

What did Rahab Know about Israel and Israel's God?

[Article based on e-mail correspondence]

Question:

What did Rahab know about Israel and Israel's God, when she conversed with the spies?

Answer:

[I think this is a significant question, because many people who use Rahab's case to "justify" lying seem to think that she understood the full implications of what she was doing.]

Rahab probably didn't know much more than what is written in Joshua 2:8-11. She knew about God's power, and that he is God over all. However, she most likely did *not* know much about his teachings, as recorded in the books of Moses. She probably did *not* know the 10 commandments (other than the degree of understanding that occurs "naturally" in people - Romans 2:14-15).

When she chose to trust God, she did so with an *imperfect* understanding of what it meant to trust him. She would have learned more about it, as she became more a part of the Israelite community.

When Rahab turned to God, she did an unusual thing. Rarely do a people abandon their gods (idols), even when their gods appear to be "failing" them. Out of all the people of Jericho, only she (and possibly some of her relatives) chose to abandon their idols and turn to the God of Israel. Her actions that flowed from this choice - even if somewhat "less than perfect" - were truly an expression of faith (trust) in the God of Israel.