

RAHAB'S CONFESSION: CONFIRMATION AND ANTICIPATION
OF THE YHWH'S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd. ed. Oxford, 1910
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 2 vols. Leiden, 2001
HB	Hebrew Bible
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
IBHS	<i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor. Winona Lake, Indiana, 1990
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
Joüon	Joüon, P. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. Subsidia biblica 14/1–2. Rome, 1991.
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	New English Translation
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament

<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis.</i> Edited by W. A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, 1997
NIV	New International Version
SHS	Scripture and Hermeneutics Series
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

TRANSLATION OF JOSHUA 2:8-14

(8) Now they had not yet lain down when she came up to them on the roof. (9) Then she said to the men, “I know that the Lord has given you the Land. And [I know] that your terror has fallen on us. And [I know] that all the inhabitants of the Land have melted away because of you; (10) for we have heard how the Lord caused the waters of the Red Sea to dry up before you when you went out from Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. (11) When we heard [these reports], our heart was melted, and no spirit remained in any man because of you; for indeed, the Lord, your God, he [is] God in heaven above and on the earth below. (12) Now then, swear to me by the Lord, since I treated you loyally, that you also will treat my father’s house loyally; and give me a trustworthy sign, (13) so that you keep alive my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all who belong to them, to save our lives from death.” (14) Then the men said to her, “Our life for yours, even to death! If you do not tell this affair of ours, then it shall be when the Lord gives us the Land, we will treat you loyally and trustworthily.”

RAHAB'S CONFESSION: CONFIRMATION AND ANTICIPATION OF THE LORD'S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS

Introduction

Spanning the ages, from the first day when God's spoken order triumphed over the cosmic chaos, to these last days in which the Spirit gathers the elect from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation by the power of Christ's gospel, the kingdom of God has not ceased to irrupt¹ on earth. Within this metanarrative,² the gift of the Promised Land to Israel plays a vital role in portraying the Lord's impending (*realized*) reign over all creation. A noticeable storyline concerning the initial fulfillments of this land promise flows from the Pentateuch into Joshua, the first of the Historical Books. After the death of Moses, the Lord bolsters his leader, Joshua, and the people, by affirming his plan to give them the promised land of Canaan (Deut 34:1-Josh 1:18), some of which has already been claimed (Num 21:21-35; 31:25-32:42). Moreover, as providence would have it, evidence of this Divine Warrior's conquest on behalf of his people would come even from the mouth of a harlot in Jericho (Josh 2:9-11). It is here, in the story of Rahab, that readers of Joshua will find not merely a Canaanites' confession of faith in Israel's God,

¹This term follows what Bruce K. Waltke considers the center of the OT's message: "the irruption (breaking in from without), not eruption (breaking out from within), of the kingship of the holy, merciful, and only God..." (*An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007], 144; esp. 143-169).

²In this case, "metanarrative" refers not merely to an overarching storyline within the HB, but also to a Christian one that encompasses the history of redemption (as told from *both* Testaments) and its universal claim on reality and human life. Cf. Albert Wolters, "Metanarrative," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005): 506-07; idem, "Confessional Criticism and the Night Visions of Zechariah," in *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, SHS (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000): 102-03.

but also an account that functions to confirm the Lord's previous promises and anticipate the imminent taking of Jericho and then the Land—both a promotion of God's kingdom.

Literary Context

In the flow of biblical narrative, the content of Joshua can do nothing but follow the Pentateuch. By the end of Deuteronomy, Moses' death awaits Joshua's succession as Israel's leader (Num 27:15-22; Deut 31:1-8, 23; 34:9); redemptive history expects the Jordan crossing and dispossession of the Canaanites (Num 14:8; Deut 1:8, 21; 11:8-12, 25; 27:2); the remaining nine and one-half tribes look forward to obtaining their own allotment of the Land (Num 32:6-32; Deut 34:1-4); and Israel anticipates the outworking of their covenant with YHWH in the Land (Deut 27:1-32:22). Resting just after Deuteronomy, Joshua then advances these themes and brings them to their intended (though temporary) destination in at least four main sections: (1) the Lord installs Joshua as leader over Israel and prepares them to inherit the Land (Josh 1:1-5:15); (2) the Israelites dispossess the nations and take the Land (6:1-12:24); (3) the Land is then distributed among the remaining tribes (13:1-21:45); and (4) Joshua exhorts Israel to retain the Land in covenant faithfulness to God (22:1-24:28).

The episode of the spies' encounter with Rahab falls within section 1, and so, as narrative, contributes to Israel's own preparation to acquire the Land under Joshua's leadership and by God's sovereign initiative. In chapter one, God not only heartens Israel by affirming his ancient promises (1:5-6, 13), but also commands them to cross the Jordan (1:2, 10f). Chapter three continues on the same note,³ even relating the awesome

³That Joshua and Israel had yet to leave Shittim (2:1; 3:1) shows that chapter three picks up the same Jordan-crossing narrative of chapter one, while chapter two briefly steps away to follow the spies from their departure in 2:1 to their return in 2:23-24.

display of God's might in causing the Jordan's waters to stand a great distance away while Israel crossed over on dry ground (3:14-17).

Purposefully, however, the author steps away from this narrative in chapter two in order to indicate the state of the Canaanites in Jericho (2:1), the very city located opposite of where the text notes Israel crossed in 3:16. In four quick scenes, the two spies encounter Rahab who safely hides them in 2:1-7; listen to her confession which they find quite informative and worthy of covenant loyalty in 2:8-14; escape from Jericho via her help in 2:15-21; and return to camp reporting the good news to Joshua in 2:22-24 (see Appendix 1). Therefore, when the reader arrives at a new setting in 3:16 (i.e. *west* of the Jordan), he has already gained insight to the positive conditions set before Israel. Yet, he has also gained something more. From the mouth of a harlot *in Canaan* come covenant confirmation and conquest⁴ anticipation on behalf of Israel, both of which the exegesis of 2:8-14 will explain below.

Before moving there, however, it will be necessary to show how vv. 8-14 set themselves apart as one scene. At least five observations contribute to this division. First, the disjunctive *wāw* at the beginning of v. 8 breaks the narrative flow to introduce a new setting within the larger episode.⁵ Second, the verb in v. 8, *עלה* ("to go up, ascend"), takes Rahab from ground level up to the roof, and thus (third), from speaking with Jericho's men to addressing the Israelite spies. Fourth, v. 15 clearly moves from the roof

⁴Though addressing the issue from a source-critical viewpoint, Coats' article is helpful in highlighting the literary contributions of Joshua 1-5 to the *conquest* theme. See George W. Coats, "An Exposition for the Conquest Theme," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 47-54.

⁵This *wāw* + non-verb is the fourth disjunctive construction since v. 6 (note *וַיִּיָּאָר* in v. 6 and *וַיְהִי שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי אֲדָמָה* in v. 7). However, that v. 8 belongs to the pericope of vv. 8-14 is clear since v. 6 contrasts vv. 4b-5 and reiterates v. 4a; and the two clauses in v. 7 conclude the scene of vv. 2-7.

scene to the escape scene. This occurs as, fifth, Rahab lets the spies “down” (ירד) through her window, the opposite of her going up in v. 8. Together, these elements distinguish vv. 8-14 as a pericope within the whole episode marked by 2:1-24.

Exegesis of Joshua 2:8-14

Setting the Scene: Rahab on the Roof with the Spies (2:8)

After Rahab sent the spies’ opposition away in a hasty pursuit (2:5), and the city gates were shut behind them (2:7), the narrator inserts a supplemental note that provides the setting for a new scene within the larger framework of the episode: על-הגג עליהם וְהָמָּה טָרְמָם וְהָיָא עֹלְתָהּ עֲלֵיהֶם (“Now they had not yet lain down, when she came up to them on the roof.”). This disjunctive clause allows the reader to follow Rahab up to the roof and invites him to eavesdrop on her meeting with the spies.

She comes to the spies before they had lain down for a night’s rest (cf. Gen 19:4).⁶ According to vv. 1-7, it seems she has now interrupted their second attempt to lie down. If the verb שכב (“to lie down”; cf. NASB: “to lodge”) in v. 1 is not functioning proleptically, then the spies laid down shortly after their arrival, were then hidden by Rahab prior to the careless interrogation by the king’s men (Josh 2:4; cf. 2:6),⁷ and had yet to retire for the night when Rahab arrives again (2:8).⁸

⁶The Hebrew imperfect can represent the “sphere” of past time. Not only does the adverb טָרְמָם show the verb action has yet to occur, but its appearance with the imperfect then followed by its apodosis consisting of a וַ + noun form often conveys the same (e.g. Gen 2:5; 19:4; 24:45; Num 11:33; 1 Sam 3:3; Job 10:21; Isa 8:4; 48:5; Ezek 16:57). See GKC, §164c; cf. §§107c, 152r.

⁷This conclusion translates the wayyqtol form of לקח as a pluperfect (“[Rahab] had taken the two men”), which the Hebrew allows (contra KJV, NET). See *IBHS*, §33.2.3a; contra Joüon, §118d.

⁸So Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 49; Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 70, 71n17.

By this point, Rahab's activity in protecting the men surely dominates the episode. Thus far, and in each case on behalf of the spies, she has taken (לקח), concealed (צפן), spoken (אמר), brought up (עלה), hidden (טמן), made ready (ערך), and come up (עלה). Her busy engagement overshadows the men's role as spies on reconnaissance for Joshua. Given the book's stress upon the Lord fighting redemptively on behalf of his people, it seems best to say their passive role and this *Canaanite's* active role highlights that YHWH has been long at work in the Land before their arrival, even though the narrator blanks God's direct involvement with the events of chapter 2.⁹ The following confession of this harlot in Canaan seems to demonstrate this is precisely the case.

YHWH's Fame and Rahab's Faith (2:9-11)

Verses 9-11 contain the words Rahab herself confessed to the spies (הַאֲנָשִׁים לִּי) concerning the Land, its inhabitants, and remarkably, the God of Israel.¹⁰ Following the supplemental note of v. 8, v. 9 resumes the narrative flow with the preterite use of אמר ("to say"), introducing the reader to her direct speech. Indeed, having tagged along with Rahab up to the roof, the reader awaits some explanation of why this foreigner, *this*

⁹Cf. Dennis J. McCarthy, "Some Holy War Vocabulary in Joshua 2," *CBQ* 33 (1971): 228. Contra Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 87-88; Yair Zakovitch, "Humor and Theology or the Successful Failure of Israelite Intelligence: A Literary-Folkloric Approach to Joshua 2," in *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore*, ed. Susan Niditch (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 75. Respectively, both argue that the spies' passivity highlights Rahab's "complete power over the lives of the timid Israelites" or that the spies are "worthless lackeys".

¹⁰Some argue that the "Deuteronomist" (i.e. the exilic author/compiler of the Former Prophets [Joshua-Kings]) added Rahab's confessions himself in vv. 9-11 to appropriate a non-Israelite "spy tale" for his own theological aims (e.g. Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*, WBC, vol. 7 [Waco: Word Books, 1983], 29-32). Rather, though the author may not have included *all* that Rahab stated, he does include what she *did* actually tell the spies (cf. Woudstra, *Book of Joshua*, 73). Indeed, the text states, "Then *Rahab said* to the men..." (Josh 2:9). Furthermore, there is evidence she was still alive when the account was written (6:25).

Canaanite, has acted so benevolently toward the Israelite spies. Rahab's words satisfy such a curiosity.

She begins with, יָדַעְתִּי (‘‘I know’’), in contrast to what she supposedly did not know (יָדַע) in v. 4b.¹¹ There she lied, saying she had no knowledge of where the men had fled, though they laid concealed on her roof. This, however, was because she was utterly convinced that a mighty, loyal God and his army waited just across the waters to the East as observed in the remainder of vv. 9-11. By using יָדַע in this theological context, Rahab means more than a mere reception and report of the facts. Indeed, she intends to communicate her ‘‘active acknowledgement’’ of what the historical and present circumstances imply about Israel's God and his kingdom agenda.¹²

Three object clauses¹³ comprise the content of what Rahab knows. Each one opens with the particle כִּי, the first of which appears alone, while the latter two join themselves to the first with a clausal *wāw*. This places the second and third object clauses

¹¹Richard Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 88.

¹²So Robert G. Boling and G. Ernest Wright, *Joshua: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*. AB, vol. 6 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1982), 146. Cf. George Bush, who notes that Rahab had ‘‘more than a strong suspicion from existing circumstances’’ (*Notes, Critical and Practical on the Book of Joshua* [Minneapolis: Klock and Klock Christian Publishers, 1981 reprint], 36). For similar acknowledgements using יָדַע, see Exod 18:9-10; 1 Kgs 7:24; 2 Kgs 5:15; Job 19:25; Pss 20:6; 135:5; Jon 4:2.

¹³James Muilenburg, ‘‘The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle כִּי in the Old Testament,’’ in *Hearing and Speaking the Word: Selections from the Works of James Muilenburg*, ed. Thomas F. Best (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 217.

after the first without need for subordination,¹⁴ and thus they function at the same level of meaning as the first: this is what Rahab knows.¹⁵

In the first clause Rahab mentions an already prevalent theme in Joshua: יְהוָה אֱתֵּן לָכֶם אֶת הָאָרֶץ (“[I know that] the Lord has given you the Land”). At this point, the Lord has reinforced his patriarchal promise to give Israel the Land through the leadership of Joshua (Josh 1:2, 3, 6, 11, 13, 15). Without question, this promise-filled instruction preceding chapter two only furthers the mission set forth in the Pentateuch—a mission for which a new generation was prepared through Moses.¹⁶ Thus, Rahab’s words are not only consistent with redemptive history, but she herself is sure that nothing will thwart God’s purpose for the Land.

Such a view is further supported by the author’s use of the verb יָתַן (“to give”). Often in Joshua, this verb appears with YHWH for its subject (esp. regarding the gift of the Land),¹⁷ or one of the Lord’s representatives (e.g. Moses or Joshua) carrying out the

¹⁴In other words, there is no hierarchical relationship between the three object clauses. See Eep Talstra, “A Hierarchy of Clauses in Biblical Hebrew Narrative,” in *Narrative Syntax and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Ellen van Wolde (Boston: Brill, 2002), 95-96; *IBHS*, §39.2.1c.

¹⁵This is the only place in the MT where *three* object clauses marked by the particle כִּי immediately follow and modify a verb of perception, though other occurrences function similarly with two (e.g. Exod 4:31; Josh 8:21; Jer 40:11). The alliteration at the beginning of each clause (כִּי-יָתַן) also favors the second and third clauses being conjoined to the first rather than subordinated. These observations go against the LXX, which subordinates the second clause by an explanatory γάρ (“for”).

¹⁶This conclusion concerning the Land promise is rather obvious in the Pentateuch. God promises to give the Land to Abram/Abraham (Gen 12:7; 13:15-17; 15:7, 18; 17:8; cf. Gen 24:7), Isaac (Gen 26:3-4), Jacob (Gen 28:4, 13; 35:12; cf. 48:4), Moses (Exod 33:1; cf. 32:13; Deut 32:52; 34:4), Joshua (Deut 31:7), and the nation of Israel (Exod 23:31; Lev 13:34; 20:24; 25:38; Num 33:53; 34:13; Deut 1:8, 21; 11:25, 31; cf. Exod 12:25; 13:5, 11; Lev 13:34; 23:10; 25:2; 26:6; Num 13:2; 15:2; 32:7; Deut 2:3; 4:1; 6:10; 8:10; 11:17, 29; 12:1; 15:4; 17:14; 18:9; 19:1ff; 26:1ff).

¹⁷Of the eighty-nine occurrences of יָתַן in Joshua, *thirty-eight* have the Lord as its subject (1:2, 3, 6, 11, 13, 15a; 2:9, 14, 24; 5:6; 6:2, 16; 7:7; 8:1, 7, 18; 10:8, 12, 19, 30, 32; 11:6, 8; 18:3; 21:43 [*2], 44; 22:4, 25; 23:13, 15, 16; 24:3, 4 [*2], 8, 11, 13), *thirty-six* of which relate to the Lord giving Israel the Land in some measure (i.e. fifteen involve יְהוָה אֱתֵּן; fourteen involve people[s]; and seven involve cities). Cf. David

action of יָרַד in obedience to him.¹⁸ In these cases, at least two emphases are worth mentioning. First, that the Lord gives the Land away to another party—and in that case, only as a usufruct¹⁹—shows his complete ownership of it. He alone exercises complete sovereignty over who will dwell in or be dispossessed from its borders. Second, that the Lord *gives* the Land to Israel proves his covenant faithfulness to the promises given to the patriarchs (see note 15). Rahab herself acknowledges the first emphasis by the very nature of her confession. Redemptive history, unfolding in the events of chapter two, embraces the second.

What is more, here the author deliberately chooses to use יָרַד in the perfective conjugation, thus stressing that God has already given the Land to Israel even though it is yet to be in their possession.²⁰ As far as Rahab is concerned, the Land is no longer the Canaanites'; it is Israel's. This corresponds with the way the Lord himself speaks of Israel's sure inheritance of the Land (e.g. Gen 15:18; Num 27:12; Deut 1:8; 3:20). Together, these observations show that even Rahab's first words largely affirm the theological message of the entire book of Joshua: God's gift of the Sworn Land to Israel.

In the second object clause, Rahab indicates that she is well acquainted with an intense fear that has brought great trepidation to herself and the inhabitants of Jericho:

M. Howard, Jr., whose numbers vary slightly (*Joshua*, NAC, vol. 5 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998], 78n27).

¹⁸Of the fifty-one other occurrences of יָרַד in Joshua, when YHWH is not the subject, the context explicitly specifies that twenty-five *give* as the Lord's instruments in obedience to his command (9:24, 27; 11:23; 12:6, 7; 13:8, 14, 15, 24, 29, 33; 14:3 [*2]; 15:13; 17:4 [*2]; 19:49, 50; 20:2, 4, 8; 21:2, 3, 8, 9).

¹⁹This fitting term appears in Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 528. There, he cites *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. defining the term as "the legal right of using and enjoying the fruits or profits of something belonging to another" (Ibid., 528n47).

²⁰See GKC, §106*m*.

נִפְלָה אֵימַתְכֶם עָלֵינוּ (“[I know that] your terror has fallen on us”). Something other than Israel—here, a unique terror—has beaten them across the Jordan, spread throughout the countryside, and fallen on the populace at Jericho with terrible force.²¹ Such a terror (אֵימָה) has not gone unmentioned. Indeed, others have voiced (even promised) it before.

After the Israelites stood awestruck at the Lord’s mighty power revealed at the Red Sea against the Egyptians, Moses sang these words in Exodus 15:14-16:

The peoples have heard, they tremble;
 Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia.
 Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;
 The leaders of Moab, trembling grips them;
 All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.
 It falls (נִפְלָה) on them, terror (אֵימָה) and dread;
 Because of the greatness of your arm they are rigid as stone.
 Until your people pass over (עָבַר), O Lord;
 Until the people pass over (עָבַר), whom you have purchased.

In the midst of the overturned chariots of Egypt’s best, Moses declares that *terror* and dread will *fall* upon Philistia, Edom, Moab, and *Canaan*, until the Lord causes his people to pass over, and establishes them on the mountain of his dwelling (Exod 15:17).²² Later, the Lord promises to send his angel before the Israelites in order that he might bring them in to the Land, victorious (23:20-23). Coupled with this, he also promises to send his “terror (אֵימָה) ahead of [Israel], and throw into confusion all the people among whom

²¹I am aware of the pronominal suffix that ascribes this terror to Israel (אֵימַתְכֶם, “your terror”). Nevertheless, due to the portrayal of the Divine Warrior throughout the so-called Hextateuch, and other uses of אֵימָה (esp. Gen 15:12; Exod 15:16; 23:27; Deut 32:35; Job 9:34; 13:21; 20:25; and Jer 50:38), it is better to speak of this term so that though it is ascribed to Israel, it is still able to precede them. In other words, this terror is only associated with them since it stems from who they are in relation to their covenant God who performs mighty deeds on their behalf and before them.

²²Several English translations better highlight the future-looking nature of Exodus 15:14-19: trembling, anguish, dismay, terror, and dread *will* grip the inhabitants of these foreign lands (so HCSB, KJV, NET, NIV). The text anticipates God’s enabling of Israel to “pass over” (עָבַר) particular obstacles upon their entrance into the Promised Land (Sihon [Num 21:23]; esp. the Jordan [Josh 1:2, 11b; 3:1, 14, 16, 17]). Thus, God’s past redemptive events anticipate the fulfillment of his promises to give Israel the Land, and ultimately establish them on Zion. Until then, terror will fill the Land.

[they] come” (23:17; cf. Deut 11:25). For Rahab, Jericho is their next stop. Surely, therefore, what Rahab and the Canaanites have experienced is not a mere emotionalism stirred from within because of some bad conditions. Instead, an outside force has driven them into a severe and overwhelming predicament: they themselves have felt the reverberations of the sheer might of God’s right hand working on behalf of his people.²³

Again, v. 9 shows continuity with the Pentateuch by confirming the Lord’s and Moses’ words through the mouth of a harlot in Canaan. The terror of the God of the Exodus has come into Canaan on behalf of his people. Furthermore, their existing state of terror²⁴ shows that Israel’s work has yet to be complete. The terror has a kingdom purpose: they still must dispossess their enemies from the Land.

The third clause is similar to the second in that it represents the severe condition of the Canaanites: *כָּל-יְשֵׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם* (“[I know that] all the inhabitants of the Land have melted away because of you”). However, whereas the prior focus was on the *objective* terror preceding Israel into Canaan, here Rahab hones in on the *subjective* reaction²⁶ to their impending circumstances. Because of Israel’s previous successes in conquest, all of Canaan melts.²⁷

²³Without question, McCarthy is correct when he says of this terror: “It [אִימָה] describes not subjective fear but the outside force which causes it” (“Some Holy War Vocabulary in Joshua 2,” 230).

²⁴The perfective conjugation of *נפל* (“to fall”) emphasizes their existing condition of terror due to the previous acts of the Lord (cf. GKC, §106g; Joüon, §112e).

²⁵The LXX omits this third clause most likely to prevent a sense of redundancy with the spies’ statement of 2:24. However, if the MT is purposefully emphatic in its repetition of Rahab’s words, then it has the preferred reading.

²⁶McCarthy, “Some Holy War Vocabulary in Joshua 2,” 230.

²⁷Some have argued that the phrase *כָּל-יְשֵׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ* refers only to the *rulers* in the Land (e.g. Hess, *Joshua*, 88n2; Boling and Wright, *Joshua*, 146). Perhaps this is the case when considering the “chiefs” (אֱלֹנָה) and “leaders” (אֵיל) mentioned together with the “inhabitants” (יֹשֵׁב) in Exodus 15:15.

מוג (“to despair, melt”)²⁸ is a unique verb appearing seventeen times in the MT, ten of which relate directly to the awful presence of God’s omnipotent power. He is able just to touch the Land and cause all its inhabitants to melt away with great mourning (Amos 9:5). By the simple utterance of his sovereign voice the mountains quake, the kingdoms of men totter, and the inhabited earth melts (Pss 46:7 [MT 6]; 75:3 [MT 4]; Nah 1:5). By the severe circumstances he creates on the seas, the otherwise-skilled sailors’ courage melts away in their misery (Ps 107:26). Moreover, when the Divine Warrior goes to war in just vengeance against his enemies, they too melt away in fear before him (Exod 15:15; 1 Sam 14:16; Isa 14:31). Thus, Canaan’s people suffer internally from the external effects of the looming onslaught by Israel, as do those who experience the dark clouds and torrential winds before the eye of a hurricane rages ashore.

Readers would do well also to notice the clear intertextuality between this clause, Moses’ song in Exodus 15, and the spy report in Joshua 2:24.

Exod 15:15b	נִמְגוּ כָּל־יְשִׁבֵי כְנָעַן
Josh 2:9c	וְכִי נִמְגוּ כָּל־יְשִׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם
Josh 2:24b	גַּם־ נִמְגוּ כָּל־יְשִׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵינוּ

Like its adjacent clause, this one shows that Moses and Israel not only recalled God’s prior salvific actions on their behalf, but also looked forward to the deliverance and rest he would grant them in the Land. To state it differently, since the day Moses sang his

However, since Rahab has moved from the specific in clause two (i.e. *us* in Jericho) to the general in clause three (i.e. *all* in Canaan), it seems best to interpret יִשָּׁב as all the *peoples* in the Land (so C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 2, trans. James Martin [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978 reprint], 34). Furthermore, Exodus 15 allows for this interpretation (esp. 15:14a, 16a); Numbers 33:52 (cf. 33:55-56) uses the same phrase in this sense; and when considering the subordinate clause in Joshua 2:10, the Gibeonites’ words in Joshua 9:9-10 demand it.

²⁸For “to despair” see HALOT, s.v. “מוג”; “to melt away” see BDB, s.v. “מוג,” esp. §2.

song, (*believing*) Israel has expected the inhabitants of Canaan to melt away upon their arrival. Moreover, the Lord promised to do so (e.g. Deut 2:25). Rahab's words to the spies, therefore, confirm their forty-year-old song. According to his steadfast love (cf. Ps 136:10-22), the Lord's terror has indeed shaken the land and caused great despair among all the people. Even the two spies recognize the covenant significance of this report and strengthen Israel with Rahab's words concerning the faithfulness of God: "Surely the Lord has given all the Land into our hands" (Josh 2:24; cf. 1:2).

Verse 10 commences with the fourth כִּי clause of Rahab's confession; however, this one functions differently from the previous three by lacking the clausal $w\bar{a}w$. It is subordinate, therefore, to the third object clause (see above) and serves as a logical conjunction²⁹ that emphatically introduces an explanatory clause, elaborating how Rahab and Canaan are personally acquainted with such God-wrought circumstances. Quickly, the reader finds that Rahab knows because she and others have heard³⁰ (שָׁמְעוּ) some news.

Two secondary clauses following the *nota accusativi* (אֲשֶׁר) disclose this distinct "news". They are both marked by the first two (of the four) relative particles אֲשֶׁר —the second joining itself to the first by a clausal $w\bar{a}w$ —and act as object clauses subordinated³¹ to the main verb (שָׁמְעוּ) in v. 10.³²

²⁹*IBHS*, §39.3.4*e*.

³⁰In this case, שָׁמְעוּ should be taken as a persistent perfective ("we *have* heard;" contra NET), emphasizing an action which happened in the past (i.e. a hearing of the Lord's mighty deeds), the effects of which still linger (i.e. their fear and trembling). See *IBHS*, §30.5.1*c* for the persistent perfective.

³¹Concerning the use of the relative marker אֲשֶׁר when governed by אֲשֶׁר see *IBHS* §10.3.1*a*; GKC, §157*c*. The clauses are *both* subordinated to the main verb (in the explanatory clause), because of אֲשֶׁר plus a transitive verb (GKC, §117*a*). Regarding the transitivity of verbs denoting mental perception see *IBHS*, §22.2.3*b* (i.e. the *verb cordis* in GKC, §157*a*).

In the first one, Rahab confesses they heard the report of Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea by the hand of YHWH: אֲשֶׁר־הוֹבִישׁ יְהוָה אֶת־מֵי יַם־סוּף מִפְּנֵיכֶם (“[for we heard] how the Lord caused the waters of the Red Sea to dry up before you”). The *hiph ‘il* stem of יבש (“to dry up”)³³ signifies causation and highlights God's sovereignty over the waters. He forced (or caused) the waters to become participants³⁴ in the formation of two heaps through which Israel passed on dry ground, and the collapse of which brought Pharaoh's army to its destruction. The Lord fought, while Israel kept silent (Exod 14:14).

News of this mighty feat reaching Canaan is a direct fulfillment of the Lord's purpose to make his name known in all the earth through the Exodus events, especially the Red Sea finale.³⁵ Because of the Exodus, God's power and the glory of his name manifest themselves in Canaan, and consequently, cause great fear. At the same time, however, the Lord's mighty acts are not divorced from what they do to save his people. The reputation of *both* spreads throughout the earth. Thus, the narrator also includes, from Rahab's words, this temporal clause: מִבְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם³⁶ (“when you went out from

³²Since אֵל is not attached to the first אֲשֶׁר with a *maqṣep*, it is even more likely that it governs both object clauses. This exact grammatical construction only occurs here and in Numbers 22:6 (without *wāw* on second אֲשֶׁר, see 1 Sam 28:9; 1 Kgs 2:5).

³³Though this is the first time יבש appears in association with God's work at the Red Sea (so also Hess, *Joshua*, 89), Exodus still says the Lord “made the sea flow back” (הִלָּךְ) so that the sons of Israel went into the midst of the sea *on dry ground* (בִּיבֹשָׁה) (Exod 14:21-22, 29).

³⁴For this specific use of the *hiph ‘il* see *IBHS*, §27.1e.

³⁵God wanted his covenant name revealed not only to Pharaoh (Exod 7:17; 8:10; 9:29), or to the Egyptians (7:5; 14:4, 17, 18; cf. 8:19; 9:20, 27; 10:7), or to the Hebrews (6:6-7; 10:1-2), but to the ends of the earth (9:16; 15:14-15; cf. Num 14:14-16, 20). God designed Israel's deliverance as well as Pharaoh's and Sihon's obstinacy (Exod 9:16; Deut 2:30) so that in events like the Red Sea and the taking of the Amorite territory (see below) he might display his power and reveal his name. Cf. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 128.

³⁶An early manuscript and the LXX include מֵאֶרֶץ (“from the land”), a phrase appearing quite often to explain Israel's deliverance (e.g. Lev 11:45; Num 15:41; Deut 6:12). Nevertheless, since the addition expresses what is already implied by the MT, the shorter reading is preferred.

Egypt”).³⁷ These words link the Sea event with the entire Exodus, especially the deliverance *from Egypt*. YHWH’s fame, therefore, is not merely to work terror in the people, but also to ensure other nations are aware that this terror precedes a people *in covenant* with him.³⁸ He achieved their freedom from slavery in Egypt, and he *will* again, in faithfulness to his covenant, fight for them in Canaan.

In the second, and notably longer, object clause, Rahab takes more time to describe a more recent redemptive act of YHWH’s, the devotion of the Amorite kings to destruction. Within this secondary clause, the preposition לְ sets off two parallel, datival phrases which mark the goal of the verbal action, as shown below (cf. Josh 9:10).³⁹

וְאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָם ←
 לְשְׁנֵי מְלָכֵי הָאֲמֹרִי ←
 אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן ←
 לְסִיחֹן וְלִעֹג ←
 אֲשֶׁר הִחְרַמְתָּם אוֹתָם

Canaan has melted away because they heard “what [Israel]⁴⁰ did *to* the two kings of the Amorites, who were beyond the Jordan, *to* Sihon and Og,⁴¹ whom [they] devoted to destruction.”

³⁷Concerning this temporal use of the infinitive construct, see *IBHS*, §36.2.2*b*.

³⁸I make this note to clarify that in the Exodus narratives (e.g. plagues, Red Sea) God is not out just to destroy people. The context of Exodus 3:10-17 show that he is indeed rescuing Abraham’s seed, Israel, in order to make his *covenant* name (יְהוָה) known. God is not only placing fear in the hearts of people, such as the Canaanites, but also associating his name with the salvation and deliverance of his covenant people (cf. Deut 20:4), something Rahab and the Gibeonites apparently grasp (Josh 2:9-11; 9:1-27). Thus, the fear of the Lord is surely to be associated with the one who is mighty to save. This is consistent with the testimony of the OT (e.g. Exod 20:24; 1 Kgs 8:16; Isa 48:9; Jer 16:21; Ezek 20:14; 36:23; Mal 1:11).

³⁹See *IBHS*, §11.2.10*d*. A conjunctive *wāw* precedes the third preposition לְ, and, therefore, functions in the same manner as the second. Thus, I treat לְעֹג on the same line with לְסִיחֹן.

⁴⁰The LXX uses the third singular here: καὶ ὅσα ἐποίησεν (“what *he* [the Lord] did”); however, since the context implies this is what God did through Israel, the MT should be the primary reading.

⁴¹Only Sihon receives the title as an Amorite king in Numbers 21:21-35. Deuteronomy, however, clarifies that Sihon was king of Heshbon (Deut 2:26), while Og was king of Bashan (Deut 3:1),

Compared to her statement about the Red Sea, the repetition here is quite noticeable as Rahab moves from the general reference of two kings to naming them and describing their terrible fate. This particularization tells the reader more than just the facts; it emphasizes that Israel is on Canaan's, even Jericho's(!), back doorstep. Their doom is near. The Red Sea did not stop the Divine Warrior's conquest on behalf of his chosen, nor did the mighty armies of Sihon (Num 21:27-30; Deut 3:26-37; Ps 135:10-11), nor the sixty fortified cities of Og (Num 21:33-35; Deut 3:1-7). Surely, the Jordan and Jericho would be no match for him and Israel either. All the inhabitants of the Land knew this, and thus, trembled.

Rahab reiterates the effects of this divine conquest in v. 11 when she states, *וְנִשְׁמַע וַיִּמָּס לְבָבֵנוּ וְלֹא-קָמָה עוֹד רוּחַ בְּאִישׁ מִפְּנֵיכֶם* (“when we heard [these reports] our heart⁴² was melted, and no spirit remained in any man because of you”). Three observations are worth mentioning. First, the opening verb in this sentence, *שָׁמַע*, is the same verb that commences v. 10 (following *כִּי*). It coordinates with the second verb, *מָס* (“to melt”), and acts as a temporal clause⁴³ to illustrate the people's reaction *upon* hearing the widespread rumors outlined in v. 10.

Second, *מָס* appears only twenty-two times in the MT, and fourteen of these are in contexts of human or divine conquest. Great armies may cause the knees of mighty

and both ruled over large regions of the Amorite territory (Deut 3:2, 8; cf. Num 22:2). This would explain why the author of Joshua sees the entire region east of the Jordan as Amorite territory (Josh 9:10; 24:8).

⁴²Though the pronominal suffix attached to *לְבָב* (“heart”) is plural, the substantive itself is singular. Translated as such emphasizes that these conditions apply to Canaan as a whole (so Bush, *Notes*, 37; contra ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV, RSV). In other words, even with all troops united against the Lord and his people, Canaan still melts (cf. Deut 1:28; Josh 5:1).

⁴³Regarding two coordinate imperfect consecutives, see GKC, §111*d*.

warriors to knock (Nah 2:10 [MT 11]), hearts to become as water (Deut 1:28; Josh 7:5), and spirits to grow faint (Deut 20:8; 2 Sam 17:10; cf. Ps 22:14 [MT 15]); but O how much more these intensify when the Divine Warrior⁴⁴ goes forth in battle array (Josh 5:1; Ps 112:10; Isa 13:7; 19:1; cf. Isa 10:18), with sword drawn from his sheath (Ezek 21:7; cf. Josh 5:13-15)! Indeed, both his enemies and mountains melt like wax before fire (Pss 68:2 [MT 3]; 97:5; Mic 1:4; Isa 34:3; cf. Deut 9:3). By using a verb that is synonymous with *נָוַו* of v. 9c, Rahab moves backwards—now from cause (v. 10) to result (v. 11a-b)—to reemphasize the “liquefied” condition of Canaan’s heart.⁴⁵

Third, the third verb, *קָוַו* (“to rise, stand”), complements the second (noted by the consecutive *wāw*), and begins another clause that further elucidates what it means for the nation as a whole (see note 38) to melt before their opponents: literally, “and there did not stand a spirit in a man any longer.”⁴⁶ In other words, nothing remained in anyone of that which may have provided the slightest courage to defend their homeland and protect their inheritance. Their entire being quailed utterly because of Israel’s might and their now-neighboring presence just beyond the Jordan.

Together, these three observations show the first portion of v. 11 to be a summary statement that recaps vv. 9-10. At the larger-narrative level, her brief synopsis

⁴⁴See also McCarthy, who observes, “Theophany and the terrible coming of the divine warrior have much in common” (“Some Holy War Vocabulary in Joshua 2,” 230).

⁴⁵Some have argued for a chiasmic structure to vv. 9-11 (e.g. Hess, *Joshua*, 89; David Merling, “Rahab: The Woman Who Fulfilled the Word of the Lord,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 41.1 (2003): 41). These attempts, however, seem incomplete. According to this exegesis, vv. 9-11 could be arranged as so: 2:9a (A); 2:9b (B); 2:9c (C); 2:10 (D); 2:11a (C`); 2:11b (B`); 2:11c (A`). Still, linking 2:9a with 2:11c is quite a stretch to be called a genuine chiasm.

⁴⁶At all nine places a *לֹא־וַיִּפְעַל* + perfect-verb + *וַיִּפְעַל* construction appears following a *consecutive* imperfect, both the ESV and NASB agree in translating the verb as past tense and the adverb (*וַיִּפְעַל*) as the negated element (Gen 38:26; Josh 2:11; 5:12; Judg 2:14; 1 Sam 7:13; 28:15; 2 Sam 2:28; 2 Kgs 6:23; Ezek 33:22). Cf. *IBHS*, §39.3.1*h-i*, and example 1 in §39.3.2*a*.

reflects the panic-stricken condition of Canaan’s citizens and its mighty armies (cf. Deut 9:1-2) due to the *history* of Israel and their God. Yet, their lasting fear also points out that their own day of destruction awaits them, and therefore, anticipates YHWH’s *future* actions on behalf of the covenant people.

Rahab not only experiences the effects of the former, and expects the latter, but also “in the application of [this intelligence, goes] far beyond her countrymen.”⁴⁷ Indeed, due to the terrifying reports sent mercifully in advance to Jericho, she embraces Israel’s God by faith. The next clause, set off by the asseverative use of כִּי,⁴⁸ makes this unmistakably clear: כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת (“for indeed the Lord, your God, he [is] God in heaven above and on the earth below”).

This confession is nearly a direct quotation of Moses’ words in Deuteronomy 4:39, and has theological links with its broader context, as shown below.

Deut 4:35	אֵין עוֹד	הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים	כִּי יְהוָה
Deut 4:39	אֵין עוֹד	הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת	כִּי יְהוָה
Josh 2:11		אֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת	כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא

There, Moses encourages Israel to maintain covenant fidelity not merely by rehearsing their history (Deut 4:1-31), but more so by stressing the faithfulness of the *only* personal, covenant-making, promise-sustaining God in the entire universe (4:32-39). According to Moses, YHWH, who has delivered them from Egypt (4:37), and driven out the (Amorite) nations before them (4:38), is going to give them the Land because he owns it (4:39-40).

⁴⁷John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of Joshua*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003 reprint), 51. This illustrates what K. M. Campbell calls “the grand principle”. That is, “...when YHWH leads his people in battle, only two reactions are possible: (a) rejection of his claims and consequent defeat and destruction; (b) the obedience and submission of faith” (“Rahab’s Covenant: A Short Note on Joshua ii 9-21,” *VT* 22 [1972]: 244). The latter distinguishes Rahab from the rest of Canaan.

⁴⁸See Muilenburg, “Usages of the Particle כִּי,” 218; cf. *IBHS*, §39.3.1*d*.

Rahab knows and confesses the same,⁴⁹ because she is aware that (1) the Lord owns the Land and is giving it into the hands of Israel (2:9a); (2) that he aims to deliver Israel and fight on their behalf (Josh 2:10); (3) that he is already greatly to be feared among the nations (2:9c, 11a); (4) that the owner of the cosmos relates personally (אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, “*your God*”) and redemptively with Israel; and (5) that he is in fact *God* (2:11c). She is, therefore, no ordinary Canaanitess. This woman abandons all other gods⁵⁰ and exercises genuine faith in the one true God of heaven and earth.⁵¹

Considering the narrative of Deuteronomy to Joshua, therefore, her words announce for Israel the fulfillment of YHWH’s previous promises and confirm he is true to his word.⁵² Moreover, they anticipate the Lord’s future grace and justice working on behalf of his covenant people. Yes, he *delivered* Israel from slavery in Egypt, and *defeated* the Amorite kings; but he *is going* to give them the Land flowing with milk and honey, starting with Jericho.

Rahab’s Entreaty for Deliverance (2:12-13)

⁴⁹With so much language reflecting the Deuteronomist, some argue that this confession does not belong to Rahab. Instead, it supports the theological agenda of the later editor (see note 9). These arguments, however, stem from a misunderstanding of the *nature* of biblical narrative. That the OT authors/editors constructed a text in order to persuade men theologically does not mean it is any less historically accurate. See, e.g., C. Hassell Bullock, “History and Theology: The Tale of Two Histories,” in *Giving the Sense: Understanding and Using Old Testament Historical Texts*, ed. David M. Howard, Jr. and Michael A. Grisanti (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 97-111; Waltke, *Old Testament Theology*, 93-112.

⁵⁰The Scripture attests that the Canaanites worshiped many gods (e.g. Exod 23:24, 32-33; 34:15; Deut 11:16, 28; 12:2-3, 30-31).

⁵¹Some argue that Rahab is not a true “convert” to the faith of true Israel, but still a foreigner who fails to renounce her polytheism (so Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 37), or one who merely acknowledges God’s evident power no more than other pagan characters in Scripture, such as a Balaam, Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, or Darius (so Nelson, *Joshua*, 50). However, the NT apostles infer that Rahab exercised genuine faith as opposed to the “disobedient” in Canaan (Heb 11:31), and accomplished works that would validate such justifying faith (Jam 2:25).

⁵²Merling, “Rahab,” 40.

Since Rahab knows Israel's God (2:11c), and that his kingdom is soon to erupt on Canaan (2:9-11b), she *then* (and thus *by faith*) entreats (אָנָּן) the spies to deal with her and her household loyally in vv. 12-13. וְעַתָּה ("and now") marks this transition from confession to petition, yet also maintains all that has occurred in the previous context (2:4-11).⁵³ That is, the shift to entreaty does not forget her previous deeds and acknowledgements. Respectively, it stems from her own acts of loyalty shown to the spies and faith in Israel's covenant God who, though terrible, mercifully saves (see note 35).

Her request begins with an oath formula: הִשָּׁבְעוּ-נָא לִי בַיהוָה ("swear to me by the Lord"). As observed from similar words expressed by Israel's leaders regarding the Gibeonites, people took this convention quite seriously (Josh 9:18-19).⁵⁴ Once sworn, breaking the oath to the detriment of the opposite party would in fact provoke the wrath of God (9:20). Doubtless, Rahab makes certain this proposal will be unforgettable in the midst of Israel's conquest (cf. 6:17).

Then, lest there be any question in the spies' minds of this Canaanite's right to covenant with them, and more so to encourage their agreement with her, she underscores her previous loyalty to them: כִּי-עָשִׂיתִי עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד ("since⁵⁵ I have treated you loyally"). The term חֶסֶד ("kindness, steadfast love, loyalty"), often associated with God's unfailing covenant loyalty (e.g. Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; 7:12), is at times used to explain strong

⁵³A gloss may be rendered, "And now (that you know these things), swear to me by the Lord." See the use of וְעַתָּה *IBHS*, §39.3.4*f*.

⁵⁴Howard, *Joshua*, 105.

⁵⁵For the causal use of the particle כִּי see *IBHS*, §38.4*a*.

relational aspects on the human plane.⁵⁶ Though Rahab has yet to receive חֶסֶד from the spies, she herself has shown חֶסֶד to them—by hiding them (2:4), lying to the king’s men (2:5), and planning an escape route (2:15-16). Her loyalty, therefore, is to Israel, *not Canaan*. By working for the spies’ welfare, Rahab shows her willingness to sacrifice for the sake of YHWH’s kingdom and his covenant community.

On this basis, she continues with the formulation of the spies’ (and thus Israel’s) commitments, should they agree: וְעִשִּׂיתֶם גַּם־אִתָּם עִם־בֵּית אָבִי חֶסֶד (“that you also will treat my father’s house loyally”). The Scripture provides evidence of oaths made that are similar to Rahab’s in that they include (1) at least two human parties, (2) a vow to the Lord, (3) the preservation of life, and (4) familial implications (Gen 21:23; Josh 9:18-19; 1 Sam 24:21 [MT 22]; 28:10; 30:15; cf. 1 Kgs 2:8). Thus, using the conventions of her time,⁵⁷ Rahab makes this an oath of fealty, which includes her father’s household, encompassing those listed in v. 13 (“[Rahab’s] father, mother, brothers, sisters, and *all who belong to them*”). If they agree, Israel must return חֶסֶד to all of these members by keeping them alive (חַיָּה), and as a result, saving (נִצַּל) their lives from death (2:13). She will be assured of this, however, only if the spies accept the oath and grant her a “trustworthy sign” (אֹת אֱמֻנָה).

⁵⁶See D. A. Baer and R. P. Gordon, “חֶסֶד,” *NIDOTTE*, 2:211-18. Refer additionally to the passages where the verb עָשָׂה appears with חֶסֶד when two human parties are involved (Gen 47:29; Judg 1:24; 8:35; Ruth 1:8; 1 Sam 15:6; 2 Sam 3:8; 9:7; 10:2; 1 Kgs 2:7; 1 Chr 19:2).

⁵⁷This conclusion challenges Zakovitch, who views Rahab’s oath as merely a smooth, calculating move to save her family by taking advantage of the spies’ desperate situation (“Humor and Theology,” 90). See Frank Moore Cross, “A Response to Zakovitch’s ‘Successful Failure of Israelite Intelligence,’” in *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore*, ed. Susan Niditch (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 103. For more on how oaths of fealty would function in tribal societies built around kinship obligations see Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 3-21.

By framing this oath, Rahab proves she owns that faith, which knows that *God is* and that he *rewards* those who seek him (Heb 11:6). In vv. 12-13, she speaks to the spies as if the Land is already theirs for the taking. Her oath, though made in her present predicament, looks forward to a coming day when Jericho will be deservingly judged, but she and her father's household undeservingly saved, by finding a place in the covenant people under YHWH's care. Rahab's words in vv. 12-13, therefore, show great continuity with the anticipation of conquest and the covenant faithfulness of the Lord highlighted in vv. 9-11.⁵⁸

The Spies' Oath to Rahab (2:14)

The final verse of this roof scene includes the spies' positive rejoinder to the terms set forth in Rahab's oath.⁵⁹ With a brief introductory declaration, they make themselves liable to Rahab's *and her family's* deliverance, even willing to face death if any ill thing were to befall them in devoting Jericho to destruction: נַפְשֵׁנוּ תַחְתִּיכֶם לְמוֹת (‘‘Our life for yours [pl.], *even*⁶⁰ to death’’). Nevertheless, they will only carry out their commitments if Rahab⁶¹ meets the inserted condition;⁶² namely, she must not tell anyone of the spies' reconnaissance efforts.

⁵⁸Cf. Woudstra, *Joshua*, 73.

⁵⁹The *wāw* consecutive with the imperfect verb אָנַח continues the dialogue that began with Rahab's confession in v. 9 (וְהִיאֲמַר).

⁶⁰For the asseverative element in the particle לְ, see John Huehnergard, ‘‘Asseverative *la and Hypothetical *lu/law in Semitic,’’ *JAOS* 103.3 (1983): 591-92.

⁶¹Although the MT uses the second person, masculine, plural ending on נַח in its *hiph'il* stem, multiple manuscripts, Origin's ‘‘fifth column,’’ and the Vulgate all suggest the feminine, singular form. The spies do put their lives on the line for *all* Rahab's household in the preceding declaration; however, the feminine singular pronominal suffix attached to preposition אֵל in the *apodosis*, the feminine singular (תִּנְיִיךְ) in v. 20, and the absence of any other characters in this dialogue seem to go against the MT. The primary reading, therefore, should refer *only* to Rahab keeping silent (contra Butler, *Joshua*, 27).

Should she maintain loyalty to Israel and fulfill this demand, the consequences will be sweet. The apodosis makes these rather plain in two main parts: (1) an adverbial expression that assumes the Lord will give Israel the Land soon (בְּתַת־יְהוָה לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ), “when the Lord gives us the Land”); and (2) a promise that ensures her the blessing of deliverance upon Israel’s conquest against Jericho (וְעָשִׂינוּ עִמָּךְ חֶסֶד וְאַמֻּת), “we will treat you loyally and trustworthily”).⁶³ Both parts not only reaffirm Rahab’s earlier confirmations, but also display the spies’ own anticipation of the outworking of God’s faithfulness on behalf of his people—those in wait across the Jordan, and this one here in Canaan. Surely, then, by these words Rahab receives her “trustworthy sign”.

Though some have argued that the spies’ agreement with this *Canaanite* woman is in direct disobedience to the Mosaic Law,⁶⁴ the Law itself suggests otherwise by allowing room for the alien, who seeks blessing through the Lord and his assembly (Lev 24:16; Num 15:14-29; Deut 10:16-22; 23:7; 27:19; 31:12). In Waltke’s words,

The Rahab incident sharpens the hermeneutical point that the Primary History [Genesis-Kings] includes both Mosaic law and Israel’s subsequent history. In this case, the latter shows that *hesed* has priority over *herem*, or as James puts it: “Mercy triumphs over judgment!” (James 1:23).⁶⁵

Moreover, the accounts given in the preceding verses suggest this woman has ceased being a Canaanite. Her loyalty is now with Israel and her faith in their God, portraying

⁶²The particle אִם (“if”) marks the protasis of the conditional sentence, while the apodosis begins with the following הִיא + הִיא construction (“then it shall be”) (contra KJV, NASB).

⁶³This second portion of the apodosis serves as a “dependent consequential situation *in future time* after an adverbial expression” (*IBHS*, §33.2.4*a*; emphasis mine). That their words emphasize future time is made clear by (1) the nature of the conditional sentence, (2) the use of הִיא (IBHS, §32.2.6*b*), and (3) the use of the *w-qatalti* form following הִיא (Joüon, §119*c*).

⁶⁴Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 86.

⁶⁵Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 516.

nothing less than the outworking of the Abrahamic covenant to include all nations (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 28:14; cf. Matt 1:1-18; Gal 3:8).

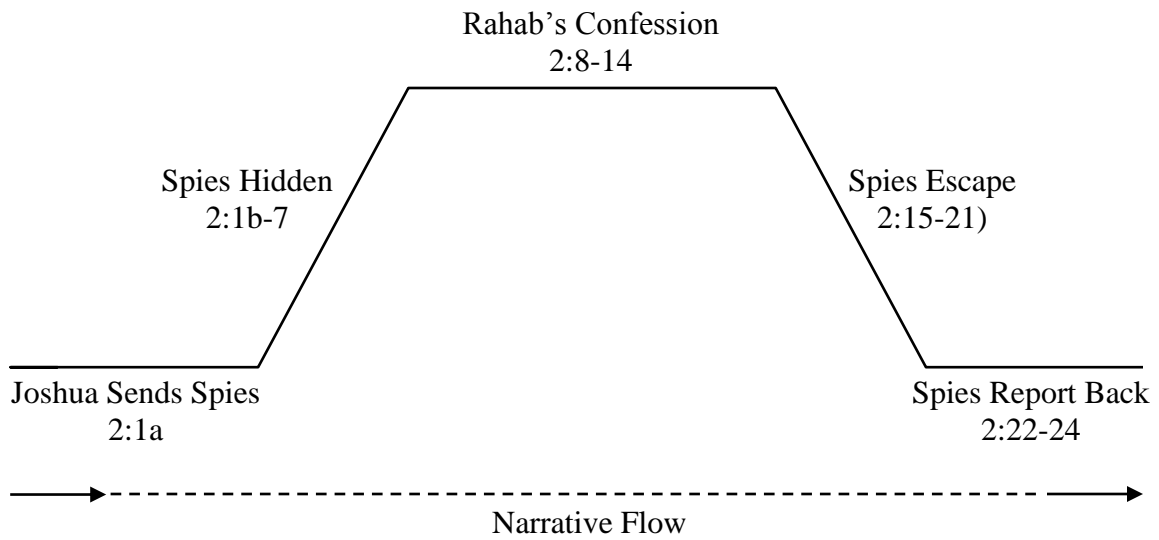
Conclusion

Thus, from the scene narrated in Joshua 2:8-14, covenant confirmation and conquest anticipation saturate Rahab's vocal interaction with the Israelite spies. Her words confirm God's covenant faithfulness in that they show a remarkable continuity with the patriarchal promises repeated throughout the Pentateuch, and in that they provide evidence of the Lord's mighty, redemptive deeds to bring those promises to their appropriate fulfillment. Her words anticipate the conquest of the Divine Warrior and his people in that they assume (1) the Land is already Israel's; (2) the destruction of Jericho is near; and (3) the Lord may still extend his mercy to the alien who trusts him. Together, these two chief observations teach that this spy story reveals more than just a harlot's testimony, but verifies that God's purpose to establish his kingdom will not fail.

By reading such narratives, therefore, covenant readers can value God's past faithfulness to carry out redemptive history on their behalf, and simultaneously look forward to his future grace in causing the kingdom to irrupt in fullness at the Parousia of the NT's *Yeshua*, "Jesus the Messiah, the son of David [the son of Boaz of Salmon and *Rahab*], the son of Abraham" (Matt 1:1, 5) (see Appendix 2).

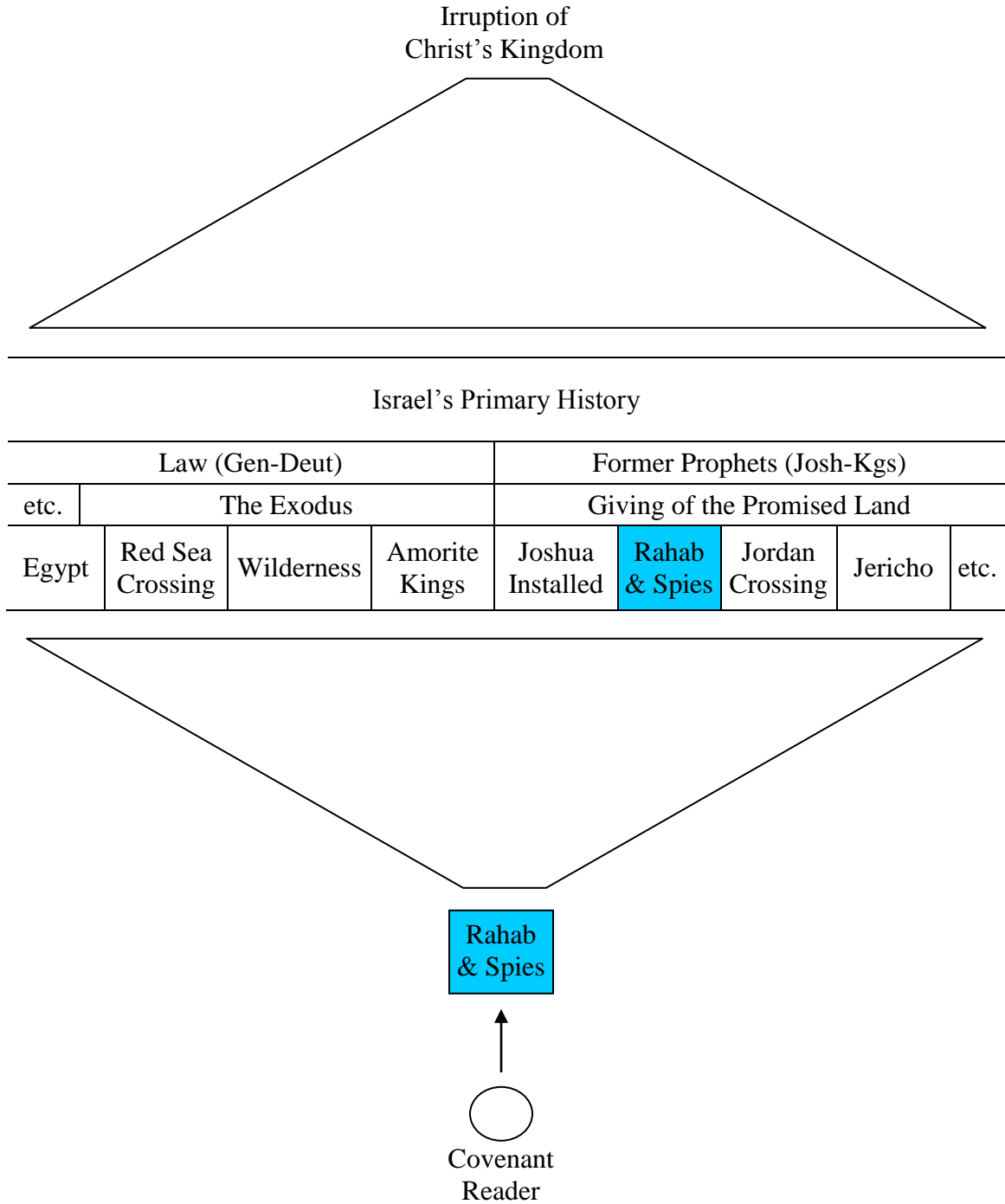
APPENDIX 1

Plot Analysis of Joshua 2:1-24



APPENDIX 2

Diagram of the Function of Joshua 2:8-14 for Covenant Readers



APPENDIX 3

Diagram of Joshua 2:8-14

8	וְהָמָּה טָרַם יִשְׁכַּבּוּן וְהִיא עָלְתָה עֲלֵיהֶם עַל-הַגֵּג
9a	וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל-הָאֲנָשִׁים יְדַעְתִּי
9b	כִּי-נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְכִי-נִפְלְאָה אִימַתְכֶם עָלֵינוּ
9c	וְכִי נִמְגַּו כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם
10	כִּי שָׁמַעְנוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-הוֹבִישׁ יְהוָה אֶת־מִי יַסּוּף מִפְּנֵיכֶם בְּצִאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם וְאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם לְשָׁנֵי מַלְכֵי הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר בַּעֲבַר הַיַּרְדֵּן לְסִיחָן וּלְעוֹג אֲשֶׁר הִחְרַמְתֶּם אוֹתָם
11a	וְנִשְׁמַע וַיִּמַּס לְבַבְנוּ
11b	וְלֹא-קָמָה עוֹד רוּחַ בְּאִישׁ מִפְּנֵיכֶם
11c	כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהִים בְּשָׂמִים מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת
12	וַעֲתָה הִשְׁבַּע־נָא לִי בִיהוָה כִּי-עָשִׂיתִי עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד וְעָשִׂיתֶם גַּם-אִתָּם עִם-בֵּית אָבִי חֶסֶד וְנָתַתֶּם לִי אוֹת אֱמֶת
13	וְאֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לְהִסּוֹהֲחִיתֶם אֶת-אָבִי וְאֶת-אִמִּי וְאֶת-אֲחֹתִי וְהִצַּלְתֶּם אֶת-נַפְשֹׁתֵינוּ מִמּוֹת
14	וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהּ הָאֲנָשִׁים נִפְשָׁנוּ תַחְתִּיכֶם לְמוֹת אִם לֹא תִגִּידוּ אֶת-דְּבָרֵנוּ זֶה וְהָיָה בְּתַת־יְהוָה לָנוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְעָשִׂינוּ עִמָּךְ חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת

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