

**LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS**  
**Lesson 1**  
**Patterns and Examples of Women**  
**in the Old Testament (1)—Eve**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:21-22; 3:1-6; 1 Cor. 11:3, 8-9; 1 Tim. 2:14; 1 Pet. 3:7

- I. Under the arrangement in God’s creation, Eve was not an independent person, but was one who was subordinate to her husband and who was part of her husband (Gen. 2:21-22); First Corinthians 11:8-9 says, “For man is not out of woman, but woman out of man; for also man was not created for the sake of the woman, but woman for the sake of the man”.**
- II. According to the arrangement in God’s governmental administration in the universe, man is the head of the woman (1 Cor. 11:3); therefore, Eve, a woman, was to take her husband as her head and was not to be her own head or to make her own decisions, but was to submit completely to her husband.**
- III. However, the cunning old serpent, the devil, the rebellious Satan, tempted and deceived Eve concerning this very point (1 Tim. 2:14); he caused her to assume the headship and to put her husband aside, thus making herself an independent unit in making decisions:**
  - A. The inward cause of man’s fall was the woman’s assuming the headship—Gen. 3:2-3, 6.
  - B. Eve was ensnared by the serpent because she forgot her husband:
    1. The devil was crafty, knowing that the woman was weaker than the man (1 Pet. 3:7), and he chose her as his target.
    2. Regardless of what the woman said to the serpent, as long as she stood there and spoke to him, she was wrong, for it indicated that she had assumed the headship.
    3. The safest way for her would have been not to talk to the evil one, but to turn to her husband and hide behind him; if Eve had done this, the subtle one would have been frustrated.
    4. Therefore, the basic cause of man’s first fall was the assuming of the headship by the wife; although she had a husband, she nonetheless stood on her own.

- C. The failure of the woman consisted in being over the man and assuming the headship —cf. 1 Tim. 2:14:
1. This failure on Eve's part typifies man's assuming the headship and signifies his being over God and putting God aside.
  2. This same principle operates today; whenever we act on our own, putting the Lord aside, we are defeated; if we try on our own to be victorious, that very effort is a defeat because it keeps us away from our Husband, our Head.
  3. Never do anything by yourself; to try to do anything by yourself means that you are assuming the headship and forgetting your position as a wife.
  4. We should be wise and never take the position of the husband.
- D. Eve in the garden was our representative; nearly all of us on occasion have acted in the way she did; we have become Eve; whatever situation occurred we faced it by ourselves:
1. When mothers deal with their little children they may deal with them independently.
  2. They may say, "I know how to take care of children. I have been a mother for years. I know what to do and I know how to do it."
  3. If you adopt this attitude, you immediately become Eve: although you may do a good job, in fact you are defeated.
  4. We must remember the principle of man's first fall: man renounced the wife's position and assumed the husband's position, making himself the head and the husband.
  5. Whether our efforts succeed or fail makes no difference; as long as we stay away from God and presume that we can act apart from Him, we have been defeated already; we must see this.
- E. We may experience this even as we deal with our temper:
1. Your trying to defeat your temper means that you are assuming the headship.
  2. You must learn to say, "Lord, I do not dare whether or not I can defeat my temper. Lord, I rely upon You for this. It is not my responsibility to deal with my temper. Lord, I am not the husband. You are my Husband. I simply rely upon You. I don't assume that I have the headship. Lord, You are my Head. Lord, You take care of my temper."
  3. If we all learn this lesson and maintain this stand before the Lord, our temper will disappear; the devil will be defeated; we must learn this one, basic principle.

#### **IV. We need to see three steps in the process of the fall in Genesis 3:1-6:**

- A. Not using the spirit—if Eve had turned to the spirit, there would have been no problem:
1. Our Husband is with our spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2; 2 Tim. 4:22); however, if we remain in our mind it means that we are assuming the headship, setting our mind to behave independently.
  2. We must realize that our Husband is with our spirit and exercise our spirit accordingly.
  3. Even when your temper is stirred within you, you need to turn to the spirit; do not deal with your temper; turn yourself to the spirit: learn to use your spirit.
- B. The soul being exercised—during the process of the fall Eve exercised her soul:
1. As Eve spoke with the serpent her mind was reasoning—Gen. 3:2-3.
  2. Then her emotion was pleased with the fruit of the tree of knowledge—v. 6.
  3. Eventually, her will made a decision, deciding to take the fruit and eat it—v. 6.
  4. Our experience is the same; as we are tempted by a particular matter, our mind reasons and considers, our emotion is aroused and comes to like the thing, and our will makes the decision.
  5. We may use the example of shopping; as you are shopping and see a particular item you want, you reason with yourself, saying, “I need this. It is on sale now and the price is quite low. This is my only opportunity to buy it at this price;” the more you reason about the item, the more precious it becomes; we have all experienced this.
  6. We should not laugh at Eve, for our own home is the garden of Eden and we ourselves at times are Eve.
  7. Our mind, emotion, and will are the parts of our soul; do not trust your mind, emotion, or will, but turn your whole being to the spirit.
- C. The action of the body—the third step in the process of the fall was the action of the body:
1. When the spirit is neglected and the soul is exercised, the body becomes a slave serving our purpose; the eye sees, the hand takes, and the mouth eats.
  2. If in the matter of shopping we forsake our spirit and use our soul, our body will take us to the department store.

**V. God is our Husband; the headship is with God, not with us, not even with the men; whether we are males or females we are all a part of His wife; we must always keep ourselves under His covering; since God is our Head we should always turn to Him.**

## LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

### Lesson 2

#### Patterns and Examples of Women in the Old Testament (2)—Sarah and Rebekah

Scripture Reading: Gen. 16:1-3; 18:9-12; 1 Pet. 3:1-6; Eph. 5:22-24; Gen. 24:1-67; 27:1—28:2

**I. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, was a good example of wives being subject to their husbands as to the Lord (Eph. 5:22); according to 1 Peter 3:6, “Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord”—cf. Gen. 18:12.**

- A. In today’s church life, God still keeps the order He ordained in His creation; God ordained that wives subject themselves to their husbands —1 Pet. 3:1.
- B. The sisters need to be today’s Sarah’s; many of the husbands, however, may feel uneasy about what Peter says in verse 6; they may think that they are not worthy to have their wives refer to them in this way; the reason is that today’s situation is altogether not according to the Bible.
- C. God establishes the husband as the deputy authority of Christ, and the wife as the representation of the church—cf. Eph. 5:22-24:
  - 1. According to Paul’s word in verse 22, wives are to be subject to their own husbands “as to the Lord.”
  - 2. The wives need to realize that in the eyes of the Lord the husband represents the Lord.
  - 3. The reason the wife must submit to her own husband is that in married life he is as the Lord; it is doubtful that many married sisters regard their husbands as the Lord.
  - 4. The situation regarding married life today is deplorable, filled with disobedience and rebellion; nevertheless, as Christ is the Head of the church and the Savior of the Body, wives must be subject to their husbands as to the Lord.
  - 5. Sarah became a positive, spiritual model; therefore, the holy women who hope in God and who submit themselves to their husbands are her daughters—1 Pet. 3:5-6.
- D. Unless the wife sees the authority that the husband represents, the authority that God has set up, it is difficult for her to submit; the wife has to see that it is

not a matter of her husband but a matter of God's authority—Tit. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5-6.

**II. Sarah is a negative model in the matter of proposing that her husband take Hagar as a concubine—Gen. 16:1-3:**

- A. God had repeatedly promised Abraham that he would have a seed and that he would personally bring forth a son (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:4-5), yet Sarah was not able to bear children.
- B. Because of this, she proposed to Abraham that he should go in to her maid, Hagar, to have a son through her (Gen. 16:2); this was altogether a proposal of the flesh.
- C. Eventually, Abraham accepted Sarah's proposal, took Hagar as his concubine, and begot Ishmael through her (Gen. 16:15); this is a warning to all women who hope in God; namely, that they should not make any proposals according to the flesh to their husbands.
- D. Otherwise, they will produce "Ishmaels" out of their flesh, who will lust against the "Isaacs" born of God's promise; this is to sow according to the flesh and reap corruption of the flesh; for whatever a man sows, this he shall also reap—Gal. 6:8, 7.

**III. Hebrews 11:11 says, "By faith also Sarah herself received power to conceive seed, even beyond the season of age, since she considered Him faithful who promised;" Sarah had become an old woman whose function had ceased; yet in the midst of her situation, she believed in God's word.**

**IV. The account of the marriage of Isaac reveals that Rebekah was chaste, kind, diligent, absolute and submissive—24:1-67:**

- A. In verse 16 we are told that Rebekah was "very fair to look upon, a virgin;" Rebekah was chaste and pure; she was also kind and diligent—vv. 18-20:
  - 1. When Abraham's servant asked for a drink, she immediately gave it to him; she also drew water for his camels.
  - 2. If the young sisters want to be under God's sovereignty, especially with respect to their marriage, they need to be kind and diligent; any young woman who is unkind and sloppy should remain single.
  - 3. When people ask you to do one thing, you must do two things for them; and the second thing should far surpass the first thing; you should not only give a man water to drink, but should also draw water for his ten camels—vv. 18-20.

4. If you do this, you will be qualified to obtain your husband, your Isaac; this is some advice to all the young single sisters.
- B. Rebekah was absolute (vv. 57-58, 61); although Rebekah had never seen Isaac, she was willing to go to him without hesitation:
1. Although her brother and mother were hesitating, wanting her to stay for at least ten days, she said, “I will go.” She was absolute.
  2. Young sisters, if you want to be married, you must learn to be kind, diligent, and absolute.
- C. Rebekah was also submissive—vv. 64-65:
1. When Rebekah saw Isaac and realized who he was, “she took a veil, and covered herself.”
  2. Sisters, do not put a piece of cloth on your head as a decoration or ornament, it must be a sign of your submission.
  3. Once you are married, you are no longer your own head; your husband is your head, and your head must be covered; this is the true meaning of marriage.
- V. Rebekah is a model on the negative side in her partial love toward Jacob, in teaching him to cheat his father in order to obtain the blessing, and in finding an excuse to manipulate her husband, asking him to send Jacob to the place where she came from—Gen. 25:27-28; 27:1-17, 41-45; 27:46—28:2:**
- A. Rebekah gave birth to twins; the older one, Esau, was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, and the younger one, Jacob, was a quiet man who dwelt in tents—Gen. 25:27.
- B. Rebekah’s love was partial toward Jacob (Gen. 25:28); thus, when Isaac was about to bless the firstborn son, she taught Jacob how to cheat his father (Gen. 27:1-17) in order to obtain the blessing; this sowed the seed of hatred between Jacob and his brother, Esau.
- C. Eventually, Rebekah had no alternative but to send away the son whom she loved in partiality, that he might flee to her brother’s place—Gen. 27:41-45:
1. For this she found an excuse and manipulated her husband, asking him to send Jacob to the place where she came from, that he might take a woman for his wife—Gen. 27:46—28:2.
  2. She probably never saw her beloved son again for the remainder of her life.
- D. All these things constitute a negative model; this model shows that the sisters who are mothers should not have a partial love toward their children or teach

them to cheat their fathers in order to obtain blessings, thus bringing discord to the family life.

- E. It shows also that sisters who are wives should not try to find an excuse to manipulate their husbands; such manipulating might cause the children to leave home and wander about.



## LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

### Lesson 3

#### Patterns and Examples of Women in the Old Testament (3)—Lot's Wife and Tamar

Scripture Reading: Gen. 19:26; Luke 17:32-33; Gen. 38:6-27; Matt. 1:3; 1 Chron. 2:4; Ruth 4:12

**I. “But [Lot’s] wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt” (Gen. 19:26); “Remember Lot’s wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his soul-life will lose it, and whoever loses it will preserve it alive”—Luke 17:32-33:**

- A. Lot’s wife became a pillar of salt because she took a lingering look backward at Sodom, indicating that she loved and treasured the evil world that God was going to judge and utterly destroy—v. 32, note 1.
- B. She was rescued from Sodom, but she did not reach the safe place that Lot reached (Gen. 19:15-30); she did not perish; neither was she fully saved.
- C. Like the salt that becomes tasteless (Luke 14:34-35 and note 34<sup>2</sup>), she was left in a place of shame; this is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers:
  - 1. The believers in Christ are the salt of the earth used by God to kill and eliminate the earth’s corruption—Matt. 5:13.
  - 2. Their taste depends on their renouncing of earthly things; the more they renounce the things of earth, the more powerful will be their taste.
  - 3. They will lose their taste by not being willing to renounce all the things of the present life; if this happens, they will be fit neither for the land, signifying the church as God’s farm (1 Cor. 3:9), which issues in the coming kingdom (Rev. 11: 1-5), nor for the manure pile, signifying hell, the filthy place in the universe (Rev. 21:8; 22:15).
  - 4. They will be thrown out from the kingdom of God, especially from the glory of the kingdom in the millennium (see note 12<sup>2</sup> in Matt. 8).
  - 5. They are saved from eternal perdition, but because they have failed to renounce the earthly things, they lose their function in the kingdom of God, thus being unfit for the coming kingdom and needing to be put aside for discipline.
- D. Preserving our soul-life is related to lingering in the earthly and material things, as mentioned in Luke 17:31; we linger in the earthly things because we care for

our soul's enjoyment in this age; this will cause us to lose our soul; that is, our soul will suffer the loss of its enjoyment in the coming kingdom age.

- E. In vv. 22-37 of Luke 17, Jesus charges us to overcome the stupefying effect of self-indulgent living in this age that we may be raptured into the enjoyment of His *parousia* (presence, coming); all these charges are related to the believers' overcoming in their practical living.
- F. Even before Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt, she was already behind her husband; this is a word to the wives—Gen.19:26:
  - 1. In committing sin, it is good for a wife to be reluctant to follow her husband, but concerning the things of God, it is not good for her to be slow in following him—cf. Acts 5:1-11
  - 2. Concerning the things of God, the best thing for a wife to do is to go along with and walk together with her husband.
  - 3. Wives, in the things with God, do not go behind your husbands; if you do, you, like Lot's wife, may suffer and become a pillar of salt; this is a warning to us all.
- G. Today Christianity helps people only to take care of the matter of salvation or perdition, but the Bible reveals that besides the matter of salvation or perdition, there is the matter of glory or shame—1 John 2:28:
  - 1. Lot's wife was not lost; she was saved from destruction; eventually, however, she became a shame.
  - 2. Hence, the Lord said in Luke 17:32, "Remember Lot's wife," warning us that, though we are saved, at the Lord's coming back we might possibly suffer shame like Lot's wife.

## II. **“And Judah begot Pharez and Zarah of Tamar” (Matt. 1:3); “And Tamar his daughter-in-law bore him Perez and Zarah” (1 Chron. 2:4); “And may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah” (Ruth 4:12):**

- A. Tamar conceived through committing incest with her father-in-law; morally speaking, this was deplorable and ethically speaking, it was awful; nobody would justify this —Gen. 38:6-27
- B. Nevertheless, she was righteous; the fault was not on her side, but on the side of her father-in-law, Judah, who admitted that she was more righteous than he—v. 26:
  - 1. Tamar was the wife of the first son of Judah; this son should have inherited the birthright.

2. But Tamar's husband was wicked in the eyes of the Lord, and the Lord took his life (v. 7); the Lord also slew Judah's second son (vv. 8-10).
  3. According to the ancient regulations, Judah should have arranged for his next son to marry Tamar in order that a son might be brought forth to inherit the birthright.
  4. Judah, however, did not fulfill his responsibility; in a sense, Judah cheated Tamar—vv. 11-14.
  5. But Tamar did not give up, rather, she even used an unseemly means to obtain the birthright; whether the means was unseemly or not, Tamar did her best to get that birthright.
- C. Tamar had a heart for the birthright; in Tamar's time, the birthright meant a great deal (Gen. 38:6-8); the birthright included a double portion of the land, the priesthood, and the kingship; the double portion of the land refers to the double enjoyment of Christ.
1. Tamar was anxious to have the birthright; she knew that if she were cut off, she would be through with God's promise and God's promise was simply the promise of Himself to be the portion of His chosen people in Christ; Tamar was not willing to miss this blessing.
  2. To have the birthright is simply to gain Christ; in order to gain Christ, we must be ready to take a way that does not seem to be the best way.
- D. The name of Tamar is sacred because she did not care for anything sinful (Ruth 4:12); she cared only for the birthright; the significance of this for us today is that if we care for Christ and are seeking Him, any way we can truly gain Him is the right way.

## LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

### Lesson 4

#### **Patterns and Examples of Women in the Old Testament (4)—The Hebrew Midwives, Moses' Mother and Sister, and Pharaoh's Daughter and Her Female Servant**

Scripture Reading: Exo. 1:15-22; 2:1-10

- I. The Lord sovereignly used the female life, the midwives, to save the male life—Exo. 1:15-22:**
- A. Pharaoh's intention to kill the sons and spare the daughters typifies Satan's strategy to destroy the life that is for God's purpose and preserve the life that is for man's pleasure—1:16.
  - B. God did not fight against Pharaoh; instead, He sovereignly used two midwives to save the male life; Pharaoh sought to utilize the midwives to kill the male life, but God used them to keep alive the life that is for God and for God's purpose:
    - 1. It may be easy for the sisters to be used by the enemy, but it is also easy for them to be used by God; whether the church will be deadened or delivered depends on the sisters.
    - 2. What is true of the sisters in the church life is also true of the women in a nation; when the females are used by Satan, the country will be corrupted; but when they are used by God, the country will be preserved.
  - C. It is in the time of degradation, of desperate need, that God comes to use the female life to rescue the situation and bring in His salvation; such was the case in Exodus 1:
    - 1. Satan comes to the females in the high times because he knows that they are the weaker vessels; by also coming to the females, the Lord puts Satan to shame.
    - 2. There is a strong indication in the Word that the sisters were present at every time of urgent need.
    - 3. The sisters need to be careful in the wonderful times, but they also need to be ready to stand on the side of the Lord, as the midwives did, and be used by Him in times of degradation and urgent need to rescue the situation and fulfill His purpose.

4. The principle is the same both in the case of the midwives and in the case of the virgin Mary; they all were used by God to bring in salvation.
5. This principle also applies in the church life today:
  - a. Whenever the sisters are used by Satan, there will be corruption in the church.
  - b. But whenever they are used by the Lord, there will be salvation; we look to the Lord that He will again use the female life to rescue the situation in the church today!

D. “And God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, He established households for them”—Exo. 1:20-21:

1. By dealing well with the midwives, God made them households to bring forth life for the fulfilling of His purpose; this means that He used the life that is for man’s pleasure to produce the life that is for God’s purpose.
2. In this picture we see that if we refuse to stand with Pharaoh but stand with God, God will deal well with us so that we may produce life for the accomplishment of His purpose.
3. Sisters, when you stand with God, not with Satan, God will establish households for you; this means that God will establish units to produce life for the fulfilling of His purpose.
4. No matter how much Satan may seek to enslave us or to deaden us, God is still sovereign and He can use us to be today’s midwives.
5. We all can be those who turn the life for man’s pleasure into the life for God’s purpose; if we are such midwives, God will establish households for us filled with people producing life for the accomplishment of God’s purpose.

**II. In preparing Moses as a savior for Israel, God used four women—Moses’ mother, Moses’ sister, the female servant of Pharaoh’s daughter, and Pharaoh’s daughter—to give him birth, to nurse him, to rescue him, to fetch him, to raise him, and to train him for His purpose; God’s use of these women reveals that during critical times the only life that can be used by God is the female life, signifying the life that stands with God and is dependent on Him—Exo. 2:2-10; Acts 7:20-22:**

- A. In Exodus 2, several females were used by God; the first was Moses’ mother, a daughter of Levi—2:1:
1. After Moses’ mother gave birth to Moses, she hid him for three months—v. 2.

2. When she could no longer hide him, she put him in an ark of papyrus and laid it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile—v. 3.
  3. Later, however, she was hired by Pharaoh’s daughter to nurse him for a period of time.
  4. Thus, the first female mentioned in Exodus 2 was the mother of Moses, the life that brought him forth in birth and nursed him—vv. 8-9.
- B. The second female was Moses’ sister, Miriam—v. 4:
1. Moses’ family might have known that Pharaoh’s daughter was in the habit of bathing at a certain place in the river, and it might have been their hope that Moses would be discovered by her and raised by her.
  2. With Moses’ father in the background, the mother and the sister worked together to carry out the plan.
  3. When Pharaoh’s daughter saw the baby and had compassion on him, Moses’ sister recommended that his mother be asked to nurse him—vv. 7-8.
  4. Moses’ sister thus watched over the male life and established the connection between Pharaoh’s daughter and Moses’ mother.
- C. The third female mentioned in this chapter is the female servant of Pharaoh’s daughter—v. 5.
1. Pharaoh’s daughter “saw the basket in the midst of the reeds and sent her female servant, and she brought it to her”—v. 5.
  2. The function of the female servant was to serve; in particular, her service was fetching the basket.
- D. The fourth female was Pharaoh’s daughter—v. 5:
1. Pharaoh’s daughter first rescued Moses and then charged Moses’ mother to nurse him.
  2. Later, when the child was brought to Pharaoh’s daughter, “he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water”—v. 10.
  3. We know from Acts 7:21 that “Pharaoh’s daughter took him up and nurtured him as her own son.”
- E. Today we also need the various functions of the female life: the conceiving, bearing, and nursing function; the function of watching, recommending, and establishing the proper connections; the function of helping and serving; and the function of raising, teaching, and training.

F. Through four kinds of female life, Moses was born, raised, and trained for God's purpose; for the carrying out of His economy today, the Lord needs these four kinds of female life; He needs many mothers, daughters, female servants, and royal princesses to make the preparations for the deliverance of His people so that they can fulfill His purpose.