

Rahab (Heb. 11:30,31)

God had a plan He shared with Abraham in which was included a most unlikely person for she was a Gentile, pagan, immoral woman. God promised Abraham his future generations would live in a land He would give them, [Gen. 17:8 I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.](#) Before they would enter the land though, they would be afflicted for four hundred years in *another* country, which turned out to be Egypt. For the first thirty years they lived in comfort until Pharaohs came along who didn't know anything about Joseph's legacy. And, for the next four hundred years, - as the Lord had told Abraham, - the children of Israel were enslaved. When they eventually came out of Egypt, their subsequent disobedience to the Lord made what should have been a two-to-three-week journey into a journey of forty years, wandering in the wilderness.

On the northern edge of the wilderness, - overlooking the Promised Land of Canaan, - Moses died and was succeeded by Joshua as the leader of Israel. In front of them was what would have seemed to be the idyllic city of Jericho, the entrance to the land God had promised. As you might understand, however, the already-occupants of Jericho had no desire to hand the city over to the Hebrews ... and for the Hebrews to acquire it on their own would have seemed an over-stretched ambition for they had been wearily travelling through the wilderness ... and had no army.

From the outside, therefore, there was no way in. Remember, though, God's promise to His people through Abraham, [Gen. 17:8 I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.](#) ... That was a commitment God had never rescinded, neither during the afflictions in Egypt, nor the hardship in the desert, and neither would be the thickness of those walls surrounding Jericho!

How did God do it? He did it using a woman *not* from the Israelite nation. Instead, she was a Gentile, idol-worshipping pagan from the backstreets of Jericho, - we know that for the window to her house looked out over the walls of the city (Joshua 2:15). Who was this woman?

HER TITLE ... She was a harlot, a prostitute, a woman who men went to satisfy their cravings and lust. One of the ancient Jewish manuscripts tries to play the description down by describing her as an 'innkeeper' ... aye,

but what did she keep in the inn? She kept her business of prostitution. No matter how you try, you can't dress it up to make her respectable ... *she was a prostitute*, and that is how she was also described in the New Testament, **Heb. 11:31** [By faith the harlot Rahab](#).

Rahab is not a very flattering name for it means 'large', 'broad', 'wide'. ... Not very flattering, at all! We can also imagine a *loud* woman, - the type you would hear her before you saw her, and she would be the centre of the attention of all the men 'oogling' over her. Her house was a den of iniquity, and if you were trying to find a place in Jericho where God's people should avoid, her house was such a place! ... She had no respect for morals or virtue ... She had no time for God (she had heard of Him), but she had nothing to do with Him!

What more can you really say about her title?! She was a prostitute ... she lived off her earnings ... she welcomed any man that wanted her services, including all the men who came in from the desert ... She must also have had a certain rapport with the soldiers who came looking for the spies because it doesn't seem the soldiers overly pressed the matter, - maybe they had secrets to hide! ... And there was no indication she was discontent with her chosen profession for this was her life, and she had no intention of changing it. ... **Her title** ... she was **Heb. 11:31** [the harlot Rahab](#).

HER TOWN was Jericho ... a welcoming place of safety to the traveller behind the walls ... and Rahab's business thrived on welcomes!

Jericho is said to be the oldest continually-inhabited settlement in the world. It has its palm tree, its fortified walls, and it was considered virtually impregnable ... What were the children of Israel to do? Rather than send his armies in straightaway Joshua despatched two men to spy out the land. For whatever reason, they made their way into a certain *house*, i.e. a 'house' rather than a 'home'. Why they went to this particular house we are not told ... They *might* have gone there seeking the services of a prostitute, - it's a possibility, - but from another perspective, the house of a prostitute was an ideal location to have as your base to avoid detection since many men from all over the place would have been in and out of that house. ... As it happened, their choice was God-ordained.

The two men entered Rahab's house and she reckoned they were there for what all the other men came into her house for. She knew they weren't from Jericho, but that didn't matter. However, the local king had heard some spies had sneaked into his city with the intention of making plans for an invasion (Josh. 2:2). He didn't know how many they were ... but him and his people were frightened, and he sent his soldiers to capture the spies. So, here the spies were ... in a prostitute's house.

As far as God is concerned, it did not matter what this woman was because He had plans for what she would become. He was going to use *her* for His glory! Before the men entered Jericho, God's sovereign grace was already there. God had a plan to use that woman, even though she had absolutely no thoughts whatsoever of anything to do with Him. But, that's the way the human condition is for if left to ourselves, *nobody* would choose to have anything to do with God. ... We would be content with a religion we would formulate to suit ourselves ... for to believe in God is not within the remit of men and women to seek.

But do you know why God chose her? If you were to imagine her in your mind and try to figure out why God chose to save her ... why do you think He did? ... Was it because of anything righteous in her? No, definitely not! ... Was it because He could see what she might become? No, it's not that either ... God chooses us because He loves us, and based upon that, there is only one possible reason God saved Rahab, and that is *He saved her for His glory!* ... He had a plan for her life and He was going to use her to fulfil an essential part in that plan ... But, why Rahab ... why a woman in her business? Not even Rahab would have chosen herself for in her 'line of work' you didn't get anything for nothing! ... And yet God, by His grace, *chose her!* Grace is something you don't earn. It is a gift which is given to someone who does not deserve it. She had not done anything to warrant God's grace or favour ... She didn't even *know* she needed it, but God set her apart from everyone else in that city to become a servant for Him.

Every other person in Jericho would perish when Israel attacked ... all except her and her family who would be with her, - that is how God intended on saving her ... Every other person perished, but God by His grace set Rahab apart. ... She had never studied the Law of Moses, or seen a miracle performed, or brought up in a home where God's Name was honoured ... but she knew *about* Him! ... There is a verse in Romans

which says, **Rom. 1:20** the invisible things of him [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse ... She had also heard how He had delivered the Israelites from Egypt, sustained them through the wilderness, and brought them to the border of her city. Yes, she knew about God and was terrified of Him because of how He had worked for the Hebrews in the past.

Right ... Can you confidently say she turned to God? Yes, I believe you can ... Firstly, because she is included in the roll-call of faith (Heb. 11); secondly, because she had the privilege of being included in Christ's human ancestry; and thirdly, because she *testified* **Josh. 2:11** the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. ... How did she come to know such a great truth? She simply believed the evidence. As with Simon Peter in the New Testament, when he confessed the Lord Jesus as **Mt. 16:16** the Christ, the Son of the living God ... he didn't make that confession by either flesh or blood, - human intellect, - but instead, he made that confession as the consequence of God opening his heart to understand and believe ... and that is what also happened to Rahab. ... This was her *testimony* of faith as to how she came to know the power of God ... and God honoured her in believing faith.

She was saved by God's grace, through faith ... and unto good works for she protected the spies belonging to the people of God, and she put the scarlet cord in the window as they directed her (Josh. 2:15-21). God changed her life, - and even her family came through for God as they sheltered in her home when the Israelite attack began, **Josh. 6:23** And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. **24** And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. **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.

God saves all kinds of people, despite what we are, - from the uttermost to the 'guttermost', from the highest to the lowest ... all who turn to Him in believing faith. And when Rahab came into the family of God she left her previous profession, her house of ill-repute, and all her former ways, - God never saves you to keep you in sin! He takes you from it!

Here is what more the Lord did ... Turn please to Ruth 4, ¹⁸ Now these are the generations of Pharez ... Pharez is the son of Judah (Mt. 1:3; Lk. 3:33), one of the twelve sons of Jacob/Israel, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham ... Abraham to whom God had promised, **Gen. 17:8** I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession ... *Here is how it all comes together* ... **Ruth. 4:18** Pharez begat Hezron, ¹⁹ And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, ²⁰ And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, ²¹ And Salmon begat Boaz ... who was Salmon's wife and the mother of Boaz? ... **Mt. 1:5** And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab ... *Rahab!* ... **Ruth 4:21** and Boaz begat Obed, ²² And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David ... King David, from whose lineage the Lord Jesus Christ was born.

God found a woman like Rahab in a place He was about to destroy, and He saved her out of it. Her being saved was included, - with everything else that happened, - in His plan for the settlement of His people in the land of Canaan. ... God keeps His promises ... even to this woman! ... He does not give us what we deserve, but instead, because of His grace, He gives us what we do *not* deserve. That is more than we could ever achieve or wish for ...

Only by grace can we enter,
Only by grace can we stand,
Not by our human endeavour,
But by the blood of the Lamb.

Jesus said, **Jn. 6:37** All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out ... Not even a woman like Rahab was beyond His grace. Another hymn says,

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.

That is what God does when He saves a person ... *any person* ... You don't need to be as low as Rahab for *all* have sinned, and *all* needs to be saved, and *all* can be saved when they believe in Jesus Christ to take their sin away. And *no* sin is an obstacle to His grace, and that is how He could reach down and save even a woman like the harlot Rahab. Amen.