

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Joshua: God's Faithful Giving Of The Promised Land To Israel

Part I: God's Leading Israel Into The Promised Land, Joshua 1:1-5:12

C. Joshua's Discerning The Truth About Rahab's Testimony Via Scripture

(Joshua 2:1-24)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We face significant spiritual deception today even as a Church, a fact we can readily illustrate (as follows):

(1) Last Sunday, a member showed me the article, "The Story -- A New 'Common Core' Catechism?" that told how Zondervan has produced "a condensed version of the Scriptures called The Story" where "the gospel -- namely, sin . . . and salvation -- are nowhere to be found." (thebereancall.org, 2/2015) Indeed, the The Berean Call staff claims "it appears that The Story is acting as a 'common catechism' for Catholics and evangelicals alike," Ibid.

(2) Then, some years ago, I was given a Catholic Bible, The New American Bible, 1986, and found that its version of Ephesians 2:8-9 reads we are "saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God: it is not from works, so no one may boast." (Ibid., p. 1279) That part theologically agrees with the Protestant KJV Bible!

However, I read in this Bible's introductory section a statement by Pope Paul VI claiming it was "'produced in cooperation with our separated brethren,'" i. e., Protestants, "so that 'all Christians may be able to use them.'" This Bible was thus produced to lead Protestants to unite ecumenically with the Catholic Church, so I dare not trust it!

(3) On top of this, Francis Beckwith, a past president of the Evangelical Theological Society who "resigned to return to his Catholic roots (with the official blessing of ETS's leadership)," claims: "'(It is rare today to find a serious Evangelical accusing the Catholic Church of believing in 'works righteousness.' Sure, the more flamboyant voices say such things, but most sophisticated Evangelicals do not take them seriously.'" (The Catholic World Report, 11/5/2014)," cited in T. A. McMahon, "Bowling the Knee to Rome," thebereancall.org, 2/1/2015)

(4) However, both popes of the Second Vatican Council said "that no changes would be made in the doctrinal structure of the church" (Lorraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. x), and the 6th Session, Canon 9 of the Church's Council of Trent (1545-1563) holds: "'If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone . . . let him be anathema'" and its 6th Session, Canon 30 adds: "If anyone says that after . . . justification . . . no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory . . . let him be anathema." (Ibid., McMahon)

Need: *So we ask, "In facing strong spiritual deception today, how can we discern the truth with real certainty?!"*

- I. At first glance, Joshua and his spies in Joshua 2 seem to have badly failed to discern the truth re: Rahab:**
- A. In preparing to battle Jericho, Joshua secretly sent spies to the city to learn of its might and morale, Jos. 2:1a.
 - 1. His past experience at Kadesh-Barnea had taught Joshua that a bad report from spies could discourage Israel, so he secretly sent two spies to learn about Jericho, Jos. 2:1a; R. St. B., KJV, 1978, ftn. to Jos. 2:1.
 - 2. The spies went to Jericho and, likely to conceal their mission, entered the home of the harlot Rahab, 2:1b.
 - B. Joshua 2:2-14 then tells how Rahab hid the spies from Jericho's king, how she told them she sided with Israel and trusted in Israel's God and that she wanted herself and her family to be saved when Israel attacked the city.
 - C. Joshua 2:14-20 reveals the spies said they would save Rahab and her family if she did not expose them and their mission to Jericho's king, if her family stayed in her house when Israel attacked and if she tied a certain identifying scarlet thread in the window through which she later let them down from the city wall for escape.
 - D. Joshua 2:21-24 reports how Rahab agreed to their terms, she sent the spies away and tied the scarlet thread in her window and that the spies safely returned to Joshua and told him God had assuredly given them the land.
 - E. Joshua 3:1 reports that Joshua believed the spies' report and instantly started to prepare to cross the Jordan.
 - F. However, this whole account **initially** leaves Joshua appearing *naive* for **trusting Rahab's testimony**:
 - 1. First, Proverbs 30:20 claims that an immoral woman like Rahab typically notoriously lies!
 - 2. Second, Rahab stood to gain if she lied to the spies by falsely claiming that she sided with Israel and her God, for if Israel's attack succeeded, her lie would spare her life, but if Israel's attack failed, since she had already lied to Jericho's king, pretending to help him find the spies (Joshua 2:2-5), Rahab would still live!
 - 3. Third, Rahab's glowing words about Israel's God for delivering Israel at the Red Sea and giving her victory over Sihon and Og could easily have been made by any pagan liar since they had all heard of these events!
- II. Yet, the WORDS Rahab USED EXACTLY ALIGNED with PROPHECY, showing she spoke the TRUTH:**
- A. When the spies told Joshua about their mission, they **emphasized** their *conviction* that God had delivered the whole land to Israel **BECAUSE all of its dwellers did "surely melt away" in fear of Israel**, Joshua 2:23-24.

- B. The Hebrew word for "surely" here is *gam*, and it precedes the verb "they melt away" (*namogu*) to emphasize that verb. (Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 324; B. D. B., *A Hebrew-English Lexicon of the O. T.*, p. 168-169)
- C. Notably, Rahab had used the same form of that verb that is rendered "faint" in the KJV in Joshua 2:9b (Ibid., Kittel, p. 323-324), so the spies had been very impressed by her use of it, and that initially seems odd: Rahab had used **two different** verbs for "melt" in Joshua 2:8-13, *mug* (in its 3rd per. pl., Niphal stem as *namogu*) in v. 9 and *masas* in v. 11 KJV rendered "melt" (Ibid., p. 323; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 587-588), and Rahab had used *masas* in a more dramatic fashion to describe the melting of men's hearts for fear than she had used *mug*!
- D. However, *mug* in its "*namogu*" form in verse 9 recalled **Moses' prophecy** about the **Canaanites' reaction to Israel's crossing of the Red Sea 38 years before back in Exodus 15:15** in his song right after that event, for there Moses **himself** had used Rahab's "*namogu*" form of the verb, *mug*, i. e., Ibid., Kittel, p. 102!
- E. More remarkably, Rahab had alluded to **another** prediction by Moses of Canaanite reaction to Israel's history in Deuteronomy 2:24-25: there he had testified that when Israel was about to defeat Sihon and Og east of the Jordan River, God had told him that the report of this victory would make the nations who heard it tremble in great fear, exactly what Rahab reported they did in Joshua 2:9a along with Joshua 2:10b.
- F. Even more amazing, Rahab gave this information in a literary *chiasmus*, "by far the most stately and dignified presentation of a subject" (E. W. Bullinger, *Figs. of Spch. Used In The Bib.*, 1968, p. 374), Joshua 2:8-11:
1. Rahab first had said the terror of Israel had fallen on the Canaanites (Jos. 2:8b), part "a" in the chiasmus.
 2. Second, she had said that all the dwellers in Canaan had melted away (*namogu*) due to Israel -- part "b".
 3. Third, Rahab had said this dread had come on all the Canaanites since they had heard of Israel's crossing of the Red Sea, what theme goes with phrase "b" above due to Moses' use of *namogu* at Exodus 15:15 in his song following that Red Sea crossing, so, the chiasmus causes us to list this statement as part "b".
 4. Fourth, Rahab had said this dread had come in hearing of the fall of Sihon and Og, which idea goes with phrase "a" above due to God's Deuteronomy 2:24-25 words, so this section is part "a" in the chiasmus.
 5. Since the most important segment of a chiasmus is its middle part, and in this context that segment is "b" and "b'," Joshua and the spies realized God had led Rahab, a poor, uneducated, young pagan prostitute who was not even born when Moses sang his Exodus 15 song about Israel's Red Sea crossing, to use the same wording Moses had used 38 years before on the same subject, especially the verb *namogu* in the same *form* that Moses had used it, all for *emphasis* in an obviously unintended, formal, literary *chiasmus*!
- G. Thus, Joshua and the spies who were immersed in the Hebrew Scriptures via obeying Joshua 1:8 knew God was involved in validating Rahab's words by arranging for Moses to have said certain words in a specific order at different times in his life that Rahab's words after his life would be both eloquent and true to God's Word!

Lesson: *By being immersed in the Hebrew Scriptures of Moses' words in line with God's directive in Joshua 1:8, Joshua and the spies accurately trusted Rahab's testimony, and so planned to conquer Jericho and to save her!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) May we like Joshua and the two spies so immerse our minds in God's Word that God can cause us to discern truth from error in all of life's issues!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

To apply this sermon and address the concerns raised in our sermon introduction, I checked God's **original** words in my *Greek New Testament* at Ephesians 2:8-9 to translate it directly from that text (as follows): "***For by grace you are being*** (present tense) ***once-for-all-been-saved-ones*** (nominative perfect passive participle) ***through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest anyone should boast.***"

Thus, though Zondervan produces *The Story* without the Gospel, though *The New American Bible* was produced by the Catholic Church to woo Evangelicals to join ecumenically with Catholicism, though Francis Beckwith says "sophisticated Evangelicals" do not accuse the Catholic Church of "believing in 'works righteousness'" and though the Council of Trent that is upheld by the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church asserts that works and purgatory are needed for salvation, ***God's original Word at Ephesians 2:8-9 claims we are saved with unconditional salvation security by faith without works in this life and without some alleged purgatory to come!***

Now, I know you do not know Hebrew and Greek so that you cannot on your own test my claims on what I say the original text of Scripture teaches. Yet, you have the Holy Spirit for discernment (1 John 2:18-20), and you may visit my office where I will show you from my library how I arrived at my views -- ***that is a standing offer!***

May we always scrutinize EVERYTHING we confront in light of Scripture truth to overcome deception.