

beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

Adam Clarke's Commentary states: Two holy women, who it seems were assistants to the apostle in his work, probably by exhorting, visiting the sick, etc. We learn from this, that Christian women, as well as men, laboured in the ministry of the word. In those times of simplicity all persons, whether men or women, who had received the knowledge of the truth, believed it to be their duty to propagate it to the uttermost of their power. If women thus prophesied, then women preached.

Persis. The latter part of the previous verse says: Romans 16:12- Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. Again, the labor could be aptly clarified as laboring in the word, either by assisting, teaching or preaching.

Old misconceptions:

1 Timothy 2:12-- But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

I would like to enter into the equation at this time something I like to call the *rule of continuation*. By this I mean that if a Biblical doctrine is at one place true, it must be found in all other places to hold true. With this being said, let us look at the 3 statements this verse makes about women:

a. I suffer not a woman to teach

b. to usurp authority

c. to be in silence

I believe the body of evidence that I have already supplied breaks the rule of continuation on all 3 of these points, unless they are dealing with a specific case. A good friend of mine, Pastor Victor Taylor from Winona, MS., has spent years researching on this subject, and he made the following observation: "*Can a woman teach a drunken man, or any sinner man on the street? If she does, is she usurping authority over him? Remember, 'I suffer a woman NOT TO TEACH.'* So if any male members are to be saved, then BROTHER, we better quit arguing and start working on the MALE POPULATION, WOMEN CAN NOT TEACH THEM!" Why is it brother, that the sisters can be entrusted with singing, nursery, taking attendance, playing instruments, leading worship, doing all the secretarial and bookkeeping work, cleaning, ordering Sunday school literature and administration, but not dare be allowed to testify, exhort, teach or preach the Word of God.

What about in public life? Do you recognize the authority of that woman police officer, mayor, governor, school teacher or professor? Let me ask you a question, brothers. Could you do HER job, or could the church function if you were to rely on ONLY THE BROTHERS IN YOUR CHURCH to run all the offices in the church?? How much help would you get? Some will here state that this is the point, that these are her roles within the church, but how can she perform these; or any other roles, if she must keep silent? If she teaches those little

Toddlers (MALES) isn't she running the risk of usurping authority over future MALE leaders in the church and community? And what about the community? Can, as Brother Taylor noted, a woman even win souls, if they are males? Should they, if they see an opportunity, to possibly save the life of a man who needs Jesus Christ, merely pass him by and 'keep silent' for fear of usurping authority over him, waiting for a MAN to show up??

Isaiah 59:16

16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. The outpouring of unction, revelation, and ministry is not reserved, Brothers for merely men; nor has ever been for only men. History is resplendent with examples of great women of God that carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Just look at examples like Sis. Oma Ellis or Sis. Nona Freeman, to name just a couple.

Joel 2:28-29

28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons **and your daughters shall prophesy**, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

29 And also upon the servants **and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.**

SOME SPECIFIC VERSES PERTAINING TO THE POWER OF GOD'S WOMEN CHAMPIONS

1. Power to command angels because of her submissive head. 1 Corinthians 11:10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

2. Women received their dead raised to life Hebrews 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

3. The church referred to as a woman

2 John 1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

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Holy Ghost Revivals

Evangelist Wayne , Denise & Arawen Coleman

812-431-1674

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WOMEN CHAMPIONS OF GOD

BY EVANGELIST WAYNE COLEMAN

Let us take an intelligent and scholarly look at the subject of women and their roles of leadership throughout the Bible. In so doing, I hope to dispel some of the bias, as well as approach the truth of the subject, and squelch some of the well-meaning; yet uninformed ignorance on the subject. My attempts are not meant as an attack, but quite the contrary. I simply want to underscore the FACTS, and they are many, that God did, and does continue to use great women of God to carry the Gospel, and for various roles of leadership. We first must go to the record of that first among women, Eve.

Genesis 2:23-24 23 "And Adam said, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.* 24 *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*"

The Bible tells us that she was called woman, which meant 'taken out of man'. It furthers tells us, "and they shall be one flesh." Even though they were created as two separate individuals, their roles are intertwined and dependent upon each other. Notice in

Genesis 1:27:

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; **male and female created he them.** Both Adam and Eve are considered MAN. Strong's defined the word man as: (OT:120)-adam (aw-dawm'); from OT:119; ruddy i.e. a human being. Without argument, Eve is as much part of the humankind as Adam, and in fact, she is jointly Adam, and he is not complete without her.

The Bible also tells us that God calls Eve Adam's Help meet. Let's look at Webster's definition of HELP:

1. AID: ASSIST
2. IMPROVE: RELIEVE
3. TO CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

Did you notice that part of the definition for help is to: IMPROVE & RELIEVE. The role of every prominent woman in the word of God was to improve the situation or circumstances, or to relieve, which no one can do unless they have the same power or delegated authority. If someone relieves someone of their duties; they are required to perform the

Same duties as the one relieved. Therefore, I believe it is appropriate to surmise that Eve was given the same privileges and responsibility as Adam.

PROMINENT WOMEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Now let's take some time to look at some other prominent women of the Bible.

Miriam. After God delivered Israel from the Egyptians, a special woman enlisted in the Lord's service, started a victory celebration to honor their God.

Exodus 15:20-21

20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The scripture begins by defining this woman as Miriam the PROPHETESS. Let's look at the Bible definition for a prophetess.

PROPHETESS- OT:5031- nebiy'ah (neb-ee-yaw'); feminine of OT:5030; a prophetess or (generally) inspired woman; by implication, a poetess; by association a prophet's wife:

PROPHET- OT:5030- nabiy' (naw-bee'); from OT:5012; a prophet or (generally) inspired man: KJV - prophecy, that prophesy, prophet.

The Greek word for *Prophetess* is derived from the same word used for a Prophet; *Nebiyah*. This definition calls her an 'inspired woman'. We know that inspiration comes from the Holy Ghost, and the thing inspired is the word of God, which the Holy Ghost inspires or reveals to us. The definition for Prophet, the word *Nabiy*, means an 'inspired man,' with the same method of inspiration. Therefore, we see that Miriam, an inspired woman of God, was used of God to sing Israel's song of deliverance in the book of Exodus.

Hannah. I have included this next great woman champion, because of her persistent faith, and dedication to her God. I believe commitment and resolve are earmarks of proven leadership capability.

1 Samuel 1:11

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

The barrenness of Hannah did not keep her from trusting the Lord. Her commitment to the house of the Lord was greater even than the

yearning of her heart. She made a vow to give him to the ministry, and to the vow of a Nazarite

1 Samuel 1:20

20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord. We see that God honored Hannah, and even in spite of the weak high priest, Eli, she gave birth to the prophet, Samuel.

Esther. Esther was notable amongst God's champions because of her decision to be a vessel of God's deliverance for the Hebrew people. Her timely decision and fearless approach to the throne room, even though she knew the penalty for appearing unannounced was death, displayed her fearless character and integrity with God.

Esther 4:14-16

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? 15 Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Did you hear her answer to Mordecai? "If I perish, I perish," was her answer. What courage it must have taken. What if she had done what many misinterpret to do today and just 'kept silent.'

Huldah. In **2 Kings 22:14** we read a brief but important account of Hulda, a prophetess.

2 Kings 22:14

14 So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

The Bible tells us that Hilkiah the priest and other male leaders went in to ask the direction of the Lord through the lady prophet. I find it very interesting that firstly, they could not get the answer for themselves, and secondly, that apparently Hulda had a great reputation for hearing the voice of God, and for being a prophetic voice of God. Even the priest, a man, placed himself under subjection to her advice.

Deborah. Next, let's look at another great woman leader, Deborah.

Judges 4:4-5

4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

5 And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

The Bible tells us that she was a prophetess, and that she judged Israel. First let's look at the definition of the word judge.

JUDGE = OT:8199 shaphat (shaw-fat'); a primitive root; to judge, i.e. pronounce sentence (for or against); by implication, to vindicate or punish; by extension, to govern; passively, to litigate (literally or figuratively):

So, going by what we have already learned, that the word prophetess means 'an inspired woman,' we also see that she, by definition, had the power to pronounce a sentence, give the order to punish, and to govern; and my friend, that means she for all practical purposes, was on the highest throne in the land. I do not read where she usurped that throne, only that the people looked to her for judgment.

PROMINENT WOMEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Pricilla. Pricilla labored together with the Apostle Paul at Corinth. She is the wife of Aquilla. With her husband, she is mentioned as a helper. NT:4904—HELPER --sunergos (sooner-gos'); from a presumed compound of NT:4862 and the base of NT:2041; a co-laborer, i.e. coadjutor: KJV - companion in labour, (fellow-) helper (-labourer, -worker), labourer together with, workfellow.

The Bible tells us that after hearing the great teachings of Apollos: Acts 18:26 And he (Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. The Bible says THEY, both Aquilla AND Pricilla, took Apollos in and expounded; or taught him more perfectly. Apparently Pricilla had no problem understanding the call of God in her life.

Junia. Paul makes mention of Junia as being 'of note among the apostles. Clearly she had a reputation for Apostolic ministry, and he even indicates that she had spent time in prison, most likely for preaching or teaching about Christ, a dubious distinction she would not have obtained had she 'kept silent.'

Romans 16:7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Tryphena and Tryphosa. Romans 16:12 mentions two seldom heard of, yet important names **Romans 16:12** Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the