

RAHAB AND THE SCARLET LINE

BIBLE TEXT : Joshua 2:1-24

LESSON 153 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Joshua 2:1-24

¹ And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

² And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.

³ And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

⁴ And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they *were*:

⁵ And it came to pass *about the time* of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

⁶ But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

⁷ And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

⁸ And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

⁹ And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Jericho

On the west side of the Jordan River, in the midst of many palm trees, lay the beautiful City of Jericho. It was a wealthy city, and was surrounded by great walls to keep out invaders who might want to come to capture its inhabitants or steal its gold. The king and many brave men lived in Jericho, but they were wicked people and God had promised their city to the Israelites.

The Israelites had come to the borders of Canaan, and their first object of attack was Jericho. Moses sent spies to see how many and what kind of people lived there. There were gates in the city wall which were open during the day, and the spies walked in unquestioned as though they were harmless visitors.

The walls that protected Jericho were thick enough for houses to be built upon them. In one of these houses Rahab had an inn to which the spies went to spend the night.

Suspicion

The king of Jericho knew that the Israelites were camped on the other side of Jordan, and he was alert to the danger such a vast army might be to his city. His counter-spies were watching, and they noticed the arrival of the two strange men who had gone to Rahab's inn. They reported it to the king, who immediately sent officers to search for them.

The houses in Jericho had flat roofs, and upon Rahab's roof she had spread out flax to dry in the sun. Under this flax she hid the two spies; and when the officers came she told them that her guests had already left the city, and if they hurried they might overtake them before they crossed the river. Her story was so convincing that the officers immediately set out in hot pursuit. It was now getting dark and the huge gates were closed so no one could go out nor come into the city. It was not right to tell a lie, but she was only a heathen Canaanite and did not know the law, "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

Rahab's Faith

Hiding the spies meant that Rahab was a traitor to her king; and if she were discovered she would probably be killed. But she was afraid of Someone else more than she was afraid of death. She feared the Lord. She said to the spies: "The LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." She realized that He was all-powerful, and she had faith that He could do much greater things than man could do.

Jesus one time told the people, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. . . . Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell" (Luke 12:4, 5). That was the fear which Rahab understood many hundreds of years before Jesus preached on earth.

A True Token

Rahab was risking her life in sheltering them, and she asked their mercy when the Israelites would march into Jericho in triumph. She said they had heard of the miraculous things God

inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

¹⁰ For 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, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

¹¹ And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

¹² Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

¹³ And *that* ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

¹⁴ And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye 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.

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.

¹⁶ And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

¹⁷ And the men said unto her, We *will be* blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

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

had done for His people even before they had left Egypt. The people of Jericho knew that in all their battles the Israelites had been successful, and it frightened them so that their hearts "did melt" within them. She knew that God would give His people this city, too.

The spies promised that her goodness to them would be rewarded. Nothing would happen to her or the members of her family if they remained in her house, if she would promise not to tell the king that they had been there. As a sign or token of their promise a red cord was to be tied in the window of her house. When the invading army saw the cord they would know that that was the house of Rahab who had befriended Israel.

The spies' mission was now finished, and as it was night and the gates in the wall were closed, Rahab used that scarlet cord to lower them from her house to the ground outside the city. She advised them to hide in the mountains a few days until the officers who were looking for them should have returned. This they did, and escaped safely to the camp of Israel.

The Scarlet Line

That scarlet line was more than a token for Rahab's household. It is a type of the Blood of Jesus, the scarlet line that runs through all the Scripture. From the time animals were killed to clothe Adam and Eve when they sinned in the Garden, the shedding of blood was a type of the remission of sin. "And without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9: 22). Abel offered the slain lamb from his flock as a sacrifice to God, which was accepted as the right offering. Burnt offerings continued to be presented by the fathers of each family until the time that God instituted the tabernacle worship and the priests were given the duty of killing the animals and shedding the blood for the sins of the people.

All these sacrifices pictured the coming of Jesus as the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world. His Blood was shed on Calvary to provide an atonement for all who want to be saved.

Our Safety

Our safety today is the Blood of Jesus. When the Blood covers our hearts and washes away our sins we are safe from the destroyer. We are just as safe as Rahab's family was in the house where the scarlet line was in the window. But we must remain under the Blood. Rahab's family were compelled to stay in the house in order to be safe. The Israelite soldiers would never have recognized them out in the street with the other inhabitants of Jericho. They must stay behind that red line,

So must we stay under the Blood. God will not recognize us as His children if we go back into sin. When we come to stand before the Judge of all the earth, our good works will not buy our way into Heaven. The Blood of Jesus which cleanses us from all sin will be our only plea.

No matter how good a Christian one may have been at one time, if he leaves the safe place behind the scarlet line he will be no safer than if he had never been there.

Rahab's Reward

All the people of Jericho had heard that the Israelites were God's chosen people. For forty years they had noted their march, and they even remembered the plagues that God had sent upon Egypt as judgment against Israel's oppressors. The dwellers in Jericho believed in the mighty power of God, and they

thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

¹⁹ And it shall be, *that* whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood *shall be* upon his head, and we *will be* guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head, if *any* hand be upon him.

²⁰ And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.

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.

²² And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought *them* throughout all the way, but found *them* not.

²³ So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all *things* that befell them:

²⁴ And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

feared and trembled. But only Rahab, one lone woman, sought God's favor. And because she did she saved the lives of all her family when the city was destroyed.

Rahab is listed in Hebrews 11 among the heroes of faith. She married an Israelite and became an ancestress of King David in the royal line from which Jesus was born (**Matthew 1:5** ⁵ And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse).

We can see that not all who fear God's judgments will be saved. Even the devils fear and tremble, but their portion will be hell for all eternity. Only Rahab's household who remained behind the scarlet line were saved. Only the people who have the Blood of Jesus wash away their sins will enjoy eternal salvation.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Describe Jericho.
- 2 Why did the spies go to Jericho?
- 3 Where did they stay in Jericho?
- 4 How did Rahab hide the spies?
- 5 How did she get them out of the city?
- 6 What was the true token?
- 7 What did it represent, or typify?
- 8 What is our True Token?
- 9 What was Rahab's reward for befriending the Israelites?
- 10 What will win us favor with God in the judgment?