

SALMON & REHAB

A CHARACTER STUDY

David O. Harrison

CHARACTER – THE LIVES OF SALMON AND REHAB

CHARACTER.

THE LIVES OF SALMON & RAHAB

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Additionally, if you have any constructive comments you would like to offer (content, references, etc.), I would be thrilled if you would contact me.

David Hensel

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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DAVID HARRISON was born and raised in England and emigrated to Canada in 1973 at the age of 21.

When he was 35, David became a Christ-follower. He is married and the father of two adult children. He attended a Brethren Bible Chapel in Scarborough for 25 years, ten of those years as an elder.

For 23 years David ran an audiovisual integration company in Toronto, Canada, catering primarily to universities, banks, and law firms.

In 2006 David founded Bus Stop Bible Studies¹, a ministry which used public transit advertising panels to display messages of encouragement from the Word of God to many millions of people in Canada.

For 10 years David was the Board Chair of Daystar Native Christian Outreach, based on Manitoulin Island.

Now 'retired', David and his wife, Wendy, run a bed & Breakfast in Muskoka, and David (who failed miserably in English at school) has taken to writing as a hobby. Never in his wildest dreams did he ever imagine appearing at the top of one of Amazon's Best Seller lists. His English teachers would have proclaimed that a *bonefide* miracle!

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¹ See bit.ly/bsbsimagine

CITATIONS

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DEDICATION

DEDICATION

To all the unsung heroes whose desire is to simply honour God and build His Kingdom. Maybe you are one of them – or could be?

“A man is known by the company he keeps.”

Aesop’s fables, written c. 600 BC

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture texts are
from the Book of Joshua (NLT).



CHAPTER 1 – READING BETWEEN THE LINES

Nahshon, the father of Salmon; Salmon, the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab...

Matthew 1:4-5

My wife, Wendy, and I have enthusiastically enjoyed watching *THE CHOSEN*², the spectacularly popular, crowd-funded series about Jesus, His disciples, and the early Church. At the time of writing, we had recently finished watching Season 4, which concluded with Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. What has struck us most about this series has been the skill of the writers and how much detail and emotion they have gleaned from seemingly insignificant passages of Scripture, sometimes just a word or two, and then visually portrayed that message. With each series, they have got better and better.

In all of Scripture, Salmon's name is mentioned only seven times in chronological lists³. Nothing else is said explicitly about him. Nothing.

² <https://watch.thechosen.tv/>

³ Ruth 4:20-21, 1 Chronicles 2:11, Matthew 1:4-5 and Luke 3:32.

How can one possibly get something from nothing? Well, don your deer-stalker hat and cape, and grab your calabash pipe, magnifying glass and Bible. “Come along, Watson, there is much to be learned!”

As Aesop teaches us, we can discover much about a person by the company they keep. So it is with Salmon.

I started this study while reading the first Chapter of Matthew at 4:00 a.m. when I couldn’t sleep. There is nothing like a long list of mostly unpronounceable names to make one’s eyes grow heavy.

It begins with the ancestral chronology of Jesus, commencing with Abraham.

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers...

Matthew 1:1-2

Long before the era of smartphones, if you gave me a name, I could probably choose correctly from a hundred memorized phone numbers. Sadly, memorizing names did not work quite as well. Perhaps that is why the Bible repeats chronological lists of names—so that we don’t forget—or at least it provides people like me a convenient look-up.

I once heard a guest speaker at church bringing us his Christmas message. He began by reading the entire chronology from the Book of Luke. He said, “Even this list is the Word of God, and if God included it, it is important and for our benefit.”

And so he proceeded to read out the list, annunciating each name perfectly.

This particular sleepless night, I came upon Salmon. Salmon? That seemed a rather odd biblical name. I decided to do a little digging. Very soon, I was wide awake.

In Hebrew, the name Salmon (שָׁלוֹן) is thought to mean “peaceable” or “clothed or garmented.” It derives its root in Hebrew from the word *shalom* (שָׁלוֹם) and is commonly translated as “peace.” Being “clothed” or “garmented” may also suggest being covered or protected, which can hold symbolic significance. I wonder what his dad, Nahshon, was thinking when he chose that name for him.

Shalom is a beautiful word with a depth of meaning few can fully grasp. Its meaning extends far beyond just the absence of conflict. *Shalom* has a deep, multi-dimensional significance in Hebrew, encompassing notions of wholeness, completeness, well-being, and harmony. As the apostle Paul expressed (although he did not use the word *shalom* specifically), he said, “...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding...”⁴ When you’ve genuinely experienced *shalom*, you will never forget it.

So, this is the first of our ‘reading between the lines’ considerations, the relationship of Nahshon and Salmon—father and son. Can you imagine bestowing a more meaningful name on your child than wishing them a life of *shalom*? I can’t.

There is also the old saying, “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” It is a common proverb in English and various other

⁴ Philippians 4:7

languages, meaning that children often resemble their parents regarding behaviour, characteristics, or talents. This phrase suggests that physical, behavioural, or moral traits tend to pass from generation to generation. As we will discover on our journey, I can't help but think that Nahshon was an exceptional father figure.

If Salmon had a typical Hebrew childhood, he would have studied and discussed the Tora with his rabbi and classmates⁵. He was born to Nahshon and his mother while they were sojourning through the desert. According to Scripture, even Nahshon would have been born prior to the Exodus travels, as we are told in the Book of Exodus

⁵ This, of course, would depend on when Moses wrote everything down.

CHAPTER 2 – CONTEXT

How often have you heard the court clerk ask a witness to raise their hand and say, “Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?”

Watching a movie, you will often hear a witness being cut off by a lawyer or the judge when they try to elaborate and provide a complete answer. We are left wondering what they mean by “the *whole* truth.”

When trying to convey the truth, context is essential for a complete understanding of the topic. As I was thinking about writing this book, it was just to be about Salmon, but as I dug deeper, it became evident that, contextually, you cannot separate Salmon from Rahab. I can’t tell Salmon’s story without simultaneously telling Rahab’s story. Then I discovered that I couldn’t tell ‘the whole truth’ about Rahab without bringing the character of Joshua and the two spies into the picture. Their story, too, needs to be admissible evidence.

Let me set the scene as we introduce our cast of characters. They will appear in order: Joshua, the [nameless] spies, Rahab, Salmon, and Boaz.

The Israelites are just completing their forty-year sojourn in the wilderness, and God instructs Joshua on what lies ahead and provides him with words of encouragement.

The Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you—from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west,'⁶ including all the land of the Hittites.' No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you."

Have you ever had a word of encouragement from God like that? "For I will be with you. I will not fail you or abandon you." I have.

I was confronted with a tough, potentially life-altering decision about ten years ago. I had prayed long and hard about it, and God knew my heart. Through a friend, God said, "Whichever way you go, I will bless you." He did not tell me which choice to make; He simply encouraged me in the same manner He encouraged Joshua. I now reflect on the ten years since with awe and immense gratitude.

⁶ The lands promised to the Israelites, as described by God, included all of modern-day Israel, most of Lebanon, much of the Sinai Peninsula, all of Jordan, a third of Syria, three-quarters of Iraq, and a large chunk of Saudi Arabia. An area covering as much as 300,000 square miles.

Again, for context, Joshua had been Moses' assistant and had a privilege not available to many. He had an intimacy with God that we can enjoy today.

In Exodus 33:11 we read,

Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting.

Joshua was right there, side-by-side with Moses in the presence of God. I believe God chose Joshua firstly because He knew that Joshua was a man after His own heart and, secondly, knowing the dramatic, faith-testing ordeals that lay ahead, Joshua would need unwavering faith to be instilled.

Then, as we keep reading the Book of Joshua, God continues His words of encouragement unabated.

“Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

We must ask ourselves two questions: do I believe God will keep His promises and do I pay attention to the conditions God may append to those promises? God made two simple conditions for Joshua to follow: “Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night,” and “obey everything written in it.”⁷ Then God emphasized the conditional outcome, “Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.”

Joshua followed God’s leading. Sadly, subsequent generations did not. But, here we look at Joshua’s character—not into the future.

⁷ The Israelites, while initially enthusiastic, did not continue to obey God’s Word. Consequently, today they only possess 2.9% of the lands God promised to them.