

**Rahab (Hebrews 11:31)**  
**By Pastor Jeff Alexander (9/17/2017)**

**Introduction**

1. Trevor Johnson, our missionary to Papua, Indonesia, shared the following quote this week on Facebook: "Faith sanctifies our works, and works testify our faith." —Thomas Watson
  - a. This quote fairly summarizes the examples that we are following in Hebrews 11.
  - b. The example before us today could not illustrate this quote more clearly: Rahab's faith sanctified her works, and those works testified to her faith (James 2:25).
  - c. The whole of Jericho heard about the Israelites and their powerful God, but only Rahab acted on what she heard, thus giving her the honor of being one of only two women named in Hebrews 11.
2. Rahab illustrates how God opens hearts to His truth and brings them to faith and salvation.
  - a. God chose to save Rahab out of one of the darkest spiritual holes under certain judgment in order to bring her to Himself.
  - b. The spies sent by Joshua were divinely directed to this woman, prepared of God to receive them.
  - c. Only through their word and promise would she find hope and deliverance.
  - d. The story of Rahab demonstrates God's design to engraft a host of Gentiles into His olive tree of salvation—the true Israel (Rom. 10:20; 11:25–36).

**I. Rahab's Awful Plight**

1. Rahab's pagan origin—a Canaanite Gentile, without God and without hope (Psa. 9:15–17; Acts 14:19; Mic. 4:5)
2. Rahab's awful name—meaning "broad" or "wide," suggesting pride, a blusterer; used of the mythical sea monster (Job 26:12; Isa. 51:9) and an emblematic name for Egypt (Psa. 87:4; Isa. 30:7)
3. Rahab's ill-fated domicile—Jericho, a city devoted to destruction by God because it was a center of Satanic power in opposition to God's purpose (Josh. 6:17, 21)
4. Rahab's infamous profession—a prostitute (Hebrew: *zonowth*, from the root, "to feed"; Greek: *porne*, "a harlot") and an inn keeper. It also suggests that she served Baal and Ashtaroth as a temple prostitute.

**II. Rahab's Faith Demonstrated**

1. Rahab's fearless determination to protect Israel's spies (Prov. 28:1).
  - a. She risked her own life by refusing to betray the men when soldiers from the king asked about them.
  - b. What about Rahab's lying? Was that justified when it protected the spies from certain harm? No (Lev. 19:11; Prov. 12:22). Rahab acted on faith yet immature. Her lying fell under the Lord's greater mercy and patience to fulfill His purpose.
2. Her faith rested on her certain knowledge of the person of Yahweh and of His ability to do what He willed.
  - a. The whole city trembled at the news of Israel's advance under the power of the God of heaven, but only Rahab acted on that information to plea for mercy.

b. She also acted in obedience to the instructions of the spies, tying the red cord in her window and securing her family in her house.

### **III. Rahab's Exaltation**

1. The greatest evidence of her saving faith was her deliverance and acceptance into the covenant community of Israel (Josh. 6:25).
2. Not only was Rahab saved from the destruction of Jericho and accepted into covenant community, but she married Salmon of Judah's princely line (Matt. 1:5).
3. Salmon was the father of Boaz and the grandfather of King David (Ruth 4:18–22).
4. More remarkable yet, Rahab is found in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5) along with four other women, three of whom were also Gentiles (Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary). These NT genealogies do not mention any of the wives of the Patriarchs.

### **Application**

1. Faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:14–17).
2. Faith demonstrates its authenticity by obedience to what is heard (Rom. 10:5–13).
3. Salvation is the work of God, not a work of faith. Faith is the evidence of the work of God, and works of obedience are the evidence of true faith.
4. The deceiver wants to mimic this truth as closely as possible. Beware.