

Hebrews 11:31

Hebrews 11:31, *“By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies was not killed with those who were disobedient.”*

Rahab was a woman and is the only woman specifically mentioned by the author of Hebrews in this chapter commending people for their faith in God. Sarah is mentioned in verse 22, but she is mentioned along with her husband Abraham.

WHO WAS THIS WOMAN RAHAB?

- 1) She was a Gentile, an idol worshiper, and a Canaanite.
- 2) She was a prostitute.
- 3) Because she was a Canaanite, she belonged to a group of people who were condemned to judgment by God.

Ethically and morally speaking, Rahab was anything but the kind of woman one would expect to find in God’s Hall of Fame of faith, but that’s how God’s grace and mercy works. God extends His grace and mercy to people from every tribe and language and people and nation.

WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY DID RAHAB LIVE IN?

Rahab lived in Jericho which was an Amorite city near the Jordan River in the land God promised to give the Israelites after He brought them out of Egypt. The Amorites were an idolatrous and wicked people. They worshiped four different gods: Chemosh, Milcom, Baal, and Ashteroth. Their worship services dedicated to these gods were filled with gross immorality and sexual perversion. They also practiced what they called “foundation sacrifices.” When a house was to be built, a child would be sacrificed, and its body built into the wall, to bring good luck to the rest of the family.” (Halley’s Bible Handbook – p. 166) Another source said that the Amorites would worship their gods by putting live babies in jars and building them into their city walls as foundation sacrifices. Another source said they would worship their gods by offering up, through fire, the fetuses of unborn children straight from the mother’s womb. The remains of the charred baby would then be placed in jars and would be placed along the inside of the city’s walls especially in the city of Jericho. (unpopulartruth.org)

Because of the idolatry and wickedness of this Amorite civilization, God had condemned it to judgment. The Lord had told Moses in Leviticus 20:2, *“Say to the Israelites: Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death ...”*

Before entering the Promised Land, Moses told the Israelites in Deuteronomy 7:1-2, *“When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations – the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you – and when the Lord your God has delivered them*

over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.”

The Amorites living in Jericho may not have felt condemned; but they were condemned, according to the Word of God. As we look at Rahab’s life, we’ll see that she exercises faith in the one and only true living God just before He carries out his judgment on the people living in Jericho, and God extends His grace and mercy to her.

PRINCIPLE #1 – RAHAB BELIEVES IN THE ONLY LIVING AND TRUE GOD (JOSHUA 2:1-11)

Joshua 2:1-8, “Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. “Go, look over the land,” he said, “especially Jericho.” So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there. The king of Jericho was told, “Look! Some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.” So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.” But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.” But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof. So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut. Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them,”

(This is significant.) Joshua 2:9-12 goes on, “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. Now then 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”

Although the Amorites in Jericho were filled with terror, they had no desire to believe in and trust in the one and only living and true God worshiped by the Israelites. They knew that the Israelite God had promised their land to the children of Israel and that He had promised to destroy them. They knew that the Israelite God had destroyed the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og who lived on the other side of the Jordan River, but they didn’t believe that He would really destroy them too. They didn’t want to repent of their sin, turn from their gods, and seek mercy from the one and only living and true God. They thought they could stop or withstand His judgment. But Rahab was different from the rest of the Amorite people. She believed in the one and only living and true God of the Israelites, sought mercy from Him and committed her soul to Him. Rahab realized that Chemosh, Milcorn, Baal, and Ashtheroth were no gods at all, and she confessed that the Israelite God was the only living and true God of Heaven and earth. Rahab told the spies in Joshua 2:11b, “... *the Lord your God is God in heaven*

above and on the earth below.”

APPLICATION – You and I are living in a condemned world.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-5a, 8-10, *“For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”*

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9, *“God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.”*

The only way to escape the one and only living and true God’s judgment of eternal separation from Him is to place our faith and trust in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as God’s only provision for the penalty of our sin. Jesus said in John 3:16-18, *“For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”*

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 14:6, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

The Lord Jesus Christ, who was eternally God, came to earth as a human being, lived a sinless life and died on the cross, rose physically from the dead and ascended back into heaven for us so that, whether we are physically alive or physically dead, we may live together with Him. If you have never placed your faith in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as God’s only way to escape eternal separation from Him, you may not feel condemned; but you are condemned to spending eternity separated from God in a place of torment according to the Word of God.

PRINCIPLE #2 – RAHAB’S FAITH IN THE ONLY LIVING AND TRUE GOD PRODUCES ACTION.

Whenever there is genuine saving faith in God, it will always be accompanied by good works and a desire to please Him. Rahab’s faith in the only living and true God caused her to abandon the fellowship of her own people, the Amorites, and join the fellowship of the Israelites.

1) RAHAB'S FAITH IN THE ONE AND ONLY LIVING GOD CAUSED HER TO TAKE THE TWO ISRAELITE SPIES INTO HER HOME, HIDE THEM, AND LIE TO THE AMORITE AUTHORITIES WHEN THEY CAME TO QUESTION HER ABOUT THE TWO ISRAELITE SPIES.

If the Amorite King had ever found out what Rahab had done, he would have executed her.

2) RAHAB'S FAITH IN THE ONE AND ONLY LIVING GOD CAUSED HER TO SEEK PROTECTION FOR HER FAMILY FROM THE COMING JUDGMENT.

Rahab tells the two Israelite spies in Joshua 2:12-13, *"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."*

Rahab did not want to be saved alone from God's judgment. She wanted her immediate and extended family members to be saved from God's judgment as well. This is evidence of a true conversion. When a person genuinely finds salvation from the penalty of their sins, they immediately begin to want to see others saved from the penalty of their sins as well. And the natural place is to begin with their family.

ILLUSTRATION – Mrs. William Booth, wife of the first general in the Salvation Army raised eight children, and claimed every one of them for God before they were born. She used to say, "I refuse to bring any child into the world to be damned in hell at last." Some of her children thought that their mother was rather mean and hard because she would not allow them to run with the non-Christian crowd. But the time came when every one of them thanked their mother for her Godly example and guidance. All eight of them became Christians and sought to bring their children to Christ as well.

The two spies agreed to save Rahab's family.

Joshua 2:14-21, *"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."*

3) RAHAB'S FAITH IN GOD CAUSED HER TO OBEY THE TWO SPIES BY TYING THE SCARLET CORD IN THE WINDOW.

Joshua 2:21b, *"... So she sent them away, and they departed; and she tied the scarlet cord in the window."*

APPLICATION – Does our faith in God motivate us to do good works? Do we have a desire to see our immediate and extended family members and friends escape the coming Judgment of God? Does our faith in Christ motivate us to obey His commandments? If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you in a court of law? If you are the only saved member in your family, in faith pray to God for the salvation of the other members of your family. If you have unsaved friends and family members, pray for them, share your testimony with them, live and obedient Christian life in front of them, introduce them to other believers who are living a Spirit filled life, and invite them to church.

PRINCIPLE #3 – RAHAB'S FAITH IN THE ONLY LIVING AND TRUE GOD IS REWARDED.

EXPLANATION – Rahab was rewarded by God as He allowed her and her family to escape the judgment and certain death.

Joshua 6:20-25a, *"When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it – men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys. Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her. So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel. Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the Lord's house. But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho ..."*

Think about it! Rahab and her family stood outside Jericho and saw God's judgment take place. The walls flat on the ground. (retaining wall 12-15 feet high. On top of that was a wall 6 feet thick and about 20-26 feet high. At the crest of an embankment was another brick wall 6 feet thick and about 20-26 feet high) Every man, woman, child and animal killed. The city burning with fire. It must have been a sobering sight. But because of Rahab's faith in the only living and true God she and her family were spared and because of their unbelief in the only living and true God all the other Amorite people in the city were destroyed.

Do you think Rahab's family members were happy and thankful that Rahab cared enough about them to rescue them from God's judgment?

Rahab was also rewarded by God as she became a part of the nation of Israel and, according to Matthew 1:5, Rahab married a Jewish man by the name of Salmon, and actually became the great great grandmother of King David and a relative of our Lord Jesus Christ. No doubt there were many women in Jericho who were more moral than Rahab, yet they suffered God's righteous judgment and were buried unknown and unsung. But by her faith in the only living and true God and His great grace and great mercy, Rahab and her family were delivered from God's Judgment and she is enshrined in God's Hall of Fame of faith.

APPLICATION – Rahab's family were all saved by the scarlet cord in the window. In the same way, all Christians are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. If Rahab's family had refused to come into her home the scarlet cord would not have saved them. If you refuse to place your faith and trust in Christ's shed blood on the cross, it will not save you.

God will reward our faith in Jesus Christ, if we have accepted Jesus Christ as our personal savior through faith. And our faith in Him produces obedience and good works, we can be assured that we will escape God's judgment.

If we have not accepted Jesus Christ as our personal savior through faith, we can be assured that we will be condemned to eternity apart from God.

John 3:16-18, "For God did not send his son into the World to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

Regardless of the kind of life you have lived, there is forgiveness for sin and eternal life available through Jesus Christ.