

Rahab and the Grace of God

The story of Rahab (Joshua chapter 2) stands as one of the greatest trophies to God's Grace principle. She was one of the greatest producers of divine good as a believer (James 2:25), and she led many of her family to Christ (Josh. 2:12,13)

In Grace, God takes losers and makes them winners. Grace means that, in spite of the fact that we stand condemned by the Law, and deserve judgment and eternal punishment, we have the opportunity to enter God's plan through faith in Christ, and to have a joy-filled and productive life.

Grace emphasizes who and what God is, not who and what we are. So God, in Grace, has often contradicted legalism, sometimes making a very dramatic point in the process.

As prostitute, Rahab would have been condemned by the Law on many counts of social misbehavior.

And Rahab would also have been dismissed from real consideration based on other factors: first, she was a woman, and then, she was a Gentile. The Law had regard for women and provided many protections for women and families. But practitioners of the Law often hold women in bondage to excessive interpretations and legalism.

The Jews said that you couldn't have a woman in a genealogy. So in the genealogy of Christ there are four women!

Tamar (Genesis 38), who knew how to get a ring from a man.

Ruth (Ruth; Matthew 1:5) - "The Moabitess", as a Moabite was under a national curse, but a wonderful testimony of a woman who was "occupied with Christ".

Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11, Matthew 1:6) - a famous beauty of the ancient world.

Rahab (Joshua 2; Matthew 1:5) - a prostitute for a long time and then wonderfully saved.

By the way, it was also forbidden to have Gentiles in a genealogy. But of these four women, three were Gentiles!

And all of these people were saved. But that's not astonishing. Self-righteous, religious people have difficulty believing in Christ and submitting to the Word of God. But these were women who had no illusions about themselves and were very quick to "cast their burdens on the Lord."

Rahab, having been a prostitute, certainly had no illusions about herself, or other people. And after salvation, she did not have to unlearn a lot of religious nonsense, so she grew very rapidly.

Rahab married Salmon, one of the leaders of the Jewish nation. And they had a son named Boaz! So Rahab is Ruth's mother-in-law, Obed's grandmother, and the great-great-grandmother of David the king.

Put all the facts together and you have a great family history. Ask yourself, how much was the character of Boaz affected by his mother Rahab's testimony and courage? (See the book of Ruth for the story.) He was known as "a mighty man of wealth", a distinguished citizen of sterling character.

And how much were the faith of Jesse, David's father, and of David himself, influenced by the momentum established by previous faithful generations?

This is a great family, distinguished in every generation by solid believers who set the relationship with God as the top priority in their lives. The subordinated all family, business, and social life to God's will and plan, and they enjoyed the many-generation blessings that accrued as a result.

Note: you are a member of a family, having ancestors and, perhaps, descendants.

Are you the beneficiary of a line of descent which has honored God? Do you have the privilege of benefiting from the faith and maturity of your parents, grandparents? Well, the lesson here is, don't drop the ball! There is a potential Boaz or David in your future.

Or, maybe your ancestry is clouded. We don't

know much about Rahab's family, and they were certainly pagan idol worshippers. Maybe your family has not honored Christ.

Then you will have to be the first, like Rahab, to exhibit faith and courage! Great families start somewhere. They start with an individual of faith and courage who trusts God, lives in His Word, and is occupied with Christ for a whole lifetime.

Events surrounding Rahab (Joshua 2)

Before proceeding, read the last few chapters of Genesis and the first few chapters of Joshua to get an overall picture of these events.

Joshua 2 begins with the second spying out of the land of Canaan by Jewish military intelligence. The first mission, with the 12 spies, one from each tribe, had been forty years earlier. Only Joshua (tribe of Ephraim) and Caleb (tribe of Judah) had enough confidence in the promises of God to bring in an optimistic report.

So, for this mission, only two agents were sent in, to conduct a reconnaissance. Jericho is the key that will unlock Canaan, so that is where the two men went. They arrive at the prostitute's house. It is on the wall, so there may be a way of escape. But they are in a dangerous situation.

There are two purpose for the spying. The first is to bring in military information regarding terrain, fortifications, troop strength, and other matters related to the defenders of Jericho.

The second purpose, part of God's overall plan, is to protect the lives of those in Jericho who are born again. There was similar situation in Sodom, where Lot's family was saved in the nick of time before the whole city was destroyed. (Jericho was just north of the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah.)

The Canaanites were under final judgment by God, just as the Sodomites had been. Their "cup of iniquity was full." (Lev. 18:24-28). They were overdue. They had been placed under the 5th cycle of divine discipline as a nation, and no nation deserved it more.

But the principle is: God always takes care of His own, no matter where they are located or how far they have strayed.

God had promised to give the land to the Jews (Joshua 1:2-4), a promise which had been made earlier to Moses' generation, and prior to that, to Abraham. But the Israelites had to exercise human action.

This generation of Jews was using Faith-Rest in the most practical and dramatic way possible. Using Faith-Rest does not mean sitting down on the ground and waiting for something to happen. On the contrary, James 2 teaches us that, when action is taken, the substance of that action indicates whether you have faith-rest in your soul

And Salmon, who may have been one of the spies, got a bonus. He found the woman that God had planned for him to marry!

The existence of the patrol became known to the king of Jericho. Somehow he got word that spies were in the city, so he sent out men to look for them. When they knocked at Rahab's door, she hid them on the roof. Then she lied to the king's officers to save the lives of the two men. When the police had gone, she helped the two Jews to escape. They barely got away, and narrowly escaped the pursuing soldiers in the hills outside the city.

Rahab's Personal Testimony

Josh. 2:8-11, Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.

"For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed." And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.