

Binding The Scarlet Line

Joshua 2:21



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FOCAL Read Together Joshua 2:21 .. and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

If a person will be saved, God will save them.

I have been often asked “What about those who have never heard of Jesus – do they go to hell when they die?” My answer is always the same. I don't believe it is possible for a person to die in their sins never knowing that the Savior died for them. There is no place in Holy Scripture where God's power and majesty is limited among the children of men. God made a blanket promise to humanity in His Scripture. He said:

Proverbs 8:17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

God does not hide Himself from the children of men. He clearly reveals Himself to *whosoever will believe in Him*. The Israel that believed in the Lord and followed Him was blessed. The Israel that disbelieved – the Exodus generation – brought cursing upon themselves. The first generation of Israel “**forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation**” (Deuteronomy 32:15). An evil heart of unbelief manifested itself over and over again, until God finally said:

Hebrews 3:10-11 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. {11} So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

Belief and obedience to God always result in blessing, but unbelief and its twin – sin – always result in cursing. Just as a little poison will take a life, a little unbelief will destroy a person or – in the case of Israel – destroy a nation of people. Unbelief is the sin that caused God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Unbelief stays the Mighty Hand of God so that He will not work. When Jesus entered His home town of Nazareth the Bible reports that:

Matthew 13:58 {Jesus} did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

How terrible is sinful unbelief! The disciples could not cast a devil out of a child because of unbelief (**Matthew 17:20**). Unbelief caused some of Israel to be broken off (**Romans 11:20**) from the blessings of God for a time. Unbelief is the source of all blasphemies against God (**1 Timothy 1:13**). We read:

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, {20} idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, {21} envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar, about which I tell you in advance--as I told you before--that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.^{HCSB}

God is life and light, sin is darkness and destruction. God does not save people *in* their sins, He saves them *from* their sins. Sin is destructive. **The wages of sin is death**

(**Romans 6:23**). Unrepentant sin caused Cain to kill his brother Abel (**Genesis 4:7**). Sin magnified caused Sodom and Gomorrah to be destroyed of God (**Genesis 18:20**). Sin wrecks kingdoms and destroys civilizations (**Genesis 20:9**). The mighty Grecian Empire that once ruled the world died under the sins of hedonism and debauchery. The mighty Roman Empire died under the weight of evil and unbelieving rulers like Nero and bloody Caligula. The great and ancient city of Jericho died under the weight of Divine Judgment.

But not Rahab the Harlot.

Rahab believed in God, and hung a scarlet line out of her window. The city of Jericho heard of God and the mighty works that He was doing in Israel. But Jericho did not repent. On the contrary, the citizens and leaders of Jericho responded to God by trying their best to legislate against Him. When the two spies came to Rahab's house unbelievers pursued them and sought their lives. But Rahab in faith hid these spies from their enemies. She did as God's men directed and hung a red cord out of her window, and so she and her household was saved.

Rather than concern yourselves with hypothetical and nonsensical questions like “what about those who have never heard of Jesus”, wouldn't we all be better off if we would instead ask ourselves “What about me? I've heard of Jesus – have I been saved by faith in Him?” The Lord saved Rahab the Harlot when she – in faith – believed on Him. Have you believed on Jesus? If you have believed on Jesus then you love Him with a deep and wondrous

love. Your love is not on the level of “I love ice cream” or “I love steak”, but it goes deeper. Lovers of Christ trust Jesus to save them both now and then. We believe that – because of Calvary – we will one day be saved from a place of eternal torment. But we also believe that we are *now being saved* and blessed because of His presence.

If you have, are you now focusing your lives – not on sin and unbelief – but on obedience to God? Are you telling others about Jesus? Is your faith working to save others from the sin that leads to destruction?

1. Look First At The Wonder of Saving Grace

Adrian Rogers “Sin is not just breaking God’s laws; it is breaking His heart”

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The disciples once asked Jesus, “**Who then can be saved?**” Jesus replied, “**With God all things are possible**” (Matthew 19:25). The world thinks that only good people will be in Heaven, but the Bible tells us emphatically that only *those whom God has saved will enter His Kingdom*.

Look at the first two words in our focal text: “**and she**”. Who was the “**she**” our text refers to? She was **Rahab the Harlot, a woman of poor reputation**. This may not mean much in today's world – for so many people wink

at sin, considering it to be nothing – but sexual sin is forbidden in the Scripture. The Bible tells us that harlotry is one of the most awful of sins. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthian believers:

1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

The sin of fornication – of harlotry – are particularly evil, for they bring destruction against one's own body. The terrible diseases of HIV and AIDs are not judgments from God – as so many of my preacher brethren mistakenly and emphatically believe – but they are the natural outcome of a life that ignores the warnings of God. “**He that commiteth fornication sinneth against his own body**”. What does the Scripture say? “**Flee – RUN AWAY from sexual immorality**”. In every list of sins the Bible gives it always shows *sexual immorality* at the top of the list. Look Beloved:

In **Romans 13:9** we see **adultery** listed as the very first of *thou shalt not's*. In **Galatians 5:19** we see **adultery and fornication** listed as the first two of the evil **works of the flesh**. The Apostle Peter warned of those who, pretending to be Christian, “**had their eyes full of adultery, who cannot refrain from sin**” (2 Peter 2:14). Solomon wrote that:

Proverbs 6:32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

The sin is so terrible that the Lord had those who fell into sexual immorality **put to death (Leviticus 20:10)**, lest such a thing run rampant among the people of Israel. And yet, of all who were in Jericho, who did the Lord save?

Rahab the Harlot.

Here is the wonder of God's salvation, and the beauty of His Grace. No matter how deep your sin, no matter how dark it may be, the Lord came to this earth and gave Himself *for you*.

Jesus told His disciples:

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

No one was more lost than Rahab the Harlot. She heard about Israel, and heard of the God of Israel. We see this in our context. Rahab tells the two spies:

Joshua 2:9 ... I know¹ that the LORD hath given you

1 Qal Perfect of H3045, יָדָע, *yâda'*, *yaw-dah'*, A primitive root; to *know* (properly to ascertain by *seeing*); used in a great variety of senses, figuratively, literally, euphemistically and inferentially (including *observation, care, recognition*; and causatively *instruction, designation, punishment*, etc.): - acknowledge, acquaintance (-ted with), advise, answer, appoint, assuredly, be aware, [un-] awares, can [-not], certainly, for a certainty, comprehend, consider, X could they, cunning, declare, be diligent, (can, cause to) discern, discover, endured with, familiar friend, famous, feel, can have, be [ig-] norant, instruct, kinsfolk, kinsman, (cause to, let, make) know, (come to give, have, take) knowledge, have [knowledge], (be, make, make to be, make self) known, + be learned, + lie by man, mark, perceive, privy to, X

the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

ILLUSTRATE “**I KNOW**” the LORD – the Eternal Great I AM – has given you this land”. Here we see saving faith. This was not merely an intellectual assent of knowledge. It was not “**I know**” like people say “**I know the grizzly bear is dangerous**”. Many people say that, and yet every year hundreds of people are mauled by grizzly bears. Why is that? Because they have an *intellectual assent* to the fact that grizzly bears are dangerous, but have not internalized that knowledge.

There is a difference between an intellectual assent to truth and an *internalizing of spiritual truth*.

All of Jericho was afraid – literally terrorized – of Israel and her God – and yet their terror was more along the line of “we know, so we will try and overcome you”. This was not the case with Rahab. Read what Rahab said:

Joshua 2:10-11 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that [were] on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. {11} And as soon as we had heard [these things], our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more

prognosticator, regard, have respect, skilful, shew, can (man of) skill, be sure, of a surety, teach, (can) tell, understand, have [understanding], X will be, wist, wit, wot.

courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he [is] God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

Here is saving faith. Rahab said “we all heard what God did in you” but she takes the extra step that true faith demands. She **“confessed with her mouth the Lord Jesus, and believed in her heart, and was saved”**.

Rahab's confession of salvation is found in the words **“the LORD your God, He is God in Heaven above and in earth beneath”**.

Here is the wonder of God's Grace. No matter how deep your sin, no matter how far you may think yourself from God, if you will but:

Romans 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Jericho in disbelief rejected the Lord, but Rahab called on the name of the Lord. The Bible tells us that:

Hebrews 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

You cannot go so low that salvation by Grace cannot

reach you. I can show you time and time again in the Scripture where **God's grace has been sufficient to save even the most lost.**

Who cannot be reached by Grace? The person who clings to their sin as if it be an idol cannot be saved. The person who believes themselves to be sufficient unto God cannot be saved. The person who believes that there are many ways unto God cannot be saved.

But the Scripture promises that **whosoever will**

Psalms 116:13 ... take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

that person shall be saved.

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

This is the wonder of saving grace. Yet look further at this text:

2. Look Next At The Way of Saving Grace

FOCAL Joshua 2:21 .. and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

Look at the next few words in our text: **“she bound the scarlet line”**. Saving Grace is not only wondrous, but it also has its WAY. Rahab believed in the Lord, and acted according to her belief. She asked the two emissaries of

God how she could ...

Joshua 2:13 ... save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

The spies told her,

Joshua 2:18-19 Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. {19} And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.

Saving Grace has a way about it. Some people believe that – once saved – that grace makes no demands. This would be wrong. Those who are saved by Grace stand ready to serve the Lord Who save them. The recipients of Grace are always ready to serve the Lord.

The way of salvation demands obedience to God if you would be blessed.

Please note that the thread that Rahab was supposed to put out of her window was **scarlet – bright red** – not blue or green or white. Those who have been saved are expected to be obedient in the smallest of matters. What

seems small to us is large to God, for He Who controls the universe is *a jealous God*. Jesus said to His disciples:

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

And

John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Rahab could have reasoned within herself, “**scarlet or white, the color makes no difference. I have hidden the spies, so surely, I will be saved.**” Her reasoning would have been faulty. What Providence set before her was a scarlet cord, a bright red cord. The true Child of Christ never reasons away the commands of God, but always asks “**what would my Father have me to do? What would my Lord forbid me to do?**”

Though it may seem but a small thing to the world, the color of that cord determined the quality of Rahab's faith. **Zig Ziglar** taught us, “**Yard by yard, life is hard; inch by inch, its a cinch.**” Obey God in the small things, moment by moment.

The night that Israel was delivered from Egypt by the hand of the death angel the Child of God was told to shed the blood of a perfect Lamb. This blood was to be placed on the doorposts of the house of every Israelite who wanted to live. Had an Israelite reasoned “I have

killed the Lamb, but this business of the splashing of Blood – how barbaric! I will forgo this while doing the first”. Had that been the case the Israelite would have grieved alongside of the worldly Egyptian. God told His people:

**When I see the blood, when I see the blood,
When I see the blood, I will pass, I will pass over you.**

The color of the cord was very important to the blessing of Rahab. Saved by faith, saved by her obedience in hiding the spies:

James 2:25-26 And in the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by a different route? {26} For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.^{HCSB}

Rahab did not debate the small thing. She did as she was directed – and so she and her whole household was saved. She obeyed God – not with the obedience of a slave, but with the obedience of a dear Child.

The Scripture tells us:

Ephesians 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children:

If you have been saved by faith, do not be looking for

loopholes in Heaven's Law. The great preacher **C.H. Spurgeon** said²:

“... when she tied the scarlet line in the window, she expressed her confidence in the fact that Jericho would be destroyed, and that she would be saved because she had received a promise to that effect. Sin would not have hidden the spies if she had not believed in their God ... Beloved, obey in faith. The obedience of the slave is worth little; the obedience of the child is precious, for it is the fruit of love. That keeping of God’s commands which comes of slavish fear lacks the very heart and bowels of obedience, for love is absent, but, as God’s dear children, resting alone in Jesus confiding in your Father’s promise, feel that because you believe you must obey, not because you dread hell, or expect to win heaven through any works of your own, but because you have believed in Jesus to the salvation of your soul, and therefore, it is your joy to do his bidding.”

If you have been saved then you have experienced His love, thus you love to love Him in return. If Christ asks for a scarlet thread, then you who have received His love would not consider giving any other color. Our Savior Jesus ...

Philippians 2:7-8 ... took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: {8} And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Jesus obeyed the Law to the finest point and then, as an act of perfect Love, laid down His life for you and for me. The unbeliever chokes on the Bread of Life (**John 6:33, 35**) for he wishes to avoid hell while living to glorify hell while on this earth. No Child of God mocks the **Cup of the New Covenant, the Blood shed on Calvary (Luke 22:20)**. By faith we – like Rahab – have tied the scarlet line in the window. The Judgment of God shall never fall on us, for it has already fallen upon Christ our Savior at Calvary.

We who are saved delight to do His bidding.

Rahab was as safe in her house as she would have been in the center of Heaven surrounded by millions of warrior angels. Her safety lay in the fact that she willingly obeyed the Covenant – and rested in the red line that hung from her window.

The Bible tells us:

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, ...

No condemnation to those who are in Christ. But is this the all of it? No, for the Scripture goes on to say:

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

There is power in our faith, but the power requires obedience in the smallest of things. Rahab believed, but them *she made public her faith*. What does our focal text say?

FOCAL Joshua 2:21 .. and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

The **line was bound in the window**. She did not hide her faith under a basket. Rahab made an open declaration. Now I know that many who saw that red cord had no idea what it hung there for, but the principle hinted at holds true none the less. Jesus said:

Matthew 5:14-16 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. {15} Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. {16} Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

When the armies of God came I do not believe that Rahab was still wallowing in harlotry. Her house was dedicated to the Lord. The scarlet line hung out of her window. When people see a Christian they should know that they are looking at someone who is different. Christians are **peculiar people**. Jesus redeemed us from the world so that we can be peculiar for Him. The Bible says:

Titus 2:14 {Jesus} gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a

peculiar people, zealous of good works.

That which should hang from our windows is a scarlet line. We were saved the day that we grabbed hold of that line, and lowered ourselves into the waiting arms of Jesus. Our lives should reflect that scarlet line that saved us. People should not be able to be around us for days without knowing that we are different, saved, and emissaries of God. **We should be people of prayer.** I know the Lord is saddened when people who are His do not bless their food before eating it in public places. People should see our bowed heads and know we are Children of our Father in Heaven. **We should be people of love.** We were saved by His love, so we should be willing to love others. Love stretches and forgives offenses against it. Love wants to save others from destruction. Do you tell others about Jesus Christ? Do people see the scarlet thread of love in you? **We should be people of the Book.**

How can we know the God of the Bible if we don't know the Bible of God? - Adrian Rogers

Our worldview – our outward actions – should be based on what God's Word teaches us, not on what the world says is right. Sodom and Gomorrah may have its opinions, but God's opinion is what matters most of all. What does the Book say? **We should also be people of praise.** Saved by Grace, we are called ever upward.

We know little of Rahab, but we do know this: **Matthew 1:5** tells us that Rahab is in the earthly lineage of Christ.

The commentator **Matthew Henry** states:

“There are four women, ... named in this genealogy; two of them were originally strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, Rahab a Canaanitess, and a harlot besides, and Ruth the Moabitess; for in Jesus Christ there is neither Greek, nor Jew; those that are strangers and foreigners are welcome, in Christ, to the citizenship of the saints.”

Why did the Lord take pains to show that a common Harlot named Rahab was in His earthly lineage? Because the Lord wants us all to understand that the Grace that saves is the Grace that richly blesses.

Jesus did not save us so that we could wallow in the pig sty of this evil age. He saved us to elevate us, to change us. Where the Spirit of God dwells, He lifts up by scarlet cord and eagle's wings. May God touch your hearts with His Word.