

BY FAITH . . . RAHAB

Sunday Morning: May 5, 2002

Text: Hebrews 11:31 "By faith the harlot **Rahab** perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."

We have been studying in Hebrews chapter eleven the cloud of witnesses who lived by faith. Their witness to us was that living by faith was a good thing. They were convinced that this was the way to please God. We can learn the same lesson from their testimony.

In our study we are going to be looking at the life of Rahab and the blessing her family received because they trusted the God of Israel for their future.

This verse tells us that Rahab did not perish with all those that believed that Jericho could not be defeated by Israel. Because she received the spies with peace she was allowed to enjoy the blessings of the land flowing with milk and honey. The children of Israel that left Egypt who were twenty and older believed not. They did not perish at Jericho. They perished in the wilderness. What a contrast between Rahab and her family and those who perished in the wilderness and at Jericho because of unbelief.

REMINDER

1 Corinthians 10:11 "Now all **these things happened** unto them (Israel) for **ensamples** [τοπος, types]: and they are written for our **admonition** [rebuke, warning], upon whom the ends of the world [ages] are come."

We are living at the end of the ages and the study of what happened to the nation of Israel is very significant. What happened to the nation of Israel from Egypt to Canaan paints some vivid pictures for us of the consequences of living a rebellious life before the Lord. The Lord recorded in His Word what happened to Israel so that we could be warned, rebuked and admonished to do those things that are pleasing to Him, like believing what He says is true.

LAW VERSUS GRACE

John 1:17 "For the **law** (wilderness) was given by Moses, but **grace** (in the land) and truth came by Jesus Christ."

When Israel passed through the Jordan river this was a new beginning for them. Egypt and the wilderness were behind them. The conquest of Canaan, the preferred inheritance, was before them. After they crossed Jordan, many things changed. They went from living under the law to living a life of grace based on truth. In the wilderness Moses had given Israel the ten commandments as well as the ceremonial law. In Canaan Israel served and fought under grace and truth and not the law. Hopefully, we will see this unfold as we study the life of Rahab.

I associate the conquest of Canaan with the period in which we live. Our spiritual battles are not flesh and blood but principalities and powers in heavenly places.

CHANGE OF COMMAND

Deuteronomy 34:9 "And **Joshua** the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for **Moses** had **laid his hands upon him**: and the children of **Israel hearkened unto him**, and did as the LORD commanded Moses."

Here we have the change of command. God had equipped Joshua with the spirit of wisdom. When Moses placed his hand on Joshua, Joshua became the new leader of the nation of Israel.

CHANGE IN THE PRIESTHOOD

Deuteronomy 10:6 ". . . Aaron died, . . . and **Eleazar** his son **ministered** in the **priest's** office in **his stead**."

Not only was there a change in command there was a change in the priesthood. Aaron was the high priest in the wilderness and Eleazar would be the high priest in the conquest of the land of Canaan. Before the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead the saved lived under the Aaronic priesthood. Since the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the saved live under the Melchisedecian priesthood.

PRIEST OF GOOD THINGS TO COME

Numbers 34:17 "These are the names of the men which shall **divide the land** unto you: **Eleazar** the priest, and **Joshua** the son of Nun."

Joshua and Eleazar, the priest, would divide the land as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. Remember that under Moses and Aaron the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh received their inheritance in the wilderness. These tribes received their inheritance under the law. Their inheritance was close to the land flowing with milk and honey, but it was not in the land flowing with milk and honey. It was not the best inheritance, that is the point.

INHERITANCE

Hebrews 9:11 "But **Christ** being come an **high priest** of **good things to come**, . . ."

Just as Eleazar divided the good land to the rest of the tribes of Israel, Christ, our high priest, will divide the good things to come. The inheritance, good things to come, is called "the spoil" in Isaiah 53:12 that will be divided with the strong.

In type, Eleazar became the high priest of good things to come, the inheritance in the good land.

CHANGE IN LAW

Hebrews 7:12 "For the **priesthood** being **changed**, there is made of **necessity a change also of the law.**"

Here in Hebrews 7:12 we see that when there is a change in the priesthood there must be a change also in the law. When the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River there was a change in the law.

SABBATH NOT OBSERVED

Joshua 6:4 "And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and **the seventh day** ye shall **compass the city seven times**, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets."

Here we see that the law of the Sabbath was changed temporarily. In Exodus 35:2-3 "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. 3. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day." we see that no work was to be done. Here in Joshua 6:4 we find the children of Israel working on the Sabbath by walking around the city and then killing their enemies.

The observing of the Sabbath was set aside temporarily. The keeping of the Sabbath is not taught in the New Testament. Jesus worked on the Sabbath when he healed the sick. Jesus' disciples were accused of working on the Sabbath when they harvested grain on the Sabbath because they were hungry in Matthew 12:1,2. Jesus told the Pharisees that He was the Lord of the Sabbath in verse 8. Keep in mind the shadow of things to come in Colossians 2:16-17 "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: 17. Which are a shadow of things to come. . ."

Not only was the observing of the Sabbath suspended, the services of the tabernacle was also suspended until after the conquest was over.

TABERNACLE SERVICE SUSPENDED

Joshua 18:1 "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and **set up the tabernacle** of the congregation there. And **the land was subdued** before them."

When did the nation of Israel start using the tabernacle in the land? The tabernacle was set up in Shiloh after the land was subdued. The ceremonial law was not practiced while they were fighting the enemy and subduing the land.

Did they worship the Lord while they were fighting the enemy? Yes, they did worship the Lord.

ALTAR OF STONES

Joshua 8:30-31 "Then Joshua **built an altar** unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, 31. . . an altar **of whole stones**, . . and they offered thereon **burnt offerings** unto the LORD, and sacrificed **peace offerings**."

They worshipped the Lord by offering burnt offers and peace offerings on altars of stone. This was the way that Abraham worshipped in his day. Genesis 12:7 "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an **altar** unto the LORD, who appeared unto him." Abraham did not use a tabernacle to worship the Lord. There was not a brazen altar nor a priest to take Abraham's sacrifice.

The last place that the tabernacle had been set up was in the wilderness just before they crossed Jordan. Deuteronomy 31:15 "And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle."

ONLY TWO WOMEN IN HEBREWS 11

Hebrews 11:11 "Through [by] **faith** also **Sara** herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, . . ."

It is interesting to note that there are only two women are mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and they are Sara and Rahab. What is noteworthy is that Sara lived without the law of Moses as Rahab did until the enemy was defeated.

RAHAB WAS A HARLOT

Joshua 2:1 "And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim **two men to spy** secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an **harlot's house**, named **Rahab**, and lodged [lay] there."

Joshua sent out two spies to view the land as well as Jericho. This was a secret mission so they used the best cover in Jericho to keep their mission a secret. They went into the house of Rahab, the harlot. The house of Rahab must have been a brothel and men going into her house would be inconspicuous.

It is a shame that each time we read about Rahab we are reminded that she was a harlot. She could not shake the title. It should be an encouragement to us that we can sink pretty low and yet be blessed by God and also to be able to be a blessing to others.

LIED ABOUT THE SPIES

Joshua 2:4 "And the woman took the two men, and **hid them**, and said thus, There came men unto me, but **I wist not whence they were:**"

Rahab had to lie. This bothered me because I know that Rahab was justified because of her treatment of the spies of Israel. James 2:25 "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?"

The following verse helps us to understand with what she did.

LET ME NOT BE ASHAMED

Psalms 25:1-3 "Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. 2. O my God, I trust in thee: **let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.** 3. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: **let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.**"

The last phrase in verse 3 is the key. "Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause." Rahab transgressed with a cause. There are times when you do lie to protect life. I know that during World War II people had to lie to save lives. You would not tell the enemy that you hid a Jewish family in the closet over there. There are times when you can transgress for a just cause and not be ashamed.

RAHAB BELIEVED

Joshua 2:9-11 "And she said unto the men, **I know that the LORD hath given you the land,** and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

Rahab believed something that those who were twenty and older, who left Egypt, did not believe. At Kadeshbarnea they could not believe that God would give them the land. She affirmed to the spies that the LORD was going to give the nation of Israel the land. She told the two spies that the Lord was already doing a work in the hearts of those in the land. The terror of Israel had fallen on them and they were faint.

THEY DID NOT BELIEVE

Hebrews 3:19 "So we see that they could **not enter in** because of **unbelief.**"

While Rahab believed that the Lord was going to give the land to Israel in her day. Forty years earlier Israel did not believe that the Lord would give them the land. Because they did not believe that God meant what he said about entering the land flowing with milk and honey, they were denied entrance into the land and their inheritance.

RAHAB HAD FAITH

Hebrews 4:2 "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached **did not profit** them, **not being mixed with faith** in them that heard it."

Rahab had heard that the land of Canaan was going to be given to Israel by the LORD. She believed that and we know that profited her greatly. We have already used James 2:25 "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works,. . ." of faith. She saved the lives of the spies and they promised her that she and her family would be spared when they took Jericho. Rahab spared the spies and Israel would spare her. I would say that was profitable for her.

ALREADY SAVED

10. For we have heard how **the LORD** dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

I do believe that Rahab was already saved before the spies entered into Jericho. The use of the name of the Lord, in her conversation with the spies, indicated that He was her LORD also. Her testimony in verse 11 that the LORD God of Israel was God in heaven above and in the earth beneath.

YOUR GOD, HE IS GOD

11. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: **for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.**"

A BLESSING TO ISRAEL

Joshua 2:12 "Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since **I have showed you kindness**, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and **give me a true token:**" (Genesis 12:3)

Rahab was asking the spies to swear to her by the LORD God of heaven and earth to show kindness to her father's house. She was going to be a blessing to the nation of Israel even though she did not know Genesis 12:3. The blessing of Genesis 12:3 still applies to those who bless Abraham's seed. Genesis 12:3 "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Rahab's family was one of the families of the earth that would be blessed.

LIFE IN THE GOOD LAND

Joshua 2:14-15 "And the men answered her, **Our life for yours**, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, **when** the LORD hath given us the land, that **we will deal kindly and truly with thee.**"

Rahab wanted the blessings that God was going to give the nation of Israel. She knew that if she was going to enjoy those blessings that she would have to be alive. The spies said "Our life for yours." They continued their promise with the word **when** and not **if**. **When** the LORD gives us the land we will deal kindly with you and that is the truth.

TOKEN OF HOPE

Joshua 2:18 "Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt **bind this line of scarlet thread** in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee."

This scarlet thread was not a thread that you would use to cross stitch or to hem a pair of pants. This thread was large enough to sustain the weight of a man. This thread was long enough to reach the ground from her house on the wall of Jericho. You could not hide this thread on a spool. This scarlet thread was to be hung in the window to be a continual reminder of the impending judgment of Jericho and the promise by the spies to spare the lives of Rahab and her family.

RAHAB'S FAITH

Joshua 2:21 "And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And **she sent them away**, and they departed: and she bound the **scarlet line** in the **window.**"

When Rahab sent the spies away she was justified. This work was a work of faith because of the scarlet line. Her faith gave assurance that she and her family would be spared when Jericho was defeated. As Abraham was justified by offering Isaac, likewise Rahab in James 2:25 "Likewise . . . Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" This was not Rahab's salvation just like it was not Abraham's salvation when he was justified by works of faith.

TOKEN OF THE FIRSTBORN

Genesis 38:28 "And it came to pass, when she (Tamar) travailed, that the one (firstborn) put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a **scarlet thread**, saying, This **came out first.**" (firstborn inheritance)

Here we find the significance of the scarlet thread in the life of Tamar. She prostituted herself to Judah, her father-in-law, to bear children that had been promised to her by Judah. Tamar had twins and during the birthing process one of the twins stuck out his hand. The midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it to this child's hand to signify the birth order. The one who had the scar-

let thread would be counted as the firstborn. The one who had the scarlet thread would be the one who would get the birthright blessing in the family. The significance of the scarlet thread provided a double portion inheritance in his family. Rahab's inheritance was to be in the land with God's chosen people. That scarlet thread in the window kept the hope alive, a living hope of a blessed inheritance. The reminder of the inheritance in the land by the scarlet thread is in type a living hope of an abundant life in the coming kingdom of our Lord.

UNCLEAN GENTILE

Joshua 6:23 "And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and **left them without the camp of Israel.**"

Rahab was not a member of the nation of Israel. She became a member of one of the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Judah. Rahab was a Gentile and was without hope apart from the nation of Israel. Ephesians 2:12 "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:" Who would you find outside the camp of Israel? You would find those who were unclean. You would find the leper outside the camp.

In the New Testament Gentiles were referred as dogs. Caleb was one of the twelve spies that went into the land and his name in Hebrew means *dog*. His name being dog was simply a prophecy that Gentiles would be included in the heavenly inheritance that is seen in type as the land flowing with milk and honey.

One advantage that Rahab had over Caleb was that she, being a woman, could and did marry into the tribe of Judah. As the wife of Salmon she would have her inheritance **in** the tribe of Judah where Caleb's inheritance would be **among** the tribe of Judah.

OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

Matthew 1:5-6 "And **Salmon** begat **Booz** [Boaz] of **Rachab** [Rahab, Gentile]; and Booz begat **Obed** of **Ruth** [Moabite]; and Obed begat **Jesse**; 6. And Jesse begat **David** the king.."

Here is harlot that had no hope without being a blessing to Israel. God blessed Rahab beyond her wildest imagination. She would be included in the lineage of David and Israel's Messiah Jesus Christ.

CONTRAST, AMONG JUDAH

Joshua 15:13 "And unto **Caleb** [Hebrew, Dog] the son of Jephunneh he gave a part **among the children of Judah,**"

Caleb's inheritance was among the tribe of Judah. We see that his inheritance was not in any city but in the villages and fields beyond the city limits. Joshua 21:12 "But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession." Where was Rahab's heritage? Her heritage would be in the palace.

ABRAHAM AND RAHAB JUSTIFIED

James 2:23-25 "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, **Abraham believed** God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Out of all those mentioned in Hebrews eleven only two are said to have been justified by works of faith. We know that justification is on the basis of faith and all in Hebrews eleven were given credit for living by faith.

We see that Rahab believed God just like Abraham believed God and both were justified. Both Abraham and Rahab believed God concerning the inheritance of their families, and their seed.

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED

24. Ye see then how that **by works** (of faith) a man is **justified** (not salvation), and not by faith only (alone).

Verse 24 is not dealing with salvation but approval. By works of faith a man will be justified and will stand approved at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It takes works of faith and not just faith alone. These works of faith were done apart from the law of Moses, the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law had not been given to Abraham.

JUSTIFIED WITHOUT LAW

Acts 13:39 "And by him all that **believe** [present active participle] are **justified** [present passive indicative] from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the **law of Moses**."

Notice that justification does not come by the law of Moses. You could be saved under the law of Moses but you could not be justified by the law of Moses. The ones believing in the present tense are those who are living by faith. If we live by faith we will continue to please God. If you were serving God under the law of Moses, the ceremonial law, you would not be justified. Galatians 3:12 "And the law is not of faith . ." If a child of God tried to be justified by the law, Galatians 5:4 ". . . whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." To fall from grace means that you have departed from the faith that accesses the grace to serve God acceptably. Hebrews 12:28 "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom (an inheritance) which cannot be moved, let [may, subjunctive] us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:"

Notice that justification does not come under the law of Moses. Was Abraham under the law of Moses? No! Was Rahab under the law of Moses? No! It is so wonderful see how God brings New Testament truth to light in the Old Testament. The Word of God is true and to feed on the Word of God is so refreshing.

BY WORKS OF FAITH

25. Likewise also was not **Rahab** the harlot **justified** by **works** (of faith), when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"

We see from this verse that Rahab was justified by works of faith apart from the law of Moses just like Abraham. How was she justified by works of faith? She believed what the spies promised her and she sent them out another way so that they would be safe.

RAHAB BLESSED WITH ABRAHAM

Galatians 3:8-9 "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would **justify** the heathen [Gentiles] **through faith**, preached before the gospel (of the kingdom inheritance) unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). 9. So then they which **be of faith** are **blessed with faithful Abraham**."

Rahab was blessed with faithful Abraham. Abraham and Rahab were persons of faith and were not under the law of Moses when they were justified.

CALLED GENTILES

Matthew 21:43 "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

John the Baptist, Jesus and the disciples preached to the nation of Israel about the heavenly inheritance flowing with milk and honey but they would not receive it. Jesus told the nation of Israel that He would take the kingdom inheritance away from them and give it to a nation that

would produce the fruits thereof. The nation that would bring forth the fruits required to enter into the kingdom of the heaven would be a people, as the house of Rahab, called out of the Gentiles, Jericho. Acts 15:14 "Simeon (Peter) hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." when a saved Roman soldier, Cornelius, believed the message of the kingdom of heaven in Acts 10.

NOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD

1 Peter 2:9-10 "But ye are a chosen [elect] generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

These verses are talking about the blessings of God upon the Gentiles. At one time they were excluded from the blessings of the kingdom of the heavens. Gentiles at one time were in darkness but God has given elect Gentiles His marvellous light. There was a time in the past that Gentiles had not obtained mercy, but now elect Gentiles have obtained mercy. Gentiles can produce the fruits required for entrance into the kingdom of the heavens, the anti-type of the land flowing with milk and honey.