

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

MAKING A PLAN

The Catholic Church has an excellent plan for reading and studying the bible, called the Lectionary. Studying the Sunday Lectionary readings can make a big difference in your appreciation of the Eucharist. Here are 8 reading plans to help you further appreciate our Catholic Faith.

Reading Plan 1
READING THE BIBLE WITH THE CHURCH

Reading Plan 2
A WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

Reading Plan 3
IMAGES OF GOD

Reading Plan 4
CALLED BY GOD

Reading Plan 5
THE JUSTICE OF GOD

Reading Plan 6
SIN AND SALVATION

Reading Plan 7
WHY DO WE SUFFER?

Reading Plan 8
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE



A Faith Formation for Children Publication
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FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE



READING PLAN 8
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE
FFC 2011

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

In the ancient world, many people considered women to be inferior to men. But throughout the Bible, God shows otherwise. Here is a two-week look at women who have served God and the church.

Day	Bible Reading	Theme
1	Genesis 2:18-3:20	Eve
2	Genesis 17:15-16; 21:1-7	Sarai (Sarah)
3	Exodus 15:19-21	Miriam
4	Judges Chapters 4-5	Deborah
5	Ruth	Ruth
6	1 Samuel 1:1-2:11	Hannah
7	Esther Chapter 8	Esther
8	Luke 1:5-25, 57-66	Elizabeth
9	Luke 1:26-2:20	Mary, the Mother of Our Lord
10	Luke 2:36-38	Anna
11	John 20:1-18	Mary Magdalene
12	John 11:1-14, 12:1-8	Mary and Martha
13	Acts 16:11-15, Chapter 18	Lydia and Priscilla
14	Romans 16:1-7	Phoebe and Junia

Based on
THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE
 Pray It, Study It, Live It
 SAINT MARY'S PRESS

Bible Passages taken from Jerusalem Bible

*Transcribed by Michael Hii for Faith Formation of Children
 6 July 2011, Feastday of St Maria Goretti*

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE



PHOEBE AND JUNIA

Day 14 Day 14 Day 14 Day 14 Day 14 Day 14 Day 14 Day 14
Romans 16:1-7

Greetings and good wishes

16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae.

16:2 Give her, in union with the Lord, a welcome worthy of saints, and help her with anything she needs: she has looked after a great many people, myself included.

16:3 My greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

16:4 who risked death to save my life: I am not the only one to owe them a debt of gratitude, all the churches among the pagans do as well.

16:5 My greetings also to the church that meets at their house.

16:6 Greetings to my friend Epaenetus, the first of Asia's gifts to Christ; greetings to Mary who worked so hard for you;

16:7 to those outstanding apostles Andronicus and Junias, my compatriots and fellow prisoners who became Christians before me;

[Reflections:](#)

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

18:23 where he spent a short time before continuing his journey through the Galatian country and then through Phrygia, encouraging all the followers.

Apollos

18:24 An Alexandrian Jew named Apollos now arrived in Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, with a sound knowledge of the scriptures, and yet,

18:25 though he had been given instruction in the Way of the Lord and preached with great spiritual earnestness and was accurate in all the details he taught about Jesus, he had only experienced the baptism of John.

18:26 When Priscilla and Aquila heard him speak boldly in the synagogue, they took an interest in him and gave him further instruction about the Way.

18:27 When Apollos thought of crossing over to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote asking the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived there he was able by God's grace to help the believers considerably

18:28 by the energetic way he refuted the Jews in public and demonstrated from the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

[Reflections:](#)

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

EVE

Day 1 Day 1 Day 1 Day 1 Day 1 Day 1 Day 1 Day 1 Day 1



THE SECOND ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION
Genesis 2:18-3:20

Paradise

2:18 Yahweh God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.'

2:19 So from the soil Yahweh God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it.

2:20 The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him.

2:21 So Yahweh God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh.

2:22 Yahweh God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man.

2:23 The man exclaimed: 'This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh! This is to be called woman,[*d] for this was taken from man.'

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

2:24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.
2:25 Now both of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they felt no shame in front of each other.

The Fall

3:1 The serpent was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that Yahweh God had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?'
3:2 The woman answered the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden.
3:3 But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death".'
3:4 Then the serpent said to the woman, 'No! You will not die!
3:5 God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.'
3:6 The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.
3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked. So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths.
3:8 The man and his wife heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from Yahweh God among the trees of the garden.
3:9 But Yahweh God called to the man. 'Where are you?' he asked.
3:10 'I heard the sound of you in the garden;' he replied 'I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.'
3:11 'Who told you that you were naked?' he asked 'Have you been eating of the tree I forbade you to eat?'
3:12 The man replied, 'It was the woman you put with me; she gave me the fruit, and I ate it'.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

18:10 I am with you. I have so many people on my side in this city that no one will even attempt to hurt you.'
18:11 So Paul stayed there preaching the word of God among them for eighteen months.

The Jews take Paul to court

18:12 But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a concerted attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal.
18:13 'We accuse this man' they said 'of persuading people to worship God in a way that breaks the Law.'
18:14 Before Paul could open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'Listen, you Jews. If this were a misdemeanour or a crime, I would not hesitate to attend to you;
18:15 but if it is only quibbles about words and names, and about your own Law, then you must deal with it yourselves-I have no intention of making legal decisions about things like that.'
18:16 Then he sent them out of the court,
18:17 and at once they all turned on Sosthenes, the synagogue president, and beat him in front of the court house. Gallio refused to take any notice at all.

Return to Antioch and departure for the third journey

18:18 After staying on for some time, Paul took leave of the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut off, because of a vow he had made.
18:19 When they reached Ephesus, he left them, but first he went alone to the synagogue to debate with the Jews.
18:20 They asked him to stay longer but he declined, though when he left he said, 'I will come back another time, God willing'. Then he sailed from Ephesus.
18:22 He landed at Caesarea, and went up to greet the church. Then he came down to Antioch

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

16:13 we went along the river outside the gates as it was the sabbath and this was a customary place for prayer. We sat down and preached to the women who had come to the meeting.

16:14 One of these women was called Lydia, a devout woman from the town of Thyatira who was in the purple-dye trade. She listened to us, and the Lord opened her heart to accept what Paul was saying.

16:15 After she and her household had been baptised she sent us an invitation: 'If you really think me a true believer in the Lord,' she said 'come and stay with us'; and she would take no refusal.

Foundation of the church of Corinth

18:1 After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth,

18:2 where he met a Jew called Aquila whose family came from Pontus. He and his wife Priscilla had recently left Italy because an edict of Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome. Paul went to visit them,

18:3 and when he found they were tentmakers, of the same trade as himself, he lodged with them, and they worked together.

18:4 Every sabbath he used to hold debates in the synagogues, trying to convert Jews as well as Greeks.

18:5 After Silas and Timothy had arrived from Macedonia, Paul devoted all his time to preaching, declaring to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

18:6 When they turned against him and started to insult him, he took his cloak and shook it out in front of them, saying, 'Your blood be on your own heads; from now on I can go to the pagans with a clear conscience'.

18:7 Then he left the synagogue and moved to the house next door that belonged to a worshipper of God called Justus.

18:8 Crispus, president of the synagogue, and his whole household, all became believers in the Lord. A great many Corinthians who had heard him became believers and were baptised.

18:9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, 'Do not be afraid to speak out, nor allow yourself to be silenced:

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

3:13 Then Yahweh God asked the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman replied, 'The serpent tempted me and I ate'.

3:14 Then Yahweh God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, Be accursed beyond all cattle, all wild beasts. You shall crawl on your belly and eat dust every day of your life.

3:15 I will make you enemies of each other: you and the woman, your offspring and her offspring. It will crush your head and you will strike its heel'.

3:16 To the woman he said: 'I will multiply your pains in childbearing, you shall give birth to your children in pain. Your yearning shall be for your husband, yet he will lord it over you.'

3:17 To the man he said, 'Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat, Accursed be the soil because of you. With suffering shall you get your food from it every day of your life.

3:18 It shall yield you brambles and thistles, and you shall eat wild plants.

3:19 With sweat on your brow shall you eat your bread, until you return to the soil, as you were taken from it. For dust you are and to dust you shall return.'

3:20 The man named his wife 'Eve' because she was the mother of all those who live.

[Reflections:](#)

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE



SARAI (SARAH)

Day 2 Day 2 Day 2 Day 2 Day 2 Day 2 Day 2 Day 2 Day 2
Genesis 17:15-16; 21:1-7

The Covenant and circumcision

17:15 God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah.

17:16 I will bless her and moreover give you a son by her. I will bless her and nations shall come out of her;

The birth of Isaac

21:1 Yahweh dealt kindly with Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her.

21:2 So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time God had promised.

21:3 Abraham named the son born to him Isaac, the son to whom Sarah had given birth.

21:4 Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

21:5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

21:6 Then Sarah said, 'God has given me cause to laugh; all those who hear of it will laugh with me.'

21:7 She added: 'Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children! Yet I have borne him a child in his old age.'

[Reflections:](#)

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

12:7 So Jesus said, 'Leave her alone; she had to keep this scent for the day of my burial.

12:8 You have the poor with you always, you will not always have me.'

[Reflections:](#)



LYDIA AND PRISCILLA

Day 13 Day 13 Day 13 Day 13 Day 13 Day 13 Day 13 Day 13
Acts 16:11-15, Chapter 18

Arrival at Philippi

16:11 Sailing from Troas we made a straight run for Samothrace; the next day for Neapolis,

16:12 and from there for Philippi, a Roman colony and the principal city of that particular district of Macedonia. After a few days in this city

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

11:6 yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days
11:7 before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea'.
11:8 The disciples said, 'Rabbi, it is not long since the Jews wanted to stone you; are you going back again?'
11:9 Jesus replied: 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? A man can walk in the daytime without stumbling because he has the light of this world to see by;
11:10 but if he walks at night he stumbles, because there is no light to guide him.'
11:11 He said that and then added, 'Our friend Lazarus is resting, I am going to wake him'.
11:12 The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he is able to rest he is sure to get better'.
11:13 The phrase Jesus used referred to the death of Lazarus, but they thought that by 'rest' he meant 'sleep', so
11:14 Jesus put it plainly, 'Lazarus is dead';

The anointing at Bethany

12:1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had raised from the dead.
12:2 They gave a dinner for him there; Martha waited on them and Lazarus was among those at table.
12:3 Mary brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair; the house was full of the scent of the ointment.
12:4 Then Judas Iscariot - one of his disciples, the man who was to betray him - said,
12:5 'Why wasn't this ointment sold for three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor?'
12:6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he was in charge of the common fund and used to help himself to the contributions.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE



MIRIAM

Day 3 Day 3 Day 3 Day 3 Day 3 Day 3 Day 3 Day 3 Day 3
Exodus 15:19-21

Song of victory

15:19 Pharaoh's cavalry, both his chariots and horsemen, had indeed entered the sea, but Yahweh had made the waters of the sea flow back on them, yet the sons of Israel had marched on dry ground right through the sea.
15:20 Miriam, the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took up a timbrel, and all the women followed her with timbrels, dancing.
15:21 And Miriam led them in the refrain: 'Sing of Yahweh: he has covered himself in glory, horse and rider he has thrown into the sea'.

Reflections:

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE



DEBORAH

Day 4 Day 4 Day 4 Day 4 Day 4 Day 4 Day 4 Day 4 Day 4
Judges Chapters 4-5

DEBORAH AND BARAK

Israel oppressed by the Canaanites

4:1 When Ehud died, once again the Israelites began to do what displeases Yahweh,
4:2 and Yahweh handed them over to Jabin the king of Canaan who reigned at Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goum.
4:3 Then the Israelites cried to Yahweh; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots plated with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years.

Deborah

4:4 At this time Deborah was judge in Israel, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth.
4:5 She used to sit under Deborah's Palm between Ramah and Bethel in the highlands of Ephraim, and the Israelites would come to her to have their disputes decided.
4:6 She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali. She said to him, 'This is the order of Yahweh, the God of Israel: "March

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

20:18 So Mary of Magdala went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had said these things to her.

Reflections:



MARY AND MARTHA

Day 12 Day 12 Day 12 Day 12 Day 12 Day 12 Day 12 Day 12 Day 12
John 11:1-14, 12:1-8

The resurrection of Lazarus

11:1 There was a man named Lazarus who lived in the village of Bethany with the two sisters, Mary and Martha, and he was ill. -
11:2 It was the same Mary, the sister of the sick man Lazarus, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair.
11:3 The sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill'.
11:4 On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified'.
11:5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus,

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

20:4 They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first;
20:5 he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in.
20:6 Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground,
20:7 and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself.
20:8 Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed.
20:9 Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.
20:10 The disciples then went home again.

The appearance to Mary of Magdala

20:11 Meanwhile Mary stayed outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, still weeping, she stooped to look inside,
20:12 and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet.
20:13 They said, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' They have taken my Lord away' she replied 'and I don't know where they have put him.'
20:14 As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognise him.
20:15 Jesus said, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him'.
20:16 Jesus said, 'Mary!' She knew him then and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni!' - which means Master.
20:17 Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and find the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

to Mount Tabor and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and the sons of Zebulun.
4:7 I will entice Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, to encounter you at the wadi Kishon with his chariots and troops; and I will put him into your power."
4:8 Barak answered her, 'If you come with me, I will go; if you will not come, I will not go, for I do not know how to choose the day when the angel of Yahweh will grant me success'.
4:9 'I will go with you then,' she said 'but, the way you are going about it, the glory will not be yours; for Yahweh will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.' Then Deborah stood up and went with Barak to Kedesh,
4:10 and there Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali. Ten thousand men marched behind him, and Deborah marched with him.

Heber the Kenite

4:11 Heber the Kenite had cut himself off from the tribe of Kain and the clan of the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses; he had pitched his tent near the Oak of Zaananim, not far from Kedesh.

Sisera routed

4:12 When Sisera heard that Barak son of Abinoam was encamped on Mount Tabor,
4:13 he called for all his chariots - nine hundred chariots plated with iron - and all the troops he had. He summoned them from Harosheth-ha-goum to the wadi Kishon.
4:14 Deborah said to Barak, 'Up! For today is the day Yahweh has put Sisera into your power. Yes, Yahweh marches at your head.' And Barak charged down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men behind him.
4:15 At Barak's advance, Yahweh struck terror into Sisera, all his chariots and all his troops. Sisera leapt down from his chariot and fled on foot.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

4:16 Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth-hagoum. Sisera's whole army fell by the edge of the sword; not one man escaped.

Sisera slain

4:17 Sisera meanwhile fled on foot towards the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. For there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite.
4:18 Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, 'My lord, stay here with me; do not be afraid!' He stayed there in her tent, and she covered him with a rug.
4:19 He said to her, 'Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty'. She opened the skin that had milk in it, gave him some to drink and covered him up again.
4:20 Then he said to her, 'Stand at the tent door, and if anyone comes and questions you - if he asks, "Is there a man here?", say, "No".'
4:21 But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent-peg, and picked up a mallet; she crept up softly to him and drove the peg into his temple right through to the ground. He was lying fast asleep, worn out; and so he died.
4:22 And now Barak came up in pursuit of Sisera. Jael went out to meet him and said, 'Come in, and I will show you the man you are looking for'. He went into her tent; Sisera lay dead, with the tent-peg through his temple.

Israel delivered

4:23 Thus God that day humbled Jabin the king of Canaan before the Israelites.
4:24 And the Israelites bore down more and more heavily on Jabin the king of Canaan, until he was utterly destroyed.

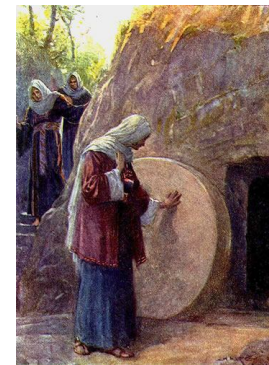
THE SONG OF DEBORAH AND BARAK

5:1 They sang a song that day, Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam, and the words were:

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

2:37 before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer.
2:38 She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

Reflections:



MARY MAGDALENE

Day 11 Day 11 Day 11 Day 11 Day 11 Day 11 Day 11 Day 11 Day 11
John 20:1-18

THE DAY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

The empty tomb

20:1 It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb
20:2 and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.'
20:3 So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

2:17 When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him,
2:18 and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say.
2:19 As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.
2:20 And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

Reflections:



ANNA

Day 10 Day 10 Day 10 Day 10 Day 10 Day 10 Day 10 Day 10
Luke 2:36-38

The prophecy of Anna

2:36 There was a prophetess also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

5:2 'That warriors in Israel unbound their hair, that the people came forward with a will, for this, bless Yahweh!
5:3 'Listen, you kings! Give ear, you princes! From me, from me comes a song for Yahweh. I will glorify Yahweh, God of Israel.
5:4 'Yahweh, when you set out from Seir, as you trod the land of Edom, earth shook, the heavens quaked, the clouds dissolved into water.
5:5 The mountains melted before Yahweh, before Yahweh, the God of Israel.
5:6 'In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, every highroad was forsaken; those who went forth on their travels through by-paths took their way.
5:7 'Dead, dead were Israel's villages until you rose up, O Deborah, you rose up, a mother in Israel.
5:8 'Those that should stand for God were dumb. From five cities, not one shield! Not one spear from forty thousand in Israel!
5:9 'My heart beats fast for Israel's chieftains, with those of the people who stood forth boldly. For this, bless Yahweh!
5:10 'You who ride on white she-asses, you with caparisons beneath you, and you who walk the highways, sing
5:11 to the shouts of a rejoicing people gathered about the watering places. There they extol Yahweh's blessings, the blessings of his reign in Israel. (Yahweh's people marched down to the gates.)
5:12 'Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, declaim a song! Take heart, arise Barak, capture your captors, son of Abinoam!
5:13 'Then Israel marched down to the gates; Yahweh's people, like heroes, marched down to fight for him.
5:14 'Ephraim's princes are in the valley. Your brother Benjamin joins your ranks. From Machir, captains have come down; from Zebulun, those with the staff of office.
5:15 The princes of Issachar are with Deborah; Naphtali in the vale with Barak has sped forward to follow him. 'Where the streams of Reuben are, men hold their long debate.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

5:16 Why did you linger among the sheepfolds listening to pipes amid the flocks? (Where the streams of Reuben are, men hold their long debate.)

5:17 'Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan. Why is Dan in the ships of strangers?[*b] Asher kept by the sea coast, dwelling at ease within his harbours.

5:18 'The tribe of Zebulun fronted death, Naphtali too, on the rising ground.

5:19 'The kings came, they stood in line of battle; then they fought, those kings of Canaan, at Taanach, by Megiddo's waters, yet bore away no silver spoils.

5:20 'From high in heaven fought the stars, fought from their orbits against Sisera

5:21 'The torrent of Kishon swept them away, the sacred torrent, the torrent of Kishon. Trample, my soul, with might and main!

5:22 'The horses' hoofs beat the ground; galloping, galloping go his steeds.

5:23 "Curse Meroz," says Yahweh's angel "curse, curse the dwellers in it; for they never came to Yahweh's aid, to Yahweh's aid among the warriors."

5:24 'Blessed be Jael among women (the wife of Heber the Kenite); among all women that dwell in tents may she be blessed.

5:25 'He asked for water; she gave him milk; in a precious bowl she brought him cream.

5:26 She stretched out her hand to seize the peg, her right hand to seize the workman's mallet. She struck Sisera, crushed his head, pierced his temple and shattered it.

5:27 At her feet he tumbled, he fell, he lay; at her feet he tumbled, he fell. Where he tumbled, there he fell dead.

5:28 'Through her window she leans and looks, Sisera's mother, through the lattice: "Why is his chariot long in coming? Why are the harnessed horses slow?"

5:29 'Among her princesses the wisest one answers, and she to herself repeats,

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

The birth of Jesus and visit of the shepherds

2:1 Now at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken.

2:2 This census - the first - took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria,

2:3 and everyone went to his own town to be registered.

2:4 So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line,

2:5 in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

2:6 While they were there the time came for her to have her child,

2:7 and she birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

2:8 In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night.

2:9 The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified,

2:10 but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people.

2:11 Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

2:12 And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.'

2:13 And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

2:14 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour'

2:15 Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us'.

2:16 So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

1:66 All those who heard of it treasured it in their hearts. 'What will this child turn out to be?' they wondered. And indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.

The Benedictus

1:67 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

1:68 'Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel for he has visited his people, he has come to their rescue

1:69 and he has raised up for us a power for salvation in the House of his servant David,

1:70 even as he proclaimed, by the mouth of his holy prophets from ancient times,

1:71 that he would save us from our enemies and from the hands of all who hate us.

1:72 Thus he shows mercy to our ancestors, thus he remembers his holy covenant

1:73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham

1:74 that he would grant us, free from fear, to be delivered from the hands of our enemies,

1:75 to serve him in holiness and virtue in his presence, all our days.

1:76 And you, little child, you shall be called Prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way for him.

1:77 To give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins;

1:78 this by the tender mercy of our God who from on high Will bring the rising Sun to visit us,

1:79 to give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

The hidden life of John the Baptist

1:80 Meanwhile the child grew up and his spirit matured. And he lived out in the wilderness until the day he appeared openly to Israel.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

5:30 "They are gathering, doubtless, sharing the spoil: a girl, two girls for each man of war; a garment, two dyed garments for Sisera; a scarf, two embroidered scarves for me!"

5:31 'So perish all your enemies, Yahweh! And let those who love you be like the sun when he arises in all his strength!' And the land enjoyed rest for forty years.

Reflections:



RUTH

Day 5 Day 5 Day 5 Day 5 Day 5 Day 5 Day 5 Day 5
Ruth

I. RUTH AND NAOMI

1:1 In the days of the Judges famine came to the land and a certain man from Bethlehem of Judah went - he, his wife and his two sons - to live in the country of Moab.

1:2 The man was called Elimelech, his wife Naomi and his two sons, Mahion and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem of Judah. They came to the country of Moab and settled there.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

1:3 Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she and her two sons were left.

1:4 These married Moabite women: one was named Orpah and the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years.

1:5 Then both Mahion and Chilion also died and the woman was bereft of her two sons and her husband.

1:6 So she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard that Yahweh had visited his people and given them food.

1:7 So, with her daughters-in-law, she came away from the place where she was living and they took the road back to the land of Judah.

1:8 Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go back, each of you to her mother's house. May Yahweh be kind to you as you have been to those who have died and to me.

1:9 Yahweh grant that you find rest, each of you, in the house of a husband.' And she kissed them. But they wept aloud

1:10 and said to her, 'No, we will go back with you to your people.'

1:11 And Naomi said, 'You must return, my daughters; why come with me? Have I any more sons in my womb to make husbands for you?

1:12 Return my daughters, go, for I am too old now to marry again. Even if I said there is still hope for me, even if I were to have a husband this very night and bear sons,

1:13 would you be prepared to wait until they were grown up? Would you refuse to marry for this? No, my daughters, I should then be deeply grieved for you, for the hand of Yahweh has been raised against me.'

1:14 And once more they started to weep aloud. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and went back to her people. But Ruth clung to her.

1:15 Naomi said to her, 'Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god. You must return too; follow your sister-in-law.'

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

1:51 He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart.

1:52 He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly.

1:53 The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away.

1:54 He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy

1:55 -according to the promise he made to our ancestors-of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

1:56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home.

The birth of John the Baptist and visit of the neighbours

1:57 Meanwhile the time came for Elizabeth to have her child, and she gave birth to a son;

1:58 and when her neighbours and relations heard that the Lord had shown her so great a kindness, they shared her joy.

The circumcision of John the Baptist

1:59 Now on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; they were going to call him Zechariah after his father,

1:60 but his mother spoke up. 'No,' she said 'he is to be called John.'

1:61 They said to her, 'But no one in your family has that name',

1:62 and made signs to his father to find out what he wanted him called.

1:63 The father asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John'. And they were all astonished.

1:64 At that instant his power of speech returned and he spoke and praised God.

1:65 All their neighbours were filled with awe and the whole affair was talked about throughout the hill country of Judaea.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

1:34 Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?'

1:35 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God.

1:36 Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month,

1:37 for nothing is impossible to God'

1:38 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

The visitation

1:39 Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah.

1:40 She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.

1:41 Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

1:42 She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

1:43 Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?

1:44 For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy.

1:45 Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

The Magnificat

1:46 And Mary said: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord

1:47 and my spirit exults in God my saviour;

1:48 because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid. Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed,

1:49 for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name,

1:50 and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

1:16 But Ruth said, 'Do not press me to leave you and to turn back from your company, for 'wherever you go, I will go, wherever you live, I will live. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.

1:17 Wherever you die, I will die and there I will be buried. May Yahweh do this thing to me and more also, if even death should come between us!'

1:18 Seeing that she was determined to go with her, Naomi said no more.

1:19 The two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. Their arrival there set the whole town astir, and the women said, 'Can this be Naomi?'

1:20 But she said to them, 'Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara,[*d] for Shaddai has marred me bitterly.

1:21 'Filled full I departed, Yahweh brings me back empty. Why call me Naomi, then, since Yahweh has given witness against me and Shaddai has afflicted me?'

1:22 This was how Naomi, she who returned from the country of Moab, came back with Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

II. RUTH IN THE FIELDS OF BOAZ

2:1 Now Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's side, well-to-do and of Elimelech's clan. His name was Boaz.

2:2 Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Let me go into the fields and glean among the ears of corn in the footsteps of some man who will look on me with favour'. And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter'.

2:3 So she set out and went to glean in the fields after the reapers. And it chanced that she came to that part of the fields which belonged to Boaz of Elimelech's clan.

2:4 Now Boaz, as it happened, had just come from Bethlehem. 'Yahweh be with you!' he said to the reapers. 'Yahweh bless you!' they replied.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

2:5 Boaz said to a servant of his who was in charge of the reapers, 'To whom does this young woman belong?'

2:6 And the servant in charge of the reapers replied, 'The girl is the Moabitess, the one who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab,

2:7 and she said, "Please let me glean and gather the ears of corn after the reapers". So she came and has been on her feet from morning till now.'

2:8 Boaz said to Ruth, 'Listen, my daughter, and understand this. You are not to glean in any other field, do not leave here but stay with my servants.

2:9 Keep your eyes on whatever part of the field they are reaping and follow behind. I have ordered my servants not to molest you. And if you are thirsty, go to the pitchers and drink what the servants have drawn.'

2:10 Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground. And she said to him, 'How have I so earned your favour that you take notice of me, even though I am a foreigner?'

2:11 And Boaz answered her, 'I have been told all you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death, and how you left your own father and mother and the land where you were born to come among a people whom you knew nothing about before you came here.

2:12 May Yahweh reward you for what you have done! May rich recompense be made to you by Yahweh, the God of Israel, to whom you have come, to find shelter beneath his wings.'

2:13 Then she said, 'May I find favour in your eyes, my lord, since you have given me courage and spoken kindly to your maidservant, though indeed I am not the equal of one maidservant of yours!'

2:14 When it was time to eat Boaz said to her, 'Come, eat some of this bread and dip your piece in the wine'. Ruth sat with the reapers and Boaz made a heap of roasted grain for her and she ate till her hunger was satisfied, and she had some left over.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE



MARY, THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD
Day 9 Day 9 Day 9 Day 9 Day 9 Day 9 Day 9 Day 9 Day 9
Luke 1:26-2:20

The annunciation

1:26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,

1:27 to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

1:28 He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'

1:29 She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean,

1:30 but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour.

1:31 Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus.

1:32 He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David;

1:33 he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.'

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

The birth of John the Baptist and visit of the neighbours

1:57 Meanwhile the time came for Elizabeth to have her child, and she gave birth to a son;

1:58 and when her neighbours and relations heard that the Lord had shown her so great a kindness, they shared her joy.

The circumcision of John the Baptist

1:59 Now on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; they were going to call him Zechariah after his father,

1:60 but his mother spoke up. 'No,' she said 'he is to be called John.'

1:61 They said to her, 'But no one in your family has that name',

1:62 and made signs to his father to find out what he wanted him called.

1:63 The father asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John'. And they were all astonished.

1:64 At that instant his power of speech returned and he spoke and praised God.

1:65 All their neighbours were filled with awe and the whole affair was talked about throughout the hill country of Judaea.

1:66 All those who heard of it treasured it in their hearts. 'What will this child turn out to be?' they wondered. And indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.

Reflections:

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

2:15 Then she got up to glean and Boaz gave orders to his servants, 'Let her glean among the sheaves themselves,' he said 'and do not check her.'

2:16 And see you pull a few ears of corn from the bundles and let them fall. Let her glean them, and do not scold her.'

2:17 So she gleaned in the field till evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned and it came to about an ephah of barley.

2:18 And taking it with her, she went into the town. She showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned. and also showed her the food she had set aside after satisfying her hunger, and gave it to her.

2:19 And her mother-in-law said to her, 'Where did you glean today? Where have you been working? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!' Then Ruth told her mother-in-law in whose field she had worked, 'The name of the man with whom I have been working today' she said 'is Boaz'.

2:20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'May he be blessed by Yahweh who does not withhold his kindness from living or dead! This man' Naomi added 'is a relative of ours. He is one of those who has the right of redemption over us.'

2:21 Then Ruth said to her mother-in-law, 'He also said to me, "Stay with my servants until they have gathered in all my harvest".'

2:22 And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, 'It is better for you, my daughter, to go with his servants than to go to some other field where you might be molested'.

2:23 So Ruth stayed with the servants of Boaz and gleaned until the barley and wheat harvests were done. And she went on living with her mother-in-law.

III. BOAZ SLEEPS

3:1 Then Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her, 'My daughter, is it not my duty to see you happily settled?'

3:2 And is not Boaz, with whose servants you were, our kinsman? Now tonight he is winnowing the barley at the threshing-floor.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

3:3 Come, wash and anoint and dress yourself. Then go down to the threshing-floor. Do not make yourself known to him before he has finished eating and drinking.

3:4 But when he settles down to sleep, take careful note of the place where he lies, then go and turn back the covering at his feet and lie there yourself. He will tell you what to do.'

3:5 And Ruth said to her, 'I will do all you say'.

3:6 So she went down to the threshing-floor and did all that her mother-in-law had told her.

3:7 When Boaz had eaten and drunk, he was in a happy mood and went to lie down by the heap of barley. Then she came quietly and turned back the covering at his feet and lay there.

3:8 In the middle of the night the man started up and looked about him; and there lying at his feet was a woman.

3:9 'Who are you?' he said; and she replied, 'I am Ruth, your maidservant. Spread the skirt of your cloak over your servant for you have right of redemption over me.'[*a]

3:10 'May Yahweh bless you, my daughter,' said Boaz 'for this last act of kindness of yours is greater than the first, since you have not gone after young men, poor or rich.

3:11 Have no fear then, my daughter, I will do whatever you ask, for the people of Bethlehem all know your worth.

3:12 But, though it is true I have right of redemption over you, you have a kinsman closer than myself.

3:13 Stay here for tonight, and in the morning if he wishes to exercise his right over you, very well, let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to do so, then as Yahweh lives, I will redeem you. Lie here till morning.'

3:14 So she lay at his feet till morning. Boaz rose before the hour when one man can recognise another, 'For' said he 'it must not be known that this woman came to the threshing-floor'.

3:15 Then he said to her, 'Bring the cloak you are wearing and hold it out'. She held it out while he put six measures of barley into it and then gave it to her to carry. And she went into the town.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

1:11 Then there appeared to him the angel of the Lord, standing on the right of the altar of incense.

1:12 The sight disturbed Zechariah and he was overcome with fear.

1:13 But the angel said to him, 'Zechariah, do not be afraid, your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth is to bear you a son and you must name him John.

1:14 He will be your joy and delight and many will rejoice at his birth,

1:15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord; he must drink no wine, no strong drink. Even from his mother's womb he will be filled with the Holy Spirit,

1:16 and he will bring back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God.

1:17 With the spirit and power of Elijah, he will go before him to turn the hearts of fathers towards their children and the disobedient back to the wisdom that the virtuous have, preparing for the Lord a people fit for him.

1:18 Zechariah said to the angel, 'How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is getting on in years.'

1:19 The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel who stand in God's presence, and I have been sent to speak to you and bring you this good news.

1:20 Listen! Since you have not believed my words, which will come true at their appointed time, you will be silenced and have no power of speech until this has happened.'

1:21 Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and were surprised that he stayed in the sanctuary so long.

1:22 When he came out he could not speak to them, and they realised that he had received a vision in the sanctuary. But he could only make signs to them, and remained dumb.

1:23 When his time of service came to an end he returned home.

1:24 Some time later his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept to herself.

1:25 'The Lord has done this for me' she said 'now that it has pleased him to take away the humiliation I suffered among men.'

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

PHILLIP MEDHURST, A-Z OF ARTISTS IN THE BOWYER BIBLE



photo: Harry Kossuth
BOWYER BIBLE VOLUME 34 PRINT 4653
THE VISITATION, LUKE 1:29-40
ALESSANDRO BONVICINO (IL MORETTO)

ELIZABETH

Day 8 Day 8 Day 8 Day 8 Day 8 Day 8 Day 8 Day 8

Luke 1:5-25, 57-66

**THE BIRTH AND HIDDEN LIFE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST
AND OF JESUS**

The birth of John the Baptist foretold

1:5 In the days of King Herod of Judaea there lived a priest called Zechariah who belonged to the Abijah section of the priesthood, and he had a wife, Elizabeth by name, who was a descendant of Aaron.
1:6 Both were worthy in the sight of God, and scrupulously observed all the commandments and observances of the Lord.
1:7 But they were childless: Elizabeth was barren and they were both getting on in years.
1:8 Now it was the turn of Zechariah's section to serve, and he was exercising his priestly office before God
1:9 when it fell to him by lot, as the ritual custom was, to enter the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense there.
1:10 And at the hour of incense the whole congregation was outside, praying.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

3:16 When Ruth came back, her mother-in-law asked her, 'How did things go with you, my daughter?' Then she told her all that the man had done for her.

3:17 'He gave me these six measures of barley,' she added 'and he said to me, "You must not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed".'

3:18 Naomi replied, 'Wait, my daughter, and see how things will go, for he will not rest until it is settled, and settled today'.

IV. BOAZ MARRIES RUTH

4:1 Meanwhile Boaz had gone up to the gate of the town and sat down, and the relative of whom he had spoken chanced to come past. Boaz said to him, 'Come here, man, and sit down'; and he came and sat down.

4:2 Then Boaz picked out ten of the town's elders and said to them, 'Sit down here', and they sat down.

4:3 Then Boaz said to the man who had right of redemption, 'Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother, Elimelech.

4:4 I thought I should tell you about this and say: Buy it in the presence of the men who are sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you want to use your right of redemption, redeem it; if you do not, tell me so and I shall know, for there is no one but you to redeem it except me, though I come after you, myself.' And he said, 'I am willing to redeem it'.

4:5 But Boaz continued, 'On the day you purchase the land from Naomi, you purchase Ruth the Moabitess also, the wife of the dead man, and so restore his name to his inheritance'.

4:6 And the man with right of redemption said, 'Then I cannot use my right of redemption, without jeopardising my own inheritance. As I cannot use my right of redemption, exercise the right yourself.'

4:7 Now in former times it was the custom in Israel, in matters of redemption or exchange, to confirm the transaction by one of the

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

parties removing his sandal and giving it to the other. In Israel this was the form of ratification in the presence of witnesses.

4:8 So when the man with right of redemption said to Boaz, 'Purchase it for yourself', he took off his sandal.

4:9 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, 'You are witnesses this day that I buy from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech, to Chilion and to Mahlon.

4:10 You are witnesses too that I buy Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, to be my wife, to keep the name of the dead man in his inheritance, so that the dead man's name may not die out among his brothers and at the gate of his town.'

4:11 All the people at the gate said, 'We are witnesses'; and the elders said, 'May Yahweh make the woman who is to enter your House like Rachel and Leah who together built up the House of Israel.' 'Grow mighty in Ephrathah, be renowned in Bethlehem.

4:12 And through the children Yahweh will give you by this young woman, may your House become like the House of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah.'

4:13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. And when they came together, Yahweh made her conceive and she bore a son.

4:14 And the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed be Yahweh who has not left the dead man without next of kin this day to perpetuate his name in Israel.

4:15 The child will be a comfort to you and the prop of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you and is more to you than seven sons has given him birth.'

4:16 And Naomi took the child to her own bosom and she became his nurse.

4:17 And the women of the neighbourhood gave him a name. 'A son has been born for Naomi' they said; and they named him Obed. This was the father of David's father, Jesse.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

8:13 The text of this edict, to be promulgated as law in each province, was published to the various peoples, so that the Jews could be ready on the day stated to avenge themselves on their enemies.

8:14 The couriers, mounted on the king's horses, set out in great haste and urgency at the king's command. The edict was also published in the citadel of Susa.

8:15 Mordecai left the royal presence in a princely gown of violet and white, with a great golden crown and a cloak of fine linen and purple. The city of Susa shouted for joy.

8:16 For the Jews there was light and gladness, joy and honour.

8:17 In every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and decree arrived, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and holiday-making. Of the country's population many became Jews, since now the Jews were feared.

[Reflections:](#)

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

8:12m But he, unable to keep within his own high rank, schemed to deprive us of our realm and of our life.

8:12n Furthermore, by tortuous wiles and arguments, he would have had us destroy Mordecai, our saviour and constant benefactor, with Esther the blameless partner of our majesty, and their whole nation besides.

8:12o He thought by these means to leave us without support and so to transfer the Persian empire to the Macedonians.

8:12p But we find that the Jews, marked out for annihilation by this arch-scoundrel, are not criminals; they are in fact governed by the most just of laws.

8:12q They are sons of the Most High, the great and living God to whom we and our ancestors owe the continuing prosperity of our realm.

8:12r You will therefore do well not to act on the letters sent by Haman son of Hammedatha, since their author has been hanged at the gates of Susa with his whole household: a well-earned punishment which God, the ruler of all things, has speedily inflicted on him.

8:12s Put up copies of this letter everywhere, allow the Jews freedom to observe their own customs, and come to their help against anyone who attacks them on the day originally chosen for their maltreatment, that is the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar.

8:12t For the all-powerful God has made this day a day of joy and not of ruin for his chosen people.

8:12u Jews, for your part, among your solemn festivals celebrate this as a special day with every kind of feasting, so that now and in the future, for you and for Persians of good will it may commemorate your rescue, and for your enemies may stand as a reminder of their ruin.

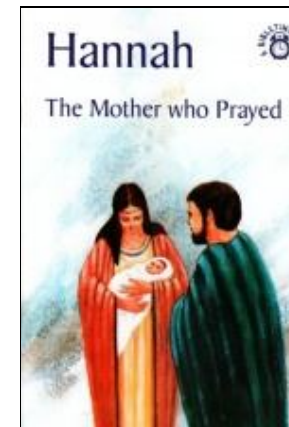
8:12v 'Every city and, more generally, every country, which does not follow these instructions, will be mercilessly devastated with fire and sword, and made not only inaccessible to men but hateful to wild animals and even birds for ever.'

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

THE GENEALOGY OF DAVID

4:18 These are the descendants of Perez. Perez was the father of Hezron,
4:19 Hezron of Ram, Ram of Amminadab,
4:20 Amminadab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon,
4:21 Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed,
4:22 Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.

Reflections:



HANNAH

Day 6 Day 6 Day 6 Day 6 Day 6 Day 6 Day 6 Day 6
1 Samuel 1:1-2:11

THE CHILDHOOD OF SAMUEL

The pilgrimage to Shiloh

1:1 There was a man of Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the highlands of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

1:2 He had two wives, one called Hannah, the other Peninnah; Peninnah had children but Hannah had none.
1:3 Every year this man used to go up from his town to worship and to sacrifice to Yahweh Sabaoth in Shiloh. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there as priests of Yahweh.
1:4 One day Elkanah offered sacrifice. He used to give portions to Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters;
1:5 to Hannah, however, he would give only one portion, although he loved her more, since Yahweh had made her barren.
1:6 Her rival would taunt her to annoy her, because Yahweh had made her barren.
1:7 And this went on year after year; every time they went up to the temple of Yahweh she used to taunt her. And so Hannah wept and would not eat.
1:8 Then Elkanah her husband said to her, 'Hannah, why are you crying and why are you not eating? Why so sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?'

The prayer of Hannah

1:9 Now after they had eaten in the hall, Hannah rose and took her stand before Yahweh, while Eli the priest was sitting on his seat by the doorpost of the temple of Yahweh.
1:10 In the bitterness of her soul she prayed to Yahweh with many tears
1:11 and made a vow, saying, 'Yahweh Sabaoth! If you will take notice of the distress of your servant, and bear me in mind and not forget your servant and give her a manchild, I will give him to Yahweh for the whole of his life and no razor shall ever touch his head'.
1:12 While she prayed before Yahweh which she did for some time, Eli was watching her mouth,
1:13 for she was speaking under her breath; her lips were moving but her voice could not be heard. He therefore supposed that she was drunk

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

8:12b 'The great King, Ahasuerus, to the satraps of the hundred and twenty-seven provinces which stretch from India to Ethiopia, to the provincial governors and to all our loyal subjects, greeting.
8:12c 'Many men, repeatedly honoured by the extreme bounty of their benefactors, only grow the more arrogant. It is not enough for them to seek our subjects' injury, but unable as they are to support the weight of their own surfeit they turn to scheming against their benefactors themselves.
8:12d Not content with banishing gratitude from the human heart, but elated by the plaudits of men unacquainted with goodness, notwithstanding that all is for ever under the eye of God, they vainly expect to escape his justice, so hostile to the wicked.
8:12e Thus it has often happened to those placed in authority that, having entrusted friends with the conduct of affairs and allowed themselves to be influenced by them, they find themselves sharing with these the guilt of innocent blood and involved in irremediable misfortunes,
8:12f the upright intentions of rulers having been misled by false arguments of the evilly disposed.
8:12g This may be seen without recourse to the history of earlier times to which we have referred; you have only to look at what is before you, at the crimes perpetrated by a plague of unworthy officials.
8:12h For the future we will exert our efforts to assure the tranquillity and peace of the realm for all,
8:12i by adopting new policies and by always judging matters that are brought to our notice in the most equitable spirit.
8:12k 'Thus Haman son of Hammedatha, a Macedonian, without a drop of Persian blood and far removed from our goodness, enjoyed our hospitality
8:12l and was treated by us with the benevolence which we show to every nation, even to the extent of being proclaimed our 'father' and being accorded universally the prostration of respect as second in dignity to the royal throne.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

am pleasing to his eyes, may he be pleased to issue a written revocation of the letters which Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, contrived to have written to procure the destruction of the Jews in every province of the realm.

8:6 For how can I look on, while my people suffer what is in store for them? How can I bear to witness the extermination of my race?'

8:7 King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, 'I for my part have given Esther Haman's house, and have had him hanged on the gallows for planning to destroy the Jews.

8:8 You are free now to write to them as you judge best, in the king's name, and seal what you write with the king's signet; for an order written in the king's name and sealed with his signet is irrevocable.'

8:9 The royal scribes summoned at once-it was the third month, the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day-and at Mordecai's dictation an order was written to the Jews, the satraps, governors and administrators of the provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to each province in its own script, and to each people in its own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

8:10 These letters, written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet, were carried by couriers mounted on horses from the king's own stud-farms.

8:11 In them the king granted the Jews, in whatever city they lived, the right to assemble in self-defence, with permission to destroy, slaughter and annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, together with their women and children, and to plunder their possessions,

8:12 with effect from the same day throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus - the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar.

The decree of rehabilitation

8:12a The text of the letter was as follows:

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

1:14 and said to her, 'How long are you going to be in this drunken state? Rid yourself of your wine.'

1:15 'No, my lord,' Hannah replied 'I am a woman in great trouble; I have taken neither wine nor strong drink - I was pouring out my soul before Yahweh.

1:16 Do not take your maidservant for a worthless woman; all this time I have been speaking from the depth of my grief and my resentment.'

1:17 Then Eli answered her: 'Go in peace,' he said 'and may the God of Israel grant what you have asked of him'. And she said,

1:18 'May your maidservant find favour in your sight'; and with that the woman went away; she returned to the hall and ate and was dejected no longer.

The birth and consecration of Samuel

1:19 They rose early in the morning and worshipped before Yahweh and then set out and returned to their home in Ramah. Elkanah had intercourse with Hannah his wife and Yahweh was mindful of her.

1:20 She conceived and gave birth to a son, and called him Samuel 'since' she said 'I asked Yahweh for him.' When a year had gone by,

1:21 the husband Elkanah went up again with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to Yahweh and to fulfil his vow.

1:22 Hannah, however, did not go up, having said to her husband, 'Not before the child is weaned. Then I will bring him and present him before Yahweh and he shall stay there for ever.'

1:23 Elkanah her husband then said to her, 'Do what you think fit; wait until you have weaned him. May Yahweh bring about what you have said.' So the woman stayed behind and nursed her child until his weaning.

1:24 When she had weaned him, she took him up with her together with a three-year old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the temple of Yahweh at Shiloh; and the child was with them.

1:25 They slaughtered the bull and the child's mother came to Eli.

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

1:26 She said, 'If you please, my lord. As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to Yahweh.

1:27 This is the child I prayed for, and Yahweh granted me what I asked him.

1:28 Now I make him over to Yahweh for the whole of his life. He is made over to Yahweh.'

There she left him, for Yahweh.

The song of Hannah

2:1 Then Hannah said this prayer: 'My heart exults in Yahweh, my horn is exalted in my God, my mouth derides my foes, for I rejoice in your power of saving.

2:2 There is none as holy as Yahweh, (indeed, there is no one but you) no rock like our God.

2:3 Do not speak and speak with haughty words, let not arrogance come from your mouth. For Yahweh is an all-knowing God and his is the weighing of deeds.

2:4 The bow of the mighty is broken but the feeble have girded themselves with strength.

2:5 The sated hire themselves out for bread but the famished cease from labour; the barren woman bears sevenfold, but the mother of many is desolate.

2:6 Yahweh gives death and life, brings down to Sheol and draws up;

2:7 Yahweh makes poor and rich, he humbles and also exalts.

2:8 He raises the poor from the dust, he lifts the needy from the dunghill to give them a place with princes, and to assign them a seat of honour; for to Yahweh the props of the earth belong, on these he has poised the world.

2:9 He safeguards the steps of his faithful but the wicked vanish in darkness (for it is not by strength that man triumphs).

2:10 The enemies of Yahweh are shattered, the Most High thunders in the heavens. Yahweh judges the ends of the earth, he endows his king with power, he exalts the horn of his Anointed.'

FFC Reading Plan
WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

2:11 Then she left for Ramah, but the boy stayed to minister to Yahweh in the presence of Eli the priest.

Reflections:



ESTHER

Day 7 Day 7 Day 7 Day 7 Day 7 Day 7 Day 7 Day 7 Day 7
Esther Chapter 8

The royal favour passes to the Jews

8:1 That same day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the persecutor of the Jews. Mordecai was presented to the king, Esther having revealed their mutual relationship.

8:2 The king, who had recovered his signet ring from Haman, took it off and gave it to Mordecai, while Esther gave Mordecai charge of Haman's house.

8:3 Esther again went to speak to the king. She fell at his feet, weeping and imploring his favour, to frustrate the wicked scheme devised by Haman the Agagite and his plot against the Jews.

8:4 The king held out the golden sceptre to her, whereupon Esther rose and stood face to face with him.

8:5 'If such is the king's good pleasure,' she said 'and if I have found favour before him, if my petition seems proper to him and if I myself