

M.O.B. Rule! (Mothers Of the Bible Rule!) *(Hebrew name pronunciation in italics)*

Sarah (*Suh-rah*): story told in Genesis 12, 16-18, 20, 21, 23. God changed Sarai's name to Sarah when He confirmed his promise to Abraham that she would have a son. Both names share a similar root, and are believed to mean “princess” or “noble woman”. The change of name is often interpreted as a change in status, reflecting God's promise to make Sarah a “mother of nations”

Hagar (*Haw-gar*): story told in Genesis 16 & 21. Hagar means “flight”, “forsaken”, “foreigner” or “Sojourner”. Hagar was told to name her son Ishmael, meaning “God hears”. Hagar is Sarah's Egyptian slave woman that she gives to Abraham as second wife and who would bear a child for him. After Hagar becomes pregnant, Sarah treats her harshly, and eventually Hagar flees from her mistress into the wilderness where God's messenger speaks to her. She is the only character in the Bible who gives God a name, El Roi, “The God who sees me”.

Rebekah (*RIHV-kah*) Genesis chapters 24-27. Her name means “to tie firmly” or “secured”. The second (after Sarah) of the matriarchs in the ancestor stories of Genesis, Rebekah is one of the most prominent women in the Bible. The story of the courting of Rebekah in Genesis 24 is the longest chapter in the Book of Genesis. When Rebekah's son, Jacob, is sent to secure a spouse and escape from Esau, he identifies himself to his future bride (and cousin) Rachel, not as the son of Isaac, but rather as “Rebekah's son” in Genesis 29:12.

Leah (*Lay-uh*) & **Rachel** (*Rah-Khel*): story is in Genesis 29 & 30. The two sisters are in competition for status. Jacob prefers Rachel. In compensation, God “opened Leah's womb”, but Rachel is barren. Leah's fertility quickly results in four sons. Leah remains insecure and in naming her sons shows her sadness as she hopes to gain his love through bearing them. She names her first son Reuben (“*see, a son*”) her next Simeon (“*God heard that I am unloved*”), the third, Levi (“*now my husband will be with me*”), and the fourth, Judah (“*thanks!*”). Rachel, did bear a child, Joseph who went on to do great things, too. Both are honored in Ruth 4:11 as “who together built up the house of Israel”.

Jochebed (*Yuh-hoved*): story told in *Exodus 2*. Means “God is glory”. Wife of Amram and mother of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. After giving birth to a son, Jochebed hid him for three months, until she could conceal him no longer. Then she crafted a papyrus basket, coated it with tar and pitch to make it waterproof, and placed her baby inside. Setting the basket among the reeds along the Nile River, she trusted her infant to God's care. Pharaoh's daughter discovered the child and recognized him as a Hebrew baby. Miriam bravely approached and offered to find a Hebrew woman to nurse the child. When

Pharaoh's daughter agreed, Miriam offered her mother Jochebed who was then paid to nurse and raise her own son!

Samson's mom is unnamed in the Book of Judges. Some scholars have speculated she could be Hazlelponi (*Hah-zel-el-bony*) in 1 Chronicles 4:3. However, Scripture places greater emphasis on her obedience and faith than on her identity. She was the wife of Manoah, from the tribe of Dan, and was barren, unable to conceive.

Elizabeth (*Ell-ee-SHEV-ah*) was a descendant of Aaron and the wife of Zechariah the priest. She was described in Luke 1:6 as “righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord”. Yet she bore the pain of barrenness, often misunderstood as a sign of divine disfavor. For a woman married to a priest, this would have been especially difficult for her to bear. When her cousin Mary visited her, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the baby John leapt in her womb. Elizabeth recognized Mary as “the mother of my Lord” and blessed her as told in Luke 1:42-45.

Mary (*Miryam*): what more need be said? A young virgin, chosen by God to divinely conceive, bear and raise the Son of God and the Messiah. Her willingness to follow God's plan, despite the difficulty it would cause her resulted in the greatest story of motherhood in history.

Happy Mother's Day!

One of the things we all must understand is that the people in God's Word are normal, everyday people like us. That includes the mothers we saw today and many other women of scripture.

Though a good mother is a wonder to behold – a superhero in every respect – their “superpower” is an obedience to God and a desire to do His Will. God is where the power comes from for all us to do anything of value to Him.

Give your all to God and He will give you all you need!