

BEHIND THE SEEN

Exploring the Bible's Unsung Heroes

RAHAB

Rediscovering the God Who Saves Me



Shadia Hrichi

RAHAB, WHO WITNESSED NO MIRACLES AND KNEW NONE OF GOD'S LAWS, MERELY HEARD OF GOD'S POWER—AND BELIEVED.

Rahab, a former Canaanite prostitute, holds a surprisingly prominent position in several key faith passages—as well as being listed in the lineage of Christ! In fact, she marries a prince. *The prostitute marries a prince!* This is the stuff of movies and romance novels.

But the best part? Rahab's story is *our* story. It's a story centered on three key themes, without which there would be no Bible, no gospel, and no Savior: *faith, grace, and salvation*. Through her daring faith, Rahab hid enemy spies, defied her king, risked her life, and found the living God. By the time you finish this six-week study, you will never look at the story of Rahab the same way again.

“*Insightful and rich in cultural details, Shadia's new Bible study on Rahab takes the reader on a deep and meaningful journey. Because of it, I have a fresh understanding of the God who saves. Highly recommended.*”

—**ROBIN LEE HATCHER**, Christy Award-winning author of *The Legacy of Faith* series and *I'll Be Seeing You*

“*With a much deeper dive into this woman in the lineage of Christ, Shadia challenges us to take our faith deeper with a relentlessly faithful God. She reminds us that no one, no matter who they are or what they've done, is outside of God's tender love. Just like he did with Rahab, God extends a rescue cord to each of us.*”

—**JENNIFER CROSSWHITE**, author of the best-selling Christian romantic suspense *Protective Custody*



Shadia Hrichi holds a master's in biblical and theological studies as well as a master's in criminal justice. Shadia is the award-winning author of several Bible studies, including *Tamar*, *Hagar*, *Legion*, and *Worthy of Love*. She is often invited to speak at retreats and other events, has served on faculty for several Christian Writers conferences, and provides workshops, coaching, and other resources for aspiring authors. Currently residing in northern California, Shadia loves to visit the ocean each week for “a date with Jesus.” Visit www.shadiahrichi.com.


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Biblical Studies / Bible Study Guides



Praise for Rahab

“I’m always on the lookout for Shadia’s newest Bible study. Each one is packed with rich insights, historical detail, and valuable life lessons. Shadia’s expert scholarship combined with relevant personal experiences challenge me and help me grow deeper in my faith.”

—**Francine Rivers**, international best-selling author

“Insightful and rich in cultural details, Shadia Hrichi’s new Bible study on Rahab takes the reader on a deep and meaningful journey. Because of it, I have a fresh understanding of the God who saves. Highly recommended.”

—**Robin Lee Hatcher**, Christy Award-winning author of *The Legacy of Faith* series and *I’ll Be Seeing You*

“Pick up this study of Rahab and feel like you’re sitting with a friend over coffee discussing what you’re learning about the God who loves you. Over and over in this study, we see that Rahab’s story is our story. It’s the story of God pursuing his beloved people—us—with grace and persistence. With a much deeper dive into this woman in the lineage of Christ, Shadia challenges us to take our faith deeper with a relentlessly faithful God. She reminds us that no one, no matter who they are or what they’ve done, is outside of God’s tender love. Just like he did with Rahab, God extends a rescue cord to each of us.”

—**Jennifer Crosswhite**, author of the best-selling Christian romantic suspense *Protective Custody*

“Shadia Hrichi once again brings hope and challenge in a thrilling look at the life of Rahab. No matter your past or upbringing, Rahab teaches us what it means to trust, and walk, in faith with the unseen God, and how He can transform the seemingly insignificant into heroes of eternity.”

—**Tara Johnson**, author of *Engraved on the Heart*, *Where Dandelions Bloom*, and *All Through the Night*

“In *Rahab*, Shadia Hrichi explores details many of us have skimmed over for years—details that make a difference in how we read, understand, apply, and share Scripture as we eagerly await the day of Christ’s return. Leading at a steady pace that encourages reflection, Shadia reveals how God uses a woman who might otherwise seem irrelevant. I enjoy how Shadia examines the stories of God’s interactions with people who are often discarded or discredited as she teaches the foundational truths of Scripture in relevant and exciting ways. I can hardly wait to join Shadia on her next adventure through Scripture!”

—**Xochitl Dixon**, contributing writer for *Our Daily Bread* and *God Hears Her*; author of the 2021 ECPA Christian Book Award Children’s Book Finalist, *Different Like Me*, and *Waiting for God*

“As she has done in her other outstanding Bible studies, Shadia Hrichi, in *Rahab*, has brought to life the story of a fascinating woman whose courage and faith in God transformed her own life and changed history. This book reveals God’s surprising ways of accomplishing his purposes through people we might least expect. Who could have imagined that Rahab, a prostitute and woman without power or influence, would be able, through her belief in God, to save her family from destruction and end up in the ancestral line of Jesus? This Bible study goes in depth, putting Rahab’s story in the context of the larger biblical narrative. Through the book’s questions and exercises, readers in group or individually will be able to probe this amazing story’s meaning and its relevance to their own lives and faith. Hrichi challenges her readers to live lives of courage and faith, and her book helps guide them in that direction.”

—**Joseph Bentz**, author of *8 Old Testament Passages That Changed the World*

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RAHAB

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Shadia Hrichi



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In loving memory of my mom:
Thank you for always believing in me.
I look forward to the day I will see you again in heaven.

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:13

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Thank you to everyone who read an advanced copy of this study and offered your kind endorsement. Robin Lee Hatcher, I still chuckle that you decided we must be soul sisters after discovering we share an unfortunate tendency of killing our house plants. Thank you so much for your kind endorsement of this Bible study. And thank you to my sweet friend Francine Rivers for introducing Robin and me, as well as the added blessing of your own endorsement. Your friendship and enthusiastic support over the years have encouraged me more than you can imagine. I am also grateful to Joseph Bentz, Jennifer Crosswhite, Xochitl Dixon, and Tara Johnson. I love how God connected each one of us. Thank you for taking the time to read this Bible study; I know how busy each of you are. Your sacrifice of time and your wonderful endorsements are greatly appreciated!

Once a book is ready to publish, the next step is launch time! I am so thankful to the countless people who support me and the ministry through their love, prayers, gifts, and encouragement. I am blessed to have an incredible prayer team of over eighty people who pray faithfully and regularly for this ministry. Friends, your prayers are truly making a difference: from the *Hagar* Bible study being translated into Arabic to the truckloads of *Tamar* studies shipped to the Prison Book Project, God alone knows all the souls being impacted for the kingdom through your faithful prayers.

Thank you also to my wonderful church family, small group “sisters,” and so many dear family and friends who have carried me through the past twelve months of writing this study while I faced some very difficult personal trials. Your love and prayers gave me the strength to press on; I can never thank you enough.

And what good would it do to have a new book launched into the world if it were not for the readers who choose to open its pages? To the person who is reading this right now, thank you for the privilege of serving you through words. There are many Bible studies you can choose from, and I am deeply humbled you have invited me—and *Rahab*—to be a part of your faith journey. It is my prayer that God would use this study to further fan into flame a holy joy for studying His Word.

Lastly, but most important of all, I give thanks to Jesus my King for saving me *from myself*. For taking my broken pieces and poor choices and fashioning them into something beautiful for Your kingdom purposes. I may never fully understand why You would choose me to teach Your glorious Word; but for as long as I am able, I will praise You for all you have done. It is my heartfelt prayer that the powerful truths in Rahab’s story will draw many hearts to Your saving love.

To Your name alone be glory, honor, and praise forever!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



SHADIA HRICHI IS A PASSIONATE BIBLE

teacher, award-winning author, and speaker who has a heart for seeing lives transformed by the power of God's Word. Having experienced much heartache, such as a broken home, abortion, and divorce, Shadia captures the hearts of her audience as she illustrates God's love, faithfulness, and power of redemption through her personal experiences.

She received a master's degree in biblical and theological studies from Western Seminary, as well as a master's degree in criminal justice from the State University of New York. Shadia is the author of several Bible studies, including *Tamar*, *Legion*, and *Hagar*, all in her Behind the Seen series, and *Worthy of Love*, a story-driven Bible study for postabortion healing.

In addition to teaching Bible studies, Shadia is often invited to speak at churches, retreats, conferences, and other events. Her insightful and witty yet vulnerable teaching style reveals a compassion for the hurting, love for Jesus, and uncompromising commitment to the truth of God's Word. In addition to writing and speaking, Shadia has served on the faculty for a number of Christian writers conferences, and she provides workshops, coaching, and other resources for aspiring authors.

Currently residing in Northern California, Shadia loves to visit the ocean each week for "a date with Jesus." Be sure to visit www.shadiahrichi.com and join Shadia's "Brave the Deep" email community to receive Bible study tips, free resources, and updates on her writing. *Rahab* is the fourth study in her series, Behind the Seen: Exploring the Bible's Unsung Heroes. Be among the first to be notified of the next study!



ABOUT THE STUDY

WELCOME, FRIEND. I HOPE YOU ARE SITTING DOWN, because this study is sure to be a wild ride! I can hardly wait for us to begin our journey of *Rahab: Rediscovering the God Who Saves Me*.

This book is divided into six weeks, each comprising five days of personal study. For added flexibility, choose a commitment level that works best for you: “light” (15 minutes/day), “moderate” (30 minutes/day), “in-depth” (45 minutes/day) or “all-in” (60 minutes/day). See Group Study Tips (on the next page) for more details.

Each day of study includes one or more questions suitable for group discussion. These questions are followed by a ☉. Be sure not to overlook these questions, even if you are working through the material on your own. There are also Pause to Ponder sections throughout the study; these are designed to provide you with a time of personal reflection. Use the space in the margin (or, if you prefer, a journal or notebook) to respond to these questions. For readers desiring to dig even deeper, I’ve prepared Extra questions, which are preceded by a ☼.

At the end of each day, there is a Your Turn section for personal application. These questions are important. While studying the Bible can stir our hearts and open our eyes to wonderful truths, only when we apply what we have learned will it have a lasting impact for God’s kingdom. In addition to this workbook, optional video teaching sessions are available at www.shadiahrichi.com/rahab.

During my study of Rahab, I often found myself fascinated by secondary topics related to the material. The Supplemental Readings I included throughout the study are not essential, but you may find them enjoyable and informative. I have included a section called Group Study Tips, which you may find useful if you are doing the study as a group.



One quick note: some paraphrase versions of the Bible may be inadequate for the purposes of this study. Whenever possible, it is recommended that you complete the exercises using a Bible translation that adheres to a more literal translation, such as the English Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, New King James Version, or King James Version.

Before you begin, take a few moments to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you over the next six weeks and to bless your commitment to this study. Then, as you open your Bible and your heart, begin each day with an eager expectation of *Rediscovering the God Who Saves Me*.



GROUP STUDY TIPS

BECAUSE ANY DEEP WORK OF GOD REQUIRES A SACRIFICE of time spent in His Word and in His presence, the volume of material in an in-depth study can be challenging for some participants. For this reason, several suggestions are provided to help you facilitate the study when participants have varying levels of time constraints.

Video Teaching Sessions

Seven optional video teaching sessions serve to complement and enhance the study. Watch Session One before you begin. Then, watch Session Two through Session Six before completing Week Two through Week Six in the study. Finally, watch Session Seven when you finish the study as a wrap-up. Sessions average between twenty and twenty-five minutes in length. Video sessions are available at www.shadiahrichi.com/rahab.

Plan an Extended Schedule

Instead of meeting for six weeks, allow two weeks for each chapter, for a total of twelve weeks. Every other week, invite participants to watch and discuss Shadia's video teaching sessions. These modifications will also provide periodic opportunities for participants to catch up on anything they may have missed or to spend extra time on areas of the study they may wish to explore further.

Customized Commitments for a Six-Week Schedule


Based on a six-week format, the following are suggested assignments based on an individual's time constraints:




For All Participants

- Read through each day's material, including the assigned Bible passages.
- Optional: read the Supplemental Reading section as provided in various weeks.


Light (15 Minutes a Day)

- Complete the Your Turn personal application section at the end of each day.
- If you have time, complete the Group Discussion questions, identified with a .


Moderate (30 Minutes a Day)

- Complete the various Pause to Ponder personal reflection sections as well as the Your Turn personal application section at the end of each day.
- Complete the Group Discussion questions identified with a .

In-Depth (45 Minutes a Day)

- Complete all questions except for the Extra questions identified with a .

All-In (60 Minutes a Day)

- Complete all the questions, including the Extra questions identified with a .
- Read all the Supplemental Reading sections.

May the Lord bless you as you journey through this study!



A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

THE STORY OF RAHAB HAS FASCINATED BIBLE STUDENTS and lay persons for centuries. Her story appears in a mere two chapters in the book of Joshua, and the events are curious right from the start. The book opens with God commissioning Joshua to lead the Israelites after the death of their leader Moses. Yet no sooner do the people come to the edge of the Promised Land than God puts the whole drama on hold to tell us the story of a Canaanite prostitute named Rahab. This interruption of the conquest story is not an accident, and it gives us our first glimpse into the theological significance of Rahab's story.

When we come to the New Testament, Rahab holds a surprisingly prominent position in several key faith passages. For starters, she is listed in the lineage of Christ! She even marries a prince! *The prostitute marries a prince!* This is the stuff of Hollywood movies and romance novels. The heartbeat of the Bible is God's passionate pursuit of His adulterous bride—a theme that echoes within the depths of every human heart.

I have a secret to share with you: Rahab's story is *our* story. It's a story centered on three key themes, without which there would be no Bible, no gospel, and no Savior. These themes are *faith*, *grace*, and *salvation*. Here is a woman who witnessed no miracles and knew none of God's laws. She merely heard of God's power and, in reverent fear, *believed*.

Through her daring faith, Rahab hid enemy spies, defied her king, risked her life, and found the living God. Rahab's story foreshadows events she could never have imagined. By the time you finish this study, you will never look at the story of Rahab the same way again. Are you ready? Let's rediscover the *God Who Saves Me!*

Your sister in Christ,

Shadia



*Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*

Proverbs 31:30



PART I

THE PROMISE



WAITING FOR THE PROMISE OF SALVATION

BEFORE TIME BEGAN, GOD MADE A PROMISE, AND WHETHER any of us realize it, all human history hinges on God's faithfulness to keep that promise. This week, we begin our study by tracing God's footsteps within the lives of His people; from the Garden of Eden to the edge of the Promised Land, we will see God at work, *behind the seen*.

DAY ONE God Made a Promise

Long before Jesus stepped foot on the earth, before David was crowned king, before the walls of Jericho fell, before the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, before Noah built an ark, before Adam ate the fruit, or before the universe was spoken into being, God made a promise.

Read Titus 1:2 in the margin. What did God promise, and when did He make the promise?

WEEK ONE

.....
" [We have this] hope of
eternal life, which God,
who never lies, promised
before the ages began."

—Titus 1:2
.....

What assurance do we have that God will keep His promise?

Why does His promise matter?

Why does it matter to *you*?

God could have promised anything—or nothing—before creating the world. This means that long before you took your first step or even your first breath, long before God planted you in your mother’s womb or you chose to go your own way, God, in His mercy, promised the “hope of eternal life.”

PAUSE TO PONDER

Think of a time when someone made a promise to you that you held dear, only to discover the other person let you down. How did you feel? How did it change you, or what did you learn? How can you take comfort in knowing that God, who never lies, always keeps His promises?

.....
 All the way back at the beginning of human history, in the Garden of Eden, God announced that a Savior would be born of human descent.

To fulfill His promise, God announced at the beginning of human history, in the Garden of Eden, that a Savior would be born of human descent (Gen. 3:15). Some of the people whom God would choose to weave into the Savior’s ancestry are the last people we might expect—like Rahab, whose story is at the heart of this study. Her story is found in the Old Testament book of Joshua, which recounts the events following the Exodus—namely, after God raised up Moses to lead the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt and miraculously divided the Red Sea. This enabled God’s people to head into the land He promised to Abraham so many generations before. When Moses died, leadership of the people passed to Joshua, Moses’s faithful assistant. It was Joshua who would lead their continued quest toward the Promised Land.

However, before we embark on Rahab's entrance into the story, we need to take some time to look at several key events that lead up to the book of Joshua where Rahab first appears. This will provide us with important context and help us to see her story in proper perspective. The first key event took place all the way back in the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve made the tragic choice to disobey God's one (and only!) command (Gen. 2:17, 3:17). It is here where God, in His mercy, announced His promise of a Savior. While this was certainly good news, Adam and Eve were nevertheless banished from their garden paradise (yet even this is evidence of God's mercy¹). From there, it did not take long for the human race, and sin, to begin to fill the earth.

Just three chapters later, in Genesis 6, the fallout from mankind's sin and rebellion reached the point where God had had enough. All but eight descendants of Adam and Eve perished in a worldwide flood.² But there was one man, Noah, who "found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (Gen. 6:8). God then waited ten generations after saving Noah and his family to introduce us to a man named Abraham.³ It was through him that the Savior of the world would one day come. Little did Abraham know that a day was coming when God would bless him with a promise that seemed all but impossible.

Facing the Impossible

Several years ago, I prayed a prayer that seemed all but impossible. It was Palm Sunday weekend. I was attending a writers conference in the beautiful redwood forest of Mount Hermon in Northern California. Just weeks prior, I had completed the manuscript for my Bible study on Hagar and sent it to my publisher. With the book deadline off my shoulders, I was eager for the opportunity to relax and enjoy time with friends at the conference. On Saturday night before Palm Sunday, we all filed into the auditorium to enjoy a time of singing and to hear a message from the keynote speaker. About halfway through the message, the speaker challenged his audience of writers and authors to "pray boldly" concerning the writing ministry God had entrusted to each one of us. Something about the challenge resonated with me: bold prayers, when offered up in faith, honor God.

I went to bed that night pondering the challenge to pray boldly. I woke only a few hours later, long before the sun began to rise. I sensed this was God's invitation to spend some quiet time with Him. Grateful that my room had a coffee maker, I got up, made a cup of coffee, pulled the thick comforter off the bed, and headed out to the small balcony. I sat down and breathed in the crisp mountain air while warming my hands on my steaming mug. With only the sound of nighttime insects on the ground below and a few birds rustling in the trees above, I soaked in the silence and began to pray.

Waiting for the Promise of Salvation

.....
 Bold prayers, when offered
 up in faith, honor God.




I poured my heart out to God, and I shared my earnest desire to see the *Hagar* Bible study minister to souls who needed a reminder that God sees them. As I did, the challenge to “pray boldly” returned to my thoughts, but I’ll be honest with you: I didn’t know how to respond. What bold prayer would be pleasing to God? Should I focus on the ministry? On reaching more readers? On outreach? On pursuing every writer’s dream of quitting their day job and writing full-time? Finally, not knowing what else to do, I simply prayed, “God, I do not know what to pray for, but I know that bold prayers honor You. Please show me what bold prayer concerning this ministry You want me to pray.” God wasted no time. Immediately, I sensed His Holy Spirit press on my heart to pray that the *Hagar* study would be translated and published in Arabic.

Honestly, I do not know what I expected God’s answer to be, but that wasn’t it. Translated? Arabic? Did I hear Him correctly? After all, not even the English version had been published yet. Aren’t books translated years later? If at all? And . . . Arabic? Really? Isn’t Spanish typically the next step?

But God’s voice was clear. So, I prayed.

Slowly, the sun began to rise. It was Palm Sunday. Later that morning, I shared my prayer with close friends and mentors at the conference. When I returned home, I shared the story with my ministry prayer team, my Bible study group, and my publisher—asking everyone to join me in this bold prayer. Through a series of events only God could orchestrate, just six months after *Hagar* was published, I could hardly believe that I was holding in my hands a printed copy of the Bible study translated into Arabic, which was being distributed to churches across Egypt and throughout the Middle East.

PAUSE TO PONDER

Describe a seemingly impossible situation where you felt challenged to pray a bold prayer. What did you pray? What was the outcome? Were you encouraged? Disappointed? What did you learn? In the end, what impact did it have on your faith or your relationship with God? If you cannot think of a time when you prayed a bold prayer, what may be holding you back? 

Choosing to Believe

Read Genesis 11:29-30 and 12:1-7. In addition to God's gracious promises in Genesis 12:2-3, what else did God promise to Abraham, according to Genesis 12:7?


Compare and contrast Genesis 11:30 with 12:7. What challenge did the elderly Abraham face, and how did he respond?


Next, read Genesis 15:1-6, which took place roughly ten years later.

What was Abraham's heartache?

What was God's assurance to Abraham?

How did Abraham respond?

Imagine being in Abraham's sandals. How else could Abraham have responded? List as many responses as you can think of. 

 What can you learn from Abraham's example in Genesis 15:1-6 (see also Genesis 12:7)?



.....
"Is anything too hard for
the LORD?" —Genesis 18:14
.....

Although both Abraham and Sarah were advanced in years and Sarah was barren, God assured Abraham that he would indeed have a son. In fact, God promised Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars. Instead of arguing with God, focusing on what he lacked, asking God for a sign, or despairing over his seemingly impossible circumstances, we read simply that Abraham "believed the LORD, and [as a result, God] counted it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). Against all human logic, against impossible odds, Abraham made a choice: he "believed the LORD."

Read Genesis 17:1-8. What else did God promise to give to Abraham, according to the following verses? I completed one for you.

Genesis 17:4:

Genesis 17:6:

Genesis 17:7: God will establish an everlasting covenant between Abraham and his descendants: to be his God and God to his descendants.

Genesis 17:8:

That's a lot of promises! But one thing God did not promise was that the road to the Promised Land would be an easy one.

.....YOUR TURN.....

Where in your life right now do you sense God is calling you to trust Him?

What bold prayer do you need to bring to God today?



If you're not sure, ask Him; God delights in honest conversation. Write your prayer below.

DAY TWO

Facing Your Fears

Yesterday, we began our study by being reminded of the incredible promise God made before time began.

Refresh your memory by filling in the blanks with the missing word or phrase from Titus 1:2.

We have this "hope of _____, which God, who never _____, promised before the ages began."

Read Genesis 15:12-14. Briefly summarize the passage in your own words.

Along with God's promise to Abraham came some difficult news. The fulfillment of His promise to give Abraham's offspring the land of Canaan would be preceded by four hundred years of slavery. That does not sound encouraging, but Abraham was looking beyond the earthly promises to something far greater.

Read Hebrews 11:1-2. How is faith described, according to verse 1?

Read Hebrews 11:6 in the margin. List two or three ways people try to earn God's favor, in your experience.

.....

"... for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." —Hebrews 11:6

.....

How might these efforts to earn God's favor grieve His heart? (Hint: see Ephesians 2:8-9.)

.....
 "Some trust in chariots and
 some in horses, but we
 trust in the name of the
 LORD our God."

—Psalm 20:7

.....

In one of my favorite books, theologian A. W. Tozer explains, "Unbelief is actually perverted faith, for it puts its trust not in the living God but in dying men."⁴

Spend a few moments meditating on Tozer's words, along with Psalm 20:7 written in the margin. How have you seen these principles at work? In the table, write some examples of trusting in people or trusting in God based on your own experiences. Complete as many as you can think of. I included one of my own as an example.

	Trust in People	Trust in God
Your culture		
Your church		<i>Our church has an annual "faith promise" pledge whereby the church as a whole, and members individually, prayerfully commit funds to support missions work for the next year, having faith that God will enable us to keep our promise/pledge.</i>
Your home/family		
Your personal life		

Of the examples you shared, which one captures your attention the most? Why?

Misplaced Faith

The truth is that every human being lives by faith—in someone. Before you or I put our faith in God, we placed our faith in someone else. Often, that person was the one looking back at us in the mirror, trusting in our own ideas of how the world operates, our place in it, and our ideas of what would make us happy.

Read Hebrews 11:8–10 and 11:13. List the challenges Abraham faced as a result of his obedience.

Abraham “died in faith” (Heb. 11:13) without seeing God’s promises fulfilled. What was Abraham looking forward to, according to Hebrews 11:10 (see also 11:16)?

PAUSE TO PONDER

How about you? How often on average do you take time to reflect on the heavenly home that God promises to all who belong to Him?

weekly monthly rarely I have never done this

When you reflect on your heavenly home, in what ways does it impact your time with God? What impact does it have on your outlook on life in general? If you rarely or have never done this, why not try incorporating this into your prayer time this week? Come back and record in what ways, if any, it had an impact on your time with God or on your outlook on life.

Abraham never saw the fulfillment of God’s promise in his lifetime; rather, his faith was anchored in what lies beyond this life. Yet, at the same time, God had made a promise to give Abraham’s descendants a land to call their own, and God always keeps His promises. However, as we read at the end of the lesson from yesterday, the road to the Promised Land would not be an easy one. Let’s take a quick look at several events leading up to the birth of Moses—the man God would task with leading His people to the Promised Land.



God's promise passed on to Abraham's son Isaac, then to Isaac's son Jacob, who fathered twelve sons. Sadly, Jacob's special affection toward his young son Joseph resulted in no small amount of jealousy among Joseph's older brothers, so much so that a band of the brothers resorted to selling Joseph into slavery and allowing their father to believe Joseph was dead.

But as Joseph was being carried away to Egypt, he was not alone. God was with Joseph. In fact, Joseph eventually rose to power in Egypt and, in time, found himself second in command after Pharaoh himself. Roughly twenty years went by, after which God sent a famine throughout the land. This turned out to be a blessing because it led Jacob and his sons and their entire tribe to Egypt, where they were unexpectedly reunited with Joseph. Not only were the brothers reconciled, but symbolically speaking, Jacob received his son Joseph back from the dead.⁵ All would seem well and good except for one thing: God's promise to give Abraham's descendants a land of their own had yet to be fulfilled. Little did anyone know that Egypt would become the nation where God's people would suffer the four hundred years of slavery God foretold to Abraham just three generations prior.

Read Genesis 50:24-26.

What did Joseph place his faith in? (What hope was he clinging to?)

What promise did Joseph require from his brothers?

Why do you suppose this was so important to Joseph?

Eventually, Jacob and all his sons died in the land of Egypt. Their descendants, however, continued to thrive and multiply, but a new king was soon to take Egypt's throne.

There's a New King in Town

Perhaps you are familiar with the biblical story of the Exodus. Roughly four hundred years after Jacob's descendants were enslaved in Egypt, Moses was born. Though he was a Hebrew, he was reared by the daughter of Egypt's king. When



he grew up, he ran away, only to return years later as one sent by God to free the Hebrew people from their slavery. But the book of Exodus does not begin with the birth of Moses. It begins with a profound but underappreciated story of incredible courage.

Read Exodus 1:1-10. What was the king of Egypt afraid of?

Read Exodus 1:11-14. Summarize the events.

It is at this point that most reenactments or retellings of the Exodus story skip ahead to Exodus 1:22, where we read, “Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, ‘Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.’” The story then immediately dives into the birth of Moses.

However, when we consider the fact that so much of the Bible involves the continuous human struggle between fear and faith, it is unfortunate that the events in Exodus 1:15–21 are often glossed over. I assure you: the story recorded in those seven verses and the life lessons we can glean from them are ones you do not want to miss! And if that doesn’t get you excited, just wait until you see the parallels to these verses that we will uncover when we reach Rahab’s entrance into the story. But I’m getting ahead of myself.

Read Exodus 1:15-16. What was the king’s aim?

Who did the king turn to in order to help him carry out his plan?

Do you find the king’s choice surprising? Why or why not? *Offs*

Picture the scene. At the time of these events, Egypt was one of the most imposing nations on earth, possessing both great political and military power.⁶ The



.....
 "... the fear of the Lord,
 that is wisdom, and to
 turn away from evil is
 understanding."

—Job 28:28

.....
 "The fear of the LORD is
 hatred of evil."

—Proverbs 8:13

kings of Egypt (or pharaohs) were considered by the people—and themselves—to be gods. When the king of Egypt feared that the Hebrews were growing too large in number, rather than sending out his army or summoning his local officials, he called two lowly Hebrew midwives. Really? That's your plan, O mighty king of Egypt?

The story is curious right from the start. Notice also that the midwives are named. This is another intriguing aspect of the story. After all, it could have simply read, *Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women . . ."* But God chose to include the midwives' personal names, ensuring that the courageous choices of these two women would be recounted for generations. Speaking of names, I did some research to see what I could discover about these two Hebrew names. My efforts did not disappoint. It turns out that the name Shiphrah means "beautiful, *prolific*, or to procreate,"⁷ and Puah means "splendor, light, or child bearing—specifically in relation to *parents' joy*."⁸ Isn't that interesting?

The Fear of the Lord

Read Exodus 1:17. What reason is given for the midwives' willful disregard of the king's order?

How would you describe what it means to "fear the LORD" to someone who does not know God?

Read Job 28:28 and Proverbs 8:13 in the margin. How do these verses shed light on your understanding of what it means to "fear the LORD"?

The root Hebrew word translated "fear" (twice in Exodus 1) is *yare*. When used in the context of fearing God, it relates to having a humble reverence toward and healthy fear of God. Because God is infinitely wise and powerful, any sane person would immediately recognize that we *should* fear God. However, those who know Him personally quickly discover that He is also infinitely loving and kind and desires the best for us. After all, He tenderly and intentionally created each one of us in His own image.

Day Two / Week One



.....YOUR TURN.....

Why is it wise for us to fear (*yare*) God?

How is this different from being afraid of God?

Where in your life right now are you grateful in knowing that God is infinitely wise, powerful, and “greatly to be feared” (Ps. 89:7)?

Where in your life right now do you need a greater “fear of the LORD” (that is, a humble reverence toward God and healthy fear of Him)? Write a prayer of confession, gratitude, or petition (or all three!) as God leads you.

DAY THREE

A Step of Faith

Yesterday, we learned that the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, “feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them” (Exod. 1:17). Imagine that you are one of these two women summoned to stand in the presence of one of the most powerful rulers of the known world. Even more, he is the ruler of the land in which you are now living—as a foreign slave. You have no idea why the king would summon you. After all, you are just a midwife. Your mind races with the possible scenarios—none of them good. You take comfort in knowing that your friend and partner in midwifery is going with you. That, and the fact that your family, along with the whole Hebrew community, is praying for you as you and your friend make your way to Pharaoh’s palace.

All too soon you find yourselves standing together before the king. Of all the scenarios that play out in your mind, you could never imagine what this arrogant king would demand. He asks you to do the unthinkable. He wants you to murder newborn infants—a heinous sin against God and in direct opposition to your life’s

Waiting for the Promise of Salvation

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“... here is the conclusion
of the matter: Fear God
and keep his command-
ments, for this is the duty
of all mankind.”

—Ecclesiastes 12:13 NIV

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