



ROSE VISUAL  
BIBLE STUDIES

6 SESSIONS

# WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

## Old Testament

### *Bible Study*





# The Woman of Shunem

After the death of King Solomon, the kingdom of Israel fell into a brutal civil war which resulted in the kingdom splitting in two—into a northern kingdom and a southern one.

The books of 1 and 2 Kings (as their names suggest) record the exploits of dozens of northern and southern kings. But scattered throughout these epic narratives are the stories of common men and women struggling to survive. In their stories, we get a break from the drama of national events and are allowed to peek into the lives of ordinary individuals—such as the woman from the village of Shunem who we'll focus on in this session.

These minor characters may not contribute much to the larger national drama of ancient Israel; yet their stories are important enough to be preserved in God's Word. *Why are they here? Why does God want us to read and remember their stories?* As you work through this session's narrative, stay curious about what the story of the woman of Shunem can tell you about God's character.





## *Explore It*

### Geography

The woman from Shunem lived in a region you have already encountered in this study. In the session about Deborah and Jael, we looked at the importance of the Jezreel Valley. On the far eastern edge of that valley was a long rectangular valley called the Harod Valley. It completed the east-west connection that traders, travelers, and armies envied. The small town of Shunem sat on the northwestern edge of the Harod Valley near the large city of Jezreel, which was where the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel built a palace. At the other end of the valley sat the monumental city of Beth-shan. Shunem was positioned along the heavily traveled international road that skirted to the north of the agriculturally rich fields.



View looking northwest from Jezreel. To the right (east) of center is the Hill of Moreh. The white buildings on its lower left slope mark the site of biblical Shunem. (Photo by [www.HolyLandPhotos.org](http://www.HolyLandPhotos.org). Used by permission.)

Simply identifying where her hometown was helps us better imagine her world. She lived on desirable land that was rich in agriculture. The international road in the valley would make her accustomed to seeing a variety of travelers from local and foreign places with whom to trade goods and ideas. Shunem may have been a small town, but its location on this significant road and near one of the royal palaces meant that the residents were well informed about political struggles. The woman of Shunem was well placed to notice the prophet Elisha's travels and provide him with hospitality.

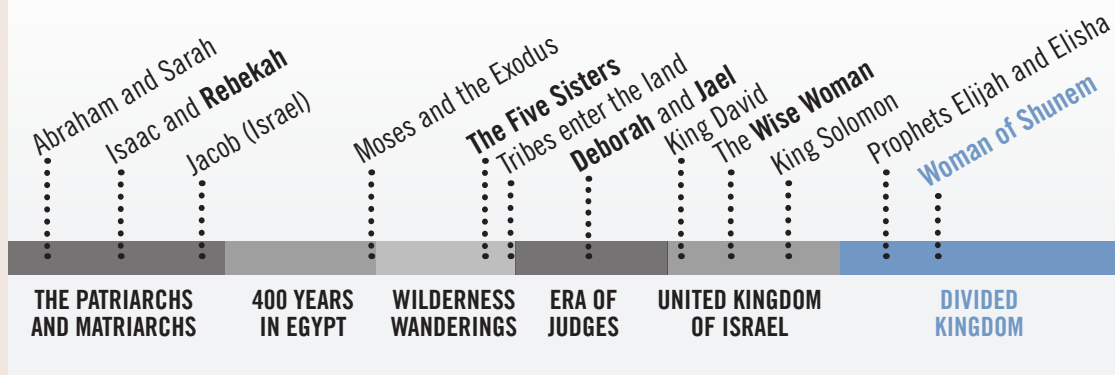


## Culture

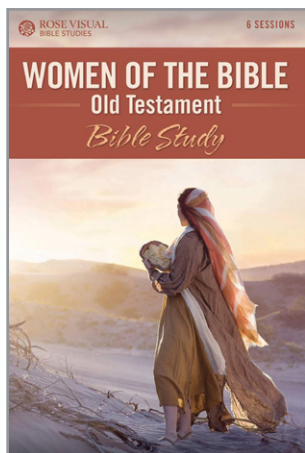
Hospitality was an essential part of ancient culture, particularly since there were no inns or hotels for travelers. People relied on a host family at each stop to provide food, water, and protection. For any village, hospitality was a form of diplomacy and networking. A traveler received food and protection, while the host not only made sure the traveler was not a threat to the village, but also that the traveler had opportunities to create broader networks of relationships and trade.

Recognizing that Elisha was a man of God who performed miracles, the woman of Shunem opened her home and extended hospitality to him when he traveled through the Harod Valley. By opening her home to Elisha, she opened her home to all who traveled with him. As their relationship grew, the woman's generosity expanded from offering meals to converting part of her house into a room set aside for Elisha. By modern standards, Israelite homes were not large. Every room had multiple purposes. Even the flat roofs during the hot, arid months were used to dry newly harvested grains during the day and then became valuable places to rest when the evening breeze came. The fact that the woman of Shunem not only built and furnished a room but also set it aside as Elisha's room indicates that she was wealthy and also very generous with what she had.

## Time Line







## Rose Visual Bible Study: Women of the Bible - Old Testament Bible Study

Loaded with charts, graphs, images, and fascinating facts, the *Women of the Bible: Old Testament Bible Study* is easy enough that the new believer understands, but in-depth enough that the longtime churchgoer still comes away learning something new.

Rose Visual Bible Studies are packed with full-color visuals that show key information at a glance! With their easy-to-use format—read it, know it, explore it, and live it—these six-week inductive studies are perfect for gaining a deeper insight into God's Word.

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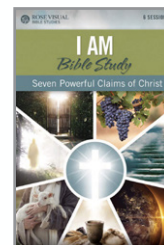


## The Lord's Prayer Bible Study

Whether you have repeated The Lord's Prayer countless times in church or are new to this classic prayer, this Bible study will help you dive deeper into the rich theological and spiritual meaning behind each line. You will discover more about God's attributes and how to pray to our Father in heaven.

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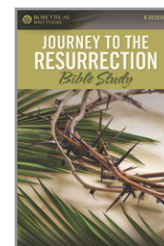


## I AM Bible Study

In the Gospel of John, Jesus uses "I Am" statements that tell his listeners exactly who he is: the Bread of Life; the Light of the World; the Gate; the Good Shepherd; the Resurrection and the Life; the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and the True Vine. These claims infuriated the religious leaders and eventually led to Jesus' crucifixion.

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## Journey to the Resurrection

Jesus didn't just come to earth to die on the cross. He came to show us how to live an abundant life, a life focused on God in every season—even in times of weakness, brokenness, and betrayal. As you journey through Jesus' final days, you'll see spiritual practices that sustained him, including fasting, repentance, and confession.

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