

## HEBREWS CHAPTER 11 – HEROES OF FAITH

### Lesson #13

### “RAHAB”

#### Hebrews 11:31

***“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”***

The list of Heroes of Faith in Hebrews chapter 11 includes a most unlikely female personality whose name was Rahab. Let us study this unique woman.

#### I. WHO WAS RAHAB?

We are introduced to Rahab in Joshua chapter two and find the following information:

##### A. Rahab Was A Citizen Of Jericho.

“Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.” (Joshua 2:1)

It has been suggested by not a few commentators that Rahab operated an inn. It would not be unusual, therefore, for the spies to seek lodging there.

##### B. Rahab was A Canaanite – a Gentile.

God had forewarned the Israelites about fraternizing with the heathen occupants of the land where they were going saying to Moses: “My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars.” (Exodus 23:23-24)

However, in the case of Rahab and her family, we see the mercy and grace of God displayed in the life of a very unlikely person and in a very unlikely place.

##### C. Rahab was A Prostitute. Joshua 2:1; 6:17; 6:25; James 2:25; Heb. 11:31.

Rahab was a prostitute and yet she is listed along with those whom we consider great heroes of faith. The heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11 were far from perfect people.

All of those we have studied so far had failures in their lives and we are not surprised when we read about them. But we are surprised when we read that ***“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”***

We shouldn’t be surprised that God saves those we consider the worst of sinners. Paul said that he was “the chief of sinners.” Can a sinner be saved from ***the house of shame*** and be put into ***the Hall of Fame***? Yes! Here in the story of Rahab we see John 3:16 illustrated.

##### D. Rahab Was a Woman of Faith. Heb. 11:31. She is mentioned 2 other times in

the New Testament in addition to Hebrews 11- Matt.1:5 & James 2:25. She demonstrated her faith in her actions with regard to her helping the spies.

#### **E. Rahab was Declared Righteous.**

James, in his epistle, writes about the correlation between faith and works saying, *“You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. **In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?”*** (James 2:20-25)

Let us be clear about the relationship between faith and works. Faith results in justification Godward; works results in justification manward. The way our fellow citizens of earth know that we have faith is by the outward manifestation of it in our works and our walk. The story of Rahab demonstrates both the grace of God and Rahab’s faith in the God of grace!

#### **F. Rahab was an Ancestress of Jesus.** She is listed in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:5 *“Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab.”*

These are the basic facts about Rahab’s biography. We shall learn more as we move on into the account of her exploits.

## **II. WHAT DID RAHAB KNOW AND BELIEVE ABOUT GOD?**

Biblical faith is always a response to revelation. It is therefore not a leap in the dark but a step into the light. It is not a vague mysticism but an understanding response to a clearly revealed truth.

This is what she knew: “I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For 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 the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He *is* God in heaven above and on earth beneath.” (Joshua 2:9-11)

She followed what light she had and God sent more. True faith has at its heart a kernel of confident reliance upon God.

#### **A. She knew that God had given Israel the territory of Canaan. V. 9**

**B. She knew that God had miraculously delivered Israel from Egypt. V.10**

**C. She knew that Israel had defeated Amorite Kings. 2:10. See Num.21:21-35.**

**D. She knew that Jehovah was the true God of heaven and earth. V.11**

With these seeds of truth she had deposited her faith, her trust, her hope for the future in God. Hers was not a perfect faith and neither is ours. That she believed God based upon the scant knowledge she had, was accounted to her as sufficient faith for her salvation. Her faith was indeed a “mustard seed faith.” (Matt. 17:20)

### **III. WHAT DID RAHAB DO?**

Rahab’s faith led to action! She took 3 actions:

**A. She lodged the spies. 2:1**

“Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.”

**B. She hid them. 2:6**

“She had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.”

**C. She helped them escape. 2:15-16**

“Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. And she said to them, “Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way.”

Her lies are not to be overlooked. Remember, she was part of a heathen culture that did not know better. The Canaanites were a debauched people. History tells us that they were involved in all sorts of orgies and atrocities. That is why God destroyed the city.

Is lying ever acceptable? It is never right to do wrong. However, with her background and cultural upbringing she no doubt saw nothing wrong with lying to preserve the lives of the spies.

### **IV. WHAT ARE SOME FAITH CHARACTERISTICS AS SEEN IN RAHAB?**

It is not how much faith we have that leads to salvation, but where we deposit what faith we have. It is the object of our faith that is most important.

**A. True faith is more than intellectual knowledge – it leads to trust in God.**

Twice she said, “*we have heard*” in 2:10,11 and therefore she said, “*I know*” in 2:9. Rom. 10:17 “*faith comes by hearing .....*”. She acted decisively out of her convictions. She wanted to be on God’s side. This decision took great courage.

**B. True faith is demonstrated by actions.**

The greatest evidence of Rahab’s faith was the scarlet cord she put in her window! See Josh. 2:18-21. That action was a faith-confirming act.

**C. True faith results in salvation.** Joshua 6:22-23 -

“But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, “Go into the harlot’s house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her.” And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.”

Was this the first instance of “household salvation”?

**D. True faith is faith that continues to trust.**

“And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.” (Joshua 6:25)

At the time of the writing of the book of Joshua, which was years after the destruction of Jericho, Rahab was still living with the Israelites.

Let us continue to trust and identify with God’s people. Paul counsels us to “...continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard ..” (Col. 1:23)

**FOUR DEGREES OF FAITH**

1. **Faith that receives** – This faith is demonstrated by an empty-handed beggar who comes to Jesus Christ and accepts salvation. John 1:12 “*As many as receive .....*”
2. **Faith that reckons** - This faith counts on God to fulfill His promises. II Tim. 1:12 “*I know whom I have believed and am persuaded ....*”
3. **Faith that risks** - This faith moves out to dare something for God that’s humanly impossible as is demonstrated over and over again in Hebrews chapter 11.
4. **Faith that rests** - This faith, even in the midst of hardship and suffering, trusts in the loving Heavenly Father for deliverance. “*Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him...*” (Ps.37:7)

~~~~~

**“WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD”**

Heb. 11:6

JdonJ