

Hebrews 11

RAHAB

Hebrews 11:13

I. Background

1. She was a Canaanite with her home in Jericho.
2. Canaanites were such a wicked, sinful people that God had commanded the Israelites to destroy every man, woman and child. Deut.7:2-6; 1 Samuel 15:3
3. The sins committed by the Canaanites included idolatry, witchcraft, human sacrifice, sexual immorality, homosexuality and bestiality, Leviticus 18:1-25; 20:6,23; Deuteronomy 18:9-14
4. The land of Canaan was promised to Abraham and his descendants by God, and was to be claimed when “the iniquity of the Amorites” was full. This was the case in the time of Joshua, Genesis 15:13-15.
5. Her profession was that of an harlot. Some try to twist the Hebrew text to reinterpret “harlot” with “inn keeper.” There is absolutely no warrant for this. When James referred to Rahab the harlot, he used the word (*porne*), meaning prostitute James 2:25.
6. As a Canaanite, she would also have participated in the many other sins of the Canaanites.
7. No leagues were permitted with the Canaanites, Judges 2:1,2.
8. With the Canaanites, she was under the condemnation of death, Joshua 6:21.
9. The fate of the Canaanites is the same as that of the whole world that we live in, Romans 3:23; 6:23.

II. Rahab's Confession of Faith, Joshua 2:9-11

1. She heard of the work of God.
 - a. God delivered Israel from Egypt, and the news would have been spread throughout the known world by merchants and travellers, Exodus 9:16.
 - b. God dried up the Red Sea, giving a passageway for Israel to escape, and means of destroying all of Pharaoh's army.
 - c. These events occurred 40 years prior to Rahab's present time.
 - d. More recently, news spread to Jericho over Israel's victory against Sihon and Og, two kings of the Amorites whose kingdoms were just across the Jordan River on the East, Numbers 21:21-35.
 - e. All of Jericho would also have heard of the Jordan River drying up to enable Israel to cross over it. The land to the northern side of the crossing would have experienced extreme flooding. The land to the south would have seen the river run dry for several hours. Bad news spreads.

2. She heard of the plan of God that God was going to give the land of Canaan to Israel, Romans 10:14,17.

3. What she heard, drove her to fear the Word and Power of God.
 - a. "your terror is fallen upon us," "all the inhabitants of the land faith because of you," verse 9.
 - b. "our hearts did melt (faint)," "neither did there remain any more courage (spirit) in man," verse 11.
 - c. All the inhabitants of Jericho felt powerless before the God of Israel.

4. She confessed her faith in the God of Israel.
 - a. She believed the Word of God, "I know that the LORD hath given you the land," v. 9
 - b. She believed in the Person of God, "for the LORD (Jehovah) your God (Elohim), he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath," v.11
 - c. She turned from harlotry and idolatry to the true and living God, eternal (Jehovah) and omnipotent (Elohim), who reigns in

heaven and earth. See also 1 Kings 18:39; Ruth 1:16,17; Matthew 16:16; Acts 8:37.

- d. She sorrowed after a godly manner to genuine repentance, as did the Gibeonites, Joshua 9:3-15; 2 Corinthians 7:9,10.
- e. The other inhabitants of Jericho displayed the sorrow of the world, for though the king feared Israel, he still tried to capture the spies, Joshua 2:1-3.
- f. It is evident that she was already a believer in the God of Israel before she met the spies, for she testified of her faith to the spies. She believed the Word of God as spoken by the travellers and merchants who lodged in her home from time to time. Without knowing it, they were God's missionaries.

III. Rahab (Rahab's Faith) Justified by Works

1. The Epistle of James teaches that any declaration of faith that is not supported by actions, is dead. True faith not only gives evidence of its presence, but is also declared genuine, or justified by this evidence, James 2:14-26.
2. Rahab showed her faith by her works, Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25.
3. By faith, she chose to obey God, not man. Joshua 2:1-21
 - a. The two spies who came to search out Jericho lodged in the home of Rahab, v.1.
 - b. The king was told of the presence of the spies, and learned of their mission. He also heard that they were last seen entering into Rahab's home, v.2.
 - c. The messengers came to Rahab's home and requested that the spies be delivered over to them, V.3.
 - d. Rahab knew of the spies and their mission before the messengers came to her.
 - e. She chose to protect the spies, and not hand them over.
4. She risked her life to side with God's people. She hid the spies on her flat roof, and covered them with stalks of flax, which were about 1 metre in length.

5. She redirected the messengers away from the spies, v.4.
 - a. She admitted that the men came to her, but did not know who they were.
 - b. She told them that the men left her home as it became dark, when the gates of the city would shut.
 - c. She said she did not know where they went, but if they would pursue them quickly, they would be sure to catch them.
 - d. This was a clear act of deception that will be discussed in a further point in this lesson.

6. She told the spies the fearful condition of the inhabitants of Jericho. This would serve to give Israel further assurance of victory over Jericho, v.9-11.

7. She gave directions to the spies on how to escape from Jericho and return to their people, 2:15,16
 - a. Her house was situated on the wall of Jericho, with a window facing outside the walls.
 - b. She directed the men to climb down a rope from her window, and then hide in the mountains for three days, before returning to their people.

8. She sought the deliverance of others, 2:12-14
 - a. “Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,” Psalm 107:2.
 - b. Rahab was not only concerned about her own safety, but for that of her whole family. She interceded with the spies to spare the lives of her and her family.
 - c. Her faith was truly unselfish and showed compassion upon those under the condemnation of death.

9. The deliverance of Rahab and her family is an illustration of salvation, 2:17-21
 - a. There must be the faith of an impending judgement –war with Israel.
 - b. There must be obedience to the way of salvation – abide in the house. E.g. Ark of Noah, Homes at the Passover

- c. There must be a scarlet coloured rope tied externally to the window on the wall – Rope was the means of escape for the spies, and scarlet is the colour of blood. i.e. the blood of redemption hung at her window. E.g. blood on lintel and side posts of the houses at the Passover.
- d. When God’s people destroyed the inhabitants of Jericho, every man, woman and child, they saw the scarlet rope tied to Rahab’s window, and spared all those who were in her home.

IV. A Weakness in Rahab’s Faith

1. Rahab lied
 - a. She lied to save the lives of the two spies, v.4-6.
 - b. She deceived the messengers of the king.
 - c. She pretended to be loyal to her people.
2. Was the lie justified?
 - a. Some call it, “A falsehood in the way of duty.”
 - b. Others seek to justify her deception because she did what was necessary to save lives.
 - c. There are those who have suggested that “if our motives are right, then our actions are praiseworthy.”
 - d. Justification has been suggested because to Rahab, her lying might have been a sin of ignorance. As she was an harlot, and that was considered an acceptable profession in Canaan, then surely lying would not be looked upon severely.
 - e. Most importantly, many examples can be found in the Scriptures where true believers lied, and were not rebuked for it. E.g.
 - Jonathan deceived his father, Saul, 1 Samuel 20:28,29
 - Michal lied to her father, Saul, 1 Samuel 19:17
 - David deceived Ahimelech, 1 Samuel 21:1,2
 - Jeremiah lied to the princes of Judah, Jeremiah 38:24-27
 - Even God told Samuel to deceive King Saul, 1 Samuel 16:1-3

- f. For the above arguments to be accepted, one must hold to the philosophy that “the end justifies the means.” This position reiterates the suggestion made in Romans 3:8, “Let us do evil, that good may come.”
3. Was it a sin of weakness?
 - a. Keil and Delitzsch claim that Rahab’s lie was indeed a sin, but a sin brought about by her weakness. A sin which God pardoned because of her faith.
 - b. Considering all the sins committed by the Canaanites, the sin of deception must come near to the bottom of the list. As it is with today, telling a lie to get out of trouble would be considered an instantaneous response. An act that required no pre-thought.
 - c. It could be considered a sin of ignorance.
 4. Nevertheless, it was still a lie, and lying is a sin.
 - a. It makes no difference who it is that tells a lie, or for what reason a person tells a lie, Exodus 20:16; Leviticus 19:11; Psalm 101:7; Proverbs 12:22; Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9.
 - b. Lying is against the very nature of God, Who cannot lie, Titus 1:2.
 - c. Not only is it stated that God cannot lie, it is also recorded that it is impossible for Him to lie, Hebrews 6:18.
 - d. Satan is the father of lies, John 8:44.
 - e. It was Satan’s use of deception that resulted in the spiritual fall of man, Genesis 3:4.
 - f. Lying cannot come from God for no lie is of the truth, 1 John 2:21.
 - g. The sin of lying, rather than being considered a light thing in comparison to other sins, will lead its adherents all the way to the Lake of fire, Revelation 21:8.
 - h. The Bible does NOT say that by faith, Rahab lied to save the spies, but “by faith...Rahab...received the spies with peace,” Hebrews 11:31.
 - i. Likewise, Rahab was NOT declared justified by works because of her sin, but because “she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way, James 2:25.

5. Consider the Confessors of the early church.
 - a. During the time of the early church, the believers went through ten persecutions by the Roman Empire.
 - b. Christians were compelled to deny Christ and accept the Caesars as God, or face the penalty of forfeiting their properties, torture, imprisonment or death.
 - c. Some chose to deny their faith to escape judgement. Later, after the persecution they sought re-entry into fellowship with the church brethren. They simply lied to save their lives.
 - d. Others maintained their faith in Jesus, and would not lie to save themselves. They willingly confessed Christ and suffered the consequences. All they needed to do to escape suffering was to tell a lie, but they would not do it. Lying would not only dishonour God, but also destroy a powerful testimony for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - e. The Fox's Book of Martyrs gives testimony to the many believers who would not lie to save themselves or their families.

V. The Faith of Rahab was Rewarded by God

1. God spared her life, and the lives of her family that rested under the protection of Rahab's house.
2. Later, Rahab married a prince of Judah, named Salmon, Matthew 1:5.
3. Rahab's son, Boaz, became a godly man who married Ruth, a converted Moabitess.
4. Rahab became the great, great grandmother of King David.
5. She is the ancestress of Jesus Christ, the Son of God

VI. A Homily From Spurgeon on Rahab's Faith

The following sermon outline was taken from "Spurgeon's Sermons on Old Testament Women." In his sermon on Rahab, Spurgeon represents her faith under the following six descriptions;

1. ***Saving Faith*** – "And, without doubt, her salvation was not merely of a temporal nature, not merely a deliverance of her body from the sword, but redemption of her soul from hell." P.124
2. ***Singular Faith*** – Of all the inhabitants of Jericho, "there was not one of them who repented of sin, or who even asked for mercy, except this woman who had been a harlot." P.126
3. ***Stable Faith*** – "It stood firm in the midst of trouble." P.127 Unlike the seed that was cast upon soil in stony places, her faith did not waver during the siege. She remained in her house.
4. ***Self-Denying Faith*** – "She dared to risk her life for the sake of the spies. She knew that if they were found in her house she would be put to death, but though she was so weak as to do a sinful deed to preserve them, yet she was so strong that she would run the risk of being put to death to save these two men." P.129
5. ***Sympathizing Faith*** – "She did not believe for herself only; she desired mercy for her relations. She said, 'I want to be saved, but that very desire makes me want to have my father saved, and my mother saved, and my brother saved, and my sister saved.'" P.130
6. ***Sanctifying Faith*** – "Did Rahab continue a harlot after she had faith? No, she did not. I do not believe she was a harlot at the time the men went to her house, though the name still stuck to her, as such bad names will; but I am sure she was not afterward, for Salmon the prince of Judah married her, and her name is put among the ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ." P. 132