

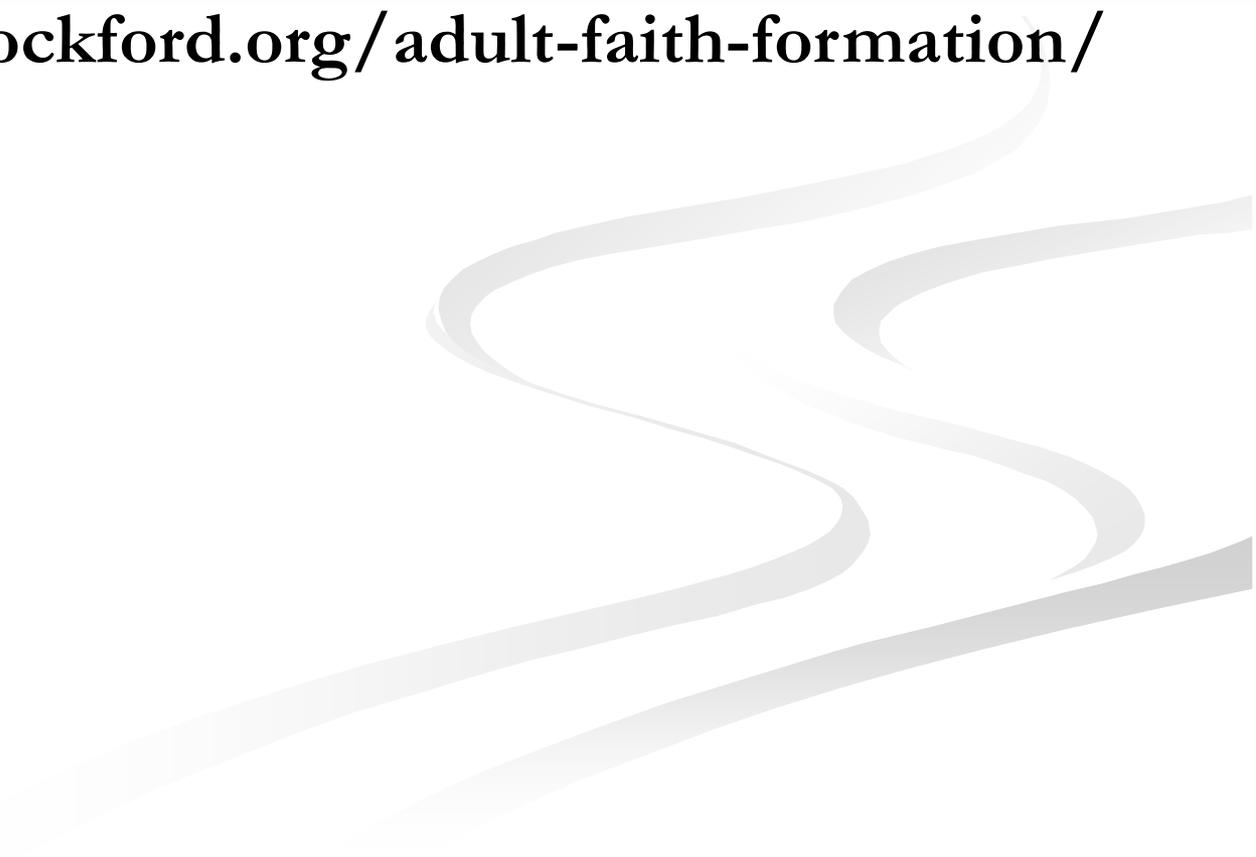
Interesting Women of the Bible

Session 1 Old Testament



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Women in Biblical Times

1. Written by men
2. Range of perspectives
3. Wives/mothers + also prophets, queens, judges, wisdom figures
4. Not all bad news
5. Patriarchal society
6. After Exile, liturgy altered status
7. Jesus was different
8. Double standard for sexual matters
9. Role of mothers
10. Key roles women played in household

1. Shiphrah and Puah

Ex 1:15-22

1. Midwives □ ironically, Pharaoh commands them to be agents of genocide
2. Offer a lame excuse, fighting oppression by refusing to be oppressed
3. They act bravely because they “feared God”
4. Ps 111:10, Prvbs 1:7 □ “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” = distinguishing characteristic of covenant fidelity
5. They become channels of life for the covenant people, + initiate liberation from Egyptian slavery
6. Moses’ mother (Jochebed), his sister Miriam, his wife Zipporah, and Pharaoh’s daughter as courageous liberators

2. Naaman's Wife's Servant Girl

2 Kings 5:1-15

1. Naaman – military officer from Aram – enemy of Israel, has leprosy
2. “a little girl” the servant of N’s wife (5:2) says “If only my master would present himself to the prophet of Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy”
3. Girl is contrasted to Naaman (who follows her lead and is healed, accepts faith of Israel, 5:15)
4. She expresses deep faith in God + his prophet = real hero of story

3. Jephthah's Daughter

Judges 11:29-40

1. Jephthah = a judge/hero, God's power not enough?
2. Crazy Vow made to God: sacred promise or bribe? (11:30-31)
3. Israel's law forbids human sacrifice (Lev 18, 20, Deut 12)
4. Spoken word is irrevocable
5. Daughter celebrates his victory = death sentence, blamed in 11:35, tragically surrenders to her death after a period of mourning
6. Story indicates a lack of trust in God, preferring magical coaxing of God's will at cost of daughter's life

4. Huldah the Prophetess

2 Kings 22-23

1. “I have found the book of the Law in the temple...”
22:8. King Josiah seeks out Huldah, not Jeremiah, reputed for holiness, wisdom, intelligence.
2. Huldah renders God’s judgment: “Thus says the Lord...” 22:16-17
3. King Josiah’s Reform: Before him there had been no king who returned to the Lord as he did...” 23:25

5. Wise Woman of Tekoa

2 Samuel 14

1. Joab engages a “gifted” woman to help move a conflicted David to forgive Absalom
2. Her story tricks David into judging himself just as the prophet Nathan did (2 Sam 12)
3. She uses disguise (2), homage (4), figurative language (7), + outright flattery (17, 20) to guide D to be a God-graced king, moving from inactivity to involvement

6. Abigail

1 Samuel 25

1. Wife of Nabal, = “intelligent and attractive” (25:3)
2. Nabal – very wealthy, “harsh and ungenerous” refuses to assist David in need. Insults him. “He has repaid good with evil.” D fumes, plans a savage attack!
3. Abigail acts quickly, gathers huge amounts of food etc. for David and his men, asks pardon for her “fool” husband, acknowledges God’s favor upon David, predicts his dynasty
4. Nabal dies, David marries Abigail

7. Tamar

Genesis 38:6-30

1. Judah (of the 12) has son Er marry Tamar. Er dies, Onan neglects his Levirate duty, dies too. She is assigned Shelah. Waits years.
2. Tamar executes “Plan B”
3. Asks for Judah’s seal, cord and staff
4. Gives birth to twins: Perez + Zerah, continuing the lineage of Judah
5. “She is more righteous than I am” (38:26)
6. Perez = ancestor of David, and Jesus (Mt 1:3)

8. Jezebel

1 Kings 16-21, 2 Kings 9

1. A Phoenician, Queen to Ahab, King of Israel, bring pagan worship to Israel
2. Mortal enemy of Elijah as a defender of Israel's God
3. Ruthless in scenario of Naboth's vineyard, Elijah announces the doom of the house of Ahab and a horrible death for Jezebel
4. Jezebel vs Elijah □ Who is God in Israel?

9. Ruth

The Book of Ruth

1. Naomi, Ruth + Orpah – all widows, options: Poverty? Re-marriage? Prostitution?
2. Orpah returns to her family, Ruth stays with Naomi and returns with her to her native Bethlehem
3. Ruth, a Moabite (enemy of Israel, Deut 23) trying to survive in Israel with no husband, loyal to “MIL” – see Ruth 1:16-17
4. She is diligent (2:7), humble (2:10), generous (2:17), gentle, kind and unassuming
5. Boaz graciously becomes her protector, credits her with *hesed*, marries her, Ruth gives birth to Obed, the grandfather of King David, ancestor of Jesus, Mt 1:5

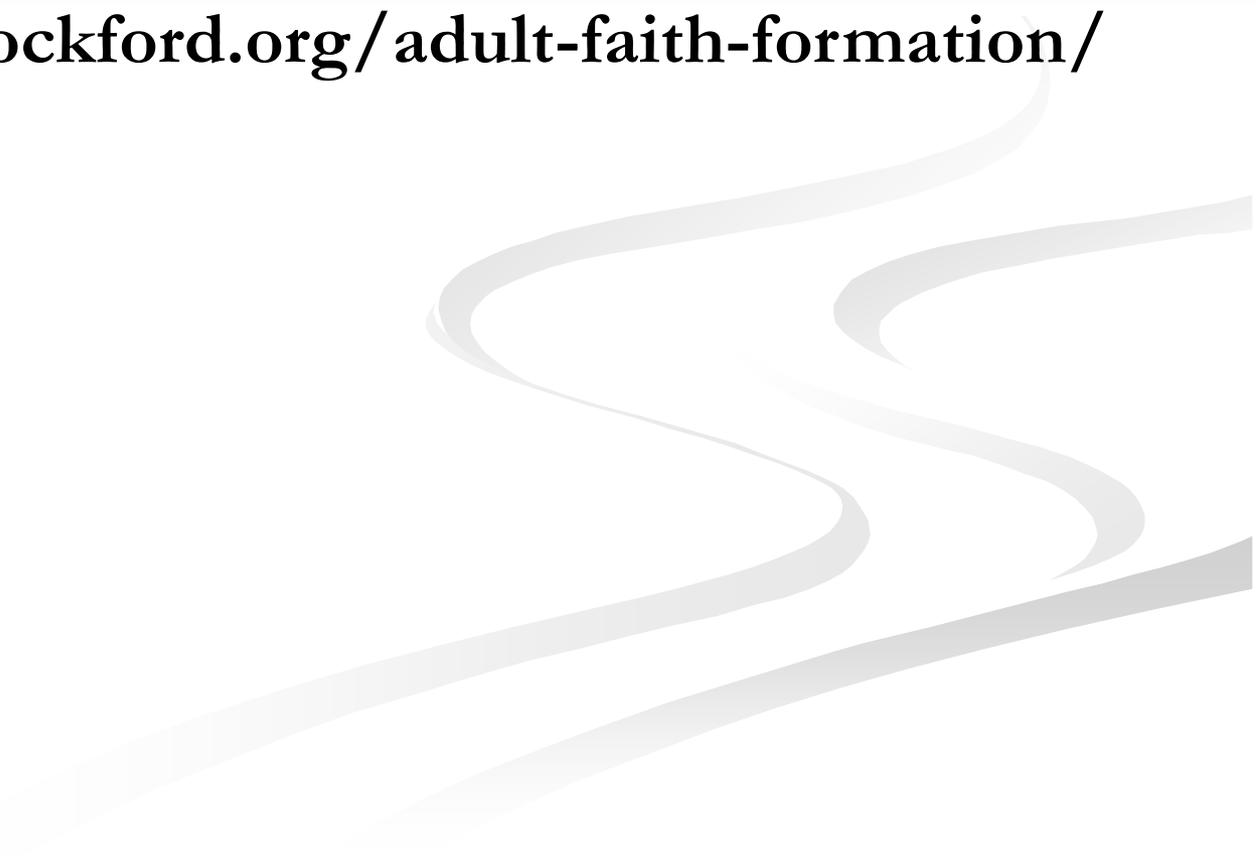
10. Queen Esther

The Book of Esther

1. A melodrama pitting good vs evil, set in Persia
2. Esther, beautiful and faith-filled Hebrew maiden chosen to be queen of Persia to King Ahasuerus
3. Her uncle, Mordecai hated by Haman, King's official, who orders slaughter of all Jews
4. M gains King's favor when he uncovers an assassination plot against the King
5. Esther courageously appeals to the King on behalf of her people, reveals H for his deceptions
6. Haman hanged, Mordecai replaces him
7. Jewish celebration □ Purim

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