

# *God's Plan of the Ages*

*Volume Three*

REDEMPTION  PRESS

---



# *God's Plan of the Ages*

## *Volume Three ~ Joshua through King Jotham*

A historical fiction epic imagining what it may have been like  
to accompany the Creator of the universe  
from the beginning to the end of time.

Paul A. Lindberg  
[www.GodsPlanoftheAges.com](http://www.GodsPlanoftheAges.com)  
Facebook community: The Feasts of Israel  
Maps drawn by Nathaniel Santa Cruz, Graphic Illustrator

Note: Volume Two begins this story. I recommend that you read it first, to properly understand Volume Three. Be sure to see the back pages for the timeline, maps, diagrams, and index for this volume.

In the previous volume I bolded everything in the Index of First Mention, to help you locate them. But in this and future volumes there are simply too many names. All that bolding became too distracting. So now I am only bolding key names such as the prophets, judges, high priests, and kings of Israel when they first appear. I do this to create visual sub-headings, to make it easier for you, dear Reader, to correlate this story with the Scriptures.

Copyright © 2016 by Paul A. Lindberg. All rights reserved. Edit version 10/16/2016.

Published by Redemption Press, PO Box 427. Enumclaw, WA 98022  
Toll Free (844) 2REDEEM (273-3336)

Redemption Press is honored to present this title in partnership with the author. The views expressed or implied in this work are those of the author. Redemption Press provides our imprint seal representing design excellence, creative content, and high quality production. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise – without the prior permission of the copyright holder, except as provided by USA copyright law.

While this volume is historical fiction and does not directly quote Scripture, it is firmly based on Scripture. My primary Scripture source and constant reference is the *New American Standard Bible* ® Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.

Used by permission. ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org))

The version I use was printed in 1971 by Regal Books, a division of Gospel Light Publications, Glendale, CA.

My secondary Scripture source is *The Interlinear Hebrew / Greek English Bible*, Copyright © 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1983 by Jay P. Green, Sr, and published in 1976 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. (Peabody, Massachusetts 01960), and the Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc. (Lafayette, IN 47903), edited by Jay P.

Green, Sr. The version I have was printed in 1984.

ISBN 13: 978-1-63232-678-2 (Print)

ISBN 13: 978-1-63232-680-5 (ePub)

ISBN 13: 978-1-63232-681-2 (Mobi)

Library of Congress Card Catalogue Number – 2016956581

# ***God's Plan of the Ages – A Historical Fiction Epic***

## ***Volume Three – Joshua through King Jotham***

### Table of Contents

1.	Joshua and Rahab .....	5
2.	Gibeon and the Five Kings .....	19
3.	The Conquest of Canaan .....	22
4.	Another Generation Which Knew Not YHWH – The Judges .....	37
5.	Eli, Samuel, Samson, Jesse .....	52
6.	King Saul .....	65
7.	David Anointed King .....	76
8.	David Flees from Saul .....	84
9.	The Death of Saul .....	98
10.	David Becomes King .....	101
11.	David, King of Israel .....	109
12.	David and Bathsheba .....	116
13.	David and Absalom.....	123
14.	David and Solomon .....	128
15.	Solomon Becomes King.....	136
16.	King Solomon.....	143
17.	King Solomon's Wars .....	149
18.	Muwet's Egyptian Palace .....	155
19.	King Solomon's Decline .....	157
20.	The Queen of Sheba .....	164
21.	The Queen of Ethiopia .....	170
22.	The Kingdom Unravels.....	175
23.	Jeroboam and Rehoboam .....	182
24.	Kings Baasha to Omri, King Asa.....	185
25.	Elijah and King Ahab.....	196
26.	Jehoshaphat and King Ahab .....	204
27.	King Joram of Israel and King Jehoram of Judah .....	220
28.	Jehoshaphat and Jehoram Die .....	228
29.	Ben-Hadad's Last Battle .....	233
30.	Hazael / Jehu / Athaliah .....	237
31.	King Joash and King Jehu .....	244

32.	Pharaoh Shoshenk I.....	251
33.	Kings Amaziah and Jehoash .....	252
34.	Kings Jeroboam II and Uzziah .....	258
35.	Jonah .....	262
36.	Kings Jeroboam II and Uzziah Again .....	270
37.	Jotham, Son of Uzziah .....	279
38.	The Downfall of Israel .....	285
39.	Uzziah's Leprosy – Jotham .....	290
40.	Isaiah, Pekah, King Jotham .....	294
	 TIMELINE for Volume Three .....	 305
	MAP: The Conquest of Canaan, 1400 - 400 BC .....	307
	MAP: The Middle East about 1000 BC .....	308
	DIAGRAMS: Mars / Earth and Venus Catastrophic Orbits 751 - 701 BC and the Final Mars / Earth Flyby .....	309
	DIAGRAM: The Seven Levels of Heaven and Hell .....	310
	MAP: Greece (Hellas) about 350 BC (to illustrate the Trojan Wars) ...	311
	ENDNOTE: Egypt's Third Intermediate Period .....	312
	 INDEX of First (or Best) Mention .....	 313

HISTORICAL NOTE: Many of the ancient cities of Egypt took Greek names after Alexander the Great liberated Egypt from the hated Persians. Egypt fell in love with Alexander and the Greek culture. These Greek names are now most familiar to us, and the old Egyptian names have all but been forgotten. So to avoid confusing you, dear Reader, I have consistently used the Greek names throughout my story – names like Leontopolis, Heliopolis, Herakleopolis, Hermopolis, and Lycopolis – even from long before the Greeks came to Egypt. To me, clarity trumps these anachronisms.

## *God's Plan of the Ages – Volume Three – Joshua through Jotham*

**J**oshua called for a month of mourning for Moses and Ziporah. It was sweet sorrow for him. Though sad at the loss, he knew that they were in a much better place. Joshua worried about carrying the burden of caring for so great a company. Yet he felt strength from the anointing Moses had given him. For now, he had a month free of important duties, to enjoy his new wife, Jerusha. What a joy and delight she was! Joshua thanked YHWH every day for her.

We will leave Joshua there in the camp with Jerusha, while we go with the two spies he sent out across the Jordan. We don't even know their names, for they went humbly, seeking no credit for themselves. Dressing like peasants of the land, they entered the great walled city of Jericho and strolled casually through the market place. Truly, it was a good land! Filled with commerce and luxury! Vendors called and jostled them, pushing for a sale. They had no local currency and could not purchase anything, so they tried to just keep quiet. However, the excitement of the market place is catching. One casually answered an insistent salesclerk with but a word or two.

“Hey! That sounds like how ‘they’ talk!”

There was a sudden hush around them. Everyone seemed to know just to whom ‘they’ referred. Every eye was on them. Faces that moments ago were laughing, seemed lined with fear. “Who are you?” a beady-eyed merchant demanded. “You’re new around here. Are you Israelites? Say something, so we can hear your accent.”

There was no denying it. They were exposed! They turned and ran for the gates. But shouts from the storekeepers reached there first and the guards blocked their way. So they turned and ran through the streets, hoping to lose their pursuers. Rounding a corner, they came to a dark and empty-looking home beside the wall. It was a rich person's home, with three stories. Surely they could let themselves down over the wall from the top story. The door was unlocked. They ran inside and climbed the stairs. The house was dark, but it was not empty. Tromping up the stairs, they heard the shriek of a startled woman on the third floor. It was a lady of the night, just awakened. She had been sleeping in after her long night's ‘work’. They had only seconds. “Help us! Hide us, and we will be good to you. Otherwise we'll have to kill you.”

She too recognized their accent, instantly. “You are of Israel,” she accused. The look of fear on her face changed to a glimmer of hope as she nodded her acceptance of their offer. She turned and led them to the end of the hall. From there, she pulled down a rope ladder and pointed up. They hurriedly climbed to the roof. Then she unhooked the ladder and stowed it neatly in a dresser drawer. Quickly she ran downstairs to answer the pounding on her door.

“Rahab! Where are the spies who came in here?”

“What? Spies? Are you sure they came in here? I was sleeping. I didn't hear them,” she lied, rubbing her eyes. “Help me find them, for I am alone and I would be at their mercy. I must be more careful to lock my door.”

She led them through the entire house, searching. When they couldn't find the spies, they asked about her roof. “Oh, they couldn't get up there – they had no ladder. I always keep my rope ladder in my dresser here.” She opened the drawer and pointed. “See. It is just as I left it. I know they're not up there. Maybe they got past us and fled back out the door. Hurry! I hope you find them!”

She was a very good liar. Even so, they only half believed her. She did have a ‘reputation’. They went to the king of Jericho and told him the whole story. He of course didn't believe her either. He knew her all too well. He sent soldiers to the harlot's house.

Meanwhile, Rahab went up to the roof with food and water for the two men. As they ate, she told them that the inhabitants of the land were all terrified of them, and would no doubt be back to check her story. So she had them lie down, while she covered them with stalks of flax which she had left up there to dry in the sun.

That evening four soldiers arrived at her house. Rahab was wearing her finest, most seductive red silk robe. She flung wide the door to welcome them in just as if they were ‘customers’. She immediately began her ‘act’, designed from long experience to increase her income. She had gotten very good at this. She focused on the captain.

“No, no! Not now!” He pushed her away. “Where are the two spies who came here a few hours ago?”

“Two spies?” She was a good actress, as harlots often are. Her eyes got big with calculated horror. “What did they look like?” She put fear on her face.

“Just like commoners from the market. They were in disguise. Don't try to lie to us. We know they came here, because the merchants told us.”

“No... Uh... Yes! Two men came here. Commoners. Just before suppertime. They had money, and they paid me well for my services. But they left just before you came, as the sun was setting. They said they had to leave before the gate was closed for the night. I'm sorry. I didn't know they were spies. They paid me well...”

“You're disgusting!” the captain snorted. “I don't believe a word you've said. We'll search your house.”

“Oh yes, please do! If men are hiding here, I surely need to know!” She led them cheerfully through the house, playing flirtatious games with the captain as they went.

Before they got to the roof, she anticipated them, “It is possible they’re hiding on the roof, though I don’t know how they’d get there, since I keep the ladder coiled up in my dresser drawer next to my red fire-escape rope.” She got it out for them and hooked it in place. With the seeds of doubt already planted, they glanced at the undisturbed flax drying up there and came down shaking their heads.

“Oh dear. I was afraid of that.” Rahab put on her ‘concerned’ look. “They probably made it out before the gate was closed for the night. But they can’t have gone far. If you hurry, you’ll catch them!”

After they were gone, Rahab bolted her door shut and snuffed out her ‘open for business’ lamp in the window. Then she returned to the roof. “I lied for you. I told the soldiers you’d gone out the gate before dark. They will be out searching for you.” She held the trap-door while they made their way down the rope ladder.

They were on the third floor, next to a window overlooking the wall. She pointed out the window. “I have a strong rope. I can let you down over the wall, and I can show you where to hide so they won’t find you.” She smiled slyly, winking at them as she opened the dresser drawer again and got out a strong, scarlet rope.

“Why are you so quick to help us? Don’t you know we’re spies? Why do you want to help your enemies?”

The plastic smile vanished, and she fell on her knees before them. “I know that YHWH your God has given you the land. The terror of you has fallen upon us! We heard how YHWH dried up the waters of the Red Sea for you, then brought it crashing back down to drown the Egyptian army behind you. We heard what you did to the mighty armies of the Amorites, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. Our hearts melted within us, and no courage remained in us, even our strongest men, because of you. For YHWH your God, He is the true God in the heavens above and over the earth beneath. He is the All-Powerful God, who gives you success...” She laid it on pretty thick.

She was weeping profusely, but suddenly (with no concept of ‘personal space’) she jumped up and threw her arms tightly around the neck of one of the spies. “Swear to me, by YHWH your God, that you will deal kindly with me and my family when you take this city, as I have dealt kindly with you!”

The spy reached back to pry her fingers off his neck. “OK. Our life for yours, if you do not tell this business of ours. When YHWH gives us the land, we will deal kindly and faithfully with you. Only you must keep this scarlet rope dangling from your window as a sign, and your family must all be here, or we are free from our pledge. Anyone within this house we will spare, or his blood will be upon our heads. But if anyone of your family leaves this house, his blood will be upon his own head. We swear this in the name of YHWH our God.”

The other spy wasn’t so sure. “YHWH our God is holy, Rahab. He doesn’t take kindly to lies, deceit, or harlotry! Harlotry is a capital offense! I’m not sure He...”

Rahab interrupted him, as if she knew this was coming. “I don’t care what your God does to me. I’m worthless, and I know I deserve to die. But my family, my mother and father, they are good people. And my younger brothers and sisters—they are all innocent. I only took this... ahh... profession, to try to help support them when my aged parents took sick. They’re desperately poor. I want to save them!” She was back on the floor, weeping again. It was, of course, all a very good act to save her skin, as the spies were beginning to discern. But now, Rahab herself wasn’t so sure how much of it was acting.

Satan and a few of his most competent demons were manipulating this woman, like a puppet on a string. Satan gloated over her. This would be his masterpiece! His open door into the camp of Israel.

He wasn’t a bit worried about her or her family. They were all his, body and soul. Her ‘poor’ parents had spent their lives in wild and riotous living. Her mother René had been a temple prostitute when she was young. Her father Reece had been a career military man, who had taken René from the temple in a big fight, in which he had killed several priests. Rahab, their oldest, had been conceived that same wild night. Though they didn’t get married, they did have a lot of children together. Two of their children had been sacrificed to Chemosh of the Moabites, and a third to Moloch of the Ammonites.

So Rahab’s ‘innocent’ brothers and sisters had grown up in a dysfunctional, hedonistic home, where personal pleasures were king. They had more or less continued in their parent’s profligate ways. All had to some degree suffered the natural consequences. But Reece and René had suffered the worst. They were poor because all their living was now spent on doctors. They had grown to secretly despise the lifestyle that they had passed on to their children. They’d finally gotten married and settled down. They stayed away from the house of their youth, where their children regularly gathered for wild orgies.

Unbeknownst to Satan, in their hearts they cried out for something better for their family. Logos heard, but Satan can’t read minds and could not hear their cries.

So when Rahab (plastic smile firmly back in place) sent away the spies, Satan laughed ‘til his sides split. *Rahab’s entire family, the most wicked in Jericho, will be welcomed into the Israelite camp. He has their word on it!*

Rahab arose early the next day (that is, noon, which was early for her). She dressed in her most modest clothes, took a lot of money (for she was very rich), and went to visit her parents, Reece and René. “I’m not sure why I’m doing this...” she began, handing them the money. They didn’t hear Satan’s chuckle. He knew why!



“This is to pay off your debts here. I want you to leave this dump and come back to live with me. As the oldest, I’m responsible to take care of you. With Israel threatening us, we need each other more than ever. I’m going to try to get my sisters and brothers to come too.”

“Rahab, you’re a harlot. You said your customers don’t like it when your family lives there with you.”

“We’ll make arrangements. I’ll move my own bedroom down to the first floor, and you and the kids can have the upper two floors. My customers don’t need to know.”

“But you sleep during the day. We would...”

“I said we’d work it out, Dad. Maybe I’ll just give up harlotry and take up a day job.” Satan knew he had to get the whole family there, for maximum impact.

*Give up harlotry?* Reece and René glanced at each other. They knew Rahab had hated them, but maybe she was ready to change. They finally agreed.

We return to the camp of Israel, where the spies had delivered their encouraging report. YHWH had kept the promise He’d given Moses, that the fear of them would fall over the entire land. Now the thirty days of mourning for Moses was past. Joshua told the people to gather at dawn to find out what God wanted next.

As they were gathering, Logos spoke to Joshua, “Moses My servant is dead. You’re in charge now. So cross the Jordan and begin to take possession of this bountiful land. I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, as I promised Moses. From the wilderness to the Western Sea and from the Negev to Lebanon and the land of the Hittites, even as far as the River Euphrates, will be your territory. No man will be able to withstand you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, so I shall be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you. Only be strong and courageous, and be careful to do according to all the law as Moses My servant commanded you. Do not turn aside, to the right or to the left, so you shall have good success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, to be careful to do all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and have good success. Again I command you: Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed in any way, for I, YHWH your God, am with you wherever you go.”

The vision faded. The people before him grew silent, awaiting his first words as their commander-in-chief. “Pack your duds and prepare provisions,” he called out boldly, “For in three days we shall cross this Jordan and begin to possess the good land which YHWH our God has given to us. Who among you will go with me?”

The people gave a mighty shout. It reverberated off the surrounding hills. Even the people of Jericho, miles away, heard it. They were terrified!

Joshua’s leading general, **Salmon**, answered for the company, “All that you command we will do. Wherever you send we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses, so we shall obey you. And anyone who rebels against your command shall be put to death!” He had spoken loudly enough for the congregation to hear, but now he turned to face them. “Only be strong and very courageous! For the victory is already ours – if we will only take it! Far be it from us to turn back in fear, as our fathers did forty years ago. With YHWH our God we cannot lose! Now go, pack your duds, as Joshua commanded. We’ll start moving down to the bank of the Jordan in two hours.”

So they left Abel-Shittim, to camp beside the Jordan. The armed men of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh said goodbye to their families (leaving them in the protection of the walled cities they had prepared) and joined Israel at the Jordan; they would keep their vow to Moses. All the Israelites purified themselves there beside the Jordan. On the evening of the third day they received their orders. “Follow the Ark of the Covenant. But keep your distance, for the Ark is holy and you have not been this way before.”

Early in the morning of the third day (remember that morning comes after evening in the Hebrew culture) Joshua gathered the people. Again, Logos spoke to him as they were gathering, “This day I will exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so they may know that just as I have been with Moses, so also I am with you. Your mouth is My mouth now. Just speak as I give you utterance.”

The crowd grew silent. They hadn’t seen or heard the vision. “People of Israel, hear the Word of YHWH your God!” Joshua began. “By this you shall know that YHWH is with you and will assuredly dispossess the inhabitants of this good land and give it to you. Behold, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the Earth shall go into the Jordan ahead of you, carried by the priests. When the soles of their feet touch the waters of the Jordan, it shall be cut off, and shall pile up in a heap a great distance away.”

The people glanced over at the Jordan. It was very full, overflowing its banks, for it was late spring (the first of Nisan, our late March). There were indeed some doubters in the group, but they held their peace. “Now select twelve men from among you; leaders, strong in faith and in body, one from each tribe. Line them up along the Jordan, spread out far downstream from the priests. As soon as they see the one upstream go into the water, they also shall start across. Quickly follow those twelve! Run! The flow of the Jordan will stop just long enough for us all to cross. The priests will wait in the middle of the river bed a half-mile upstream of you, until everyone crosses.”

Carrying the Ark on long poles, the priests walked a half-mile upstream and put their feet into the water. As Joshua had said, the water began to dry up. It continued drying up as they walked out to the center of the river. One by one, the twelve leaders of Israel followed their lead.

The people all saw, and gave another mighty shout. The Canaanites heard it, and they saw the waters stop. They were terrified. Everyone began gathering inside the walls. They had spent the last six months stocking up on food, preparing for the long siege that they knew was coming. Jericho was the oldest and strongest fortified city in Canaan. It had been flattened by earthquakes six times before, but it was at a strategic location (at the junction of two major trade routes), so it had always been rebuilt. This latest rebuild (after the catastrophes forty years earlier, at the Exodus) was the best ever. The destroyed city had been leveled about twelve feet above the plain. This plateau was ringed by a double wall. The outer wall was six feet thick and eight feet high (making it twenty feet to the base of the plateau). The inner wall was twelve feet thick and twelve feet high. The six foot gap between the two walls was filled with rubble from the old city. Along the top of the inner wall were guard towers, observation walkways, and the upper stories of rich people's houses built into the wall.

Following their twelve leaders, the people of Israel ran across the Jordan on dry ground. After they were all safely across, Joshua ordered the twelve leaders to go back and each retrieve a large stone from the middle of the river bed. They obeyed, though by now they could hear the thunder of rushing waters upstream. As they were getting their stones, Joshua went back to the priests, who were still standing in the center of the river bed. He gathered twelve more stones and stacked them up as a memorial right there in the middle of the river bed, where the priests were standing. As the twelve leaders were carrying their stones out of the river bed, Joshua led the priests up to the river bank. Their timing was perfect. Just as the feet of the priests reached the banks, they saw a big wave rushing toward them. They quickly hiked up to high ground, barely escaping the flood. The Jordan returned to overflow its banks as before.

Those high on the walls of Jericho could see what the Israelites could not. Eighteen miles north at a town called Adam the west bank of the Jordan had collapsed. It had created a temporary dam, stopping the river's flow. Why had the bank collapsed? No one knew. Though 1410 BC was on the 30 year cycle of great catastrophes, with Jupiter in Leo and Saturn in Aquarius, this was only Nisan 10 (March 20), seven months before the deadly Mars flyby. So it could not have been their god aiding the Israelites!

The Canaanites crowded along the wall saw the priests, carrying the glittering gold Ark, enter the water just as it dried up. The Israelites were still in the river bed when the dam gave way. Those on the wall hoped the flood would catch them and sweep many away. But no, all but the priests made it out in time. *Wait! Their leader returned to the priests, the fool! Couldn't he hear the rushing waters? At least he and his foolish priests would surely drown.* Then at the last possible second, they all got out and hiked above the flood. Their timing was incredible!

The Canaanites stared glumly at one another. Now they knew they were doomed. Only a God much greater than theirs could have pulled off a stunt like that! And this October is the 'appointed time' of major catastrophes. Israel's God will order an earthquake from Mars. Jericho's walls will fall and the city will be destroyed. Again.

Just as they figured, the Israelites merely moved a few miles up from the river and began to set up camp. The Canaanites settled in for the siege that they knew would last until the Mars flyby that October. They sacrificed earnestly to Mars, praying to regain his favor, and pleading for him to send his fiery sword on Israel next time.

Using the stones they had gotten from the Jordan, the twelve leaders of Israel made a memorial beside the camp while the people were pitching their tents. That afternoon, Joshua gathered them all together for another speech. "You see this memorial? When your children and your grandchildren ask about it, tell them, 'This is where we crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land on dry ground. YHWH our God dried up the waters before us, just as He did the Red Sea, until we had all crossed.' Thus all nations of the earth may know that YHWH our God is mighty, so that you will serve and fear Him forever. Now, each family among you take an unblemished lamb into your home tonight, for in four days we will celebrate the Passover, as Moses commanded. Also, all the males among you, make sharp flint knives to circumcise each other today. No one who is uncircumcised may celebrate YHWH's Passover."

They discovered that none of the males born since the Red Sea crossing had been circumcised. It is a lot easier on a baby, as God had commanded. It's extremely painful for an adult. But they did it. They healed up over the next few days so they could celebrate Passover on Nisan 14, which fell on a Sabbath that year.

The Canaanites were bottled up tightly in Jericho. So the next day (the day after the Sabbath, when the high priest offers the Firstfruits) the Israelites discovered their unguarded fields. (The barley was ripe, but the Canaanites had not yet begun the harvest, as they were caught by surprise when God dried up the Jordan for the Israelites.) They helped themselves, and made flatcakes with the freshly harvested barley for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was wonderful! Most of them had been raised all their lives on manna, and had never even tasted barley cakes.

The next morning, when they went out to get their daily manna – there was none. That miracle ceased the very day after they ate of the produce of the land. So for the moment Jericho was mostly ignored, as Israel delighted in the new land God had given them. Logos too was delighted – this generation had faith! They knew the land was theirs, and they weren't worried about being next to the mightiest city in the land. Besides, Joshua also expected to wait until the October 24th pass of Mars before he attacked Jericho. It was just the way great battles were fought in those days.

After Passover week Joshua took Salmon and the two spies up to scope out Jericho. When they got near, the spies pointed out the scarlet rope still dangling from Rahab's window. Of course the Canaanites couldn't see it, for they were all bottled up tightly behind the walls. Joshua and Salmon began to discuss how they might take the city. "It seems impossible. Those walls appear to be impregnable. We'll just have to wait for the flyby of Mars in October to knock them down." So they turned to leave. There, 100 yards behind them, stood a tall man with a drawn sword.

"How long has that dude been standing there?" Salmon whispered. "Why didn't we see him when we came?"

"It matters not," Joshua answered, also drawing his sword. "Cover my back. I'll go see what he wants." As he got close, he called, "Are you for us? Or for our enemies?"

"Neither!" the man responded firmly. "Instead, I have come as commander of the host of YHWH."

Suddenly Joshua recognized Him! It was Logos, the angel he'd seen talking with Moses. Joshua fell on his face, saying, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

"Take off your sandals, for this is holy ground. Then come closer, that I may instruct you."

Joshua did. Logos continued, "Today I have rolled away from you the reproach of Egypt. Finally you are circumcised of heart, soul, and body, and ready to enter the land. Therefore call your campsite Gilgal, 'Rolling'. Now that you are pure, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and its valiant warriors. All the fighting men among you, march silently once around the city each day for six days. Seven priests shall lead the procession with seven trumpets. They shall blow one long blast after each day's circuit is complete. Following them, eight priests shall carry the Ark of the Covenant. Let everyone keep in step with the priests." Logos paused to chuckle. "We don't need to wait for Mars; we can create our own earthquake! On the seventh day, start early, before dawn. Begin as before, but march around the city seven times. Then the priests shall blow their trumpets seven times, and all the men shall respond with a great shout. I assure you, the walls around Jericho will all fall flat, so every man may go straight in to take the city."

"However, I shall honor the spies' vow to Rahab. Her house shall not fall flat. Bring her and her family to Israel and purify them outside the camp seven days."

"But the rest of Jericho you must utterly destroy. Slay everything that lives. Burn the city with fire. Only things which can withstand the fire you shall devote to Me for the tabernacle treasury – things made of metal or precious stones. But put them all under a ban, lest the faithless among you covet them and fall into sin."

"Yes, Logos, my Lord and King!" Joshua nodded his agreement, his face still bowed to the ground.

"Joshua! Look up at me!" Logos commanded.

Joshua did so, to see a big smile on Logos' face. He was laughing! Just as He'd always done with Moses! Waves of comfort and joy washed over Joshua, as he remembered his time on top of Mount Horeb with Him. "I have one question for you, My friend," Logos said. "Why did you set up the twelve stones in the bed of the Jordan? Surely you know they'll be forever covered?"

"Of course," Joshua began laughing too. "The twelve stones on the river bank will be a reminder for us and our children. But the twelve stones in the river bed will be a reminder for You. You promised to go with us, to fight our battles with us, and to give us this good land. If You are ever tempted to withdraw Your promise, or if we ever displease You so that You turn Your back on us like You did at Mount Sinai, I will use those stones to remind You. I will take Your hand, fly You into the river, and put Your hand upon those stones, and then You will remember us in our weakness and need."

"You? Take My hand? Fly Me...?" His laughter grew.

"Logos, my Lord..." Joshua stopped laughing. Logos did too. When Joshua spoke again, it was with a deeper seriousness than he had ever felt before. "Sir, several times I heard Moses boldly argue with You to spare these people when You were about to destroy them. I swear to You that if it ever comes to that again, I will be ten times as bold as Moses ever was. I'll do whatever it takes to obtain Your promises for these, Your people!"

"And I suppose you, too, want to see My face?" The laughter began again, this time with quiet chuckles.

"No. Actually not. Moses told me about that. I don't have a death wish. I am quite happy to wait on that until I am gathered to my fathers. All I want now is everything that You promised. Not one shoelace less."

"Thank you, My friend. You have My own heart, My Spirit, within you, for that is My desire as well." He raised His arms and looked up toward the heavens.

"Father! Hear him! We still have a man of Spirit on the earth. Rejoice with Me!" The laughter grew. For a split second Joshua heard it echo, as if from a million angels. Then the vision faded and Logos disappeared.

As Logos was welcomed back from the physical realms by the heavenly host, Satan also came. He had come to taunt, still a favorite pastime of his even though he was no longer permitted in the throne room. "I have an advantage over You," he crowed. "I don't have to keep my word, but You bind Yourself, even to the vows of Your people. Those spies foolishly vowed to let Rahab and her family live. Now there is nothing You can do to prevent their coming into Israel!" He laughed. "They're all mine. Filled with my demons. My finest demons. Hordes of them. And I will ensure every kind of demon enters Israel with them!"

It was a valid taunt, and the surrounding angelic host knew it. They'd seen all the wickedness of Jericho, and Rahab's family was among the worst!

But Logos didn't respond as Satan expected. "Satan, have you seen Joshua? His heart is true and pure, with a zeal for My righteousness like no one before. Perhaps he can help deliver Rahab's family from your demons? And Salmon, his aide; between the two of them..."

"Bah! Puny men! Weak! They might be able to block a few, but I've got thousands of demons in that family now, and I'm adding more every day You delay. You should have taken the city on the first day. But no – You just had to 'celebrate the Feast!'" His voice dripped with sarcasm. "*Your delay shall cost You.*"

"They would have failed if they were not pure..." Logos began, but Satan had fled.

Indeed the family of Rahab was growing. After a few days of the massive army of Israel marching in lock-step all around the city, the thunder of their tread shaking the walls, the last few holdouts came running. Now all Rahab's brothers and sisters were there. And nearly all their wives, husbands, boyfriends, girlfriends, lovers, and children were there as well. Most of the adults had been involved with multiple partners in the past. Satan was encouraging them also to join the crowd. 'Family' can be a broad word when faithfulness to a single spouse is not the standard. Satan and his demons now filled the house, quite literally. It was pretty gross.

Rahab was sorry that she had offered the 'blank check' to her extended family. No Victorian prude herself, she was disgusted by what was going on in her own house. "There are some ground rules in this home!" she shouted. "Shut up and listen to what the spies told me, or it may cost you your life!" The raucous crowd settled down a bit so Rahab plunged ahead. "First, my red fire escape rope has to stay there in that window or we're all dead." That was easy. More began to listen. "Second, anyone who leaves the house when Israel attacks is dead." She was starting to get their attention. "Third, their God, YHWH, is holy – He hates sin. He punishes it with death. So you'd all better stop sinning, now!"

"What is sinning?" a child innocently asked. Her voice was soft. Suddenly the house grew very quiet as everyone strained to hear.

"Well... the spies told me sin is lies and deceit and... harlotry!" Her face got red, but she bravely pressed on. "Harlotry is what I do for a living, selling sex, so I might be slain by their God. But I'm hoping that if I stop now He won't know I was a harlot. Then He might let me live. So from today on I'm not gonna' sin anymore. Each of you does different things. I don't know what sin is for you. Just... well... just stop whatever it is you're doing 'til you find out." She shut up abruptly.

Satan looked at his chief demon prince, the one who ruled over the city of Jericho. "What was that all about? She can't repent, can she? She doesn't even know what sin is. Of course she can't repent."

"Even if she does," the demon prince responded, "it will do her no good. It's only out of fear. She has no love of our Enemy or His ways. Fear-repentance never lasts, as you well know."

"Yes, yes. But just in case, assign more demons to tempt her. And find some suave relative of hers to seduce her again, just to be on the safe side. Make it look like real love. We have too much invested in Rahab to lose her now!"

It was the seventh day. The Israelite army completely surrounded the city in a column 400 men wide, fifty yards outside the walls. They had started marching before dawn, with the thunder of their footsteps waking up everyone in Rahab's house. They tried to turn over and go back to sleep, but the pounding never seemed to stop. Sleepless hours slowly passed. Noon, one... and still they marched. Harrold (a childhood sweetheart of Rahab) came to her room. Everyone else was crowded around the window or on the roof, but Rahab was on her bed, crying softly. "Hey, sweetie. Mind if I come in?" He didn't wait for an answer.

Harrold shut and locked the door behind him, and knelt by her bed. Stroking her hair, he asked, "So, why do you weep? Are you afraid? Our walls are strong. I've got it figured out. If their God is strong enough to break down our walls, then He is strong enough to save us all as the spies promised. So either way, we win. There's no need to fear. But we do have to plan ahead here. If Israel takes the city and if we're saved as you say, we'll have to become Israelites. You know what that means. Everything we've ever known, our family, our culture – all gone forever.

"But I've been thinking about what you said." He bent over and kissed her wet cheek. "Y'know, the only reason I left you was I didn't like your harlotry." (That was a blatant lie. The reason she had become a harlot was because of the way Harrold and his buddies had molested her. But Satan figured in her sad state she'd fall for it.) "But I still love you, honey – I always have. So now that you vowed to give up harlotry, well... we should get back together, to protect each other from the invaders, you know."

He slid onto the bed beside her. She didn't push him away. It felt good to be comforted by an old friend. She didn't even know why she cried. *Maybe Harry was right – they needed to stay together, to preserve their family and culture.* He gently wiped her tears away. She embraced him and they kissed. Just like old times, she thought, when they were young and innocent.

"Wait!" She sat up suddenly and broke their embrace. The word 'innocent' hit her like a ton of bricks. She wasn't 'innocent' when she was having sex with him. That is what led to her harlotry!

She pushed him away. “No. Maybe it wasn’t just the harlotry that was my sin, Harry. Maybe it was the sex! Maybe their God YHWH thinks sex is a sin!”

“No,” Harrold shook his head knowingly. “That can’t be. Just look at how many Israelites there are. You don’t get that many people by not having sex.”

“Well, yeah, but... maybe they don’t have the sex until after they are... uh... married, or something...”

“Nah... That’s impossible, sweetie. Everyone has sex. Or how would you figure out who you wanted to marry? You gotta know someone before you marry ‘em.”

Rahab pondered that. *Harrold sounded so logical, but it was her life.* “No, Harry. It’s not worth the gamble. No more sex ‘til I figure out what YHWH wants.”

She got up, unlocked the door, and peered past the crowd at the window. “How many times?” she asked.

“This is the seventh. They are just finishing now. See, there are the priests, getting ready to blow their trumpets again. I wonder how many more times...”

The trumpets began to blow. The pounding beat of the marching feet seemed to swell. It made the whole house bounce a little, in a syncopated rhythm since sound travels through the air and the ground at different rates. But they weren’t worried. It had been bouncing like this all week. The walls were strong. An earthquake from Mars was far worse than this little bouncing.

The demon prince of Jericho looked over at Satan. He was scowling. “So, this was going to be so easy?”

“Don’t give up now. Find someone else. We haven’t much time. I will not lose her! She is the key!”

“Michael!” Logos called. “Take some of your angels to cover Rahab’s house. Protect everyone inside, at all costs. Especially Rahab. She is Mine. Did you notice? *She chose Me, even not knowing Me or My ways!*”

Michael leaped to obey. Satan and his demons were crowding around Rahab, screaming lies to her. “In the mighty name of Logos, you are no longer welcome in this house!” Michael drew his sword. “Get out! Now!”

“Oh gimme a break. You and your love-sick Lord have no authority here. None. This house is mine. Always was. Always will be. So go to Sheol already.”

“This house belongs to Rahab. Her choices prevail here. By her own authority, by her choice...”

“Her choice? Ha! She chose me long ago. She knows nothing about sin, or repentance, or Logos... She can’t make any other choice. You’re wasting your...”

“She chose Logos!” Michael thundered, waving his sword. His host caught the signal, and drove Satan and his demons out without another word.

The angelic host had barely secured the house when the seventh trumpet blew and the Israelite army began to shout. It was a great, bold shout, a shout filled with true faith, from the throats of 600,000 fighting men who poured all their energy into it. And as they shouted, they stomped their marching feet with great gusto.

Expelled from Rahab’s house, Satan checked out the city walls. They were still sound, but he was suspicious. “Circle around the city at the base of the outer wall.” He ordered his demon host. “That’s a lot of vibration. Make sure the plateau doesn’t collapse underneath the walls.”

But as they moved to circle the outside wall, Michael sent the remainder of his host to push out on the inside walls. It’s a lot easier to push a wall down than hold it up. They pushed in time with the shock waves coming from the army’s boots. In one minute it was all over. The inner wall pushed the old rubble against the outer wall, so that it all collapsed down the plateau, making a lovely ramp for the Israelite army to run up into the city. Only Rahab’s house remained standing, supported by several hundred of Michael’s angels.

Now the thunder subsided. The dust began to settle. A long moment of silence followed as everyone on both sides paused to survey the carnage. Jericho was lost, it was clear. The Israelite army leaped to the fallen walls and rushed into the city, meeting no resistance.

“Don’t try to flee!” Rahab screamed, her heart in her throat. “Fall on your knees! Pray to their God, YHWH. Pray like you’ve never prayed before. Repent of all your sins. Repent of everything whether you think it’s a sin or not. This is your last chance, or we die!” She fell on her knees crying out loud to YHWH, and confessing everything she’d ever done, most of which was actually sin. Those within earshot began to get the idea, and it spread quickly throughout the house.

It took a while for Satan and his demons to struggle out from under the fallen walls. When a spirit being leaves the realms of spirit to interact with the physical realm, he subjects himself to the dangers of the physical realm, so it took time for Satan’s forces to regroup in the heavenlies. But by then, it was all over. All his willing human hosts were slain, while Israel had not even lost a man. Satan went screaming up to Logos, who was above the city directing the battle. “That wasn’t fair!” he howled. Then recalling what Logos had said about fairness not being one of His criteria, he added, “That wasn’t just! It wasn’t right! These people are all mine! They chose me! They love me and my ways. You can’t do that. I demand my rights!”

“Begone, Satan. Go claim the corpses of those who chose you. They are yours, for death is always the end result of all who choose you and your ways of death.”

“No! Rahab is mine. Everyone in her house is mine! You used force and deceit to take them! You can’t...”

“Silence!” Logos thundered. Satan shut up instantly, terror-stricken at the awesome power of Logos’ Word. “Never accuse Me of that which is your own domain. I do not use force or deceit. I merely spoke words of Truth to Rahab through the mouth of the spies. They obviously bore fruit, did they not? In just those few words, Rahab heard, repented of her sin, and chose Me, even knowing next to nothing about Me. Does that not teach you something about the power of My Word, the power of Truth, and the power of true repentance?”

Satan fled. He had lost. A total and bitter defeat. It had happened so fast, he still couldn’t believe it. Even as he and his demons drank the blood of the slain, he couldn’t really enjoy it. He was filled with doubts about the final outcome of his Great Controversy with Logos. But as he became more drunk, all thoughts of his inadequacy faded and his natural arrogance reasserted itself.

The two spies knocked on Rahab’s door. They heard sounds of weeping and wailing. They knocked louder, then louder yet. They tried the door. It was bolted tight. “Rahab!” they shouted at her third floor window. “Rahab! It’s us. The two spies. We’ve come to keep our vow to you. So open the door already.”

A head poked out the window. It was Rahab. Her first words were, “O my God! I’m still alive! Is it over? Are you going to keep your vow to save my family? Remember, you swore it! I kept my part of the bargain. I left the scarlet rope out, and I...”

“Let us in,” the spies asked, holding out their empty hands. “Do we look dangerous? Just open the door.”

She came down and let them in. “We killed everyone in Jericho,” they told her and her extended ‘family’. There is no one else to help you, so you must trust us. We are about to burn the city. If you obey us, you will be spared, only for Rahab’s sake, because she helped us. Now, gather your clothes and personal things. Bring a bedroll; you’ll be sleeping outside for a while. But leave behind your all your gold, silver, and other valuables. They’re under a ban.” They waited as the motley band gathered their stuff. “Ready now? Then follow us.” They led the way out of the city like the pied pipers.

Without a thought Rahab left behind all her riches to follow the spies. She couldn’t help noticing Joshua and Salmon standing on the fallen city gates giving orders. “This city is now and forever cursed!” Joshua shouted. “Cursed is the man who rebuilds Jericho; his first-born will die the day he lays its foundation; his youngest will die the day he hangs its gates. Touch nothing under the ban. Everything flammable must be burned. Valuables which cannot burn are consecrated for the tabernacle treasury. If you find anything else alive, it must be slain. And anyone who takes any of the spoils for himself shall surely die.”

“Wow!” Rahab thought. “That guy is really serious!”

They were not led into the camp of Israel. They were led to a small knoll overlooking the camp, and told to wait until the leaders decided what to do with them. At least they had a great view. Rahab sat on top of the hill, watching the army gather the spoils of war. There was a lot. She saw some of her own stuff included. Late in the evening they finished and set the city afire. Then some men from the camp came up with tents and blankets. Rahab recognized their leader as the one had stood beside the commander who had cursed the city.

“My name is Salmon,” he said. “If you obey me, your lives will be spared. But only for Rahab’s sake, because she aided our spies. Which one is Rahab?”

“I am, sir.” She jumped up and came forward.

Salmon stared into her face, unsmiling, for a long minute. Finally he spoke. “You’re a harlot.”

“Yes, sir. Uh... No! No, sir! I was, sir, but I’m not anymore. The spies said YHWH your God doesn’t like harlotry, so I vowed I would give it up. But I don’t want YHWH to know what I was, so please don’t tell Him. The spies said that He might kill me.”

“He already knows. That’s a good vow. If you keep it He might forgive you and cleanse you of your past. The spies also told me that you lied for them.”

“Hey, wait!” Rahab was a bit indignant. “I had to lie for them. That’s what saved their lives. Can’t your God YHWH forgive me for that?”

Now Salmon finally smiled. “He already has. That is why you are here. But now that you are one of us, you had better give up lies and deceit, also, for we in Israel live only by truth. Can you do that?”

“Yes, sir.” Rahab wasn’t sure she could, but she was for certain sure she was going to do her best.

“And now that you are no longer a harlot, how would you like a new job?” His smile grew broader.

She returned the smile. “Yes, sir!”

He spoke loudly enough for the rest to hear, though most of them had been listening pretty closely anyway. “OK. Rahab, from this moment on, you are in command of this group. You have my authority over them. If they have needs, tell me, and I shall meet them. If they have problems or need discipline, tell me and I will take action. But I will tell you what to do, and I will expect you to enforce it over your people. Can you handle it?”

“Yes, sir. And thank you, sir. I will be faithful!”

“I know you will, Rahab. I can see it in your eyes. We’ve brought food, tents, and blankets. You’ll be living here for a while. If you have discipline problems, signal to those guards at the edge of camp, and I’ll send up armed men. Anyone who rebels against your authority will be slain.”

There were some gasps and shrieks. Salmon knew his point had hit home. He spoke louder yet, to indicate he was talking to everyone. "It's late. Tomorrow I'll explain what you need to do. If you are obedient, you will become Israelites. But if you are not, you'll be slain. There is no third alternative. Do not try to escape. My guards will stand watch day and night. Any questions?"

"Yeah!" It was from a big, burly man who looked half drunk even when he was sober. "Why put her in charge? She's a woman!" He spat out the word as if it were the most despised thing in the world.

"Come here. I'll tell you why," Salmon said, drawing his sword. The big man came, slowing a bit as he eyed the drawn sword. He passed Rahab with a sneer. He stood nearly two heads taller than she.

"Because I said so. Now, I'll give you five seconds to humbly kneel down and apologize to Rahab for your impudence, or I shall have your head here and now!"

He had a lifetime of pride to overcome, and he just couldn't do it. He started to argue. Salmon didn't even listen. He counted slowly to five, then lunged out and sliced off his head, as calmly as if slicing a cucumber. "Any other questions?" Long pause... Deathly silence. "No? Rahab, take over. I'll return tomorrow." He turned on his heel and strode off down the hill.

The group just stood there, stunned. Rahab pondered. Why had Salmon put her in charge? In her culture, men just don't submit to women – they use and abuse them. The Israelite culture must be very different. Maybe better. At least for women. She shook her head. The rest of the group was waiting on her. She was not used to being in charge, but after Salmon had stared into her eyes, she would do anything for him. "This body is the dividing line," she shouted. "All the men over there. Women and children over here. Set up tents, or sleep under the stars, I don't care. But no sex. Not until we figure out what this God of theirs wants. Tomorrow we'll bury the body, but tonight, if anyone crosses this line I'll... I'll have his head!" It sounded horrible, but her relatives got the point and obeyed. "Now, thank YHWH that you're still alive, and get some sleep!"

"Hey, Rahab?" Harrold raised his hand. "How do we thank YHWH? Who is He? Where? He's not even here!"

Rahab didn't know the answer. She and her society were accustomed to visible idols. "When I prayed to Him this morning, I just knelt down facing the Israelite camp. It seemed to work. We're alive, aren't we?" Rahab suddenly realized that as their leader, she needed to set the example. "Here. I'll show you. Do it like this." She turned to face the Israelite camp. It had gotten nearly dark, and from their knoll, the fiery glory cloud of YHWH that hung over the tabernacle seemed quite near and spectacular. She gasped and fell to her knees.

"OYHWH, God of the Israelites, thank You!" She cried, in a high-pitched voice overcome with emotion. "Thank You for sparing our lives, and for inviting us to join the Israelites. We beg You, forgive our wickedness. Just show us what You want, and we promise to obey. You are a powerful God, more powerful than any god we've ever known before. We swear to worship You, and You only, now and forever!" She continued on like that for quite a while, unaware of her relatives following her example.

Logos, in the heavenlies above her, called Gavriel and Michael over to look. "There. See? The power of My Word, planted in a hungry heart. When she helped the spies, she only wanted to save her skin. But a few words from Me through the spies and, even though she doesn't really know Me yet, she is praying fervently to Me from the depths of her soul!"

The angelic host rejoiced. Satan felt their net tighten around the Canaanites, blocking many of his demons from their previous hosts. His 'open door' into Israel was closing! He worked frantically with those who remained his, but many of his best tools involved lust, sensuality, and immorality – all of which had just been disarmed by Rahab's orders. He was furious, and such rage begets mistakes. He began planting lewd images in the mind of Harrold, who was still firmly his. It was easy. Harrold had already been aroused when he had lain with Rahab in her bed, but he had not been satisfied. Now he satisfied his lusts with other men in the tent.

It caused a big commotion. Reece was also in that tent, and he wouldn't go along with it. Early the next morning, when Rahab asked him what the commotion was all about, Reece told her.

"Harry!" Rahab screamed. "How dare you! I said no sex! I made it very clear! Do you want to bring down YHWH's wrath upon us all?"

"Hey, babe. Nobody cares. It's just sex. Everyone does it. You're pretty good at it yourself. I told you, YHWH doesn't prohibit sex. If He did, there sure wouldn't be that many Israelites down there!" He laughed, and a few others joined his laughter. "We'll obey you, Rahab, if that's what Salmon wants, but you don't own us, and you can't keep us from having a little fun at night!"

Rahab didn't even answer him. She was shocked and disgusted. She had embraced him the day before; but she had no idea he had become so perverted. She had always enjoyed sex, real sex. The very thought of homosexual relations disgusted her. She turned away. Good. Salmon and his men were coming up the hill with more food and supplies. Seeing him, Rahab's eyes lit up. He would take care of the problem, she knew. "Good morning, sir!" She bowed. "Thank you so much for coming!"

"Good morning Rahab. Did you sleep well? How did it go? Did the others obey you?"

“Yes, sir. Very well, sir. Most of them obeyed fine. Your demonstration with Big Oaf here,” she pointed to the dead body with her toe, “really put the fear of God into them. But, there was one small thing . . .” Rahab hesitated. All of a sudden it seemed so silly – her order to have no sex. Maybe Harrold was right and YHWH didn’t care. Maybe she was just being overly sensitive, because that had been her own weakness.

“Tell me, Rahab. I’ll take care of it!” It was an order.

“Yes, sir. I separated the men from the women last night, and told them no sex. Really, it was no big thing – I . . . I just didn’t know what YHWH wanted. The spies told me He hates harlotry, and I thought . . . well . . . I . . .”

“Rahab, just tell me. I’ll take care of it.”

“Well . . . one of the men disobeyed me. He had sex with some of the other men in their tent.”

“Is there a witness? Who saw what happened?”

Reece stepped forward. “I saw it, sir. I am Reece, Rahab’s father. I was in their tent. I reported it to Rahab.” He turned, pointing. “Harrold initiated it.”

“Harrold, is this true?” He drew his sword.

All of a sudden Harrold wasn’t feeling quite so bold. “Yes, sir. I’m sorry sir. It won’t happen again.”

“Who cooperated with you in this detestable act?” Salmon was clearly very serious about it.

Harrold pointed to two others, and Reece nodded. So without another word, Salmon stepped up and in three swift strokes of his sword, they lay dead on the ground.

Carefully wiping the blood from his sword, Salmon glanced at Rahab. “Anyone else who disobeyed you?”

“No! N . . . no, sir. I don’t think anyone will ever dare to disobey me again. But . . .”

“But what? Don’t ever be afraid to talk to me.”

“Well . . . does YHWH really hate sex that much?”

He finished wiping his blade and put the sword back into its sheath. Then he came back to Rahab and touched her shoulder, gently, tenderly, as if he had not just killed three men. “Are you eager to learn about YHWH? Or are you just afraid of Him?”

“I . . . well . . . both, sir! We saw His fire over that big tent (she pointed) last night, and we prayed to Him. We thanked Him for sparing our lives, and repented of our wickedness. But I fear Him, too. He’s . . . He’s powerful!”

“I see. Then I will tell you. YHWH does not hate sex. He made it. He wants us to do it – only within certain laws. Harold was outside those laws. But that is not why I slew him.” His face broke into a smile, the first she’d seen that day. “I slew him because he disobeyed you.”

Rahab’s eyes grew large. This man cared! About her! Why? She didn’t know how to respond.

He saw her confusion, and explained, “Authority is everything. You are the authority here, as you were in your own house. If they did not obey you, you threw them out of your house, right? Well, they are only here because you helped the spies, so they’re still under your authority. Except here, you are under my authority. As long as you obey me, it is my job to deal with anyone who will not obey you. Just like I am under Joshua’s authority and he is under YHWH’s authority. If anyone will not obey us, YHWH will deal with them, like I dealt with those three rebellious men. See how it works?”

“Yes, sir. Thank you sir.” She was overwhelmed.

“And, Rahab? I want you to know, I’m very glad to hear that you worshiped YHWH last night. I am proud of you. You have honored me, and YHWH, by taking charge the way you did last night. I can see I made the right decision in putting you in charge.”

He scanned the group. Everyone was listening intently, horrified looks on many faces. “After I leave, bury these bodies – and any others who disobey Rahab or myself before then. Rahab has turned out to be one of my best officers. She knew what I wanted before I said it. I was about to tell you that there’ll be no sex this week. YHWH demands a week of purification before we can allow you into the camp – a week of cleansing, both outside and inside. We’ll start with circumcision of all the males – that’s cutting off an unclean part. You’ll see. I have three priests with me. Men, line up over there so they can begin. Ladies, you can start the washing: yourselves, your clothes, your bedrolls, everything in the camp. You will remain strictly segregated. No man is to touch a woman. Your minds and hearts must also be purified. As Rahab taught you last night, just be grateful to YHWH that you are alive, and worship Him and Him only.” He hesitated. “Wait . . . Are there any idols in the group? Anything that you bow to or pray to, or offer sacrifices to?” He scanned. There was no answer. “Tell me now. I’ll get rid of them and you will be forgiven. But if we find them later, I swear they will be destroyed and you will be slain along with them!” He waited.

Six in the group hurried back to their tents, soon returning with idols which they carefully placed on the ground before Salmon. Their faces showed fear.

Salmon smiled. “Good. You six have just saved your lives. I hope the rest of you are already free of such foolish bondage!” He took the wooden idols and casually cast them into the fire. He set the gold ones on one rock and beat them with another into an unrecognizable blob.

“Anything else you put your trust in? Anything you love so much, it might keep you from loving YHWH? Any special treasures that might turn away your heart?”



“Sir? I have a little silver. I was saving it because... well, as a backup in case I needed to escape or... uh... bribe somebody, or buy my freedom. It’s not a god, but I guess I did put some trust in it. Is that what you mean?”

“That’s exactly what I mean. I’ll see that you’re taken care of so you won’t need it. Joshua ordered that all the silver, gold, and other valuables be put under a ban. It must go to YHWH’s treasury. Anyone else?” There was. When they finished, Salmon had quiet a stack of stuff. Silver, gold coins, a big gold bar, and some very fine clothes. “Achan. You’re in charge of Rahab’s stuff. See that the valuables get into YHWH’s treasury. And burn those clothes.”

“Yes, sir!” Achan began bundling up the pile.

The priests got busy with the circumcisions. The males all permitted it, fearing Salmon’s sword. He just chatted with Rahab. “Thank you for taking charge here. Keep up the good work. Looks like the rest of your group won’t give us any more trouble. I must go. We’re planning our next attack. Don’t worry about it. If you need anything, those guards down there are always alert for your signal.”

The week went by pretty slowly. They buried the dead bodies. Then Rahab had them scrub everything. They found a few more idols in the process, so Rahab made them take every thing out and lay it in the sun for her inspection. She burned all the idols and made them scrub everything again. Then all the women went down to the stream to scrub their bodies. After they finished, the men followed. Rahab made sure they stayed apart. At the end of the week, they scrubbed everything again.

They saw a small contingent of Israel’s army charging bravely up the hill toward Ai. They paid no attention, but that afternoon, the soldiers came limping back, carrying 36 bodies. She scanned the faces of the leaders, but Salmon was not among them. *Was one of those bodies his?* Rahab almost cried out, worried about his safety, suddenly aware of how much she longed to see him and how much she treasured in her heart his brief words of commendation.

The week was past. Finally Salmon returned, alone. He was alive! But he looked sad and distressed.

“What happened?” Rahab blurted out as Salmon got close. “I saw soldiers returning with bodies...”

“We lost the battle at Ai,” Salmon admitted bluntly. “We don’t know why YHWH is displeased with us. It’s not because of you. The camp guards tell me you spent the week scrubbing and purifying yourselves like I asked.”

“Yes, sir. Everything, sir. And we searched carefully, and burned the remaining idols, sir. I made sure of it.”

“More idols? Were the people disciplined?”

“Yes, sir. I had them scrub everything and everyone all over again. I... I don’t think you need to kill them, sir. They didn’t know they had them.”

Salmon laughed, the first time Rahab had heard him laugh. “I don’t question your judgment, Rahab. You’re in charge. Whatever you say, goes. In fact, I am pleased with your judgment. You are one bright spot in my otherwise miserable day. Gather your people and follow me. You’ll be inspected by our leaders. If you are found to be pure, you may be adopted into a family of one of the thirteen tribes of Israel. You’ve got to belong to an Israelite family to be an Israelite. Pray they choose wisely and are willing to accept you.” He paused, his smile turning to a grimace. “This was a bad day for this. They’re all pretty upset.”

“Shall we wait for another day, sir?”

“No. I said a week and I keep my word. We made you wait long enough. Our defeat is not your problem.”

They followed Salmon down the hill. The people had all gathered around Joshua, who was shouting orders. With each order, people would change places. Salmon brought them near the front. They realized that Joshua was drawing lots from a basket held by a priest, and the ones selected by the lots were being separated. Salmon nudged one of the elders. “What’s going on?” he asked.

“YHWH told Joshua that we lost the battle because somebody took stuff under the ban. But no one would confess. So he’s trying to find out who did it.”

“Achan!” Salmon whispered.

“What? You know who did it?”

“I don’t know. But I assigned Achan to take Rahab’s stuff down to the treasury. It was a big responsibility. He agreed too quickly. He should have asked for help to carry it all. And I should have been suspicious when...”

“The family of Carmi, front and center!” Joshua shouted. Again the congregation shuffled around.

“Achan!” Rahab gasped. She recognized him as he came forward with the family of Carmi. Salmon heard her gasp, and glanced at her with a knowing nod.

Joshua drew another lot from the basket. He read it and looked up. “Achan.” He pointed directly at him. “Achan! Step forward.” It was an order.

Achan gave him this innocent “Who, me?” look, then glanced around for someone to defend him.

But Joshua was certain. YHWH’s lots never lied. “My son, I implore you. Give glory to YHWH the God of Israel, and confess your sin. Don’t try to hide it.”

Salmon knew. He stepped up to Joshua’s side, and looked Achan in the eye. That did it. Achan bowed his head sadly. “Yes, sir. I sinned against YHWH. I coveted some of the valuables from Rahab’s stuff. Salmon told me to put it in YHWH’s treasury, and I did – most of it. But I took a small bag of silver coins, a bar of gold, and a lovely Babylonian mantle. I hid them in my tent, in the earth.”

“Why is it always, ‘Rahab’s stuff?’” Rahab muttered to no one in particular. “None of it was mine!” She had obeyed the spies and left all her valuables behind.

René, Rahab’s mother, heard her. “Remember what Salmon said about authority? They were all under your authority, so it was all your stuff. Be glad you gave it up, or you might be standing over there instead of Achan!”

Rahab was shocked to realize – her mom was right! It had been a long time since she had agreed with her mom on anything. She reached around her waist to give her a hug, the first in many years. It felt good. Then her dad’s arm wrapped around both of them. She responded with her other arm. Rahab stood between her parents and began to softly cry. It had been a very long time since she had been their little girl. But it felt so, so good.

Joshua sent men to Achan’s tent. They found the stuff. He gave orders for Achan to be taken outside the camp and stoned. Reece looked down at his daughter. There were tears in his eyes too. “I’m so proud of you, Rahab! You gave up all your riches, everything, even your big house. But you saved all our lives!”

They waited a long time, huddled together. Salmon and all the elders had gone to see the stoning too, so the Canaanites were all alone. Some talked about running off – for the first time there was no one guarding them. But Rahab put her foot down. “If you go beyond that red standard, I swear I will personally see to it that you are captured and slain! Don’t you know that all Canaan is given to Israel? Your only hope for life is right here! We’ve come this far; don’t lose it now! So get back here. Face the cloud over that big tent and kneel down. Pray that you will be found pure enough so that one of the families here will adopt you. That is your only hope!”

When the congregation finally returned, Salmon found them huddled together, facing the tabernacle. They were all kneeling, praying. As the Israelites were gathering, Salmon walked up to Rahab and her parents. “You’ve done very well, Rahab – keeping everyone quietly here, praying. You have made a good impression on the elders. I believe your family will be adopted into Israel with no trouble. But just to be sure, you three come with me. I have a plan. I’ll let you three be first.” He brought them up with him onto the speaking platform.

They had to wait. Joshua was making a speech about YHWH turning away from His fierce anger at Israel – now that Achan had been dealt with – so God had given the city of Ai into their hands. It was very encouraging.

Finally it was Salmon’s turn. “Men of Israel. As you know, our conquest of Jericho, the strongest city in Canaan, was accomplished without losing a single man. This is due in part to these three you see beside me. This is Rahab and her parents Reece and René. Rahab is the one who helped our spies...” He retold their story.

Salmon was a good story-teller. He made it come alive with personal details, most of them correct. But he left out the sordid stuff. When Salmon told how she and her family had already learned to love and worship YHWH, Rahab wondered if that part was actually true.

She was delighted as everyone applauded Salmon’s speech. Rahab and her folks bowed their acceptance. Salmon was saying, “Now each of you has to make three solemn oaths, here in front of the group. First, vow that you will forsake all other gods, to worship only our God YHWH, and keep His laws forever. Second, swear your allegiance to Israel and submission to Israel’s leaders. Third, swear your willingness to accept the family of Israel that adopts you, and be faithful to them as your own family from now on. Rahab, would you like to go first?”

“Sir? If it pleases you, may my father go first? He is our eldest, and I want him to be respected and honored as... as I do!” She looked up at him with love in her eyes. Now he really knew he had his daughter back.

Salmon OK’d the request, and Reece, followed by his wife René, swore the proper oaths, both getting loud “Amen’s” from the congregation when they finished.

Now it was Rahab’s turn. She had been thinking fiercely as they took their vows. She knew YHWH didn’t like lies or deception – the spies had told her that. So she knew she could not make those vows without first clearing up a few things. “I do vow to love and worship YHWH, and Him only, and keep His commands forever. But I have to confess that I don’t really love Him right now. I was just a harlot! I don’t know Him and I don’t know how to love someone I don’t know. But I fear Him. I worship Him out of fear. He’s a very powerful God – much mightier than any I ever knew. When I helped the spies, it wasn’t because I loved and worshiped YHWH – it was because I feared for my own skin! Please, I beg of you, let someone adopt me who will teach me how to love Him, for that is what I want. I’ll be able to keep my vow only when I learn to love Him. But I do swear my allegiance to Israel, and my submission to your leaders, elders, and the family that adopts me.”

She heard laughs and loud “Amen’s” in the crowd’s response, and Salmon beamed at her, so she hoped she had said the right thing. After all the other Canaanites had spoken their vows; it was time for the adoptions. Salmon introduced them by saying, “Men of Israel. Before you stand forty new sons and daughters of Israel. They have been circumcised, purified, and their vows accepted before God and all of us this day. We welcome them into our camp. But they need families. So pray now, asking YHWH if He wants you take any of these precious ones into your family, by adoption or by marriage. YHWH will guide you. I’ve already prayed, and YHWH has guided me, so I will make the first selection. I choose Rahab and her parents Reece and René. I take them to be members of my own family, now and forever.”

Amid the cheers and clapping, Salmon glanced down at Rahab, still standing between her parents. “If my favorite officer will accept me, of course!”

“As my lord wishes, sir. But sir, what did...?” She was interrupted by the other adoptions. Soon her entire family was chosen by families of various tribes of Israel.

That night Salmon introduced Rahab and her parents to his own parents, Nahshon, the son of Aminadab, and Nan'nre, an Egyptian woman who had come with Israel through the Red Sea as an infant. They were of the tribe of Judah. Aminadab was one of the elders of Israel who had been slain by Prince Cain. Nahshon's sister (Aminadab's daughter) Elishiva had married Moses' brother Aaron. When they finished the introductions, Salmon asked, “Rahab, as we were making our choices for your family, you had a question. What was it?”

“Oh!” She thought fast. “Uh... Sir? Will you teach me about YHWH, so that I may learn to actually love Him?”

“Of course. But that was not it.” His penetrating gaze stared into her eyes, as they had the first time.

Suddenly she knew she would never be able to keep secrets from him. She'd always been a first class actress. Her whole life had been an act. But now she had better open up and get real. This was going to be tough for her. “No sir.” She looked down. “I'm just a whore. How can you care about me? Why do you say nice things about me?”

“You're not a whore anymore. You're forgiven and cleansed. Now you're a pure daughter of Israel. In your culture life was cheap, but in my culture life is infinitely precious. That's why I care. That's why I slay rebels who hate God and His ways of life – they would bring their ways of death upon us all. I say nice things about you because I see in you one of the most lovely, capable, and intelligent women in Israel. But that wasn't your question either. Look up at me. Never be afraid to talk to me.”

Rahab's eyes grew large. Her heart was pounding. How could this mighty man of Israel say such things about her? Encouraged, she finally looked directly into his eyes. “Yes, sir. You said, ‘by adoption or by marriage’. I just wanted to know which... uh... what did you mean?”

Salmon leaned back and laughed uproariously. “Yes. That was indeed your question. I saw it in your eyes when I said those words. Well, I have made my choice. It's your turn. Which do you choose?”

“Huh? You mean, I get a choice?”

“Of course. In my culture, women aren't slaves.”

Rahab had always been pretty bold with men, but this was overwhelming. She admired Salmon almost like a god – now he seemed to be proposing marriage? If she chose? “Please sir, may we ask your God about it first?” She turned and knelt facing the tabernacle.

Rahab wasn't sure how to pray. But it seemed like YHWH had heard her prayers of repentance – or else why would she be here now? So now, she prayed the same way, out loud. “Lord YHWH, God of the Israelites, You are a mighty God. I've repented of all my sins and chosen to worship only You, forever, and to obey Your commands. Please sir, Salmon has asked me to choose. Just adoption, or marriage. Which do You command?”

She heard laughter – and singing. She risked a glance back at Salmon, but it wasn't him. He was staring at her, wide-eyed, as if her prayer had caught him by surprise. But suddenly a voice filled her mind, a laughing voice, “Do not be afraid to accept Salmon as your husband. For I have chosen him to give you a son for Me, a son whose name will be mighty in Israel.”

She jumped up and looked around. Salmon's family and her own parents were staring at her, listening with great interest, but not interrupting. It wasn't them. It must have been YHWH Himself who had answered her! But she wasn't sure. She had never heard any god speak before. “Dad? Would you please...” she hesitated, a bit confused. She wasn't sure what she wanted him to do.

But Reece was. “Yes, my dear. I sure will!” He wasn't about to let this opportunity pass for his daughter. He gently took her hand, led her to Salmon, and put it in his. “She chooses to marry you, and I approve her choice. Thank you. You are most kind, and we are greatly honored to be a part of your family.” He bowed.

Salmon and Joshua spent the next day planning and preparing for another assault on Ai, to take place very early the following morning. Rahab spent the two days in prayer for her betrothed. She trusted that YHWH would keep His promise, but she was taking no chances. As she prayed, an angel appeared to her in a vision. He lifted her soul from her body and brought her up high above Ai, where she could see Joshua leading his troops to attack the city. She saw the men of Ai come out in battle array, the successful counter attack, and the army of Israel fleeing before them back towards their camp. The victorious defenders of Ai gave chase. Then she saw another army of Israel, just as large, rise up from their hiding place in the valley west of Ai, between Ai and Bethel. She was delighted to see Salmon leading them. *Her beloved!* They charged up the hill into the now unprotected city. “Pray for him!” the angel beside her commanded. “He is in mortal danger!”

Rahab was already praying. But seeing her beloved in danger, her prayers redoubled. “O Lord YHWH, You are the powerful God! Protect Salmon by Your great power!” Suddenly she saw it: a woman standing on the city wall, above the gate. She had a huge stone; she was hoisting it over her head, to heave down just as her enemies entered. Salmon was leading the charge! The woman hurled the stone down with all her might, aiming it to intercept the leader. Her aim was perfect!

Rahab's prayer never faltered. The heavy stone, already loosed, must be redirected. It must not hit Salmon. It must fall harmlessly behind him. Rahab shouted at the stone in YHWH's name. It moved to her command.

At the last second Salmon instinctively looked up and ducked. But he was too late; the stone was sure to crush his head. But then it hesitated, just long enough for him to run past. It caught the heel of his sandal, making a jagged cut in the leather.

Now at peace, Rahab's soul drifted up to where she could see the whole battle. Salmon and his men quickly captured the city and set a signal fire. When Joshua saw the smoke, he turned his army to face the men of Ai. "Shout!" Joshua ordered. "For YHWH has given us the victory!" The Israelites responded with a mighty shout.

The men of Ai were caught between the two armies. They were quickly slain to the last man. Their king was hanged on a tree until sundown. Ai was plundered and totally burned. A heap of stones was piled over its gate, and Joshua cursed it as he had done to Jericho.

Late that night, Salmon returned to his father's tent. Rahab was first to greet him, running directly into his embrace. No longer shy about her status, she hugged him tightly and praised his victory.

"How do you know I was victorious? I haven't said a word to anyone here yet!"

She flashed him her most lovely smile. "I know by the jagged cut in the back of your sandal. If today were not a victory, that cut would have been in your skull!"

Salmon looked back to inspect the cut. He didn't even remember feeling it. "How did you know...?"

"I prayed for you," was all she said. Salmon suddenly knew he had more than just a fine officer. He had a partner in battle, one who would stand with him, and even fight with him, from the heavenly realms.

The next day Joshua called the congregation together and ordered them to pack for a three day trip up onto the highlands. "Moses commanded us to go to Mount Ebal and re-commit ourselves to the laws of YHWH. All the cities of Canaan are in terror of us already. They will not trouble us while we obey." So early the next morning, they traveled north to the Wadi Far'a, then hiked up the wadi around Shechem and up to the top of Mount Ebal. There Joshua built a stone altar, and made sacrifices to YHWH. With the help of thirty volunteers he also built a stone monument with the Ten Commandments chiseled on it. It was beautiful, made to last forever. The next morning, Joshua stationed the Levites with the Ark of the Covenant in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. He separated the rest of the people into two groups facing the Ark, one with their backs to Mount Ebal, the other with their backs to Mount Gerizim.

Joshua had the two groups shout back and forth to each other the blessings and curses Moses had given. The group at Mount Gerizim shouted the blessings for obeying YHWH's law, while the group at Mount Ebal shouted the confessions and the curses for forsaking YHWH's law. Finally Joshua stood with his wife Jerusha just below the altar on Mount Ebal. All the elders and leaders of Israel stood below him, with their wives and families. Salmon was there too, with his family to his left, and Rahab and her parents to his right.

Joshua read the laws of Moses, while all the people stood and listened intently. Even the little children were silent before him. There was just something about that place, the resounding echo between the two mountains, that inspired reverential awe in the congregation.

They finished at sundown. They planned to return to Gilgal first thing next morning. Joshua closed with the Aaronic Benediction and then bade them all good night.

Before they had dispersed, Salmon turned to Joshua. "Sir? Rahab has consented to marry me, and our parents have agreed. Would you please sanctify our marriage here, now, before the holy altar? We will never forget this day of consecration to the laws of YHWH. We would like every wedding anniversary to be a commemoration of it."

Rahab nodded her agreement, whispering, "This was beautiful!" So Joshua blessed and sanctified their wedding then and there, finishing by torchlight.

That night, Joshua and Jerusha remained on Mount Ebal by the altar, praying together. Logos met with them. They enjoyed sweet fellowship with Him until dawn. But just before He left, Logos reminded Joshua of the curse that Moses had placed on the 9th of Av, the date that the Israelites had made the golden bull at Mount Sinai.

"Yes, Lord. I do remember. But I must admit I didn't understand it then, and I don't understand it any better now. Why do You mention it?"

"On what date did Israel first attack Ai?"

Suddenly Joshua got it. "On the 9th of Av!"

"So then, you had no excuse for not coming to Me, or at least praying about it before attacking Ai. You had been duly warned."

"Yes, Lord!" Joshua determined that he would never again assume; he would always pray about each step of the conquest of Canaan. Thus he gained wisdom.

The Israelites returned to Gilgal the next day. There they remained encamped as summer changed to fall – the months of Elul and Tishri. They celebrated the Feasts of Trumpets (Tishri 1), the Day of Atonement (Tishri 10) and Sukkot (Tishri 15-21). Tishri passed, and still the camp was at peace. The surrounding nations and city-states remained bottled up in their cities, terrified.