

THE SCARLET THREAD

TEXT: JOSHUA 2:1-24; 6:17, 21-25

INTRODUCTION:

1. One of the most interesting characters in Scripture is Rahab the harlot (Joshua 2:1).
2. In addition to her story recorded here in Joshua chapters 2 and 6, Rahab is referred to several times in the New Testament.
3. In Matthew 1:5, we are told that Rahab married Salmon, an Israelite from the tribe of Judah, and Rahab was the mother of Boaz. Boaz married Ruth the Moabitess, and is the great-grandfather of King David.
4. This means Rahab was the great, great-grandmother of King David, and therefore in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. Rahab is also referred to in Hebrews 11:31 – “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”
6. And Rahab is also referred to in James 2:25 – “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?”
7. What Rahab did was evidence of her faith in the true God of heaven (cf. Joshua 2:9-11).
8. Rahab lived in the doomed city of Jericho. She was a heathen and a harlot, but she acted upon faith, and was spared the judgment of God when Joshua and the Israelites destroyed Jericho.
9. Many years ago, W.A. Criswell preached a message entitled, "The Scarlet Thread of Redemption." Dr. Criswell referred to the scarlet-colored (the color of blood) thread that Rahab hung out of her window in Jericho.
10. The “thread” was a cord or a rope. “A threefold cord (same word) is not quickly broken” (Eccl. 4:12).
11. "The scarlet line of Rahab is a symbol of her faith that God will provide deliverance in the time of judgment. Throughout the Bible 'scarlet' speaks of sacrifice made on the behalf of the believer" (Criswell).
12. In that sermon, Dr. Criswell traced this scarlet thread back to the Garden of Eden. God Himself killed an animal and clothed Adam and Eve with the animal skin.
13. Therefore, blood had to be spilled for Adam and Eve to be covered.
14. Next comes Abel's offering in Genesis 4, and all the way through the Bible all the way to the book of Revelation, we can trace the scarlet thread of redemption.

15. Revelation 1:5 says, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
16. Revelation 5:9 says, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."
17. Revelation 7:14 says, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
18. The Lord Jesus Christ is called "the Lamb" 26 times in the Book of Revelation, emphasizing His blood atonement.
19. The Bible teaches that there can be no forgiveness of sins apart from the blood of Christ. Hebrews 9:22 says, without the "shedding of blood is no remission" (no forgiveness of sin).
20. Leviticus 17:11 says, "For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."
21. In John 1:29, John the Baptist introduced the Lord Jesus by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
22. The story of the Passover is given in Exodus 12, and the New Testament refers to Christ as our Passover lamb. First Corinthians 5:7 says, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."
23. The scarlet line that Rahab hung out her window is a symbol ("a token" – Joshua 2:12) of her faith that God would deliver her and her family in the time of judgment.

- 1. THE SCARLET THREAD WAS DIVINELY APPOINTED**
- 2. THE SCARLET THREAD WAS ABUNDANTLY SUFFICIENT**
- 3. THE SCARLET THREAD WAS CLEARLY SEEN**

I. THE SCARLET THREAD WAS DIVINELY APPOINTED

1. There were certain facts that Rahab had to believe in order to be saved. First of all, she had to believe that the God of Israel was the true God of heaven and earth (2:11).
2. Secondly, she had to believe that God would soon destroy Jericho and everyone in it (2:9-11).
3. Furthermore, Rahab had to believe that only God could deliver her from the impending judgment (2:12, 13).
4. Let me make an application. Judgment is coming to this wicked, sinful world. The prophet Isaiah said men will go into the holes of

- the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD when the LORD arises “to shake terribly the earth” (Isaiah 2:19).
5. The book of Revelation says men will hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and they will say to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:15-17).
 6. The hymn-writer put it this way:
*Judgment is coming, all will be there.
 Who have rejected, who have refused.
 Oh, sinner, hasten, let Jesus in,
 Then He will pass, will pass over you.* – John G. Foote
 7. God has only one appointed way of deliverance – the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9).
 8. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).
 9. Acts 4:12 says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
 10. There is no other shelter. There is no other way of escape.
 11. It took faith for Rahab to put that scarlet thread in her window (Joshua 2:18-21). She could have disregarded their instructions.
 12. That is why Hebrews 11:31 says, “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not...” Rahab believed God, and she was saved.
 13. “Them that believed not” perished when the judgment came (cf. John 3:16-18).

II. THE SCARLET THREAD WAS ABUNDANTLY SUFFICIENT

1. The scarlet thread, unnoticeable to most people, was abundantly sufficient to save Rahab and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had, and all her kindred (6:23).
2. When Israel attacked Jericho, they brought out Rahab, and her entire family (6:23).
3. The city of Jericho was “utterly destroyed” (6:21), but Rahab and all her relatives were delivered (6:15-17, 21-25).
4. Just like God delivered Noah and his family, and just like God delivered Lot and his family, God delivered Rahab and her family (6:23).

5. God saved Rahab's entire family (6:23). The Bible teaches that God wants to save the whole family.
6. The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). And they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).
7. And the whole family got saved (Acts 16:32-34).
8. Rahab was a harlot, and a heathen, and an idolater, but God's grace was abundantly sufficient to save her.
9. We are reminded of the Scripture, "And he must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4). Why? To meet another Gentile woman of loose morals – the woman at the well.
10. Our Lord said to her, "For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband" (John 4:18).
11. But she repented, and she believed, and she ran back to the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29).
12. John 4:39 says, "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did."
13. This is the wonderful grace of God. The word "grace" is found 170 times in the Bible. "Grace" refers to divine favor bestowed on undeserving people. Like the Samaritan woman, Rahab was an undeserving sinner.
14. Grace not only pardons and saves; grace also transforms us and teaches us (cf. Titus 2:11, 12).
15. Rahab deserved to die with all of the other wicked sinners in Jericho, but Rahab trusted in the God of Israel.
16. Romans 5:17 refers to an "abundance of grace," and this is what Rahab received.
17. "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8).
18. Hebrews 11:31 says, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not..."

III. THE SCARLET THREAD WAS CLEARLY SEEN

1. The two Israelite spies agreed to save Rahab and her family if she agreed to distinguish her house from the others by hanging the scarlet thread out her window so the Israelites would know which home to spare.
2. Back in Egypt, God told the Israelites, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13).

3. Now in Jericho, Rahab would be safe as long as the Israelite army could see the scarlet (color of blood) thread in the window.
4. Furthermore, Rahab's family were to remain inside the house during the battle (2:17, 18).
5. Noah's family had to stay in the ark in order to be saved.
6. If you are in Christ, then you are safe and secure. The Bible says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).
7. The scarlet thread had to be clearly seen. Perhaps Rahab would be worried about what her neighbors would think.
8. Perhaps Rahab wondered if the soldiers would attack her house. But Rahab acted in faith when she hung the scarlet thread out her window.
9. Rahab trusted God.
10. Someone divided Rahab's story into three parts:
 1. Rahab's works – evidence that she was saved (cf. James 2:25).
 2. Rahab's faith – she is mentioned along with Moses and Abraham in the great "faith chapter," Hebrews 11.
 3. Rahab's reward – she and her family were spared when God destroyed Jericho.

CONCLUSION:

1. After rescuing Rahab and her family, Joshua pronounced a curse upon Jericho (Joshua 6:25, 26).
2. This world is cursed because this world has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn on the television and you will see our Lord's name taken in vain. You will see the Bible and the Christian faith mocked.
3. This world has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, and is under the curse of God. First John 5:19 says, "the whole world lieth in wickedness."
4. In II Corinthians 4:4, Satan is called "the god of this world."
5. Three times in the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus referred to Satan as "the prince of this world" (12:31; 14:30; 16:1).
6. This wicked world will remain under God's curse up until the Lord returns and is recognized as King of kings and Lord of lords.
7. Satan is a defeated foe. Soon he will be cast into the lake of fire.
8. And just as God saved Rahab and her family, God will save any repentant sinner who calls on Him in genuine faith.
9. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).