

## PART TWO

**Character Studies of Old Testament Women****EVE**

Genesis 1:26-28	Created	
Genesis 2:18, 24	Why Created	
Genesis 3:16	Tempted Adam to do evil-	Why she yielded:
	Good for Food -	Lust of Flesh (1 John 2:16)
	Pleasant to the eyes -	Lust of Eyes
	Desired to make wise -	Vain Glory of life
Genesis 3:16	Curse	
Results of the sin:	Mother didn't harken to God	
	Father disobeyed God	
	Oldest son was a murderer	

**NOAH'S WIFE AND THE WIVES OF THE THREE SONS**

They obeyed God and accepted the decisions of their husbands.

They encouraged their husbands to listen to God's leading.

All went through the flood that destroyed the rest of the people.

They accepted ridicule, ostracism.

They believed the preaching that the world rejected for 120 years.

They encouraged building a huge boat on dry land.

They were pure and righteous in an evil and sin-filled world.

"Everybody is doing it" did not tempt them.

Genesis 6:5 Condition of other women at that time.

**SARAH**

Genesis 11:29 Lived in an idolatrous land, yet was obedient to God when he said, "Go where I will show."

Genesis 12:11 A beautiful woman though 70 years old.

Genesis 16:1-6 Impatient with God's plan, unjust with her servant and brought trouble on herself.

Genesis 17:15 Name changed to Sarah "Mother of Nation."

Genesis 18:6-8 A good cook in a hurry.  
 Genesis 18:12-15 Doubted God, laughed at His promise, then denied she laughed.  
 Genesis 20 Lies to King Abimelech.  
 Genesis 21:9-11 Short tempered again. Abraham obeyed God, not Sarah.  
 Genesis 17:15-16 Honored of God in spite of weakness.  
 Genesis 23:2 Died at the age of 120 years and mourned by Abraham.  
 Hebrews 11:11 Named among the "GREATS"  
 In Galatians the free woman represents the heavenly Jerusalem.

### **HAGAR THE HAUGHTY SERVANT**

Genesis 16:4-6 She had haughtiness toward, and contempt for one who had been a good mistress.  
 Genesis 16:9-10 Angel advises humility and obedience and Hagar receives a home and care.  
 Genesis 16:13 She learned what we all should learn, "THOU GOD SEEST ME."  
 Genesis 21:9-14 A poorly trained son causes her exile.  
 Genesis 21:17-20 God's care for her.

### **REBECCA**

Genesis 24:11-20 She is industrious and chosen for Isaac's wife. (An answer to a good man's prayer).  
 Genesis 21:23-25 Hospitable.  
 Genesis 24:50 Jehovah worshiper  
 Genesis 24:58-61 Willing, obedient and adventuresome  
 Genesis 24:65 Modest  
 Genesis 24:67 She was pleasing to her husband.  
 Genesis 25:28 She was partial to her children.  
 Genesis 27:5-17 Schemer  
     Vs. 13 The result  
     Vs. 41 Hatred and murder in Esau's heart  
     Vs. 42-45 The curse  
 Genesis 27:46 Deceit again. - Never saw Jacob again

### **RACHAEL**

Genesis 29:6-9 An industrious shepherdess  
 Genesis 29:13 Cousin to Jacob  
 Genesis 29:17 Beautiful  
 Genesis 29:20 It is an honor to be loved truly by a good man.  
 Genesis 29:30 Seven more years

Genesis 30:1           Envious of sister with large family  
 Genesis 30:22-24    Has one son - Joseph  
 Genesis 31:19        Steals father's idols  
 Genesis 35:4         Idols buried in Shechem  
 Genesis 33:2         The favorite wife last.  
 Genesis 35:16-20    Second son born - Benjamin -- Death

### **LEAH**

Blest of God by large family.  
 Had six sons. Genesis 30:19  
 Handmaid had two.

### **POTIPHAR'S WIFE**

Genesis 39:1,9,12   She tempted Joseph to do evil

### **ASENATH - JOSEPH'S WIFE**

Gen. 41:45            Daughter of an Egyptian high priest.  
 Gen. 41:50-52        Gave birth to two sons  
                           Manasseh - "God has made me forget all my toil"  
                           Ephriam - "God has made me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."  
 Gen. 48:5-6         Sons were adopted by Jacob and became two of the tribes in the  
                           promised land.

### **JOCABED**

Wife of Amram and mother of Moses, Aaron and Miriam. Ex. 6:20  
 Exodus 2:1            Of the tribe of Levi  
 Exodus 2:2-4         Mother's love shown in wisdom  
 Exodus 2:5-9         God gives her time to teach her son and pays her for it.  
 Exodus 2:10         She is honest with Pharaoh's daughter  
 Hebrews 1.1:23      A woman of faith and courage  
 Hebrews 11:24-27   Moses' choice was the result of early home training. His further  
                           education in Egypt was only pagan.  
 Proverbs 22:6        "Train a child"

### **ZIPPORAH**

Exodus 2:16           She was the daughter of the priest of Midian, Reuel or Jethro. As a  
                           descendant of Abraham through his son Midian (today known as the  
                           Arabians), Zipporah was reared to worship Jehovah. She was an  
                           energetic shepherdess.  
 Exodus 2:21         Marries Moses  
 Exodus 18:1-7        Brought by her father with her sons to Moses after the Exodus.  
 Exodus 18:12        As a priest of Jehovah, Jethro does proper sacrifice to Him.

Exodus 18:13-26 Her father, a wise man, gives good counsel to Moses.

Numbers 12:1 Because Zipporah's mother was a Cushite (Cush the son of Ham, the son of Noah, settled in Africa. They were dark-skinned people.), Miriam spoke of Zipporah as inferior.

Numbers 12:9-10 God was very displeased with what Miriam said.

## MIRIAM

An excerpt from *God's Woman* by C. R. Nichols pp 21-24:

Moses, the leader; Aaron, the priest; and "Miriam, the prophetess" (Ex. 15:20).

Miriam is the first prophetess mentioned in the Old Testament. When Israel was delivered from bondage, it was Miriam who led the women in singing the chorus of the song of deliverance. (Ex. 15:20). God's women have a place in God's work.

Jehovah never shields those who do wrong. In detailing the history of the heroes and heroines of the Bible, their faults are not overlooked. We have been delighted with the splendid traits of character revealed in the history of Miriam. She showed herself a devoted sister in preserving the life of her infant brother, Moses. With Moses and Aaron she toiled in bringing from bondage her nation. She had the distinction of being the first prophetess mentioned in the Bible. When the hosts of Israel were safely beyond the waters of the Red Sea, they lifted their voices in the song of deliverance which was composed by Moses; and Miriam composed the chorus worthy of the occasion and theme, and led the women in such a song as had never before been heard on earth.

Not many days passed till Miriam and the others saw Moses go into the Mount. They witnessed the enveloping of the mountain in smoke, and heard the peal of thunder. Miriam was present when Moses returned from the Mount where he had been in communion with Jehovah; she heard the words spoken by her brother on his return. She saw the tabernacle erected, and the banner raised.

Moses appointed men to be judges in Israel to relieve himself of the burden of adjudicating every matter of dispute coming between the Israelites; he alone determining the righteousness of weightier matters. Was Miriam jealous of her brother, Moses? Did she

resent the fact that she was not consulted touching the appointing of judges, or that she had no place in the number? [This was never seen in her before.]

While in Midian, Moses married Zipporah, who bore him two sons before he returned to Egypt to deliver Israel. His wife and children accompanied him for some distance toward Egypt, and then returned to the home of Jethro in Midian. When Moses with Israel reached Sinai, his wife and children joined him. Did the presence of Zipporah, the wife of the leader, arouse jealousy within the heart of Miriam? Did she fear the leader's wife would eclipse her in the estimation of the hosts of Israel? Did she resent the presence of a woman who was nearer her brother than she? Did she feel she had been rooted out of the close relationship she had enjoyed with Moses? Was she jealous?

It brings a pang of disappointment to learn that one we have admired, fails; that they do not measure up to the standard we had for them. Must we always find that our heroes and heroines have "feet of clay" which will in time crumble, and the admired one will crash at our feet?

In delivering Israel, Jehovah chose from all Israel Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to be the leaders (Micah 6:4), with Moses in the highest place. He was the chief lawgiver. Did Miriam feel that she was being pushed aside in later life? Regardless of the view you may entertain, it remains a fact that "Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married" (Num. 12:1-3) Was it the fact that Moses had married the woman of Cush, or was that assigned as a pretext by Miriam and Aaron for their rebellion against Moses? Evidently they knew of the marriage of Moses to the woman long before they defied Moses. That Moses was the chief of the three is well known. . . .

It is said that only Miriam was punished, and the question is asked, "Why?" It is true that Aaron was not punished as Miriam was, but that is no proof that Aaron was not guilty, nor proof that he was not punished.

Have you noticed that when the name of Miriam appears in connection with that of Moses and Aaron's, her name appears last, with the one exception found in Numbers twelve and the first verse? In this verse it reads, "Miriam and Aaron." It is my view that her name appears first in this passage because it is detailing the rebellion, in which Miriam was the leader, the revolt originated with her. This case furnishes an example of what it means for a woman to usurp authority over a man. (End of C. R. Nichols)

To sum up Miriam's character we find:

1. Exodus 2:4, 8-9 A devoted sister in her care for baby Moses
2. Exodus 15:20 The first prophetess
3. Micah 6:4 Chosen of God
4. Exodus 15:20-21 Leader of women in song
5. Exodus 12:2 Ambitiously indiscreet. Questioning God's putting Moses first.

## WOMEN WHO HELPED BUILD THE TABERNACLE

God called them "wise hearted."

Exodus 35:4-19 Moses tells Israel of the things needed to do God's commands.

Hebrews 8: 5b The obedience was so perfect God made it an example to us today.

Exodus 25:20-29 The response of the people:

"Willing hearted"

"Wise hearted women"

"Women whose heart stirred them up to wisdom"

"Willingly offered to the Lord."

What did it cost these wise, willing women? - - -

First, it cost them their gold, jewelry and precious stones. The Israelites had been slaves for 400 years so their material treasures would not be too plentiful. Some of them could have been heirlooms hidden by each generation so that they meant a lot to the family and naturally would be very precious. Perhaps most of the jewelry came from the plunder given them by the Egyptians when they (Israel) made their exit from Egypt (Exodus 12:35-36) These were probably the first such things in the lives of most of the Israelites and again would be considered most precious. Yet more was given than could be used.

The second thing that the tabernacle cost the Israelites was woven goods. All of the finest cloth, robes, and tent materials; dyes and the most costly of each item. There was no visible chance of replacing these and still there was again more given willingly than could be worked into the tabernacle. Exodus 36: 3b, 5-7.

The last, and usually the most difficult item to be given, especially today, was time or physical work. In verse 26 we notice there was spinning; verse 29 - all manner of work; and verse 35 there was embroidery work and weaving. All very important items and given in abundance by willing and consecrated women. Everything was done in obedience with what God had specified and the greatest part of it was the women's work. Ex. 39:22-32.

**RAHAB**

- Joshua 2:1 She has been called an Inn Keeper - (Hotel) - so the spies sought lodging there.
- Joshua 2:6 Protects Israelites
- Joshua 2:8-11 Tells why she risked her life - She believed in Jehovah God.
- Joshua 2:12 Exacts a promise of the spies.
- Joshua 2:19-19 The agreement
- Joshua 2:21 Her obedience at once.
- Joshua 6:22-25 The agreement fulfilled
- Hebrews 11:31 Her faith is an example to us today

**DEBORAH**

She was called a brave prophetess.

- Judges 5:4-5 Tells who she was and where she lived
- Judges 5:6-7 Obediently gives God's message to Barak, Israel's captain
- Judges 4:8 Barak a coward
- Judges 4:9 Glory given to women
- Judges 4:14 Urging again given by Deborah
- Judges 4:22 Another woman, Jael, took victory from Barak
- Chapter four contains Deborah's song (like Miriam)
- Judges 4:31 God rewards "rest" to capable, obedient leadership.

**MANOAH'S WIFE - SAMSON'S MOTHER**

- Judges 13:2-5 God prepared a proper Mother for his strong man - Samson
- Judges 13:22-24 She is faithful and blessed for her belief
- Judges 14:3 Desired son to marry in the Lord

**DELILAH**

- Judges 16:4 Loved by Samson
- Judges 16:5 A scheming, deceiving, money-loving woman.
- Judges 16:13-14 A clever weaver
- Judges 16:16 Tempts Samson to disobey his God.
- Judges 16:21 Sells Samson to blindness and slavery - for a price - pretending love.

**RUTH - NAOMI - ORPAH**

The following is a reprint of an article written by Lafe Culver, published in *The Gospel Press* by Loren Brink in Loveland, Colorado, on October 1961.

**The Girl Who Made Good**

Three women stood near the border of the land of Moab looking toward Judea. Tears

filled their eyes, for the hour of separation which they had dreaded was now to come. The two sisters-in-law clung to their mother-in-law and wept.

Tragic circumstances had previously robbed all three women of their husbands, leaving them without any form of income or security. Naomi quietly spoke tender words of advice to the two young widows, "Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband" (Ruth 1:8-9).

Naomi kissed them good-bye, but the young widows insisted with renewed tears "Surely we will return with thee unto thy people" (Ruth 1:10). But Naomi again discouraged them, for she was fully aware of the hard life of a widow in Judea. Finally, Orpah, one of the young women, bade a final goodbye and slowly started down the path to Moab. Naomi quickly suggested to Ruth, the remaining young widow, that she follow her sister-in-law's example, for she would probably fare better if she, too, returned to her own people.

But there was a different decision in Ruth's heart. She looked steadfastly at Naomi and uttered these trusting words, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me" (Ruth 1:16-17).

Orpah is not heard from again, but Ruth's name became etched upon the scroll of divine history forever. God later rewarded her deep faith by allowing this Gentile woman to bear a son who became one of the ancestors of the Christ. It was more than chance that caused Ruth to be so favored. God blessed her for reasons that still affect our lives today.

### **RUTH LOVED TRUTH**

As a girl, Ruth grew up in a land of wickedness. In her country everyone worshiped man-made idols and no one seemed to care much about the kind of life they lived. From the Bible account we conclude that Ruth was an attractive girl, but not so hasty as to marry the first boy that she saw in her neighborhood.

A Jewish family moved into her community. Perhaps Ruth was attracted to these people who served the one God. Naomi's family lived such a happy, righteous, and purposeful life in comparison to the heathens about them.

Whatever the cause, when Ruth married into this family, she found out about a God that far surpassed those gods made of stone. Her honest heart hungered to know more about so great a God, thus when the hour of decision came, Ruth followed Naomi.

Orpah had the same opportunity as Ruth, but evidently she did not appreciate the characteristics of the God of Israel. To her, one god was as good as another. She didn't compare or investigate. Like many today, Orpah conformed to whatever religion was handy, never questioning whether it was true or false. It was an easy matter for her to fall back into Moabite idolatry.

Ruth's decision was not so easy. Undoubtedly she had numerous relatives who served idols and their influence could have affected her choice. But one thing saved her soul -- RUTH LOVED TRUTH! God blessed her for seeking it.

### **RUTH WORKED HARD**

After her husband died, self pity could have been an unbearable burden for Ruth, but she did not let misery and poverty sway her. When they arrived in Bethlehem, Ruth's first statement to her mother-in-law was: "Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace" (Ruth 2:2) Ruth had chosen the one God of Israel and was content to serve Him industriously in whatever circumstance she was found. She didn't bewail her lot; she went to work with determination.

Somewhere along the line Ruth had learned to be a good worker. Now don't think for a minute that anyone is a "born worker." Everyone must LEARN to work, and that means more than just being able to know how to perform a certain job. Even today, most girls can hardly wait until they are old enough to dust the house, wash the dishes, or iron the clothes. In due time they learn how to perform such tasks and seem content . . . until the novelty of it wears off, but they have not LEARNED TO WORK until they can discipline themselves to do the required duties without balking and complaining!

I am certain that Ruth didn't especially LIKE the hot, backbreaking work of gleaning in the harvest field. She knew that they had to eat and accepted the responsibility without a murmur.

It was in the harvest field that Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi, first noticed Ruth. Boaz was a godly man who was well liked by his employees (Ruth 2:4). He immediately

became interested in Ruth and inquired about her. He had heard about the Moabite women who trusted the God of Israel and who was concerned about her mother-in-law. Ruth's diligence so impressed Boaz that he instructed his harvesters to make certain she gleaned an ample supply, making her labors very prosperous throughout the wheat harvest.

I wonder, are others impressed with your desire and ability to work? Do you discipline yourself to perform even undesirable tasks well? The time to learn to do a job cheerfully and well is while you are young, then these good work habits will stabilize you later in life. Some men have married girls who came from neatly kept homes, girls who always were well groomed, etc., only to discover after marriage that it wasn't the girl but her MOTHER who had done the actual work.

It was not so with Ruth. She was admired for her zealous attitude.

### **RUTH WAS PURE**

According to the law in Israel, when a man died and left no son to receive his inheritance, it became the responsibility of the nearest kinsman to marry and support the departed man's widow. It was concerning this subject that Naomi sent Ruth to remind Boaz of his responsibility toward them.

Though this approach may seem rather bold to us, the words of Boaz reveal Ruth's reputation: "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." (Ruth 3:10-11)

Unlike many shallow-minded girls of today, Ruth did not dream, talk, whisper, scheme, and giggle continually about men, She "followed not young men" as others undoubtedly did about her. The whole city knew her as a woman of virtue. True, Ruth desired a home of her own, a faithful and devoted husband, and children to love and train, but she sought these admirable goals with the reserve and purity that always accompany godly character. She preferred to let God lead in her life instead of trying to keep up with worldly standards.

How important it is today for young women to refrain from patterning themselves after the examples about them in the world.