

January 15, 2012
"The Scarlet Cord"
Joshua 2

I. It was a symbol of a covenant –

1. Rahab "begged" for it, she asked them to "swear" –

¹² "Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, ¹³ "and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." (Joshua 2:12-13 NKJ)

2. Israel's spies agreed regarding it –

So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you." (Joshua 2:14 NKJ)

3. They also set the conditions of it –

¹⁷ So the men said to her: "We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, ¹⁸ "unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. ¹⁹ "So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. ²⁰ "And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear." (Joshua 2:17-20 NKJ)

4. Rahab agreed to these conditions and did not hesitate starting to fulfill them –

Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window. (Joshua 2:21 NKJ)

5. As a Covenant sign the scarlet cord was very similar to the blood of the Passover lambs, yet it was also similar to other Covenant signs –

²² "And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.

²³ "For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. (Exodus 12:22-23 NKJ)

These Covenant signs created a sense of security in a time of danger –

- All Jericho would be destroyed, except for Rahab's home marked by the scarlet cord!
 - All first-born would be killed by the angel of death, except those behind the doors marked by the blood of the lamb.
- God promised not to destroy the world again by a flood, we can be certain of that because of the bow He has put in the sky –
 - The Lord's Supper is a Covenant sign; that while we sin and deserve God's wrath, Christ has died for those sins, we are covered with His blood and will be saved in the day of God's wrath!

II. It was an example of the obedience of faith / trust and obey –

Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? (James 2:25 NKJ)

The spies (God's representatives to Rahab) said do this –
"unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. (Joshua 2:18 NKJ)

Rahab did exactly what they said –

Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window. (Joshua 2:21 NKJ)

How different this is from false faith?

- False faith will pick and choose which commandments to keep
- False faith will argue over whether the rope really needs to be scarlet, cannot it be green or pink, what difference does the color make?

- *False faith argues regarding God's chosen representatives ... "who are these men telling me what to do, are not I saving their lives?"*

III. The scarlet cord distinguished Rahab and her family from the lost, the condemned sinners –

So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab (Joshua 2:1 NKJ)

What is most obvious about Rahab was she was a sinner, whenever even in the New testament she is identified she is identified as a "harlot." - see James 2:25

³¹ **By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. (Heb 11:31 NKJ)**

Yet, the scarlet cord was the mark which distinguished her from unbelievers, those who did "perish."

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 NKJ)

Jericho is a miniature model of a lost and condemned world, note Rahab's right and rational fear –

⁹ **and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. ¹⁰ "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ "And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. ¹² "Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me ...(Joshua 2:9-12 NKJ)**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever. (Psalm 111:10 NKJ)

- *Rahab had a fear and a faith which she was able to communicate and hence her family was saved –*

²³ **And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴**

But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. ²⁵ And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. (Joshua 6:23-25 NKJ)

- *Such does not always happen –*

¹⁴ **So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking. (Gen 19:14 NKJ)**

- *We live in a condemned world, just like Jericho, we should live and act accordingly –*

¹⁰ **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.**

¹¹ **Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, (2Pe 3:10-11 NKJ)**

IV. There is a Scarlet Cord that runs throughout Scripture –

1. *We see it in the blood of those animals which died to clothe Adam and Eve - ²¹ Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. (Gen 3:21 NKJ)*
 2. *We see it in the better offering offered by Abel –*
 - ⁴ **Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, (Gen 4:4 NKJ)**
 3. *We see it in the bloody Covenant sign of circumcision – Genesis 17:1-14*
 4. *In the blood of the Ram which died instead of Isaac – Genesis 22:13*
 5. *In the blood of the Passover lambs – Exodus 12:1-13 and of all the many sacrificed animals – Hebrews 9:14 & 10:4*
 6. *In the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ – John 1:29; Revelation 1:5*
 7. *Ultimately, this is continued / remembered in the Lord's Supper –*
- ²⁵ **In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (1Co 11:25 NKJ)**