

## Hebrews 11:20-22, “Conquering Faith”

7.28.19

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Several Sundays ago, I told you that you would hear the following phrase again. In fact, I want to show it to you. This phrase:

**“The demonstration of faith is always obedience.”**

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Now, I’m nothing folks...only by the grace of God am I here today...but, I do want to show you a demonstration of faith from my life. I wish I had a ton of these...but, I don’t...but, I do have this one... The one that led me here. Here is my demonstration of faith...



You say, “What?” That’s a gas station. It is. It’s a gas station about 15 minutes outside of Asheville. And it was in the parking space where (see this next picture) this truck was parked where my demonstration of faith would require obedience.



It was in that parking space that I called Pam in October of 2005 and I said, “I can’t do this anymore.” I was on my way to meet an architect for the securing of a large hardwood flooring order for the Cliff’s Community, a Tiger Woods’ designed golf course community in Asheville. It was about 7:30 in the morning.

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Pam, on the other end of the line, said THESE two wonderful words to me, "I know." She said, "Kevin, the Lord is calling you into the ministry. Do what He's telling you to do." It was at that moment, in that parking space that our lives changed...because it was at that moment the decision was made, "We're going to be obedient to the Lord's call on our lives, and yet we really didn't even know where we'd end up or what we would do." Yes, it was a very scary decision. I was 37 years old, in an established career, making really good money...and then that call from God to trust Him and WELL...here we are today! Yes, church family, the demonstration of faith is always obedience.

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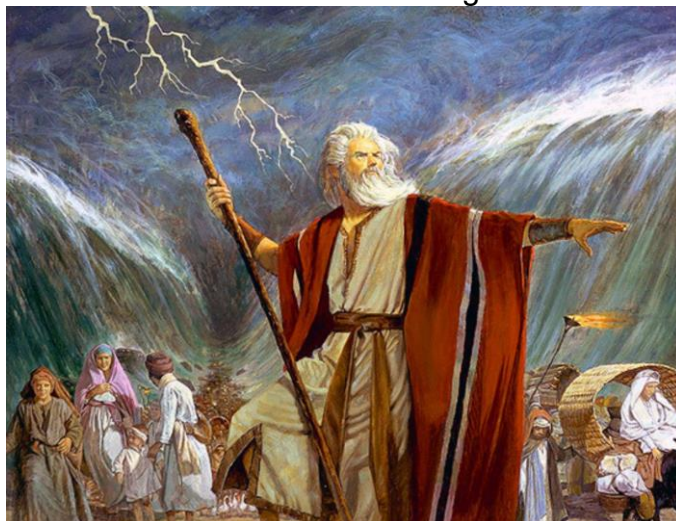
How goes it with you today? Are you perhaps in a similar situation today? Perhaps the Lord is calling you to trust Him in great faith. If that's true...that first step of obedience into the great unknown is always the hardest. You know what, church family, (you tell me if this isn't true)...don't you look back in your life and see where God called you to step out in faith and you look back and wonder, "How did we do that?" I look back on that day 14 years ago and that's what I think.

This morning, as we look at more heroes of the faith in Hebrews chapter 11, we will (I believe) shake our heads and wonder, "How did they do that?" And I'll say this now: I believe the key in answering that question is simply this. Whether it's me in a parking lot at a Love's gas station or it's Noah building a boat, or Abraham on a mountain called Moriah...or it's you in your situation...the key is that when we hear from God, we simply obey.

And church, that's what we've seen over the last 8 weeks in our journey through the Hall of Faith found here in Hebrews 11. We've been reminded that God's desire is for us to have a relationship with Him that's so close and so intimate that we'll hear His voice, recognize it and then obey Him. That is the essence of God's desire for each and every one of us...that we might know Him. And that's what we've seen in the lives of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and today we'll see two more.

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So, as we come to chapter 11 again, we find ourselves at verse 30...and it's interesting in that I'll say this again, just as we're making our way through the book of Hebrews, we're also making our way through the Old Testament. We have now made our way all the way through the book of Genesis and Exodus...Pastor Dale shared our last message about Moses...



Moses delivered the people of the Israel to the edge of the Promised Land. And what we're going to see today, is the fact that, just as Moses had taken the people through the Red Sea, 40 years earlier, Joshua (Moses successor) would take the people through the Jordan River right up to the gateway of Canaan...to a city called Jericho. And it's here we're going to see two more great examples of faith.

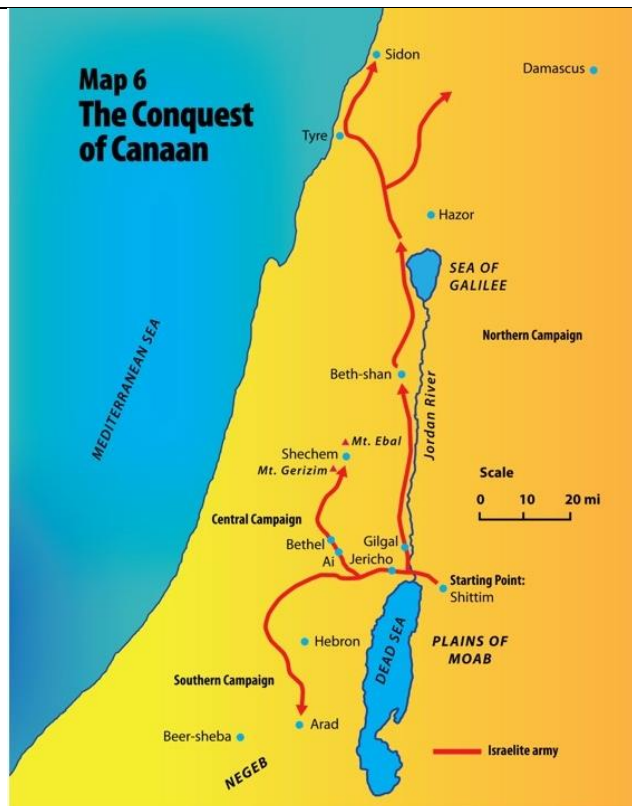
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## Hebrews 11:30-31

<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 prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

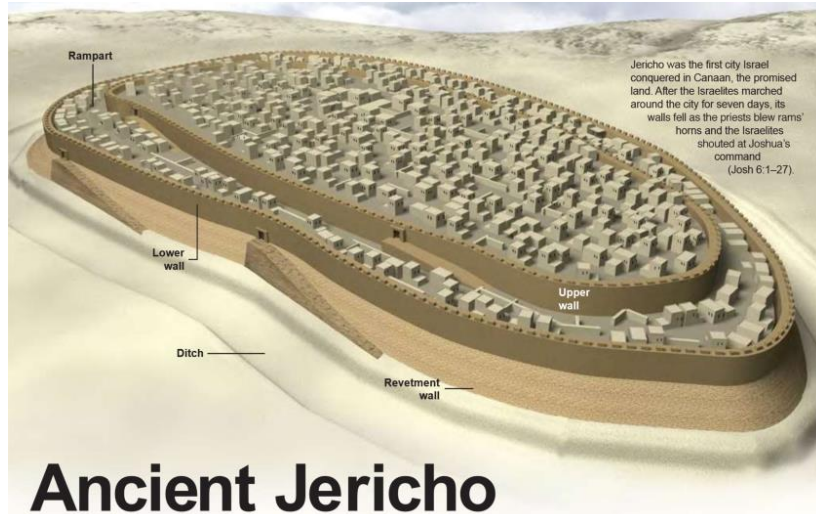
Here in these two verses, we see really one event: the destruction of Jericho...the city that's literally the entry point to the land that was promised to Abraham and his descendants decades earlier. The nation of Israel has now returned to take back the land that is theirs. But, in order to do so, they'll have to conquer the city. Let's see this.

As you are turning there (the sixth book in the Bible, right after the Pentateuch), let me remind you there are over 2 million people ready to take back their land. They've been gone for over 440 years...but, they're now on the cusp of realizing the promise of their return. Joshua has delivered through the Jordan River, just as Moses had delivered them through the Red Sea, 40 years earlier. Take a look at this map...



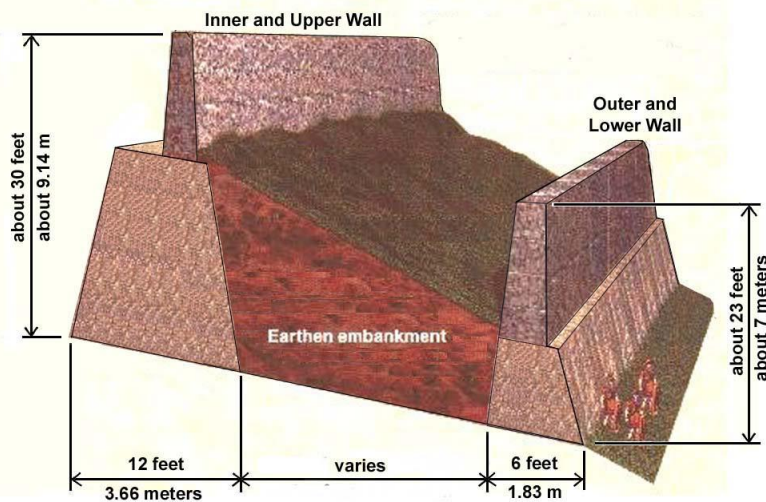
See the Dead Sea. The Jordan flows into it, and it's there the Israelites crossed over and now they must take Jericho to enter the Promised Land.

As we reach Joshua 6, Jericho is on lock-down because they can now see the nation of Israel outside their city walls. Now the city walls are actually two walls... See it...



## Ancient Jericho

There was a Lower Wall and an Upper Wall. Many of the ancient cities had this system of walls, because if you made it over the first wall, you were a sitting duck as you picked off by the warriors of the city on top of the inner wall or upper wall. See this...



**DOUBLE REDOUBTABLE WALL FOR  
THE ANCIENT CITY OF JERICHO**

It was a great system to defend a city. So, when you hear the word “Wall” in what we’re going to read...it’s actually a system of two walls. So, now let’s look at the military strategy of God for taking down the city of Jericho.

### Joshua 6:1-5

<sup>1</sup> Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. <sup>2</sup> And the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. <sup>3</sup> You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. <sup>4</sup> Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> And when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.”

And there you have it. The great military strategy of the Lord. Wow! Can you imagine the looks on the faces of the people when Joshua shared this place? “Uh, Joshua...you want to go over that

again...because we're pretty sure you've got to be leaving something out." Nope...this it. March around the city for six days and on the seventh march around it...blow some trumpets and the walls will come down. Can you feel how that might have felt for the people and for Joshua? Can you feel the almost embarrassment of the warriors of Israel as they marched around the walls and likely heard the laughs and the jeering of the warriors of Jericho on top of the walls? "Look at those fools!"

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Can I be honest with you.



When I was sitting in front of that Love's gas station, where was parked, that's how I felt... What were people going to say? What was my family going to think...Pam's family...would they all think I've lost my mind?

Listen, so often when the Lord calls us...He does so in a way where it really almost seems foolish to a watching world... But listen, **FAITH PUSHES US TO ACT BEFORE WE SEE THE VICTORY!** Conquering faith is always demonstrated by obedience to God's word...what He tells us to do! Faith and obedience are inseparable, and that obedience has to have great courage...the kind of courage that's willing to obey no matter the price, no matter the embarrassment, no matter what anyone else says. Faith requires that we act **before** we see the victory and never forget church family...the greatest act of faith is that **VERY FIRST STEP!** A decision in a parking lot that can change your life.

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Are you there today? Grimacing at the thought of what the Lord is asking you to do? Listen, I thought about not calling Pam on that fall day in 2005. I could have ignored the voice of God and kept on working where was... after all, I was making a 6-figure income. It's true, I could have chosen to walk away from my Jericho... Because to be honest...I looked up at my circumstances...my walls...and they seemed insurmountable. How about you? Is that you today? Are you standing before Jericho looking at massive walls...wondering, "How in the world am I going to do this?"

Well, dear brother, dear sister...you're NOT, and that's the point of Jericho... God's going to do it!

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And this introduces us to an inhabitant of the city of Jericho. A lady...a prostitute named Rahab.  
**Hebrews 11:31**

<sup>31</sup>By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

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Now did you catch the word “disobedient” in verse 31? The people who perished in Jericho were “disobedient.” What does that mean? Well, the Greek word is: apeitheo. We get our English word “apathetic” from it. What does it mean to be apathetic? It means that you know the truth, but you refuse to act on it. In Greek, it literally means: “not to allow oneself to be persuaded, to refuse to obey.” The people of apeitheo. But how? How were they disobedient? Had someone preached to them? No...but, word had travelled to Jericho some 40 years earlier. You’re in Joshua 6. **Go back to Joshua 2** and we’ll see Rahab and the fact that “word” had travelled to Jericho about God.

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Let me set the scene... Joshua has secretly sent in two spies to check out Jericho. These spies have literally go inside the city walls in a covert operation.

### **Joshua 2:1-24**

<sup>1</sup>And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. <sup>2</sup>And it was told to the king of Jericho, “Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” <sup>3</sup>Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.” <sup>4</sup>But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, “True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.” <sup>5</sup>And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” <sup>6</sup>But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. <sup>7</sup>So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out. <sup>8</sup>Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof <sup>9</sup>and said to the men, “I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before 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 devoted to destruction. <sup>11</sup>And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. <sup>12</sup>Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign <sup>13</sup>that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” <sup>14</sup>And the men said to her, “Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the Lord gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.” <sup>15</sup>Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. <sup>16</sup>And she said to them, “Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way.” <sup>17</sup>The men said to her, “We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. <sup>18</sup>Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. <sup>19</sup>Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. <sup>20</sup>But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear.” <sup>21</sup>And she said, “According to your words, so be it.” Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window. <sup>22</sup>They departed and went into the hills and remained there three days until the

pursuers returned, and the pursuers searched all along the way and found nothing. <sup>23</sup> Then the two men returned. They came down from the hills and passed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they told him all that had happened to them. <sup>24</sup> And they said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us."

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Joshua, being encouraged by this report would lead him to direct the people to cross the Jordan River and this takes us back chapter 6. **Turn back there to verse 15** We're to day 7 of the march.

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### **Joshua 6:15-17**

<sup>15</sup> On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. <sup>16</sup> And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. <sup>17</sup> And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent."

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So, the walls fell and the city was conquered. See the artist's depiction:



But, wait a minute...see the red cord? That's Rahab's cord. **Jump down to verse 22.**

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### **Joshua 6:22-25**

<sup>22</sup> But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her."<sup>23</sup> So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. <sup>24</sup> And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. <sup>25</sup> But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

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**Wow!** What an amazing account of conquering faith...the faith of a man...Joshua, the faith of a nation, the Israelites, the faith of one woman, Rahab. Hey Church...do you know what passage came to my mind as I read this account? It's in the New Testament and it's 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

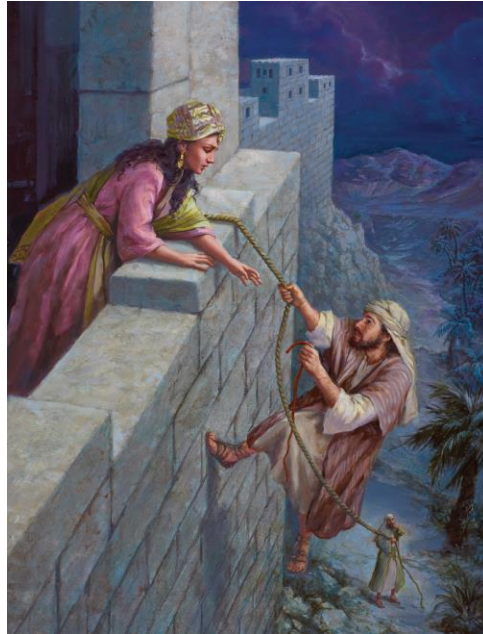
### **2 Corinthians 10:4-5**

<sup>3</sup> For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We destroy

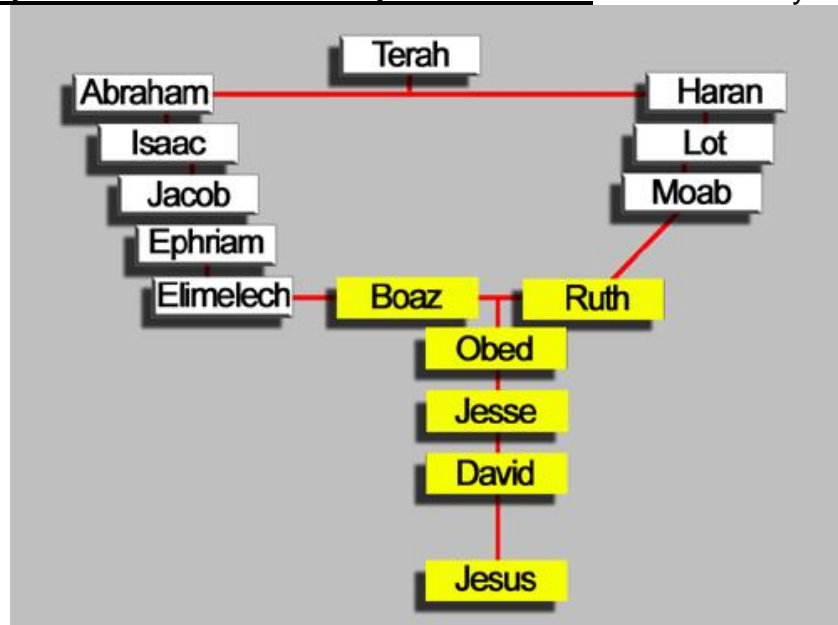
arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,<sup>6</sup> being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

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Church, we must obey...even when it seems crazy! That's how we gain the victory in this life! And that's how Rahab and her family were saved... Ponder this artist's depiction as I share one other thought about Rahab...



Did you know that Rahab is part of the family tree of Jesus? According to Matthew, chapter 1. **Rahab, the former prostitute is in the family line of Jesus** Let me show you. See the chart:



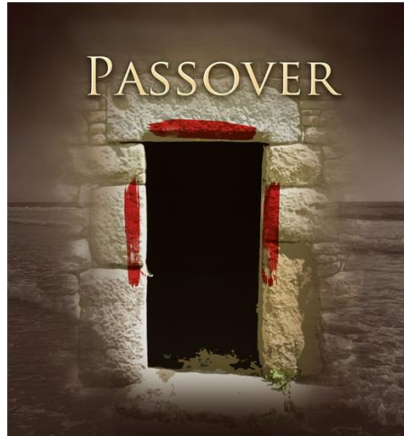
This is so intriguing. See the top: Abraham's father, Terah. Abraham's brother was Haran. He was the father of Lot, who would be the father of Moab...the Moabites were pagan, from the Moabites would come Ruth and Ruth would trust in God and marry a man named Boaz, who would be the father of Obed, who would be the father of Jesse, who would be the father of David. (Hey, did you know that the Rahab was the great, great grandmother of King David?) And that would make her in



the lineage of Jesus...who would come from the household of David, for Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, would go to Bethlehem, the city of David, where Jesus was born.

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Now, why do I tell you this? Listen, there's a scarlet thread woven into the fabric of the lineage of Jesus. A red cord that hung from the window of a prostitute's house, indicating that she believed. Belief changes everything. Just like it did for the children of Israel when they believed by painting blood on their doors in Egypt...



so that the Death Angel would pass over them. You see, Rahab, didn't have blood on her window...but, it was a cord...as red as blood. Oh, Rahab could have never earned her way into the kingdom. She wasn't good enough. She was prostitute. But everything changed when she believed.

Listen, and we're done. You see for the Jews hearing this letter of The Hebrews read by the elders to them...they were reminded of that fact that Rahab had never stepped foot into the Tabernacle. She had never brought a single lamb for sacrifice to a priest. She had never washed her hands in any ritual cleansing...she had never once celebrated the Passover feast...but, she is listed in the Hall of Faith...and she's not even a Jew. Do you know what this means? We'll see her in heaven!

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Church...the demonstration of faith is always obedience...and that obedience is the evidence of our faith in God...no matter what we've done, like Rahab...no matter who we are...even if we're not in right family, or come from the right town. Belief changes all of that...no matter how tall the walls...like Jericho...and no matter if it's a parking place at a Love's gas station. Have faith, have courageous faith and do what God is telling you to do!