

ABC's of SALVATION

by

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

RAHAB

“BY faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Hebrews 11:31).

In the few words above, the writer to the Hebrews sums up the story found in chapters two and six of the book of Joshua. Few narratives in the Word of God so completely picture the salvation of the sinner as does the story of the sparing of the harlot Rahab in the destruction of Jericho. It is one of those **“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).**

I. She Lived in a Condemned City

Jericho was one of the first cities in the pathway of Israel. It was marked for destruction, for Israel was to wage a war of extermination. The critics of God's Word have had much to say about this seemingly wholesale slaughter. They fail to see that God had declared that their cup of iniquity was full (Genesis 15:16) and also that the Judge of all the earth did right (Genesis 18:25).

In this condemned city, upon which the sword of God's justice was about to fall, lived the harlot Rahab. In this connection, she was a picture of the entire race. In John 3:18 it is written, **“He that believeth not is condemned already.”** Note the words. It does not say, “may be condemned” or “is about to be condemned” but **“is condemned”** Again it is written in Romans 3:23, **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”** Again note the words. It does not say “some have sinned” or even “most have sinned” but it specifically says **“all have sinned”** Thus we see that Rahab's city was a picture of the entire race.

II. Her Character Was Bad

She not only lived in a condemned city, but her own personal character was bad. She was a harlot; her life had been one of sin and disgrace. It might not have been difficult to persuade her that she was bad. It was a matter of public knowledge—it was proclaimed by the situation of her home. Be that as it may, one thing is sure that all men everywhere are sinners. The Word of God is very clear on this matter for it says, **“There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10).**

In another chapter we have called your attention to the two memorable interviews held in John 3 and 4. The Lord Jesus Christ, in chapter 4, had little trouble in convincing the poor outcast of her sins, but when He talked to the religious leader in chapter 3, He was met with the questions, “How? How?” God’s Word does not classify sinners, such as good sinners, bad sinners, etc., but says **“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”** Some armies have a standard of height for their soldiers. To miss this mark by one-half inch means rejection just as surely as if it had been missed by a foot.

III. She Believed in the Power of God

To the two spies she said, **“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”** (Joshua 2:10). She did not attempt to explain by “natural means” the things she had heard concerning the power of the Lord. She was willing to accept the truth that the God of the Israelites was more powerful than any of the gods of Canaan.

Some time ago I picked up a piece of Sunday school literature of a well-known denomination. In the account of the crossing of the Red Sea, this paper stated that Israel just crossed a marshy tract of land. Being on foot it was easy to step from one tuft of grass to another. The Egyptians, being in chariots, drove into this marshy tract and stalled in the mud. This harlot on the walls of Jericho had more faith in the power and Word of God than some of these **“blind leaders of the blind”** have. She knew if she were spared, it would be by the grace and power of God.

IV. She Received a Promise

“And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if you 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” (Joshua 2:14).

She based her faith upon the word of the spies. Her safety depended upon the authenticity of the spies rather than upon what she did. It is written in I John 5:9-12, **“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”**

If Rahab could trust the word of the spies to the saving of her life surely sinners may trust the Word of God concerning their salvation.

V. She Displayed the Sign of Her Faith

“And the men said unto her . . . 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” (Joshua 2:17, 18).

There is a scarlet line running from Genesis to The Revelation.

- It begins to run in the third chapter of Genesis where God provides coverings of “**coats of skins**” for the sinning pair.
- This scarlet line is seen in Abel’s offering, the passover lamb, the brazen altar of sacrifice, this scarlet line of Rahab, etc.

When time is over and the saints gather about the Throne, the theme of their song will be, “**For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**” (Revelation 5:9).

When eternity is hoary,
Precious still will be the story,
Of redemption by the blood,
Of redemption by the blood.

VI. Her Faith Gave Way to Sight

There were days and probably weeks of waiting. It is probable that she received much advice during those days. No doubt she was told many times that such a simple expedient as the displayed cord would never save her, while on the other hand there were those who told her the city would never be destroyed.

During this time her faith never wavered. She knew the city was doomed to destruction but she had the word of the spies for her preservation. That faith was shown by her display of the scarlet cord. That cord was not an ordinary one. It was the one by which she had saved the lives of the spies—she could trust it now to save her life.

One day the city fell into the hands of the Israelites. In Joshua 6:22, 23 it is written, “**But Joshua said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot’s house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. 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.**”

Her faith had now given way to sight.

VII. Her Great Privilege

Rahab never performed great feats. She never stopped the mouths of lions, she never quenched the violence of fire, nor turned to flight the armies of aliens, yet her name is written among the heroes of faith in God’s “Westminster Abbey” in Hebrews 11.

But another privilege was hers. She was the grandmother of Jesse—the father of David. Thus we see that she was in the line of the ancestry of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. She was a member of His earthly family, according to the flesh.

Unsaved reader, you have a greater privilege. By faith in Him, you may become a member of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12) and can reign and rule with Him throughout the ages. A greater privilege was never vouchsafed to the sons of men. To reject such a privilege makes all other sins sink into insignificance.

There is life in a look at the Crucified One;
There is life at this moment for thee;
Then look, sinner—look unto Him and be saved—
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.

His anguish of soul on the cross hast thou seen?
His cry of distress hast thou heard?
Then why, if the terrors of wrath He endured,
Should pardon to thee be deferred?

~ end of chapter 18 ~

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