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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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THE AMAZING WOMAN NAMED RAHAB

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JAMES
NUMBER 23
JAMES 2:24-26

Dr. W. O. Vaught
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

JAMES 2:24-26 "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

In our last study we saw the amazing faith of Abraham and how Christ complimented Abraham and called him the Loved-One of God. This is a quotation from 2 Chronicles 20:7. "He was called" and this is an aorist, passive, indicative of "kaleo" and it means a citation of honor. "Philos" is the strongest word for love and it really means "The loved one of God." It means that Abraham had arrived at that stage where he was occupied with Christ.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE OCCUPATION WITH CHRIST

1. The basis for occupation with Christ is the daily intake of Bible doctrine through the understanding of grace. One must become a mature believer by taking in a maximum amount of doctrine in order to have occupation with Christ. (Jeremiah 9:24, Ephesians 3:18-19, Ephesians 4:20)
2. With doctrine as the working object of faith the believer has a maximum response to God thereby, causing him to be called "The friend or loved-one of God."
3. Occupation with Christ is based on the fact that Jesus Christ has been glorified. Colossians 3:1-2.
4. Occupation with Christ is absolutely essential for any mature believer. Hebrews 12:1-2
5. Occupation with Christ is illustrated by showing here that God has a right-man for a right-woman. Just as God has a right partner for each one so Jesus Christ is designed to be our right partner.
6. The function of grace in the life makes it possible for a believer to respond to the love of Christ. James 1:21-22.
7. The seal of the Holy Spirit guarantees that his love between a believer and Jesus Christ will last for all eternity. Eph. 1:11-14
8. Occupation with Christ depends on a total dependence in grace provision. Psalm 37:4-5
9. Occupation with Christ results in both stability and inner happiness. Psalm 16:8-9
10. Occupation with Christ is the basis for blessing in suffering. Psalm 77.

JAMES 2:24 "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." "Ye see" and the verb is "horao" and is a present, active, imperative and is a command to keep on seeing this. If you see this, you will see one of the greatest grace principles in all the Word of God. Now what will you see? The next word is "hoti" and it is an arrow pointing to something very important. "By works" is from "ek ergon" and means out from the source of works. The next word is "anthropos" and means mankind, both male and female. The next word "is justified" is a present, passive, indicative of "dikaioo" and it means to be vindicated. So this says this is the way a member of the human race is vindicated. He receives this vindication not from faith by itself, for faith must have an object. "Monon" is the word for alone and it means that faith just standing there by itself is no good. You can have all the faith in the world and if you don't have an object to put it in, then it is nothing. That's why the Bible says, "Have faith in God." The object is the important thing in that sentence. Your faith may not be very strong, but if you put it in the right object, then it becomes something amazing. Faith in itself is no good. Faith must have an object and the object determines the vindication and the justification. In salvation the object of faith is Jesus Christ. In living the Christian life, the object of faith is Bible doctrine.

Faith has to have something that will work for it. Faith has to have workers. In salvation faith has Christ who did all the work for it. After salvation doctrine goes to work for you. Faith standing there by itself can't produce anything. Faith alone is non-working. Faith is perception in a wheel chair. But the more doctrine you have working for you, the greater is your faith.

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?" Let us get a few facts about Rahab, the prostitute.

1. Rahab was a prostitute but she became saved. Hebrews 11:31.
2. Rahab became a producer of divine good. James 2:25
3. In the third place, Rahab stands as one of the great illustrations of the grace principle by being in the genealogy of Matthew 1:5. The Jews said that you can't have a woman in a genealogy but God reached out and put four women in this genealogy of Matthew 1. Three of the four were gentiles and three of the four were adultresses. It is an amazing illustration of the grace of God and what he can do with and for fallen individuals. The first one of these is Tamar in Matthew 1:3 and Genesis 38 is devoted to her and her adultery. The second adultress and fornicator was Rahab, the woman in our story here and she is in the genealogy in Matthew 1:5. She was a professional prostitute and then was saved. In that same verse we have a woman of Moab named Ruth. Deut. 23:3-8 tells of the curse that was upon the Moabites. The fourth woman in this line was Bathsheba described in Matthew 1:6. So by the grace of God, these women were picked up, saved, and put in the line that produced Christ, and that's grace. It took someone as great as God to do this.

Rahab was an illustration of the lowest profession, yet she was regenerated and became one of the great women of all time. She was able to see grace in a hurry, and once she saw it, she latched onto it. There was no hypocrisy in her. She knew she was a sinner and once grace touched her, she was saved. It was easier for someone like Rahab to be saved than someone like the rich young ruler and indeed so far as we know from the Biblical record, he was never saved. Rahab never had been cursed with religion so she quickly understood the new birth and she grew spiritually very rapidly. Her house also housed her rope factory as recorded in Joshua 2:1.

Joshua sent out a two-man patrol to make a reconnaissance and they stayed in Rahab's hotel and were hidden in her rope factory. The purpose of this reconnaissance was twofold. They were to bring in military information and to protect the born-again people in Jericho, just like God protected Lot in Sodom when Sodom was destroyed. The principle is this--God always takes care of his own no matter where they live or how they have strayed away. Leviticus 18:24-28 tells how Jericho was overdue this judgment, and remember, Jericho is just a little north of Sodom. No race has ever been put under the fifth cycle of discipline until it was overdue. In Joshua 1:2-4 God repeated the promise he had made to Abraham and to Moses that he would give them the land. So this is a study of justification by production. You believe something so get up and move out on the basis of the doctrine you know.

It takes work and faith to get the results of God's promises. God had promised them the land, but they had to work for every foot of real estate they got. They were to possess the land which God had already given them. Don't sit down and wait for a job to come to you. Exhaust every possibility at your command and then God will work for you and do what you can't do. When Joshua got that promise from God that he would inherit the land, he didn't sit down and fold his hands. He sent out spies to gather information so he could know the facts and intelligently move in. This was Joshua's faith-rest. So he sent in two men, and they are not only going to bring in information, but one of those men is going to find his right woman and she will move into the line that produced Christ. Salman would have missed this if he had not been obedient. He acted on a promise and God did all the rest. The promise was received and believed and then God brought it about. God brought Rahab and Salman together and they became God's way to keep the line going that would produce the physical form in which the Son of God would do his work on earth. This passage, by the way, is going to tell us how Rahab was converted.

Rahab's Conversion

I think that it is significant to note that Rahab's conversion came about by hearing how Israel had been delivered by the hand of God from Egyptian bondage. This story is told in Joshua 2:9-11. The exodus story was used to bring her to Christ. The King of Jericho heard that the spies had entered the house of Rahab and he sent to Rahab and told her to send the men to him. Rahab became the number one suspect since she had become a believer.

JOSHUA 2:3-4 "And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house for they be come to search out all the country. And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:" From these verses we know that Rahab protected these men by hiding them in her rope factory on the roof of her house. In verse 4 she told a lie for she knew where they were and hid them up there. She lied in order to save the lives of these two men. Rahab is always called Rahab the prostitute and never Rahab the liar, though she told one of the most famous lies in all the Bible. Why? A lie is always a sin and is always wrong. But there were other factors involved. She told the lie for she knew if she revealed these men, they would be killed. She knew these men were serving the Jews and she had recently been converted and her sympathy was with the Jews. She knew if she told the truth they would be killed so she lied to save their lives. The lie was not justified, but the lie served its purpose.

JOSHUA 2:5 "And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them." This is an explanation of her lie and it lets you know she did a thorough job of lying. But she had been in the business of faking people out for quite some time and she was smart enough to know how to get these men out of the city without getting them killed. This lie put her in the genealogy of Christ.

JOSHUA 2:6 "but she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof." So here we have the explanation of how she hid these men in her rope factory.

JOSHUA 2:7 "And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate." She got the men of Jericho off on a false trail and got the two men out safely.

JOSHUA 2:9 "And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath give you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you." This verse reveals that she was a very wise person and she realized that God had given the Jews the land.

JOSHUA 2:10 "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." This proves she knew some doctrine and she knew exactly what the Lord was doing.

JOSHUA 2:11 "And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." This is an expression of her positive volition at the point of gospel hearing. When she heard how God had delivered them from Egypt, she believed.

Look for a moment at EXODUS 9:16 "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." From this you see God knew exactly what he was doing.

JOSHUA 2:12-14 "Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee." Rahab here extracted a promise that would eventually bring her and her family under the promise and delivery of God. The reconnaissance team made a promise--our life for yours--provided she not tell why they were there. It is very important to keep your mouth shut and not gossip about the business of other people

JOSHUA 2:15 "Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall." This is the famous scarlet rope. Since she was a prostitute this is all she had. This was the red light sign of her trade. Her house was on the wall and with this scarlet rope, she let them down to safety.

JOSHUA 2:16 "And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way." Here she gave instruction that lets us know she was smart. Her careful instruction saved their lives. She was smart enough to know the patrol would be pulled off after three days and they could escape. This famous red rope is later on going to be hung from her window and is going to be the means of saving her household. (Just like the blood on the doorposts in the first Passover.) The scarlet rope was Rahab's identification with the Jews at the Passover. They had blood on the door and she had a scarlet rope out the window.

JOSHUA 2:17-18 "And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. 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." This is a beautiful picture of the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. Here we see the three restrictions placed on Rahab and her pledge. She lied to save them, she gave them sound advise, and doctrine in her mind saved them.

Condition No. 1

Rahab's family must all be inside the house for all the walls of Jericho are going to fall down except one spot and that's where the house of Rahab was on the wall. Rahab's Hotel was the only safe place in Jericho.

Condition No. 2

She must bind the scarlet cord in the window as an identification

Condition No. 3

She was to keep her mouth shut and not reveal the business of the spies. The doctrine of privacy stands out here.

JOSHUA 2:21 "And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window." The rope was put in the window and this was her deliverance.

JOSHUA 6:23 "And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them with out the camp of Israel."

JOSHUA 6:25 "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." This shows us how God delivered her because she was faithful.

1 CHRONICLES 2:11 "And Nahshon begat Salma, and Salma begat Boaz," Here we see Salma, sometime spelled Salman, who later married Rahab. They had a son named Boaz, the grandfather of Jesse the great grandfather of David the King.

PSALM 87:4 "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there."

Now turn back to 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?" Salman and Rahab were married and remember this--he never brought up her past and the grace of God cleaned her up and you never hear one word of guilt about her past because God has washed it all away. (Now if some of you are carrying around with you some guilt about your past, why don't you drop it at Christ's feet and never remember it again?) So God put this former prostitute in the line that produced Christ, and don't you ever forget it. That word "Likewise" puts Rahab in the very same bracket as Abraham. Abraham and Rahab in the same bracket by the grace of God. Abraham became the friend of God and so did Rahab. Her love life had all been straightened out and she centered her love on Jesus Christ. She was occupied with Jesus Christ before her right man came along. The word for harlot is "porne" and comes from the word "pernao" which means to sell yourself. Then the big opportunity came and she talked when she should have talked and she kept silent when she should have kept silent. "Justified" here is a culmanative aorist and it began with hiding the spies and ended with hanging the red rope out the window. Vindicated by works it is called. "Having received the messengers" and this is from "hupo de comai" and it means to receive the authority from the facts and acting on them. She sent them out another way and this is from "ek ballo" and it means she thrust them out the right and safe way.

JAMES 2:26 "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." This is an illustration of the dead body. A physical body is dead when the spirit leaves it. So faith without a working object is dead.