

The Faith of Rahab

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Scripture:

Heb 11:31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

Jas 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?

Grace:

The story of Rahab exemplifies that salvation is for all who believe (Rom 10:13).

Rahab is a Gentile (a heathen).
Rahab is a woman.
Rahab is a harlot.

Repentance is to the Lord, then from sin.

God in His grace uses people we might think He could never use.

1Cor 1:27 God has chosen those (viewed by people of the world) who are - foolish, weak, base, despised and are not - so that no man may boast before God (1Cor 1:27-29).

Jesus was a friend of tax collectors and sinners! (Lk 7:34).

The Women in the Genealogy of Jesus; He isn't ashamed to have prostitutes in His family tree.

Tamar (prostituted herself with her father-in-law, Judah); **Rahab** was the great-great-grandmother of King David; David was the father of Solomon by **Bathsheba** (Mt 1:1-6).

Rahab's Story (Jos chap. 2 & 6)

Joshua decided to send two spies into Jericho to study it carefully. (Jos 2:1)

The spies entered the city and stay with Rahab, a pagan prostitute. (Jos 2:2)

This was a logical strategy. Strange men going to a harlot's house would not arouse suspicion.

The king commands that she give up these men to him. (Jos 2:3)

Her act of faith was risky, had she been caught hiding the spies, she would certainly have been executed. Her faith wasn't just a feeling, but a conscious choice (it meant standing against Jericho), it was a commitment to God.

Rahab invented a story to protect the spies. (Jos 2:4-6)

She safely hid the men, then told the king's men that the spies had come to her house but had left.

Rahab's request - she and her family to be spared when Jericho is conquered. (Jos 2:12-14)

Rahab helps the spies escape. (Jos 2:14-21)

The spies told her that she must put that same scarlet rope in her window when Israel came against Jericho. This would be the sign that she and her family were to be spared.

Rahab's faith

Rahab believes that Jehovah is God. (Jos 2:9-11)

She heard of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and victories in the wilderness, and saw the fear of her people, convinced her that Israel would conquer the land.

Faith is believing the truth that God has revealed.

Rahab's faith led her to do something (works Jas 2:25)

She didn't allow the people's fear to paralyze her. (Jos 2:11)

She hid the spies.

By offering them a haven of safety, she was choosing to be at peace with their God. Through that simple but brave act, she modeled the concept of drawing near to God in faith, believing that He rewards those who seek Him. (Hb 11:6).

She requested that she and her family be spared when Israel conquered Jericho;

She let them down by a scarlet rope through the window.

She bound the scarlet cord in the window.

Her confession of faith

"for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." (Jos 2:11)

Her faith was contagious because she also won her family (Jos 6:23).

The contrast between:

Rahab's faith response (Jos 2:8-14) with the Ammonites fear (Jos 2:10).

Moses was told to pass through their land, not harassing or provoking them (Dt 2:16-19).

Moses sends a peace delegation, offering to pay for food and water (Dt 2:26-29).

Sihon responds in unbelief and war (Dt 2:30-37).

Rahab's faith response with the Canaanites fear (Jos 2:10).

Rahab and the Canaanites responded to the same reports.

Rahab's faith led to life, while the Canaanites' unbelief led to death (2Cor 2:14-16).

Like Abraham and Ruth, Rahab renounced her country in favor of Israel. In fact, she risked her life to be identified with Israel's God (Jos 2:4-7, 15-16).

The significance of Rahab's story

All people are under the sentence of wrath, just like the people of Jericho.

We are by nature sinners and are under the sentence of eternal destruction (Eph 2:1-3). Just as the army of Israel gathered together and marched against Jericho, so destruction is marching towards everyone.

The only way for sin to be removed is for its penalty to be paid.

Jesus came to this earth for the purpose of removing sin between us and God, which is another way of saying that Jesus came to this earth to receive the penalty for sin so that all those who believe in him do not have to receive that penalty themselves (2Cor 5:18-21).

God's mercy

But God in mercy has given man a cord to put in the window of our lives. The sacrifice of Jesus is our scarlet cord. Before the sentence of wrath can be lifted from us, the reason (our sin) for that wrath must be removed (Rom 5:9; 1Thes 1:10; 5:9).

Putting out the scarlet cord – the blood of Jesus

On the cross, Jesus received that penalty in full. We have in Jesus the cord that can and will spare us from the wrath of God.

The Blood Covenant

As Israel needed the scarlet blood of the lamb on their door-frames to distinguish them from the condemned Egyptians (Ex 12:7, 13), so Rahab needed this scarlet cord that the Israelites provided to distinguish her and her family from the doomed Canaanites.

The scarlet cord that Rahab had to hang out her window as a sign of the agreement they made probably was not the same rope she used to let the spies down, since the words are different.

The cord's color is significant; it represents the color of the blood of atonement (Ex 12:7, 13).

Tamar tied a scarlet thread to the wrist of her first son (Gen 38:28-30). Both women were non-Israelite, ancestors of Jesus (Mt 1:3-5).

Christians today accept (by faith) Christ's death when we drink the cup of the new covenant in the scarlet blood of Jesus (Lk. 22:20; 1Cor 11:25-26).

Repentance - Faith in Christ will change your life

Repentance is first to the Lord and then from sin.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new' (2Cor 5:17).

Great is God's mercy

The fact that Rahab the harlot was saved tells us that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace. No one is too bad to be saved.

Prostitutes mentioned in the Bible

1. Tamar's sleeping with Judah, her father-in-law (Gen 38).
Tamar places herself by the road to Enaim, dresses herself as a prostitute, and when her father-in-law approaches her, she introduces herself as a temple prostitute. He promises her a young goat and as a pledge gives her his seal, cord, and staff. When a friend of Judah's goes to exchange the goat in, she is nowhere to be found and he reports that no such temple prostitute ever sat there. When Judah discovers later that Tamar is pregnant, he condemns her to be burned to death. When she indicates that she is pregnant by the owner of Judah's staff, he has a moment of transformation. He exclaims: She is righteous; Not I. Tamar bears twins who become part of the line of Christ.
2. Rahab, the prostitute, who hides the spies (Jos 2; 6).
Rahab is referred to as a prostitute several times in the story. It is most likely on account of her being a prostitute that the spies could have gone to her house and been hidden with little suspicion.
3. Jephthah's mother was a prostitute (Judg 11:1);
4. The people of Gaza tried to capture Samson when he went to visit a prostitute there (Judg 16).
5. Two prostitutes, one of whose son had been smothered during the night.
Solomon makes a famous wise decision regarding whose child it was (1 Kgs 3).
6. Ezekiel 16 and 23 pictures Jerusalem as a prostitute -
Judah prostitutes herself to foreign gods of other nations. The imagery intends to illustrate how the people of Israel turned away from the Lord and gone after other gods.
7. Gomer, the wife of the prophet Hosea, is traditionally considered to be a prostitute.
Hosea was commanded by God to find a woman who would be unfaithful to him. Her unfaithfulness is a picture of the unfaithfulness of the people of Israel, expressed more explicitly in Hos 4.
8. In the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), the youngest son spent his money on prostitutes.
9. Prostitutes were among those that Jesus spent time with.
He also used the social group of prostitutes and tax collectors frequently in illustrations (Mt 21:31).
10. The female sinner who anointed Jesus with oil (Mt 26; Mk 14; Lk 7).

Tradition has it that this woman, based on the scorn she received by the apostles and her ability to purchase such expensive perfume, was a prostitute. Yet, only the Gospel of Luke mentions that she is a sinner.

11. Mary Magdalene, to whom Jesus appeared after his resurrection, a reformed prostitute.

12. Babylon (Rev 17).

It is considered the great prostitute, mother of all prostitutes, and the abomination of the earth. It is judged at the end times (Rev 19).

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