I Have a Name: Readings on Women through Whom God Worked

Lee Magness

This series of short readings reflects the contributions of women amidst God’s covenant people. The reading might be appropriate for Mother’s Day or Pentecost season as a way of celebrating women in the life and ministry of the church. The “I” lines may be read by the same woman or by a series of different women, one for each Biblical character (W). The “She” lines may be read by a single reader, a reader’s choir, or the whole congregation (R).

Prologue
W We are the daughters of God
   We are the sisters and wives and mothers of men
   We were planned by God to be partnered with men
R They were in the beginning good
    They are in the end graced
W We are women
   We have names
R We celebrate their names

Eve  

(Genesis 1.26—3.24)

W I am also the image, the likeness alike
   I knew the joy of joining, flesh of my flesh
   I shared the shame, felt its effects
R She was the mother of all living
    Before she fell, she fit
W I am a woman
   I have a name
R Her name is Eve

Sarah  

(Genesis 21.1–7)

W I had a claim to that covenant too
   The promise of son and nation and blessing
   I too laughed and felt little Laughter leap in my womb
R She was wife and mother to covenant-bearers
    She was a covenant-bearer
W I am a woman
   I have a name
R Her name is Sarah
Zipporah

(Exodus 2.15–22, 4.24–26)

W I was a foreigner, a stranger to the covenant
   I married a murderer, a man named Moses
   I reminded that shepherd of the sign of the covenant
R She was the wife of the prophet of God
   She was the mother of circumcised sons
W I am a woman
   I have a name
R Her name is Zipporah

Miriam

(Exodus 15.19–21)

W I sang God’s people through the sea
   I saw horse and rider hurled into the sea
   I danced the daughters across on dry ground
R She was a prophet of God
   She saw and spoke for God
W I am a woman
   I have a name
R Her name is Miriam

Rahab

(Joshua 2.1–21, 6.15–25)

W I was more than a prostitute—or less, a priestess
   I lived in the walls that came tumbling down
   I heard God’s hand at work in his people
R She protected the people of God with a rope
   They protected her with a scarlet thread
W I am a woman
   I have a name
R Her name is Rahab

Deborah

(Judges 4.4–5.12)

W I dispensed justice in the name of Jehovah
   I led the Lord’s army into battle
   I arose a mother in Israel
R She was a prophet of God
   She saw and spoke…and led for God
W I am a woman
   I have a name
R Her name is Deborah
**Ruth**  
*(Ruth 1.1–4.22)*

W I gave my life to my mother-in-law  
   I gave my heart to her kinsman  
   I gave my self to her God  
R She was the great-grandmother of David  
   She mothered the Messiah  
W I am a woman  
   I have a name  
R Her name is Ruth

**Hannah**  
*(1 Samuel 1.1–28)*

W I cried bitter years for a baby  
   I prayed and pled and begged for a baby  
   I pressed him on the priest, still a baby  
R She was meant to mother  
   She dedicated her darling to the Lord  
W I am a woman  
   I have a name  
R Her name is Hannah

**Huldah**  
*(2 Kings 22.1–23.3)*

W When they found the long-lost law, the king came to me  
   The king sought out my insight  
   I called for repentance and guided reform  
R She was a prophet of God  
   She saw and spoke for God  
W I am a woman  
   I have a name  
R Her name is Huldah

**Mary**  
*(Luke 1.26–2.52)*

W I was the servant overshadowed by the Lord  
   I suffered the pain of the miracle of his birth  
   I suffered the pain of the miracle of his death  
R She held him like a son  
   She held him like a sword  
W I am a woman  
   I have a name  
R Her name is Mary
Anna

(Luke 2.36–38)

W I was only eighty-four when I finally found him
   I had waited, relishing the redemption
   I held him, a toddler in the temple
R She was a prophet of God
   She saw and spoke for...and saw God
W I am a woman
 I have a name
R Her name is Anna

Mary


W I had seven demons that he had driven out
   I followed and financed the steps of my Savior
   I stood at the cross and knelt at the tomb
R She was the first witness of the risen Lord
   She was the first to go-and-tell the good news
W I am a woman
 I have a name
R Her name is Mary

Joanna and Susanna

(Luke 8.1–3)

W We had also been healed
   We had also helped
   We also followed and funded
R They were the companions of his way
   They listened and learned
W We too are women
   We too have names
R Their names are Joanna and Susanna

Mary and Martha

(Luke 10.38–42; John 11.1–45)

W We too called him the Christ, the Son of God
   We loved Lazarus like the brother he was
   Ours was the last home the Christ called home
R They were sisters to each other
   They were like sisters to the Lord
W We are women
   We have names
R Their names are Mary and Martha
**Dorcas**  
*(Acts 9.36–42)*  
W I sewed the clothes the widows wore  
I sowed the seeds of the gospel with each garment  
I was raised by Peter in the upper room  
R She was the seamstress of Joppa  
She was loved by the lowly  
W I am a woman  
I have a name  
R Her name is Dorcas  

**Lydia**  
*(Acts 16.13–15)*  
W I gathered with the women to worship God  
I listened to Paul at the place of prayer  
I opened my heart to the way and my home to the wayfarers  
R She was a buyer and a seller  
She was baptized with her household  
W I am a woman  
I have a name  
R Her name is Lydia  

**Priscilla**  
*(Acts 18.2–3, 24–26; Romans 16.3; 1 Corinthians 16.19; 2 Timothy 4.19)*  
W I taught the teacher the way of the Lord  
I partnered with Paul in the work of the Lord  
I opened my home to the household of faith  
R She was a learner and a teacher  
She was a wife and a witness  
W I am a woman  
I have a name  
R Her name is Priscilla  

**Phoebe**  
*(Romans 16.1–2)*  
W I was his sister, the sister he sent  
I was a minister, a servant from Cenchrea  
I cared for Paul and cared for his correspondence  
R She was a leader in the church of the Lord  
She was a letter-carrier—Romans, no less  
W I am a woman  
I have a name  
R Her name is Phoebe
Euodia and Syntyche

W  We were his co-workers too
    We wrestled side by side for the sake of the gospel
    When we wrestled he called us together to his side
R  They were Paul’s partners in pastoring
    They were pastored by Paul
W  We are women
    We have names
R  Their names are Euodia and Syntyche

Lois and Eunice

W  We timothied him first in the faith
    We showed him the Shema, taught him the Torah
    We gave to the Lord the one to whom we had given the Lord
R  They were grandmother and mother
    They were his models of ministry
W  We are women
    We have names
R  Their names are Lois and Eunice

Epilogue

W  We are the daughters of God
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R  We celebrate their names

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