

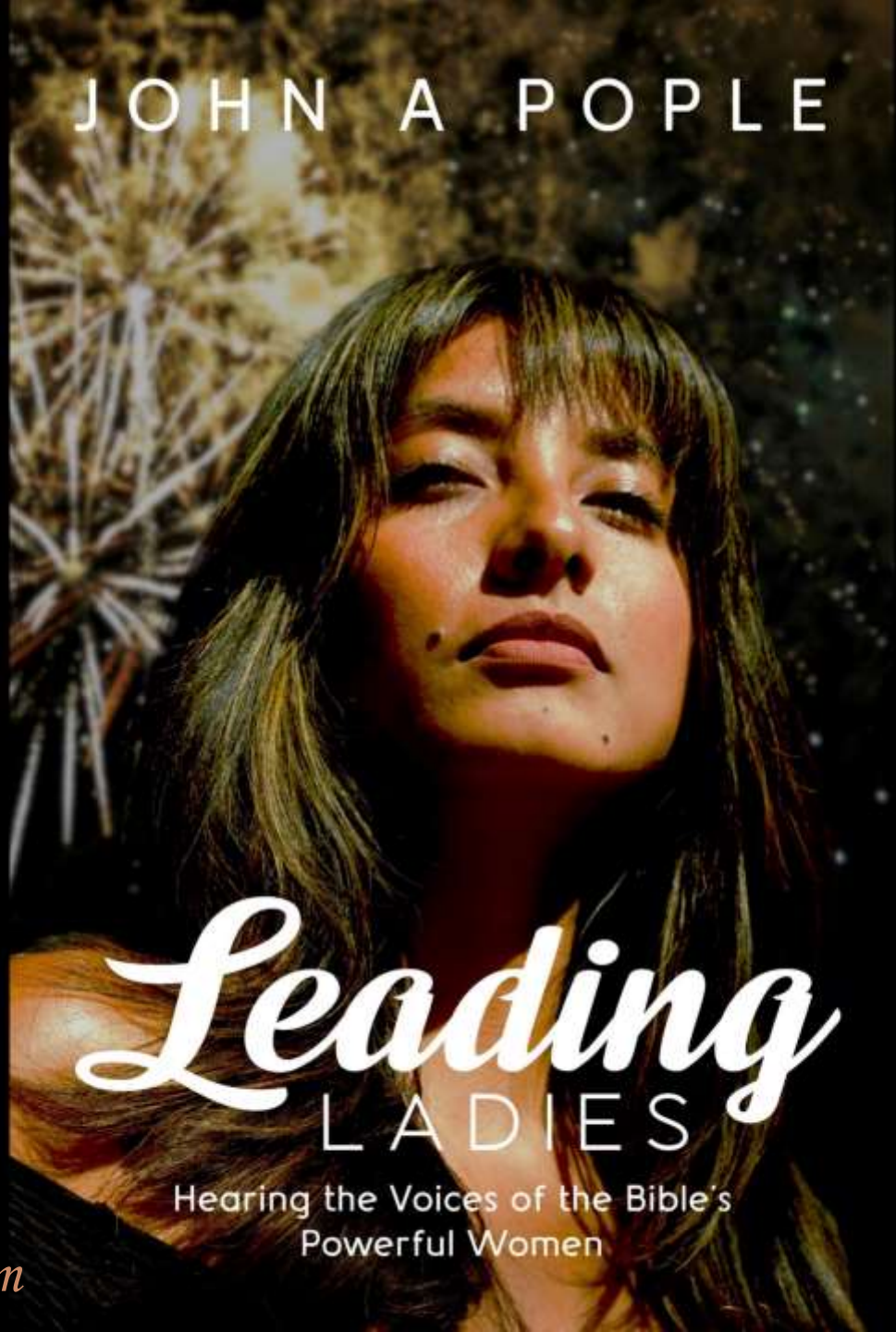
JOHN A POPL

Hebron Camp

Cockatoo Valley

Jun 2023

LEADING LADIES



Leading
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Hearing the Voices of the Bible's
Powerful Women

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“The God of Widows”

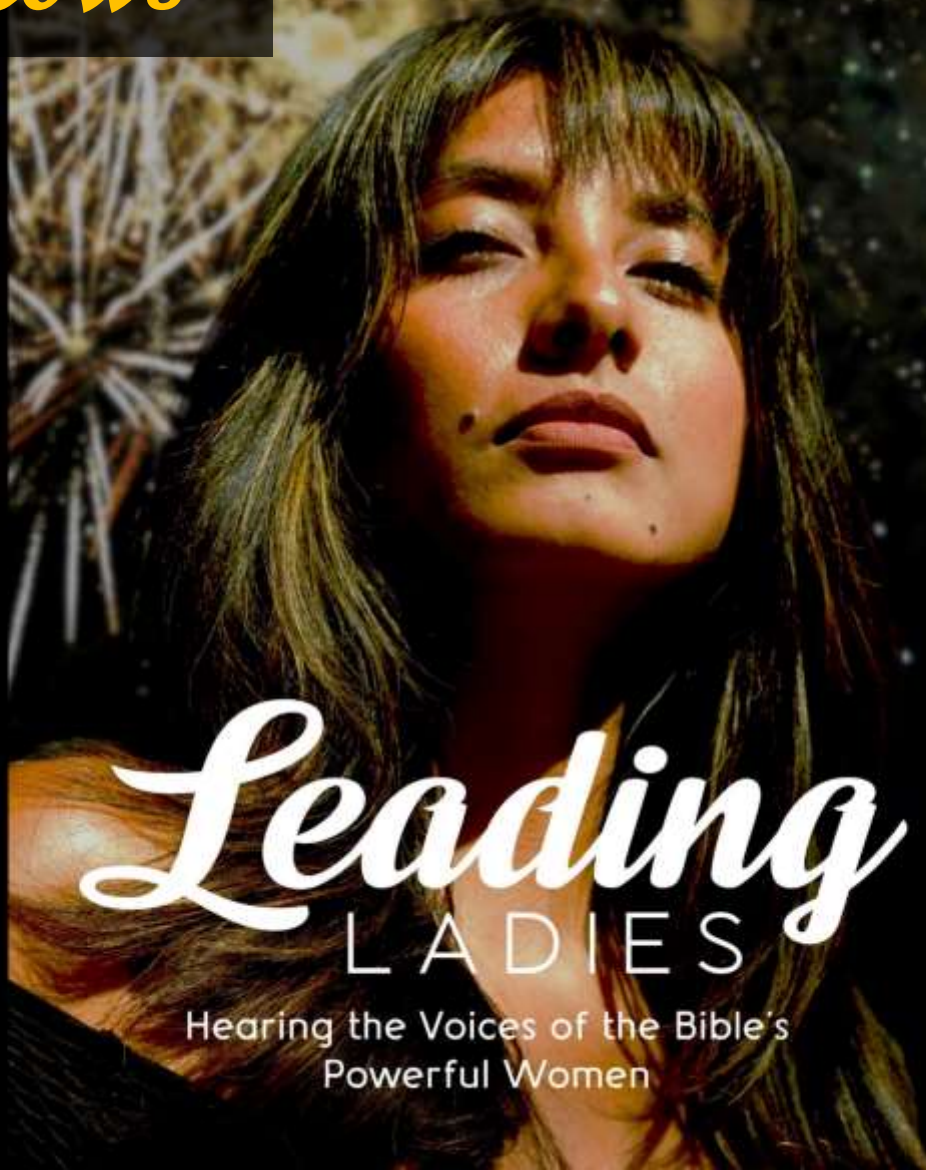
Tamar’s Story

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The First Widow

Gen 38

Er's wickedness prevents Tamar having a son
Onan won't raise a son for the widow
Judah won't provide a husband for the widow

The First Widow

Gen 38

Er's wickedness prevents Tamar having a son
Onan won't raise a son for the widow
Judah won't provide a husband for the widow

Man doesn't care for widows => widow is a crisis situation

Deceiving the Deceiver Poisoned Wells?

*[Tamar] put off her widow's garments, put on a veil, wrapped herself up, and sat down at the entrance to **Enaim**, which is on the road to Timnah. **Gen 38:14***

“Enaim” = Twin Wells

The Patriarchs Isaac and Jacob met their wives at a well

Gen 24:10-51; Gen 29:1-14



Is Tamar saying Judah has given her two wicked husbands, so she has to come back to the well a third time?

Deceiving the Deceiver A Goat and a Garment

When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, because she had covered her face with a veil... Tamar: "What will you give me?" ... Judah: "I will send a young goat from the flock." Gen 38:15,17

Tamar fools Judah with a goat & garment
Possibly not a coincidence...

Judah deceived his father, Jacob,
with a goat and a garment
Gen 37:29-35

Jacob deceived his father, Isaac,
with a goat and a garment
Gen 27:11-29

Deception begets deception begets deception

**Tamar deceives Judah the deceiver,
son of Jacob the deceiver**

**And with the
same tools**



Deceiving the Deceiver Loss of Authority

Judah: *“What pledge shall I give you?”*

Tamar: *“Your signet and your cord and your staff that is in your hand.”*

Gen 38:18

Signet = Legal identity

Staff = Authority

*The scepter will not depart from Judah,
nor **the ruler’s staff** from between his feet*

Gen 49:10

Judah refuses to let Tamar become a wife;
depriving her of authority or legal identity



Tamar takes from Judah what Judah took from her

Death Sentence!

Tamar becomes pregnant from Judah's sin

Judah: *"Bring her out and have her burned to death!"* **Gen 38:24**

Judah's sentence is illegal and immoral.

No evidence, No trial, Burning to death



Unmasking the Deceiver

Tamar to Judah: *"Please determine [hāker-nā'] whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff."* **Gen 38:25**

Judah to Jacob: *"Examine it [hāker-nā'] to see whether it is your son's robe"* **Gen 37:32**

True evidence
of Judah's
immorality

Fake evidence
of Joseph's
death

Confession

“She is more righteous than I.”

Gen 38:26

Tamar saves herself with planned cunning, but damage is done

Damage Done

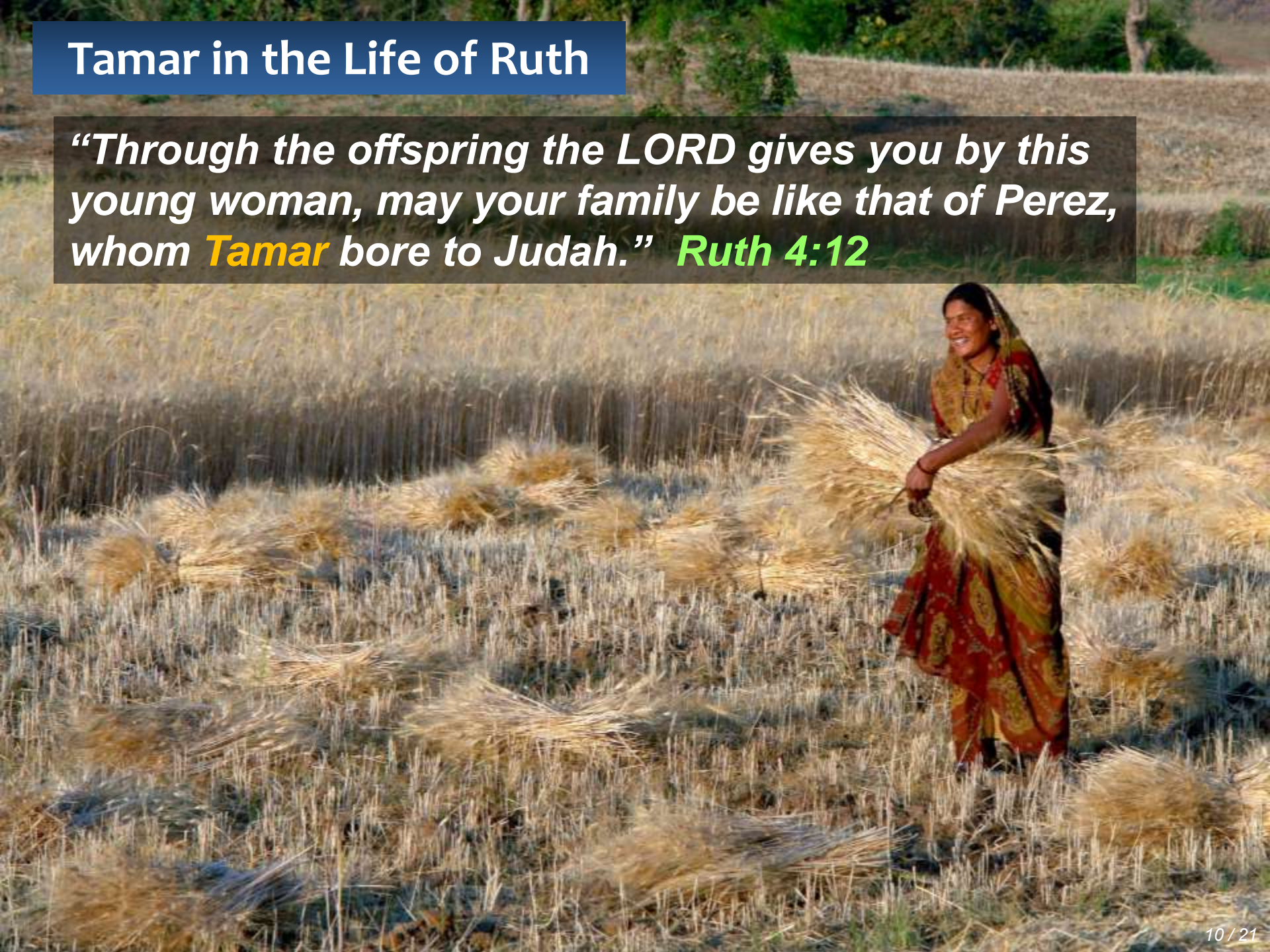
No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, not even unto the tenth generation. Dt 23:2



Tamar's line is rejected by Law for 10 generations, for Judah's sin

Tamar in the Life of Ruth

*“Through the offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom **Tamar** bore to Judah.” Ruth 4:12*



Long-Awaited Redemption

*“...may your family be like that of Perez, whom **Tamar** bore”*
Ruth 4:12

*This, then, is the family line of **1** Perez:*

*Perez was the father of **2** Hezron,*

*Hezron the father of **3** Ram,*

*Ram the father of **4** Amminadab,*

*Amminadab the father of **5** Nahshon,*

*Nahshon the father of **6** Salmon,*

*Salmon the father of **7** Boaz,*

*Boaz the father of **8** Obed,*

*Obed the father of **9** Jesse,*

*and Jesse the father of **10** David.*

Ruth 4:18-22



Tamar the widow is finally Redeemed – by the widow Ruth

The Scarlet Cord

*There were twins in her womb. And when she was in labor, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.” But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” Therefore his name was called Perez [Breakout]. Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah [Scarlet]. **Gen 38:27-30***

‘Scarlet’ is the rightful firstborn in human terms

But why?

God allows ‘Breakout’ to displace ‘Scarlet’ and birth Messiah

=> Rahab, and the Birth of Israel

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“Midwife in Israel”

Rahab’s Story

Jun 2023

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Tamar in the Life of Rahab

Spies hide out in Rahab's house

King finds out; questions Rahab

Rahab hides spies; deceives King

Rahab chooses her allegiance: Israel's God



Midwives Resist the King

*Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring forth the men that have come to you...” But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them **Jos 2:3-4***

*Pharaoh: “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. **Ex 1:16-17***

Rahab hides spies
Resists the king
Deceives the king

Rahab is in the
midwife role...

Midwives hide babies
Resist the king
Deceive the king

... as she ‘delivers’
the two spies

Hidden in the Foliage

*[Rahab] had brought them up to the roof and **hid** them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. **Jos 2:6***

Jochebed became Moses' nurse

=> Rahab was Israel's nurse

šāpan – hidden
Only used twice!

*When [Jochebed] could **hide** [Moses] no longer she got a papyrus basket for him ...and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. **Ex 2:3***

Israel's Circumcision

10th Abib

Jos 4:19

8

At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the people of Israel the second time." Jos 5:2

God's Law commands circumcision on the 8th day Lev 12:3

Count back 7 days, we find the day God considers Israel was born!

Israel camped 3 days at the Jordan before crossing Jos 3:1-2

...after hearing from the spies, who camped 3 days in the hills after leaving Rahab Jos 2:22-24

The day Rahab delivered them!

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

God sees Israel's Birth as the day Rahab delivered the spies

Rahab is Israel's midwife

The Scarlet Cord

*[Rahab] tied the scarlet cord
in the window. Jos 2:21*



Tamar

Scarlet cord tied on firstborn

Scarlet cord tied by midwife

Second son 'breaks out'

God chooses 'breakout' son

Zerah (Scarlet)

Tamar's midwife

Perez (Breakout)

Perez => **Christ**

Rahab

Canaan's Jericho

Rahab

Israel

Israel => **Christ**

Scarlet Cord is God's exceptional authorization for a newcomer to displace the original people

Rahab is God's chosen midwife for His people, as revealed by Tamar



Hebrew **midwives** resist & deceive the king of Egypt

Jochebed the **nurse** hides

Moses in the plants in the river

Law calls male to be **circumcised** **8 days** after **midwife** delivers him

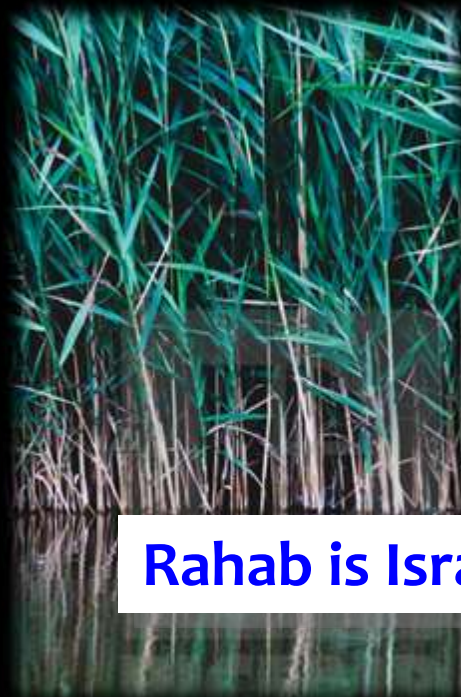
Tamar's **midwife** ties **scarlet cord** on firstborn Zerah

Rahab resists & deceives the king of Jericho

Rahab hides the spies in the plants on the roof

God calls Israel to be **circumcised** **8 days** after **Rahab** delivers spies

Rahab ties **scarlet cord** on Canaanite Jericho



Rahab is Israel's midwife



Pharaoh

Moses

Rahab

Joshua

Who is Rahab?



Earthly eyes:
Rahab is
a Canaanite prostitute



Heavenly eyes:
Rahab is
God's chosen midwife

Which eyes do I use?

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“Serpent Slayer”

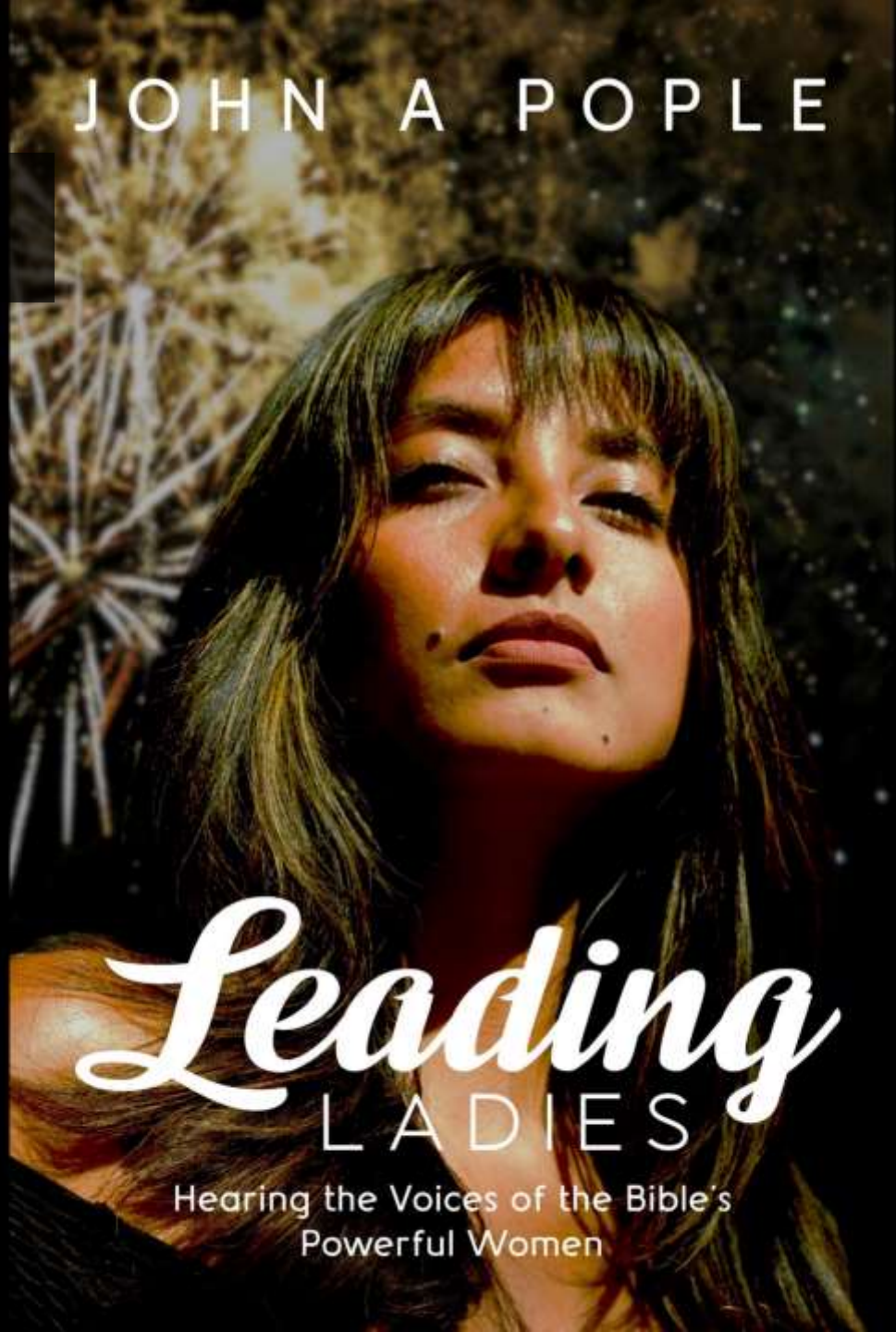
Jael’s Story

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Woman of Lappidoth

Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth... Jdg 4:4

Hebrew: 'woman'

Hebrew:
'burning torch'
or 'firebrand'



Translation may be:

*Deborah, a prophetess,
the wife of a man
named Firebrand*

*Deborah, a prophetess,
a firebrand woman!*

Leading Lady: Deborah

Deborah: God's appointed Judge

Now Deborah, a prophetess... was judging Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah... in the hill country of Ephraim **Jdg 4:4-5**

Barak

God's appointed military leader

"Has not the Lord, the God of Israel, commanded you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun?'" **Jdg 4:6**



Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.” Jdg 4:8



Barak Balks

“I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into *the hand of a woman.*” Jdg 4:9

Is this why Deborah led, because Barak failed to?

NO

This is Jael

Israel Defeats Canaan

Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. **Jdg 4:14-15**

General Sisera was killed by Jael

“Then Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. **Jdg 4:21**



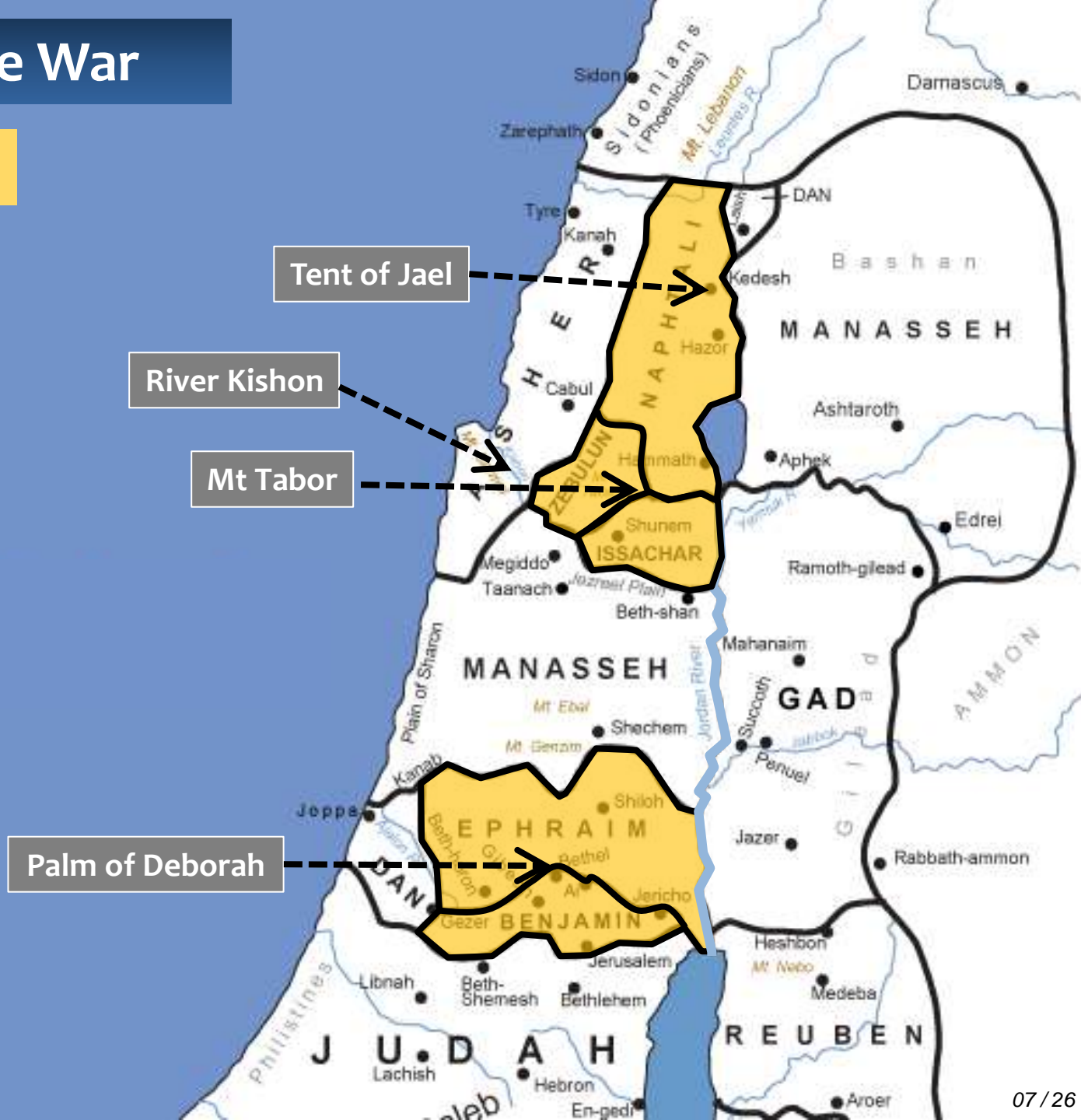
The Song Fighting with Deborah: The Valiant



*“From **Ephraim** their root they marched down into the valley, following you, **Benjamin**, with your kinsmen; from Machir marched down the commanders, and from **Zebulun** those who bear the lieutenant’s staff; the princes of **Issachar** came with Deborah, and **Issachar** faithful to Barak; into the valley they rushed at his heels... **Zebulun** is a people who risked their lives to the death; **Naphtali**, too, on the heights of the field.” **Jdg 5:14-18***

Mapping the War

Fought for Israel



The Song Much Searching of Heart: The AWOL

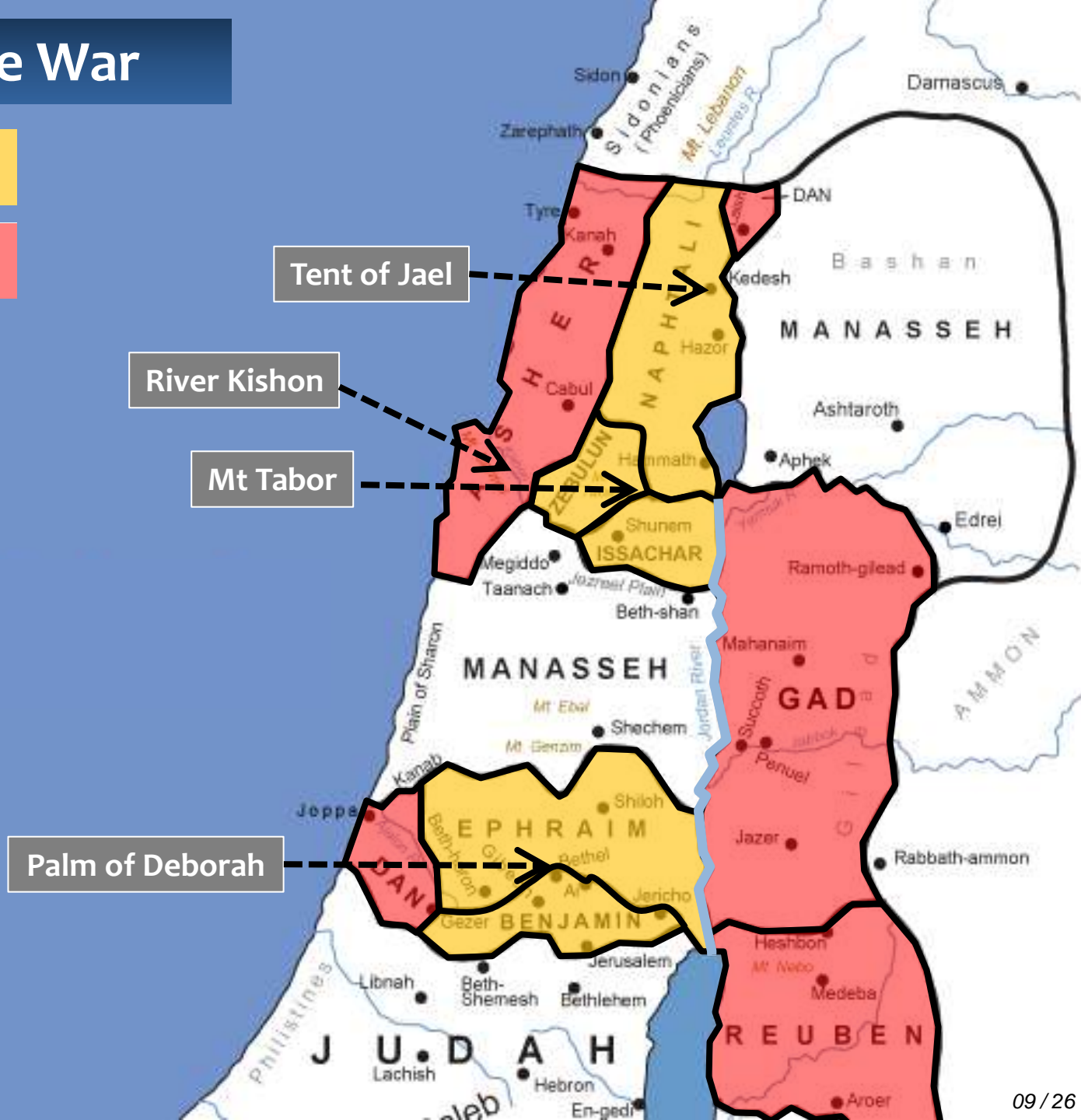


*“Among the clans of **Reuben** there were great searchings of heart. Why did you sit still among the sheepfolds, to hear the whistling for the flocks? Among the clans of **Reuben** there were great searchings of heart. **Gilead** stayed beyond the Jordan; and **Dan**, why did he stay with the ships? **Asher** sat still at the coast of the sea, staying by his landings... The torrent Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon. March on, my soul, with might!” **Jdg 5:15-21***

Mapping the War

Fought for Israel

Absent from war



15 persons mentioned:

8 Female, 7 Male

- 3 Deborah
- 2+1 Jael, Barak
- 2 Sisera
- 1+1 Shamgar
- +1 Sisera's mother
Princesses

**More female names
than male names**



The Days of Shamgar = The Days of Jael
Deborah arose

Mother in Israel

**Female characters
take the lead in the plot**

Awake, Awake, Deborah (& Barak)
Princes came with Deborah (& Barak)

Jael is “**Most Blessed of Women**”

Jael “crushed Sisera’s head”

Mother of Sisera is wailing

Princesses reveal the destruction

Mother in Israel

***“Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel.” Jdg 5:7***



Mother in Canaan



***“The mother of Sisera looked through the window,
And cried out through the lattice,
‘Why is his chariot so long in coming?’
... ‘Yes, she answered herself,
“Are they not finding and dividing the spoil:
To every man a girl or two”” Jdg 5:28-30***

Mother in Israel

Woman of God

Children prevail & live



Mother in Canaan

Ungodly society

Children are destroyed



“To every man a girl or two!”

Sisera met ‘two girls’

- Deborah, who outmaneuvered him
- Jael, who killed him

Be careful what you wish for

Jael: Leading Lady

Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite

**Kenites are traitors
to Israel *Jdg 4:17***

Hebrew: 'woman'

Hebrew: 'group'

**Translation
may be:**

*Jael, the wife of a
man named Group*

*Jael, a woman of
the Kenite group*

Hebrew:
'mountain goat'
or: 'Jah is God'

**The One whose God was Jah,
among a group of traitors**



Jael's Story: Carpe Diem

Jael came out to meet Sisera... “Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; have no fear.” So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.” So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. **Jdg 4:18-19**

But Jael... took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, until it went down into the ground... and he died. **Jdg 4:20**

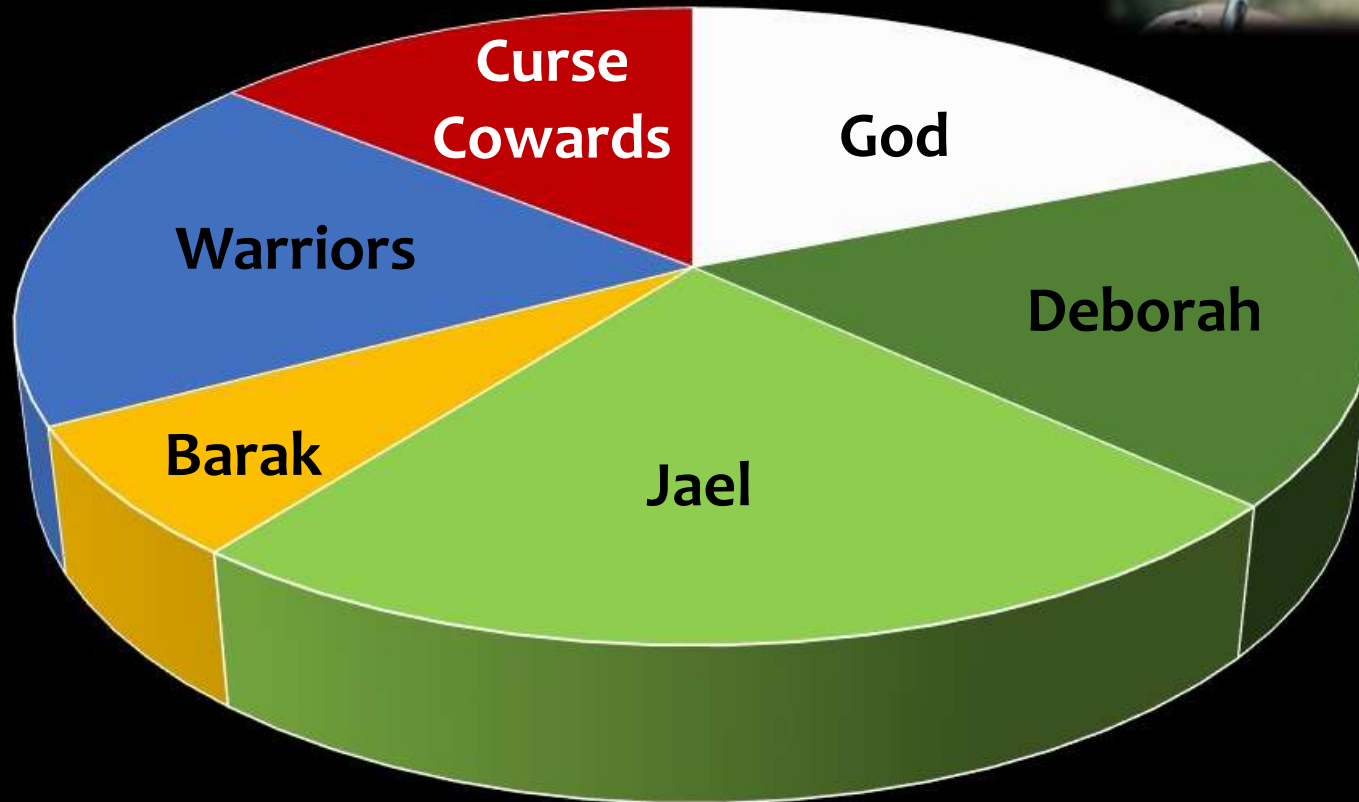


The Song The Elevation of Jael

60% praises God & Leading Ladies

25% praises male warriors

15% curses cowardly men



Most Blessed of Women

Mary

“Blessed are you among women, and
blessed is the fruit of your womb!”

Lk 1:42

“Most blessed of women
be Jael.” Jdg 5:24

Jael

Link between
Jael & Mary

Mother of
Messiah

Link between
Jael & Eve

“Most blessed of women”
was Jael’s blessing
before it was Mary’s

Link to Eve gives us more...

Eve



Serpent Slayer

**God said to the serpent:
“You are cursed... He
shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His
heel.”** **Gen 3:14-15**



**Messiah will crush the head
of the enemy of God's people**

**“she struck Sisera;
she crushed his head.”**
Jdg 5:26



Jael is his pre-cursor!

The Song

One More Mother

Jael is described as a ‘mother’ to Sisera

- Gave him blankets; put him to bed
- Brought him milk and curds
- Stood guard at the door



**“Between her feet he sank, he fell,
he lay still;**

between her feet he sank, he fell;

where he sank, there he fell—dead.” Jdg 5:27

Physically he was
asleep! This isn't
what happened!

Hebrew clause meaning
childbirth **Gen 30:3**

Deborah's Song describes Jael
birthing Sisera as a corpse

Sisera is dead in this world and the world to come

Contrast of Mothers: This Life

Mother in Canaan

Sisera's mother

Ungodly society

Children are destroyed



Mother in Israel

Deborah

Woman of God

Children prevail & live



Contrast of Mothers: The Afterlife

Mother in Canaan

Sisera's mother

Births Sisera in mortal life

Sisera killed



Mother in Israel

Jael

Song: Births Sisera stillborn

His fate is the 2nd death



The Superiority of Motherhood: Deborah's Choice

Deborah chose to describe herself as a Mother, but she had choices

Roles not Chosen



A Wise, Discerning Judge



A Mighty, Valiant Warrior

Role Chosen



Mother in Israel

- Mother > Judge
- Mother > Warrior
- God's own leadership style is a nurturing one

Jesus the Judge?

“You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.” **Jn 8:15**

NO (not yet)



Jesus the Warrior?

“Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, *“No more of this!”* And he touched his ear and healed him. **Lk 22:49-51**

NO (not yet)



What Role did he choose?

Role of Messiah

A Judge to Be

“[God] has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness”
Acts 17:31

A Warrior to Be

he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. **Isa 11:4**

Role of Messiah

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”

Mt 23:37

- Not a Strutting Rooster
- Not a Crowing Cockerel

Jesus chooses the role of Mother in Israel

The Superiority of Motherhood: Messiah's Choice

- Jesus declined to be a Judge
- Jesus declined to be a Warrior
- **Jesus chose his role**
as a **Mother in Israel**



- Deborah was a literal Judge
- Deborah was a literal Warrior
- **Deborah chose her role**
as a **Mother in Israel**

Deborah saw Messiah

The Serpent Slayer: David

Goliath represents his whole nation, as Sisera did

“Choose a man and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.” **1 Sam 17:8-9**

David kills the ‘Serpent’ with a single head strike, as Jael did

Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, [David] slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone **1 Sam 17:49-50**

David

Comparisons of Preparation

Jael

Goliath's challenges

Israel > 40 days

Argues w Saul / brothers

1 Sam 17:16;22-37

1. Trials Saul's armour

2. Uses proven weaponry

1 Sam 17:38-39;40

1. God's prophet says he will be Israel's next King
- he's not crowned yet

1 Sam 16:12

2. Experienced God's Spirit rushing upon him!

1 Sam 16:13

Time

none

Weaponry

Whatever's
in her tent

**Divine
Assurances**

none



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“The Devoted Daughter”

Jephthah’s Daughter’s Story

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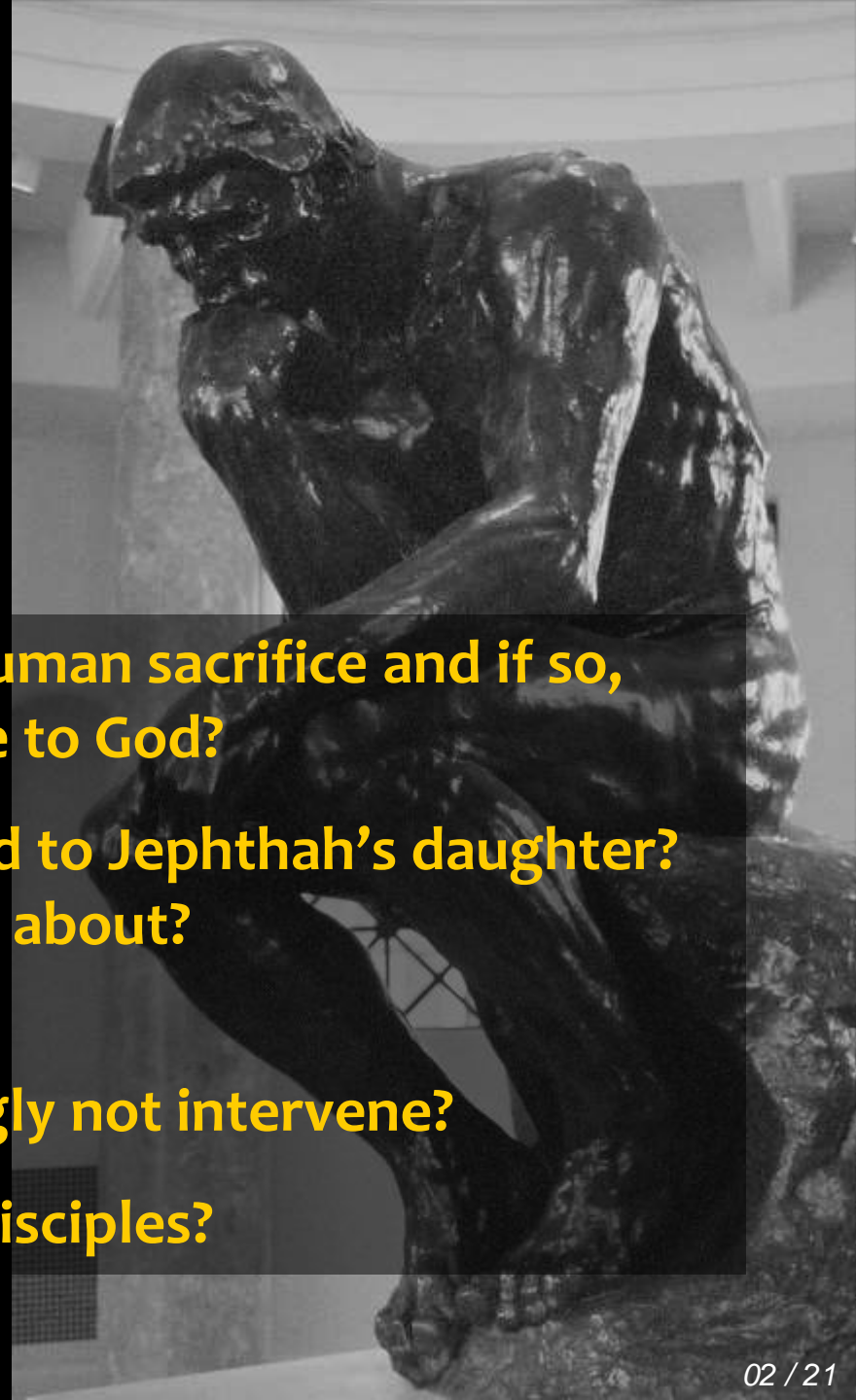


Problems

Judges 11 is a problem passage for many, mainly because God approves of Jephthah *Heb 11*

Questions

- Is Jephthah participating in human sacrifice and if so, how can Jephthah be acceptable to God?
- If not, what actually happened to Jephthah's daughter? and what is the story actually all about?
- Where is God in all this?
Why does He seemingly not intervene?
- Is any of this relevant to 21C disciples?



Who is Jephthah?



A Warrior, of the tribe of Gad

*Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. **Jdg 11:1***

Son of the region's Founder, but an illegitimate ('defective') son, born of a prostitute

*His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. **ibid***

A Godly man, recognizing God's Hand in Israel **Jdg 11:9-27**

A Man Commended for his Faith

*I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, **Jephthah**, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice... These were all commended for their faith... **Heb 11:32-33,39***

The Rejected Brother

Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You are not going to get any inheritance in our family," they said, "because you are the son of another woman." Jdg 11:2

Presumably Gilead has died & inheritance is being divided

Some time later... the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. "Come," they said, "be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites." Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now, when you're in trouble?" Jdg 11:4-7

=> Jephthah still nurtures bitterness against his brothers

To Be King

- *The elders of Gilead said... “you will be our head over all who live in Gilead.”*
- *Jephthah answered, “...will I really be your head?”*
- *The elders of Gilead replied, “The LORD is our witness; we will certainly do as you say.”* **Jdg 11:8-10**

So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. And he repeated all his words before the LORD in Mizpah. **Jdg 11:11**

Mizpah’s origin: a place where parties who didn’t trust each other made contracts

Jephthah insists on total control of Gilead’s people - why? From pride?



Humility

Jephthah recognizes God's Hand in Israel's battles, past & present

- *“Israel did not take the land of Moab... the LORD, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his men into Israel's hands...”*
- *“Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me...”*
- *“Now since the LORD, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out before his people Israel, what right have you to take it over? ...whatever the LORD our God has given us, we will possess.”*
- *“Let the LORD, the Judge, decide the dispute this day between the Israelites and the Ammonites.”* **Jdg 11:9-27**

Jephthah is a humble man: his desire for power isn't from pride...

...but needs the power for his plan...

The Disastrous Vow: Inception

“If you give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD’s, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.” Jdg 11:30-31

Did Jephthah intend to perform/risk human sacrifice by fire?

Detestable to the Lord

[Ahaz]... sacrificed his son in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out **2 Kg 16:2-3**

[Israel] sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire... provoking [the Lord] to anger. **2 Kgs 17:16-17**

“They have built the high places... to burn their sons in the fire... something I did not command or mention **Jer 19:5**

You... do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire **Dt 12:31**

Let no one... sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire... Anyone who does... is detestable to the LORD **Dt 18:10-12**

“whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me... I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.” **Jdg 11:30-31**

The Answered Prayer

*“When you offer your gifts—the sacrifice of your sons in the fire—you continue to defile yourselves... Am I to let you inquire of me, O house of Israel? “As surely as I live,” declares the Sovereign LORD, “I will not let you inquire of me.” **Ezk 20:31***

“If you sacrifice your children in the fire, I will not even listen to your prayers”

*“Let the LORD, the Judge, decide the dispute this day between the Israelites and the Ammonites...” Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah. **Jdg 11:27,29***

God listens to Jephthah’s prayer & responds favourably

This *proves* Jephthah was never going to burn anyone

Unraveling the Idiom

Jephthah uses “burnt offering” as an idiom. But what does it mean?

“If the offering is a burnt offering... he is to offer a male without defect... and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar.” Lev 1:3,9




Characteristics of a burnt offering:

- (Generally) a freewill offering
- The subject was a ‘male without defect’
- The entire animal was utilized (sole unique characteristic)

=> Jephthah planned to give a “male without defect” to the Lord “wholly” i.e. forever

Hannah's Burnt Offering



Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. And she made a vow, saying, “O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life..” 1 Sam 1:10-11

**Hannah sacrifices Samuel
‘as a burnt offering’:**

- a freewill offering
- a male without defect
- given wholly (for life)

Hannah is offering her firstborn son for lifelong Temple service

The Disastrous Vow: Result

Clue

When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of tambourines! She was an only child... When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, "Oh! My daughter! You have made me miserable and wretched, because I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break." Jdg 11:34-35

How can he not expect his daughter to greet him?!

Jephthah doesn't live in Mizpah, he lives in Tob

His *family home* is in Mizpah

He's targeting one of his brothers



Understanding Jephthah's Daughter

Why **was** Jephthah's daughter in Mizpah?

A cunning plot by the brothers?

No: Jephthah would feel rage, not guilt

Her idea to celebrate God's victory?

And mend the family?

Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. Ex 15:20

=> An excruciating irony to her father's carefully plotted revenge



Solving the Mystery

Compiling the evidence, Jephthah:



- Was a Godly man **v9-27** whose answered prayer proves he was not intending human sacrifice **Ez 20**

- Had been embittered against his brothers for “some time” [~20 yrs] **v4,7**

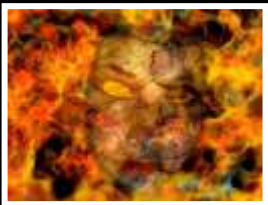


- Insisted on establishing total authority in Gilead, which gave him power over his brothers **v8-11**

- Vowed to devote someone from his family home in Mizpah to the Lord **v34**



- Vowed to offer them ‘as a burnt offering’ - i.e. a male without defect, to be given wholly **v30-32**



=> Jephthah planned vengeance on his brothers by sending one into lifelong Temple service



Jephthah's Daughter takes the Lead

“My father,” she replied, “you have given your word to the LORD. Do to me just as you promised, now that the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites. But grant me this one request,” she said. “Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry.” **Jdg 11:36-37**

She mourned virginity, not death

Aside: How old was Jephthah's daughter?

- **She gives a mature response to her father**
- **She was unmarried**

Probably a teenager



The Point

If Judges 11 **isn't** about human sacrifice by fire – what is it about?



Bearing grudges

... which led to:

**Taking revenge & pretending
it's service to God**



Lessons

Keep your promises

***LORD, who may dwell
in your sanctuary?
Who may live on your
holy hill?
He whose walk is
blameless...
who keeps his oath
even when it hurts...***

Psa 15:1-4

Don't bear grudges

Keep gifts to God sincere

The Big Picture: Man Rules Selfishly

His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. Jdg 11:1

Root cause of tragic sequence was abuse of power from Gilead, the city's leader. His child paid the price

"...I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." Jdg 11:31

Jephthah sought power in Gilead in order to exact personal revenge. His child paid the price



Both leaders, fathers, abused their power for a personal agenda
Both times a family was broken as a result

The Big Picture: God's Servant Rulership

- 1 Jephthah devotes his (teenage?) daughter to the Lord
- 2 Hannah devotes her young son Samuel to the Lord

Time between 2 events: ~ 30 yrs

Where is God in all this...?

...building families, as a Good Father would

Consider: Samuel grew up to respect the Lord

And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men. 1 Sam 2:26

...yet not due to Eli the High Priest's 'fathering'

Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD. 1 Sam 2:12

Jephthah's Daughter's Legacy

So who was living at the temple to act as a Godly parent to influence the infant Samuel...?

God provides a mother for the orphaned boy...

...and a long awaited child for the godly Leading Lady



Samuel: Israel's last & greatest judge

JOHN A POPLÉ

“First Among Apostles”

Mary Magdalene’s Story

Jun 2023

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Leading
LADIES

Hearing the Voices of the Bible’s
Powerful Women

LEADING LADIES

LEADING LADIES



How Many Marys?



Mary
Magdalene



Mary, sister
of Martha



Mary, mother
of Jesus



Mary, mother
of James, Joseph



Mary, Cleopas'
wife, Jesus' aunt



the other
Mary

A maximum of six

A minimum of three

*...but standing by the cross of
Jesus were his mother and his
mother's sister, Mary the wife of
Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.*

Jn 19:25



Mary
Magdalene



Mary, sister
of Martha



Mary, mother
of Jesus



Mary, mother
of James, Joses



Mary, Cleopas'
wife, Jesus' aunt



the other
Mary

Mother of James & Joses

Jesus' Brothers

*"Is not [Jesus] the carpenter's son?
Is not his mother called Mary? And
are not his brothers James and Joses
and Simon and Judas?"*

Mt 13:55



Mary Magdalene



Mary, sister of Martha



Mary, mother of Jesus & Joseph



Mary, mother of James, Joseph



Mary, Cleopas' wife, Jesus' aunt



the other Mary

Mother of James & Joses

At the foot of the cross...

...were **[Jesus'] mother** and his mother's sister, **Mary the wife of Cleopas**, and **Mary Magdalene**.

Jn 19:25

...were **Mary Magdalene**, and **Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses**, and **Salome**. **Mk 15:40**

...were **Mary Magdalene** and **Mary the mother of James and Joseph** and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Mt 27:56

Why call Jesus' mother the "mother of his [half-] brothers"?

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

And [Jesus'] mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" **Mk 3:31-34**

Jesus' physical mother (and brothers) struggled to stay with Jesus spiritually

Mary is then seen as the mother of Jesus' physical brothers



The Other Mary



Mary Magdalene



Mary, sister of Martha



Mary, mother of Jesus, James & Joses, the other Mary



Mary, Cleopas' wife, Jesus' aunt



the other Mary

At the Burial

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.
Mt 27:61

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.
Mk 15:47

The mother of Jesus is presented as 'the other Mary' to Mary Magdalene, not the other way round

Mary Magdalene is presented as superior to Mary the mother of Jesus

The Biggest Question

Is Mary Magdalene = Mary of Bethany?



Mary
Magdalene

Mary, sister
of Martha



Mary, mother of Jesus,
James & Joses,
the other Mary



Mary, Cleopas'
wife, Jesus' aunt

- 'Magdalene' = 'of Magdala'
- Doesn't two origins: Bethany & Magdala, suggest two different people?

Yes, although not necessarily

The Case for Two Marys

Mary, sis Martha, Lazarus

Geography

from Bethany, near Jerusalem

Jn 12:1-3; Lk 10:38-39

Financial status

Was poor

Bethany = “house of the poor/misery”

Mary Magdalene

from Magdala, Galilee. Traveled from Galilee to support Jesus Lk 8:2-3; 23:49

Had money to assist others

Lk 8:2-3

The Case for One Mary

Event	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene
From Galilee to support	<i>Lk 8:2-3,23:49</i>	<i>Lk 8:2-3,23:49</i>
Listening at Jesus' feet	<i>Lk 10:38-42</i>	X
Jesus calls for her	<i>Jn 11:28</i>	X
Triggers his weeping	<i>Jn 11:33-35</i>	X
Anoints him for death	<i>Jn 12:1-8</i>	X
Attends Crucifixion	<i>Mt 27:56</i>	<i>Mt 27:56</i>
Attends burial at tomb	<i>Mt 27:61</i>	<i>Mt 27:61</i>
Brings spices for body	<i>Mk 16:1</i>	<i>Mk 16:1</i>
Jesus appears to her 1st	<i>Mk 16:9</i>	<i>Mk 16:9</i>
Appointed to testify	<i>Jn 20:18</i>	<i>Jn 20:18</i>

pre-

Min-
istry

post-



Solution

Mary of Bethany **is** Mary Magdalene

There are three Marys in total

Mary Magdalene, sister of Martha
Mary, sister of Martha



Mary, mother of Jesus,
James & Joses,
the other Mary



Mary, Cleopas'
wife, Jesus' aunt

Mary Magdalene



Mary Magdalene,
sister of Martha



Mary, mother of Jesus,
James & Joses,
the other Mary



Mary, Cleopas'
wife, Jesus' aunt

*Mary Magdalene and the other Mary
were there, sitting opposite the tomb.
Mt 27:61*

**Mary Magdalene
Pre-eminent Disciple**

Resolving Mary's Story

Is from **Bethany**, Jerusalem; sister to Martha & Lazarus; **Lk 7:37; Lk 10:39; Jn 11:32**

Is poor (Bethany = house of the poor)

chooses/forced into prostitution **Lk 7:39**

=> **Moves to Magdala**, Galilee

(Mary is unknown there, Magdala known for affluence & corruption)

=> **Obtains money, lavish gifts, perfume worth a years wages?** (hers alone)

Encounters Jesus, who first appeared in Galilee **Mk 1:39**

*****LIFE IS TRANSFORMED*****



Resolving Mary's Story

The Perfect Disciple

LIFE IS TRANSFORMED

Returns from Galilee with money to support Jesus Lk 8:2-3, 23:49

Brings Jesus to her family in Bethany Mt 21:17

Sits at Jesus' feet, humbly listens and learns Lk 10:38

Shares tragedy of her brother's death with Jesus Jn 11

Understands his teaching, anoints him for burial Mt 26:6-13, Lk 7:36-47, Jn 12:1-8

Bravely attends Jesus' crucifixion & burial Mt 27:56-61

Holds loyal vigil at Jesus' tomb, brings spices to his body Mk 16:1

Is chosen as first to meet resurrected Jesus: believes immediately Jn 20:16

Is chosen to testify to the Apostles & boldly does so Jn 20:17-18

She that has Ears to Hear...

Jesus teaches Mary

*[Martha] had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. **Lk 10:39***

*[Mary] came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head. **Mt 26:7***

*"Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." **Lk 10:42***

*"In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial." **Mt 26:12***

Mary listened, and learned

Jesus teaches the Twelve

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and... be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."

*"You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men." **Mt 16:21-23***

*They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. **Jn 20:9***

Why Jesus Wept

When Jesus saw [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

“Where have you laid [Lazarus]?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. **Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” **Jn 11:33-36****

He wept because Lazarus was dead?

No, Jesus had known that for 4 days, discussed it with apostles, and Martha

So what was new?

Context clarifies

Seeing ***Mary’s*** pain.

Empathy

Because he loved Mary

The Anointing

Matching details => 3 accounts of same event

<i>Lk 7</i>	<i>Mt 26</i>	<i>Jn 12</i>
Simon's house	Simon's house	
	Bethany	Bethany
alabaster jar of perfume	alabaster jar of expensive perfume	expensive perfume
anointed Jesus' feet	anointed Jesus' head	anointed Jesus' feet
wiped feet with hair		wiped feet with hair
	done for his burial	done for his burial
	disciples indignant "give money to poor"	Judas indignant "give money to poor"
	"The poor you have with you always"	"The poor you have with you always"

The Anointing

Unique details provide extra insights

<i>Lk 7</i>	<i>Mt 26</i>	<i>Jn 12</i>
Simon is a Pharisee	Simon is a leper	The woman is Mary
Simon invites Jesus (=> it's his house) Mary doesn't live there		Martha is serving (=> it's her house, <i>Lk 10:38-40</i>)
Simon disapproves of Mary, but lets her in		Dinner in Jesus' honour
Mary is 'a sinner'		
Expensive ointment belongs to Mary	Mary earns eternal legacy	

- Simon & Martha are married, their house is in Bethany
- Jesus has just raised Lazarus; this dinner is Martha honouring Jesus
- Ointment is Mary's, she brings it over to Martha's house

Mary has planned this
Mary honours Jesus far more deeply

The Loyalty of Presence

Day before Passover

Crucifixion

Mary Magdalene

Mary, Jesus' mother
Mary, Jesus' aunt, wife of Cleopas
Mother of James & John
Salome
John (& others)

Burial

Mary Magdalene

Mary, Jesus' mother
Joseph of Arimathea
Nicodemus

Sunday Morning

Tomb visit 1

Mary Magdalene

Mary, Jesus' mother
Salome
Joanna (& others)

Tomb visit 2

Mary Magdalene

Peter
John

[Joseph of Arimathea] rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb. Mt 27:60-61

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb... Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. Jn 20:3-11

Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. Lk 24:12

***Joseph & Nicodemus came... and went. Mary stayed
Peter & John came... and went. Mary stayed***

Jesus reveals himself to the one who stays

The Loyalty of Vigil



The End: Revelation

He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jn 20:15

Now Peter and John have gone, Jesus reveals himself

=> Mary is shown 'above' Peter and John

*Jesus said to her, "**Mary.**"*

*She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "**Rabboni!**" Jn 20:16*

Mary has only to hear her name, and she knows

"Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Jn 20:17

Mary is ordained as Apostle to the Apostles

Apostle to the Apostles

**Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news:
“I have seen the Lord!” Jn 20:18**

Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

they did not believe it
Mk 16:11

seemed to them like nonsense
Lk 24:11

First Among Apostles

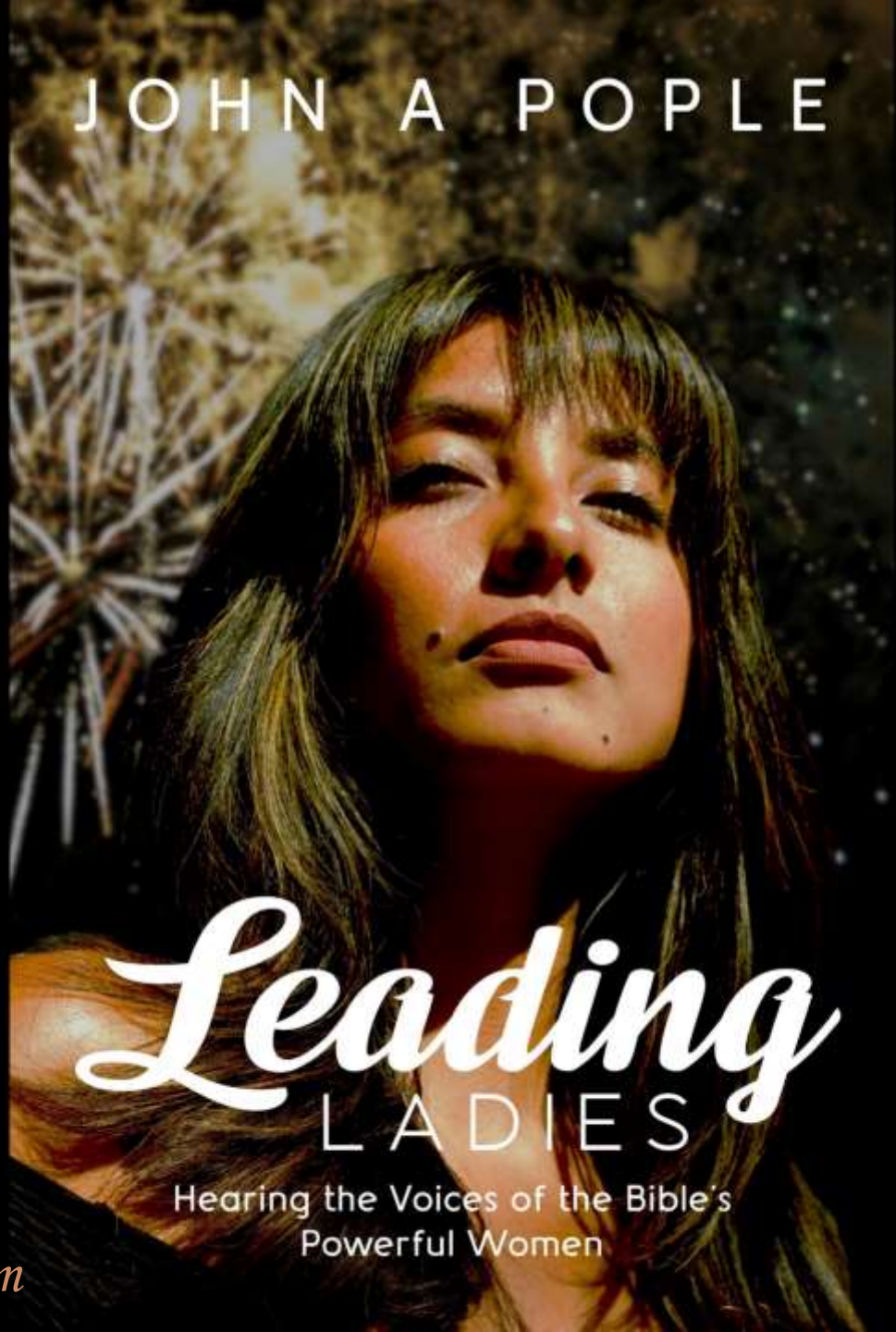
JOHN A POPL

Hebron Camp

Cockatoo Valley

Jun 2023

LEADING LADIES



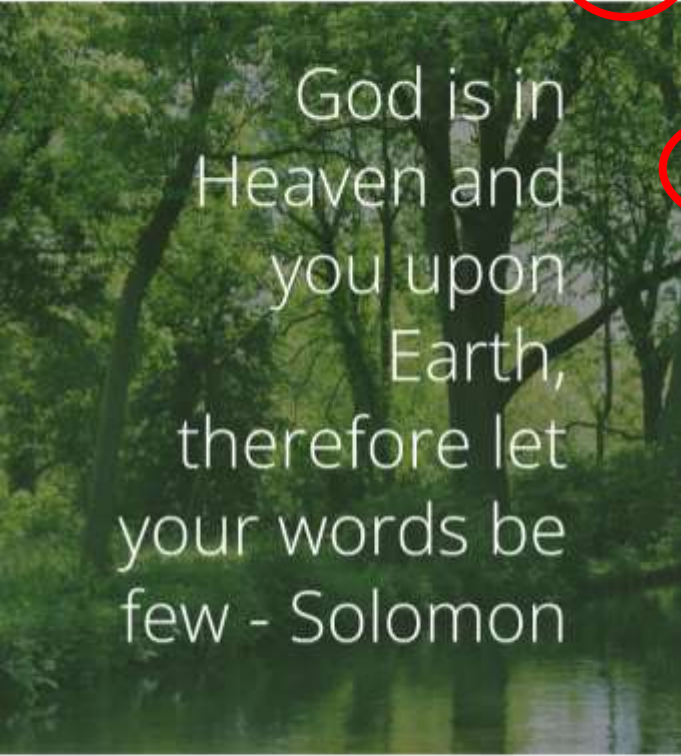
Leading
LADIES

Hearing the Voices of the Bible's
Powerful Women

LEADING LADIES

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Leading Ladies
Hearing the Voices of the Bible's Powerful Women

We explore new insights in the Bible's heroines' life stories.

The Leading Ladies Case Studies delve into the Biblical text of each heroine's story to unearth

I am a man in search of God

It's an easy search. I readily see him in the natural world: in the sinuous thrust of a tree against the sky, in the crenelated permanence of an igneous mountain face, in the luminance of a sunrise, in the river's gentle caress of a forest bed. I enjoy



JOHN A POPLÉ

“Vessel of Life”

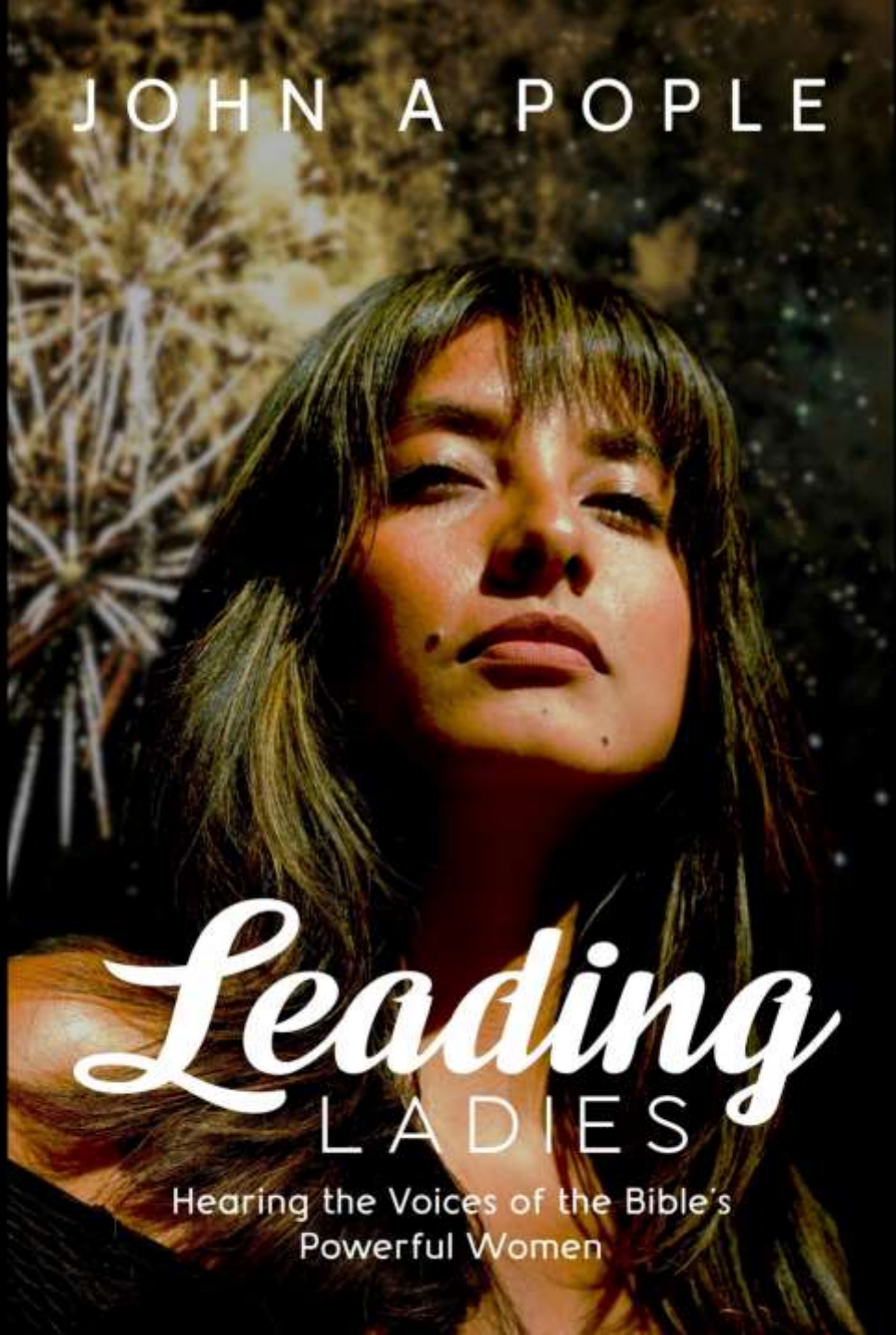
The Story of Woman

Jun 2023

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LEADING LADIES

LEADING LADIES



Leading
LADIES

Hearing the Voices of the Bible's
Powerful Women



Eve



Hagar



Mary



*Woman
Clothed with the Sun*

“Vessel of Life”

The Story of Woman



Vessel of Life:
Eve's Story

Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living

Ḥaûâ = Breath

Gen 3:20

X

‘Ādām

‘Ădāmâ

the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life

Gen 2:7

The Lord God formed man of **dust from the ground**, and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**; and man became a **living being**.

Gen 2:7

Human = **Heaven's Breath** + **Earth's Clay**

Heavenly
Element



N^əšāmâ = Breath

Living Human

‘Ādāmāh = Earth

Earthy
Element



*When you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.*

*When you send your Spirit,
they are created.*

Ps 104:29-30

Heavenly
Element



Heaven's Breath

Human = +
Earth's Clay

Rûah = Breath

Living Human

'Āpār = Earth

Earthy
Element



Ḥaûâ = Breath

Woman

Heavenly
Element



Heaven's Breath

Human =

+

Earth's Clay

Ḥaûâ = Breath

Living Human

'Ādāmah = Earth

Man

Earthy
Element



'Ādām = Earth

Grasping Equality with God

*“You will not surely die,”
the serpent said to the
woman. “For God knows
that when you eat of it
your eyes will be opened,
and you will be like God,
knowing good and evil.”*

Gen 3:4-5

Principle: You don't become God by being ungodly

Grasping Equality with God

*“you will be like God, knowing
good and evil” Gen 3:5*

*When the woman saw
the fruit of the tree was...
desirable for gaining
wisdom, she took some
and ate it. Gen 3:6*

*Your attitude should be
as Christ Jesus: who did
not consider equality
with God something to
be grasped. Phil 2:5-6*



The Woman & The Serpent

Gen 3:15-16

“I will put enmity between you and the woman...”

Enemy > < Enemy



Enemy > < Enemy

“...and between your offspring and her offspring.”

“Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son... He will be great... and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever.”

Lk 1:31-33



Punishment of Eviction

Adam



“Cursed is the ground because of you, in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you”

Gen 3:17-18

So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. He drove out the man

Gen 3:23

Promise of Life

Eve



“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.”

Gen 3:16

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. *Gen 3:20*

Vessel of Life

*Adam named his wife
Eve, because she
would become the
mother of all the living.*

Gen 3:20

'Ādām
Clay



Ḥaûû
Breath

Life continues

The Woman in the Desert

Role: Vessel of Life

Peril

Desert Place

Conflict

Births



Eve

Consequences
of Adam's sin

Out of Eden
Thorns, Thistles

Serpent desires
to kill child





Vessel of Life:
Hagar's Story

Leading Ladies, Silent Men

Sarai can't conceive & complains to Abram

“The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.”

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. **Gen 16:2**

- Sarai's comments indicate a lack of faith
- Abram is silent, fails to lead
(as Adam failed **Gen 3:6**)

Hagar Flees to the Desert

And when [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. And Sarai said [to Abram]... “May the Lord judge between you and me!” But Abram said... “Your slave is in your hands... Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her. The angel of the Lord found Hagar... beside the road to Shur.
Gen 16:4-7

Then the Lord said to [Abram] ... “your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there.”

Gen 15:13

Ex 1:11

Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur.
Ex 15:22



Banished to the Desert

Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.”

Gen 21:8-10

This is Hagar's second flight to the desert



To See or Not to See?

Sarai & Abram don't see Hagar

Sarai: "Go, sleep with my slave"

Gen 16:2

Abram: "Your slave is in your hands"

Gen 16:6

God sees Hagar; equates her with Abram!

"Hagar... I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." Gen 16:8-10



She called the name of the Lord... "You are the God who sees me" [El Roi]... "I have seen the One who sees me."
Gen 16:13

The only human to name God!

Hagar sees God!

Moses wouldn't look

Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look at God. Ex 3:6

God's Promises to Hagar

First Visit of
Angel to Human

Hagar's first flight to the desert

“Hagar... I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count... You are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael” Gen 16:8-11

Same as Promise to Abraham: innumerable descendants

Same as Promise to Mary: A child named by God

Same as for Abraham and Mary: Hagar is called by name

Hagar's second flight to the desert

“What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” Gen 21:17-18

Same as for Abraham: Reassurance of repeated Promise

“Let me not see the boy die”
Gen 21:16

***“Do not be afraid, Hagar, for
God has heard ...” Gen 21:17***

The Woman in the Desert

Role: Vessel of Life

Peril

Desert Place

Conflict

Births



Eve

Consequences
of Adam's sin

Out of Eden
Thorns, Thistles

Serpent desires
to kill child



Hagar

Affliction of
Sarai & Sarah

1. Shur, Egypt
2. Beersheba

Sarah wants rid
of the child





Vessel of Life:
Mary's Story

Mother of Messiah

Mary gives birth to the Saviour



*The angel said to her...
“You will conceive and
give birth to a son, and
you are to call him Jesus.
He will be great and will
be called the Son of the
Most High. The Lord God
will give him the throne of
his father David, and he
will reign over Jacob’s
descendants forever; his
kingdom will never end.”*

Lk 1:30-33

Fleeing the Child Killer

Mary must flee to the desert

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt.

Mt 2:13-15



The Woman in the Desert

Role: Vessel of Life

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Births

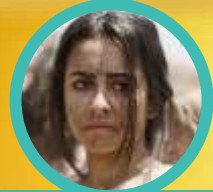


Eve

Consequences
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Hagar

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1. Shur, Egypt
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Sarah wants rid
of the child



Mary

Affliction of
King Herod

Egypt,
God-prepared

Herod desires
to kill child





Vessel of Life:

Woman Clothed with the Sun's Story

The Woman & The Serpent

*A woman clothed
with the sun...
She was pregnant
and was crying
out in birth pains*

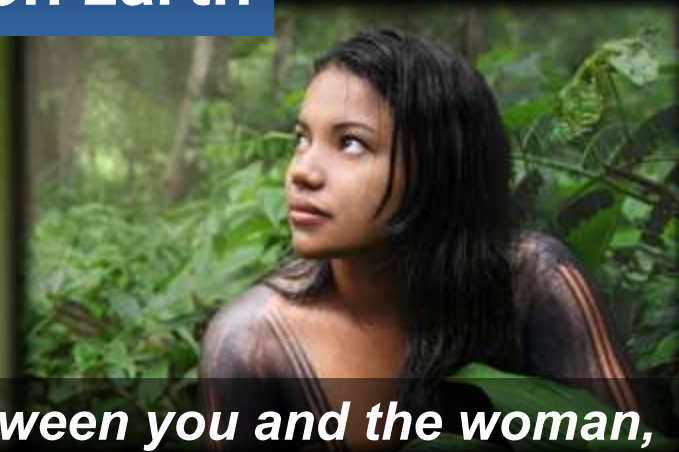
Rev 12:1-4

*And behold, a
great red dragon*

*And the dragon stood before the woman
who was about to give birth, so that when
she bore her child he might devour it.*

Conflict on Earth

Serpent



Woman

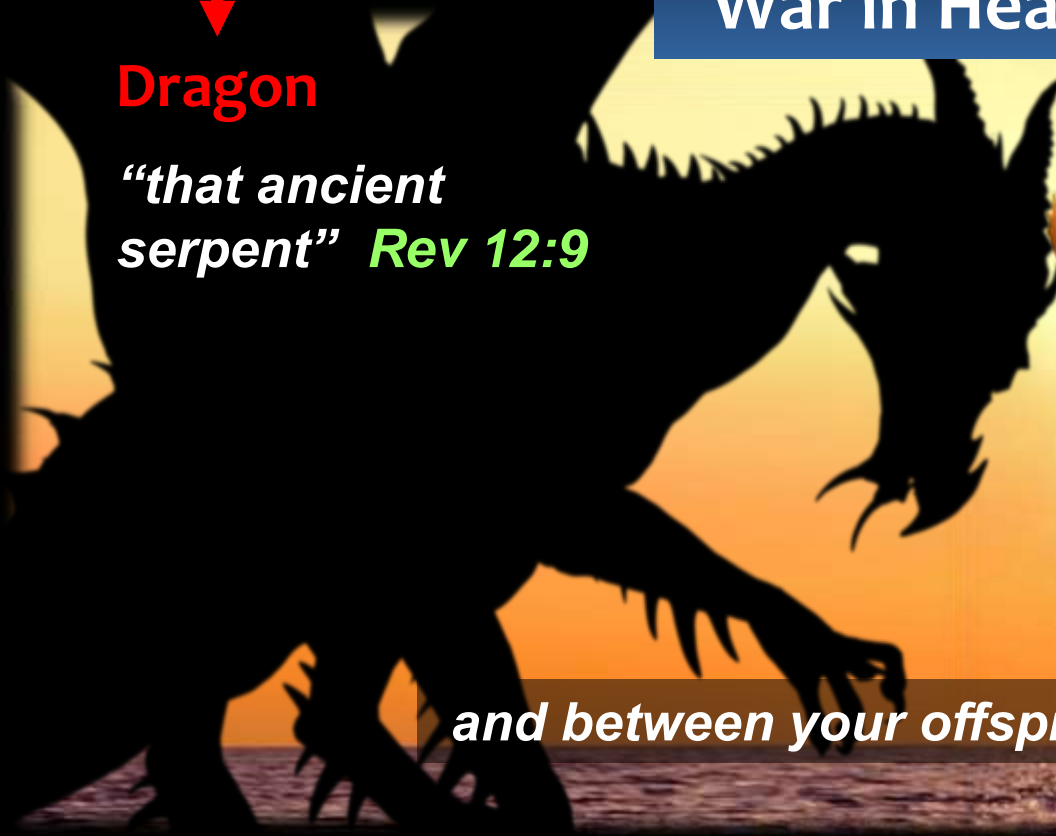


Christ

"I will put enmity between you and the woman,

War in Heaven

Dragon



"that ancient serpent" Rev 12:9




Woman



Christ

and between your offspring and her offspring"



*She gave birth to a male child, one who is to **rule all the nations with a rod of iron**, but **her child was caught up to God and to his throne** **Rev 12:5***

Clues to the Man Child:

- Seed of the Woman
- Kills Serpent/Dragon
- Rules with rod of iron
- Ascended into Heaven
- At the Throne of God

*“And he who overcomes... to him I will give power over the nations, **He shall rule them with a rod of iron**” **Rev 2:26-27***

*“**this same Jesus... was taken up from you into heaven**” **Acts 1:11***

*...[Jesus] is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven **Heb 8:1, c.f. Acts 7:56***

The Child is Christ

Fleeing the Dragon

the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

Rev 12:6



The Woman in the Desert

Role: Vessel of Life

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Mary

Affliction of
King Herod

Egypt,
God-prepared

Herod desires
to kill child



Woman
In Sun

Affliction of
Red Dragon

Wilderness,
God-prepared

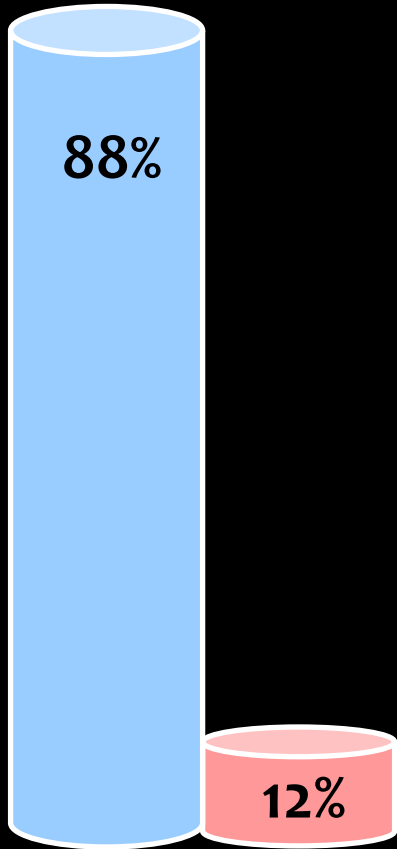
Dragon desires
to kill child



Defender of Life

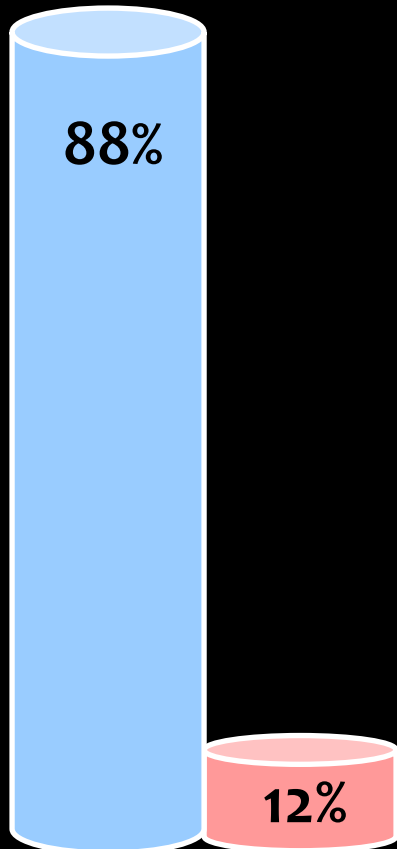
Arrests (USA, 2011)

Murder



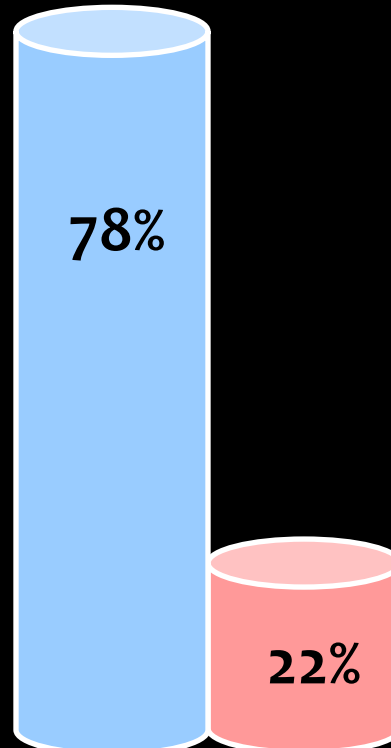
Male Female

Robbery



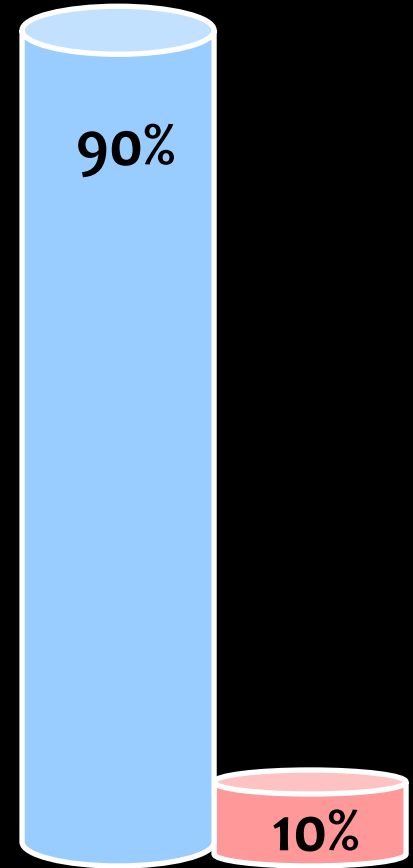
Male Female

Aggravated Assault



Male Female

Murder convictions
USA 1980-2008



Male Female

Crim. Just. Info. Serv. Div., FBI, US Dept. of Just.

*A Cooper & E L Smith,
NCJ236018, 2011,
B. Just. Stat., US DOJ*

The Woman in the Desert

Role: Vessel of Life

α : First



Eve

Lowliest



Hagar

Highest



Mary

Ω : Last



Woman
In Sun

God treats them
all the same



LEADING LADIES

The Bible's Powerful Women

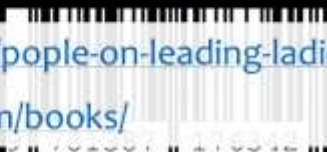
These case studies delve into the Biblical text of each heroine's story to unearth fine details, and deep patterns, previously unseen. We are thus challenged to see Rahab as the midwife of God's nation Israel; to see that Jael fulfills the Eden covenant in precursor cameo; to see that Delilah was assassinated; and to see that Esther completes her hidden agenda to remove the disgrace from the house of King Saul. Overarching this we see the creation of Adam and Eve describing a harmonizing of the spiritual and the natural, a fusion of Heaven and Earth, with the woman emblemizing the Heavenly component and the man the Earthly one.

Seeing the Leading Ladies' stories together reveals that their accomplishments directly parallel the well-known feats of the greatest Biblical male heroes. Yet characteristically the women achieved their goals with fewer resources and less preparation time. The Ladies' victories are often unseen because they are encoded in the Bible record in a much quieter voice, which is God's own signature communication style.



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Leading LADIES

Hearing the Voices of the Bible's
Powerful Women

