

Who was Adah in the Bible?

The Bible mentions two women named Adah. The first Adah was the wife of Lamech and the mother of Jabal and Jubal (Genesis 4:19-20). She is also the second woman named in the Bible, the first being Eve (Genesis 3:20).

The second Adah was one of three Canaanite women whom Esau took as wives (Genesis 36:2). This Adah was the daughter of Elon the Hittite and became the mother of Esau's firstborn son, Eliphaz (Genesis 36:15). From Eliphaz came Amalek, the father of the Amalekites, enemies of Israel (Numbers 14:45).

Usually, when the Bible mentions a woman's name, it is because she was significant in the unfolding plan of God. In ancient patriarchal cultures, women were often viewed as little more than child-bearing property owned by a husband. God often inspired human writers to include women's names in genealogies, which elevated their status for all who would later read about them.

The first Adah, the wife of Lamech, was noteworthy because she was the mother of Jabal, the ancestor of nomadic ranchers. Her other son mentioned, Jubal, was a musician, and his offspring were known for crafting and mastering musical instruments (Genesis 4:20). Adah's husband committed a murder, and he boasted to Adah of his deed (verses 23-24).

The second Adah, the wife of Esau, is significant because she, like Esau's other wives, was from Canaan. This fact deeply distressed Esau's parents, Isaac and Rebekah, who commanded their younger son Jacob, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman" (Genesis 28:60).

After Jacob stole Esau's birthright, Rebekah knew she had to get Jacob away from his

brother, so she used Esau's Canaanite wives as an excuse: "Then Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I'm disgusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living'" (Genesis 27:46).

Adah and Esau's other wives most likely introduced idolatry and pagan practices into Isaac's and Rebekah's lives. Isaac, the son of promise (Genesis 17:16, 19), was to be the father of a great nation, a people set apart for the worship of the Lord (Genesis 22:17). It was of utmost importance that his only other son, Jacob, did not marry into the Canaanite tribes but take a wife from among their own people. Jacob did, and he became the ancestor of the ten tribes of Israel (Genesis 35:11-12, 23-26).

Esau's Adah represents the worldly contamination that compromise brings. Esau was weak in character and morals. He was willing to sell his godly heritage for a bowl of stew (Genesis 25:32-34). And he married women like Adah who were outside the plan of God. That sin mirrored the sin of his grandfather Abraham, who also fathered a child outside the plan of God. That sin has caused untold damage in the world ever since (Genesis 16:3-4; 25:18). And Adah's sons and grandsons also became enemies of Jacob's offspring. Adah should be a reminder to us that making friends with the world is never an option for the people of God (see James 4:4).