

Day 2 – Jan. 31, 2023

The story of Rahab and the Spies is well known and a favorite of Sunday school lessons. Rahab of Jericho houses and hides 2 Israelite spies who have been found out, and then lowers them down from her window outside the city wall, thereby saving her family when the Israelites destroy the city.

But am I the only one who finds this story a bit troubling? For one thing, Rahab is a prostitute, and given our borderline puritanical stance on sexuality in Evangelicalism, it is interesting that we celebrate a woman who commits what we consider sexual sin for a living. She also turns on her own people. In a nationalistic season where treason is one of the highest crimes around, we celebrate a woman who commits treason of the worst kind, a treason that leads to the death of her neighbors, the entire city, and ultimately the whole nation. Then, we find her saving these men with what seems to be God-sanctioned lying. We worship the one who is The Truth and condemn even “little white lies”, yet we celebrate this story as one of victory for God and His people. Here in Chapter one, we have a small forewarning of the difficult themes to come in this book.

So we have to ask, is this text condoning prostitution, treason, and lying, as long as it is “for the right reasons” which could be read “for the right people”? Or is there something deeper here? For God indeed saves Rahab and her family in an almost Passover-like scene. The red rope hanging from the window should remind us of the lamb’s blood on the doorpost marking this home as one protected by the Almighty. And while (spoilers) all other homes are destroyed, Rahab survives this mass death because of her obedience to the commands of God’s people.

Might God be able to work outside of our little boxes and frameworks we hold in such honor? Might God be able to work through people we consider unworthy? Through activities we consider wrong, or even heinous? Might God be the one to determine how He does and doesn’t save His people, rather than us? Might this story of Rahab the Prostitute be given to lead us to a new level of humility before our God who moves in mysterious ways indeed?

Food for thought...