

Women in the Gospel according to Luke

Women are mentioned frequently in all four of the Gospels, but are especially prominent in Luke:

Passage (Source)	Brief Description
Luke 1:5-7 (L)	Zechariah's wife Elizabeth is named; both are righteous and old
Luke 1:13, 18 (L)	Gabriel and Zechariah each mention Elizabeth briefly
Luke 1:24-25 (L)	Elizabeth conceives & praises God for taking away her "disgrace" (of being barren)
Luke 1:26-38 (L)	Annunciation: Gabriel visits Mary to proclaim Jesus' birth; Mary agrees to cooperate
Luke 1:39-56 (L)	Mary visits Elizabeth; Elizabeth praises Mary; Mary praises God in the "Magnificat"
Luke 1:57-61 (L)	Elizabeth gives birth to John; she (surprisingly) is the one who names him
Luke 2:5-7 (L)	Mary goes with Joseph to Bethlehem; there she gives birth to her firstborn child
Luke 2:15-20 (L)	Shepherds visit Mary & Joseph; Mary treasures all things in her heart (v. 19)
Luke 2:22 & 27 (L)	" They " go to Jerusalem for "their" purification; Simeon speaks to both "parents"
Luke 2:33-35 (L)	Simeon speaks directly to Mary : a sword shall pass through her heart
Luke 2:36-38 (L)	Prophet-widow Anna praises God and speaks to the people about Jesus
Luke 2:41-51 (L)	Both parents take Jesus to Jerusalem; his Mother speaks (v. 48) and "treasures" all (v. 51)
Luke 3:19 (Mk)	Wicked Herodias mentioned only very briefly (contrast Mark 6:17-29)
Luke 4:25-26 (L)	Jesus refers to OT examples: the widows of Israel & the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:1-7)
Luke 4:38-39 (Mk)	Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law ; she then immediately serves them all
Luke 7:11-17 (L)	Jesus has compassion for a widow in Nain , restoring her only son to life
Luke 7:28 (Q)	"Among those born of women , no one is greater than John" (the Baptist)
Luke 7:35 (L)	" Wisdom is vindicated by all her children "
Luke 7:36-50 (Mk)	A sinful woman anoints Jesus and is forgiven; Jesus contrasts her with Simon the Pharisee
Luke 8:1-3 (L)	Many Galilean women support Jesus & his disciples: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna , others
Luke 8:19-21 (Mk)	Jesus' mother & brothers come; those who hear & do God's word are his mother/brothers
Luke 8:40-42, 49-56 (Mk)	Jesus restores Jairus' daughter to life; the child's parents are both mentioned (vv. 51, 56)
Luke 8:43-48 (Mk)	Jesus heals a hemorrhaging woman ; she takes the initiative and is praised for her faith
Luke 10:38-42 (L)	Martha serves & complains while Mary sits at Jesus' feet (like a disciple!) and is praised
Luke 11:27-28 (L)	A woman says, "Blessed is the <i>womb</i> that bore you and the <i>breasts</i> that nursed you!"
Luke 11:31 (Q)	Jesus refers to the Queen of the South , who came to hear Solomon's wisdom (1 Kgs 10:1-10)
Luke 12:45 (L)	In a parable, both men & women slaves are beaten by a wicked manager
Luke 12:53 (Q)	Families will be divided: father / son; mother / daughter; mother-in-law / daughter-in-law
Luke 13:10-17 (L)	On a sabbath, Jesus cures a woman who had been crippled for 18 years
Luke 13:20-21 (Q)	Parable of the Kingdom of God being like a woman mixing yeast & flour
Luke 13:34 (Q)	Jesus wants to gather Jerusalem's children as a mother hen protects her brood
Luke 14:26 (Q)	Disciples must "hate" their father, mother, wife , children, brothers, and sisters
Luke 15:8-10 (L)	Parable of a woman who lost & found a coin, then rejoices with her friends
Luke 16:18 (Mk)	A brief saying against men divorcing their wives or marrying divorced women
Luke 17:26-27 (Q)	"In the days of Noah, people were marrying and giving in marriage " (see Gen 6-8)
Luke 17:32 (L)	"Remember Lot's wife " (see Gen 19:15-26)
Luke 17:35 (Q)	Two women will be grinding grain: one will be taken, one left
Luke 18:1-8 (L)	Parable of a widow fighting for her rights against an unjust judge
Luke 18:20 (Mk)	"Honor your father and mother " (cited from Exod 20:12 and Deut 5:16)
Luke 18:28-30 (Mk)	Disciples who have left wives , brothers, parents , children & possessions will be rewarded
Luke 20:27-36 (Mk)	Sadducees question the resurrection with story of a woman who had seven husbands
Luke 21:1-4 (Mk)	A poor widow's small offering is worth more than the offerings of rich people
Luke 21:23-24 (Mk)	Alas for pregnant and nursing women in the days of Jerusalem's destruction
Luke 22:56-57 (Mk)	Peter's first denial comes after a servant girl challenges him
Luke 23:26-31 (L)	Jesus speaks to wailing women in the crowd on the way to his crucifixion
Luke 23:49 (Mk)	The women from Galilee watch Jesus' crucifixion from a distance
Luke 23:55-56 (Mk)	The women see where Jesus is buried and prepare spices & ointments for his body
Luke 24:1-11 (Mk & L)	Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary of James , and other women find Jesus' tomb empty; two messengers speak with them; they remember Jesus' words and tell the other disciples
Luke 24:22-24 (L)	Two disciples (two men? or a married couple? "Cleopas" in 24:18) on the road to Emmaus tell Jesus how some women of their group had gone to the tomb & saw a vision of angels

Male/Female Pairs and Parallels in Luke:

First Story (ref. & source)	Second Story (ref. & source)
Angel Gabriel appears to Zechariah (1:8-23 - L)	Angel Gabriel appears to Mary (1:26-38 - L)
Canticle of Mary (<i>Magnificat</i> ; 1:46-55 - L)	Canticle of Zechariah (<i>Benedictus</i> ; 1:68-79 - L)
Simeon encounters the infant Jesus & his parents in the Jerusalem Temple (2:25-35 - L)	Anna thanks God & prophesies about Jesus in the Jerusalem Temple (2:36-38 - L)
Widow of Zarephat & Israelite widows (4:25-26 - L)	Naaman the Syrian & Israelite lepers (4:27 - L)
Exorcism of a Demoniac at Capernaum (4:31-37 - Mk)	Healing of Simon's mother-in-law at Capernaum (4:38-39 - Mk)
Centurion's slave is healed (7:1-10 - Q)	Widow of Nain's son raised from the dead (7:11-17 - L)
Naming of the twelve apostles of Jesus (6:12-16 - Mk)	Naming of women who accompanied Jesus (8:1-3 - L)
Jairus' daughter is raised to life (8:41-42, 49-56 - Mk)	Bleeding woman is healed (8:43-46 - Mk)
Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37 - L)	Examples of Martha and Mary (10:38-42 - L)
A neighbor asks for bread at midnight (11:5-8 - L)	A widow asks for justice persistently (18:1-11 - L)
A woman in a crowd shouts out to Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bore you..." (11:27 - L)	A man at a dinner tells Jesus, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (14:15 - L)
The Queen of the South (11:31 - Q)	The Ninevites (11:32 - Q)
A crippled woman is healed (13:10-17 - L)	A lame man is healed (14:1-6 - L)
" Daughter of Abraham " reference (13:16 - L)	" Son of Abraham " reference (19:9 - L)
Parable of a man planting a mustard seed (13:18-19 - Mk)	Parable of a woman mixing yeast & flour (13:20-21 - Q)
Parable of a shepherd looking for a lost sheep (15:3-7 - Q)	Parable of a woman looking for a lost coin (15:8-10 - L)
Example of two men together asleep (17:34 - Q)	Example of two women grinding meal (17:35 - Q)
A servant girl questions Peter (22:56-57 - Mk)	Two men also question Peter (22:58+59 - Mk/L)
Simon of Cyrene carries Jesus' cross (23:26 - Mk)	Jesus meets women on the way to Calvary (23:27-29 - L)
Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus' body (23:50-53 - Mk)	Women see where Jesus is buried (23:55-56 - Mk)
Women find Jesus' tomb empty (24:1-11 - Mk)	Two disciples journey to Emmaus (24:13-35 - L)

Sources: L = only in Luke; Q = also in Matthew, but not Mark; Mk = also in Mark (and usually also Matthew)
 Note: When Luke mentions "disciples" or "they," do *not* assume the reference is *only* to men; it may *also* include women!

Women in the Gospel according to John

The Fourth Gospel does not mention as many women as appear in Luke's Gospel, yet the female characters in John are found in some very crucial and prominent roles:

Prominent female characters in key stories of John:

- 2:1-12 The **Mother of Jesus** at the Wedding of Cana
- 4:1-42 The **Samaritan Woman** at the Well
- 11:1-45 **Martha and Mary** intercede with Jesus for their brother Lazarus
- 12:1-8 **Mary** anoints Jesus in Bethany
- 19:25b-27 The **Mother of Jesus** and **other Women** at the Foot of the Cross
- 20:1-2 **Mary Magdalene** discovers the Empty Tomb
- 20:11-18 Jesus Appears to **Mary Magdalene**
- [8:1-11] The Woman caught in Adultery [*not originally in John; maybe a Lukan story?*]



Lesser references to women and feminine imagery in John:

- 3:4 Nicodemus asks about returning a *mother's womb* and being born a second time
- 3:29 John (the Baptist) uses an analogy involving a *bride and bridegroom*
- 6:42 Some Jews claim that they know Jesus' "*father and mother*"
- 9:18-23 Both parents of the Man Born Blind (implicitly *also the mother*) are questioned by the Pharisees
- 12:15 The Evangelist mentions the "*daughter of Zion*" while quoting Zech 9:9
- 16:21 Jesus uses the image of a *woman in labor* as an analogy for sorrow turning into joy
- 18:16-17 A *woman* challenges Peter twice in the courtyard of the High Priest

Question for Reflection: Which of the *female characters* in the Fourth Gospel do you consider the most important as a model of faith? Which one do you find most inspiring? Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan Woman, the Mother of Jesus, Martha and Mary of Bethany?