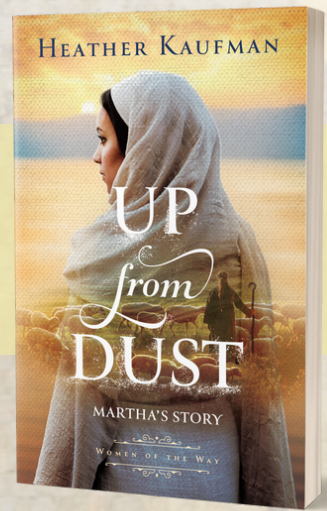


BOOK CLUB GUIDE



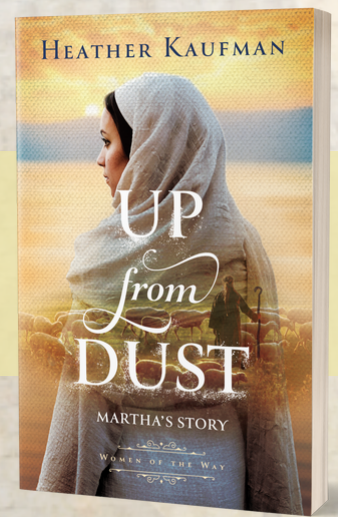
FROM THE AUTHOR

Hello, Fellow Book Lover!

I'm sure, like me, your TBR list is outrageously long, so I deeply appreciate you considering *Up from Dust* as your next book club pick!

This story has been many years in the making. The idea germinated during an Easter sermon in 2016, when I was startled into a deep admiration for Martha of Bethany. Overwhelmingly, the message I'd received about Martha up until that time was one of warning: Don't be a Martha! Don't be so busy that you miss out on Jesus! But in John 11, we see an incredibly strong woman of faith—someone I long to emulate. When Jesus pointedly asks if Martha believes His words, she delivers one of the strongest confessions of Jesus Christ in the Gospels (John 11:27). Her trajectory from a worried Martha to a trusting Martha is astoundingly beautiful. And it led me to wonder . . . what went on in this woman's heart to effect such a change?

Up from Dust is my exploration of all the "many things" that troubled Martha's heart and her winding road to belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Beginning in her childhood, the story traces Martha's nuanced relationships with siblings Lazarus and Mary and her volatile relationship with her father. From the excitement of first love to the many ups and downs in female friendship, we journey with Martha as she comes of age and learns to bear the heaviness of grief. When Jesus bursts onto the scene, Martha's harried heart is compelled to respond. Will she cling to her hurt more than to Adonai? Or is there a better way forward?



Writing this book changed me. I was confronted, like Martha, with my own desire for control. And, like Martha, I had to learn what it meant to surrender to God's way. My desire is for *Up from Dust* to both entertain and deeply bless all who read it. Let's choose to "be a Martha," shall we? Let's choose to learn from our mistakes and take the Living God at His word!

Please feel free to reach out with any questions at heather@HMKStories.com. I'm always happy to hear from readers!

Wishing you and your group many lovely hours of reading and discussion!

Hugs,

Heather

Heather

HMKStories.com

UP FROM DUST BIBLE TRIVIA!

QUESTIONS

1. How many times in the New Testament does Jesus repeat a person's name twice in a row?
2. How many resurrections are recorded in Scripture leading up to Christ's own resurrection?
3. How long had Lazarus been in the tomb by the time Jesus arrived?
4. What two things did Jesus tell Martha about His identity?
5. Martha gave a strong, public confession of Jesus' identity in John 11:27. Out of the twelve disciples, who also confessed Jesus as the Christ?
6. Mary gave a shocking display of devotion by anointing Jesus before Passover. How much was the expensive perfume worth?
7. Which named disciple objected to Mary's outpouring of love on Jesus?
8. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey, He fulfilled the prophecy: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" (quoted in John 12:15 ESV). Which Old Testament prophet recorded these words?
9. Name two ways Jesus is our Passover lamb.
10. Which feast of the Lord corresponds to Christ's resurrection?

UP FROM DUST BIBLE TRIVIA!

ANSWERS

1. Four times.

- a. "Martha, Martha" in Luke 10:38–42
- b. "Simon, Simon" in Luke 22:31–32
- c. "My God, My God" in Matthew 27:46 (quoting Psalm 22)
- d. "Saul, Saul" in Acts 9:1–9

Note: When Jesus said a name twice in a row, big things were happening and lives were changing!

2. Six.

- a. Widow of Zarephath's son in 1 Kings 17:17–24
- b. Shunammite woman's son in 2 Kings 4:18–37
- c. The man cast on Elisha's bones in 2 Kings 13:20–21
- d. Widow of Nain's son in Luke 7:11–17
- e. Jarius' daughter in Mark 5:35–43
- f. Lazarus in John 11:38–44

Note: Jesus was the seventh resurrection recorded in Scripture. The number seven symbolizes completion in the Bible.

3. Four days (see John 11:17)

Note: The number four is significant because some believed the soul of the deceased stayed by the body for three days, hoping to return. Jesus was leaving no doubt in anyone's minds that Lazarus was indeed dead.

4. "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25 ESV)

Note: This is one of seven "I Am" statements recorded in the book of John.

5. Peter in Matthew 16:16

Note: Similar to Martha's confession, Peter declares that Jesus is not only the Messiah, but also the Son of God, affirming His divinity.

6. 300 denarii (see John 12:5)

Note: A denarius was a day's wage for a laborer, so Mary's gift was pricy indeed!

7. Judas Iscariot (see John 12:4)

Note: Judas was one voice of many, for Matthew records that others were "indignant" over this "waste" (26:8). Some only saw the price tag, while Mary declared Jesus to be priceless.

8. Zechariah

Note: John quotes Zechariah 9:9, which prophesized that the Messiah would enter Zion on a donkey. Unlike the horse, which was symbolic of war, the donkey symbolized peace.

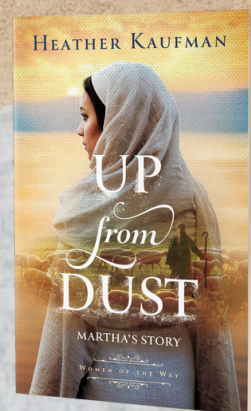
9. Possible answers:

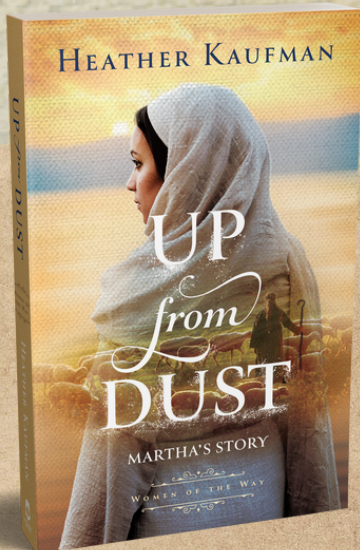
- a. He was a mature male (Exodus 12:5; Luke 3:23)
- b. His bones were unbroken (Exodus 12:46; John 19:36)
- c. He was spotless (Exodus 12:5; 1 Peter 2:22)
- d. He died for our sins (Exodus 12:13; 1 Corinthians 15:3)

Note: Jesus rode into Jerusalem on "lamb selection day," which was four days before Passover (Exodus 12:3).

10. The Feast of Firstfruits

Note: The Feast of Firstfruits was observed within the Passover celebration on the day after the Sabbath. The priest offered the first ripe sheaf of barley as an offering to the Lord, dedicating the upcoming harvest to Him. In 1 Corinthians 15:20, Paul calls Christ "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (ESV). Christ's resurrection anticipates the resurrection of all believers!





 SPOTIFY
PLAYLIST

Enjoy this playlist of inspirational music curated by Heather Kaufman for *Up from Dust*.

Listen now:

[Open.Spotify.Com/Playlist/35lZ4v514k27HKynMYvURy?si=933415e2cd5b46bc&nd=1](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/35lZ4v514k27HKynMYvURy?si=933415e2cd5b46bc&nd=1)



 SCAN TO LISTEN

MARTHA'S TABLE

Hospitality was a sacred duty in the ancient world. Those who shared table fellowship aligned themselves with one another, establishing peace between the parties.

In opening her home to Jesus, Martha was participating in a long and sacred tradition. What we do know is that Jesus frequented her home and rested at her table, but we can only imagine the foods she served. Did she learn Jesus' taste and preferences and prepare His favorite dish when He arrived?

Enjoy six authentic recipes that are featured in *Up from Dust*. Perhaps Jesus Himself enjoyed some of these very dishes while reclining at Martha's table.

Happy Feasting!
Heather



BIBLICAL WHOLE WHEAT FLATBREAD

Source: [Hadassah Magazine](#)

Makes 11 flatbreads.

Ingredients

1/2–3/4 cup fresh grape juice

1/2–3/4 cup water as needed

5 cups whole wheat flour

1/4 tsp salt

1 tsp olive oil



Directions

Combine all ingredients to make a dough.

Knead for 5–10 minutes until smooth and elastic, adding more water if necessary to create a soft dough.

Let rise overnight, to activate the natural yeast.

Heat a dutch oven upside down over a hot burner.

Divide dough into 11 parts, and roll into balls.

Flatten balls with the palm of your hand, and roll out or stretch until very thin.

Cook flatbreads for 2–3 minutes on both sides, or until cooked through.

Keep cooked flatbreads on a plate covered with a slightly dampened towel, to keep moist until eating.

Note: The ancients did not know the properties of yeast, but discovered that fruit peel, especially of grapes and apples, fermented the dough.

CARROTS WITH CUMIN

Source: *Food at the Time of the Bible* by Miriam Feinberg Vamosh

Ingredients

6 medium carrots

Salt

1 tbsp honey

1/2 tsp ground cumin

Salt & freshly ground pepper

Water

1/4 cup olive oil

2 crushed garlic cloves

1 tbsp chopped parsley



Directions

Peel and slice carrots into 1/4-inch rounds. Put in a pot with a little water and salt and cook covered for about 10 minutes until tender but still crisp. Mix remaining ingredients and add to the hot carrots. Toss and adjust seasoning to taste. Serve at room temperature.

NUT CAKES

Source: *Food at the Time of the Bible* by Miriam Feinberg Vamosh

Ingredients

1 cup fresh or juicy dried pitted dates or figs
1/4–1/2 cup water
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground cardamom
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
3/4 cup chopped almonds
Honey



Directions

In a blender or food processor, mix the dates to a paste with the water. Add the spices, walnuts and 1/4 cup almonds and mix well. Form into small balls, coat with honey and roll in remaining almonds.

LENTIL AND BARLEY STEW

Source: *Food at the Time of the Bible* by Miriam Feinberg Vamosh

Ingredients

3 tbsp olive oil
1 chopped garlic clove
1/2 cup diced celery
1 cup lentils
1 tsp cumin
1/4 tsp black pepper
1 cup chopped onions
1/2 cup diced carrots
4 cups vegetable stock
1/2 cup barley
1/2–1 tsp salt
1 bay leaf



Directions

Sauté the onions, garlic, carrots and celery in the olive oil until soft. Add the remaining ingredients. Cover, bring to a boil and simmer over a low heat for 45 minutes, until the lentils and barley are tender. Discard the bay leaf and season to taste.

QUAIL

ROASTED WITH HONEY, CUMIN, AND ORANGE JUICE

Source: [Shikkis Farm](#)

Ingredients

8 quail, patted dry and left whole
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp freshly squeezed orange juice
2 tbsp honey
1 tsp minced garlic
1 tbsp ground cumin



Directions

Step 1: Preheat oven to 500 degrees. Rub the quail with half the olive oil, then sprinkle all over with salt and pepper. Put them breast side up in a roasting pan just large enough to accommodate them. Combine remaining ingredients and brush about half of this mixture over the birds; put in oven.

Step 2: After about 10 minutes of roasting, baste with remaining mixture, then continue to roast until done, about 10 minutes more. Serve birds hot, with pan juices, or warm or at room temperature.

Note: Although this recipe calls for orange juice, in Bible times they used the citron (Hebrew: etrog). This citrus fruit has a lemony, sweet flavor and thick rind.

STUFFED DATES

Source: *Forward*

Ingredients

1 lb. ground chuck
2 tbsp grated shallot
(or minced onion)
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbsp chopped parsley
½ tsp cumin
½ tsp allspice
¼ tsp cinnamon
1 tsp kosher salt
⅛ tsp pepper
2 tbsp pine nuts
24 Medjool dates
12 slices beef fry, sliced
in half lengthwise



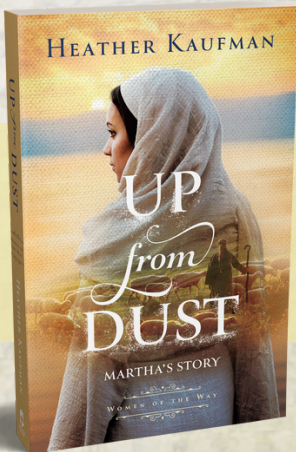
Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a large bowl, combine meat, shallot (or onion), garlic, parsley, spices, and pine nuts. Form the mixture into torpedo-shaped logs, each about 1 heaping tablespoon.

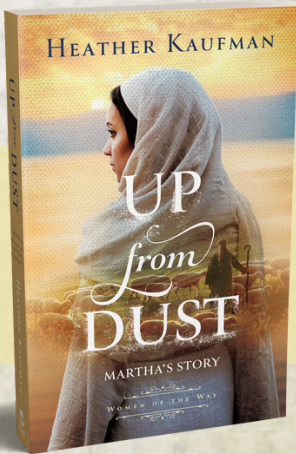
Slice open dates lengthwise, making sure not to cut all the way through. Discard pits.

Stuff dates with meat mixture. Wrap each date with a strip of beef fry; place on a rack set over a baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes. Serve warm.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. All three siblings carry burdens they learn to work through in order to embrace freedom and new life in Christ. Discuss the trajectory of each sibling. Which sibling's journey did you resonate with the most?
2. Did you find Martha's father to be a sympathetic character? Discuss the ways his choices affected his children. Compare and contrast his grief with Martha's.
3. What do you think of Cleopas' assertion that it's better to behold beauty for a moment than not at all? Is there something in your life that feels fragile and perhaps shattered like "broken pottery"? How might God be redeeming that part of your story?
4. Discuss the feather pendant and the role it plays in Martha's life. What does it come to represent for Martha, and what do you make of the ending where she removes it for the first time in eleven years?
5. When Martha connects Uri's Jesus with the Jesus before her, she struggles to reconcile the two and wonders why the Messiah would give Uri "false promises." When Jesus quoted Psalm 91 to Uri, was that a false promise? Why or why not?
6. Is Martha's hesitation with Cleopas understandable, given her background? Compare and contrast her relationships with Uri and Cleopas.



7. In what ways does Gilah and Martha's friendship change throughout the story? Are there scenes in which they prove their friendship to each other? What do you see as the contributing factors to their reconciliation?
8. Martha doesn't know how to be a sister to Mary when what she needs is a mother. How does Martha struggle with this tension and grow in her understanding and love for Mary?
9. When Lazarus falls ill, the sisters realize how much he'd seen and loved each of them uniquely. In what ways did Lazarus show his love and care for each sister?
10. Trace the theme of darkness/light throughout the story. What do you make of Martha's observation of Jesus as a fire?
11. Compare and contrast Uri and Jesus. Discuss the impact each has on Martha's formation.
12. Significantly, Martha never receives concrete answers about Uri. Likewise, we can experience hard things without concrete answers. How are you tempted to react in such moments? How do Martha's reactions shift throughout the story?

AN OPEN BOOK

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SCAN HERE

