

Women in the Days of the Kings

Memory Verse: *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10 NIV).*

Background Helps:

We move past the reign of King David to consider prominent women from the rest of the period of the kings of Israel and Judah. Some of these women can be classified as “good”: the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-10, 13), the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-24), the widowed wife of the prophet (2 Kings 4:1-7), and the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:8-37; 8:1-6). Two of these women can be classified as “evil”: Jezebel (1 Kings 16:29-33; 18:1-19; 19:1-2; 21:1-29; 2 Kings 9:1-37) and Athaliah (2 Chron. 22-23; 24:7). Several of these women were Gentiles: the Queen of Sheba, the widow of Zarephath, and Jezebel. (Athaliah, the daughter of King Ahab and Jezebel, was of mixed race.) Several of these women are mentioned in the New Testament: the Queen of Sheba (Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31), the widow of Zarephath (Luke 4:25-26), and Jezebel (Rev. 2:20).

Lesson Helps:

In keeping with the truth of our memory verse, that Christ will judge each person for the *good* or *bad* done while in the body (2 Cor. 5:10), the female characters in this week's readings are a mixed lot of good and evil. Thus your lesson can focus on either positive or negative examples.

1. My aim is to teach my students about the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon, so that they will seek after the true wisdom found in Jesus Christ. This aim reflects our Lord's own use of this Old Testament story (1 Kings 10:1-10, 13) as seen in Matthew 12:42 (Luke 11:31). After considering the Queen's long journey and her visit with King Solomon in 1 Kings 10, point your students to the true wisdom found in Jesus Christ, perhaps using such passages as 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16; 3:18-23 or Colossians 1:28-2:10. This lesson may be especially fitting for teens and college and career age adults.
2. My aim is to teach my students about the faith of two widows (the widow of Zarephath and the widowed wife of the prophet), so that they will trust the Lord to supply all their needs. The miracle stories involving these two widows would especially encourage the faith of our senior citizens, although all of us need to exercise faith in the adequacy of God's provision.
3. My aim is to teach my students the story of the Shunammite woman, so that they will follow her godly example. Refer to your teacher's handout “Handling the Character Study Lesson.” The Shunammite woman appears to be a good candidate for a “combination of characteristics” lesson. What exemplary qualities

do the episodes in 2 Kings 4:8-37 and 8:1-6 reveal in her character? How did God reward her? How can we follow her example today? This lesson is fitting for all ages.

4. My aim is to teach my students about the wicked influence of Queen Jezebel, so that they will aim to be a good influence in their family and in their community. Focus your lesson on the evil influence that Jezebel had on her husband, Ahab, on her descendants (include a study of Athaliah), and on the nation of Israel (both northern and southern kingdoms). We also are constantly influencing others, for either good or evil, both in our family and in the wider community. Urge your students to be an influence for good. (Alternatively, you could focus your lesson on not allowing evil people to wrongly influence you!) Again, good for all ages.

Remember to keep your lessons interesting by using a variety of teaching methods. See suggestion #1 in your teacher's handout "An Introduction to Prominent Women of the Bible."

Assignment:

-  Read about Esther (Prominent Women of the Bible).
-  Memorize Romans 8:28.