

SERMON: RAHAB'S RED ROPE

Joshua 2:15; Joshua 2:18; Joshua 2:21; Joshua 6:17; Joshua 6:25

Joshua 2:15

Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

Joshua 2:18

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.

Joshua 2:21

And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

Joshua 6:17

And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

Joshua 6:25

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.

Introduction

You have heard me say over and over, that faith and reason do not conflict. They complement each other. This Biblical narrative is another example of this fact. Joshua had already been assured by God that His people would be successful in conquering the Promised Land. Joshua believed God, yet, he sent two spies to Jericho on a reconnaissance mission. Jericho was geographically the first city after crossing the Jordan River; it was also the most fortified city in the land. The strategy was simple: the defeat of Jericho would have a domino effect on the rest of the land and make the defeat of other cities much easier.

The two spies hid in the boarding house of a prostitute named Rahab. Let me say it right here that all saints have a tainted past and all converted sinners have a tremendous future. In her pagan culture, her profession was not seen as immoral. If we condemn her behavior, we also must condemn her clients' behavior. It appears she was also a seamstress. In that era, a seamstress actually made the cloth and the thread and then made the garments from that same cloth and thread. This is why she had flax stalks on her roof; flax was used to make cloth and thread.

The king found out about the spies and approached Rahab and inquired about their location. The spies were hiding on her roof among the stalks of flax, but she did not disclose their whereabouts. When it was safe, she lowered them down from a window with a red rope.

The two spies, whom Rahab had concealed and protected, made a covenant with her that they would protect her and her family when the city was attacked. They requested that she hang that same red rope from that same window to clearly identify her house, so they would be spared during the battle. She complied with their request and displayed the chosen emblem, hence she and her family were saved when the walls of Jericho came tumbling down and the entire city was destroyed. There are many great truths that can be gleaned from this narrative. I can only give you a few in one sermon- especially on Communion Sunday.

Exposition

1. Rahab Became A Woman Of Faith.

(She Only Had One Opportunity To Get Saved-We Have Many.)

2. Rahab Demonstrated Love and Mercy to People From a Different Culture and From a Different Background.

(She Was Obeying The Golden Rule Before There Was A Golden Rule.)

(She Was Not Perfect, But Her Heart Was In The Right Place.)

3. The Spies Demonstrated Reciprocal Appreciation.

(We Will Save You When The City Is Attacked.)

(The Merciful Shall Obtain Mercy.)

4. Rahab Displayed Exact Obedience to a Small Matter.

(Hang the Same Red Rope From The Same Window Again.)

(We Have To Help People Help Us.)

5. The Red Rope Was Both Historical And Prophetic.

(It Brought About Continuity Between The Past, The Present, And The Future.)

(The Red Rope Was the Source Of Salvation.)

(A) It Referred To The Blood On The Door Post In Exodus.

(B) It Was a Type Of the Saving Blood Of Jesus.

Closing Thoughts

The scarlet thread, Rahab's red rope, runs all the way from Genesis to Revelation. The way to salvation has not changed and it never will. It is through the blood of Jesus. It was anticipated by types and by foreshadows in the Old Testament and by the "Real Thing" in the New Testament. Only the blood saves. No blood on the doorpost-no salvation. Blood on the doorpost- salvation to all behind the door. No red rope hanging from the window- no salvation. The red rope hanging from the window-salvation to all who will grab it and slide down to safety. The blood will never lose its power. Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

Related Scriptures

Joshua 2:1-6:27

Hebrews 11:31

James 2:25

Matthew 1:5

End Notes

1. Rahab is honorably mentioned both in Hebrews 11 and in the book of James. In Hebrews 11 she stands forth as an example of faith. In James she is exemplified as an illustration of works. She married Salmon, who may have been one of the spies. From this marriage Boaz was born. We all know that Boaz married Ruth and from this lineage came David, and from David's lineage came our Savior, Jesus. I spared you all of the "begats."

2. Jericho was surrounded by two walls, both thirty feet high. The outer wall was six feet thick and the inner wall was twelve feet thick. Between the two walls was a space of twelve to fifteen feet. The space was covered over and houses were built bridging the two walls. This was where Rahab's house was built.

3. Rahab hid the spies among stalks of flax. Flax seeds yield linseed oil. The fibers in the stalks produce linen yarn. To obtain the yarn the flax fibers were softened by soaking, dried, and bleached on the roof tops. The soaking is called retting.

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