

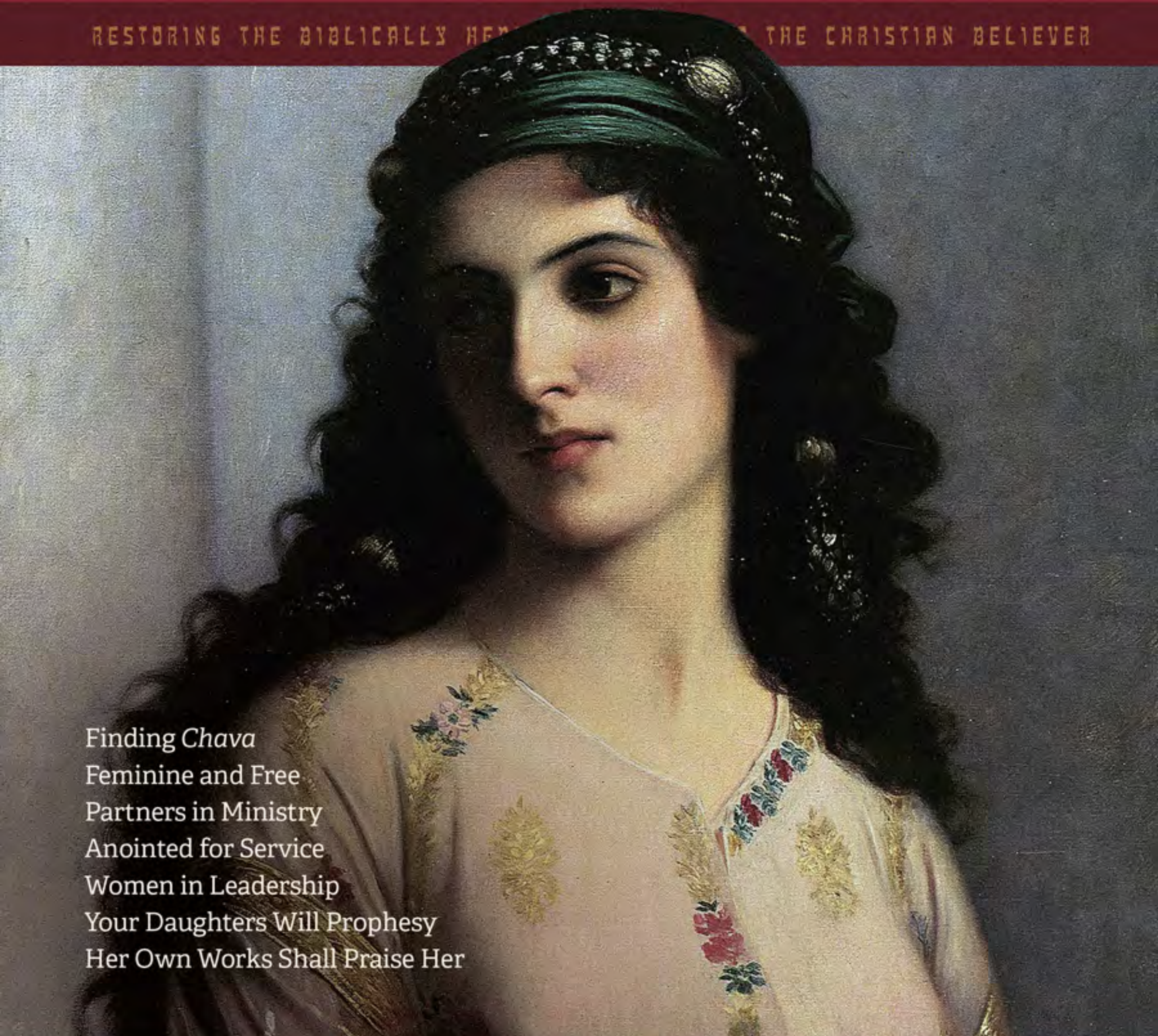


HEBRAIC CHRISTIAN  
GLOBAL COMMUNITY™

Woman of Valor Issue

# RESTORE!

RESTORING THE BIBLICALLY HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER



Finding Chava  
Feminine and Free  
Partners in Ministry  
Anointed for Service  
Women in Leadership  
Your Daughters Will Prophesy  
Her Own Works Shall Praise Her

**"A Woman of Valor Is More Precious Than Jewels"**



## In This Issue . . .

<b>Feminine And Free</b> Dr. John D. Garr	<b>6</b>
<b>Women in Leadership</b> Lenore Lindsey Mullican	<b>12</b>
<b>Hospitality</b> Cheryle Holeman	<b>17</b>
<b>Finding Chava</b> Dr. Victoria Sarvadi	<b>18</b>
<b>Your Daughters Will Prophecy</b> Dr. Karl D. Coke	<b>22</b>
<b>Anointed by God for Service</b> Dr. Howard Morgan	<b>26</b>
<b>Partners in Ministry</b> Dr. Dwight A. Pryor	<b>30</b>
<b>Her Own Works Shall Praise Her</b> Rev. Martha Looper	<b>32</b>

## RESTORE!

“The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake;  
he will exalt the Torah and make it honorable.  
But this people have been robbed . . . and no one says, *Restore!*”  
(Isaiah 42:21-23).

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Hebraic Christian Global Community is an international, transdenominational, multiethnic teaching, publishing, and fellowship resource to the body of Christ. We promote the restoration of Christian unity, the recovery of the Hebraic foundations of Christian faith, and the renewal of Christian love and support for the international Jewish community and the nation of Israel.

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*Great blessing is God’s solemn promise to everyone who blesses Abraham’s children!*

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**Global Community**

Restoration Foundation

**WOMAN OF VALOR ISSUE**

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**SHOFAR  
SOUNDS**

Thoughts from  
the Editor

# *Eshet Chayil*, the Woman of Valor

## BEING ALL THAT GOD HAS CALLED WOMEN TO BE

When King Solomon undertook to describe the ideal woman, he began his synopsis by asking this question: “Who can find a woman of valor?” Then, Solomon declared that this woman *par excellence* is “far more precious than jewels” (Proverbs 31:10, JPS, NRS), following up on his observation in

Proverbs 12:4, “A woman of valor is her husband’s crown” (NIV). In the Hebrew text, the phrase that is translated accurately in the Jewish Publication Society’s translation is אִשֶּׁת־חַיִל (*eshet chayil*), which specifically means “woman of valor.” Virtually all other English translations, however, fail to capture the essence of the woman that Solomon went on to describe, rendering *eshet chayil* as “an excellent wife” (NASB, ESV); “a wife of noble character” (NIV); “a virtuous woman” (KJV); and “a capable wife” (NRS). Even the *Tanakh* Hebrew version translates *eshet chayil* as “a capable wife.”


Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the word *chayil* is almost always associated with the strength of a warrior and not with moral values or virtues. When associated with men, *chayil* is almost always translated “valor.” In some cases, it is even translated “valiant men” (Judges 18:2; 1 Chronicles 28:1; 1 Samuel 16:18) when the word *man* does not appear in the text. In other instances, *chayil* is rendered as “valiant warriors” (Judges 20:44, 46, NASB). The phrase אִישׁ־חַיִל (*ish ha-chayil*) is translated “men of valor” 37 times in Scripture.

When the same word *chayil* refers to a woman, however, translators and exegetes insist on rendering it as “capable” and “virtuous” and only rarely as “valiant.” The King James translators were certainly more concerned with preserving female moral rectitude, submissiveness, and docility and with keeping women in the “woman’s place” to which men had consigned them than they were with women’s valor, bravery, and courage. Solomon’s ideal

woman, however, captures the essence of women in general, including their resolute fortitude and their fearless tenacity. The truth is that all females have the God-given ability to be “valiant” as well as to be “virtuous,” of “valor,” and of “noble character.” Indeed, true virtue and noble character expressed in modesty and integrity epitomize valor. God does not, therefore, hesitate to use women to “stand in the gap” to protect his people (Ezekiel 22:30). In fact, the sages maintain that women are inherently more spiritual than men; therefore, there is every reason to expect that by their God, women “can do valiantly” (Psalm 108:13).

Proverbs 31 confirms that Solomon’s *Eshet Chayil* was a capable wife and a careful, diligent homemaker (11–15, 21, 27); however, she was also a real estate developer (16a), a vintner (16b), a manufacturer (18–19), a merchant (18, 22, 24), a philanthropist (20), a wise counselor (26), a woman of God (30). As a result, “Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying ‘Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all’” (29). Solomon concludes his observations about the *Eshet Chayil* by saying, “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her the product of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates” (30–31).

Solomon’s quintessential *Eshet Chayil* was not designed to impose the image of an over-idealized, mythical “superwoman” upon all women, nor was it an effort to establish unrealistic and unattainable goals for women in general. The praise accorded her merely projected a composite sketch of womanhood that outlined the virtually limitless possibilities for successful ventures that women who are free and equal may choose to undertake. This is proven from the diverse meanings of the word *chayil*, which include “power, wealth, virtue, honesty, courage, success, or accomplishment” or “to give birth, to create, to terrify, to perform wonders, to wait, to hope, to succeed, and to mature” depending upon how the word is vowel-pointed in Hebrew. Since this song of praise to the Woman of Valor was one that Solomon’s mother taught him (Proverbs 31:1), it is entirely possible that it could have first been sung by Abraham as an ode to Sarah, as some rabbinic commentaries suggest.

When it comes to opportunities for ministry in the body of Messiah, God not only permits women to teach, preach, lead, and administer, he predicts prophetically that they will do so. David said, “The LORD gave the Word; great was the army of women who proclaimed it” (Psalm 68:11, TNK, ESV). Through the prophet Joel, God himself prophesied, “I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity. . . . Your sons and your daughters will prophesy” (Joel 2:28, CJB). The apostle Peter declared that Joel’s prophetic work began on the Day of Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus (Acts 2:15–18), and this work has never been abrogated or suspended. As coequal partners with men in the human race, women can achieve anything for which they are called, inspired, and anointed. The sky is literally the limit for them in family, society, and community of faith. 



**John D. Garr, Ph.D.**  
Founder and President

**In this issue, we discuss the role of women in biblical life—in home, in society, and in the community of faith.**

**Cover: Portrait of a Jewish Woman by Charles Landelle (1821–1908)**



Dr. Garr, I wanted to write you to say that your book, *God and Israel*, is surely a blessing. I have noticed the extensive research that enables you to establish the people, the nation, and the land as truly belonging to the Lord.

Charles Richmond  
Vincennes, IN



I have enjoyed the books that you have sent me, and I continue to enjoy every issue of *Restore!* magazine. I thank you for being such a blessing to me and pray that the Father will continue to bless your ministry.

Carmen Jo Bisbee  
Ocala, FL



I appreciate your sending me *Restore!* What a blessing it is! Thank you for making it possible for me to receive this important information. I always look forward to the next issue for food for my soul.

Cindy Lampa  
Rancho Cordova, CA



I receive *Restore!* magazine as a gift. I don't even know who pays for the subscription; however, it is a powerful blessing. It is very educational and always thought provoking. I always look forward to the next issue. Thank you for making this resource available to me and to the colleagues with whom I share it.

Brent Gimple  
Mayo, FL



Dr. Garr, The books you write, the sermons you give via the Golden Key Partners are truly inspiring for me to dig deeper for the truth in everything. I just can't wait for the next newsletter, CD, and hopefully your next book.

Shaun Daugherty  
Comstock, NY



It is a blessing to be part of Hebraic Christian Global Community. May God continue to use us to put forth this timely message.

Lyle Bruce Turner  
Pikeville, KY



We want to thank you for all the wonderful materials that we receive from Hebraic Christian Global Community. May the Lord bless the work that you are doing for him.

Lynda Wright  
Houston, TX



Thank you for the insights that you have brought to my wife and me. We really want to share these truths with others so they can see how we can return to the faith of the patriarchs.

Patrick Garrison  
Albuquerque, NM



Thank you for sending *Restore!* magazine to us. We would appreciate it if you could send us some of your books.

Stefano Tonta  
Rose Hill, Mauritius



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Comments  
and Criticism

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# *Feminine and Free!*

GOD'S DESIGN FOR WOMEN IN HOME, FAMILY, AND FAITH COMMUNITY

BY JOHN D. GARR, PH.D.

**T**he role of women in family, society, and church has been one of the most hotly debated issues in the history of the Christian church. Across the annals of time, it has remained among the most volatile and emotionally charged subjects of discussion that have engaged not only the community of believers but also all of humanity in every social, cultural, and ethnic situation. Presently, from the one extreme of chauvinism and even misogyny to the other ex-

treme of militant feminism—and everywhere else between—strident voices continue to clamor for a bully pulpit from which they can pontificate and speak for God, providing everyone with *the* answer to the question, *What is a woman's place?* Unfortunately, like so many other controversial issues in Christian doctrine and polity as well as in public discourse and policy, this subject has generated far more heat than light.

Perhaps more important than the issue of a woman's place is the foundational question underlying the issue: "Who is woman?" or "What does it mean to be a woman?" When these anthropological questions are answered in biblically Hebraic theological terms, more answers to the age-old debate on womanhood will be forthcoming.

## WOMAN IN GOD'S IMAGE AND LIKENESS

In order to answer the question, *Who is woman?* the best place to begin is at the beginning. First, the question of why human beings exist on Planet Earth must be resolved. Humanity—comprised of two genders, male and female—was carefully created, formed, and fashioned by God with only one purpose in mind: to serve as a theomorphic representation of the Creator himself. The sacred account of human genesis declares in unequivocal terms that "God created humanity in his own image. In the image of God created he him, male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27).





God chose to image himself in humanity—both male and female—equally and indiscriminately. The God of Scripture is no more reluctant to be viewed in feminine terms than he is to be seen in masculine terms. This truth is essential to the understanding that all of humanity, both male and female, is truly theomorphic—that both male and female equally manifest the image of God. Recognizing feminine images in God is essential in order to establish the truth that God is absolutely genderless and is not a masculine being.

Neither God nor the prophets, the sages, and the apostles suffered from gynophobia or misogyny. Since the God of Scripture was genderless—neither male nor female—he could cause himself to be understood by using metaphor and imagery taken from both the female and the male genders of his human creation. There is, therefore, ample evidence directly from the Hebrew Scriptures that God chose to reveal himself to humanity by means of both male and female images—and often both at the same time.

A classic example of the truth that God can be imaged in masculine and feminine terms at the same time is found in the text of Deuteronomy 32:18, in which God says to Israel, “Of the Rock who created you, you are unmindful, and you have forgotten the God who writhed in labor pains with you.” This text can be translated thus: “Of the Rock who *fathered* you, you are unmindful, and you have forgotten the God who *mothered* you.” The Hebrew phrase translated “mothered you” is *cholelecha* (חָלַלְתָּ), which literally means “writhed in labor pains [with] you.”

The New King James Version translation of this passage preposterously renders the phrase *cholelecha* as “fathered you.” The King James Version is less absurd but still renders it as “formed you.” The Douay Rheims Catholic Bible renders *cholelecha* as “created you,” which still does not capture the literal meaning of the text. Each of these “translations” purposely obscures the fact that the text associates feminine imagery with God. One thing is certain, men never “writhe in labor pains” when they “father” a child! Fortunately, other versions render the Hebrew more accurately as “gave you birth” (NIV, ESV, NASB).

In this and numerous other examples, God demonstrated to humanity intrinsic truth about himself by using imagery to which both genders could relate either from experience or from observation. More than incidentally, then, the God of the Bible clearly chose to image himself in gynomorphic terms because the feminine reveals some truths about God that the masculine does not and cannot.

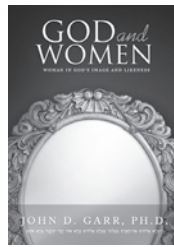
#### DIVINE FEMININE IMAGERY

Feminine imagery applied to God would have

#### WOMAN OF VALOR ISSUE

## God and Women

### Woman in God's Image and Likeness



\$22

that have kept women from fulfilling God's gifts in their lives.

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come as no surprise to the Hebrews themselves, for the ancient name for God that was revealed to Abraham contained vivid feminine imagery. *El Shaddai*, which is generally translated “The Almighty,” was likely derived from the Hebrew word *shad*, which means “breast.” Indeed, the first mention of *El Shaddai* in Scripture (Genesis 49:24–25) confirms this truth: “The arms of his hands were made strong by . . . *El Shaddai* (שֵׁדַי) who blesses you with . . . blessings of the breasts (שָׁדַי—*shaddim*) and of the womb (רֶחֶם—*rechem*).” Some scholars have asserted that the ultimate diphthong *ai* in the word *Shaddai* may have been an ancient feminine ending, making it possible to render the name or title as “The Breasted One.” The accuracy of translating *El Shaddai* as “The Breasted God” or as “the God (*El*) of my breast (*Shaddai*)” is confirmed by the immediate textual relationship between the name *Shaddai* and the subsequent metaphors: blessings of the “breasts” (שֵׁדַי—*shaddim*) and the “womb” (רֶחֶם—*rechem*). What would be more natural as a benefit from “The Breasted God” than blessings of “the breasts” and of “the womb”?

God's promise of “blessings of the womb” resonated with the Hebrews because they understood that, at least metaphorically, God had a womb. This is confirmed from the fact that YHWH is consistently portrayed as being merciful—indeed, full of mercy. “His mercy endures forever” is a phrase that is repeated in each of the 26 verses of Psalm 136 and occurs 17 times in other passages of Scripture.

In Exodus 33:19, God introduced

**The God of Scripture is no more reluctant to be viewed in feminine terms than he is to be seen in masculine terms. This truth is essential to the understanding that all of humanity, both male and female, is truly theomorphic.**

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a term for mercy that contains powerful feminine imagery when he said, “I will show mercy [רחם—*racham*] on whom I will show mercy [רחם—*racham*].” The word *racham* comes from the root רחם—*rchm*, from which the word רחם—*rechem* (“womb”) is also derived. In Hebrew, therefore, the connection between “womb” and “mercy” is apparent. It is surely apropos to the text of Exodus 33:19 because the safest place in the universe for an unborn fetus is in its mother’s womb, where it is not only protected but also nurtured and brought to term. The spiritual lesson in this metaphor confirms the fact that the safest place on earth for any human being on earth is in the mercy of God. The abstract concept of divine mercy, then, is based in the concrete image of the female uterus and has remained a consistent and clear application of feminine imagery to God.

Feminine imagery in God is also demonstrated in the depiction of *hokmah* (divine wisdom) in feminine terms: “By *hokmah* the Lord laid the earth’s foundations,” says Solomon in Proverbs 3:19. *Hokmah*, wisdom personified declares, “From everlasting I was established, from the beginning, at the origin of the earth. . . . Then I was beside [God], as a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him” (Proverbs 8:23, 30). The feminine nature of divine wisdom is clear: “Say to *Hokmah*, You

are my sister . . . exalt her, and she will promote you” (Proverbs 7:4; 4:8–9).

### THE GENESIS OF WOMAN

Both masculine and feminine qualities of God are clearly revealed in the account of his theomorphic human creation. God, who is one (*echad*) but manifest in three modes of divine existence (Father, Son, and Spirit), created humanity that is one (*echad*) but manifest in two genders (male and female). Scripture clearly says that God created one humanity, literally “the Adam” (*ha-Adam* in Hebrew) and that he created *ha-Adam* male and female in his image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). The fact that *ha-Adam* is the only human name in Scripture which employs the definite article (*ha*—“the”), it is obvious that *ha-Adam* was to be understood as “humanity,” not just a human male.

Everything that was needed for gender specific existence was present in the single human being that God formed from the dust of the earth and then “created” from nothing as a living being by breathing the breath of life (the *neshamah*) into his nostrils. The woman, therefore, was not a divine afterthought that occurred to God when he discovered that his male creation was imperfect and inadequate. All that was necessary to complete the process of human generation was for what pertained to the feminine to be extracted surgically from *ha-Adam* and then, in biblical terms, to be “built up” or fashioned into the woman.

In the construction of woman, however, God made sure that there would be no hint of inferiority of his feminine creation. In order to accomplish this, he extracted one of *ha-Adam*’s “sides”—a metaphor for the tissue that could be “built up” into the woman. What was extracted was not an expendable male body part—a spare rib as it were. The Hebrew word which describes the anatomical part that was surgically removed from *ha-Adam* is צֶלָה (*tzela*). The word *tzela* appears 42 times in Scripture, where it is translated as a “side,” a “side chamber,” a “beam,” the “side of a hill,” a “corner,” or a “flank.” Only in the two instances where it was used to describe the construction of the first woman is it translated “rib.” That the *tzela* was not a “rib” is clear from the fact that both the Hebrew word צֶלָה (*tzela*) and the Greek word that translates it, πλευρά (*pluera*), were never used to mean “rib” until at least the first century BC.

### CONSUBSTANTIAL AND COEQUAL

Because male and female were composed of the same body tissue, they were consubstantial. And because they were consubstantial, they were also coequal. God confirmed this fact when he named both male and female “Adam” (Genesis 5:1–2). In creation, therefore, woman was not a divine

**In order to mirror the  
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the whole.**

afterthought cobbled together from spare male body parts, nor was she created from a substance that was different from that of the man. In no way, therefore, could the woman ever be considered to be inferior to the man or ontologically subordinate to him.

In order to mirror the absolute coequality of the persons in his own divine being, God created male and female as coequal partners, both equal halves of the whole. So as to manifest the absolute oneness of the divine substance, he created them consubstantial, of precisely the same substance—from the same body—and he created a way for the two halves to be rejoined and thereby to recreate their original “one-flesh” state (Genesis 2:24).

In every respect, then, the utter equality of male and female in the one humanity images the absolute coequality of the persons in God. Only together did Adam and Eve manifest the *imago Dei* in their coequality, in their consubstantiality, in their utter oneness—the same *echad* that was ascribed to God in Deuteronomy 6:4—and in their perfect unity of being that they shared in the super-entity first of sexually undifferentiated humanity and then of marriage.

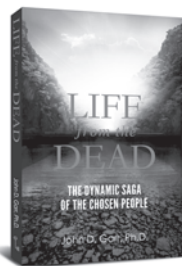
#### COUNTERBALANCED AND COMPLEMENTARY

In the Genesis narratives of human creation, God further revealed his plan for the delicate interaction between the male and female that he had made. The surgery that God performed on *ha-Adam* was not for the purpose of creating division; it was rather designed to produce a multifaceted unity, the cohesion of distinct and different yet totally equal elements that would forever be counterbalanced in perfect complementarity. When God observed that it was not good for humanity to be alone, he, therefore, purposed to create a companion for the lone earthling: *אֶשֶׁר-לוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ* (*eshe-lo ezer kenegdo*), “I will make a help as his partner” (Genesis 2:18). The Hebrew phrase *ezer kenegdo* was translated into English in the King James Version as “help meet (qualified) for him.” Over time, this term morphed into the word *helpmate*, which conveyed the meaning of the woman’s inferiority or subordination to the man.

The truth is that God intended nothing of the sort. The phrase *ezer kenegdo* literally means “a help (*ezer*) like (*ke*) [but] over against (*neged*) him (*o*).” The woman, therefore, was to be a help that was to be opposed to the man in the sense of being a counterbalance to him. The Hebrew word *עֵזֶר* (*ezer*) means “help,” but it always conveys the meaning of rendering help to one who is inferior to the one who is giving the help. In addition to the two instances where it describes the fashioning of the woman, the word *ezer* and its verbal form *azar*, along with their compound, cognate, and derivative forms, appear more than one hundred times in the Hebrew Scriptures where they

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are used in reference to a savior, one who rescues from danger and distress, one who strengthens, and one who is a ruler. Well over half of the uses of *ezer* and *azar* in Scripture refer directly and specifically to God. None of these references indicates that the “helper” is inferior to the one being helped. When Psalm 33:20 says, “The Lord is our help in time of trouble,” it certainly does not indicate that God is somehow inferior to those whom he helps.

Because of the parallel between the word *ezer* (“help”) and the Paleo-Hebrew word *gezzer* (“power”), which differ only in whether the beginning *ayin* of both words is pronounced as “e” (*ezer*) or “ge” (*gezzer*), some scholars have suggested that the word used to describe the woman could be translated “power” so that the phrase *ezer kenegdo* could be rendered “a power equal to him.”

If God had only said that he would make an *ezer* for the man, it would be logical to conclude that the woman was to be the man’s superior, his savior, rescuer, or ruler. God, however, was utterly specific in his description of the woman and her relationship to the man. He declared that she would be an *ezer kenegdo*, a help “like” or “equal to” him.

Whatever the case, it is clear from the Hebrew text that when he fashioned the woman, God was not creating an inferior female “helper” for a superior male. He was manifesting a unity in diversity, a counterbalanced complementarity that would empower the human couple to experience a kind and level of interrelationality that would image the perichoresis (mutual encircling and interpenetration) that exists within the divine being. Woman would complement man, and man would complement woman. Both would counterbalance the other so that both would profit from the delicate interrelationship of mutuality and love.

**Woman is designed to complement man, and man is designed to complement woman. Both counterbalance the other so that both profit from the delicate interrelationship of mutuality and love.**



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Men and women, therefore, were designed by God to be the same, only different. This is demonstrated in human DNA, where 22 of the 23 pairs of chromosomes are identical. Only one pair, a scant 4% of the total, is different. Female and male human beings have clear distinctions and distinctives; however, regardless as to how important these may be, they do not distinguish or segregate the complete humanity of both genders. Indeed, the differences are integral parts of the divine design that makes both genders completely indispensable and that establishes patterns for complementarity that benefit both female and male equally and contemporaneously.

### FEMININE BY DESIGN

Women are feminine because God designed and then fashioned them to be feminine. The word *feminine* is not a brand name for "masculine light." The word *woman* does not denote a diminutive man. In Hebrew, the words *ish* ("man") and *ishshah* ("woman"), though homophonic, have no etymological connection. The feminine person that God created was not a wo-man or a fe-male in the purest restrictive etymological sense of the English terms. She was a completely unique construction, fashioned by the hand of God from the already-created living tissue of sexually undifferentiated generic humanity. Her identity as having been "taken from man" was only an observation made from the perspective of the male who was what remained after the living tissue from which she was constructed had been surgically removed.

***Without the presence of women, humanity would lose most of its sense of beauty and thereby would lose much of the very essence of life and being itself.***

The woman was not created to be another human male, even with different identifiers. She subsisted in her own right: her existence was not dependent on or appended to the male. She was designed to be feminine, and only as feminine can she be fulfilled. One thing is certain: a woman is not to be treated as a man, nor is she to treat herself as a man. A woman is to be recognized—and must recognize herself—as God's amazingly delicate counterbalance to masculinity.

As part of woman's feminine nature, she was designed by God for beauty. She was not a clone of the man that God had created. She was so much more that the man exclaimed, "Finally, this is it!" The silky, flowing tresses of her hair, the smooth softness of her cheeks, the dancing dreaminess of her eyes, the sweetness of her lips, the gentleness of her smile, the graceful expressiveness of her hands, the shapely lines of her body—all were designed by God. Alluring, dazzling, graceful, lovely, exquisite, elegant, captivating, charming, enchanting, mysterious—this was woman as she was designed by God to be. She was—in a word—*beautiful*.

In biblically Hebraic tradition, women have long been recognized for the beauty that is part and parcel of their essence, the beauty that they reflect, and the beauty that they create. The Bible is full of descriptions of feminine beauty and the nature of women to beautify themselves and their environment. Without the influence of women, a man's world can be quite sterile—functional to be sure, but lacking warmth and beauty. The artistic beauty of the woman, too, is part of the design by which God made her utterly indispensable to the entire human equation. Without her, humanity would lose most of its sense of beauty and thereby would lose much of the very essence of life and being itself.

Because woman was designed by God for beauty, she was also designed by God for modesty. Though modesty is intrinsically connected with personal appearance, including the wearing of modest clothing, it also involves discretion in conversations, bodily posture, movements, and knowing where, when, how, and to whom to disclose private matters. A woman's allure is the divinely designed attractiveness of her inner being that radiates out through her actions and her appearance, a radiance that draws people, both male and female, to her with an almost indescribable enchantment. When this feminine mystique is enhanced by biblical modesty that insists on keeping hidden from public view what must be displayed only in the privacy of the life-long commitment to the total intimacy of marriage, it is even more irresistible.

Woman is designed for nurture and relationship. Without a doubt, woman was fashioned by the Creator to mirror the very essence of divine existence: love and its outworking in pure relationality. The first woman—and every woman

thereafter—was designed by God to promote, guide, and sustain relationships of love and nurture. Physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually, woman was designed by the Creator to be a nurturer. Every fiber of her existence is driven to embrace the role of nurturing: she esteems, honors, treasures, values, preserves, reveres, adores, safeguards, shelters, shields, defends, nourishes, supports, sustains, ameliorates, comforts, encourages, guards, protects, rears, teaches, cultivates, develops, advances, civilizes, disciplines, bolsters, elevates, enriches, and refines.

#### RELEASING WOMEN FOR DIVINE DESTINY

Women, especially women of faith, have profound and unlimited potential for amazing achievements in virtually any aspect of the human experience. Whether they are single, married, divorced, or widowed, whether they are educating themselves or teaching others, whether they are homemakers or pursuing careers (or both!), all women have an innate gift for bringing beauty, health, and wholeness to everything to which they put their minds, their hearts, and their hands. Beginning their profound impact in the small but sacred sphere of their own families and then extending their influence to their communities, to their nations, and to the world, women have God-designed and -imparted talents for relationship that are virtually unlimited.

Without a doubt, women and men of faith can profit immeasurably from the simple act of letting women be all that God designed them to be. At long last, men can recognize in the profound charisma of femininity the counterbalancing complementarity that augments their own masculinity as God designed it, thereby bringing greater self-fulfillment to their lives. Women, too, can accept for themselves their own unique gifts and recognize them as God-designed for their own welfare as well as for the safety, security, and stability of the human race. They can confidently position themselves in domestic, social, political, and religious realms to exercise their femininity by adding dimensions of beauty, modesty, spirituality, and nurture to each arena that human life so desperately needs. By understanding the nature of their divine gift, they can unleash the powerful feminine relationality quotient and the unique feminine creative energies that will bring them self-fulfillment while at the same time advancing the cause of faith and justice in the earth. Then, they will have succeeded in fulfilling the divine design for femininity—the God-fashioned woman.

It is time for both women and men to recognize God's gift of femininity and to affirm the divine right of every woman to be feminine and free. In so doing, they affirm their faith in themselves and in the God who created them to reflect

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the divine image and likeness in every aspect of their existence. When men and women mutually recognize that they are respectively masculine and feminine solely by divine design, they will discover new meaning to self-identity. They will also open the door of freedom for the fullest manifestation of the gifts that God has given both genders, and they will find the level of self-fulfillment that brings the wholeness of divine *shalom* to human existence.

When men and women recognize at long last that they are consubstantial and coequal by divine design, they will be liberated to celebrate the true coequality that does not demand sameness but fully respects diversity and difference in a equitable relationship of mutual submission. When they understand that the pure *echad*, the divine unity, of the marriage relationship is achieved not in uniformity but in a high level of cohesion and mutuality that respects—even requires—diversity in the expression of their respective self-identities, they can encourage one another to be all that God has designed them to be and to fulfill the dreams and aspirations of both femininity and masculinity. When both male and female completely accept—and better yet, fully understand—that women are feminine by divine design, women can finally be feminine and free! 

**When everyone accepts that women are feminine by divine design, at long last women can finally be feminine and free!**

Dr. John D. Garr, founder and president of Hebraic Christian Global Community, has pioneered research, writing, and teaching on the Hebraic foundations of the Christian faith for more than fifty years, helping believers understand the theological emergence of Christianity from the matrix of biblical Judaism. John's wife Pat and their sons, John, Timothy, and Stephen, share in work of Hebraic Christian Global Community.





# Women in Leadership

## A STUDY OF THE APOSTLE PAUL'S TEACHING

BY LENORE LINDSEY MULLICAN

**T**he interpretation and understanding of Paul's views on women in Church leadership has had a profound effect on the expression of God-given gifts by women to the Christian community. Women have been restricted from exercising their spiritual gifts because some of Paul's sayings have been taken out

of context and applied to the church as universal instructions.<sup>1</sup> This article shall endeavor to examine Paul's views of women in church leadership from a Hebraic perspective of the Jewish culture and thought as reflected in the Bible, the Talmud, and the archaeological record.

The centrality of Paul's view on women must come from a foundational theology expressed in Galatians, one of his earliest writings.<sup>2</sup> Paul writes, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). It was not the intention of Paul to set any of the above against one another but rather to show an equality. In Paul's own ministry this equality included that of both men and women in leadership roles.

Paul was a Jew who remained strong in his Jewish faith and believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Paul's Damascus Road experience was perceived as a special calling to a specific task, that of being a witness to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21). According to Krister Stendahl,<sup>3</sup> as well as Pinchas Lapide,<sup>4</sup> this was not a conversion. Paul studied under Rabbi Gamliel and his writings reflect rabbinic thought form. Therefore we will begin this study with a review of women leaders in Biblical (Old Testament) and rabbinic writings.

Paul's use of "neither male *and* female," probably alludes, in a typical rabbinic method of interpretation,



to Genesis 1:27 which reads: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Alluding to Scripture was a method of rabbinic midrash, which is characteristic of Paul as it was also of Jesus. In the Genesis passage man and woman are given equal authority over the rest of God's earthly creation as a result of bearing the image of God. Both man and woman "share equally the God-assigned task of creation rulership without any intimation of role distinctions."<sup>5</sup> In the Old Testament Scriptures we have examples such as freedom of choice in marriage partners (Genesis 24:58); rights of inheritance (Numbers 27:7, 8); and the Proverbs 31 woman who is an independent businesswoman as well as being in a position of supervision in her own household and even owns land. There are numerous other examples of women understanding their rights and position under God as equal to that of men. For example, in the Decalogue both father and mother are to be honored, and striking of father or mother is punishable by death (Exodus 21:15).

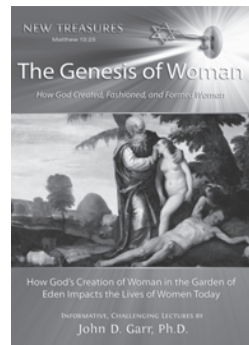
Women took an active role in the religious life, certainly in the home but also in the community. Miriam, Moses' sister, was a prophetess (Exodus 15:20). She was co-leader along with Moses and Aaron (Micah 6:4). The rabbis, in commenting on Numbers 12:15, acknowledged that Israel delayed their journey on her account.<sup>6</sup> Other prophetesses were Deborah (Judges 4:4) who was also a judge and leader in Israel, and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14, 2 Chronicles 34:22) through whom the Lord spoke. Six men were sent from King Josiah to receive God's words from Huldah and this resulted in national revival. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary comments concerning the passage, "Discrimination on the grounds of sex was foreign to the spirit of the Old Testament."<sup>7</sup>

In her study of the role of women in the Old Testament period Rachel D. Levine writes that woman "was respected, her personhood was equivalent to that of a man, and she was considered to be a co-worker with the Lord in the creation of new life."<sup>8</sup> Gretchen Hull's study concludes that the variety of women's functions included a single woman leader (Miriam), a resistance leader (Rahab), a good soldier (Jael), and a spiritual as well as judicial leader (Deborah) who was also a wife and mother.<sup>9</sup>

Although the primary role of the Jewish woman in the first century was that of wife and mother, this was considered a position of prestige and honor and "in no way was she looked upon as being inferior to man."<sup>10</sup> In studying Rabbinics it is necessary to realize that the Talmud was written over a wide span of time and reflected varying cultural and social situations; therefore, the opinions therein differ.<sup>11</sup> There are numerous examples both in literature and in ar-

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cheological findings, however, of women in positions of leadership during the first century BCE. and the first two centuries CE.

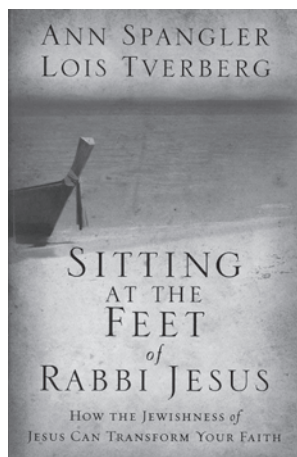
There was a high regard for education and the mother had the responsibility for the education of both boys and girls in the primary years. Rabbinic writings show that several women were considered scholars. These include Ima Shalom (wife of Rabbi Eliezer Ben Hyrcanus, the sister of Rabbi Gamaliel II); and Beruria (wife of Rabbi Meir and daughter of Rabbi Haninah Ben Teradyon). Beruria even contributed important halachic decisions.<sup>12</sup> The Talmud says concerning her that she "studied three hundred laws from three hundred teachers in [one] day."<sup>13</sup> Talmud translator Rabbi H. Freedman states:

This is undoubtedly an exaggeration, but it is interesting to note that a woman is cited as an illustration of wide scholarship, thus showing that the Rabbis were by no means averse to women studying as has been commonly supposed."<sup>14</sup>

Due to her responsibilities the woman was exempt from positive commands, the observances of which "depend upon definite point of time."<sup>15</sup> The demands of motherhood took precedence over religious observances outside the home; therefore, while *permitted* these religious observances she was not *required* to do them as was

***Discrimination on the grounds of sex was foreign to the spirit of the Old Testament. Women were respected, their personhood was equivalent to that of men, and they were considered to be co-workers with the Lord in the creation of new life.***





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the man. This is the context of the benediction recited daily by men: "A man is obliged to offer three benedictions daily: that He has made me an Israelite, that He has not made me a woman, that He has not made me a boor."<sup>16</sup> The underlying motive is that of gratefulness for the *privilege* of "having the duty of carrying out the precepts of the law."<sup>17</sup> This in no way implied a "degradation of women."<sup>18</sup>

Concerning the role of women in the temple, Shmuel Safrai states: "According to Jewish religious law, women were allowed in every area of the Temple precincts in which men were. The Mishnah specifies areas within the Temple which nonpriests were allowed to enter, but it does not differentiate between men and women."<sup>19</sup>

Women had the privilege of participating in activities of the Temple. They were present for the three benedictions recited with the people following the daily preparation of the morning *tamid*.

<sup>20</sup> Also, women of priestly lineage had certain obligations just as the men did of bringing sacrifices and offerings to the Temple.<sup>21</sup>

#### WOMEN IN THE SYNAGOGUE

The role of women in the synagogue has been reevaluated recently with the discovery that in the excavations of first century synagogues no evidence has been found for a separate women's gallery.<sup>22</sup> In fact "all archaeological evidence points to just the opposite—a common meeting room for both men and women."<sup>23</sup> No longer can we conclude that women

were spectators but rather that they were actively involved in all aspects of the worship.

The context of some rabbinic sources presupposes the presence of women in synagogue services. The Mishnah even "provided that a woman could be one of the seven called each Sabbath to publicly read from the Torah scroll."<sup>24</sup> Women were obligated to pray, according to the Mishnah, "they are not exempt from saying the Tefillah, from the law of the Mezuzah or from saying the Benediction after meals."<sup>25</sup> Although the issue was related to distance walked to attend synagogue, the following quote demonstrates the presupposition that women attended synagogue to pray.

"A certain widow had a synagogue in her neighborhood; yet she used to come daily to the school of R. Johanan and pray there. He said to her, 'My daughter, is there not a synagogue in your neighborhood?' She answered him, 'Rabbi, but have I not the reward for the steps!'"<sup>26</sup>

Archaeological studies have shown that women served in many capacities in the synagogue. There are numerous inscriptional evidences of women donors to the synagogue and the honor they were given.<sup>27</sup> That Jewish women served in leadership positions is evident from inscriptions denoting these functions. Bernadette Brooten has made an extensive study of archeological inscriptions and has noted evidence for such leadership roles among women as:

1. Head of synagogue: *archisynagogos*, whose function was in administration and exhortation.
2. Leader: *archegissa*, derived from *archegos*.
3. Elder: *presbytera*, with no indication that they were the wives of elders; may have been involved in financial oversight of the synagogue and/or have been scholars.
4. Mother of the Synagogue: *meter synagoges*, from second century CE and later; their function may have had to do with administration.
5. Members of Priestly Class: *hiereia*/*bierissa*, perhaps equivalent to the rabbinic כהנית (priestess).<sup>28</sup>

#### WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Women had prominent roles in the ministry of Jesus. In Luke 2:36–38 we read of Anna, a prophetess who proclaimed Jesus as Messiah. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, sat at Jesus' feet (Luke 10:39). The Hebrew idiom of sitting at someone's feet means being a student, a disciple, תלמיד (*talmid*). This idiom is used in rabbinic literature. We read in Avoth, for example, "let thy house be a meeting-house for the Sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and drink in their words with thirst."<sup>29</sup> The idiom also is used in Acts 22:3 where Rabbi Gamliel is the teacher at whose feet Paul studied. Many women are mentioned in the Gospels as traveling with Jesus and helping support him and his disciples from their own means (Luke 8:1–3). These women and many oth-

***It is clear that Paul allowed and encouraged women in all aspects of ministry including leadership roles.***

ers can clearly be considered *disciples*; this parallels the accounts of Jewish traditions in which women studied with scholars and teachers.<sup>30</sup>

Women were in the group at Pentecost and included in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel that, “I will pour out of my Spirit . . . and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17). Indeed, in Acts 21:9 we are told that Philip the evangelist had four daughters “which did prophesy.”

The Bible offers ample evidence of women who were associated with Paul serving in the whole spectrum of church leadership roles. The Church at Philippi began with a nucleus of women, in which Lydia, an influential business woman took an active role (Acts 16:12–15). Other women who were leaders in house churches include Apphia, a leader alongside Philemon and Archippus at Colossae (Philemon 2); Nympha of Laodicea (Colossians 4:15); Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11); and Priscilla along with her husband Aquila (1 Corinthians 16:19).

In Athens several converts joined Paul. Of the two mentioned by name one was a woman, Damaris (Acts 17:34). Women were considered co-workers with Paul. In Philippians 4:2–3 we read of Euodias and Syntyche who had labored with Paul. Priscilla along with Aquila were also co-workers (Romans 16:3). The term *co-worker* is the English rendering of the Greek *συνεργος* (*sunergos*) which means “working together with, helping, fellow laborers with God,”<sup>31</sup> taking part with, in cooperation with.<sup>32</sup> In Acts 18:24–26 we read that when Priscilla and Aquila met Apollos in Ephesus, they “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” It is interesting to note that the King James translation lists the couple as Aquila and Priscilla in spite of the fact that the Greek text lists Priscilla first. “If the order of the names implies what it seems to, it was not Aquila who took the lead, as might be expected, but his wife.”<sup>33</sup>

Some of Paul’s co-workers were also called apostles. Andronicus and Junia “notable among the apostles” (Romans 16:7) may have been a husband and wife team. This passage suggests either that they were apostles or that they were honored by the apostles.<sup>34</sup> There is no evidence contrary to the understanding that Paul is referring to a woman, however. In fact, this person is referred to as a woman by John Chrysostom and Jerome.<sup>35</sup> Catherine Kroeger has concluded that indeed early tradition considered Junia an apostle and it was not until the Middle Ages that this identity was questioned. In the Middle Ages a male-oriented church hierarchy could not conceive of a female apostle. The name Junia was changed to the masculine form Junias by translators and appears as such in manuscripts from that time on. This is in spite of the fact that the masculine form is “unknown in antiquity, and there is absolutely no lit-



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erary, epigraphical or papyrological evidence for it.”<sup>36</sup> The term *αποστολος* (*apostolos*) means delegate, envoy, messenger, one sent out.<sup>37</sup> This corresponds to the Hebrew *שליח* (*shaliach*), one sent by someone to accomplish a specific task.<sup>38</sup>

Paul described Phoebe as a “servant of the church” (Romans 16:1). The Greek word is *διακονος* (*diakonos*), the same as the masculine which is usually translated “deacon.” In his letter to Timothy, directions are given about women deacons as well as male deacons (1 Timothy 3:8–13). In the Pauline epistles it usually has the meaning of ministry. Phoebe is also described as *προστατις* (*prostatis*). The meaning given by Liddell and Scott is “exercising authority, to be a leader, to hold office, a leader, chief, a protector.”<sup>39</sup> It would appear that the translation “helper” is too weak. Phoebe was a person with authority who was a leader and teacher in the community of Cenchreae.<sup>40</sup>

It is clear that Paul allowed and encouraged women in all aspects of ministry including leadership roles. How then do we explain such statements as, “women should keep quiet in the churches” (1 Corinthians 14:34), and “I allow no woman to teach or to have authority over men” (1 Timothy 2:12)? In order to correctly interpret these passages it is imperative to understand the religious, cultural, and sociological context in which the statements were made. Much of the misunderstanding relating to Paul’s teaching may be attributed to a lack of comprehension of Paul’s Jewishness and an attempt to alienate him from his Jewish roots. Also imperative to a correct interpretation of these passages is an accurate understanding of Jewish and pagan religious teaching and the vast differences between the Judeo-Christian and pagan religious

**According to Jewish religious law, women were allowed in every area of the Temple precincts in which men were. The Mishnah specifies areas within the Temple which nonpriests were allowed to enter, but it does not differentiate between men and women.**



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practices. Paul was dealing with specific problems in specific situations. It is important to note, for example, that in the Corinthian church that was composed largely of Gentiles who had come out of pagan religion, there were those who had brought in practices that had been part of their pagan religions.

Religious activities in Greco-Roman paganism included cult prostitution and shriek cries described as wild outcries. The Corinthian female dominated religious thought and practice. From the mother goddess Artemis to the women serving their time as sacred temple prostitutes and speaking messages from the gods, the male of Corinth was deeply dependent upon the female.<sup>41</sup> It was specifically against this female religious domination that the converts from paganism were bringing into the church that Paul was dealing with. Unfortunately, the universal application of Paul's specific discipline has resulted in a church that is dominated by men. How much richer would our interpersonal relationships be if we could rediscover God's original intent of equality of the sexes without domination by either!

An in-depth discussion of Paul's troublesome passages relating to women in positions of church leadership is beyond the scope of this article. However, examples have been offered from the Bible and rabbinic literature, as well as from archeological discoveries, to show that women occupied positions of leadership before, during and after the time of Paul. When both Paul and these troublesome passages are viewed within their proper cultural and historical context, there is no longer a valid basis for restricting the role of women in the church. 

<sup>41</sup> William David Spencer, "The Chaining of the Church," *Christian History* VII, no. 1 (1988), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Randy Petersen, "What About Paul?" *Christian History* VII, no. 1 (1988) p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Pinchas Lapide and Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul: Rabbi and Apostle* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> G. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids Book House, 1985), p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> m. Sotah 1:9.

<sup>7</sup> *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), p. 418.

<sup>8</sup> Rachel Levine, "The Woman's Role: Part I," *Yavo Digest* 5, no. 1 (1991), p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Gretchen Gaebelin Hull, *Equal to Serve* (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1987), p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> A. Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), p. 159.

<sup>11</sup> "Woman," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Corrected Edition. (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972).

<sup>12</sup> Rachel D. Levine, "The Woman's Role: Part II," *Yavo Digest* 5, no. 1 (1991), p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> b. Pesahim 62b.

<sup>14</sup> H. Freedman, trans., I. Epstein, ed., b. Pesahim 62b. (note).

<sup>15</sup> m. Kiddushin 1:7.

<sup>16</sup> b. Menahoth 43b.

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, p. 159.

<sup>18</sup> C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), p. 658.

<sup>19</sup> Shmuel Safrai, "The Role of Women in the Temple" *Jerusalem Perspective* 2, no. 9 (1989), p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> m. *Tamid* 5:1.

<sup>21</sup> Safrai, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Bernadette J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue* (Chico, CA: Scholars' Press, 1982), p. 104.

<sup>23</sup> Rachel D. Levine, "Women in First Century Judaism," *Yavo Digest* 1, no. 4 (1987), p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Levine, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> m. Berahot 3:3.

<sup>26</sup> b. Sotah 22a.

<sup>27</sup> Brooten, p. 142.

<sup>28</sup> Brooten, pp. 5-99.

<sup>29</sup> m. Avoth 1:4.

<sup>30</sup> Rachel D. Levine, "Women Disciples," *Yavo Digest* 1, no. 5 (1987), p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> William Arndt and Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), p. 787.

<sup>32</sup> Henry C. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 1711.

<sup>33</sup> Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), p. 69.

<sup>34</sup> Arndt and Gingrich, p. 99.

<sup>35</sup> Tucker and Liefeld, p. 73.

<sup>36</sup> Catherine Kroeger, "The Neglected History of Women in the Early Church," *Christian History* VII, no. 1 (1988), p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> Arndt and Gingrich, p. 99.

<sup>38</sup> Abraham Even-Shoshan, המילון החדש (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1975), p. 2706.

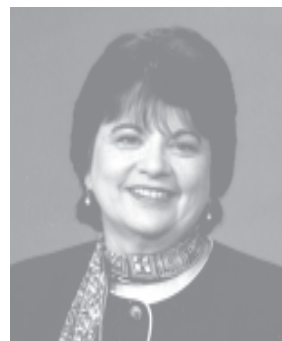
<sup>39</sup> Liddell and Scott, p. 1526.

<sup>40</sup> Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities," *Women of Spirit*, ed. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 36.

<sup>41</sup> Catherine Kroeger, "The Apostle Paul and the Greco-Roman Cults of Women," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, March, 1987), p. 25.

**When both Paul's writings are viewed within their proper cultural and historical context, there is no longer a valid basis for restricting the role of women in the church.**

**Lenore Lindsey Mullican teaches Modern Hebrew at Oral Roberts University as Assistant Professor of Modern Languages. The daughter of former Jerusalem pastor, the late Dr. Robert L. and Margaret Lindsey, she was reared in Israel and speaks fluent Hebrew. She and her husband Ken live in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where they direct the ministry of HaKeshet, an organization connecting Christians with their Hebraic heritage.**



# Hospitality

BY CHERYLE HOLEMAN

Recently, as a guest teacher was making a presentation to our local group, I stormed into the room to make a frantic announcement: "I've locked myself out of my own house!" Immediately, about nine hands went up, and voices said in unison, "Here, use MY key!" I burst out laughing as I realized that they *all* did have a key to my house. It was the natural reaction to a friend in need around here. (I don't have a key to my own house. The door is usually always open in case someone might need something from inside.)

Our environment is very unusual today even within the United States: we have intimacy with our neighbors. Recently when we had a huge rainstorm with five inches of rain in two hours, everyone went to the front porch to watch the deluge. In large cities, people don't have the front porch experience of yelling across the street during a rainstorm, or sipping tea on their decks while watching the grandkids play in the sandbox (which became "beach front property" that night).

Just as the Hebrews of 2,000 years ago knew their neighbors intimately, we have learned the meaning of hospitality in our small town. Everyone who moves here loves our friendliness, our innocence, honesty, integrity, Christian values, and wholesomeness. What they are seeing is *biblical hospitality* in action; they just don't know what to call it!

Hospitality is a necessity of life in the desert, but among the nomads this necessity has become a virtue, and a most highly esteemed one. The guest is sacred. The time that a stranger can avail himself of hospitality varies from tribe to tribe: among some it is "until the salt he has eaten has left his stomach"; in big tribes it is for three more days and within a radius of 100 miles.


Old Testament parallels spring to mind. Abraham gave a lavish reception to the three "men" at Mamre (Genesis 18:1-8), and Laban was eager to welcome Abraham's servant (Genesis 24:29-32). Two stories show to what excesses the sentiment of hospitality could lead: the angels who stayed in Lot's house at Sodom (Genesis 19:1-8), and the crime at Gibeah (Judges 19:16-24). Both Lot and the old man of Gibeah were ready to sacrifice their daughters' honor in order to protect their guests (Genesis 19:8; Judges 19:23).

The entire Torah addressed the life of the Community. When Moses was given "the Law" (better translated "the Instructions"), its 613 commandments were designed to be lived out in an entire community, *not* for one individual to live alone with God. Within those 613 commandments were instructions for the

Hebrew tribes to live together in peace with God in the midst of their community! There were instructions for women, for men, for the king, for the stranger among them, and for all of the different groups within the community. In those instructions the Hebrews were told how to worship the LORD, how to keep themselves healthy and clean, how to raise their children, what they were to be to one another, and how to make a stranger welcome among them. They were to be a light in those pagan communities to draw men unto God—not isolated from the world around them with a "holier-than-thou" attitude. They were to set an example of integrity, honor, moral values, and godliness.

Why would God take these honest hard-working people from Kansas, and show their hearts to others? In a small community such as our town, we all stand ready to help each other in our daily lives. We are families interwoven in a fabric of God's design. We're not to draw away from the Christian community as we study biblical Hebraic principles. We are to walk among them and set an example. Even though we have been told that God's laws "do not apply to us today," I'm amazed at how the laws of community *do* apply in my life.

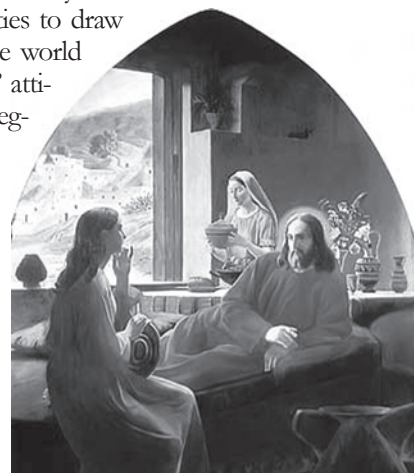
Over and over again, we get phone calls from people asking if they can stop by and visit, or come for a teaching weekend. Perhaps this is a way to share *him*. Our reply is always, "Sure! God's door is always open here." Once my husband Tom got a phone call from a lady, a hippie whom most people would have turned away from their door. Tom's reply was, "Sure! Come on." She showed up, and we visited. The next day we found her on the back porch crying. "I've walked all over North America from Canada to Mexico. When I got here, you opened your home to me, and I suddenly realized that I was home! I have found peace for the first time in my life!" she said. That was 1994 and she has stayed in this area ever since. She now works with a ministry and is full of joy, peace, and love.

As I looked at the keys that my friends offered to me that day, it came to me that each of us has "The Key" to God's House. We carry it with us every day. It's His Peace and Love that opens the door to strangers and even to our loved ones. *He* is the *key* that passes all understanding. "They shall know you by your love." Have you shown HIM to anyone lately? 



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Cheryl Holeman is vice president of HaY'Did (The Friend) Learning Center, a networking organization designed to train, educate, and equip individuals for study in the rich Hebraic heritage of biblical faith. She also is an assistant professor at Oral Roberts University. Cheryl and her husband, Tom, live in Tulsa, Oklahoma.



# Finding Chava

*HEBREW INSIGHTS INTO GOD'S DESIGN FOR WOMEN*

BY VICTORIA SARVADI, TH.D.



**T**he Hebrew language is amazingly multi-dimensional, idiomatic, and deep in its layers of meaning. A significant part of Hebrew is the prevalent mystical level and prophetic element of the words themselves that are not readily detected when they translated into other languages—especially English. In fact, almost always, the English language translates only the surface or concrete level of Hebrew words, leaving the text void of the deeper Hebrew inferences, rich concepts, and hints to other connecting Hebrew words and references.

In Jewish thought, the different levels of meaning in Hebrew words are described by the acronym *PaRDeS*, which is a Hebrew word that means “orchard,” “garden,” or “paradise.”

P—*Peshat* (surface or literal meaning)

R—*Remez* (hints of prophetic meaning)

D—*Derash* (concepts that connect to multiple places in Scripture and thought)

S—*Sod* (mystical or spiritual meaning)

While these Hebrew methods of interpretation were not formalized until the fourth century AD, it is evident that the principles were used by Jesus and the apostles.

It is only when we study the Bible from a Hebrew perspective that we can fully unwrap the rich

meaning of God's Word. This is particularly true when we study the beginning of mankind/womankind.

When God made the first recorded human being in his image, he made this being out of the dirt elements of the Earth. The Hebrew word for the originally designed human is "*ha-adam*," which literally means "the red dirt being."

*HaAdam*, whom we now know as Adam, was originally created as an asexual creature—having both genders within its very makeup. It was not until later that God created Eve. I believe it is possible that God purposely made the integrated tandem of man/woman in order to ultimately create a memory of a once-united existence within the separate individuals. And it is quite probable that this memory is part of the blueprint that motivates man and woman to come together to procreate.

Scripture tells us, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:21–22).

God took one Adam's *ribs*. The Hebrew word translated "rib" is *tsela*, which also means "chamber" or "side." Beginning with this understanding, we can unpack the four *Pardes* levels of the Hebrew word *tsela*.

### THE PESHAT SURFACE MEANING

Woman is made from man—bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh (Genesis 2:23). This is the primary level of understanding that the majority of us learn in Christendom.

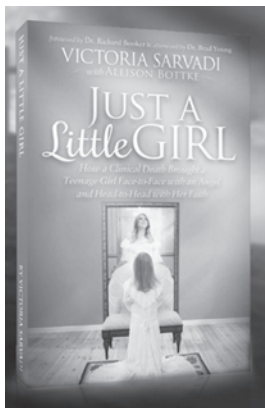
### THE DRASH CONNECTING LEVEL MEANING

#### 1. Chamber Connection

Eve (*Chava* in Hebrew) was removed from *ha-Adam*. Since the original creation of *ha-Adam* included both feminine and masculine qualities, it is deduced that *all* that was *feminine* was removed from Adam. This would include the entire female endocrine and reproductive systems. Part of the reproductive system includes the *chamber (tsela)* or "womb" that nurtures and grows (along with the seed of man) the development of human life. *Chava* means or "mother of all living" or "source of life." When man looks for a wife, he is in essence, looking for *love or a mother for his seed*. This *love of his life* is associated in their coming together conjugally. Her nurturing their child is regarded as maternal love. This maternal love creates the hormones to nourish her child through her own breasts sharing the very nutrients she ingests.

#### 2. Side Connection

Another aspect of *tsela* is "side." One of



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the deeper conceptual meanings goes into the absence of this "side" that is removed. It is understood that this balancing "side" taken from the whole would cause the other to walk with a limp. Rabbis teach that removing the *tesla* would cause changes or deficiencies to occur in the man that would cause him to be bent over or curved—unable to stand upright or be erect. The picture that comes to mind is that *ha-Adam*, with the extraction of the *tsela*, became lopsided, unbalanced, and incomplete. It is only when the two—man and woman—are joined together that they are counterbalanced and function as a unified "one." This balance is no doubt depicting a spiritual, physical, and soul-like joining of the two.

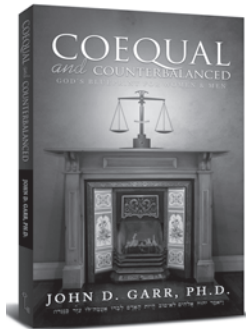
A woman comes along*side* of man to complete, aid, and balance his life as he balances hers. This counterbalance is evident in the mental perspectives, stature, and anatomy of man. Man is ordinarily physically stronger and more rugged. His brain is wired to solve problems "logically," and by the same token, being governed more by reason, he has a greater ability to disconnect from or stifle his emotions. This perspective when tipped too far may seem out of touch and callous at times to a woman. This is because a woman, often thought of as softer or a more graceful creation than that of man, generally makes her decisions on a *combination* of her logic and gut feelings. She is designed to be more in touch on an emotional level to feel

***It is only when the two—man and woman—are joined together that they are counterbalanced and function as a unified "one." This balance is no doubt depicting a spiritual, physical, and soul-like joining of the two.***



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the impact of critical situations whether positive or negative. When this emotional side is tipped too far, it is perceived by the male counterpart to be irrational.

The truth is, man and woman are hard-wired to balance the deficits in each other. This is a part of God's design for woman and man's being alongside each other.

### THE SOD MYSTICAL MEANING

The Scripture uses the word *tsela* not only to represent the female *side* or portion that was taken out of Adam but it is also used in describing the *sides* or *chambers* of the tabernacle, the altar, the ark of the covenant and the temple. These sanctified objects or chambers were created as a means of allowing man the ability to approach God and for actually containing the Presence of God within a physical compound. Could it be that God designed the *chamber* or

*womb* of a woman to be a consecrated (holy) place where God himself would take residence to form his creation?

Both David and Jeremiah seem to agree: “For you fashioned my inmost being, *you knit me together in my mother's womb*” (Psalm 139:13, CJB). “Here is the word of *Adonai* that came to me: ‘Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you’” (Jeremiah 1:4–5a, CJB).

In these Scripture examples, God makes it clear that he actively participates in the process of creation and new life. It is by his divine plan and wisdom that he fashions a baby and that he is, by the testimony of His own word, “present” in the gestation of life.

The hymen is a membrane and is likened to a veil that protects the womb. Just as the high priest was the only one allowed to go through the veil into the most holy place, so is it that a husband is the only one consecrated by a covenant to go through the membrane into his wife. At the moment of the consummation of marriage, the breaking of this membrane causes blood to pour from the chamber or womb of a woman. This blood letting is a sign of a blood covenant between the man and his wife. Can you see the rich levels of meaning when a word is studied in all the Hebrew levels?

Being a woman is a beautiful privilege. No wonder the enemy has devalued and exploited women and their bodies for ages. The reason is revealed in the curse that God spoke over the serpent, “I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your descendant and her descendant; he will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15, CJB).

This animosity and spiritual attacks against women have taken form in various demonic deviancies over the ages of time such as sexual discrimination, debasement, and harassment, pornography, rape, extortion, and prostitution, sex trafficking, and other sex related violence and crimes. Most crimes against women are sex (*tsela*) related.

These sexual biases against women are masterminded from the offense of the evil one, the enemy of God, going all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Apparently, according to the prophecy, the serpent would be the spiritual father to a descendant that would one day challenge the seed of a woman.

God fashioned for himself within the womb of Mary the very vessel that would carry the Holy Presence of God. As God prophesied to Eve, her Seed, which was from the Father, would give birth to a Savior. He would be born of a woman having no chromosomes of an earthly father. What a privilege for women to share in the miracle of God's creation. And may all women feel the distinct honor and blessing that God chose a woman to bring the Messiah into the world.

### THE REMEZ OR PROPHETIC MEANING

God is still at work and has been creating another “Eve” from the side of Messiah. As the Roman spear pierced into the *tsela* of Yeshua, caus-

**Could it be that God designed the chamber or womb of a woman to be a consecrated (holy) place where God himself would take residence to form his creation?**

ing blood to spill out of his side, God has been forming the body or bride of Christ just as he formed Eve. Yeshua promised that he was going to prepare a mansion in his Father's house so that his bride would be with him forever. He also said that one day his bride would join him in eating a covenant meal called the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*.

One of the most beautiful depictions of the *prophetic* love of Messiah is the ancient Jewish custom of the *passing* of the *Erusin* Cup or the Cup of Betrothal. When a man wanted to marry a woman in ancient Jewish culture, he would approach her father to discuss the price of the bride. The father, realizing the assets and liabilities that his daughter would bring to the marriage, would express *his will* for the bridal price.

After an agreement was made, a covenant cup was poured and placed between the hopeful groom and the woman he desired to marry. The man would first take the cup and drink from it, indicating he wanted to make a covenant of marriage with her. After he drank from the cup he would customarily "*pass the cup*" to her like one *passes* a baton in a race. If she drank from it (as this would be the hope and *will* of the groom), she was agreeing to wait for him as he would go and prepare a place for her.

This "place," traditionally called "a little mansion," was a room built in his father's house for the purpose of consummating the marriage. Only the groom's father could say when it was made to his specifications, and only then could the groom go and get his bride. In ancient times a week-long marriage supper or feast would follow—but only after the blood-stained sheets were displayed for the wedding guests to witness.

Much of this ancient tradition was manifested on the night Yeshua was in the Garden of Gethsemane. While he was talking with God, it was made clear what the will of the Father was for the payment of his bride. After physically manifesting in his body the profound terms of the Father's will, he accepted what the *erusin* cup was demanding of him and cried out, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me."

Did this exclamation mean he was rejecting the terms of the cup? On the contrary, it means he accepted or metaphorically drank from the cup and was now *passing* it (like a baton) to his bride, of course, wanting (or willing) for her to accept and drink too. Then, the most profound statement was declared by our Bridegroom; "Not my will [*which is that she would drink and be my bride*] be done but *your will* [*the*

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*terms of the covenant or price*] be done!" In other words, he would pay the price for his bride whether she chose to drink or not.

What a perfect love! Yeshua loves his bride with all his heart, mind and being. Yeshua is our "new Adam," and we are his bride and the new *Chava* (Eve) of his life! This is why we pray, "Come, Lord Yeshua!"

### WOMAN AND MYSTERIES OF THE WORD

There are many mysteries in God's Word concerning the roles that the God of the universe designed for women. Every person born (including men) carries the chromosome of a woman. Women represent the exquisite and delicate design of our careful, loving Creator, and every woman is profoundly beloved of the God who is her Lord and Master. 

Dr. Victoria Sarvadi is co-founder and vice-president of The Nathaniel Foundation in Kingwood, TX. She received her doctoral degree from The Center of Biblical Research in Redlands, CA, and has served the Messianic community as teacher and administrator. As a licensed minister, she is also Director and Minister of the Nathaniel Fellowship, a Hebraic community in McKinney, TX, where he and her husband Paul reside.



**What a perfect love! Yeshua loves his bride with all his heart, mind and being.**



# “Your Daughters Will Prophecy”

BY KARL D. COKE, PH.D.

**T**he LORD God said in Joel 2:28–32, “*And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and **daughters will prophecy**, your old men will dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. Even on my servants,*

*both men and **women**, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.*”

The outpouring of God’s Spirit upon all people mentioned here is accomplished by God Himself during a specific time period which is marked by certain characteristics. Among

the characteristics marking the “days” of God’s Spirit outpouring are: 1) the sun turning to darkness; and, 2) the moon turning to blood. Since neither of these have happened, we are still in “those days” in which God’s Spirit is being poured out upon men and women in order for them to prophecy. According to Joel, a third characteristic marking “those days” is “*everyone who calls upon the name of the LORD will be saved!*” This is the reason God wants both men and women to prophecy. He wants men and women to give His Word to all those who are seeking salvation. Obviously, since people are still calling upon the Name of the LORD and being saved, we are still in “those days” of God’s Spirit outpouring! This is God’s plan. He pours His Spirit upon all flesh, both men and women, so that they will preach His Word to unsaved mankind in order that they might know to call upon the Name of the LORD to be saved. Women preaching the Gospel is just as much God’s idea as that men should preach the Gospel.

The words translated “*will pour out*” from Joel 2:28 and 29 come from the Hebrew word **שָׁפַק** (*esh-pok*). This is from the Hebrew root verb **שָׁפַק** (*sha-phak*) which means “*to pour out, bestow in profusion*” (*The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, p. 735). In the **שָׁפַק** (*esh-pok*) form, this word, *sha-phak*, (poured out) is in the Kal, future tense, first person, singular form (*Ibid.*, p. 52). This means that God, after people begin to turn their hearts



to Him, will continually pour out His Spirit upon all flesh until the last person calls upon the Name of the LORD to be saved.

Men and women should prophesy when God's Spirit is poured upon them. However, according to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Volume 13, p. 1151, "The word of 'YHWH' and not His 'Spirit' is the primary source of prophecy. The 'Spirit' may prepare the prophet to receive divine revelation, may evoke the revelatory state of mind, but the 'Word' is the revelation itself. What makes him a prophet is not the Spirit which envelops or moves him—for this Spirit also motivated elders, judges, Nazirites, and kings—but the Word which he has heard and transmits to others." God wants men and women to deliver His Word to those ready to call upon His Name to receive His salvation. He readies and enables preachers by pouring His Spirit upon them.

### CLOTHED UPON WITH THE SPIRIT

The Hebrew word לָבַשׁ (*la-vash*) best describes how this outpouring takes place. *La-vash*, according to the *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, page 430, primarily means "**to put on a garment, to clothe oneself with a garment.**" The message of all prophets is God's Word. In order for men and women to deliver God's Word with authority, God "clothes" them with His Spirit. Persons who have had God pour His Spirit upon them are duly "clothed" to represent Him to those people being liberated by His Word. This is exactly to what Jesus was referring in Luke 24:45–49: "Then he [Jesus] opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures [*Torah, Nevi'im* (including Joel 2:28–32), and *Ketove'im*]. He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ [Messiah] will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and **repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached** in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised [*Holy Spirit*]; but stay in the city until you have been **clothed with power from on high.**" Jesus further clarified His Father's intent to clothe men and women in His Spirit for prophetic enablement in Acts 1:4–5, 8. He said, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift [Holy Spirit outpouring] my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about [John 14:15–21]. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . you will receive power [enablement] when the Holy Spirit comes on [*la-vash*—clothes] you; and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Joel 2:28–32 said that God would pour His Spirit upon men and women; therefore, in Acts 1,

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both men and women should be waiting in Jerusalem in obedience to the command of Jesus in Acts 1:4–5, 8. Acts 1:12–14 describes the "waiting" band of 120 believers. Among those present in the upper room were "**women**" and "**Mary the mother** of Jesus." Women were (as they had always been) "clothed" with the Holy Spirit along with the men. A "clothed" man, Peter, preached the salvation sermon recorded in Acts 2 where 3,000 were saved. However, we find women preachers mentioned in Acts 21:8–10: "Leaving the next day [from Ptolemais], we [Paul's entourage] reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven [*Deacons of Acts 6*]. He had four unmarried **daughters who prophesied**. . . ." Philip was first a deacon of the church at Jerusalem because he was "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom." He later evangelized in Samaria (Acts 8:4–8) with accompanying miracles and then preached God's Word to the Ethiopian Eunuch in Gaza (Acts 8:26–39). He obviously had been an example to his four daughters. They now also prophesied. A unique footnote to Acts 21:8–10 is that the Apostle Paul stayed in their house "a number of days!" Paul records no objection to these four women prophets! Why? Paul knew Joel 2:28–32 as well as Peter, the one who used it in

**God's plan is to pour His Spirit upon all flesh—both men and women—empowering them to preach His Word so that unsaved mankind may call upon the Name of the LORD and be saved.**





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his Pentecost sermon.

Contrary to modern teaching, Paul accepts women prophets. This thought is contrary to the deadly conclusions preached by generations of alleged Greek Bible scholars. It is in opposition to those who have misused I Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12 to perpetuate their *Greco-Roman* myths. All should read Paul's definitive teaching on women prophesying in I Corinthians 11:2–16. Here, Paul teaches men and women propriety in public prayer and prophecy. Paul is addressing a Gentile congregation. In verse 5 Paul says, **“every woman who prays or prophesies. . . .”** Paul expected women to prophesy! His issue in this context is that they should do so with their heads covered. The covering of a Jewish woman's head shows that she is under her husband's authority. The practice of head covering is Jewish. The issue of I Corinthians 11:2–16 is not over whether or not women should prophesy. Paul expected women to prophesy, even the saved Gentile

women from Corinth, Greece! Paul expected women throughout “those days” spoken of by Joel would be “clothed” with God's Spirit in order to prophesy God's Word to those calling upon the Name of the LORD to be saved! He expected the same for men. Until the sun turns dark and the moon turns red, O God, pour out your Spirit upon all flesh that they may tell

others how to be saved. O God, while we are still seeing thousands call upon your Name to be saved, clothe your people with your precious Holy Spirit! Endue us all to reach just one more before they are lost to an eternal hell.

#### HELLENISM'S DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE

When and where did this notion that women should not prophesy creep in? In my opinion, history supports Lisa Aiken's claim (below) that women began to lose their prophetic status around the time of the building of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. “Issued in 538 B.C.E., after his conquest of Babylon, Cyrus' rescript relates the return exclusively to the reconstruction of the Temple” (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Volume 15, p. 955). Following the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Greeks rose to world prominence. “When Judea came under Greek rule, following the campaign of Alexander the Great, there was a closely knit Jewish population centered around the Temple in Jerusalem. . . . The Hellenistic kings respected the temple and lavished gifts upon it. . . . The attitude of the Seleucid monarchs changed radically in the days of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. On his way back from Egypt in 169 B.C.E., Antiochus broke into the Temple, and carried off its precious vessels; two years later he erected the “abomination of desolation” on the altar, turning the building into a temple of Zeus (*ibid.*, p. 958). Even though Judah Maccabee cleansed the Temple three years later (Hanukkah), the *Hellenization* of the Jewish Biblical world had begun. Greek philosophy mixed with Biblical truth is a portion of the *Hellenization* process. According to Abraham Joshua Heschel in his book *God in Search of Man*, p. 98, “Greek philosophy began in a world without God. It could not accept the gods or the example of their conduct. Plato had to break with the gods and ask: What is good? Thus the problem of values was born. And it was the idea of values that took the place of God.” Once you replace God with human values then what God says or does ceases to exist. Once God's Word ceases to exist it is a small step to replace it with human wisdom. One must remember, “The major premises of Western philosophy are derived from the Greek way of thinking” (*ibid.*, p. 14). Almost all preachers in the West are schooled in Greek philosophy. Hence, Western preaching (done by men) automatically attaches itself to learned Greek philosophical roots which repudiate women. This has been done all the while God Himself said in His Word, “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and **daughters will prophesy**, . . . Even on my servants, both men and **women**, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”

#### HEBREW AND PROPHETESSES

Before the Second Temple, women were accepted as prophets. According to Lisa Aiken on page 216

***The Hebrew word  
translated “prophet” in the  
Bible is נָבִיא (nabi). The  
feminine form used in the  
Bible is נְבִיאָה (nabi-ah).  
Nabi-ah (prophetess)  
carries the same meaning  
of the masculine form.***

of her book, *How To Be a Jewish Woman*, “Sarah possessed tremendous divine inspiration [*ruach ha-kodesh*], even as a child. She later married Abraham, who eventually became a great prophet, yet she surpassed him in her level of prophecy. She so excelled in this that she was known as the mother of prophecy. . . . Both men and women have always had equal opportunities to achieve prophecy, and it was not always limited to a few individuals. For example, the millions of Jews who left Egypt during the Exodus were all granted prophetic visions. There were also many other Jews throughout history who were prophets or who were occasionally granted prophetic visions. **Prophecy by both sexes continued until the time of the Second Temple.**”

The Hebrew word translated “prophet” in the Bible is נָבִיא (*nabi*). The feminine form used in the Bible is נְבִיאָה (*nabi-ah*). *Nabi-ah* (prophetess) carries the same meaning of the masculine form. According to page 528 of *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, Gesenius states, “נְבִיאָה . . . a prophet, who is actuated by a divine afflatus, or spirit, . . . With the idea of a prophet there was necessarily attached, that he spoke not his own words, but those he had divinely received. . . . נְבִיאָה f.-(1) a prophetess. . . .”

There are forty-eight men and seven women prophets mentioned in the Old Testament. Three of the women prophets are mentioned in the Old Testament where נְבִיאָה (*nabi-ah*), *prophetess* is used in the text. They are: **Miriam** (Exodus 15:20); **Deborah** (Judges 4:4); and **Huldah** (2 Kings 22:14). “The rabbis add **Sarah**, **Hannah**, **Abigail**, and **Esther** (Meg. 14a),” according to page 1176 of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Volume 13. This makes seven the number of acknowledged Jewish women prophets. Sarah is accorded this status by Rashi on Genesis 21:12, while others list Proverbs 31:10–31 as her qualifications to be a prophet. Hannah is given prophetic status due to her prophecy recorded in 1 Samuel 2:1–10. 1 Samuel 25:24–31 reveals Abigail’s ability to correctly prophesy. Esther is obviously given prophetic status due to her introduction of (and the Israeli perpetual keeping of) the Feast of Purim recorded in Esther chapter 9. We have the prophecies made by these four women which allow them to be called prophets. By contrast, in Acts 21:8–10 there is no record of the prophecies made by Philip’s daughters. They must have, like their father and according to Joel 2, spoken God’s Word to those calling on the Name of the LORD in order to be saved.

Heschel asks, “What do we and the people of the Bible have in common? The anxieties and joys of living; the sense of wonder and the resistance to it; the awareness of the hiding God and moments



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of longing to find a way to Him” (*Between God and Man*, p. 242). I agree with Abraham Heschel. Further, I am convinced that nothing has changed since Genesis chapter 3. Man is lost in his own sin and in need of a Savior. Unfortunately, there are no words of salvation from the Greek gods. The Greek gods could not care less about the fate of all mankind. They are all capricious. The Greek philosophers were correct in sacking the Greek gods! The only good God in search of lost mankind is the LORD God of the Bible. Only the Bible contains the words which bring lost men back to life. How shall any of these lost ones hear His Word? It must be preached by those previously saved by its promises. When preached, God’s Word will give faith to believe its promises to those who are lost. Since both men and women have been and are now being saved by “hearing” God’s Word, it is Biblically correct that both men and women should be “clothed” with God’s Spirit and be released to preach the Gospel to all those who will yet call upon the Name of the LORD and be saved.

Along with Moses and Joel, before Almighty God, I humbly, dreadfully humbly, welcome all, both men and women, to the prophetic ministry of preaching the Gospel! At the same time, I ask “Why, when so many are headed to hell, would anyone deny another human the opportunity of God’s Spirit(ual) outpouring to clothe them to preach the Gospel?”



Dr. Karl D. Coke is a Hebrew teacher whose understanding of the original languages, history, geography and cultures of Holy Scripture enables him to make the Bible come alive for his audiences and readers. As Chancellor of the Timothy Program International, he offers the world a high quality, accredited Bible college curriculum. Karl travels extensively and teaches internationally. He and his wife, Lori, live in Charlotte, North Carolina.



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# Anointed by God for Service

## *ROBBED OF OPPORTUNITY BY MEN'S TRADITIONS*

BY HOWARD MORGAN, D.MIN.

**T**he subject of women in ministry has for many centuries been a troubling doctrine for much of the church. When we return to the church's Jewish roots, however, we discover that the true faith of Abraham

provides both anointing and opportunity for women to fulfill their callings in the Kingdom of God.

As the church departed from its Jewish roots, it lost its understanding of the Kingdom of God and adopted the pagan practices of "Gentile authority" which Jesus prohibited his disciples from emulating. This kind of authority is oppressive and repressive, seeking to keep in power those who by virtue of military strength, political standing, or financial resources have acquired dominant positions in society. The Kingdom of God, as revealed in the Jewish Scriptures, is built upon an entirely different structure. The greatest in the Kingdom of God are those who serve (Matthew 23:11).

Those who are given authority in the church receive it for the express purpose of serving the purposes of God in the lives of those in their care. Authority is never given to manipulate others to serve one's own "self"-centered purposes (Colossians 1:28). Self-centered religion builds its own "kingdom" in opposition to the Kingdom of God. We can use this concept of a self-centered kingdom as opposed to a Christ-centered



Kingdom as a very accurate measuring rod to examine our own motivations and seek to discern the motivations of modern church leaders. If traditional church practices that have become the “norm” today, justified by theological interpretations of the Bible based on a self-centered motivation, then we must change those practices and change the theologies that justify them. We are under a divine mandate to build God’s Kingdom and not to protect that which sustains any other “kingdom.”

Leaders in the Kingdom of God are vested with authority so that they can do what is necessary to help those committed to their charge become “complete in the Messiah” (Colossians 1:28). All leaders who are practicing biblical religion are anointed by God for only one reason—to equip the “saints” for the work of service to which they are called (Ephesians 4:11–16). The term *saints* is a reference to all who believe in the Messiah, obviously including women. This means that all ministers are called to do whatever they can to help women fulfill their callings in the Lord, and not hinder them!

#### ANOINTED BIBLICAL WOMEN


When we read the many biblical vignettes about women in various ministries and callings, we must remember that we are not just talking about unique or special individuals. These are spiritual examples of what any woman can be or do if she will respond to the Lord as these women did. Unless we see them in this way, their stories will have no effect on our lives today, and the purposes of God in relating their stories to us will be lost. They are “examples to us who believe, upon whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Consider Sarah, the wife of Abraham, who is recorded in the “hall of fame of faith” in Hebrews 11. The writer says that “through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.” How are you faring today concerning the promises of God to you? Like this woman of God, are you judging God faithful to fulfill His promises to you, or are you judging Him another way?

When Rebecca understood that it was the will of God for her to marry a stranger, she did not hesitate to fulfill God’s will. When this woman of God was convinced about the will of God, she moved without delay. Do you?

Consider the faith and wisdom of Jochebed, mother of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Committing her son to the small watertight ark she had built, she planned for Pharaoh’s daughter to find him and for Miriam to suggest that she nurse her

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own son. In this way she was led by the Spirit to be actively involved in the formative years of Moses’ life, imparting to him the spiritual foundations for his future greatness. Could you do with your child what this woman of God did with hers?

Jochebed’s godly influence is also seen in her daughter Miriam’s life. The prophet Micah mentions her as one of those whom God used to lead Israel during the Exodus (Micah 6:4). After the miraculous deliverance of Israel and the divine judgment upon Pharaoh’s army at the Red Sea, Miriam, whom scripture specifically calls a “prophetess,” became the first worship leader in Israel’s history, singing and dancing with a tambourine, as she led the women in dancing and the nation in singing the praises of the Lord (Exodus 15:20–21).

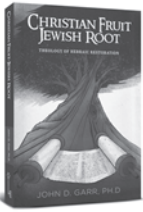
Because of the boldness, wisdom, and faith in the goodness and righteousness of the Lord, the five daughters of Zelophehad had the Law of God, the Torah, changed. God himself said that they “spoke right” when they insisted that women be included in the property rights inheritance laws (Numbers 27:1–9). Could they have been the first “lady lawyers” in the world? When you see unrighteousness, do you have the boldness to confront it? These five women did!

***Church history is full  
of misogynistic  
leaders who have  
taught that women are  
inferior to men and  
relegated to lifetimes  
of spiritual  
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Rahab, a woman of dubious character (some rabbis call her merely an “innkeeper”), also mentioned in the Hebrews 11 hall of fame of faith, is a direct ancestor of David and Jesus. She had great faith, wisdom, discernment, and courage. She was one who could “discern the signs of the times” and recognized that the formerly impregnable Jericho was about to be destroyed. Rahab’s past life was no indication of her future success. When she came to faith, she obeyed and received her reward. What discernment about the signs of the times do you have? What are you doing about the things you discern? Would you take the risks that Rahab did? Would you have hidden spies?

Consider the wisdom of Abigail, and the Queen of Sheba’s desire for wisdom. And the widow of Zarephath, whose obedience to the word of the prophet Elijah brought supernatural provision to her home. What about Huldah, another prophetess, whom Josiah sought for wisdom and guidance when he found the Law of God, or the prayer passion of Hannah, whose intercession and future dedication and sacrifice brought to Israel the great judge and prophet Samuel.

Let us not fail to mention three of the most famous women in the Hebrew Scriptures: Ruth, Esther, and Deborah. Ruth is the premier example of faith and devotion. Her declaration to Naomi, “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for **whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.** Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me,” (Ruth 1:16–17) is one of the most famous in all of scripture.

Another famous quote is attributed to the beauty queen

turned national savior and hero, Esther. When faced with the prospect of certain death for entering the king’s throne room uninvited, she proclaimed with faith and courage, “. . . and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and **if I perish, I perish**” (Esther 4:16).

Deborah was a prophetess, a counselor, a military leader, and a judge. The Israelite general Barak knew the anointing of God that was upon her life and would not go out to battle unless Deborah consented to go with him. God used her to deliver the entire nation.

These examples of women in the Old Testament clearly show how the Lord anointed women and then gave them opportunities to serve His purposes. God never changes (Malachi 3:6). So why would He, or the apostle the church claims to follow, now prohibit women from exercising their anointings or taking advantage of the opportunities God gives them? The answer is that neither He nor Paul has done that.

### NEW COVENANT WOMEN

In the New Testament we see women exercising their faith, and their giftings as God gives them opportunity. Consider these examples: The woman at the well was an evangelist (John 4:29–30). The woman with the issue of blood had faith enough to take the anointing right out of Jesus’ body without His directing it (Mark 5:30–34). There were three women at the cross (John 19:25), and two women at the tomb who were the first to see the resurrected Savior and the first to proclaim the good news of His resurrection (Matthew 28:1, 10). There were women who were preaching the gospel enough to be persecuted by Saul (Acts 8:3, 4). Philip the evangelist had four daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:8–9). There were Jewish women in the Upper Room (Acts 1:14; 2:4), and Gentile women in Cornelius’ home (Acts 10:24, 27, 44) receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28, 29), the purpose of which was to imbue the receivers with power to witness (Acts 1:8). Why would God give women the power to minister and then deny them the opportunity to use it? *He wouldn’t, and He didn’t.* In the pure apostolic first century church, women could exercise all the gifts of the Spirit, and they did!

Women in the New Testament did preach, pray, and prophesy. In Romans 16:1 Phoebe is called, in the Greek text, a *diakonos*—a deaconess—of the church. This is a noun that is used in many places in the New Testament to describe individuals who do the work of the ministry: evangelizing, preaching, praying, prophesying. We see both Priscilla and Aquila, her husband, ministering together, teaching Apollos the Scriptures, overseeing a church, and traveling with and helping Paul in the ministry (Acts 18:1–2, 18, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19). These are not things a woman who had to be silent

**The many biblical vignettes about women in various ministries and callings are spiritual examples of what any woman can be or do if she will respond to the Lord as those women did.**

could do! Junia, a woman, is called an apostle by Paul in Romans 16:7, and in Philippians 4:2–3 he mentions two women, Euodia and Syntyche, whom he describes as “fellow laborers in the gospel.” How could you labor in the gospel and be silent?

It is obvious then that God fully intends for women to exercise all of the gifts and anointings that he imparts to them. If this is true, how could Paul tell women in 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 to be silent, and that it is not permitted for them to speak in church? The answer is simply that he did not. He was only restating a quote in a letter sent to him about these and other issues (chapter 7:1). He responds to the quote by exclaiming in 14:36; “What? [are you talking about?], came the word of God out from you? Or came it unto you only?” It is foolishness to think that he would stop in the middle of a chapter and contradict all that he had just written and was himself practicing. It is not a shame for women to speak in church, because Paul already instructed women to speak in church. The whole content of this chapter is the balanced use of tongues and prophecy by both men and women. The difficulties of this text are resolved when it is seen as a simple restatement of an issue posed to Paul by those yet bound by unscriptural Jewish traditions (the oral “law” of verse 34) that kept women silent in synagogues.

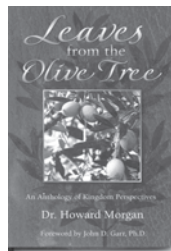
Did Paul really instruct the church in 1 Timothy 2:12 that women are not allowed to teach? If he did, then how could he expect them, as believers, to fulfill the Great Commission? Jesus told everybody to “go into all the world and teach the nations. . .” In like manner, those who prophesy do so that everyone can learn, the central goal of teaching (1 Corinthians 14:31).

It is interesting to note that Jesus in His rebuke of Jezebel in the book of Revelation (2:20) did not censure her for teaching or prophesying, but for teaching and prophesying error. If women were never permitted to teach or prophesy, the elders in the church at Thyatira would never have even allowed Jezebel to open her mouth. But because women were teaching and prophesying as a normal occurrence, she had the opportunity to speak. The church was rebuked for allowing her to lead people astray, not for allowing her to teach.

The immorality of Jezebel in Revelation 2 ties directly to our study of 1 Timothy 2:12. If you will take the time to do an in-depth study of this passage, you will find that Paul was not telling women in general not to teach or have authority over men, but was in actuality dealing with Gnosticism and female Gnostic teachers who were mixing sexual immorality with Gnostic doctrines. The Greek word used in this passage of Scripture for “usurp authority” is *authentien*. This is the only place it is used in the New Testament. The normal word for authority is *exousia*. This rare verb (*authentien*) had coarse sexual overtones. John Chrysostom’s

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fourth-century commentary on this verb uses the expression “sexual license.” Paul was actually prohibiting female Gnostic teachers from mixing their strange doctrines and sexual immorality as a means of seducing the church. This is exactly what Jesus was doing in Revelation 2:20–24.

For a detailed treatment of this concept, see Charles Trombley’s book, *Who Said Women Can’t Teach?*

Church history is full of misogynistic theologians and ministers who have—all too successfully—tried to minimize these women as some special exception to the “norm.” Many of these have taught that women are inferior to men and that Paul meant to silence them and relegate them to lifetimes of spiritual imprisonment and fruitlessness. As we boldly confront these doctrines of demons, all the women in the Body of Christ will be set free to minister in the anointing of the Holy Spirit, taking full advantage of all the wonderful opportunities God will give them to build His Kingdom. As God restores His church to its Jewish roots, those daughters of Abraham will be set free to inflict massive damage on Satan’s kingdom. Amen! 

**As God restores  
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Jewish roots,  
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Dr. Howard Morgan is an internationally recognized Bible teacher whose inspiring, equipping, and prophetic ministry has impacted the lives of believers, empowering their spiritual lives. With bases in Atlanta, Georgia; Liverpool, England; and Vancouver Island, Canada, he mentors pastors and leaders and provides oversight for many churches and ministries around the world. Howard and his wife Janet reside in Atlanta, Georgia.





# Partners in Ministry

SERVING GOD AND SERVING ONE ANOTHER

BY DWIGHT A. PRYOR



In my series, *In His Image: Biblical Insights into Love, Marriage & the Family*, and *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church and Synagogue*, I argue for both the ontological and theological equality of women and men—ontological by virtue of our mutual creation in the image of God, theological by virtue of our shared new creation in Christ.

Consider the creation of the original human being, Adam. “So God created man [*adam*] in his image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). Note the emphasis on unity and equality in a parallel passage (Genesis 5:2): “On the day that God created man [*adam*], he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female. He blessed them and called their name Man [*Adam*] on the day they were created.”

Adam’s iniquity and disobedience in the Garden resulted not just in the painful expulsion from God’s presence, but in a corrupting and corrosive effect on the very identity

of male and female. The male's God-given and intended responsibility for servant dominion of His creation became a drivenness toward dominance (including of the female creature). The female's God-given and intended capacity for nurturing and responsiveness was bent toward a distorted desire for a mate to "rule over" her in a twisted kind of codependency. Her identity, obscured by her "fall," would now be found not in her creator, but in the male creature.

But all is not lost. The good news is that there is a remedy for this corrupt condition. What the first Adam's iniquity wrought, the "last Adam" rights. The disobedience of Adam brought judgment and death, the obedience of Jesus unto death on the cross brings redemption and blessings. To be "in Christ" therefore is to be re-created into a new humanity, a new man (*adam*). Our broken image is restored to the likeness of the Creator when we are "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). In Christ, therefore, we are complete and have our peace/*shalom*.

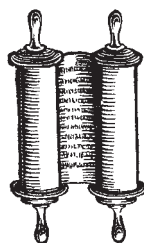
In Christ we also—both male and female—are free to serve His body in a variety of functions, drawing upon a diversity of giftings. We all truly are priests (i.e., ministers) in the Kingdom of God's Son. Our contributions may vary by gender, skills, callings, and circumstances. In the Scriptures and Jewish tradition, for example, we see women serving as queens and generals, prophets and rabbis, wives and teachers, deacons, apostles, and house church leaders. But let us never forget that our identities must not be found in ministries but in Christ, first, last, and always. Otherwise, no matter how exalted our roles or prestigious our service to the church, we engage in destructive forms of religious idolatry that rob us of our peace and His power.

In my series, I argue further that the first and highest order of "ministry" for both men and women in covenant marriage is to one another. This principle usually is ignored by men and too often denigrated for women. In Jesus' name, women and men are empowered to engage in a variety of functions on behalf of the family of God. But first we must properly love, serve and submit to one another in our own families.

If the church can be compared to a body, then the cells of that living organism are the family units. They are the first level of covenant community, and the basis for the healthy functioning of the larger community of faith. In the New Testament frame of reference, to "minister" is to serve one another in love. This

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is our high calling in Christ, and its truest and best expression is in the home. To ignore this is to impoverish ourselves, and to denigrate it is to deceive ourselves.

I believe this principle applies equally to women and men. We should rejoice that in Christ women can exercise many callings and opportunities for ministry. But let us remember that none of these is higher or more important to God than their ministry to their husbands and children. And to the men, let us acknowledge our corresponding responsibilities. We have no higher calling on our lives than to model Christ in our homes—to lead, bear responsibility and care for, and even to sacrifice for the sake of the *shalom* of our wives and children. We may have powerful and respected ministries in the church, but apart from godly service to our covenant partners and families we are inauthentic and incomplete ministers. 

***The first and highest order of "ministry" for both men and women in covenant marriage is to one another.***

The late Dwight A. Pryor, founder of the Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, was long involved in extensive research into the Hebrew foundations of Christian faith, both with the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research and in concert with other scholars of similar vision. He produced an extensive library of teachings that document the truth about Christianity's Jewish roots. The Center in Dayton, OH, continues Dr. Pryor's important vision.





# Her Own Works Shall Praise Her

WHAT WOMEN CAN BE AND DO REVEALED BY GOD'S CALL ON THE LIVES OF BIBLICAL WOMEN

BY REV. MARTHA LOOPER

**I**n the Hebrew Scriptures, there is not the slightest hint that God ever discriminated against women. Indeed, the Holy Scriptures themselves are the most powerful witness to God's creating opportunities and giving natural and supernatural empowerment to women for a virtual unending and limitless range of ministries and works of service to God and man.

Before the first woman, Eve, was separated from Adam's side, God's spoken word declares, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth'" (Genesis 1:27, 28). This creation of God was to be a partnership.

Adam recognized the equality of the woman in creation when he declared: "This is now bone of my

bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). Prior to Eve's creation, Adam had viewed all the creatures God had made and recognized none were his kind or his equal. Paul described this truth: "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another flesh of fish, and another flesh of birds" (1 Corinthians 15:39). This statement leaves no room for human evolution from the animal world; therefore, man and woman are unique, created in the image of God to reflect his glory and his order.

## THE PROMISE OF REDEMPTION

The first promise of redemption was given to a woman. God said of Eve that her seed shall bruise the head of the serpent and serpent "shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). This is the only reference in the Bible to the "seed of the woman." The seed of the man is transmitted from generation to generation, as the seed of sin comes upon all generations through Adam's transgression. This promise to Eve (Galatians 4:4, 5) came to pass when in the fullness of God's times He chose Mary, a virgin, to conceive the Son of God by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Truly Jesus bruised Satan's head through his death and resurrection, taking from him the keys of death and hell.

Christ brought in a better hope, breaking down the middle wall between Jew and Gentile so that now, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's then you all are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to the promise"



(Galatians 3:28, 29). God made male and female equal in salvation according to faith.

### WOMEN OF HONOR

As we examine the Old Testament historical record we find God using women in all dispensations according to their abilities and circumstances. One unusual example is Hagar, a Gentile servant who became a surrogate mother for Sarah when she wearied in waiting for God's promise of a son. Hagar found herself in a situation not of her own making. When Sarah grew resentful and sent her away, the angel found her in the desert, promised her a son, and gave her his name. She was advised to return and humble herself to Sarah. When Ishmael became a young man and Isaac was weaned, Sarah said, "The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son" (Genesis 21:10). Sarah made this statement by divine inspiration, for we find Paul quoting it verbatim in the New Testament (Galatians 4:30).

Though Abraham loved Ishmael and sought God for a blessing for him, he assured Sarah that she could do as she wished with Hagar and her son. Hagar was sent away with bread and water, only to find herself weeping when the water was gone. God spoke to her, showed her a well, and revealed her son's future. Hagar is the only woman in Scripture who named a place because of a visitation of God: "Wherefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi." She said, "Thou God seest me. . . . Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" (Genesis 16:13, 14).

Women sought God for answers. Rebekah sought God as to why the children in her womb struggled. God revealed to her that two nations were in her womb and that the elder would serve the younger. She tried to help the Lord because of her fear that Isaac would give the birthright to Esau, and she caused sorrow and separation. So we understand that women had access to God through prayer.

Miriam was called a prophetess and was very active in the Exodus and the wilderness journey. When Moses married the Ethiopian woman, Miriam and Aaron spoke against him: "Has the Lord spoken only by Moses, has he not spoken also by us?" Notice Miriam's name is listed first in the statement, so evidently she was the leader in this argument. God met with Moses, Aaron, and Miriam at the door of the tabernacle and declared that he spoke in visions and dreams to the prophets, but to Moses he spoke face to face. Further proof of Miriam's greater guilt in the matter was the fact that she was stricken with leprosy. Aaron confessed their guilt in the matter and besought Moses to pray for her healing. She was cured; however, she was put out of the camp for seven days. Micah in recounting how God had gone before Israel out of Egypt said, "I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam" (Micah 6:4). Miriam

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was acknowledged as a leader, but in God's order.

Deborah was a prophetess and a judge of Israel. She received directions from God to assemble the army to go against Sisera. When she asked Barak to lead the army, he agreed to do so only if she would accompany him into battle.

Deborah warned him that her doing so would not be to his honor, but she predicted that God would sell Sisera into the hands of a woman. Jael the Kenite invited Sisera into her tent when he was fleeing from the battle, served him food and drink, and watched as he fell asleep. She then killed him. The song of Deborah and Barak is wonderful in extolling the providence of God and his fighting for them. Though Deborah was both a prophetess and judge, the greatest title given her was "Mother in Israel" (Judges 5:7), for she had a mother's heart for the people of God.

Huldah was a prophetess of whom Hilkiah the priest and others enquired concerning the book of the law that was discovered in the temple. Her words to them and to King Josiah came to pass, prompting Josiah, under the Lord's inspiration, to complete one of the great reformations and restorations of worship of God in Judah.

Many other women, including Ruth, Esther, and Abigail, were profoundly used of God in a variety of ways in the Old Testament. Indeed, the evidence shows that biblical women were fully capable of fulfilling virtually any calling that time and circumstance necessitated, and they were given the freedom by the Hebrew culture to do so.

### NEW TESTAMENT MINISTRY

God's ways are entirely consistent; therefore, when the New Testament era began, we find God choosing Mary to fulfill the promises in the law, prophets, and Psalms that predicted the birth of the Messiah. At the same time, Eliza-

***Evidence shows that biblical women were fully capable of fulfilling virtually any calling that time and circumstance necessitated, and they were given freedom by the Hebrew culture to do so.***





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beth was preparing to give birth to John the Baptist as one who would prepare the way of Christ. When Jesus was brought to the temple for the purification, Simeon declared that this child would be the salvation of Israel, but Anna, a prophetess eighty-four years of age, who had remained in the temple continually in prayer and fasting, gave thanks to God and spoke to all who looked for redemption in Israel of him (Luke 2:36–38).

Various women were closely associated in the ministry of Jesus, including Mary and Martha, sisters of Lazarus, and Mary Magdalene who later was the first to see Jesus after his resurrection and in effect was the first to proclaim the good news: “He is risen!” The woman at the well of Samaria became a proclaimer of Jesus in her region.

Priscilla worked with the apostle Paul and, along with her husband Aquila, informed Apollos, who was extraordinary in the Word, the more perfect way of Christ. Phoebe was a minister from Cenchrea whom Paul asked to assist the Roman church. Lydia, an important business woman when Paul met her, became instrumental in the overspread of the gospel in her region. The four daughters of Philip also prophesied.

When the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost, women were among those who were baptized, fulfilling the promise of Joel that God would pour out the Spirit on all flesh, whereupon sons and *daughters* would prophesy.

### WOMEN IN ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

Ecclesiastical history clearly documents that after the fourth century, the Western Roman Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church took increasingly separate paths up until their final separation in the eleventh century. The Eastern Church maintained a more biblically correct Hebraic heritage in liturgy, doctrine, and gender matters than did the Western Church. Women participated in the sacraments and in the priesthood in the Eastern Church well into the Middle Ages—a clear influence of its Hebraic roots from earlier centuries. The Roman Church’s traditional expulsion of women from the celebration of the sacraments and its exclusion of women from

the priesthood have greatly influenced much of the thinking of the Protestant world historically and presently regarding gender and the theology of leadership.

The question remains then: was Rome’s historical path regarding gender and leadership rooted in biblical foundations or not? The truth is that gender bias in the church has always been rooted in the philosophy of the Greco-Roman world, not in Holy Scripture or in Jewish tradition.


### GOD’S CONSISTENCY

God is absolutely consistent throughout the Old and New Testaments in his dealing with women. Far from being less than men, they are equal with men:

- (1) In creation, they are equal.
- (2) In salvation, they are equal.
- (3) In God’s gifts and graces, they are equal.
- (4) There is also an equality in proclamation so

that all women dedicated to God and his service can be used where needed in ministry, administration, or leadership.

Women’s greatest arena of ministry can and should be their own children in the home. The life modeled combined with the godly principles and simple good news of God’s saving grace can be the most effective and long-lasting in the heart of children. Seeds sown early take deep root.

What can women do with God’s approval in ministry, leadership, and spiritual gifting? The historical record of Holy Scripture and of Jewish tradition gives broad latitude to diversity of expression for women who turn to the Lord with all their hearts and receive the empowering anointing of his Holy Spirit. The greatest witness that confirms the authenticity of multifaceted ministry for women is the record of those women in history who were so clearly used of God that their lives set precedent and made clear God’s confirmation on women in ministry and service. If there are to be questions as to the virtue of women’s involvement in all areas of ministry, “Let God be true, and everyone else a liar.” Are women God’s servants, called to ministry? “Give [*woman*] the fruit of her hands. Let her own works praise her in the gates” (Proverbs 31:31). 

Rev. Martha Looper has been in Christian ministry for over fifty years, serving as teacher, evangelist, and pastor. A strong biblicist, her keen insight into the Holy Scriptures and her eloquent expositions of biblical truth have made her ministry an example for both men and women. Her love for the Jewish people has been a hallmark of her ministry. Martha lives in Cleveland, Tennessee, where she is an associate pastor of Restoration Fellowship.



***The greatest authentication of female ministry roles is those women in Bible history who were so clearly used of God that their lives set precedents and clarified God’s confirmation of ministry opportunities for women in all ages.***

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