

## C7 - Women of the Old Testament

### Study 1 - Eve

#### BIBLE READING:

**Genesis 1: 26-27, 2: 7-8, 15-25, 3: 1-20**

#### KEY VERSE:

**Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

Genesis 2: 24

### GOD'S CREATION

In the book of Genesis, we have the account of God's creation. His word and His power brought our universe into being. On the sixth day God crowned His work with the creation of human life, man and woman made in His own image. **(1: 27)** In the following chapter we read that Adam was created out of the dust of the earth, but Eve was formed from one of Adam's ribs. **"She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man" (2: 22).**

### ADAM'S PERFECT COMPANION

Eve was given to Adam as a helper **(2: 18)** and shared in his responsibilities and privileges. Together they were complete and fulfilled. Their union was the basis for the institution of marriage by which God established the family unit as the context in which the earth would continue to be filled with people. Note the Key Verse which states God's intention from the outset of Creation. This is repeated by Christ in **Matthew 19: 4-6** and by Paul who draws a parallel between the relationship of a man and his wife with that of the mystery of Christ and the church. **(Ephesians 5: 31-33)** Clearly this denotes the significance and dignity of marriage as being much more than a legal contract! Eve was indeed privileged in her relationship with Adam, and with him, to enjoy communion with their Creator in the Garden of Eden. **(3: 8)**

### EVE'S WRONG CHOICE

Adam and Eve were moral beings, not mere puppets of their Creator. This means they had the ability to understand a situation and make choices. God had given them a simple command. They were forbidden to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **(2: 16, 17)** This prohibition was to teach them the value of obedience, and to strengthen their trust in the wisdom and love of God. Similarly, all good parents make rules, not to spoil their children's lives, but to develop their ability to make right choices.

In the New Testament we read that **"the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning..." (2 Corinthians 11: 3).** Satan planted seeds of doubt in Eve's mind as to what God had actually said which led to a suspicion that God was spoiling things for them. Because Eve listened to the serpent and his lie **(3: 4)** instead of believing that God had their best interests at heart, she fell into temptation. She reached out for something which was not hers to take! Even more serious was the fact that she chose to act independently of God!



*The Creation of Adam depicted on the Sistine Chapel ceiling by Michelangelo, 1508–1512 (Source: Wikipedia)*

### FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES

Having taken the forbidden fruit, Eve immediately gave it to her husband. Eve was deceived by Satan, but Adam acted in deliberate disobedience to God **(1 Timothy 2: 14)** with the result that **"...sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin". (Romans 5: 12)** Adam and Eve, along with all those born since, have borne the consequences of their wrong choice in multiple ways.

This first encounter which Eve had with Satan teaches us about how subtle an enemy he is and our need to guard against his tactics. Paul echoes the need to be vigilant when he writes **"so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."** **(2 Corinthians 2: 11)** Later on, Paul refers to Satan being disguised as **"an angel of light."** **(2 Corinthians 11: 14)** In **John 8: 44**, the Lord Jesus tells us of his true identity – **"a liar and the father of lies"**.

### EVE'S MOTHERHOOD

Eve has the distinction of being the first mother; her name means **"mother of all living". (3: 20)** However, one of the results of sin was the suffering connected with childbearing. Eve had further pain in her life when her sons reached adulthood; her first son, Cain, murdered her second son, Abel. In this distressing event God's word to Eve, **"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing" (3: 16)** came true. Later, she bore another son whom she called Seth (which means 'compensation'). **(4: 25)** Seth, in turn, became the head of the race from which the Lord Jesus Christ was eventually born. She was the first link in the long chain by which God's promise of a Saviour was fulfilled. **(See 3: 15)**

## C7 - Women of the Old Testament

### Study 2 - Miriam

#### BIBLE READING:

**Exodus 1: 7-14, 22; 2: 1-10; 15: 19-21;  
Numbers 12: 1-16**

#### KEY VERSE:

**And Miriam sang to them: “Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.”**

Exodus 15: 21

Miriam's parents were slaves under the cruel Pharaoh of Egypt. Since Jacob and his sons had moved to Egypt when Joseph was ruler, 400 years earlier, their families had grown into a separate nation within Egypt and appeared to be a real threat to the Egyptians. They were no longer welcome and were forced into hard labour. Pharaoh had every intention of destroying the spirit of these strangers who lived in his land.

#### PROTECTIVE SISTER

When Moses was born to Jochebed and Amram, they realised that he was a special child, and they wanted to save his life! (**Hebrews 11: 23**) Miriam was given the responsibility of watching over Moses, hidden in his waterproof basket. (**Exodus 2: 4**) She was young for such an assignment, but she was quick-thinking and showed initiative when she met Pharaoh's daughter. Through Miriam's resourcefulness and courage, Moses' life was saved and Jochebed got her baby back. Miriam was part of God's great plan to deliver His people from the wicked hands of Pharaoh.

#### PRAISING PROPHETESS

A further 80 years passed before the Israelites were freed from their slavery in Egypt. Moses became their leader and after ten plagues (**Exodus 7 - 14**) Pharaoh agreed to let the people go. When he changed his mind and pursued them, God opened a pathway through the Red Sea to allow the people to escape, bringing the sea back again over Pharaoh's armies. There on the shores of the Red Sea, the people saw the Egyptians destroyed forever by the power of God.

Now a whole nation of people was ready to begin its journey to the Promised Land of Israel. Leading the people were Moses, Aaron and Miriam. **“For I brought you up from the land of Egypt... and I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam.”** (**Micah 6: 4**) Miriam's early promise as a responsible and trustworthy person was still in evidence. Her life for God had not stood still - she had become a prophetess (**15: 20**) and was able to receive God's Word

for the people. Known and respected by the women of the nation, she led them in praising God who had kept His promise to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. (**See Key Verse**) It is important that we seek to progress in our Christian lives, always being obedient to God's Word and encouraging others to do the same.



Miriam the prophetess by Anselm Feuerbach, 1862 (Source: Wikipedia)

#### PROUD LEADER

As time went on, Miriam became jealous of the leadership role which Moses had. She used the marriage of Moses to an Ethiopian woman as an excuse to criticise him. Instead of being thankful, and supportive of her brother, she reached out for a position which was not hers to have! It was really an act of rebellion against God's choice, and, indeed against God Himself! The consequences of her action were horrendous, and it was only through Moses' intervention that Miriam was saved from a living death! (**Numbers 12: 9-16**)

It is sad to record Miriam's fall, for she was a person who had so much to offer. She was a strong-minded person with a gift for leadership which God had used for the good of His people, but as time went on she was overcome by jealousy, pride and a bitter spirit.

God gives us talents and opportunities to use for Him, but He expects us to value those talents and develop our own spiritual lives, in order to be a help to others. **“...pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith...”** (**1 Timothy 6: 11, 12**)

# Answer Sheet

## C7 - Women of the Old Testament

### Study 1 - Eve

Return address on back of answer sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Read *Genesis 1: 26-28*.**

a) What distinguished Adam and Eve from the other creatures which God created?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) What task and responsibility did God entrust Adam and Eve with?

\_\_\_\_\_

/3

**2. Adam and Eve were unique in that they were placed on earth as mature adults. Read *Genesis 2: 7, 18-23*.**

a) How did God make Adam? \_\_\_\_\_

b) What reason is given for God creating Eve? \_\_\_\_\_

c) How did God create Eve? \_\_\_\_\_

d) Suggest a reason why God did not make Adam and Eve like robots. \_\_\_\_\_

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/2

/2

/1

**3. Answer these questions:**

a) Why did Adam call his wife 'woman'? (see ***Genesis 2: 23***) \_\_\_\_\_

b) Why was Adam's wife also called 'Eve'? \_\_\_\_\_

c) Name three of Eve's sons. \_\_\_\_\_

/3

**4. Write TRUE or FALSE after each statement:**

a) Eve disobeyed God's command. \_\_\_\_\_

b) Eve was not deceived by the serpent. \_\_\_\_\_

c) God promised that the woman's seed would bruise the serpent's head. \_\_\_\_\_

d) Childbearing would be easy for Eve after she disobeyed. \_\_\_\_\_

e) Adam and Eve's sin affected the whole of the human race. \_\_\_\_\_

/5

**5. This study has given an insight into what Satan is like.**

a) Write a short description of Satan's character based on what you have learned from his encounter with Eve. Refer to the other verses given in the study.

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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b) We are advised in ***James 4: 7*** to "***resist the devil, and he will flee from you***". How can we do this in practice? (Clue: ***Ephesians 6***)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

/3

**THINK:** About how you answer someone who says marriage is an old-fashioned idea and not advisable because so many marriages don't last. Be able to explain God's design for marriage.

TOTAL =  /25

# Answer Sheet

## C7 - Women of the Old Testament

### Study 2 - Miriam

1. Pharaoh began a period of great persecution against the Israelites because he was afraid of them. In your own words, explain in what ways he made their lives miserable. (*Exodus 1: 8-14, 22*) \_\_\_\_\_

□ /4

2. When Pharaoh's daughter opened the basket:

a) What did she see and hear? \_\_\_\_\_

b) What conclusion did she immediately come to? \_\_\_\_\_

c) What part did Miriam play? \_\_\_\_\_

□ /5

3. Answer the following questions:

a) In *Exodus 15: 1 and 21* we read that God had "*triumphed gloriously*". Explain in your own words what God had done for the Israelites. \_\_\_\_\_

b) How is God described in *Exodus 15: 2*? \_\_\_\_\_

c) How did Miriam and the women of Israel react to the overthrow of the Egyptians? (*Exodus 15: 20, 21*) \_\_\_\_\_

□ /6

4. Read *Numbers 12: 1-13* again.

a) List two ways in which Miriam and Aaron "*spoke against Moses*". \_\_\_\_\_

b) In what way was Miriam punished for her wrongdoing? \_\_\_\_\_

c) How did Aaron and Moses intervene in the situation? \_\_\_\_\_

□ /6

5. Paul writes about selfish ambition and conceit in *Philippians 2: 1-5*. These were Miriam's failings. From these verses describe four ways in which we can avoid these pitfalls today. \_\_\_\_\_

□ /4

**THINK:** Miriam led the women in praise to God for rescuing them from the Egyptians. Take a moment to thank God for answered prayer in your life.

TOTAL = □ /25

# Answer Sheet

## C7 - Women of the Old Testament

Study 3 - Deborah

1. Read again *Judges 4: 1-3* and give short answers to the following questions.

- a) Why were the Israelites 'sold' to the king of Caanan? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What was his name? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What was the name of the commander of his army? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) How were the Children of Israel treated? \_\_\_\_\_
- e) What did the Israelites do about this? \_\_\_\_\_

□ /5

2. Explain briefly Deborah's role in Israel. \_\_\_\_\_

□ /3

3. Answer TRUE or FALSE:

- a) Barak was the commander of the Israelite army. \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Deborah told him to follow her into battle. \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Jabin had 900 iron chariots. \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Barak went willingly into battle. \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Deborah went into the battle with Barak. \_\_\_\_\_

□ /5

4. Answer the following:

- a) Which do you think was the stronger character, Deborah or Barak? Give reasons for your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

- b) How did Deborah help Barak? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

□ /4

5. Give two examples of Deborah's faith in God from *Judges chapter 4*.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

□ /2

6. As Christians we are in a spiritual battle. (*Ephesians 6: 10-18*)

- a) Who is our enemy? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- b) How can we gain the victory in our lives? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

□ /4

5. Read *Matthew 5: 13-16* again and suggest ways in which we can let our "light shine before others". \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

□ /2

**THINK:** How can I follow Deborah's example of faith and trust in God in my own life?

TOTAL = □ /25

# Answer Sheet

## C7 - Women of the Old Testament

Study 4 - Hannah

1. In what ways did Peninnah make Hannah's life difficult?

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2. How do these 'words' affect others?

- a) **Proverbs 15: 1** "harsh word" \_\_\_\_\_
- b) **Proverbs 16: 24** "gracious words" \_\_\_\_\_
- c) **Proverbs 29: 20** "a man who is hasty in his words" \_\_\_\_\_
- d) **Ecclesiastes 12: 11** "words of the wise" \_\_\_\_\_

/4

3. Like Hannah, we should take our problems to the Lord. How do these verses explain this?

- a) **Psalms 86: 7** \_\_\_\_\_
- b) **1 Peter 5: 7** \_\_\_\_\_

/2

4. Hannah saw herself as 'a servant of the Lord.' (see verse 11)

- a) What exactly was she willing to do for Him? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Read the following verses and identify qualities that should characterise us as 'servants of the Lord':
- i. **Galatians 1: 10** \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. **Colossians 3: 17** \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. **2 Timothy 2: 24** \_\_\_\_\_

/2

/3

5. Hannah asked for a son, but not for selfish reasons.

- a) Suggest some things that a Christian could pray for which would be a blessing to others.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What mistake did Eli make when he saw Hannah praying? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Express, in your own words, what she said in reply to Eli. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- d) What does the name 'Samuel' mean? \_\_\_\_\_

/3

/1

/2

/1

6. Hannah endured patiently in a difficult trial.

- a) What example has Christ left His followers in the way He dealt with suffering? (**1 Peter 2: 23**)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Read **1 Peter 4: 19**. What two things should a Christian do who is suffering according to God's will?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What reward is mentioned in **James 1: 12** for a person who perseveres under trial?
- \_\_\_\_\_

/5

**THINK:** What helpful lesson have you learned from the life of Hannah?

Return your completed answer sheet to:

TOTAL =  /25      UNIT TOTAL =  /100

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## C7 - Women of the Old Testament

### Study 3 - Deborah

#### BIBLE READING: Judges 4: 1-24

#### KEY VERSE:

**“I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.”**

Judges 5: 7



Deborah as portrayed in a publication called *Promptuarium Iconum Insigniorum* in 1553  
(Source: Wikipedia)

The situation in Israel was depressing - not at all as God had intended for His people. After Joshua's death the nation had turned away from God and worshipped idols, ignoring His law, **“You shall have no other gods before Me”**. (**Exodus 20: 3**) God punished them for their deliberate disobedience and instead of becoming progressively stronger in the land, Israel was under the control of the surrounding nations, who should by now have been driven out of Canaan. (**Judges 2: 7, 11-16**) When the people reached their lowest ebb, they **“cried out to the Lord”** and He sent them a deliverer. These deliverers were known as ‘judges’, (**3: 7-9**) and Deborah was one of them.

#### DEBORAH'S FAITH

Like Miriam, Deborah was a prophetess and a leader, but unlike Miriam she was not spoiled by the pride which can come with authority and power. God had given her a special position amongst His people. She had a real sense of calling as **“a mother in Israel”**, caring for the needs of individuals and yet aware of the plight of a whole nation. Deborah was a strong-minded woman who had accepted God's will for her. Day by day she was asked to make decisions and exercise judgments between people; with God's help she fulfilled those responsibilities, using His Word with wisdom and receiving His guidance. A prophet's work was not only to reveal the future to the people; more often it was to apply

God's Word to the present situation, and so teach His will and His ways.

#### DEBORAH'S COMMAND

Deborah's right-hand man was Barak and when it came to battle, he was the one chosen to lead the people. Deborah realised that the time had come to fight against Jabin and Sisera, and she said to Barak, **“Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the Lord go out before you?”** So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.” (**4: 14**) Barak had been less than enthusiastic at first, which must have been a disappointment to Deborah. Nevertheless, she went into battle with him, showing support and encouragement by her actions as well as her words. Because of Barak's hesitancy in fighting, he had to forfeit the privilege of killing the hated general Sisera. That honour was given to a woman called Jael. She was not an Israelite, but she was well aware of Sisera's cruelty and particularly of his merciless treatment of women. (**5: 28-30**) She was ready to strike a blow literally against evil, and God used her to make known His unchanging condemnation of those who violate womanhood.

#### DEBORAH'S SONG

Deborah and Barak led Israel in a song of praise after their great victory. (**Chapter 5**) Its poetry and energy reflect the character of Deborah, whose whole concern was for the people - directing them back to national self-respect and obedience to God, **“that the leaders took the lead in Israel, that the people offered themselves willingly, bless the Lord!”** (**5: 2**)

Deborah led by example - always ready to take responsibility and make decisions. But her energy and vision had their source in the Lord and she always gave Him the glory for His strength and help, **“does not the Lord go out before you?”** (**4: 14**)

Deborah's history is a challenge to all Christians, whatever their age or gender. We are to be both **“salt”** and **“light”** (**Matthew 5: 13-16**) in a sinful and corrupt world.



Grave near Tel Kedesh in Israel attributed to Deborah or Barak. (Source: Wikipedia)

## C7 - Women of the Old Testament

Study 4 - Hannah

### BIBLE READING:

**1 Samuel 1: 1-28**

### KEY VERSE:

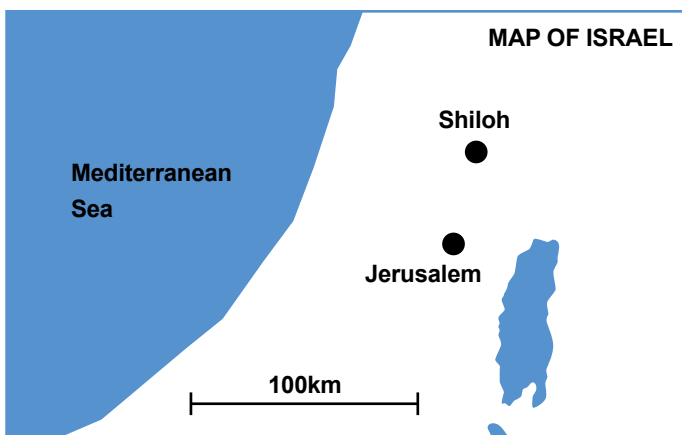
**“For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to Him.”**

1 Samuel 1: 27

Our study is set in the time of the Judges. God was preparing for the day when the people would demand a king to rule over them. Samuel, the last judge, and an outstanding prophet would be a key figure in the choosing and training of a king. Samuel, however, was yet to be born!

### HANNAH’S SORROW

Every year, God’s people went to Shiloh (see map) to worship the Lord at His house, called the Tabernacle. One family - Elkanah, his two wives and the children - always went to the feast, but what should have been a time of celebration was spoiled by one of the wives. Her name was Peninnah, and she was extremely jealous of Hannah, who was the favourite wife. Instead of being thankful that God had blessed her with a good husband and a fine family, Peninnah had allowed envy and bitterness to take root deep in her heart. Eventually her hidden antagonism surfaced in harsh words against Hannah, taunting her with the fact that she had never been able to have children. Life became intolerable for Hannah, and she dreaded the visits to Shiloh where Peninnah’s insults were even worse. Peninnah’s jealousy and its root cause are a warning to us. The words of **Proverbs 4: 23, 24** are an apt summary of how we can guard against jealousy - **“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you crooked speech....”**



### HANNAH’S REQUEST

Hannah never retaliated but rather hid the problem from her husband. It was something she preferred to keep between herself and the Lord. One evening, after the special thanksgiving meal was over, Hannah could bear her sorrows alone no longer and went to the Tabernacle to pray. **“She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.” (1: 10)** Unlike Peninnah, Hannah took her bitterness to the Lord and poured it out in prayer before Him. For a Jewish woman, to be childless was a real reproach, and she brought this shame to God, telling Him how she felt and what she longed for. Hannah addressed God as **“Lord of Hosts”** - the mighty and powerful One; she spoke of herself as **“Your servant”** - humble, and insignificant and yet believing in the ability of God to do anything. She asked for a son and vowed that the child would be given back to the Lord.

Hannah’s spirit was tried again when Eli, the priest, accused her of being drunk. Her gracious and respectful reply, **“No, my lord...” (1: 15, 16)** is an illustration of the ideal wife in the book of Proverbs, **“She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue”.** (Proverbs 31: 26)

### HANNAH’S REWARD

God granted Hannah’s request, and her son, Samuel, was born. To give this little child back to the Lord must have taken courage, but Hannah kept her vow. When the family returned to Shiloh, year by year, she brought her son a new coat. It must have given her great happiness to watch him grow, both physically and spiritually. **(2: 18-21)** Hannah was blessed with more sons and daughters, but her great joy was her first born, Samuel. He came as an answer to her prayers and faith. Eventually he would become one of the greatest prophets in Israel, a man of prayer, equal in rank to Moses and Aaron. **“Moses and Aaron were among His priests, Samuel was among those who called upon His name. They called to the Lord and He answered them.” (Psalm 99: 6)**

### HANNAH’S EXAMPLE

Hannah has left us a fine example of trust in God, even when everything seems to be against us. She is also a good illustration of patience under trial and provocation. **(See verse 6)** She proved the truthfulness of **Psalm 37: 5, “Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act.”**



Remains of the Tabernacle at Shiloh (Source: Wikipedia)

This is the first of two units on **Women of the Bible.**

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