

The House of Rahab

Joshua 2:18-19 "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. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him."

Prisoner of Jericho

Rahab the harlot lived in the city of Jericho. It is very likely, as was common in that time, that she had never lived anywhere else. She was born in Jericho and would most likely die there. This was her identity. She was a Canaanite of Jericho. The bible both Old Testament and New says that she was a harlot. Many argue that this word could be translated innkeeper but regardless of her occupation, Rahab was a harlot. I say this with confidence because this is the nature of all men apart from Christ. From the time that Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that has been the nature of man.

Religion requires that we be good, that we do good things and "get cleaned up" to prove we are worthy of God and can come to God. Christ did not ask anyone to get cleaned up first. He bids those that are weary and heavy laden to come to Him. The truth is that "All have fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) We are all harlots apart from God. To make Rahab anything but a harlot is to be like the Pharisees who criticized Jesus when Mary fell at His feet and washed His feet with her hair. (Luke. 7:37) They assumed he did not know what kind of woman she was, when the truth was that they did not know what kind of men they were.

None of us could ever be worthy of His grace and mercy. (Isaiah 64:6) "All Our righteousnesses are like filthy rags." The fall of man doomed us to a nature that is fallen and wicked. The best that we have to offer God apart from Christ is an affront to Him. That is who we are as descendents of Adam. "For all have sinned." We are prisoners of our descent, prisoners of our fallen nature. As it says in Genesis chapter one, each will bring forth after its own kind. If we understand this, we will realize that it is hopeless for us to try to do anything for God apart from Christ. Jesus said it best. Without me, you can do nothing!

This was Rahab's life. What a hopeless existence it must have been. She was a prisoner of her circumstance and her identity. She was trapped behind the walls of that identity in Jericho a place of great darkness and wickedness, a place under God's judgment. How she must have longed to be free from those walls. In her heart Rahab must have known that there was more to life than Jericho. She longed to be free but had no hope.

Hope of Freedom

She began to see her existence, who she was, and where she was from as a prison from which she could not escape. However, God heard the cry of her heart even in that dark hopeless place, and so as she continued in her prison, something began to happen that would change her life. She began to hear of a great nation that was heading toward Jericho. This nation had been delivered by its God from bondage and brought out of Egypt with mighty miracles. This God had even parted the Red Sea and buried the armies of Egypt. The kings of Og and Sihon had not been able to stand against this nation. Rahab heard and she began to believe. Rahab probably wondered if this God would receive her. Could this God deliver her from her bondage as He had delivered Israel? She began to identify with Israel's exodus and wonder if their bondage to Egypt had been like her bondage to Jericho. She believed that it was so.

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. 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. 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.

So she waited and hoped, and one day her chance to be free came. Spies from Israel were in the city. She knew what she had to do. Rahab received them and hid them in her house. She knew that their presence there could cost her life, but this did not matter. She had to know this God of Israel; she had to be free!

Imagine for a moment if these spies had responded to Rahab as some in the church might. "I could never enter the house of a harlot! God forbid! I would rather die!" After Rahab waited and hoped for so long, would those who represented the God of Israel just not have her? Rahab was the great-grandmother of David so there would have been no King David, and no Solomon. This was the ancestral line of Christ so could it be that there would have been no Jesus? Thank you Lord for the spies that you chose. Thank you Jesus that you did not reject Rahab when she asked you to come into her. She made her house a refuge for Israel and as soon as she took them into her house, she was joined in heart with them.

Change of Identity

Some might call her hiding of the spies an act of treason against her king and country but the truth was that she was no longer of Jericho. Her descent had already changed. Her identity had changed from Rahab the harlot of Jericho to Rahab of Israel. She was no longer of Jericho and she was no longer a harlot. By faith she had been joined to Israel. She was still in Jericho but she was not of Jericho. Even though she still appeared to be Rahab the harlot to everyone around her, something inside of her had changed. She began

to see her house as a part of Israel. She came out of Jericho and abode in Israel in her heart. Though she still appeared to be a prisoner, she knew that she was free. She knew that it was only a matter of time until these walls came down.

Psalms 37:34 "Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it."

Rahab is one of four women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew chapter one. Here it is clear that she was lifted out of the genealogy of Jericho and placed into the genealogy of Christ. She was delivered from that kingdom of darkness in Jericho and translated into the kingdom of Israel. (Col 1:13) She became part of a great cloud of witnesses that together would bring forth Christ. Her former natural descent was cut off. In her heart, the source that she had once drawn from was now gone. That source that had flowed out as the Rahab the harlot was now cut off. She was grafted in to a new vine, a vine that would bring forth fruit unto God.

She knew that her only hope for freedom was the destruction of Jericho. Her old identity and everything that was a part of it had to be destroyed so that she could truly enter in to Israel. She was much like Noah. Her purpose was the salvation of her household, but the result was the destruction of everything outside of the refuge that God had called her into.

Hebrews 11:7 "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith".

So she received Israel and in doing so she entered into Israel and was joined to them. Had she remained in Jericho, she would have met the same end as Jericho. Her end would have been death but instead, Christ came forth through her. She learned to abide in that new identity. She abode in and sought to draw others into that place of refuge. This is what it means for us to be in Christ.

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Ephesians 1:6-10 "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

1 Corinthians 1:30 "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: God has placed us in Christ." Just as He gave Rahab a place of refuge, so has He given us His Son as our

refuge. We have been given a new identity in Him. He has destroyed that place that we once dwelt in Adam and has given us a new genealogy.

Refuge in a Dark Place

Rahab would not fight for her old kingdom and old identity any longer. Her hope was now in Israel and the God of Israel to whom this nation was joined in shadow. In becoming one with Him that is our refuge, she became a refuge. She became an environment of life and light in a dark place. God caused light to shine out of darkness in Jericho in the person of Rahab. (2 Corinthians. 4:6) Her house then became a place of refuge for “whosoever will” because she had been joined to Him who was her refuge. She identified with Israel, and because of this, all who entered her house were saved.

When Israel surrounded Jericho, there was a terror that came upon everyone who dwelt there, for Joshua 6:1 says the city was sealed up. However, there was one place of refuge, one oasis of Israel in the midst of this terror for any who would enter in. In that place there was not terror but rejoicing. The walls that had become a prison were coming down. Freedom was at hand at last, and the trumpets that Jericho feared were a sound of joy to those in the house of Rahab. The cry in that house was, “I am coming out of Jericho and into Israel!”

These trumpets sounded for seven days and the longer they sounded the more horrendous they were to Jericho, but God had made a place of refuge in Jericho. At the Passover, judgment was immanent to all those who did not enter in, but the sound of the trumpet at Jericho was also for all who had ears to hear and to enter in.

Why Rahab?

But why the house of Rahab? How could the house of one so reproached bring salvation? What a joke it must have seemed in Jericho, but in all truth, that house was their only hope of salvation. There was no other but that one place that they could abide in safety. How foolish! How could this house be refuge? After all, this house was a part of Jericho; It was built into the very wall of the city. Many from Jericho had been in this house, and unfortunately only those whose hearts were open to the Spirit of God could see that this was not the same house that they had known. So it was with Jesus of Nazareth. Isaiah. 53:2-3.

There seemed to be nothing special about the house of Rahab, but that was not what Israel saw when they came in, and that was not what God saw. They saw the scarlet thread in the window, and just like the blood that had been placed on the doorposts of their houses at the Passover, this thread represented a finished work. The Lamb had died for this house. The blood of the Lamb that had caused the death angel to pass over Israel covered this house. Israel recognized the atoning death of the Lamb. All in that house had already died. They had been joined to the one who had come through death burial and resurrection at the Red Sea. All those in that house were Israel.

It would have been easy for Rahab to try to find ways to deliver herself from Jericho, but anything that she did took her outside of the refuge that God had given her. We are to abide in Christ. That is our place of refuge. There is nothing that we can do to add to our salvation. Anything that we do brings us out of that place of abiding in Him. Our flesh profits nothing. I cannot deliver myself from my old identity by my flesh. How can my flesh defeat my flesh. It is only by Christ. When thoughts come that are ungodly I must look to Jesus. I am crucified in Him. I cannot defeat the old nature but Christ already has. I must look to the finished work of the cross of Christ for my deliverance. Like Rahab the Harlot, we must trust the Lord and wait patiently on Him. This waiting and trusting is not the same as doing nothing! It is a very active faith. We may appear to be doing nothing when in fact we are obeying God as we abide in Christ and trust in His Word.

So when finally there was the sound of a shout and the walls of Jericho fell, the house of Rahab stood fast! Despite everything around this house testifying to the contrary, when the dust settled, the house of Rahab remained. It stood because it had been joined to an eternal habitation that could not be shaken. This is the same house to which we are now joined. This was no longer the house of a harlot, but the abode of God. Finally Rahab was free from her bondage. Finally, she saw Joshua face to face.

As it was with Rahab, so it is with us. We are in the world but we are not of the world. We have been joined to Christ. Our only hope for freedom is the total destruction of our old descent from Adam. In Christ this is done.

Rom. 6:6-7 "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

We have been placed in a new line. We now spring from a new source. We are now one with Christ. As it says in John, Jn. 7:3 *"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* Not because of us but because of the One to which we are joined. He is the spring and source of this life. These rivers of living water should be our expectation. We once like Rahab were harlots but now we are saints of God by Christ. We have Christ living in us. All we need do is believe. We are separated from our old identity in Christ. We must abide in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Accepted in the Beloved

It is important to understand that the House of Rahab is not really the point. The house of Rahab did not look any different than it ever did. It is much the same with us. We cannot look to ourselves to find the evidence of what was accomplished at the cross. The evidence is not found in our house. The evidence is found in the House of the Lord to which we are joined. We are now in Christ. That is where we must look to find the truth

of our new identity. The house of Rahab had been swallowed up in something greater. She became Israel. Her house was swallowed up by a greater house. This house is spoken of in Hebrews 3:1-6 and 1 Peter 2:4-5.

We do not suddenly become more special to God when we are saved. We are not the point at all. Jesus is the point. It is He that is pleasing to the Father. The house of Rahab actually came under God's judgment before the rest of Jericho. Just as the blood of the doorposts of the houses of Israel declared that those inside were already dead, the red cord in Rahab's window declared her identification with Israel in that same redemption. Because she was a part of Israel, she became a partaker of the death of the Lamb. Her house was seen as judged before God. This is how God sees us. The blood of the Lamb declares our death. We are dead with Christ. The cross of Christ was our judgment. So it is not that we are suddenly special to God. It is not I but Christ that is special to the father. We are swallowed up in that Son that our Father loves so much. We are accepted in the Beloved!

Unfortunately many do not see what has been accomplished by the cross of Christ and continue to live as if Jericho still stands. Just as Joshua rescued Rahab from Jericho, we have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. (Colossians 1:13) But many Christians never understand that there is so much more of Christ that we can enter into. They are satisfied with knowing that someday when they die they will go to heaven and continue to live in bondage to sin and to their old identity as long as they live.

How tragic to never realize God's true purpose for our existence. God has a plan and a purpose for us that we can live in right now. We do not have to wait for some future return of Christ or to die and go to heaven to realize God's plan for us. His purpose is that we would be conformed to the image of Christ now and that we could have a real and living relationship as sons with our Heavenly Father.

Romans 8:28-29 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."