Bible Stories **NOT** for Children

BETRAYAL DELIVERANCE

WANDA ROBINSON

Foreword by Sheila Butt

Publishing Designs, Inc. P.O. Box 3241 Huntsville, Alabama 35810

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Book cover, design, and layout: CrosslinCreative.net

Editor: Peggy Coulter

Printed in the United States of America

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Robinson, Wanda

Betrayal to Deliverance / Wanda Robinson

192 pp

13 chapters and study questions

Adult Bible Study.
 Bible Heroes and Villains
 Practical,
 Spiritual Encouragement

I. Robinson, Wanda. II. Betrayal to Deliverance

ISBN: 978-1-945127-44-1

248.8

ENDORSEMENTS

Wanda Robinson regularly blesses women's classes and ladies' days with her love for God's Word and her talent for teaching. In *Betrayal to Deliverance*, Wanda combines careful study of the text of Scripture with practical applications for daily living. The discussion questions included throughout each chapter make it an ideal resource for Bible classes, and the insights it contains will encourage both longtime Christians and newly baptized believers.

—Andrew Phillips, Preacher Graymere Church of Christ, Columbia, Tennessee

If I didn't own this book I would buy it. Sister Robinson has written a masterful book with chapter end notes and questions that provoke thoughtful introspection. Her "Rabbit Holes" are humorous, heart-breaking at times, and appropriate. *Betrayal to Deliverance* is a good biblical read, a page-turner that is hard to put down.

—Rudy Cain, Director World Video Bible School

Betrayal to Deliverance presents familiar Bible stories we learned as children and challenges us with in-depth examinations and applications from an adult perspective. The use of special discussion questions, spontaneous prompts for further Bible study, and encouragement for personal reflection are catalysts for a mature understanding of timeless Bible events. Wanda Robinson provides readers with the foundational truth of "whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). What an excellent study for a group setting or for personal growth!

—Mary Greene, Ladies' Instructor Nashville School of Preaching

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FOREWORD

Wanda Robinson has been teaching Bible classes for as many years as I have known her, and she is a very capable and knowledgeable student of the Scriptures.

In this book *Betrayal to Deliverance*, Wanda takes several Bible stories typically taught to children and brings them to life for us adults. We can be mesmerized by the way Wanda gleans life lessons and unveils a further level of spiritual understanding beyond the capabilities of children.

If you are looking for a book to study together as sisters in Christ or simply for your own spiritual growth, *Betrayal to Deliverance* is a wonderful choice!

The book will renew your love for the true events that God has seen fit to include in his Word. Our lives today are still reflections of those same crucial points . . . reflections of the uncertainty, the struggles, and the victories.

We will all see something of ourselves in these pages. I know God will be glorified through them!

For Him,

Sheila K. Butt

INTRODUCTION

Maybe you have heard them all your life—stories about the righteousness of Noah, the cowardice of Jonah, the weakness of Samson. Children's Bible class teachers have brought these stories to life using flannel-graphs, flip charts, videos, and costumes. But how much do you really know about the details of these narratives and the lessons we can learn from them?

Deuteronomy 6:6–7 admonishes us regarding God's Word: "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children . . ." We want our children to learn the wonderful message of the Bible. The need for them to know God through his Word is great. We read Bible stories to them at bedtime and make sure they attend Bible school. We protect our children from the intimate and scary details, but as adults, our knowledge of these same Bible stories should extend beyond that of our children.

Just as we don't teach algebra to six-year-olds, we carefully avoid teaching some of the specifics given in the Bible to children. Their little ears are not ready for the gory details. We don't want to cause them to have nightmares after hearing about children drowning in the flood, Samson having his eyes gouged out, or the widow's son on the verge of starving, so we highlight the parts children can understand.

However, adults must be nourished by more than the milk of the Word. Do you know why the Philistines thought seven cords might affect Samson? Why did Naaman expect Elisha to come out to see him? Who else besides Jonah was affected by the storm? Why did King Darius post guards outside the lions' den?

Delving into familiar Bible stories as adults should allow us to see more profound lessons than just the obvious ones. Some of the incidents we will study are R-rated, filled with violence, illicit sex, dishonesty, betrayal, and distrust. But we will also see the beautiful love, grace, and power of our Father toward those who trust him. Join me as we look at these familiar stories through adult eyes and glean the lessons God intended for us.

SOOD OL'

GENESIS 6:5-8:22

friend told me about a twelve-year-old girl at her congregation. Let's call her Susie. She was getting to the age where she noticed what the other young girls were wearing. Some of them were beginning to wear outfits that were very short and suggestive. But Susie's mother would not allow her to dress in such a manner. She was being taught to dress modestly in order to please God. That was okay with Susie, but it did make her feel out of place. Susie explained, "I just feel like a polka dot in a room full of stripes."

Maybe Noah felt the same way. He was a righteous man surrounded by unrighteous people. He would have stood out like a sore thumb. Noah was the tenth generation since God created Adam. As the population of the earth grew, sin flourished. According to Genesis 6:5 "the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." What a heartbreak for God to see his creation turning their backs on him! What sorrow God must have felt as he looked on mankind. Was creating mankind a mistake? No, the problem lay in man's misuse of God's gift of free will, which led to sin, and God cannot ignore sin.

IS GOD GRIEVED TODAY?

We still live in an evil world—a world of crime and bad guys, sin and wickedness, and problems and burdens. School shootings, mass murders,

sex trafficking, and terrorism dominate the morning news. We can't help but wonder if God is as grieved today as he was in Noah's day.

God chose to destroy all those wicked people (Gen. 6:7). But there was one man who stood out among all the rest—Noah. God noticed Noah who lived righteously and found favor in God's sight.

WALKING IN HIS FOREFATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

If we look back at Noah's ancestry, we find that Noah's great-grandfather was Enoch, a faithful servant of God (Gen. 5:21–29). Noah had not been born when his great-grandfather Enoch left this earth, but maybe Noah was influenced by the stories of Enoch's life that had been handed down from one generation to another. As we read in verse 22, great-granddaddy Enoch "walked with God" and set an example of righteousness. Noah was following in his footsteps.

Did you know your great-grandparents? In what ways have you be	en
influenced by your ancestors? How can we influence our descendant	ıts?

The world had continued to grow even more evil in the intervening years since Enoch went to be with God. Violence and corruption were all around. No one other than Noah was trying to live a life that was pleasing to God. How difficult it would be to live in the midst of such evil. He had to deal with the wickedness of others everywhere he went. If he wanted to buy a piece of property, he had to wonder if he was being cheated. When he spoke to his neighbors, he didn't know if they were telling him the truth or lies. All their thoughts were evil; how could he trust anyone? What a difficult way to live! Yet, even in the midst of so much evil, Noah stood firm, refusing to follow the path of wickedness.

THE SOUND OF GOD'S VOICE

Because of the righteousness of Noah, God commanded him to build a gigantic ship, unlike anything man had ever seen—an ark that would save mankind from the coming catastrophe God had planned.

And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch (Gen. 6:13–14).

We are told that God spoke to Noah, but Scripture gives no details of their conversation. Was Noah surprised when the Creator talked to him? Had Noah previously heard God's voice? How did God sound? One time for vacation Bible school, I had my brother stand in the bathtub to make his voice resonate, and I recorded him speaking as we imagined God might have sounded. He tried to sound very authoritative and majestic. As we acted out the story, God's voice came from "the sky" as we played the recording. It certainly caught the children's attention, but we can only speculate as to how accurate our rendition was.

FOLLOW THE BLUEPRINT

God gave Noah very precise instructions regarding the size and specifications of the ark. Noah was even given a passenger manifest, listing the ones who would be allowed on board: Noah, his wife, their three sons, and their sons' wives. No one else.



How many arks are mentioned in the Bible? What did they have in common? (Hint: You may need to check different translations.)

I love Genesis 6:22: "Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did." Noah did exactly what he had always done; he obeyed God. He began working on the building project just as he was told, being careful to follow God's instructions. Noah used gopherwood, thought to be from the cypress tree, which would have provided hard, lightweight, and sturdy wood. This is the only time gopherwood is mentioned in the Scriptures. The planks had to be cut to the correct length and assembled. Then the structure had to be coated with pitch or bitumen for waterproofing. That required a lot of work! No factory, no assembly line, no power tools. Although we are not told how Noah accomplished this great task, we do know this: God provided the means for Noah to get the job done.

The ark was not a ship in the traditional sense. It was just a big wooden box constructed to float. The ark was built without any steering mechanism. There was no ship's wheel, no sail, and no rudder. The ark floated wherever the water carried it.

The website biblestudy.org says this about the ark:

Noah's ark was constructed on a one-to-six ratio. Naval architecture reveals that this is the most stable ratio for an ocean-going vessel. It could have easily survived even big ocean waves and would be next to impossible to capsize.²

We are not surprised that the creator of the universe knew just how this ship should be built.

IT WAS BIG!

The ark was big compared to the standards of that time. Its dimensions were 300 cubits in length, 50 cubits in breadth, and 30 cubits in height (Gen. 6:15). There was no standard length for a cubit. It was thought to be the length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, on average, 18 inches. Using that standard of measurement, the ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Maybe an easier way for us to picture it would be the length of 1.5 football fields. The ark had three

decks with rooms, but only one window (Gen. 6:16). A door for entering and exiting was built into the side of the ark. The ark was large enough to accommodate all the birds and "everything that creeps on the earth" (Gen. 7:8).

According to people who are much smarter than I am, the ark's total volume was 1.5 million cubic feet.³ That would equal the capacity of 569 modern railroad stock cars, making a train more than 5.5 miles long. The average double-deck stock car can accommodate 240 sheep. Three trains hauling 69 cars each would have ample space to carry 50,000 animals, which would fill approximately 37 percent of the ark. That would leave an additional 362 cars, enough space to make 5 trains of 72 cars each, to carry all of the food and baggage, plus Noah's family of eight people.⁴

In preparation for this catastrophic event, God directed Noah to provide food for the people on board, as well as all the animals (Gen. 6:21). Can you imagine gathering enough food to last many months for all the different animals? How much hay would be needed? What would the giraffes eat? How many vegetables would need to be collected? Who would pay for it all?

A LONELY AND DISCOURAGING UNDERTAKING

Building the ark and gathering all the necessary supplies was a monumental job, and Noah didn't seem to get any encouragement from his neighbors. He was building a huge boat in the middle of a field with no rain in the forecast. He was even taking time to preach, according to 2 Peter 2:5 where he is called "a preacher of righteousness." But only his wife, three sons, and their wives listened to him. How discouraging for this good man!

Interestingly, Scripture does not tell us how long this building project lasted. Some people believe, based on Genesis 6:3, that Noah spent 120 years building the ark, but the verse doesn't support that theory.

Some Bible scholars interpret the 120 years to be a sort of grace period between God's decision to send a flood and the actual time it started raining. Others believe the 120 years refers to a shortened life span for man from that time forward. In observing man's longevity, we see several who lived more than 120 years. Abraham lived to be 175; Isaac, 180; and Jacob, 147.

BRING IN THE ANIMALS

Finally, the boat was finished, the shelves were stocked, and animals began parading toward the ark. According to God's instructions, one pair of unclean animals and seven pairs of clean animals began the trek to safety. We notice here that the distinction between clean and unclean animals occurred long before the Mosaic law.

It is difficult to know with any certainty how many animals would have walked, waddled, hopped, or scampered on board the ark. The estimates for the total number of animals vary widely from 2,000 to 75,000. Some Bible scholars maintain that only one pair of each species boarded the ark. For instance, the canine family includes coyotes, dogs, wolves, jackals, and several others, but perhaps only one pair would be represented on the ark instead of the hundreds of canines in that species. This one pair would then produce all the animals that make up the canine family.

Why were there no sea creatures on the ark? It is thought that there are over a million species of animals in the world; however, the vast majority of these are capable of surviving in water and would not need to be brought aboard the ark. These species include dolphins, whales, porpoises, many types of snakes, alligators, crocodiles, sea turtles, shrimps, lobsters, and many other crustaceans. Also, all insects could have survived outside the ark.

Have you ever thought about where the animals came from? Surely not all of them lived in Noah's neighborhood. It seems that in order for the different species to survive, the animals must have come from many different locations.

Animals started marching toward the ark—clean and unclean animals, wild and tame animals, big and small animals. What a parade

that would have been! They came not because Noah rounded them up like cattle in an old Western; they came at God's direction. The animals may have traveled from faraway jungles or from the cold Arctic areas to reach the ark. Just envision these animals, some of which people in that part of the world had never seen, all heading to Noah's place. Natural enemies may have been walking side by side through the door of the ark.

WHAT DID THE NEIGHBORS SAY?

You would think such a spectacle would get the neighbors' attention, but that was not enough to make them cry out to God in repentance. If you had seen Noah building this large contraption and then watched this long procession of animals, wouldn't you have wondered whether Noah knew something you didn't know? This should have proved to everyone that Noah was working under God's direction, but they ignored the evidence.

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be (Matt. 24:36–39).

Sadly, those people kept on with their normal lives, oblivious to God's great plan until it was too late. Matthew tells us the second coming of Jesus, the Son of Man, will come just as abruptly, to the surprise of men.

How does Goo warnings?	d warn people toda	ay? How do peop	le react to God's

SHUT IN

Have you ever considered what Noah and his family did during those last seven days before their voyage began? It might have taken that long to situate all the animals in their proper places. They may have done a last-minute count to be sure they had all the necessary supplies. If Noah was like most men, he checked the ark one more time to make sure it was waterproof.

Then the Lord said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you seven pairs of every clean animal, a male and his female; and two of the animals that are not clean, a male and his female; also of the birds of the sky, seven pairs, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and I will wipe out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made." So Noah acted in accordance with everything that the Lord had commanded him (Gen. 7:1–5 NASB).

It was time. After all the appointed animals and people had entered the ark, God shut the door, separating Noah and his family from the evilness without and protecting them from a watery grave (Gen. 7:16 NASB).

WATER OUTSIDE, SAFETY INSIDE

We can imagine the thundering black clouds gathering in the sky and drops of water starting to dot the land. "The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth" (Gen. 7:18 NASB). Sheets of rain began hitting the earth harder and harder. The earth split open as the waters of the fountains of the great deep gushed forth. As the waters rose, the ark started to float, and only those inside were spared from the horror of drowning. Do you suppose Noah could hear the screams and cries for help of his friends and neighbors as they perished? Could they see their houses as they collapsed under the weight of the water? Did they stay awake at night listening to the pounding of the rain on the roof?

God had told Noah the rain would last forty days and forty nights, and it did exactly that. Can't you see Noah marking a crude wall calendar as each night's pitch blackness faded into the subdued morning light?
The number forty is mentioned numerous times throughout the Scriptures. What other events center around this number?
I can picture Noah, Mrs. Noah, their sons, and their sons' wives scurrying around the ark, feeding the animals and cleaning their stalls. What a big job Noah and his family had been commissioned to perform! They had the blessing of work to keep them occupied during this long period of isolation. Name three ways work is a blessing in our lives.

A CLEAN, NEW WORLD

Even when the rains had slackened to a gentle sprinkle and God had shut off the fountains of the earth, the inhabitants of the ark couldn't simply walk out, because the earth was buried under water. About a year would pass as the flood waters slowly evaporated into the air and receded into the ground. Finally God commanded them to come out; Noah, his family, and all the animals were able to exit the ark (Gen. 8:16–17).

Just think what they saw when they walked out that door—a new world washed clean. This was certainly a fresh beginning for Noah and his family. They were starting their lives anew without the evil influences they had faced previously. The world was full of possibilities. Do

you think it was scary? Exciting? Humbling? A new beginning can be all those things.

What new beginnings have you had? How did they affect your spiritual life?

ALTAR OF WORSHIP

Noah's very first order of business was to build an altar and offer sacrifices to God, who had delivered them safely to dry land. This is the first altar recorded in the Scriptures. Do you find it strange that Noah put to death some of the very animals he had just saved?

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done" (Gen. 8:20–21).

Noah's willingness to sacrifice any of the animals was a tribute to his trust in God's provision. He might have thought that he needed all the animals to breed his new herds and flocks. Noah might have considered all the work he had done to keep these same animals safe from the flood. Instead, Noah realized that God, who had brought the animals to the ark and sustained them for a year, was certainly capable of protecting his creatures as the earth was repopulated. Therefore God was deserving of Noah's gratitude and praise.

Noah showed his gratitude for God's protection by offering a sacrifice. How do we show our gratitude to God?					

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

We have so many unanswered questions about the flood. How many animals were saved? Were baby animals born on the ark? Where on the mountains of Ararat did the ark land? Why did innocent children die in the flood? We must put these questions aside until God can answer them in eternity and instead focus on the lessons meant for us to learn from this amazing event.

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith (Heb. 11:7).

The story of Noah is not just a bedtime story for our children. From Noah we learn an adult lesson: Faith and obedience go hand in hand. Faith alone was not enough. Noah's faith had to be coupled with doing what God commanded. Because Noah had faith in God, he was obedient to God's commands, thus leaving us an example of a life pleasing to God.