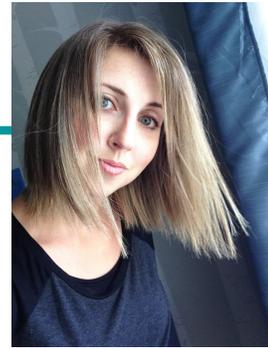


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Bio: Katrina is a follower of Jesus, a wife, a mom of four, and a Biblical Fiction author from Alberta, Canada. She writes with a passion for New Testament History, especially first-century women. When she's not lost beneath stacks of research, she's consuming copious amounts of coffee, good books, and board games.

AS THE STARS

45 BIBLE FICTION SHORT STORIES



Paperback ISBN: 978-1-9990338-2-8

eBook ISBN: 978-1-9990338-3-5

Amazon ASIN: 1999033825

Publication date: October 29, 2019

Genre: Devotional/Christian Historical Fiction Pages: 258

Audience: Pre-teen through adult. This book includes raw history as it is presented in the Bible, including depictions of violence, war, death, and drunkenness, and references to sex and prostitution.

Back cover text: Explore the Bible one incredible story at a time. From the tears of Eve to the bond of Priscilla and Aquilla, this Bible Fiction Devotional takes you on an immersive journey through the pages of scripture.

Deepen your familiarity of biblical figures and find inspiration for your journey in theirs. Written for lovers of Christian Fiction, this devotional pulls the emotion from the gripping stories in the Bible while staying grounded in scripture. Rally your 300 men with Gideon, brave the king's displeasure with Esther, and trust in God's acceptance with Rahab.

Entertainment and education unite through story comments that add both historical context and relevance for today, and discussion questions follow every story so you can dig deeper with group study.

It's time to travel through the biblical world and discover the amazing events that are woven into God's plan for all mankind.

Available for purchase in paperback and ebook on Amazon. Read for free through the Kindle Unlimited program.

Katrina D. Hamel has also published *Dividing Sword*, a biblical fiction novel.

AS THE STARS INCLUDES STORIES BASED ON THESE KEY BIBLICAL FIGURES:

*19 of these
stories feature
the lives of
biblical women!*

Eve
Noah
Hagar
Abraham
Joseph
Shiprah and Puah
Moses
The Daughters of Zelophehad
Rahab
Deborah and Jael
Gideon
Delilah
Ruth
Hannah
Eli
Samuel
David
Michal
Elijah
Gomer
Jonah
Daniel
Esther
Herod the Great
Elizabeth
The Shepherds
Simeon
Matthew
The Poor Widow
The Paralytic
The Prodigal Son's Brother
Herod Antipas
Martha
Mary Magdalene
Peter
Tabitha
Lydia
Paul and Silas
Priscilla and Aquilla

EXERPT FROM AS THE STARS

Eve

LIFE AFTER THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT

Her heart pounded in her chest as she hurried through the valley. They couldn't have gotten lost, surely? Her sons were no longer little boys easily distracted by imaginative games and wandering far beyond their knowledge. They were men with responsibilities, and they had never been gone all night before.

Eve hastened over the dewy grass, her muscles fatigued by lack of sleep and food. She cleared her throat and called again, "Cain! Abel! Where are you?"

The only sound was the wind waving in the grass and the chirp of birds. Eve glanced to the side and was relieved to see her husband, Adam. She didn't want to lose sight of him in case he mysteriously disappeared too. A tall, rolling hill blocked her view ahead. Perhaps if she climbed it she could see her sons. She trotted up the slope of yellow blooms humming with bees, ignoring the weary ache in her calves. Sweat beaded on her brow, but she didn't slow. The ache in her heart was stronger than that in her muscles. She had to find her boys.

Painful longing resurfaced, like it did every time she had to struggle through this new life. If only they were back in the garden! Back where they were safe. Regret pulsed through her veins as she finally crested the hill and the valley spread out before her.

She drew a hand up to shade her eyes and squinted. The bright valley was wrapped by a forest of brilliantly green trees and backed by a cerulean sky.

There! There was a figure, sleeping in the grass! Relief made her laugh, and she called back to her husband. "Adam! I found them!" Adam looked up, turned, and hurried towards her. She began to pick her way down the hill. Surely if one of her sons was here, the other wasn't far.

She trotted forward, calling out, "Boys! You had us worried! Why didn't you come home?" An uneasy feeling quivered in her stomach when the sleeping figure did not stir at the sound of her voice. She slowed instinctively as she neared. She recognized that back and those legs, but there was something wrong.

"Abel, wake up!" she called. There was no response. She felt a cold tingle run up her arms despite the warmth of the rising sun. She crossed the remaining distance and saw how awkwardly Abel lay in the bed of grass. She heard Adam's swishing strides behind her as she covered the last few steps and stood over her son and saw his face.

Her own scream filled her ears and echoed around the valley, silencing the birds and buzzing insects.

The weight of pain and sorrow dragged her to the earth and she crumpled to the ground. She felt her husband push past her and saw him kneel beside her broken son. Adam's back stiffened with shock. Abel was clearly dead. Dried blood coated his head and ran into his open, glassy eyes.

Her scream ended in tears that shook her whole body. Was this the fate that awaited them all? Was this the true punishment for her disobedience? Oh, it was her fault, it was all her fault! Grief and regret convulsed her body and flooded her eyes until she couldn't see.

"How did this happen?" Adam's anguish broke through her agony, and she dragged her gaze to see tears running down his face. He stared at her as if she held the could explain. She only shook her head, unable to form words.

Eve reached out to take her son's hand but flinched at the cold touch of stiff skin. A movement flickered in the corner of her eye and she jerked her chin. A figure stood in the trees bordering the valley.

"Cain!" she gasped. Adam wobbled to his feet and took a few steps towards his eldest son. Cain dropped something small and fled from them into the forest. "Come back!" Eve cried out, reaching forward as if to pull him to her. Why was he running? What was happening?

Adam raced across the field after his son, leaving Eve rocking back and forth next to the strange, lifeless body that only yesterday had been warm and full of life. She yearned to go after Cain, but she couldn't leave Abel alone.

Adam disappeared into the thick trees and was gone for a long time. Eve was barely aware of the sun slowly shifting across the sky until it was behind her. Her eyes stayed fixed on the trees. Adam would bring back Cain. They would find out what had happened. Together, they would figure out what to do now.

At last, Adam reappeared at the forest's edge and her heart fluttered, but then sunk again. He was alone. He paused where Cain had been standing, crouched, and picked up something. With painful slowness, he crossed the grassy valley back towards her. She wished he would walk faster, yet she was afraid of what he would say when he arrived. He stopped a few feet away from her, his shoulders stooped with weariness and sorrow.

"Where's Cain?" she whispered, swallowing around the thickness of her parched throat.

"Gone." Adam's voice was as dull as rain on the mud roof of their small hut. "I followed him for hours, but he kept running and running until I lost him in the forest. He didn't want to be found. He doesn't want to come home."

"Why?" she cried out, grief bursting forth afresh.

Adam held out his hand, and she saw a rock a little bigger than a man's fist. He tossed it in the grass and it tumbled to land in front of her. She saw the crusted blood and understood. Cain had done this. She tipped back her head and wailed at the sky, "Why, God, why?"

God was silent, and Eve dropped her face into her palms. She had lost both her sons today.

Adam decided they should bury their son, and they spent the rest of the day covering Abel's body in earth and rocks until there was a mound at the base of the hill surrounded by nodding heads of yellow flowers. Then they went home, Eve feeling as if she was leaving her heart behind in the field.

They approached the house in the dusky twilight, but she stopped in the little yard where the grass was worn away by the feet of her busy family. How could this be home without her boys? Everything was shattered and she couldn't see any way to put it back together.

Adam noticed her hesitation and came to stand beside her. He drew an arm around her waist and they stared at the empty house together. She leaned against him. He alone could understand.

“This is our fault, isn't it? I knew Cain was angry at Abel, but I never thought—” she swallowed painfully. “I should have been a better mother. I should have talked to him. If only we were still in the garden. If only I hadn't...” regret choked off her words. She had hoped her sons would be better than she had been. She had given into temptation, but she had hoped her sons would learn from her and be better. Would her descendants be forever doomed to repeat her mistakes?

Adam squeezed her tighter. “I know. I wish I had taken Cain aside and talked to him. But they were grown men,” his voice was thick. “Cain knew violence was wrong, and he did it anyway.”

“Then what hope is there for us and our children?” Eve wailed, her heart breaking. “If we know the difference between good and evil, and yet chose evil, how can we ever be happy? How can things ever be like they were?”

Adam turned her into his arms, and she burrowed her face in his neck. He stroked her hair and murmured, “Remember the promise.”

Eve's throbbing heart reached out and clutched that promise. Yes, one of her seed would crush the evil that she had let loose in the world. There was hope. But how long would she have to wait? And who would suffer in the meantime?

Read this story for yourself in Genesis 3 and 4:1-15

STORY COMMENTS

I did not want to write this story. This story made me stare at the realities of sin and the pain it brings. I don't want to look at it. I like sunny stories with hope and laughter. I kept getting up and walking away from my computer mid-sentence, needing to escape.

I can only imagine Eve's suffering. Genesis doesn't say how she felt, but as a mother, I can assume she was heart-broken. She lost two sons in one day, something a parent would never fully recover from. I have no doubt that regret filled her days and nights as she saw the result of sin unleashed on the world.

Sometimes we like to point fingers at Eve for eating the forbidden fruit, but I'm sure she regretted it every day of her life.

Eve may have been the first to taste the fruit, but sadly, we all partner with her through our own sin. We are not innocents suffering because of her rebellion. No, each one of us rebels against God in our hearts, in our words, and in our actions. She may have been the first, but we have each reached out and plucked that forbidden fruit and felt the consequences of our sin—damage in our relationships with each other and the earth, and separation from God. (Genesis 3:16-24)

The good news is, God had a plan to bring about restoration. When he had the three perpetrators lined up in front of Him, God cursed the tempter. He promised that the woman's seed would crush the serpent's head. (Genesis 3:15) From the beginning, there was a plan to conquer sin and death once and for all. We see that plan unfold in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.
For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

1 Corinthians 15:20-22

There is hope, beautiful hope in these words! Yet, we still live among pain and sorrow. We are caught in the struggle of knowing that we have forgiveness of sins and resurrection in our future, yet we are still living in this world with hardship, sickness, sorrow, and death. Jesus walked through this earth with his eyes wide open. He saw the brokenness. He healed and he comforted, but he also warned his followers that they had a hard journey ahead of them. (Matthew 24:9-13)

I find myself going back to the cross again and again with my hard questions about the struggles of this world. I ask God my questions, and again I find my hope in the Messiah.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- ★ Why do you think God put the tree in the garden and told them not to eat it?
- ★ What do you think it was like for Adam and Eve to leave the garden?
- ★ Do you think Adam and Eve ever played the blame-game with each other?
- ★ Have you ever heard people preach that when you become a Christian, everything should be easy? Do you think that is biblically accurate?
- ★ What or who do you turn to when your life is turned upside down?

TALKING POINTS ABOUT AS THE STARS

Why the title *As the Stars*?

The title of the book was inspired by the promise to Abraham that his descendants would be as the stars in heaven. (Genesis 22:17-18) I believe that the Bible is filled with the stories of these "stars" and that those who believe today should see themselves as part of that twinkling expanse.

What prompted this book of short stories?

These short stories were written during the editing process of *Dividing Sword* as a creative expression and as a way to share my love of Bible stories. They first appeared on my website, where they found a warm welcome with readers for their entertainment and unique take on Bible study. In early 2019 I decided to compile this growing collection into one book for easier enjoyment and study.

What is the purpose of biblical fiction? Can it help our faith?

I know it can be a struggle to connect emotionally with the stories of the Bible. I have often found the culture, traditions, and treatment of women or other groups of people hard to understand. Even though I grew up with Bible stories, sometimes I need a boost to see familiar stories with fresh eyes. My hope is to display the heart of the stories to both new and experienced Bible readers, giving some background to the history and culture, and providing an application for today. I wrote these short stories to function as teasers, and I intentionally direct the reader back to the Bible to discover the full story.

What other books are like *As the Stars*?

While this style of devotional is unusual, it is not entirely unique. For similar styles of biblical fiction studies, take a look at *Friends of Jesus* by Karen Kingsbury, *Women of Easter* by Liz Curtis Higgs. Both of these authors have several books in the same vein.

Is there a theme that ties these 45 short stories together?

The subject of these stories wasn't chosen to fit in a particular theme, though the entire Bible is joined together by the slowly unfolding promise of salvation and restoration of the world. My hope is that there will be a story for everyone, particularly if studying with a group. Different stories resonate with

different people at different times of life, and the Bible has a wonderful way of speaking to each of us in those varied seasons.

Nineteen of these stories tell the stories of women, and they are supporting figures in many of the other stories as well. I hope that this creative look at the unique and varied women in the Bible will show both the struggles and the faith of women in our ancient history. Women had a tremendous impact on the world and were used by God to further His plan of salvation.

I do want to add that one of the stories in *As the Stars* isn't found in the Bible at all. It is inspired by the history of Herod the Great as recorded by the historian Josephus. I included this story to hint at the dramatic history that took place between the Old and New Testament writings. I have a fascination with the history and culture of first-century Israel and her place in the ancient world. Many of the short stories explore the Old Testament, but my full-length novels focus on the era of the New Testament World.

What's next for you?

I am working on a new biblical fiction series that explores what life might have been like for the historical woman Joanna who was healed by Jesus and supported his ministry. Her husband was the steward for Herod Antipas, the man who beheaded John the Baptist. I have long wondered what struggles and sacrifices she endured to remain a loyal disciple of Jesus despite her husband's boss and a possible division of faith in her family.

Download book cover images back on the website by going to <https://katrinadhamel.com/media-kit>