

How God Breaks the Glass Ceiling

For a very patriarchal society, God used a remarkable set of women in leadership roles in the stories of the Old Testament:

- **Eve** was the mother of all living (Genesis 3:20).
- **Miriam** is described as a prophet (Exodus 15:20). She may have been the sister who watched over Moses in his basket when he was discovered by Pharaoh. She led the women in singing and dancing after Moses led the Children of Israel across the Red Sea (Exodus 15). She was temporarily struck down with leprosy after complaining against Moses (Numbers 12).
- **Sarah** played a significant role in the story of Abraham and the formation of the Israelite people (Genesis 17-25). The same is true of **Rebecca** (Genesis 24-29), and **Rachel** and **Leah** (Genesis 29-35).
- **Rahab** protected the two spies Joshua sent to Jericho (Joshua 2).
- **Deborah** was a prophet and judge ruling over Israel. She led the Children of Israel to victory in a battle against the Canaanites (Judges 4). Barak, the commander of the army, refused to go into battle without her, and God granted them victory.
- **Jael** killed Sisera, captain of the Canaanite army by driving a peg through his temple (Judges 4).
- The **five daughters of Zelophehad** faced Moses and the entire community of Israel to demand land as their inheritance (Numbers 27).
- **Ruth** and **Naomi** are a beautiful example of God's dealings with women.
- **Hannah** was barren until God answered her prayers. She gave birth to the Samuel whom she dedicated to God (1 Samuel 1).

- **Abigail** saved her household by providing for David (1 Samuel 25). She later became King David's wife.
- A **young servant girl** directed Naaman to go to Elisha for healing (2 Kings 5)
- When King Josiah didn't know what to do, his advisors consulted with **Huldah**, a female prophet, who spoke God's word to them (2 Kings 22).
- The teachings of **King Lemuel's mother** are part of Scripture (Proverbs 31)
- **Shallum's daughters** helped repair the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3:12)
- God used **Queen Esther** to save the Jewish people (Esther).

Not only does the history of Israel include these women, several women are described in the genealogy of Jesus: **Tamar, Rahab, Ruth** and **Bathsheba** (Matthew 1). God has used women throughout human history.

*Adapted from **Felicity Dale's** blog, Kingdom Women. Felicity Dale is the author of numerous books including "Simply Church." She is an advocate for women in the church and trains people to start simple, organic house churches around the world.*