

Joshua 2:12-24

“A scarlet cord”

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I. Intro

In 1965 P.F. Sloan wrote a protest song eventually recorded by Barry McGuire called the “*Eve of Destruction*” what Sloan wrote and Barry sang in 1965 is a lot closer today than it was then but it is still Jesus who offers deliverance from the eve of destruction. The 2nd chapter of Joshua is a story about a woman who no matter where you read of her she almost always carries the moniker “*Rahab the Harlot*”. She was a gal from the wrong side of the tracks living a life of ruin, no husband or children, no hope. She heard of a God unlike the gods she worshipped:

- A God who kept His promises to those that worshipped Him.
- A God who was pure and holy that always went before His people overcoming the greatest of obstacles defeating the greatest of enemies.

And she thinks, “*Oh if only I could know this God, maybe He would love me*” and then two fellows show up at her place of business but they aren’t like all the other fellows who show up every day. No these two fellows come in and they look into her eyes not her chest! They aren’t undressing her they are looking out the window, watching the soldiers and she realizes these aren’t customers. And this Rahab with such a reputation sees her chance; “Save me” she asks them.

II. Vs. 12-13 A true token

Vs. 12-13 This is an entire chapter is written about a prostitute who lives on the wall and contains nothing militarily or strategically necessary to defeat the enemy! Yet after meeting this woman the two spies will proclaim that *“Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.”* There is no report of them doing any espionage; they simple come into the city stay at the house of a prostitute on her roof for a day then leave, hold up in the mountains three days and swim back across the Jordan and confidently declare to Joshua that not only was Jericho going to be defeated but all the lands and all the people. There are several key parts to Rahab’s salvation the first appears right here in verse 12 as we see that she did two things:

- a. First, *she acknowledged that the God of the Israelites whom she names specifically is the only one that can save her.* Many people say they believe in God and even use His name but they do so without regard to His nature and character. That is not what Rahab did as she used the name used by the Israelites, which implies that she wasn’t trying to make a god fashioned to her own making.
- b. Second, *she recognizes that she and her family is equally deserving of God’s judgment as were the rest of the inhabitants of Jericho.* There is no indication that she feels that she some how deserves God’s salvation, only that she has done the works fitting her repentance.

There is no argument that she and her family are *“good idol worshippers”*. Instead she lumps her family in with herself as equally needing to be delivered. Remember, Rahab doesn’t have it all together with regards to her lying to the king, yet *what she does have is an awareness that she is a sinner and that only the God of the Israelites can save her.* Anyone who has realized that they

are deserving of judgment and has received forgiveness and deliverance will want those they love not to perish as well. Rahab wanted assurance from the two spies by them giving their word and they respond to her request by offering their lives in support of their word. That is what Jesus has done for us he promised in John 6:47 *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.”* He then supported that by laying down His life as Jesus said in John 15:13 *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.”* What would happen if each person here today would at least daily make an observation of their own self and list the things about themselves that they are sick of and then cry out to go God to cleanse them of their sins? Why I believe we would have a pure and holy church that would effectively reach our world. Remember, Rahab was forsaking all she had ever known leaving her culture and people behind.

No person, no matter who they are, is a pawn in God's plan they are people He is interested in and yes along the way He will use to accomplish His purpose but he wants you to know Him to enjoy life as you walk with Him. It is interesting that **the stories she heard of God's judgment also spoke to her of God's love!** She heard folks speak about how God destroyed the Egyptians and sent plagues upon them and thought more of who God was protecting the Israelites instead of who He was destroying! And said, *“Oh how He loves them! I wonder if He could love me like that?”* A God who can take slaves who were in bondage and set them free making them His own people. She may have thought, *“I'm a slave to my own passions, I'm in bandage to my known immorality can you make me your own as well?”* The stacking of flax to dry was the way they would extract the fiber to make cloth. This indicates perhaps that there had already been a change in her life. Jericho was the Las Vegas of Canaan and she would not have lacked for business at the brothel. Rahab was a woman who had dwelt in the worst of

the mire the world has to offer and once she had been pulled out wants only to see her family delivered as well.

III. Vs.14-21 Three signs of life

Vs. 14-16 God has prepared for us Himself as a refuge, a place where we can be safe and secure in His love where we can hold up while everything else is being destroyed around us. There is a scarlet cord for you to hang on too that will keep you safe from destruction if you will grab a hold of Him, He longs to be the assurance for you. This scarlet cord that was used for their deliverance was to be visible so that the soldiers would know that she was to be spared. What if she would have said, *“Well I trust God but I don’t like red cords hanging out my window?”* There are folks who say *“Hey I believe in God but I don’t think that Jesus is the only way of salvation, as long as you are sincere and believe in something they that will be enough.”* **With this type of belief, the instrument of salvation is our sincerity not the object of our belief and our obedience.** Rahab didn’t argue about it, she immediately obeyed the words of the two spies, no delay, no changing the directions. **The same Joshua that would be the judge to most of the people was the savior to Rahab and her family simply because she trusted and obeyed.** What a glorious picture of God’s salvation as these two spies gave Rahab a “Scarlet Cord” as a true token of the assurance of her salvation. The very cord that she had used to deliver the two from the king became bound with a red cord which would signal her escape from judgment. She was to place it out the very window they had escaped from making it very visible. Our witness is to be very visible not just very audible! People need to see the wisdom of our relationship Jesus in our lives not just her us talk about it. She was to go and get her family and bring them into the home where they were to be saved. If Rahab or her family left the protection of that place, then they would not be safe! Later when Rahab and her family looked out that window and saw the

dust coming up under the feet of the army she would be at perfect peace even though she knew the man made security of the walls of Jericho was no match for the Holiness of God. Out her window lay a scarlet cord of redemption and she knew that the same God who was so holy that the walls of Jericho could not withstand His presence was so loving that He would protect her in the midst of the rubble of her former life.

Vs. 17-21 The spies promise to her that if she would show three signs to them that they would honor her request and spare her life and those of her family.

1. Vs. 18a **Visible Transformation** *“when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down”*: She needed to make a visible sign of where she was at. The two spies told her that she need to weave into the rope of their deliverance a scarlet cord and that this cord would be a sign of her transformation. Her profession was accepted but she needed to make her calling and election visible. There are those who profess to know Christ but there has been no visible fruit of that profession no transformation. Think of how messed up the world is with regards to the *“red light district”* indicating prostitution instead of spiritual transformation.
2. Vs. 18b-19 **Verbal Conformation** *“unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home.”* Secondly, she had to make her confession before others in this case her family. By gathering at her place it would be an indication that they believed as she had. They too realized that they were worthy of judgment and that the God who righteously was going to judge them could also mercifully save them.

3. Vs. 20 **Consistent Alienation** “*And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear.*” Finally, we see that Rahab couldn’t go back on her commitment, she couldn’t just say the words and then go back to the way she used to live.

- She needed to keep a scarlet cord in the window
- Her family in the house
- And not go back on her word.

There is an interesting truth with regards to the flax as it was what the rope and linen was made of in those days. The priest wore garments made from flax and Rahab made a rope from flax with a scarlet cord! *The same material was in both and reminds us that no matter who we are we are still covered by the righteousness of Christ.* The same rope that let down the two spies saved a heathen prostitute. Some say that brothels would paint their window sills red to let folks know what business they were in. When she dropped the scarlet rope over the window sill it made the sign of a cross; which was the same sign made at the door posts of the Jewish homes while they were in Egypt as the lamb was slain and its blood sprinkled on the two sides and the top and bottom. It is the cross that saves us from our past, it is the cross that changes our path and is the cross that saves us from the destruction we rightly deserve.

IV. Vs. 22-24 All the land into our hands

Vs. 22-24 After three days of hiding in the mountains the two spies swim back across the Jordan that they would soon walk across on dry land. Their testimony was great but what they had gleaned from Rahab caused them to be strong and courageous “*Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.*” Notice they say, “**has delivered** all the land into our hands” not will, not part of the land but

all land right now and this based just upon the words of Rahab. Since the men didn't know God's plan for taking the city, they couldn't give Rahab any detailed instructions. For all they knew the city could be besieged, the gates smashed down, and the people massacred. They knew the city would fall and that ultimately the land would be taken but they didn't know how.

As great a sign as this was in the window, ***Rahab wasn't saved by a sign!*** She and her household were ***saved by trusting in the God of Israel.*** Many folks wear a cross as a piece of jewelry or a decoration in their homes but is it for a show or to go? Religious decorations don't have any power to deliver or save but the God of the Bible does and only trusting in Jesus can deliver our souls from destruction.

The most interesting part of this story of the two spies sent into the city of Jericho is that militarily their reconnaissance was absolutely unnecessary God wasn't interested in gathering information on how to destroy the most fortified city in Canaan He was interested in gathering a lady and her family who needed to be liberated from their sin and delivered from destruction. From the time that Rahab became committed to live as an alien in her own town she became a witness to those living in godless culture and too are we. She had nothing but a verbal witness of the acts of God and that was only very minimal, yet she knew that she didn't want to live any longer apart for the love of God. There are many more residents of Jericho than there are Rahab's as they think they are safe within the walls of their world. The walls are thick and strong and nothing can pull them apart they withstood the test of time. But God is not impressed with walls and it's people's choice whether it has come to save you or judge you.