

RAHAB'S FAITH: A SAVING FAITH

HEBREWS 11:31

Introduction

This is a beautiful picture of saving faith. It is the picture of one of Christ's ancestors, the picture of a harlot who turned from her sin to live for God. And because she did, she was saved and became one of the great women of history in the eyes of God and believers everywhere.

- I. A faith that believed in the God of Israel (v.31).
- II. A faith that saved (v.31).

I. *Hebrews 11:31 Faith in the God of Israel*

The faith of Rahab was a faith that believed in the God of Israel (cp. Josh. 2:1-21; 6:17, 22-23, 25; Mt. 1:5; Jas. 2:25). She was a harlot and a Canaanite, a woman who was the furthest thing from being a follower of God, but she experienced a phenomenal conversion and she became a strong believer. What happened was this.

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho to spy out the city. They were almost caught, but they found refuge in the house of a prostitute named Rahab. The armed soldiers had heard that the spies were hiding out in her house and they confronted her, but she hid and protected them. Why? Why would she lie to her people and protect the two Israelite strangers? Scripture says because she believed in the God of Israel. How could she have possibly believed in the God of Israel when she was not an Israelite and had never been taught about the God of Israel and His promises? Scripture tells us. In conversation with the two spies she said:

Josh 2:9-11 And said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

Rahab believed what she had heard about the God of Israel — that He was the true and living God. When it was humanly impossible for Israel to conquer Jericho — when Israel had no modern weapons to make war — when there was not a chance in this world that Israel could be victorious — Rahab believed in the God of Israel and she acted upon that faith. She believed that the God of Israel would save His people and give them the promised land. Therefore, she saved the lives of the two Israelite spies.

Psa 31:19 How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.

Psa 32:10 Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

Psa 34:22 The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

Psa 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

Psa 118:8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Prov 29:25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

Isa 50:10 Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.

II. Hebrews 11:31 Faith that Saves

The faith of Rahab was a faith that saved her and her family. Rahab asked the two men to save her and her family when they attacked the city.

Josh 2:12-21 Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death." "Our lives for your lives!" The men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land." So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. Now she had said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way." The men said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear." "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

Note: it was seeing the scarlet (red) thread that was to save Rahab. Also note that Rahab demanded that the men "swear to her by the Lord." She strongly believed that Israel would

conquer Jericho despite the impossible odds against them. She believed in the God of Israel: that God was going to give Israel the promised land. And most important of all, she believed that her life and salvation rested with the Israelites, that is, with the God of Israel. She believed that the God of Israel could and would save her. Oliver Greene has an excellent picture on the scarlet thread and salvation:

“This presents a beautiful picture of salvation. Two spies made the promise, Rahab believed it; and even though a great host of Israelites were to move in upon the city, she believed that the scarlet thread was her assurance of protection. All the money in Jericho could not have purchased that scarlet thread, because it was Rahab’s guarantee of preservation while others were destroyed through unbelief: ‘And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father’s household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho’ Josh.6:25 .

“This is most interesting. The Word of God does not name the Israelites who befriended this woman of Jericho, but some noble soul in the land of Israel took her in, loved her, and gave her a new home; and as she lived among the Israelites she grew in grace, in faith and in strength.

“We can easily believe that Rahab was an attractive woman, one who had a winning personality and the ability to make friends easily; but now she had something more: she had the Lord God in her heart. She was a new creation, a completely new woman.

“A young man in Israel fell in love with her and married her. (I like to think that this young man was one of the spies, but that is just supposition on my part. The Bible does not tell us who he was.) The record does prove, however, that Rahab became the wife of an Israelite and God blessed them, gave them a son, and they called his name Boaz.

“We read of Boaz in Ruth 2:1 that he was a ‘mighty man of wealth, ’ and Mathew 1:5 tells us, Salmon begat Booz (Boaz) of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse. Jesse was the father of David, and it was through the lineage of David that the Saviour came!

“You see, when God saves a harlot, a murderer, a liar, a thief – or even a good moral person, that one becomes a new creation with a new heart and a new life. God saves – He does not repair: ‘Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new’ (2 Cor. 5:17)” (The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, p. 504f).

Thought 1. Just imagine! Rahab was one of the human ancestors of the Saviour Himself, Christ Jesus our Lord. What a glorious picture of the saving grace of God.

And His mercy and grace are eternal: they are able to save any of us today no matter how much of a harlot, derelict, thief, murderer, adulterer, liar, fame-seeker, drug addict, leader, boaster, socialite or materialist we are. Whether we would be considered to be down and out or of the upper crust within society, God can save us. No matter what we are or what we have done, God can save us if we will only believe and trust in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 3:15-16 *That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

John 3:36 *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*

John 5:24 *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."*

John 12:46 *I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.*

John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Rom 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

2 Tim 3:15 *And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ■*