

Adventure Club

A weekly lesson for children, young people, parents and grandparents, from the GCI Watford Church.
Number 34, 13th November 2020

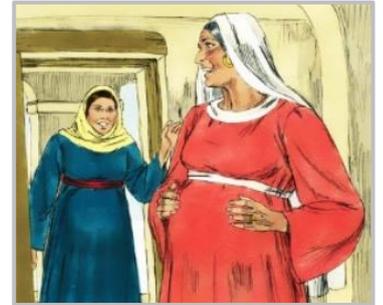
Learning From and About Some Bible Women

Part 2, New Testament

Elizabeth

‘A Woman of Integrity and Obedience’ *Woman’s Study Bible*

Elizabeth is the mother of John the Baptist. ‘As both daughter of a priest and wife of a priest Elizabeth lived a righteous life, even though she carried a quiet sorrow because she was childless. Then a miracle occurred. Her husband Zacharias, who served in the temple at Jerusalem, was the first person in about four hundred years to receive direct word from God that is recorded in scripture. While he was burning incense, an angel appeared to announce that his wife Elizabeth would have a child who would be named John.’ *Woman’s Study Bible*



‘When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.’ *Luke 1:41-44, ESV*



Mary

‘An Honoured Mother’ *Woman’s Study Bible*

‘No other human being was closer to Christ on earth than Mary, His mother. Each of the Gospels and the Book of Acts includes her as a woman uniquely gifted to share her Son’s earthly life. As a mother, she is one of us, but as the mother of our Lord, she is blessed above all women. Matthew introduces Mary of Nazareth as the betrothed wife of Joseph, “a just man” (Matthew 1:19). When the angel Gabriel appeared to her with the birth announcement (Luke 1:26-28), Mary’s response clearly revealed her keen understanding of Scripture and her ready willingness to obey God. The awesome concept of yielding her virgin body to the Holy Spirit as his instrument was sure to be misunderstood, but Mary’s spirit of total trust earned God’s pleasure (Luke 1:38). Overwhelming as the news was, she submitted herself to the assignment with joy. Her song of praise (Luke 1:46-55) describes a perceptive heart of overflowing exaltation to her Lord. Not only was Mary God’s sovereign choice to bear the Christ Child, but she was also a devoted and humble follower of her Messiah.’ *Woman’s Study Bible, page 1686*

‘Mary said, “My heart is overflowing with praise of my Lord, my soul is full of joy in God my Saviour”.’ *Luke 1:46-47, Phillips*

Anna

‘A Faithful Prophetess’ *Woman’s Study Bible*

‘Anna was an aged widow who had been married only seven years before her husband passed away. After he died she chose to worship God in the temple continually. For the past eighty-four years she had been serving God with night-and-day prayer and fasting. While Simeon was prophesying over Mary and Joseph and the baby, Anna walked up to them and burst forth with a great chorus of praise to God for the child. And from that day forward she told everyone in Jerusalem who was waiting for their redemption that the anticipated Messiah had come!’



Luke 2:36-38, TPT

Mary Magdalene 'I Have Seen the Lord'



'After her healing experience, Mary became a devoted follower of Christ. Unflappable in her faithfulness, she was counted among the small group of women who, at their own expense, served Jesus and His disciples as they preached and ministered to the masses. Mary became an important leader among the ministering women. Scripture mentions her fourteen times. She proved to be a passionate follower who gave her time, energy and wealth to the Lord's work. She faithfully followed Jesus throughout His ministry. Even when nearly everyone fled with fear after Christ's arrest, Mary lingered lovingly all the way to the cross and witnessed His painful death. Mary remained faithful to Jesus long after others had given up hope. Early one morning, after the Jewish Sabbath had ended, she crept through the predawn darkness to the tomb. In her arms she carried the customary spices to prepare the Lord's body for burial. The Lord richly rewarded Mary for her faithfulness to Him. For when she arrived at the tomb, the heavy stone slab that sealed the entrance had been removed. To her horror, Mary discovered the tomb empty, but her grief turned to joy when she came face to face with Jesus, the risen Lord. In his incredible grace, God chose a faithful woman, Mary of Magdala, to proclaim to the disciples and to the world the glorious life-changing news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Imagine the excitement! "I have seen the Lord!" she shouted with unequalled enthusiasm to the small bank of bewildered and unbelieving disciples.'



Woman's Study Bible, page 1797

'Jesus said to her: "Mary". She turned and said to Him in Aramaic: "*Rabboni*" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her: "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them: 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'." Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples: "I have seen the Lord" – and that He had said these things to her.'

John 20:16-18, ESV

Joanna

Devotion to Her Lord Exemplified in Humble Service

'Joanna was the wife of Chuza, the steward of Herod Antipas. When Joanna met Jesus, He healed her of an unrecorded illness or evil spirit that controlled her life (Luke 8:2), and Joanna made a self-sacrificing decision. She chose to risk her comfortable lifestyle in order to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Joanna went to Jesus' tomb on the early Sunday morning following the crucifixion. She is listed as one of the women who reported the resurrection of Jesus to the eleven disciples. She stands in history as a woman with position and possessions whose devotion to her Lord is exemplified in humble service.'

Woman's Study Bible, page 1707



'Returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles.'

Luke 24:9-10, ESV

Susanna

'A Faithful Servant'

Woman's Study Bible



'Susanna was one of the many women who followed Jesus in His travelling ministry. Like Mary Magdalene and Joanna, Susanna had been healed by Jesus of either a debilitating sickness or evil spirits. She then became a leader among women who served Jesus and His disciples and supported them financially.'

Woman's Study Bible, page 1707

'After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out, Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household, Susanna and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.'

Luke 8:1-3, NIV



Salome

'Followed Jesus and Cared for Him'

'Salome was one of the women who followed Jesus from Galilee, and who stood afar off witnessing His crucifixion. She came with other women on the morning of the resurrection to anoint Jesus' body with spices. Mark 16:1. She was probably the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John, Matthew 27:56.' *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopaedia*, page 1504

'Watching from a distance, away from the crowds, were many of the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and had cared for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jacob the younger and Joseph, and Salome.'

Mark 15:40-41, TPT

Mary (the Mother of James the Less) A Behind the Scenes Follower



'Jesus had many "behind the scenes" followers. All four Gospels describe a group of women who were devoted to special ministries to the Saviour. These women served, supported, and even travelled in order to prepare the way for Jesus and the twelve. Mary, the mother of James the Less and Joses, was one of these women. In fact, she was one of the few followers (mostly women) who did not desert Jesus at the cross. She remained for the entire tragic ordeal. Imagine the wrenching of her heart as she helplessly watched the hideous torture, humiliation and crucifixion of the One she had found so understanding and gentle. Staying behind when the crowds left the death scene, she and a few of this loyal group followed Joseph of Arimathea as he took Jesus' body to the tomb. Though they saw Him die, they could not let Him go – not yet. They needed to know where His body would rest. After the Sabbath, these women spent hours gathering the spices used for burial – they still served Him. With heavy hearts they got up early in the morning, packed the spices, and trudged toward the tomb. When they arrived, there was an eerie silence, not the silence of death, but rather of wonder – the tomb was open and empty. God honoured these faithful women in a special way. At the lowest point of Christianity, Mary and her companions were the first to receive the news that revolutionised the world. Composers, writers and artists through the centuries have celebrated the message they, alone, heard that morning – "He is risen".' *Woman's Study Bible*, page 1636

'Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.'

Mark 16:1, NIV



Martha

'Yes Lord, I Believe You Are the Christ, the Son of God'

'Martha was apparently single, whether by choice or circumstances, and living in Bethany with her sister Mary and their brother Lazarus. Martha is a poignant reminder to everyone of the balance between fellowship with friends and family and the work necessary to meet their mundane needs.

With trusting faith, Martha acknowledged Jesus' power over death. Jesus explained that He Himself was the resurrection. She agreed and saw an immediate manifestation of that faith in her brother's

resurrection.' *Woman's Study Bible*, page 1778

'Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."' Luke 10:38-42, ESV

'Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."' John 11:21-27, ESV



Mary (of Bethany) 'A Committed Follower' Woman's Study Bible



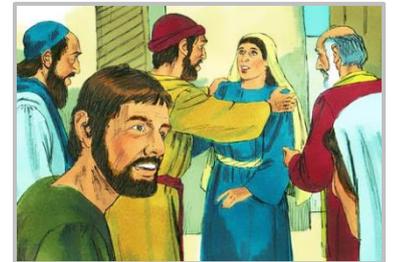
'Mary stands as a role model for every dedicated disciple of Christ. She was apparently unmarried, living with her older sister Martha and their brother Lazarus. Their home was a friendly retreat for the Lord, who may have been in their age group. Mary, more than any other in the New Testament, is associated with sitting at Jesus' feet, a testimony to her hunger for spiritual truth and understanding (Luke 10:39). Yet she not only sat at His feet; she also served him by anointing Him with costly ointment to show her desire to meet practical needs as well as to seek spiritual blessing. Mary's example demonstrates her strong decision-making capacity. She chose, Jesus said, to listen to Him, and later her gift of ointment poured out in preparation for His burial was a premeditated act of worship. True to Jesus' prophecy, Mary has lived in history as one personifying commitment.' Woman's Study Bible, page 1777

'This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair.' John 11:2, NLT

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Rhoda Too Excited to Open the Gate!

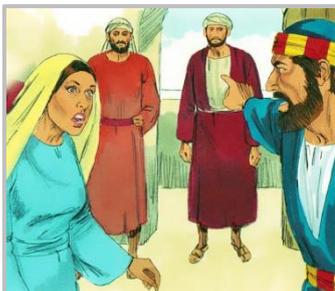


Rhoda was 'a servant girl in Jerusalem who heard Peter's voice and knock at the gate of Mary (the mother of Mark) after his release from prison through angelic intervention. The term *paidiske* indicated Rhoda was probably a slave.

Her Greek name *Rhode*, indicates she may not have been a Jewess. Whether she was attached to Mary's household, or was one of the believers gathered to pray for Peter, is not known. Her joy at recognising Peter's voice reveals that she knew the apostle and points to her being a Christian. Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, page1469

'Then Peter went to the house of Mary the mother of John whose other name was Mark. Many of the Lord's followers had come together there and were praying. Peter knocked on the gate and a servant named Rhoda came to answer. When she heard Peter's voice, she was too excited to open the gate. She ran back into the house and said that Peter was standing there. "You are crazy!" everyone told her. But she kept saying that it was Peter. Then they said, "It must be his angel".' Acts 12:12-15, CEV

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Sapphira 'Lied to God'

'There was a man named Ananias. His wife's name was Sapphira. Ananias sold some land he had, but he gave only part of the money to the apostles. He secretly kept some of the money for himself. His wife knew this, and she agreed with it. Peter said, "Ananias, why did you let



Satan fill your mind with such an idea? You kept part of the money for yourself and lied about it to the Holy Spirit! Before you sold the field, it belonged to you, right? And even after you sold it, you could have used the money any way you wanted. How could you even think of doing such a thing? You lied to God, not to us!" When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Some young men came and wrapped his body. They carried it out and buried it. And everyone who heard about this was filled with fear. About three hours later his wife came in. Sapphira did not know about what had happened to her husband. Peter said to her: "Tell me how much money you got for your field. Was it this much?" Sapphira answered, "Yes, that was all we got for the field." Peter said to her: "Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! Do you hear those footsteps? The men who buried your husband are at the door. They will carry you out in the same way." At that moment Sapphira fell down by his feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead. They carried her out and buried her beside her husband. The whole church, and all the other people who heard about this, were filled with fear.' Acts 5:1-11, ERV



Tabitha (also called Dorcas) Full of Good Works and Acts of Charity

'There was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa,

the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him: "Please come to us without delay". So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed. Turning to the body he said: "Tabitha, arise". And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.'

Acts 9:36-42, ESV



Mary (the Mother of John Mark) 'A Dauntless Example'

'Scripture mentions Mary, the mother of John Mark, only once. During the persecution of Herod Agrippa, this brave woman offered her house to the first group of Christians at Jerusalem as a place to worship and pray. Times proved difficult for Christ's followers during those early turbulent years. Herod Agrippa imprisoned Peter after killing James, the brother of John, with the sword. Yet, in spite of the risks involved, Mary courageously opened her home regularly to Christians. After an angel miraculously escorted Peter from prison, he went immediately to Mary's house, a familiar place of hospitality for the disciples. There he found the congregation praying for his release. With the dauntless example of a mother like Mary, no wonder John Mark became a missionary, church leader, and author of the second Gospel.' *Woman's Study Bible, Page 1826*

'Then Peter went to the house of Mary the mother of John whose other name was Mark. Many of the Lord's followers had come together there and were praying.' Acts 12:12, CEV



Damaris 'A Courageous Believer' *Woman's Study Bible*

'Damaris, an Athenian woman, became a believer in Christ after hearing Paul's sermon at Mars' Hill, the highest court in Athens. She heard, and accepted by faith, Paul's message, while some of the crowd belittled him and called him a 'babbler'. Damaris listened carefully to the Gospel message of salvation. Then with rare courage and God-given wisdom, she chose to oppose the mocking debaters and to express her commitment to the resurrected Christ. Like other believing women Damaris became more than just a spectator of Paul's ministry. She became a team-mate, a woman in the early church who helped to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.' *Woman's Study Bible, page 1841. Damaris is mentioned in Acts 17:34.*

Phoebe 'A Great Leader and Champion For Many'

'Let me introduce to you our dear and beloved sister in the faith, Phoebe, a shining minister (or deaconess or servant) of the church in Cenchrea. I am sending her with this letter and ask that you shower her with your hospitality when she arrives. Embrace her with honour, as is fitting for one who belongs to the Lord and is set apart for him. I am entrusting her to you, so provide her whatever she may need, for she's been a great leader and champion for many – I know, for she's been that for even me!' Romans 16:1-2, TPT



Priscilla

‘A Fellow Servant of Jesus’ *Romans 16:3, Voice*

‘Priscilla and her husband Aquila were deeply involved in the spread of the Gospel. Her name unexpectedly precedes her husband’s in three of the six references to them. When Paul arrived in Corinth in late A.D. 50, he worked with this dynamic couple in their tent-making business. Priscilla presented a picture of a strong, competent woman who was actively involved in Christian ministry. Though she managed her household and pursued a trade, she found time to gain a thorough understanding of Scripture and she was obviously adept in teaching. As a well-respected leader in the early Church, she was also noted for her hospitality. She worked side-by-side with her husband, and together they made a significant contribution to the spread to the Gospel in the early decades.’ *Woman’s Study Bible, page 1843*



‘Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house.’ *Romans 16:3-5, NIVUK*

Mary

‘Who Laboured Much For Us’ *Romans 16:6, NKJV*



‘Nothing is known of this diligent Christian woman but what is said in *Romans 16:6*. Even this is not absolutely clear, due to the question of who was the beneficiary of her labours, whether it was upon Paul or upon the saints in Rome that her labours were expended. However, it is the degree and diligence of those labours which are brought into focus here. The Greek word here translated "much labour" indicates work sufficiently heavy to produce weariness and fatigue.’ *Coffman’s Commentary*

Lydia

A Woman of Determination, Foresight and Generosity

‘When Paul and Silas came out of a Philippian prison, Lydia attended to their needs. Her house became a meeting place of the first European church. She was not too busy to take time for hospitality. Lydia’s name appears in scripture only twice. She was seemingly the first Gentile convert in Europe, the first Christian business woman and the first believer to open her home as a worship centre for European



Christians. Lydia proved the importance and influence of a woman of determination, foresight and generosity.’ *Woman’s Study Bible, page 1836*

‘One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. When she and the members of her household were baptised, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house”. And she persuaded us.’ *Acts 16:14-15, NIV*

Eunice and Lois

‘Nurturers of True Faith’ *Woman’s Study Bible*

‘Two people especially helped to mould Timothy. From early childhood his godly mother Eunice and his faithful grandmother Lois touched his life. Unknowingly, they prepared him for God’s call to salvation and then for ministry by teaching him the Word of God (*2 Timothy 3:15*). Eunice and Lois are valuable models. Parents can know God’s Word, and they can faithfully teach it to their children. Like Eunice and Lois, they can carefully nurture a true faith and be diligent to possess right doctrine. They can model to their children godliness rather than worldliness and Christlikeness as opposed to self-centredness. Eunice and Lois are living testimonies that nothing in a mother’s life is more important than a personal and vibrant faith modelled before her children.’ *Woman’s Study Bible, page 2015*



‘I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice.’

2 Timothy 1:5, NKJV

See if you can memorize these words:

'Mary said, "My heart is overflowing with praise of my Lord, my soul is full of joy in God my Saviour".' Luke 1:46-47, *Phillips*

Word Search

BIBLE WOMEN
 ELIZABETH MARY
 MARY MAGDALENE
 MARY MARY
 MARY MARY
 JOANNA SUSANNA
 SALOME MARTHA
 RHODA SAPPHIRA
 TABITHA DORCAS
 DAMARIS PHOEBE
 PRISCILLA LYDIA
 EUNICE LOIS
 ANNA PROPHETESS
 MOTHER SISTER

M	E	M	R	A	Y	M	M	E	R	Y	X	S	M
A	A	M	A	R	I	A	N	M	A	R	O	A	A
R	R	N	O	E	M	E	R	Y	R	A	M	C	R
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O	P	A	D	D	M	S	I	R	A	M	A	D	I
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A	N	A	N	N	A	S	U	S	M	A	R	R	Y
M	A	T	Y	M	A	A	R	Y	M	A	R	P	Y

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Mary Magdalene, Susanna, Mary the mother of James the Less and Mary the mother of John Mark – quality illustrations of ladies: John Heseltine and Pam Masco, freebibleimages.org.
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Bible abbreviations:

CEV: Contemporary English Version. ERV: Easy-to-Read Version. ESV: English Standard Version. NIV: New International Version. NIVUK: New International Version, United Kingdom.
 NKJV: New King James Version. NLT: New Living Translation. Phillips: J.B. Phillips New Testament. TLB: The Living Bible. TPT: The Passion Translation. Voice: The Voice.

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Any questions, etc, please contact the UK GCI Watford Church Council or Geoff Sole, 01707 880782 or geoff@geoffsole.co.uk.