men of Israel and their God. **She** gives more EVIDENCE that she has **RENOUNCED** her former king and former “god”.

Look at Joshua 2: 15-16, “**Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.**

16 And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.”

These two spies have promised safety for Rahab and her family. **And**, they have SWORN by the Lord. **But**, Rahab is not without accountability in this matter.

Look at Joshua 2: 17, “**And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.”**

The spies give Rahab three stipulations she must meet if she and her family are to be safe. **We see** two of them here in verses 18 & 19.

Look at Joshua 2: 18, “**Behold, *when* we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.**

19 And it shall be, *that* whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood *shall be* upon his head, and we *will be* guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head, if *any* hand be upon him.”

Bind the ðscarlet threadö in the window. **Gather** your family into your house.

The ðscarlet threadö mentioned in verse 18 was probably a rope platted together. **It had** to be strong enough to support the weight of a man, since it was also used to lower the spies to safety.

Back in verse 12 of our text, Rahab had asked these men to give her ða true tokenö. **She** wanted something to verify the promise and oath they had sworn to. **The SAME** ðscarlet threadö that had brought them to safety would be the **SAME** one that would keep her safe when Jericho was overthrown. **That** ðthreadö would be the common bond between these men of Israel, Rahab and the Lord.

The ðscarlet threadö, of course, is **TYPICAL** of Christ, His blood, His Righteousness as the common bond binding all of His elect together. There is but **ONE** place of safety. **It is** like the ark was in Noah's day. **It is** like the ðblood on the lintel and doorpostö was when God delivered Israel from Egypt.

When Israel came into Jericho, there would be **ONE** place of safety. **It would** be the house marked by that **SAME** ðscarlet threadö. **Rahab** was responsible to gather all her family into **THAT** place. **EVERY** (other) place; **EVERY** (other) person would be **DESTROYED**.

There is but **ONE** means of safety from Eternal Destruction. **That** means is the Righteousness Christ worked out (freely) imputed to the account of a sinner.

The third stipulation given to Rahab is in verse 20.

Look at Joshua 2: 20, “And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.”

õ**This**, our businessõ is speaking of the business of providing DELIVERANCE to Rahab and her family. **I.e. If** you tell others that we have sworn to give you safety, we will **no longer** be bound by our oath.

Point: The safety these men have promised and sworn to is ONLY to those who have been PREPARED for DELIVERANCE. **In this** case it is ONLY to Rahab and her household. **Rahab** is the ONLY one who demonstrated (true) FAITH in God. **She** ALONE sought the MERCY of God.

The REST of Jericho remained enemies of Israel. **The** REST remained UNPREPARED. **And**, those who remain UNPREPARED (in EVERY generation) are facing utter destruction.

Rahab agreed to the stipulations of the two spies.

Look at Joshua 2: 21, “And she said, According unto your words, so *be* it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.”

Rahab sent the spies away IN PEACE. **She RESTED** her hope in the promise and oath she had been given. **She** bound the “scarlet thread” in her window. **I.e. She RESTED** her safety and that of her family in the promise and oath of the God of Israel. **She** acted as one whom God had PREPARED for DELIVERANCE.

I believe in this that Rahab is a TYPE of each of God’s elect. **God** PREPARED the DELIVERANCE (salvation) of His elect in eternity. **He chose** them in Christ. **He made** Christ their Surety (placing all the conditions of their salvation on Christ and Christ ALONE). **He sent** Christ in time to do all that was required for their eternal SAFETY.

According to the prophecy of Daniel 9:24, Christ would come in time “**to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness**” for His sheep.

According to Christ’s resurrection from the dead, He FINISHED that work. **By His** obedience unto death, He “saved His people from their sins”.

So, the DELIVERANCE for EACH sinner God has chosen was PREPARED in eternity. **That DELIVERANCE (their Final Glory)** will happen. It cannot fail to happen. God has ORDERED it. **He has** PURPOSED it. **He has** PREDETERMINED it. **By His** obedience unto death, Christ has OBTAINED it.

But, in time, God MUST and DOES PREPARE each sinner that He has chosen for DELIVERANCE. **He** brings them to the knowledge of a DELIVERANCE that is already theirs in Christ. **That** is what He did with Rahab here in the book of Joshua. **And**, that is what He does with each of His elect at their appointed time.

Look at Jeremiah 23: 3, **“And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.”**

The PREPARED in each generation will bear the ðfruitsö of Righteousness imputed (Faith, Repentance, Rest in Christ alone).

In each generation God PREPARES His elect for Final Glory. **He** brings each of them:

1. To **receive** His messengers (and Gospel) with peace.
2. To **renounce** what they once sought safety (acceptance) in.
3. To **rest** in His provision (the imputed Righteousness of Christ ALONE)

Are you one whom God has PREPARED for DELIVERANCE?

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