

7. Ruth, on the other hand, was a trophy of grace throughout her life. Although she lost her first husband, Mahlon, early in their marriage, she eventually married Boaz, another member of the line of Judah from whom was born Obed.
8. Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah, one of David's general officers. While he was off fighting a war, David raped his wife. She was not a prostitute but the victim of a sexual assault. Although David conspired to have Uriah killed in action, he and Bathsheba were later married and their first born was Solomon.
9. Mary's first pregnancy occurred by an act of God resulting in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. She later married Joseph with whom they had at least six children, four sons, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, and at least two daughters, unnamed (Matthew 13:55–56).
10. It is interesting that from among these five women, James chose Rahab to illustrate his point at the conclusion of chapter 2. Tamar was guilty of tempting Judah to commit adultery. Ruth was a trophy of grace who applied doctrine and received grace from God. Bathsheba was the victim of a sexual assault resulting in the birth of the adulterine. Mary was divinely selected to become the incubator of the biological life of Messiah.
11. James chose Abraham to be his first illustration of how a believer is “justified by works.” For his second illustration, James selected Rahab who also used doctrine as her working object to be “justified by works.”
12. The doctrine James wants the reader to learn is how the working objects of one's faith is what results in works that produce divine good.
13. In the case of Abraham, it was the five-paragraph Abrahamic Covenant that resulted in establishing the chart pedigree of the Messiah beginning with Isaac.
14. For Rahab it was her faith in Messiah Who became the working object of her salvation that led her to divinely guided decisions in favor of the Jewish spies.
15. Principle: The word that establishes this principle is **δικαιόω (*dikaiōō*)**. This word is translated “justified,” but in this context it is best translated “vindicated.”
16. “Justified” is used when it is “spoken especially of the justification bestowed by God upon men through Christ, through the instrumentality of faith (Romans 3:26, 30; 4:5; 8:30, 33; Galatians 3:8).



17. When the issue is one's salvation, faith in Christ results in divine justification before the Supreme Court of Heaven.
18. Post salvation, the believer, who has access to divine viewpoint from the inculcation of Bible doctrine, has working objects that enable him to make good choices from the source of divine viewpoint.
19. "Justification" by faith is explicitly a part of the forty things imputed to a believer at the moment of salvation. "Justification" by works is an English translation that correlates with the decision-making processes of Abraham with regard to his son, Isaac.
20. The issue in each case is the act of faith that produces a positive result.
21. Faith must have working objects and in each case those objects must be directed to pertinent experiences in the life of the individual being discussed.
22. To describe each category—one for salvation and two for application—requires us to select the best English word for the context being observed. This requires us to define the root words of "justification" and "vindication":

**Justify, Transitive verb.** 1. To demonstrate or prove to be just, right or valid. 2. To free (a human) of the guilt and penalty attached to grievous sin. Used of God.

**Vindicate. Transitive verb.** 1. To clear of accusation, blame, suspicion, or doubt with supporting arguments or proof. To demonstrate or prove the validity of.<sup>1</sup>

23. Further clarity is provided by Noah Webster's definitions of these terms in his 1828 first edition of his *American Dictionary of the English Language*:

**Justify, Verb transitive.** 1. To prove or show to be just, or conformable to law, right, justice, propriety or duty; to defend or maintain; to vindicate as right. We cannot *justify* disobedience or ingratitude to our Maker.

2. In *theology*, to pardon and clear from guilt; to absolve or acquit from guilt and merited punishment, and to accept as righteous on account of the merits of the Savior, or by the application of Christ's atonement to the offender.

**Justification, noun.** 1. In *Theology*, remission of sin and absolution from guilt and punishment; or an act of free grace by which God pardons the sinner and accepts him as righteous on account of the atonement of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), s.vv. "justify, vindicate."



**Vindicate, verb transitive.** To support or maintain as true or correct, against denial, censure or objections. 2. To defend with success, to prove to be just or valid.

**Vindication, noun.** The defense of any thing (*sic*), or a justification against denial or censure, or against objections or accusations.; the vindication of the Scriptures against the objections of infidels. The act of supporting by proof or legal process.<sup>2</sup>

24. The words “justify” and “vindicate” are very closely related, but there are nuances of difference between them. The theological use of “justify” stresses an absolved relationship between the sinner and God by means of the former’s use of Jesus Christ as the working Object of his faith resulting in salvation and eternal life. (John 3:16)
25. The theological use of “vindicate” stresses the application of the believer’s faith in the working objects of divine revelation to produce divine good which God honors with blessings and rewards.
26. The phrase “justification by faith” emphasizes salvation of the unbeliever whereas “justification by works” emphasizes the production of the believer. Each of these individuals has working objects for his faith.
27. In the examples we are studying in James 2:21 and following, both Abraham and Rahab are believers who have placed their faith in working objects. Abraham’s was directed to the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant while Rahab’s was directed toward her protection of Salmon and his associate leading to Joshua’s victory over Jericho.
28. Abraham’s actions during the three-day vigil from Beersheba to Mount Moriah and his actions that followed demonstrated his unflappable faith in the veracity and immutability of the Abrahamic Covenant thus insuring the longevity of the bloodline of Messiah.
29. Rahab placed her personal faith in God when hearing reports of His ten plagues upon the Egyptians that resulted in the Jews’ exodus into the Sinai Peninsula.
30. Her faith was further amplified when news came to her about the victories Joshua had won in battles against the two Amorite generals, Sîhon and Őg.

**Sîhon. A king of the Amorites, with capital at Hêshbon near Médêba, in the East Jordanic country not far from Mt. Nêbo, who refused to the Israelites permission to pass through his territory when nearing the Promised Land.**

<sup>2</sup> Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* New York: S. Converse, 1828), s.vv. “vindicate, vindication.”



When the Israelite host appeared, he did not hesitate, but at once gathered his people together and attacked them. But the battle was his last. He and all his host were destroyed, and their district from Árnón [River] to Jábbok [River] became at once the possession of the conqueror, c. 1401 B.C. The kingdom of Síhon is mentioned in Joshua 13:21, 27.<sup>3</sup>

Óg. An Amorite, king of Bāshan, who ruled over sixty cities, the chief of which were Áshtarōth and Édrei at the time of the occupation of Canaan, c. 1400 B.C. He was defeated by the Israelites at Édrei and, with his children and people, was exterminated. His many walled cities were taken, and his kingdom was assigned to the trans-Jordanic tribes, especially the half tribe of Manesseh.<sup>4</sup>

31. These battle victories took place to the east of the Jordan River, referred to a trans-Jordan. West of the Jordan is the walled city of Jericho. For Joshua to be able to move uninhibited into Canaan, he must defeat its inhabitants and destroy the city.
32. For a complete understanding of what Rahab knew when Joshua's spies visited her home magnifies the impact of her favorable welcome of the two men.

According to the Bible, the credit for gaining a foothold in the Judean heartland west of the Jordan goes to Joshua. If his exploits had followed a planned schedule, they would fit into the following grand design: phase one—the establishment of a bridge-head west of the Jordan; phase two—the gaining of a foothold in the mountains; phase three—spreading out from the secured base on the central ridge to widen the area of occupation for permanent settlement.

Phase one was divided into two stages: the river-crossing and the securing of the bridge-head. The place chosen by Joshua for crossing the Jordan was the sector of the river closet to the Dead Sea. Secondly, the river could be forded in many places in this sector, which gave the crossing parties the choice of different routes according to potential hostile interference.

As far as the prospective bridge-head was concerned, there was only one real option. On the western side of the lower Jordan were the plains of Jericho; in their midst stood the oasis city of Jericho, possibly the oldest city on earth and certainly the oldest walled town known to us so far.

<sup>3</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed., ed., R. K. Harrison (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988), 1194.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 935.



Five millennia before Joshua, the spring that watered the rich alluvial soil had already converted the otherwise barren rift valley into a lush tropical garden that supplied the needs of the caravans and travelers commuting between the two banks of the Jordan, as well as those who traveled along the river. Hence, the capture of the oasis of Jericho meant the acquisition of a fertile base abounding in fruit and water, as well as control of the water source, which was vital for all movement in the area.

The great problem for the Israelites, who were inexperienced in siege-craft and devoid of any siege train, was the capture of the town, secured as it was behind its walls, towers and battlements. Joshua therefore commanded his scouts to reconnoiter the other side of the Jordan for the best possible bridge-head, with special emphasis on Jericho, and their exploits are common knowledge: ‘And they went [into Jericho] and came into a harlot’s house, named Rahab, and lodged there’ (Joshua 2:1). There is no doubt that in later Hebrew usage the word *zonah* meant harlot. But the verb from which it was derived, *zan*, means to feed and to provide with victuals. Rahab might well have been a hostess who kept an inn for wayfarers passing through Jericho. This seems to fit her standing as householder, an accepted member of a large family to whom even the messengers of the ruler of the town spoke with a certain civility. Inns have always been excellent sources of information. The careless talk of guests and the sharp ears of hosts have combined to make them a coveted intelligence objective.<sup>5</sup>

One of the subjects learned from listening to conversation in inns is the true morale and opinion of the population. Thus the report of Rahab’s words – ‘For we have heard ... what you did unto the two kings of the Amorites ... whom you utterly destroyed. And ... our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you’ (Joshua 2:10–11) – must have strengthened Joshua in his conviction that the proper psychological moment for the attack upon Jericho had come.<sup>6</sup>

33. Rahab’s had two working objects of her faith. First her positive response to the power and authority that obviously protected and produced victories for the Israelite armies. This resulted in her conversion from heathenism and harlotry over to becoming a sinner saved by grace through faith in Messiah.
34. Secondly, her new spiritual status motivated her to direct her working object of faith toward the God of Israel which resulted in her readily supporting and sequestering the two spies in order to facilitate the assault on Jericho.

<sup>5</sup> The writer’s assumption that Rahab was a “householder” may have some merit, however, his conclusion that she was therefore not a harlot contradicts the biblical record. The Greek word for “harlot” is the feminine noun πόρνη (*pōrnē*), “A harlot or prostitute (Hebrews 11:31; James 1:25),” each referring to “Rahab the harlot.”

<sup>6</sup> Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon *Battles of the Bible* New York: Fall River Press, 2006), 44–45.



**James 2:25** In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? (NASB)

1. Rahab, characterized in both Testaments as “the harlot,” is a wonderful example of the grace and mercy of God. She was saved by grace and as a result of her conversion, became one of the revered women of the Bible in three ways:

1. She was saved according to:

**Hebrews 11:31** By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she welcomed the spies in peace. (NASB)

2. She used the working objects of her faith to produce divine good in James 2:25 (above).
3. She was honored among women and became a trophy of grace being mentioned among five women in the chart pedigree of Jesus Christ in:

**Matthew 1:5a** Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab ... (NASB)

2. It is unusual for feminine names to be found in Jewish genealogies. That five are included in Matthew 1 is remarkable considering the varied backgrounds of each:

The insertion of the names of women—a practice not only foreign but abhorrent to ordinary usage . This peculiarity is the more marked when we notice that these names introduce what would be considered serious blots in the family history of the Davidic house.<sup>7</sup>

3. In addition to this rare occurrence of these five women in Matthew 1, it is also true that the inclusion of the names of Gentiles were never to be listed in genealogies. However, three of the five were indeed Goyim: Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth. Some biblical scholars even question the pedigree of Bathsheba.
4. To add insult to this perceived injury, Tamar, Rahab, and for some Bathsheba, although the assertion to the latter is rejected in our study, were of ill repute. David raped Bathsheba! Ultimately, she married David and their first surviving son, Solomon, continued the progress of the royal chart pedigree of Jesus down to Joseph.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis Matthews Sweet, “Genealogy of Jesus Christ,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2:1196.



5. Verse 25 opens with the phrase, “In the same way” which references us back to Abraham in James 2:21–24. This means that Rahab is introduced as a second example of using the working objects of her personal experiences to produce divine good.
6. Her application of doctrine as her working object is associated with Abraham’s by the conjunction **καί (kaí)**: “also.” In other words, Rahab will provide a second illustration of being vindicated by works.
7. Abraham’s accumulation of doctrinal rationales over a forty-five-year period resulted in empowering his Law of Freedom to take Isaac up Mount Moriah with the intent to offering him to God as a burnt offering.
8. Rahab used her Law of Freedom to sequester the two Israeli spies from the king of Jericho and then give them intel on how to avoid the king’s search party, so Joshua could get the intel he needed to attack the city.
9. Verses 21 and 25 each pose the same question that demands an affirmative answer. Here is how the Greek phrase, “Was not Abraham/Rahab vindicated by works,” reads exactly the same way in both references: **οὐκ ἔξ Ἀβραάμ / Ῥαάβ ἔργον ἐδικαιώθη (ouk ex Abraám , Rhaáb érgon edikaióthē)**.
10. The two vindications are mentioned next. For Abraham it reads, “When he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?” For Rahab it reads, “When she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?”
11. We have done a thorough study of Abraham’s utilization of his Law of Freedom to accumulate working objects resulting in his vindication by works. Rahab has a similar story to tell as well.
12. We will go through an overview of Joshua 2:1–24 in which Rahab becomes a central figure in the Jews ability to enter and occupy the promised land. The part she plays will be because of her salvation and the accumulation of working objects that facilitated this historic outcome.

### **Rahab’s Working Objects:**

1. When we first meet Rahab, she is a believer who has left the profession of prostitution primarily because of her personal faith in “the Lord your God” mentioned in verse 11.
2. Her involvement with Salmon and his fellow spy occurs when the two arrive in Jericho on a reconnaissance mission under orders from Joshua. She used her home, situated on the top floor of Jericho’s walls, not only as a hotel, but also its roof for a rope manufacturing business. (Joshua 2:1)



**Joshua 2:1** Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.<sup>8</sup>

Jericho (“moon city”), also called the “City of Palms,” was the primary focus of the spies. A fortified city, it was located just five miles west of the Jordan River and had springs that made it an oasis. Archaeological excavations of Jericho reveal continuous occupation to this point back to at least 7000 B.C.

The Amarna letters of the fourteenth century B.C. verify that the major cities of Canaan were in reality small kingdoms, each ruled by a local king.<sup>9</sup>

3. Intel reached the king of Jericho that Israeli spies had entered the city on a mission to reconnoiter it and its environs. This means that the city had an excellent system of spotting noncitizens entering the city.
4. Apparently the king had intelligence that the Israelites were encamped at Shittim, located in the trans-Jordan near Mount Nebo about ten miles east of the river. Jericho was only about five miles west of the Jordan.

**Joshua 2:2** It was told to the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.

5. He knew that Rahab had converted to Judaism, so she was a prime suspect to be hosting the spies for the night. The king sent his officers to Rahab’s house to get a situation report:

**Joshua 2:3** And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.”

6. Before the officers arrived at Rahab’s place, she had already hidden them on the roof underneath her inventory of flax ropes. Her response to the search party has caused a stir among many believers because she told the men three lies that are recorded in verses 4 and 5:

<sup>8</sup> All verses in Joshua, chapter 2, are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

<sup>9</sup> *NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk through Biblical History and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), s.vv. 305fn2:1 and 2:2.



**Joshua 2:4** But the woman had taken [ Qal imperfect of  $\text{לָקַח}$  (*laqach*) ] the two men and hidden them, and she said, “Yes, the men came to me [true ], but I did not know where they were from [ lie #1 ].

**v. 5** “It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out [ lie #2 ]; I do not know where the men went [ lie #3 ]. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.

7. Obviously, the opening comment Rahab makes in verse four refers to events that took place prior to verse 3. As a believer in the God of Israel and therefore loyal to Joshua and his men, she made the decision to protect not only these two men, but the destiny of the entire Israelite nation encamped just fifteen miles away in Shittim.
8. However, in order to do this, she had to start telling lies. As a result, some commentators on this passage are quick to judge Rahab for telling lies. First, they are correct that she did lie. Second, what would have happened to her, her family, the two spies, one of whom, Salmon, was to be revealed as her right man and part of the chart pedigree of Messiah, while putting in jeopardy the entire Jewish nation?
9. Such a decision would have resulted in the following adjustment to the passage:

**Joshua 2:4b** “Yes the two men came to me. They are spies for the Jews who are encamped 15 miles to the east at Shittim.

**v. 5** These two men are up on my roof right now. Go there and you can capture them.

10. The two spies would have been murdered along with Rahab and potentially her family. The king would have prepared to defend the city and sent carriers to alert other city states in the area. The Jewish people’s future in Canaan would have been jeopardized and the deaths of Salmon and Rahab would have severed the Judaic line of Messiah.
11. Yet, what about those lies? Lies come in a number of categories. For example: (1) some are often done in a way to express kindness in social situations. (2) some are in-your-face brazen, and (3) many are designed to mislead on a vast scale to deceptively influence groups or nations.
12. These three examples have titles, “little–white,” “bold–faced,” and “misinformation.”



**White lie: An untruth told to spare feelings or from politeness, as in *She asked if I like her dress, and of course I told a white lie*. This term uses *white* in the sense of “harmless.”<sup>10</sup>**

**Bold-faced: impudence; marked by contemptuous or cocky boldness.<sup>11</sup>**

**Misinformation: False or inaccurate information, especially that which is deliberately intended to deceive.<sup>12</sup>**

13. Which category of lying does Rahab commit? Were they expression of being polite to the king’s emissaries? Back in the 1930s, Walter Donaldson wrote a song made popular by numerous big bands entitled, “Little White Lies”:

The stars all seemed to know  
You didn’t mean all those sighs  
The night that you told me  
Those little white lies.

Who wouldn’t believe those lips  
Who wouldn’t believe those eyes  
The night that you told me  
Those little white lies.

14. Rahab was not being courteous. But was she being impudent? No, “cocky boldness” is a facial façade designed to conceal guilt. For example, “I did not have sex with that woman!” President William Jefferson Blythe IV.<sup>13</sup>
15. One of the major tactics used today by major media outlets is misinformation. Each medium communicates its political or social agenda by means of misinformation designed to sway public opinion.
16. The press medium’s utilizers include newspapers: *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the wire service, Associated Press.
17. The Broadcast medium’s frequencies include the major networks, ABC, CBS, NBC, and PBS plus two cable outlets, CNN and MSNBC. The major television networks also have radio affiliates nationwide.
18. These media are experts in widespread misinformation, told bold-face with never a hint of little white lies. Nevertheless, Rahab took on the task of defending her fellow believers up on the roof and Joshua’s army in Shittim.

**(End JAS2-53. See JAS2-54 for continuation of study at p. 531.)**

<sup>10</sup> Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* (1997), s.v. “white lie.”

<sup>11</sup> *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), s.v. “bold-faced.”

<sup>12</sup> *The New Oxford American Dictionary* (2001), s.v. “misinformation.”

<sup>13</sup> AKA, William Jefferson “Bill” Clinton. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. [2010], 3:389).



19. Deciding that lives saved trumped telling it all and leaving nothing out, Rahab engaged in a sinful misinformation trifecta.

