

GOD MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN

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As Joshua and the Israelite people were preparing to cross the Jordan River and begin the conquest of Canaan, two spies were sent to the city of Jericho. Their presence in the city became known, and a woman named Rahab hid them on the roof of her house. Why would this woman willingly hide foreign spies whose ultimate purpose for being there clearly involved the destruction of her own city? Rahab said to them, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh 2:9-11). Her words reveal part of God's purpose for all the things He had done for Israel in bringing them out of Egypt, and then literally to Jericho's doorstep.

God's work to save souls

One of the major reasons that God let all the earth see His wondrous works on behalf of Israel was to make Himself known to them so that some of them might repent and serve Him. Rahab is one example of this purpose being fulfilled. Rahab had heard what God had done for Israel in Egypt and against Sihon and Og, and, as a result, she had come to understand and acknowledge that "*the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath*" (Josh 2:11). Rahab heard about everything that God had done for Israel and it caused her to believe in God and repent of her sins. On several occasions, God gave His people Israel a great victory over their enemies "openly in the sight of the heathen" for "all the ends of the earth" to see (Psa 98:1-3). This was done so that "all the earth" would learn who Jehovah is and turn to serve Him (Psa 98:4; see also Psa 126:1-2). Much later in Israel's history, God saved them from annihilation by the Persians under wicked Haman, and the result was that "*many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them*" (Est 8:17). Rahab too was converted to God after hearing of God's great works and this

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(continued)

fulfilled one of God's major purposes for doing those works and making them known to everyone.

God's work to magnify His name

It certainly worked according to God's purpose for Rahab and others to actually be saved after hearing of His wondrous works on behalf of Israel. But even when people heard of these things and refused to repent, it still accomplished God's purpose. Another purpose God had for making His works known among all the heathen was to cause His name to be known and magnified. As He prepared to begin His works in Egypt, before sending the first plague upon them, God said, "*And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them*" (Exod 7:5). Though He understood that Pharaoh was a "vessel of wrath fitted to destruction" (Rom 9:22), God told Pharaoh that He was bringing the plagues upon him "*that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth*" (Exod 9:13-14). The destruction of Pharaoh and all of God's mighty works against him would cause God's name to be "declared throughout all the earth" (Exod 9:15-16). Specifically, God intended for the people of Palestine to hear, be afraid, and have sorrow take hold of them (Exod 15:13-14). This is precisely what happened. Rahab said that terror had fallen upon them and all the inhabitants of the land fainted because of what God had done for Israel (Josh 2:9). Rahab said that as soon as the people of Jericho had heard what God had done in Egypt and to the two Amorite kings, "our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man" (Josh 2:10-11). The men of Gibeon, Hivites, disguised themselves and were happy to accept a cursed position among the Israelites because they had heard the fame of Jehovah "and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth" (Josh 9:9-10). In spite of the wickedness of the people of Egypt and Canaan, and even the faithlessness of the Israelites themselves, God was still making His mighty power to be known by what He did for Israel in Egypt, in the land of the Amorites, and now in Canaan itself (2 Sam 7:23; 1 Chr 17:21; Ps 106:7-8; Neh 9:10; Jer 32:20; Ezek 20:9).