

## Rahab Not Joshua

*<sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.<sup>31</sup> By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace. (Heb. 11:30-31)*

*A young small girl rushed into the room to find her parents but instead found herself surrounded by a wall of adults' legs.*

*She started screaming in panic because she could not find her mom and dad ... only the crowded legs of strangers.*

*As the child screamed, one of the adults swiftly moved aside so the girl could see her mom standing across the room.*

*Running into her mother's arms, the child was immediately calmed.*

*... Even though the situation of being in a room full of people had not changed, the child was quieted by seeing her mother who loved her, and whom she loved.*

*That's the power of sight ... but that is not faith.*

... But the writer of Hebrews has told us that "faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."

Faith is not about what we can see, but rather knowing that God sees.

No matter our circumstances the assurance that God sees ...

... in our blindness trusting that God knows where we are and what we are going through ....

... trusting that God not only knows but even determines the limits of our trials and suffering.

This doesn't mean God will remove all pain and trouble from our lives, but it means that He guards us through that pain and trouble no matter what it is.

Today we are going to see at the **Red Sea** the contrast between faith and unbelief.

At **Jericho** we are going to see the contrast between our weakness and God's power.

Finally, we are going to see **in Jericho** how God works through a people for the good of the individual.

## 1. By Faith Seas Part

*By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.*

So far chapter 11 has talked about the faith of individuals but here it says “by faith THEY passed through...”

... here we are being pointed (not to the faith of an individual) to the faith of a people—the faith of Israel.

Now, let's take a moment and consider the “faith” of Israel.

... Jesus called the Israel of his day a “wicked and perverse” generation

... The writer of Hebrews in chapter 3 called the Israel of Moses's day a people who “rebelled” and who “provoked God” “disobedient” and filled with “Unbelief”

... At one-point Jesus looked at the religious leaders and asked them about the whole history of Israel ... “which of the prophets did you not persecute?”

... everybody who God chose to speak his word to Israel ... was persecuted in one form or another.

**PAUSE**

Can I ask you a serious question: “**Do You Believe in God?**”

Across the board and around the world, the church of Jesus Christ is finding itself again and again being exposed to horrific stories of moral failure and sin within the church.

... that has only been highlighted in this past week with the very public moral failure of Carl Lentz pastor of Hill Song in NYC.

... but sadly he is one among many.

... the church has been found to sin.

*<sup>13</sup> The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men;<sup>14</sup> From His dwelling place He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, (Ps. 33:13-14)*

God is a God who sees us.

... but when we behave as if God doesn't see us ... we are behaving as if we don't believe in God.

**The many of the Israelite people did not believe in God.**

... and the reason I am making this point is because I need you to see that the "they" in verse 29 is not ALL the inhabitants of Israel...

... this "By faith they" is the real Israel inside the nation of Israel.

... these are the ones who by faith believed and received the promise of God.

What was true then, is true now.

There are large gatherings of God's people (i.e. visible church) but there is a church inside the church.

There are wheat AND tares in the earth in the visible church.

... and the reason that God is good to his church is because of the faith of the true believers within it...

*(That is the point of the letters to the 7 churches in Revelation... “he that hath hears let him hear what the spirit is saying to the church.”*

*... the letters are written to those who believe and listen to God.)*

**... my question for you today is this:** are you one of those people who believe in God and listen to.

Here is why this is so important.

(People who believe in God will see the seas part.)

This miracle of the Red Sea was a defining miracle that has been etched into the national consciousness of the Jewish people.

*After the passing of the death angel Moses and the Israelites had been released and told to leave.*

*... in a strange turn of events God had led Moses to camp at the bank of the Red Sea that first night.*

*... well, it wasn't long before Pharaoh began to regret his decision and sent his army to go get the Jews and bring them back.*

**Moses said to the people, “Don't be afraid. Stand your ground, and watch the Lord rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never ever see again. The Lord will fight for you. You just keep still.” (Exodus 14:10-14)**

*Nightfall came, and the Egyptians made camp opposite the Israelites.*

*God commanded Moses to lift his staff over the water.*

*That night a strong east wind came blowing across the water toward the Israelites, and when morning came, they found the water pushed back by the wind on either side of a path that had been cleared through the middle of the sea ...*

*... and the Israelites walked through the water as if on dry land.*

*The Egyptians tried to follow, but their chariots appeared to become stuck in the seabed, slowing them down and when the Israelites arrived on the other side of the sea, God commanded Moses to stretch back his staff over the waters.*

*When he did, the waters returned, covering the Egyptian army and charioteers. The finest army in the land was utterly destroyed.*

*... not even one of the Egyptian soldiers survived.*

NEVER FORGET: That which brings salvation to God's people also brings destruction on God's enemies.

The Work of Christ saves us and condemns the world.

That is encouraging to me!!!

“Oh things are so bad, I don't know what we will do.”

... I'll tell you what we will do ... WE WILL TRUST GOD!

Never fear: God will always preserve His church ...

... so don't worry about your enemies, let God deal with them!

We don't need to overcome and defeat the arguments of this world ... that is not our job ...

We preach the good news of Jesus Christ and trust God to do what he has promised to do—  
KEEP US AND DEFEND US!

... let God do His job.

By faith the seas part.

## **2. By faith Strongholds Fall.**

*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.*

There is something missing here in verse 30... what is missing?

... I will tell you what is missing between the parting of the Red Sea and marching around Jericho ...

... 40 years.

After crossing the Red Sea, in a matter of weeks they were at the Jordan River ready to go over into Canaan...

... but instead of just going, they decided to send a delegation to find out to determine if it was possible?

For all our talk about faith ... too often the believing church is as slow to trust God as the unbelieving world.

... they sent a delegation to MAKE SURE that God hadn't lied to them about being able to conquer the land.

The majority of the spies said, "there are strong holds, giants in the land" it's too hard for us we should have been left in Egypt ...

... in fact, only 2 of the spies believed, they said "God will give it to us."

**... but the majority of the people listened to the wrong voices.**

What happens when the church of Jesus Christ is up against a problem, a difficulty, or a stronghold ...?

**... there will always be those like the 10 unbelieving spies and the people who agreed with them who will say, "we can't do it."**

... So Israel had to learn from 40 years of wandering in the desert to trust God.

... a whole generation died.

But this time, in v. 30, we see that they listened to God.

And here is God's way of bringing down this Jericho strong hold ...

... march around the city every day for 7 days in perfect silence.

... this is a great idea (sarcasm).

... Joshua certainly you can find a better way ...

No, no, we are going to do this .... see here the reason it will work.

... On the last day we are going to walk around the city 7 times and then we are going to sound the trumpets and shout loudly.

(what?)

... but they did, and the walls fell.

**It wasn't the silence, marching, shouting, or the trumpets that did it... it was God!**

When we are confronted with strongholds of error,

- ... fortified places of sin in our society
- ...in our culture,
- ... when we encounter sheer invincible unbelief ...

... what are we to do about it?

Should we have a discussion, concoct some strategies .... are we free to do that?

Should we riot, pillage, revolt ... are we free to do that?

**Listen to me: we are not free to do anything other than what God has told us to do.**

And what has God revealed ... what has He told us to do?

*<sup>4</sup> for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup> We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, (2 Cor. 10:4-5)*

Do you see it?

This is exactly how is there going to be a church in 100 years.

The **means** by which the **church of Jesus Christ is going to be preserved** is:

- the preaching of the Word of God,
- the prayers of God's people,
- and God's people living a holy and godly life in the world.

This is how churches grow and survive ... this is how churches are preserved in times of even the harshest persecution.

... there is nothing magic about it

... there is nothing to be discovered

... to be dreamt up

... this is it ... this is what the God called pastor will be questioned about when he stands before the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Was the Word preached
- Did God's people Sing



- Did God's people pray
- Were God's people encouraged to live a holy and godly life

... that is all that matters.

If we do that, if Jesus tarries, there will be a church here in 100 years... I don't know if it will be big or small but there will be a church ...

We need to challenge the prevailing culture that wants to modify and amend things because they think they have better ideas than God when it comes to His church...

NO!

... we must be committed to God's ideas because we **believe** God ... we **believe in** God and we believe **in God's word**.

... the weapons of our warfare are spiritual weapons.

John Milton called God's plan for the church "**the irresistible might of weakness.**"

Where there is faith seas part ... where there is faith strongholds fall, and ...

### **3. By Faith Sinners are Saved**

*By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.*

In the previous verse 40 years was missing ... what is missing in this verse?

JOSHUA

Why, when covering the defeat of Jericho, is Rahab mentioned and Joshua omitted?

Because the writer of Hebrews is trying to show us how the **faith of a people** was instrumental in the **salvation of an individual**.

What the church does as a corporate body impacts their ability to influence sinners.

... in Matthew 23 Jesus warns the Jerusalem church against turning people into two-fold children of hell.

... not only not leading them to God ... actually making them worse sinners.

This is the last extended mention of an individual in this whole catalogue of faith ... beginning with Abel it ends with Rahab.

Rahab is a trophy of grace.

Now, throughout history there has been an attempt to “whitewash” Rahab’s reputation ....

... individual theologians have tried to argue that when it says Rahab was a “prostitute” or a “harlot” it really meant that she was an “innkeeper.”

... not true. The word for “harlot” is πόρνη ... I think that will help you know that this is not an innkeeper.

She was a Gentile, an alien, a stranger to God ... and yet she is spared.

... Rahab’s conversion and salvation is a type and promise that God is going to call out of the world a church from among the gentiles.

... she was an Amorite (guilty of heinous sins) ...

**... her salvation is a testimony that God can redeem anyone.**

Paul writes to the church of Corinth ...

*(1 Cor. 6:9-11) Do not be deceived; neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals,<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor those habitually drunk, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

Rahab was from the lowest, most wicked lifestyle ... but that was her past ...

God want you to see her past because he wants you to know the power of His grace.

... God knows your past and he is not afraid of it ... because he has the power to forgive and pardon you ...

... Jesus says “no matter where you are coming from, come to me!”

These spies go into this prostitute’s house and they encounter something unexpected ...

*(Joshua 2:9-11) “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 despaired because of you. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> When we heard these reports, our hearts melted and no courage remained in anyone any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth below.*

... Rahab has a very robust view of God ...

God is in heaven and here and I know God has given you this land ... swear by the LORD that me and my family will be saved.

... Because she trusted in God she preserved her life and the life of her family.

... she was incorporated into the people of God.

... She married a prince of Judah (Salmon)

... She had a son named Boaz who married a Moabite named Ruth who had a son called Jesse who was father to king David and a great .... grandson called Jesus.

Rahab gets honorable mention in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 and here in this catalogue of faith...

... when James wants an example of faith that works, he points to Rahab.

**Why is there so much mention about Rahab throughout the bible ... even more than Joshua?**

So that we will know that God has sent His son to seek and save such **as she was...**

... that we will know that God stands ready to save all who will come to him.

Praise to God for such **mercy and grace** that is given to people **like you and me!**

I want to finish where I started ... Do you believe in God?