

## The Outcasts:

(*The Outcasts* is a series of Bible studies based on those people whom most levels of society would consider unimportant, insignificant or even repulsive. These people are often overlooked or cast aside, as if they have nothing to give the body of Christ.

Rebels...backsliders...children...senior citizens...the handicapped...the uneducated...the homeless. Thankfully, God looks upon the heart and sees us for what we can become; beautiful witnesses for the Gospel of Christ. It is my prayer that through these Bible studies you will be blessed and gain a clear vision for how the God of the Universe sees you; incredibly precious and valuable).

I Spy!



By Mary Kane

Take a moment to quiet yourself before the Lord and confess any sin that is in your heart. Now, please ask God to open the eyes of your heart that you may learn from His Holy Word.

Please read Joshua 2:1-21.

(Prior to our text, Moses led the Hebrew people out of the land of Egypt, where they had been slaves for about 400 years. Working through His servant Moses, God led his people to the Land of Promise. At the border of this special land, God relieved Moses of his responsibilities and placed Joshua in command over His people.)

### **What directive did Joshua issue in verse 1?**

The spies were to go in and view the land, *especially* Jericho. The word *especially* in the original language is derived from a word that means "a token, a signal, an omen, a miracle." From the wording of this verse, we see a small hint that God was going to do a wonderful work concerning Jericho.

## **Where did the spies stay while in Jericho?**

It was quite scandalous for the spies to enter the house of a prostitute. But God, in His omniscience, led the spies to the one house in all of Jericho where a person of faith resided. Coincidentally, that house belonged to a prostitute named Rahab. Before we gasp in horror at the mention of a prostitute in a Bible story, let's hear God's heart concerning this matter.

**Please read Matthew 21:31 and record how Jesus felt about prostitutes.**

Jesus welcomed them to believe in Him.

## **Why would Rahab's house have been the perfect hideout?**

It was a risk for her to allow these men of Israel, who planned to destroy the city of Jericho, into her home. For the first time in this account, Rahab put her life in the balance because of her faith in Yahweh. The people of Jericho considered the Hebrews to be their enemies. Somehow, the King of Jericho received news that spies from Israel had taken up lodging at Rahab's house. The NKJV reads "Behold, men have come here *tonight* from the children of Israel..."(emphasis mine). So, the king found out about the presence of the spies within hours of their arrival in the city. I wonder if their clothing gave them away, after all the spies would have been forty years behind the times as far as current trends were concerned (see Deuteronomy 29:5)! Or did someone over hear the spies talking and recognize the language or accent as Hebrew and report them to the king? Nevertheless, the King of Jericho was on their trail!

### **What did the king order Rahab to do (verse 3)?**

Since scripture is silent on any prior conversation between Rahab and the spies, we are left to wonder if the spies took Rahab into their confidence immediately or did they have to wait trustingly for the deliverance of the Lord if Rahab betrayed them.

### **How did Rahab respond to the king's command?**

At this point, I believe for the second time Rahab laid her life on the line for her belief in the God of the Hebrews; certainly she would have been killed if the spies were found in her house. But, Rahab feared the King of Kings more than the King of Jericho! She hid the men and lied to the king about their presence in her house.

### **What do you think about the fact that Rahab lied to the king in order to protect the spies?**

Some resources that I have read state that Rahab was wrong for lying to the king; the Bible also condemns the act of lying. But in James 2:25, Rahab is commended for her work concerning the Hebrew spies. With reference to this same matter Matthew Henry states, "If she had either told the truth or been silent, she would have betrayed the spies, and this would certainly have been a great sin;... But God accepts what is sincerely and honestly intended, though there be a mixture of frailty and folly in it, and is not extreme to mark what we do amiss."<sup>i</sup> Whether Rahab was right or wrong to lie, God knew the intentions of her heart and honored her work for His kingdom.

After Rahab got rid of the king's henchmen, she went back on the roof to talk to the spies.

### **What startling thing does she say to the spies?**

She said, "I know that the Lord has given you the land." How do you think Rahab *knew* that the Lord had given the land to the Hebrews?

Verse 10 gives us a clue; she had heard all that the Lord did when He brought His people out of Egypt! But hadn't all the other inhabitants of Jericho heard the same news? Why was Rahab the only one who *knew* this information? Perhaps it was because she was the only one in all of Jericho who had a heart for Jehovah!

Please read verse 9-11 again.

**What happened to the people when they heard about all that the Lord had done to those who had opposed Him?**

Did you notice, however, that Rahab reacted in faith, while those around her reacted in fear? Terror fell upon them, they became fainthearted, their hearts melted in fear and they were without courage. At the end of verse 11, Rahab, in a great statement of faith, declares that Jehovah is God in heaven and on earth—there is no other!

**Based on this declaration of faith in God, what does she ask for in verse 13?**

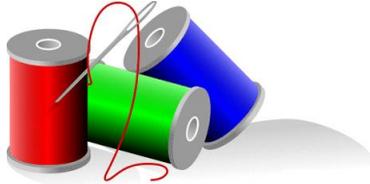
Rahab asks for grace for herself and her family... not because of who she is, but because of who God is! Perhaps she thought that if Jehovah would care to save a ragtag bunch of slaves from Egypt, He just might be interested in saving an outcast, a woman of doubtful reputation, from Jericho. Isaiah 55:1 reminds us that all are welcome, "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters:" You see, God is not willing that anyone should perish, but that whoever believes in Him, shall have eternal life! All are welcome—no matter what their past, no matter what their present.

**How did the men escape from the city (verse 15)?**

**What did the spies tell Rahab to do in order to ensure her and her family's safety?**

They instructed Rahab to bring her father's family to her dwelling and to bind the scarlet rope in the window. I suspected that the scarlet rope symbolized something significant; after all, how many people have a scarlet rope lying around the house? So I looked into the original language and was very excited by what I found (God is always exciting!)! Let's take a moment to dig into the text for a blessing!

The NKJV states that Rahab was to "bind this line of scarlet cord in the window..." I wondered why God would use two words in one verse that appeared to mean the same thing—line and cord; He must of had a reason for this. I learned that the original word used in this verse for cord is *chuw*t which means "a thread, cord, line or string." However, the transliteration for *line* is *tiqvah* which means "a cord, a rope", but it also means "hope, expectation, ground of hope, the thing that I long for."<sup>ii</sup> In essence, then, we could say that all of Rahab's hopes for the future were hanging by a thread—a thin red thread! This thin red thread was her only hope for true life. So what looked like synonyms, *line* and *cord*, were actually two different words with a point of commonality.



The color *scarlet* is also a significant element in this account. According to one resource, *scarlet cord* represents the blood of Christ, which was shed to cover our sin. In reference to the *scarlet cord*, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown states, "Its red color made it conspicuous, and it was thus a sign and pledge of safety to Rahab's house, as the bloody mark on the lintels of the houses of the Israelites in Egypt to that people." Scarlet...for her sin, scarlet...for her redemption by the blood of Christ. Regardless of the meaning behind the scarlet cord, the fact remains that Rahab had placed her trust in the God of Israel.

### **When did she place the cord in the window?**

After Rahab sent the spies away to safety, she immediately bound the cord in the window. Even though she knew that she would have at least three days until the Hebrew people could possibly launch an attack on Jericho, Rahab quickly bound the cord to her window. I think her expediency in accomplishing this task, was a sign of the depth of her belief in God.

Now please take a moment and read Joshua 6:1-25.

**Out of the entire city of Jericho, please list the people who were saved (verse 23):**

All of the people in the city of Jericho had the same opportunity as Rahab; they all heard the same information about how God delivered His people. But only one woman came to faith in God (Hebrews 11:31) and she and her whole family were spared. Interestingly, the name Rahab means a "broad, wide wall." By faith, God destroyed the walls of her bondage (Jericho) and set Rahab free, physically and spiritually. Rahab gained not only new life for eternity, but new life for the present; she married a man from Israel named Salmon.

**Do you have any walls in your life that you need God to destroy?**

**What step of faith can you take today in order to bring down those walls?**

Before we close, we must take a peek at one last scripture, in order to see how God used the life of this Outcast (this is going to be good!).

Please turn to Matthew and scan 1:1-16.

**Whose family line is listed in Matthew 1?**

**Whose name is listed in verse 5?**

What a marvelous God we serve! God took the life of an Outcast, saved her, redeemed her and placed her in the family line of Jesus Christ...our God is amazing.

So what can we learn from this Outcast?

- **Our faith can bring salvation to others.** Because Rahab believed in the God of the Hebrews, her family was saved! Rahab acted on her faith and her entire family walked out of Jericho alive.
- **God will accept anyone who will come to Him in faith.** From prostitutes to presidents, businessmen to busboys, cashiers to chemists; all are welcome in the kingdom of God!
- **God will use Outcasts to build His kingdom.** Just as God used Rahab expand the borders of land of His people, He will use you too, if you will step out in faith and make yourself available.
- **The faith of one Outcast can affect the future of an entire nation** Rahab's faith had great impact upon the nation of Israel and Jericho! Your faith will also greatly impact your nation if you exercise it as God calls you to.
- **The faith of an Outcast can affect the future of every believer.** Because Rahab chose to courageously follow God, by faith, she became part of the family line of Christ. As a believer, you will also leave a legacy to those who come behind you...may it be a legacy of faith.

**What have you learned from the life of this Outcast?**

Like Rahab, we can know that there is always hope for an Outcast when Jehovah is your God.

By Mary Kane

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<sup>i</sup> Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Joshua 2." . Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996. 2010. 15 Nov 2010. <[http:// www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm\\_view.cfm? AuthorID=4&contentID=821&commInfo=5&topic=Joshua&ar=Jos\\_2\\_9](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=821&commInfo=5&topic=Joshua&ar=Jos_2_9) >  
Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *tiqvah* (*Strong's 8615*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 20 Nov 2010. < [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm? Strong's=H8615&t=NIV](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H8615&t=NIV) >