

Women of the Bible

A Bible Study in
Eight Lessons



By Kyle Pope



Ancient Road Publications™

Women of the Bible

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P.O. Box 20399
Amarillo, TX 79114
<http://www.ancientroadpublications.com>

Women of the Bible

Lesson One: Eve

While the Bible focuses much of its attention on the men whom God has used in service to him, there are many great women with whom God worked, who served Him and who teach us many lessons about service to God. In this study we will look at a number of women who are discussed in Scripture.



Introduction. The obvious place to begin a study of women of the Bible is to consider what the Bible tells us about the first woman of all — Eve. Although little is recorded about her, the points that are addressed can teach us some valuable lessons.

I. The Creation of Woman.

- A. After God created man, no “helper comparable” (“help meet” KJV) to him was found, so woman was formed from a rib taken from man (Genesis 2:18-24). “Helper comparable” Heb. *‘ezer* (עֵזֶר) - “*help, succour, one who helps*” (Gesenius).
- B. The man and the woman were created in the “one flesh” marriage union.
 1. She is called “Woman” Heb. *’ishah* (אִשָּׁה) because she is taken from “Man” Heb. *’ish* (אִישׁ).
 2. The union was created as a bond of love, support and assistance, not one of resentment, competition and bitterness.

II. The Temptation of Eve.

- A. While in the garden the serpent questions the woman about the one restriction God had set for the man and the woman (Genesis 3:1).
 1. Eve demonstrates a knowledge of Divine law (Genesis 3:2-3).
 2. The serpent deceived the woman (Genesis 3:4-5).
- B. Eve observed three things about the fruit which led her to give in to the deception — it was: 1. good for food, 2. pleasant to the eyes & desirable to make one wise.
 1. We can learn from that which tempted her, the very elements found in those things which pose temptation (cf. I John 2:15-17).

III. The Consequences of the Fall.

- A. Immediately after the couple sinned they attained a consciousness of good and evil and knew they were naked (Genesis 3:7).

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- B. When questioned by the LORD she claimed the serpent “deceived” her (Genesis 3:13).
 - 1. The Apostle Paul connects this with the restriction a woman is given to “learn in silence with all submission” (I Timothy 2:11-14).
- C. A number of physical consequences are given to the woman and her female posterity as a consequence of this deception (Genesis 3:16).
 - 1. Pain in childbirth, desire for one’s husband and subjection to a husband.
 - 2. This does not suggest that the woman’s sin was passed to her offspring (Ezekiel 18:20), nor does it imply that women are less valuable in God’s sight (cf. Galatians 3:26-28).

IV. After Eden.

- A. Eve bore three named sons (Cain, Abel & Seth - Genesis 4:1-2; 25) and the daughters through whom her sons populated the earth.
- B. Two statements are recorded in connection with these births which Eve made.
 - 1. “I have gotten a man from the LORD.” (Genesis 4:1).
 - 2. “For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.” (Genesis 4:25).
 - 3. Both statements reflect the recognition that her children were given to her as a blessing and responsibility from God (cf. Psalm 127:3-5).

Conclusion. God created Eve as exactly the kind of “helper comparable” to her husband. She was deceived and fell to temptation, as did her husband after her. This fall brought to her and her daughters after her responsibilities and physical consequences which continue to this day. Some of these consequences have established an order in the home and church which demand submission and obedience. This order does not place women as of any lesser value, importance or significance to God.



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Lesson Two: Sarah

One of the first women whom the Bible mentions by name, after Eve, is Sarah. Sarah was the wife of Abraham, and the mother of Isaac, the first in the lineage of Abraham that would lead to the establishment of the Israelite nation and the birth of Jesus.



Introduction. Sarah was originally named Sarai (שָׂרַי) meaning “princess,” but God changed her name to Sarah (שָׂרָה), meaning “noblewoman.” (Genesis 17:15). Sarah was the half-sister of Abraham, by Terah and a different mother (Genesis 20:12). This, of course, was before such was forbidden in the Law of Moses (Leviticus 18:9). Sarah, even as an older woman, was a very beautiful woman (Genesis 12:11). Yet, New Testament writers praise her, not for her physical beauty, but for her respect for her husband. and her faith.

I. Sarah’s Obedient Respect for Abraham.

- A. Peter praises Sarah’s obedience to Abraham, calling him “lord” (I Peter 3:6). The Hebrew word, *adon* (אָדוֹן) can mean either lord and master or be used as a term of respect, like our word “sir.”
 - 1. The Holy Spirit is not teaching that Sarah worshipped Abraham, nor that she was under him as servant to a master. She did, however, obey and respect him, as Christian women are to do to their own husbands (Ephesians 5:33; Titus 2:5).
- B. Sarah submitted to Abraham’s instruction that she tell Pharaoh that she was his sister (Genesis 12:10-20). Abraham, knowing that Sarah was a beautiful woman, feared that he would be killed so that Pharaoh might take her for himself. The same thing happened out of fear of Abimelech, the king of Gerar (Genesis 20:1-18).
 - 1. Sarah demonstrated an obedient, submissive disposition in both instances. This deception did not go so far that Sarah was defiled or sinned. Submission to a husband never demands disobedience to God (cf. Acts 5:29).

II. Sarah’s Faith in God’s Promise.

- A. The Hebrew writer praises Sarah’s faith saying that Sarah received strength to bear a child, by faith, when she was past age (Hebrews 11:11).
 - 1. God promised Abraham that he would have an heir from his own body (Genesis 15:4). But, Sarah, was barren, well into her old age (Genesis 11:30; 16:2).

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2. In order to provide a child to Abraham, Sarah gave her maid Hagar to Abraham as his wife (Genesis 16:1-4). Cuneiform tablets found in Nuzi, near the modern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, reveal that Mesopotamian culture allowed this custom for a woman who was barren. Any child born to the servant was considered the legal child of the woman who owned the handmaid. (H V 67:19-21). Sarah, in doing this tried to use her own devices, relying upon the customs of her culture, to accomplish what God had promised. She eventually came to see this was wrong (Genesis 16:5).
 3. She mistreated Hagar, leading her to run away, until the Lord instructed Hagar to return (Genesis 16:6-16).
- B. When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, and Hagar's child, Ishmael, was thirteen God appeared to Abraham and promised that Sarah would have a child a year from that time (Genesis 17:21).
1. It is at this time that the Lord changed her name, declaring that "kings of people shall be from her" (Genesis 17:15-16).
- C. When the Lord appeared with the two angels and ate with Abraham, He promised again that Sarah would conceive (Genesis 18:1-10).
1. Sarah, hearing the promise laughed (Genesis 18:11,12). When the Lord asked why she laughed, she denied it, but the Lord confirmed that it would happen, asking, "is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:13-15).
 2. This exchange must have convinced her that she could trust the Lord's promise, because the Hebrew tells us she received strength to bear a child, by faith, when she was past age (Hebrews 11:11).
- D. At the appointed time Sarah did conceive and bear Isaac (Genesis 21:1-4).
1. Sarah expressed her joy over the birth saying, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." And further, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age." (Genesis 21:6, 7).
 2. When Isaac grew, Sarah sent Hagar and Ishmael away when she saw Ishmael scoffing at Isaac (Genesis 21:8-12).



Ancient Cuneiform Tablet

Conclusion. Sarah died at 127 years of age and was buried in the cave of Machpelah (Genesis 23:1-9). Sarah, like all servants of God, had her struggles. Even so, she demonstrates the submissive and faithful attitude which the Lord expects of those who would serve Him.



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Lesson Three: Rebekah

When Abraham left Haran to go to the land of Canaan, his brother Nahor remained in Mesopotamia. Nahor's wife, Milcah bore eight children unto him, one of whom was named Bethuel – the father of Rebekah.



Introduction. When Isaac was grown, and Abraham was old, he made his oldest servant swear to him that he would not take a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanite women. Instead he sent him to Mesopotamia, to his brother Nahor's people, assuring him that the Lord would provide a wife for Isaac there (Genesis 24:2-9). This wife would be Rebekah.

I. Rebekah's willingness to follow where the Lord led her.

- A. Upon the arrival of Abraham's servant in Mesopotamia, he prays that God would reveal to him the woman who should be Isaac's wife (Genesis 24:10-14).
 - 1. Before he finished praying, Rebekah came to him and does just as he had prayed that she would do (Genesis 24:15-21).
 - 2. When Rebekah revealed her family to him, the servant knew that God had answered his prayer (Genesis 24:22-28).
- B. When Abraham's servant came into Rebekah's house he told her family his purpose (Genesis 24:32-41).
 - 1. He also tells them how God had brought Rebekah to him (Genesis 24:42-49).
 - 2. Bethuel and Laban (Rebekah's father and brother), recognizing God's hand in this matter, agree to let Rebekah go to Isaac (Genesis 24:50-56).
- C. Rebekah is asked whether she will go immediately with Abraham's servant and become Isaac's wife, or not. She agrees to go. (Genesis 24:57-58).
 - 1. Given that marriages were generally arranged by a woman's parents (or father), the fact that she agrees to go when given a choice, reveals her willingness to follow where the Lord would lead her.
 - 2. Rebekah's family blesses her (Genesis 24:59-60). Such blessings were often predictive and prophetic in nature, revealing how God would bless the one upon whom the blessing was bestowed.
- D. Rebekah goes to Isaac and becomes his wife (Genesis 24:61-67).

II. The Lord's promise to Rebekah regarding her children.

- A. Rebekah, like Sarah was barren (Genesis 25:20-21a).
 - 1. Isaac prayed to God and Rebekah conceived (Genesis 25:21b).

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- B. As her conception progressed, the children “struggled” within her (Genesis 25:22a).
 - 1. She prayed to the Lord about the matter (Genesis 25:22b). This reveals that Rebekah was a woman who not only trusted in the God, but saw Him as the source of answers to life’s problems (cf. Philippians 4:6-7).
 - 2. God revealed to her that all was well with her conception, and that she would have two children, who would grow into “two nations,” yet, “the older shall serve the younger” (Genesis 25:23). This was an important revelation which may explain Rebekah’s behavior towards Jacob (the younger), in the future.
- C. Rebekah gave birth to twins, Esau (who was born first) and Jacob who came out holding the heel of Esau (Genesis 25:24-28).

III. The blessing of Jacob and protection from Esau.

- A. When Isaac was old and his eyesight was diminished he instructed Esau to bring him a meal of wild game in order to bless him (Genesis 27:1-4).
 - 1. Overhearing Isaac’s plans, Rebekah instructs Jacob and helps him pretend to be Esau in order to receive the blessing rather than Esau (Genesis 27:5-17).
 - 2. While this may have come simply from favoritism, this may have been her attempt to honor what God had promised regarding them (see Genesis 25:23).
- B. When Esau learns of the deception, Rebekah warns Jacob to flee to her brother in Haran (Genesis 27:41-45).
- C. Rebekah also goes to Isaac, and like Abraham had done for Isaac, requests that Jacob not be given a wife from the Canaanites (Genesis 27:46).
 - 1. Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him to Mesopotamia (Genesis 28:1-5).



Modern Mesopotamian
Village of Haran

Conclusion. Rebekah demonstrated a trust in God which led her to leave her home and go to a different land to become the wife of Isaac. She looked to the Lord in her time of trial and trusted His promises regarding her children. This trust in God’s promise regarding Jacob, may well have led her to take steps necessary to assure his security and blessing from God. She was a great woman of faith, through whom God would further the lineage of Abraham, leading ultimately to the birth of Jesus.



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Lesson Four: Ruth

After the Law of Moses was given the Israelites were led by judges, who acted both religiously and militarily to defend the people. The Lord wanted Israel to see Him as their king (see I Samuel 8:7), yet not all Israelites did. Among those who may have recognized this fact was a man named Elimelech (Heb. *Elimelek* אֱלִימֶלֶךְ meaning - “God is my king”). Ironically, from this man’s family would spring the Davidic line of Israelite kings, through Elimelech’s daughter-in-law, Ruth.



Introduction. During a time of famine in Israel, Elimelech, his wife and two sons, went to Moab to survive the famine (Ruth 1:1-2). Moab was a nation descended from Lot, and viewed a relatives of the Israelites under the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 2:9). While there, his sons took Moabite wives, but Elimelech and both of his sons died (Ruth 1:3-5). His widow was named Naomi and one of his daughters-in-law was named Ruth.

I. Ruth Goes With Naomi.

- A. Naomi decided to return to Israel, to her hometown of Bethlehem and urged her daughters-in-law to stay in Moab and marry again (Ruth 1:8,9).
 - 1. While the other woman stayed, Ruth went with Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17).
- B. Ruth’s commitment to Naomi and “her God,” together with her marriage to Elimelech’s son, make it clear that Ruth had forsaken the false gods of Moab.
 - 1. The Moabites worshipped the false god Chemosh (I Kings 11:33).
 - 2. Marriage to an unconverted Moabite was unlawful (Ezra 9:1,2).

II. The Widows’ Life in Bethlehem.

- A. In Bethlehem, Naomi sends Ruth to glean in the field of a relative named Boaz in order to provide them with food for themselves (Ruth 2:1-3).
 - 1. The Law of Moses commanded that Israelites were not to harvest every bit of the produce from a field but they were to leave some for the poor to “glean” (Leviticus 19:9-10).
- B. Boaz noticed Ruth and instructed his workers and Ruth so that she would be able to glean more than enough from the fields (Ruth 2:8,9; 2:15).
 - 1. Ruth, overjoyed at Boaz’ protection of her, learned that Boaz had heard about her care for her widowed mother-in-law (Ruth 4:11-12).

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2. When Ruth returns to Naomi, she brings with her an Ephah (=1.1 bushel) of barley, causing Naomi to rejoice (Ruth 2:17-19).

III. Ruth and Boaz.

- A. After Ruth had gleaned in the fields of Boaz for some time, Naomi tells Ruth to go to Boaz, with a humble gesture of affection to demonstrate her willingness to be taken under Boaz' protection as his wife (Ruth 3:1-5).
 1. This gesture of "uncovering his feet" was not improper, but actually symbolic of what she was requesting (cf. Ruth 2:12).
- B. Ruth goes and does as Naomi said, humbly asking Boaz to be her "kinsman-redeemer" (Ruth 3:6-9).
 1. As a "close relative" (vs. 9) - Heb. *go'el* גֹּאֵל (meaning - "to act as a kinsman-redeemer"), Boaz had the right to redeem the property or family of a relative (see Leviticus 25).
 2. Boaz is delighted at the gesture and says that he will try to do as she has requested (Ruth 3:10-11).
- C. The next day Boaz goes to a closer relative and makes the arrangements and then takes Ruth as his wife (Ruth 4).
 1. Ruth and Boaz conceive and have child, whom they name Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of King David (Ruth 4:17-22).

Conclusion. Ruth was a faithful and loving woman who demonstrated a spirit that trusted in God, was concerned with the welfare of others and was willing to sacrifice her own comfort for the good of another. She is a wonderful example to Christians today and was, undoubtedly, a great influence on the faithful members of her family who would come after her.



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Lesson Five: The Virtuous Woman

The last chapter of the book of Proverbs contains sayings that are attributed to “King Lemuel” (an unknown king or even a symbolic name meaning - “The king for God,” cf. Acts 1:1). Solomon, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit includes these sayings within his own book of Proverbs.



Introduction. The last portion of this chapter (Proverbs 31:10-31) deals with a description of one who is called a “virtuous woman” (“worthy” - ASV, “excellent” - NASB, “noble character” - NIV). This description serves as a powerful outline of what God desires of the Godly woman.

I. The “Virtuous Woman” Defined.

- A. The meaning of the Hebrew word *cha'il* (חַיִל) translated “virtuous” is “strength, efficiency.” It is used of armies, heroes and those mighty in strength and valor (*A Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 298).
 1. This word speaks to the virtue, courage, strength and efficiency of the godly woman.
- B. It has the basic idea of “strength and influence” (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament*, p. 334). This woman is of moral strength and character. She is not weak nor incapable. But exercises significant strength and influence over those around her.

II. The “Virtuous Woman’s” Character.

- A. **“Her husband trusts her”** (11a). The Godly woman can be trusted by her husband. He does not worry about what she does, or with whom she is associated because she demonstrates a character that is honorable and trustworthy.
- B. **“She does him good and not evil”** (12a). The worthy woman seeks the best for her household. She will not criticize and talk bad about her husband but honors him, to a degree that improves his standing among others (see vs. 23). This is not to say that she ignores sin, but rather that she does not emphasize his shortcomings in her mind or to others.
- C. **“Willingly works with her hands”** (13b). This woman is industrious. Her work is not done with regret but with a recognition of the importance of her duties and a heart willing to perform them.
- D. **“Rises while it is yet night”** (15a). Jesus is described as rising early to go to God in prayer (Mark 1:35). This reflects a premeditated interest in seeking communion with God before the day began. The virtuous woman meditates upon her effect upon her family and how to utilize the time of each day.

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- E. “Provides food for her household” (15b).** The New Testament teaches that a wife is to be a “keeper of the home” (Titus 2:5). A part of this involves providing food for her family. This is not excluding a family from eating at a restaurant, or a husband preparing (or helping in the preparation of) a meal, but this is primarily the responsibility of the wife.
- F. Her work (16-19).** Being a keeper of the home does not demand that a woman can never take care of business outside of the home. Yet, we should note that the tasks described in this text do not excuse (or lead her to neglect) the responsibilities in the home. Any work that a woman does outside of the home should never prevent a woman from meeting her other responsibilities within the home.
- G. “She reaches out her hand to the needy” (20b).** The woman of this chapter is generous and considerate of the needs of others. This could include the sick, the suffering, those mourning the loss of loved ones or other types of need. Her duties towards her family do not prevent this generosity.
- H. “She is not afraid of snow for her household” (21a).** While future dangers can come from many sources, the virtuous woman does what she can to prepare her family for the future.
- I. “Strength and honor are her clothing” (25a).** The Godly woman is not a “weak” or “repressed” woman. This is a woman of inner strength, outer industry and emotional fortitude.
- J. “She shall rejoice in time to come” (25b).** Preparation for the future does not mean that she is anxious and worried about the future. She looks to the future and sees reason to rejoice. This positive hope is vital for her to nurture a healthy family.
- K. “She opens her mouth with wisdom” (26a).** The Godly woman recognizes her responsibility in nurturing faith and godliness in her family. Paul shows that Timothy’s mother and grandmother were of this character (II Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15).
- L. “On her tongue is the law of kindness” (26b).** The virtuous woman is a kind woman. She is not harsh in speech or callous to the needs and concerns of others.
- M. “She watches over the ways of her household” (27a).** While the Bible teaches that the husband is the head of the house (Ephesians 5:23), it also teaches that a woman has significant authority within the home. Paul calls her a “keeper of the home” from the Greek word, *oikouros* (οἰκουρός) meaning “a watcher of the house.” She is told to “manage the house” (I Timothy 5:14) from the Greek word *oikodespoteo* (οἰκοδεσποτέω) meaning “to rule a household.” While this is under the headship of her husband, it is a role of authority nonetheless.
- N. “Does not eat the bread of idleness” (27b).** As we have already seen, this is not a lazy woman. Just as the Bible rebukes the husband who would be lazy (Ecclesiastes 10:18), the godly woman sees her role in the home and diligently seeks to carry it out.

Conclusion. We have seen that the Bible describes the virtuous woman as a caring, hard working, kind and considerate woman who seeks the best for her husband and family. This beautiful description serves as a wonderful example of what the Christian woman should strive to be (cf. I Corinthians 10:6).



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Lesson Six: Esther

During the time of the Persian rule, the Jewish people were allowed to return to Palestine, rebuild the temple and restore the worship of the Lord in Jerusalem. Yet, during this same period, events unfolded which could well have annihilated the Jewish people had it not been for the courage of a young Jewish woman named Esther.



Introduction. Esther, was the Persian name given to a young Jewish exile named Hadassah, who lived in the palace city of Shushan. She had been brought up by a man named Mordecai, after her father (Mordecai's uncle) and her mother died (Esther 2:5-7).

I. The Deposition of Vashti.

- A. The story of Esther took place during the reign of Ahasuerus, believed to be the king known to history as Xerxes I (Esther 1:1-2).
 - 1. Xerxes I is famous in the histories of Herodotus for his war with the Greeks, burning Athens and the defeat of his own fleet at Salamis in 480 BC.
- B. Sometime after these events the Bible tells us that Ahasuerus, back in his citadel at Shushan, held a great feast. During the feast he commanded his wife, Vashti to present herself wearing her crown, before the people and officials. Vashti refused to do as the king commanded (Esther 1:10-12).
 - 1. Upon the advice of the princes Ahasuerus deposes Vashti and makes plans to select another Queen (Est. 1:16-20).

II. The Queenship of Esther.

- A. Many young women were brought to Shushan and brought before the king, to see if he would choose her for his wife.
 - 1. Esther was chosen over all the other women, although she had not revealed that she was a Jew (Est 2:17-20).
- B. Mordecai, while lingering near the gates out of concern for Esther, overheard a plot against the king. He informed Esther, and she told the king in Mordecai's name (Esther 2:21-22).
 - 1. Mordecai's actions were recorded in the king's chronicles (Est. 2:23).

III. Haman's Plot.

- A. After sometime, A man by the name of Haman was promoted by the king above the princes. The command was given to all to bow before Haman and give him

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homage. Mordecai would not bow before him (Esther 3:1,2).

1. Out of hatred for Mordecai Haman brought a plan before the king to kill all of the Jews (Esther 3:8-11).
- B. Mordecai, with all the Jews mourned and put on sackcloth upon the reading of the king's decree (Esther 4:1-3).

IV. Esther's Deliverance of the Jews.

- A. Word came to Esther of the plot, and she sent back word to Mordecai that she was not allowed to go to the king without being called (Esther 4:10-11).
 1. Mordecai sends back word to Esther reminding her of her own danger because of the decree and suggesting to her that she might have come to her position for a time such as this (Esther 4:13-14).
 2. While Esther is the only book of the Bible that never refers to God, Mordecai's appeal to providence and Esther's response to it, shows God's hand at work.
- B. Esther goes before the king, and he extends the golden scepter towards her allowing her to come to him (Esther 5:1-2).
 1. The king offers her up to half his kingdom, but she requests only that he and Haman come to a banquet she has prepared (Esther 5:3-4). During the banquet she requests they come to another banquet the next day (Esther 5:8).
 2. During the night Ahasuerus has read to him the chronicles which record Mordecai's hand in averting the plot to kill him and honors him (Esther 6:3-9).
- C. At the banquet the Esther reveals that Haman's plot would kill her too (Esther 7:3-6).
 1. Haman is hung on gallows he had built to hang Mordecai (Esther 7:9-10).
 2. Although the king's decree could not be rescinded, he issued another decree granting the Jews the right to defend themselves (Esther 8:11-12).
 3. The Jews defended themselves and celebrated their deliverance the next day. This began the annual two day memorial the Jews celebrated known as Purim (Esther 9:16-17; 26-28).



Ahasuerus (Xerxes I)

Conclusion. Esther was a woman of great courage. Her devotion to God's people even at the risk of her own life serves as a wonderful example of the kind of selfless and sacrificial attitude that all followers of God should aspire towards.



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Lesson Seven: Mary

Paul told the churches in Galatia that God, in the fullness of time, sent forth His son, “born of a woman” to redeem those under the law (Galatians 4:4-5). This birth of the Son of God to a virgin named Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:20-25), in the line of David (Luke 3:23-38) was the glorious manner through which the Messiah came into this world.



Introduction. Mary was betrothed to a man named Joseph when she “was found with child” of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18). Joseph considered “putting her away” until he was miraculously told what had happened to Mary (Matthew 1:19-20).

I. Mary & the Birth of Jesus.

- A. The angel Gabriel had come to her and announced Jesus’ birth (Luke 1:26-33).
 1. She is described as “highly favored” and blessed “among women” (Luke 1:28).
 2. She “found favor” with God (Luke 1:30). Mary, most certainly had demonstrated the kind of character that showed her to be a suitable woman to bear and raise the most important Person ever born on earth - Jesus.
 3. Mary is told that her child will be “Son of the Highest” who will reign over the house of Jacob “forever” (Luke 1:31-33).
- B. Mary asks the angel how she will have a child as a virgin (Luke 1:34).
 1. She is told that the Holy Spirit will come upon her (Luke 1:35-37).
 2. Mary believed the Lord’s promise (Luke 1:38). There must have been many hardships that she must have faced, as a betrothed woman, with child. Even so she endured this honorably.
- C. When Mary went to the home of Elizabeth, and saw her relative with child, she offered a beautiful declaration about God’s goodness to her (Luke 1:46-55).
- D. When the time came for her to give birth, Mary went with her husband to Bethlehem and gave birth to Jesus. The child was laid in a manger, because there was no room in the inn (Luke 2:4-7).
 1. When Jesus was presented at the temple, Mary was told prophetically by Simeon of the turmoil and pain to her own soul that would come from the life of Jesus (Luke 2:25-35). These promises must have stayed with Mary and influenced her own faith in God’s word unto her (cf. Luke 2:51-52).

Women of the Bible Lesson Seven: Mary

II. Mary During the Life of Jesus.

- A. When Jesus was young, He stayed behind the caravan in Jerusalem, speaking with the scholars in the temple. Mary confronted Jesus about this (Luke 2:48-50).
 - 1. Mary “kept all these things in her heart” (Luke 2:51-52).
- B. Jesus’ first miracle was motivated by Mary (John 2:1-11). Mary either knew that the time for Jesus to perform a miracle had come, or simply trusted that He would behave Himself honorably to help with the problem.
- C. During Jesus’ ministry, His brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5) and even thought at one point that He was “out of His mind” (Mark 3:21).
 - 1. Mary is not included in these descriptions of unbelief on the part of His family (cf. Matthew 12:46-50).

III. Mary in the Face of Jesus’ Death & Resurrection.

- A. Among the followers of Jesus that stood at the cross when Jesus died was Mary, his mother (John 19:25). Simeon’s prophecy that a sword would “pierce” the soul of Mary was most surely fulfilled as Mary watched her firstborn Son suffer such pain.
 - 1. Jesus from the cross, tells John (“the disciple whom Jesus loved”) to care for Mary (John 19:25-27).
 - 2. Historical tradition records that John did care for Mary, even taking her into his home years later in the city of Ephesus after the destruction of Jerusalem.
- B. After Jesus’ death and resurrection, Mary was a faithful disciple together with Jesus’ brothers who eventually came to believe in Him (Acts 1:12-14).

Conclusion. Mary was a wonderful servant of God. She was honored over all women in that she was allowed to give birth to Jesus Christ, God in the flesh. This honor brought her both joy and anguish. She saw Jesus being rejected, mocked and ultimately crucified. In spite of it all, she went on to become a faithful disciple of Jesus, worshipping with the other saints in the early church.



Women of the Bible

Lesson Eight: Mary & Martha

Jesus had the occasion to encounter many interesting people in His time upon this earth. Great lessons of faith and how to establish priorities are taught from some of these encounters. Among such lessons taught are the great examples illustrated in the lives of two sisters named Mary and Martha.



Introduction. Mary and Martha lived in the city of Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem (John 11:1, 18). Their brother was a man named Lazarus. Jesus preformed great signs and taught great truths to these two sisters and their brother.

I. Martha & Mary's Response to Jesus (Luke 10:38-42).

- A. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to Him (Luke 10:39).
- B. Martha was "distracted with much serving" (Luke 10:40). There was nothing wrong with Martha serving the meal. Yet, at a time when she could have been feeding spiritually upon Jesus' teachings, she was focusing only on material things.
 1. "Worried and troubles about many things. But one thing is needed..." (Luke 10:41-42a). Just as Jesus had taught in the Sermon on the Mount worry and anxiety reflects a lack of faith. The "one thing" that is need is seeking the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:25-34).
 2. "That good part" (Luke 10:42b). Mary recognized that spiritual things are more important that the daily cares of life. While it is necessary to meet the daily needs of life, spiritual things must take the priority.

II. Death of Lazarus (John 11:1-36).

- A. They sent to Jesus (John 11:3). They were confident enough in Jesus that they realized He could offer them a solution to their problem..
 1. Jesus loved them (John 11:5). Jesus loves everyone, but there was a special relationship that existed between the Lord and these women.
- B. Conversation with Martha..
 1. "Even now..." (John 11:21-22). Martha had enough faith in the Lord that she believed that he could help Lazarus after he had been dead four days.
 2. "You are the Christ" (John 11:23-27). Martha acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah.

Women of the Bible Lesson Eight: Mary & Martha

C. Conversation with Mary.

1. Martha told Mary that Jesus was there (John 11:28-29).
2. "If you had been here" (John 11:31-32). The Holy Spirit records more details for us about Martha's conversation with Jesus than that of Mary. However, it is interesting to note that Martha, the woman who did not take the time to listen to Jesus as He taught, in this text is the one who voices confidence in Jesus' power to help Lazarus after he died.

III. Anointing at Bethany by Mary (John 11:2).

- A. After the raising of Lazarus, Martha serves Jesus and Lazarus (John 12:1-2).
- B. Mary anoints Jesus with costly oil (John 12:2-8; cf. Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; [Luke 7:36-47]).
 1. "She has done what she could" (Mark 14:9). What a wonderful statement! There are often limitations in what we are able to do. Mary could not stop Jesus from going to the cross, but she could honor Him before His death. We must strive to do what we can in the face of our own limitations.
 2. "A woman in the city who was a sinner" (Luke 7:37). Although Luke's account does not clearly identify this as the same event, it takes place at the home of a Pharisee named Simon (cf. "Simon the Leper" Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3). If it is the same account, then Mary is the woman known in the city as a "sinner."
 3. "The one whom he forgave more" (Luke 7:40-47). If this is talking about the same event, it indicates to us that Mary humbly recognized her sinfulness and her need to receive forgiveness from the Lord.

Conclusion. Mary and Martha, like all of us, struggled with the sorrows of life, the importance of setting their priorities where they should be and the need to set their minds on spiritual things while laboring in a material world. Their willingness to follow the Lord and the special relationship that Jesus had with their family teaches us many lessons about how we should strive to serve Him as well.



Women of the Bible

Lesson One: Eve

Lesson Two: Sarah

Lesson Three: Rebekah

Lesson Four: Ruth

Lesson Five: The Virtuous Woman

Lesson Six: Esther

Lesson Seven: Mary

Lesson Eight: Mary & Martha



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