

Lessons From the Life of Rahab

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Let's turn over to Hebrews 11:6. Most of the scriptures I'll read today are out of the New King James. It just makes it a little clearer, because we have quite a few passages to cover. If I switch to the King James, I'll do my best to let you know. Here is a principle.

Hebrews 11:6. *But without faith it is impossible to please Him [God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (NKJV)*

We know that faith comes from God to us as a gift. That faith is the same faith that Jesus Christ had when he walked this earth. Yet, at the same time, you see, there are things that we can do to strengthen whatever faith God has given us and it's up to us to do that. One of the ways we can strengthen our faith is to study the lives of the people mentioned here in Hebrews 11. There are sixteen people mentioned by name; Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel. Of those that I have just named, there is one that is unique; one that is different from everyone else; one that is unusual. That is Rahab, because she is the only foreigner mentioned among those that were named. Obviously, this woman stands out when you read it. Look at verses 30-31.

30) By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

31) By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. (NKJV)

Obviously, since she is listed in this chapter, she must have had great faith. With that in mind let's go to James 2:14, because here we have another principle about faith. James asks the question:

James 2:14. *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? (NKJV)*

Obviously, we know faith and works go hand in hand, because the works are the evidence of our faith. Then James goes on. He proceeds to give two examples of Biblical characters who exhibited both faith and works. In verse 21 he mentions Abraham, but notice verse 25.

25) Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? (NKJV)

We see with these two passages that Rahab, despite being a foreigner, despite being a prostitute, was a very, very special woman. Maybe there are some things we can learn

that will benefit us today from the example of Rahab all those years ago. The title of the sermon is

Lessons From the Life of Rahab

Let's be turning over to the book of Joshua to recount Rahab's story. The context here is that Moses has just died. You can read that at the end of Deuteronomy. He tells Joshua to take Israel across the Jordan River to finally take the land of Canaan, which God was giving them. It was a gift from God. Now God is speaking to Joshua in chapter 1:3-5. Notice what God promises.

Joshua 1:3. *Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.*

4) From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. (NKJV)

Of course, the United States has forgotten that in this recent vote in the United Nations and we did not back up Israel, to whom God gave this land. Yes, they don't understand God right now, but that will change. In verse 5 the promise is:

5) No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life [Joshua]; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. (NKJV)

These are promises from God to Joshua and the nation of Israel. Go to Joshua 2:1-24.

Joshua 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." ... (NKJV)*

Spying secretly implied that the greater part of Israel didn't know that they were going out to do this spying. My guess is Joshua didn't want a repeat of what happened forty years earlier. When Moses sent spies, they came back with a bad report and Israel revolted and they had to wander in the wilderness for forty years. He sent to two spies secretly to spy out Jericho.

It's also interesting that Joshua sent spies in the first place. You see, why do you need spies if God just told you I'm giving you all of this? There is a spiritual analogy for us. You see, Joshua's goal was to take the physical Promised Land. Even though God gave it to him and to Israel as a gift, he was gathering all of the information that he possibly could. He was being wise. He wanted to understand what he was getting into. The same holds true for us. We want to take possession of a spiritual promised land, the Kingdom of God. Even though it is a gift, we need all of the information we can possibly get. God has indeed left us all of the information we need and it's sitting there right in front of us in our Bible. We, as Joshua, need to investigate and look at and study it and that's exactly what Joshua was doing, even though God promised that He would take care of Joshua all of the days of his life.

1b) ...So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. (NKJV)

Let's just stop there, because some in the past have argued that Rahab was an innkeeper and not a harlot. That's what Josephus says. That's what was taught in the early Worldwide Church of God and other people have said the same thing. They get that from the fact that two Hebrew words, one translated "innkeeper" and the other translated "harlot" are very, very close. So, they figured she could be an innkeeper out of maybe politeness or something like that. We just read that she was called a harlot very clearly in the Greek in James 2:25. The Greek word for "harlot" in the New Testament is "porn," where we get our English word pornography. So, it is very clear without doubt she was a harlot.

2) And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." (NKJV)

Obviously, Jericho was on high alert, defcon 4, and we would be on high alert if you had three to five million Israelites ten miles away, which they were.

3) So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country." (NKJV)

Now, people have wondered: Why go to Rahab? The fact is, with the city being on high alert, the king had spies everywhere. He sought those spies and they wound up in Rahab's house.

4) Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.

5) And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them."

6) (But 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.) (NKJV)

I think most of us understand that the roofs in Middle Eastern homes are flat, because there is hardly any rainfall. In those days they would use the roofs to dry things like flax or wheat, because they could toss it up in the breeze or the breeze coming through on the roof would dry out the flax or the grain.

7) Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. ... (NKJV)

The Hebrew word for "ford" means just a *crossing place*. So, they pursued them all of the way to the Jordan River knowing Israel was on the other side, on the east side, and they stopped there, but they couldn't find them.

7b) ... And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

8) Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, (NKJV)

Notice what she says, this harlot who grew up in paganism.

9) and said to the men: "I know that the Lord [YHWH] has given you the land, ... (NKJV)

Notice, she identifies herself as knowing God and secondly, she didn't say might give you the land or could give you the land or there's a possibility of you having the land. She said "has given you the land."

9b) ... that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. (NKJV)

Here is a woman who grew up worshipping Canaanite gods, Dagon, Asura, etc., etc., etc. Here she makes this unbelievable statement.

10) For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt ... (NKJV)

That was forty years prior.

10b) ... 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. (NKJV)

That account you can find in Numbers 21. She said, they have heard all that. That was easy to understand, because Jericho was at a crossroads and people would often stay there on their travels. Because of her profession, a lot of people came through and there was a lot of talk and she was privy to the latest news and the latest gossip.

11) 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. (NKJV)

Here she acknowledges that the God of Israel is the one and only true God. He is God of heaven and earth. She even uses His name. Here she displays a very repentant attitude of what she had done before by acknowledging God and rejecting all of the gods that she had worshipped from her youth. Then she proceeds, as we do, to ask for mercy.

12) Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord [YHWH] ... (NKJV)

Here she is asking for an oath in the name of God.

12b) ... since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token,
13) and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." (NKJV)

Notice this. The first things she asks for, her first thoughts are on other people. She didn't put herself first; save me first. She talked about her dad and her mom and her brothers and sisters and everything that they had and then at the last she says, deliver our lives. That is a converted attitude.

14) So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the Lord has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."
15) Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. (NKJV)

This is important and we'll address that later. Her house was on the wall and she dwelt on the wall. Let me read from The Biblical Archeology Review. Notice what they say.

Rahab lived on the wall of Jericho or in the city's casement.

Now, a casement is a fortified enclosure. They built into the wall these casements where soldiers could peek through and shoot arrows and drop molten lead and stuff down on the invaders below.

In the late bronze age, the time of which the story of Rahab in the Bible was set, thick, defensive walls were common. People could conceivably have lived on them.

16) 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." (NKJV)

Notice the wisdom. The fact is that the mountains were to the northwest. The Jordan River was to the east. So, she sent these two guys in the opposite direction of where logically you would think that they would go to get to the Jordan and get over the Jordan and get back to Israel. So, the soldiers likely assumed, hey, they're going to head home, so they patrolled the area from Jericho to the Jordan but the spies went the opposite way.

17) So the men said to her: "We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear" ... (NKJV)

Now they give her three conditions. If she meets those three conditions, they will honor this oath.

18) *"unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down ... (NKJV)*

This is so they could identify her home and rescue her.

18b) *... and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home.*

19) *So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him.*

20) *And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear." (NKJV)*

So, there were three conditions; leave a cord in the window, bring your family in the house and don't let them go out and keep your mouth shut.

21) *Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.*

22) *They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought them all along the way, but did not find them.*

23) *So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them.*

24) *And they said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord [YHWH] ... (NKJV)*

This is the same YHWH that Rahab used when she was making her statement of believing that God is the God.

24b) *... has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us." (NKJV)*

Let me just summarize chapter 3. Israel crosses the Jordan River and, as you remember, the priests carried the ark into the river. The river stops flowing just like what happened in the Red Sea. It walls up on either side. They walk through on dry land. In chapter 4 Israel builds a monument to this event and, for the very first time, they camped on the west side of the Jordan River, which is the Promised Land. Then in chapter 5 all of the men were circumcised. It was a time of Unleavened Bread. They kept the Passover. They ate the firstfruits. Let's start in Joshua 5:13-15.

Joshua 5:13. *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. ... (NKJV)*

Who is this man?

13b) ... And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" (NKJV)

We would say: Are you for us or are you against us? Joshua asked him that question. Notice the answer. Read this carefully.

14) So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." ... (NKJV)

So, you have the commander of army, that army is the Lord's army.

14b) ... And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" (NKJV)

Now, we know that this is not a regular angel. How do we know that? Well, regular angels refuse to allow themselves to be worshipped. You can check that out in Revelation 19:9-10. We have examples of angels telling people to get up on their feet and angels did not allow people to worship them; but this angel allowed this to happen.

15) Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so. (NKJV)

Now, here Joshua is told to do the identical thing that Moses was told in the account of the burning bush. Take your sandals off of your feet, because this ground is indeed holy. Moses was in the presence of holiness. Joshua now is in the presence of holiness. There are only two beings that are holy; what we know today as the Father and the Son. Back then it was God and the Word. So, the commander of the Lord's army had to be Jesus Christ. I don't think there's any other way you can understand this. The Lord, whose army Christ was commanding was God the Father. So, we see here both what we know as the Father and the Son, God and the Word are intimately involved with what Joshua is doing and Israel is doing at this time. So, the angel of the Lord now gives Joshua plans on how Jericho was to be conquered in chapter 6:1-25.

Joshua 6:1. *Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. (NKJV)*

Obviously, the gates were closed. Sentries were posted and nobody came in and nobody came out. They were on high alert.

2) And the Lord said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor." (NKJV)

Here are the instructions now.

3) You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days.

4) And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. ... (NKJV)

This is interesting symbolism, because God doesn't do anything by accident. There is a plan. Those blowing the trumpets preceded the ark, that which symbolized God's presence. So, the trumpets were blown before. At some point God and Christ are going to return to this earth and guess what is blown before they return? The trumpets are; interesting symbolism.

4b) ... But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.

5) It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn ... (NKJV)

This was different than what they were blowing for the first six days.

5b) ... "and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him." (NKJV)

Continue in verse 10.

10) Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout." (NKJV)

So, for the six days once around the city and then on the seventh day for the first six times around the city the only sound that was heard, not a human voice was heard, but the seven trumpets were blown as they proceeded. That was the only sound that Israel heard and the residents of Jericho heard as they were peeking over the walls.

11) So he had the ark of the Lord circle the city, going around it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.

12) And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord.

13) Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the Lord, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets.

14) And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days. (NKJV)

This is interesting also. God allowed Jericho to stand for six days. That's obviously a type of the six thousand years that God has allowed man's rule on the earth and man to stand. It's interesting to note, though that during those six days the only sound was the shofar. That was a warning to the people of Jericho and it was blowing the entire six

days. The same is true spiritually going way back to the beginning. Abel and Enoch, remember Enoch is called a preacher of righteousness, Noah, Abraham all the way down to these end days a trumpet has been blowing somewhere on this earth throughout all of these six thousand years saying that in six thousand years there is going to come a time when this cosmos, this order, this rule of man is going to come to an end. That's exactly what happened to Jericho.

15) But it came to pass on the seventh day ... (NKJV)

We understand this to be the last day of Unleavened Bread.

15b) ... that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. ... (NKJV)

The only sound was the shofar.

15 continued) ... On that day only they marched around the city seven times.

16) And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!"

17) Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it." ... (NKJV)

The Hebrew word "doomed" is "harem" and it means *devoted or set apart*. We're told here that Jericho was devoted to destruction, set apart for destruction. Go on in verse 17. Notice we get back to Rahab.

17b) ... "Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent." (NKJV)

Continue in verse 20.

20) So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. ... (NKJV)

We'll find in just a minute that not all the wall fell down flat.

20b) ... Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

21) And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

22) 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."

23) 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. (NKJV)

This is because, you see, they were foreigners. That, as we're going to see, happened for a time and then Rahab and her family were allowed into the camp.

24) But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. (NKJV)

Now, let me give you some facts about the ruins of Jericho, which have been extensively excavated. These are facts. These aren't somebody's speculation or somebody's opinion. They found when excavating Jericho many scorched jars full of grain. This was highly unusual. Normally, you see, any valuables in a conquered city would be taken by the conquerors, particularly grain. Yet, they found jars full of grain, but they were scorched. Why was the grain left in Jericho? We just read the answer. First of all, God said you can take the gold and the silver and all of that, but that's all and you burn everything else with fire. Obviously, these jars were scorched. The second thing, let's understand that Jericho inside those walls had an abundant food and water supply, because there was a spring inside Jericho, inside the walls. Normally, if you were going to go against a city like that, that had plenty of water, plenty of food; it would take months, even years to subdue that city. The jars were scorched because Israel burned it with fire and the jars were full, because Jericho fell in only seven days and the people didn't have time to consume the grain. It wasn't necessary. You see here that the excavation, the archeological investigation of Jericho proves the Biblical story with those jars scorched full of grain.

25) 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. (NKJV)

So, at some point, after a period of cleansing, no doubt, she and her family came in to live with Israel.

This is an incredible story when you think about it. God does nothing by accident. The reason we are told this story is that there are lessons He wants us to learn down through history, but especially today. Let's ask the question: What lessons can we learn about Rahab in this account? We are only going to talk about four of them. You could go on and on and on with lessons that can be learned.

1. The first point is God can use anyone to accomplish His will.

Rahab started out as a foreigner. She was a prostitute and yet God used her. Look where Rahab wound up. Look at the end of her life and what happened to her life.

Let's go to Mathew 1:1-6. This is the account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior.

Matthew 1:1. *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:*

2) *Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.*

3) *Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.*

4) *Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. (NKJV)*

Tradition has it that Salmon was one of the two spies.

5) *Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth [another foreigner], Obed begot Jesse,*

6) *and Jesse begot David the king. ... (NKJV)*

Continue in verse 16.

16) *And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. (NKJV)*

Rahab is in the genealogy leading to Jesus Christ, but let's go back to the end of verse 4. It says Nahshon begot Salmon, one of the two spies. Who on earth is Nahshon. Let's go to Numbers 2:1-3 and see who this Nahshon is. We pick up the account. Israel has been out of Egypt for about two years.

Numbers 2:1. *And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:*

2) *"Every one of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting. (NKJV)*

It talks about a standard and emblems of the tribe and the house. When I was in the military, we had a guidon and that was a flag on a long pole. The guidon bearer would march in front of the troops and the guidon symbolized the company or the squadron that you belonged to. So, we see here that Judah had a guidon and each clan had a guidon. That way when they were marching in the wilderness, they could follow and keep together with their own tribe and their own clan. They were to camp a distance from the tabernacle.

3) *On the east side [of the tabernacle], toward the rising of the sun, those of the standard of the forces with Judah shall camp according to their armies; and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be the leader of the children of Judah." (NKJV)*

Now, is there any more unlikely figure, being a prostitute and a pagan to marry into the most prominent family of the house of Judah, to become mother of Boaz, and we read that in the book of Ruth, the great, great grandmother of King David. Is there any more likely scenario? This happened. God caused it to happen. What's the lesson for us in this point, God using anyone to accomplish His will? Let's go to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and see how it applies to us. Paul is talking to this dysfunctional church in Corinth and he is reminding them of something very important.

1 Corinthians 6:9. *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... (NKJV)*

There are some people today who don't understand this scripture or who don't believe it. They believe they can behave in an unrighteous way and still be part of the Kingdom of God or still be part of God's church. Somehow they think that God gives them a pass. God doesn't.

*9b) ... Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,
10) nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (NKJV)*

That's pretty plain, pretty simple. Here's the key.

11) And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (NKJV)

Yes, we were. We used to be like Rahab, all of us. She started out as a great, great sinner. We started out as great sinners, yet we have the potential of marrying Jesus Christ. We have the potential of marrying into the God family. Look where Rahab wound up. That is hope for us. That is very encouraging for us. So, the first point is God can use anybody He wants to and He can call anybody He wants to be part of His family. Rahab proves that.

2. The second point is Rahab did not walk by sight, but she walked by faith.

Rahab believed what she could not see, not what she could see. It's interesting. We need to investigate what Rahab actually saw before the Israelites arrived. Let's go to Deuteronomy 9:1 and see a warning God was giving Israel. He was trying to prepare them for what they were going to see when they went across the Jordan River. This is God's warning to the nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy 9:1. *"Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations ... (NKJV)*

Who are these nations? These are nations:

1b) ... *greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven,*
(NKJV)

The Complete Jewish Bible says, *fortified up to the sky*. He's saying look; you are going to go against people that are mightier than you. They have bigger armies. They have more weapons. You are going to go up in cities that are just fortified to the hilt, so prepare yourself. Remember, Israel had been wandering in the wilderness for forty years. What weapons did they have? They had swords. They had bows and arrows, but not much else. They didn't have weapons that were designed to siege a city; the battering rams and the giant slings that could throw burning material inside on the other side of the walls. Remember, they didn't have any of that. Also remember they weren't a trained army. They had been slaves; wandered around for forty years, but nobody trained them in military tactics. They weren't some kind of seasoned army in that regard.

Now, let's look at some facts from archaeology. These are not somebody's supposition. You can check this if you want. There are many web sites that you can go to, but one is biblicalarchaeology.org.

Jericho was surrounded by a gigantic earthen embankment, a big mound of earth all around the city. It would be like if you took a big donut and sliced it horizontally, got rid of the bottom half and you set the flat part on a table. The table would be the land around Jericho. The donut would be this giant mound of earth all around the city and the donut hole would be Jericho on the inside. The peak height of this mound, this donut that went around Jericho, according to archaeological evidence, was between forty and fifty feet high all the way around. At the outer edge of this embankment, away from the city, there was a stone retaining wall that was twelve to fifteen feet high. If you were coming from the outside, you would see this twelve to fifteen foot high stone retaining wall, then this earthen embankment going up to fifty feet and then Jericho was hidden on the inside. Now, on top of this stone retaining wall was the first of two walls. The first wall was a mud brick wall and its foundation was the stone retaining wall. It was six feet thick and it was twenty-five feet high. So, this first wall was at least forty feet above ground level. You approached Jericho. You see this stone retaining wall, then this mud brick wall even higher. You are looking up and you have to somehow scale a wall forty feet high that had soldiers on top, that had casements built into the wall with windows so they can shoot at you, throw things at you. The second wall was at the crest of the embankment and the top of that second wall was seventy feet above ground level. It was very similar to the first wall, twenty-five feet high. If you add that on top of the forty to fifty feet of the mound and you have a forty foot high wall and then a climb and then a seventy foot high wall above that. This is what Rahab saw every day of her life.

Notice what this web site, biblicalarchaeology.org, says:

This is what loomed high above the Israelites as they marched around the city each day for seven days. Humanly speaking, it was impossible for the Israelites to penetrate the impregnable bastion of Jericho.

All they had were bows and arrows and swords. What are you going to do when you see this giant thing in front of you, two walls going up to the height of a seven story building? Frankly, this is what Rahab saw every day of her life, this impregnable city.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:7, the principle that she walked by and the principle that we need to walk by. This is something, as we get closer to the end, that we cannot forget. We have to remember this every day of our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:7. *For we walk by faith, not by sight. (NKJV)*

As I said in the introduction, Rahab had both faith and works. She walked by faith. She walked by what she could not see, rather than what she could see. The Israelites didn't stand a chance against Jericho.

The question is what happens to God's people at the end of the age if we walk by sight and not by faith? If we don't have the faith that it takes and we are guided by what we see with our own eyes, what happens to God's people? Let's go to Matthew 24:22-25. This is what happens if we succumb to what we see with our eyes. Rahab didn't succumb to what she saw with her eyes. She walked by faith, what she could not see.

Matthew 24:22. *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

23) "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. (NKJV)

Don't believe what you are told. Don't believe even what you see with your eyes.

24) For false christs and false prophets will rise ... (NKJV)

We haven't seen this yet, but we will.

*24b) ... and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.
25) See, I have told you beforehand. (NKJV)*

I am giving you a warning. Don't walk by sight. Walk by what I have told you. Walk by faith. The fact is it's very plain here. If we walk by sight, we are going to be deceived. There are going to be signs that will convince all of those except the very elect. There will come a time as with Rahab that we cannot walk by sight. We have to walk by faith and what we read in God's word. That's what Rahab did and she set the example for us.

3. The third point is as God's children we have absolutely no reason to be anxious and to worry about what lies ahead, about our lives.

Said another way nothing is too big for God and nothing is too small for God. God takes care of us in little ways and in big ways. I've seen that more in the last few years that God answer prayers about little things, even inconsequential things, but they're important to us sweaty, smelly human beings. We pray and God answers. Then the big things He answers. Let's go back to Joshua 2:12-14. Here the spies, remember, are giving an oath before God to save Rahab's life. We don't have to worry. We don't have to be anxious.

Joshua 2:12. *Now therefore, I [Rahab] beg you, swear to me by the Lord [YHWH], since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, 13) and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." 14) So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the Lord has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you." (NKJV)*

Put yourself in the situation of the two spies, let's say Salmon. They come back after spying out the land and Joshua tells them I have met with the commander of the Lord's army and He told me to go around once for six days and seven times for the seventh day and when we blow the trumpets and then I say shout, the walls are going to fall down flat. Wait a minute. They knew Rahab lived on the wall and her window had the scarlet cord coming down. Yet, these two spies are saying, hey, we made an oath before God that we are going to rescue Rahab. How can this be? Now they find the walls are coming down and she's going to be destroyed. What do we do? We've got a problem here. Put yourself in that situation. What would we do? Most people would panic and they would either try to go warn her or save her themselves somehow, some way or complain to Joshua. Look, this isn't going to work. We have to do this a different way. Go talk to the angel of the Lord, see if we can change this thing. Let's go to Joshua 6:22. Notice what Joshua says.

Joshua 6:22. *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." (NKJV)*

How could you go into her house? It's on the wall and we were just told the wall is going to fall down flat. How can we make this happen? This was a problem for the spies, because they were given a task of going and rescuing Rahab. Yet, it seems contradictory that they had to go into her house and rescue her, but they were just told all of the walls were going to go down flat. It seems that they were given an impossible task. The fact is it was a problem for the spies, but it was not a problem for God. God took care of it. There is nothing too big and nothing too small for God Almighty.

Now, let's look at the archaeological evidence. This is not speculation. This is proven archaeological evidence. At the end of the seven times around and the trumpet is blowing and Joshua said to shout, and they shouted, and then the walls collapsed and then the outer wall collapsed. If you look at a cross section, there is the retaining wall and the outer wall is built right on top of it, and then you have this mound going up and the second wall is up there. The outer wall collapsed out. These are mud bricks, remember, so they came down as rubble. Guess what? Now they didn't have a stone retaining wall in front of them. They had all of this rubble on the outside and it was a ramp just to go right up. The other wall collapsed and, let's understand, that it collapsed all the way around except one area. This is proven by archaeology. There was one small area on the north side of the wall where houses were built against the wall and the wall did not collapse. This was on the outer wall. It was in an area that would have been a poorer area, because remember you had to go over an embankment into Jericho proper and it was a poorer area where a prostitute would probably live. You had soldiers on the wall going back and forth that were probably clients and on it goes. All those impregnable walls are going to fall down flat, yet the two spies have to go in and rescue Rahab. How does that work? You see, nothing is too big; nothing is too small for God. He spared Rahab and her family and it is proven archaeologically that this happened. Let's go to Philippians 4:6-7. We are going to need the lesson going forward. We just don't know what the next few years hold for us.

Philippians 4:6. *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, ... (NKJV)*

I might add, passes everything that we see.

7b) ... will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (NKJV)

Why? It's because there is nothing too big and nothing too small for God to take care of. That leads us now to the fourth and final point.

4. Rahab lived in Jericho, but that's not where her citizenship was.

She probably grew up there. Let's go to John 17:14-16. We are given instruction in the New Testament for exactly the same thing. It tells us where our citizenship should be and it's not where we are. Here Christ is saying to the apostles:

John 17:14. *I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*
15) I do not pray that You should take them out of the world ... (NKJV)

Christ is saying, I'm not asking you to take them out of the world. I'm not asking you to go up on a high mountain and put a commune there or something like that, where my people, my children get out of the world. He says no that's not the plan.

15b0 ... but that You should keep them from the evil one. (NKJV)

That is in the world where they live.

16) They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (NKJV)

That is a principle. With that in mind let's go to 2 Corinthians 6:14. We're told we have to live in the world. We're told that Christ prayed that God would protect us from the evil one and that we should not be part of the world we live in. Here is another instruction carrying it to completion here.

2 Corinthians 6:14. *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. ... (NKJV)*

If we are yoked to an unbeliever, we are unequally yoked, not the same in values, not the same at all.

14b) ... For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (NKJV)

Continue in verse 17.

17 Therefore [because of this] "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." (NKJV)

We put these two scriptures together. We are to live in the world, yes. God is going to protect us from the evil one. That's a promise, but you see we have to come out of the world in our minds, in our beliefs, in our actions, in our thoughts and be separate. Draw a barrier between us and the world. God says if you do that, He will save you. He will receive you.

Now let's ask a question. What saved Israel in Egypt the night of the Passover? Weren't they told to separate themselves, to go into their homes, lock the doors, and keep away from the Egyptians? Separate yourself from the Egyptians. Go in your homes and stay there. What was the sign of the separation? It was the blood over the doorposts, that scarlet blood over the doorposts. The death angel would pass by those who separate themselves from Egypt, which is a type of sin. We all know that.

What saved Rahab forty years later? God told her to separate herself from the rest of Jericho. Get your family. Get your loved ones in your house. Go in there, lock the door and don't go outside. Let's go back to Joshua 2:19. This is what she was told and this is what she did.

Joshua 2:19. *So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And*

whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head [the two spies] if a hand is laid on him. (NKJV)

So, what was the sign of the separation? It was the scarlet cord hanging down from the window. It was the same color as blood. So, Rahab lived in Jericho, yes. For all we know maybe Rahab loved the town. Maybe she grew up in the town. Maybe she was born there. We don't know. The fact is we have Americans who live in the states, Canadians, Australians, wherever you might be. Certainly in America there is much to love. There is much to appreciate about our country, but our country should not be our priority. We are called to have our focus and our residency somewhere else. Our mind should be resident somewhere else, even though our physical bodies are here. With that in mind let's go to Philippians 3:17-20. We live here in the northwest, probably the most beautiful part of the country. It's just gorgeous and we're thankful to be here and we love this part of the country. There are some things to love about our country. As we know, there are things we don't love about our country. Rahab may have loved Jericho. We don't know. Notice what we are told, though.

Philippians 3:17. *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. (NKJV)*

That's something to follow.

18) For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: (NKJV)

There are tares in God's church, as they always have been, but even to this day, who are enemies of the cross of Christ.

19) whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly ... (NKJV)

They are in it for the wrong reasons.

19b) ... and whose glory is in their shame — ... (NKJV)

Power, control, all of that; it is a shame.

19 continued) ... who set their mind on earthly things. (NKJV)

That is in God's church. We see it today. Notice here is the principle.

20) For our citizenship is in heaven ... (NKJV)

It's not on this earth, not of the country in which we reside.

20b) ... from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (NKJV)

So, Rahab, despite being a pagan, despite being a harlot, despite being a resident of Jericho knew that was not where her citizenship was. She looked to a higher authority. She looked to a different place. That place was governed by God Almighty and so should we. We should look to a different place than where we are now.

Let's conclude. Rahab's story teaches us that God can use anyone to accomplish His will. Like Rahab, all of us are imperfect. All of us have sinned, but we can be saved, as she was saved. Rahab walked by faith and not by sight. She believed in what she could not see, rather than what she could see. We have learned that we have no reason in this life to be anxious, to be fearful, to be tied in knots, because God is God and God is in control. While we live in this world our priorities should be in heaven. Our focus should be on heaven. Our focus should be on God and Jesus Christ. Our focus should not be on things on this earth.

We read in Hebrews that Rahab was probably the most unlikely to be a hero of the Bible. Of all that are mentioned in Hebrews that are true heroes, she was the most unlikely, given the fact that she was a foreigner, she was a prostitute and she was someone who was immersed in paganism from the day she was born. Yet, she went on to become an Israelite. She married into the most prominent family of Judah and she became an ancestor of David and Jesus Christ.

What a mind boggling story we have. If God can accomplish such a great thing through her, given her background, what can He do with you and me? Let's be thankful for the lessons from Rahab and let it be an encouragement as we go forward in these very last days.