

Biblical Narratives - Women Whom God Rescued from Shame

A word about "Barrenness."

Overwhelming desperation accompanies infertility. The global fertility market size was valued at USD 33.1 billion in 2020. Sometimes the shame comes from within.



Genesis 18 & 21: Sarah is barren, and in her 90's. God gives Sarah a son. She names him "Laughter!"



Genesis 29 & 30: Rachel is loved by Jacob, but is barren. God not only give her a son, but he is Joseph, the one who will save the clan of Jacob (Israel) in Egypt.



Genesis 38: Tamar (not a Jew) is married to Judah's son, (Judah is one of Jacob's 12 sons, and brother to Joseph – of the coat of many colors story. Tamar's husband dies before they have children. His brother is forced to marry her, but refuses to impregnate her, which keeps her outside the clan of Jacob (Israel). He dies. Judah still refuses to bring her into the family. She surreptitiously gets Judah to lay with her by posing as a prostitute, he doesn't know it's her. She becomes pregnant, proves it is Judah's child and is incorporated into the clan. She is honored in Jesus' lineage, Matt. 1.



Joshua 2 & 6: Rahab (not a Jew) is a prostitute in the city of Jericho. She's heard of the Israelites being led by God and wants to be part of that movement. She houses Israeli spies, helps them escape and aids in the demise of Jericho by the Israelites. She is honored in Jesus' lineage, Matt. 1.



Ruth: Ruth is a Moabite widow (not a Jew). She loves her Jewish mother-in-law, Naomi, and wants to remain in the Jewish family. Naomi arranges an encounter with a distant cousin and Ruth becomes the grandmother of King David. She is honored in Jesus' lineage, Matt. 1.

1 Samuel 1, 2:1-10, 18-21: Hannah is barren, and elderly. She is so desperate for a child the Eli, the priest, thinks she is drunk while praying in his presence. God gives her a son, Samuel, who becomes one of the greatest prophet to Israel... and she has several more children.



1 Samuel 25:1-42: Abigail is married to Nabal, a nasty fellow. David is on the run, hiding from King Saul, who wants to kill him. David's army helps feed Nabal's men. When David needs food he sends messages to Nabal for him to reciprocate. Nabal refuses, and David is ready to kill him and his men. Abigail intervenes with food and she pleas for Nabal's safety. When Nabal hears what she's done, he falls stricken and dies, and she is now a childless widow. David then takes Abigail and she becomes the wife to a king.



2 Samuel 12: Bathsheba is a Hittite (not a Jew), seen by King David, bathing on her roof. He takes her, impregnates her, and has her husband killed. He then takes her as his queen. The child dies, but her second child is King Solomon. She is honored in Jesus' lineage, Matt. 1.



1 Kings 17:7-24: The Widow of Zarepheth. During a great famine, Elijah is sent by God to Sidon (north of Israel, near Tyre) to a Canaanite widow, living in poverty with her son. As long as Elijah is her guest, and the famine remains, God refills her jars of flour and oil so they have bread to eat. Her son dies, and Elijah raises him from the dead.



Esther: Esther is living in Babylon with the exiled Jews. The King's counselor Haman, hates the Jews and wants them wiped out. He talks the king into passing laws that make all subjects bow to the King, or die. Esther's uncle convinces her to try out for the Miss Babylon pageant, the winner getting the prize of becoming the King's new wife. She wins. She uses her beauty and influence to overturn Haman's plot and saves her people.