

## Sabbath School Lesson #2 – Surprised by Grace – 4-10 October 2025

**C**hrist would have us live by faith, even as the harlot Rahab lived. Of her, we read that “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Hebrews 11:31). Her case has been a cause of stumbling to some who have not given careful thought to it. It is well known that Rahab lied to the men sent by the king of Jericho to seize the spies (see Joshua 2:2-6), and they imagine that in saving her God placed a premium on lying, and that it is right sometimes to lie. Neither is true. Rahab was saved, not because of her lie, but because of her faith. She, in common with all the people of Jericho, had heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea, and how He had led the Israelites; but she alone, of all the inhabitants of Jericho, believed that the hand of the Lord was in the matter, and that He had given the land of Canaan to the Israelites. All the other inhabitants of Canaan might have been saved, as well as Rahab, if they had only believed, as she did. The opportunity was given them. She had simple faith but was totally ignorant of God’s law. In the code of heathen morality, lying was accounted a virtue, and she knew nothing better. But her faith made it possible for her to be saved and brought her into a place where she could learn righteousness. As a natural consequence her faith in God would increase when she learned more of Him. In her case we have a clear instance of the revelation of the righteousness of God from faith to faith.

**Sunday: Second Chance** – Read Joshua 2:1, along with Numbers 13:1-2, 25-28, 33; and Numbers 14:1-12; why would Joshua start the mission of conquering the Promised Land by sending out spies? The sending of the spies to Jerico by Joshua was an act of faith, for he believed the word of God that they should arise at once and possess the land. Joshua himself had been one of the spies sent by Moses and who returned a good report, and so he also followed Moses’ method of sending spies. We are told: “The Israelites were still encamped on the east side of Jordan, which presented the first barrier to the occupation of Canaan. “Arise,” had been the first message of God to Joshua, “go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them.” No instruction was given as to the way in which they were to make the passage. Joshua knew, however, that whatever God should command, He would make a way for His people to perform, and in this faith the intrepid leader at once began his arrangements for an advance” – EG White {PP 482.3}.

**Monday: Value in Unexpected Places** – Read Joshua 2:2-11, Hebrews 11:31, and James 2:25; was Rahab justified by “works” or by “faith”? James says, “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way” (James 2:25). Paul says, “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Hebrews 11:31). Both are strictly correct. Rahab was justified by faith; but she would not have been justified by faith if her faith had been merely a simple assent to the fact that God was leading the Israelites. Such a belief as that would not have been real faith. But she had so strong a faith in what she had heard about God’s leading the Israelites into the land of Canaan, that she did the works required of her, and so in a secondary sense she was justified by works, since it was her works that testified to the reality of her faith. Faith and works are inseparable. So closely united are they that the possession of one presupposes the possession of the other. Yet it must not be forgotten that faith is first. There can be no works where there is no faith. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4), and “the just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:1). This is literally true. It is also true, as Paul says, 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” (Romans 10:9). Also when the jailer asked, “What shall I do to be saved?” Paul answered him truly, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). This may be said to comprise all that is necessary for salvation, because works are included in faith; they follow it as surely as flowers follow the showers of spring. If a man has the faith of Abraham, he will do the works of Abraham; if a man really believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he will bring forth works “meet for repentance” (Mat 3:8).

**Tuesday: New Allegiance** – Read Joshua 2:12-21 and Exodus 12:13, 22-23; how do the texts in Exodus help you understand the agreement between the spies and Rahab? The

scarlet thread that Rahab was told to put on her window so that she may be passed over, that red colour represented blood, as the blood that the Israelites put on the doors to be passed over by the destroying angel when they were in Egypt, which blood ultimately was a token of the blood of Christ our Passover. It was not the blood of animals that saved the Israelites in Egypt, it was not the scarlet that saved Rahab, but the atoning blood of Christ. Christ “was made under the law.” In dying, He obeyed; in obeying, He died. He obeyed until death; He obeyed in death. In Him was no sin, but on Him were laid the iniquities of us all. He bore mercies in His hands, but He bore the sins of many in His person. He died that we might live; and He lives that we may not die. He shed tears. He shed His blood. He poured out His life. “His blood cleanseth from all sin.” This fountain is always open. Happy for us that it is so. We need to wash daily, for we sin daily. As the scarlet thread in the window of Rahab; as the mark put on the forehead of the righteous by an angel having an inkhorn at his side (Ezekiel 9); and as the blood of the lamb on the two side-posts and the upper door-post of Israel in Egypt; so the blood of Christ only and alone can save us who believe in Him.

**Wednesday: Conflicting Values** – Read Joshua 9:1-20; what lessons do we learn from the story of the Gibeonites? The seemingly ‘conflicting values’ here was about how the Israelites handled the matter. The Gibeonites had tricked the Israelites into taking an oath not to destroy them, that is, the Israelites pledged by oath to protect the Gibeonites. When the Israelites found out the truth, they were now faced with ‘conflicting value’ whether to honour or dishonour their oath. In entering the oath, the Israelites “asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them.” The Israelites were tricked into believing the ambassadors were from a far country. After only three days, “they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them.” What was their reaction, should they honour and was it right to their oath? We are told: “Great was the indignation of the Israelites as they learned the deception that had been practiced upon them. And this was heightened when, after three days’ journey, they reached the cities of the Gibeonites, near the center of the land. “All the congregation murmured against the princes;” but the latter refused to break the treaty, though secured by fraud, because they had “sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel.” “And the children of Israel smote them not.” The Gibeonites had pledged themselves to renounce idolatry, and accept the worship of Jehovah; and the preservation of their lives was not a violation of God’s command to destroy the idolatrous Canaanites. Hence the Hebrews had not by their oath pledged themselves to commit sin. And though the oath had been secured by deception, it was not to be disregarded. The obligation to which one’s word is pledged – if it do not bind him to perform a wrong act – should be held sacred. No consideration of gain, of revenge, or of self-interest can in any way affect the inviolability of an oath or pledge. “Lying lips are abomination to the Lord.” Proverbs 12:22. He that “shall ascend into the hill of the Lord,” and “stand in His holy place,” is “he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.” Psalm 24:3; 15:4” {PP 506.1}.

**Thursday: Surprising Grace** – Read Joshua 9:21-27; how did Joshua combine justice with grace? “The Gibeonites were permitted to live, but were attached as bondmen to the sanctuary, to perform all menial services. “Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord.” These conditions they gratefully accepted, conscious that they had been at fault, and glad to purchase life on any terms. “Behold, we are in thine hand,” they said to Joshua; “as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.” For centuries their descendants were connected with the service of the sanctuary” {PP 506.2}. The Lesson writer asks, ‘What might have happened had the Gibeonites disclosed their identity and requested mercy as Rahab did?’ and then says, ‘we don’t know.’ But we ought to know the answer, for we are told: “But it would have fared better with the Gibeonites had they dealt honestly with Israel. While their submission to Jehovah secured the preservation of their lives, their deception brought them only disgrace and servitude. God had made provision that all who would renounce heathenism, and connect themselves with Israel, should share the blessings of the covenant. They were included under the term, “the stranger that sojourneth among you,” and with few exceptions this class were to enjoy equal favors and privileges with Israel” – Ellen White {PP 507.1}.