

Women of the New Testament

Women of the Gospels

Mary of Nazareth (Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-52; 8:19-21; Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-23; 12:46-50; 13:53-58; Mark 3:31-35; 6:1-6; John 2:1-12; 19:25-27; Acts 1:14)

"Scripture states that Mary, mother of Jesus and wife of Joseph, conceived her child miraculously through the intervention of the Holy Spirit while she was still a virgin. After a period of exile to escape Herod's wrath, she made her home in Nazareth. Scripture mentions other children."

Elizabeth (Luke 1: 5-80)

She was a woman of priestly descent who was a relative of Mary the Mother of Jesus. "Childless into old age, Elizabeth gave birth to a son, John, through a miraculous intervention. Her child, John the baptizer, grew up to be the prophet who prepared the way for the promised Messiah."

Anna (Luke 2:36-38)

Anna was a widow and a prophet who spent her life in prayer and fasting at the Temple. She witnessed to all who came to the Temple that Jesus had come for Israel's liberation.

Woman accused of adultery (John 8:2-11)

"The only biographical information identifying this woman is the accusation by the scribes and Pharisees that she had committed a sin." The scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus to be her judge and jury. Instead he told her to "go and sin no more."

Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Luke 8:40-42, 49-56; Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26)

"The little girl who was twelve years old was the daughter of a synagogue official. Luke says she was his only daughter." Jesus raised her from the dead, with the order "Talitha Kum! ... Little girl, get up."

Woman with the flow of blood (Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48; Matthew 9:20-22).

"All three accounts record that this woman has suffered an incurable flow of blood for twelve years. For all that time she has been ritually unclean, as indicated in the law." She is healed when she touches Jesus' garment as he is on his way to tend to Jairus's daughter.

Woman who anoints Jesus' head. (Mark 14: 3-9; Matthew 26:6-13)

"Nothing is known of this woman except her beautiful, prophetic gesture, which remains in memory of her." According to the accounts of Mark and Matthew, this unnamed woman anointed the head of Jesus two days before the Passover, as a prophetic recognition of Jesus the Christ.

Crippled Woman (Luke 13: 10-17)

Jesus encountered this woman in the synagogue while he was teaching. She had a condition that left her bent over and unable to stand for 18 years. "His decision to heal her on the Sabbath, publicly and in a house of prayer, proclaims yet again his message that people take priority over regulations and rules."

Poor Widow (Mark 12: 41-44; Luke 21: 1-4)

"Scripture tells us only that she was poor and that she was a widow. She must have lived in Jerusalem or in a village nearby." Jesus pointed her out for the contribution she made to the temple treasury: two small coins that came from the little she had to live on.

Canaanite Woman (Mark 7: 24-30; Matthew 15: 21-28)

The Canaanite woman was an outsider, but she insisted on the fruits of the inner circle. She demanded justice, with courage.

Herodias and her daughter (Mark 6:17-29; Matthew 14:3-12)

"Herodias was living in adultery with Herod Antipas, who was the local ruler of Galilee and Perea and one of the sons of Herod the Great." Solome was the daughter of Herodias. She and her mother were instrumental in the death of John the Baptist.

Woman at the Well (John 4: 1-42)

The woman at the well discerned the reality of spirit and truth when she observed that God dwelled in other places than those of power. Her testimony spread the message of the Messiah among the Samaritans.

Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42)

Mary and Martha lived with their brother Lazarus in Bethany, outside of Jerusalem. Scripture relates that Jesus loved this family, and records at least three occasions when he was guest in their home. "Martha was practical, the mistress of the house, while Mary was more contemplative."

Susanna (Luke 8:3)

She was among the women who accompanied Jesus in ministry. The women who journeyed with Jesus tended to be Galileans. Some were well-to-do and some were related to followers of Jesus. Luke reports they supported Jesus' ministry financially.

Johanna (Luke 8:1-3; 24:10)

Johanna was the wife of Herod's steward, Chuza and is considered one of several women who assisted Jesus out of their means. She was one of the women who told the apostles about the risen Christ.

Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:1-3; John 19:25; 20: 1-18; Mark 15:40-41, 47; 16:1-11; Matthew 27: 55-56,61; 28:1-10; Luke 23:49, 55-56; 24:1-11)

Scriptural evidence indicates that Mary Magdalene was among the Galilean women who accompanied Jesus on his mission, and that she was a leader in this female circle. She was singled out by Jesus to be the first to see and proclaim him as risen Christ.

Mary, wife of Cleopas (John 19:25; Luke 24: 13-53).

Cleopas is named as one of the two who encountered Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Some scholars suggest that Mary, his wife, was the other traveler, who prepared the meal for the three of them. "She probably was the woman who stood at the foot of the cross. She certainly was one of the women disciples."

Peter's Mother-in-Law (Luke 4:38-39; Mark 1:29-31; Matthew 8:14-15)

Her name and that of her daughter are unknown. Jesus' miraculous cure allowed her to minister to Jesus and the other disciples.

Women of Acts and the Apostolic letters

Women At Pentecost (Acts 1: 12-14; Acts 2: 1-18)

While liturgical practices have focused more on the presence of men in Acts 2, women were present at the Pentecost, and sons and daughters were given the gifts of prophesy and preaching.

Dorcas (Gr.) also Tabitha (Aramaic) (Acts 9: 36-42)

She is the only one mentioned in the feminine form of "disciple" in the New Testament. "In this context, 'disciple' seems to describe those with authority."

Rhoda (Acts 12: 11-17)

"Rhoda was a female servant in the household of Mary the mother of John Mark in Jerusalem. Late one night she heard a persistent knocking. When she discovered it was Peter, she became so flustered, she left him standing at the gate." Peter had just been miraculously delivered from prison.

Mary, Mother of John Mark (Acts 12: 11-17)

Mary, the mother of John Mark, was host to a housechurch in Jerusalem. Tradition indicated that it was used as the headquarters for the Jerusalem church

Lydia (Acts 16: 11-15, 40)

Lydia was a Gentile who attended Jewish services and accepted the teachings about the one true God. She and her household were baptized after hearing Paul speak. The church at Philippi was established and maintained through her influence, support and leadership.

The Female Slave of Philippi (Acts 16:16-24)

This woman had the power to predict the future, earning vast sums for her masters in Philippi. When Paul delivered her of spirit possession, the source of her skill, her masters became furious at the loss of her lucrative ability. Paul, too, treated her harshly.

Damaris (Acts 17:22-34)

"Damaris was a Greek woman who became a Christian after hearing Paul's words before the Areopagus in Athens. She had enough education and intellectual competence to be persuaded by his philosophical argument."

Philip's Prophetic Daughters (Acts 21: 8-14)

These four women, all gifted with prophecy, were daughters of Philip, one of the seven chosen by the apostles to assist in ministry. While their reference in Scripture is brief, Eusebius the historian acknowledged their fame in Asia as prophets and transmitters of the apostolic tradition. Didache 15:1-2 indicates that prophets were the normal ones to preside at Eucharist.

Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3)

Paul mentions that these two women worked on an equal basis with him and his coworkers to advance the Gospel. He sent an emissary to mediate a dispute between them, indicating "how important the women are both to Paul and to the community in Philippi."

Phoebe (Romans 16: 1-2)

"Phoebe was a leader in the church at Cenchræ. An official teacher and missionary commended by Paul, she was a woman of authority, responsibility and influence and Paul's financial patron.^{3/4}

Prisca (Acts 18: 13, 18-19, 24-28; 1 Corinthians 16-19; Romans 16: 3-5; 2 Timothy 4: 19.)
Prisca (Priscilla) exercised a team ministry with her husband Aquila. They led a house-church wherever they settled, and were considered co-workers of Paul.

Nympha (Colossians 4:15)

"Nympha was a Christian woman of Asia Minor to whom Paul sent greetings at the close of his letter to the Colossians. The local church at Laodices (although some would say in Colossae) met at her home."

Apphia (Philemon 1-3)

"Apphia is greeted by Paul at the beginning of his letter to Philemon. She, Philemon, and Archippus are members of a house church or churches in the Lycus Valley."

Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:10-11)

"Chloe is mentioned in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians as the source of Paul's awareness of dissension within the church. Chloe's people have told him about it. She may have been the leader of a house church."

Lois and Eunice (Acts 16: 1-3; 2 Timothy 1:5)

"Lois was the grandmother of Timothy, Paul's trusted associate, and the mother of Eunice. ...The author of the second letter to Timothy praises both women for their faith, the faith as it exists within themselves and as transmitted to their offspring."

The source for this material is the book *Woman Word*, written by Miriam Therese Winter, Medical Mission Sister. All quotation marks are the words of the author. Other text was compiled by Barbara Ballenger and Mary Straka Felker. *Woman Word* is published by Crossroad Publishing Company. It contains a complete list of all the women in the Christian Scriptures along with original related psalm and prayer resources for reflection and worship.