

***SCHOOL OF MESSIAH BIBLE INSTITUTE
YESHIVA MASHIACH***

A MINISTRY AND TEACHING RESOURCE ON
THE SUBJECT OF:

Women In Ministry

“A BIBLICAL TRUTH UNVEILED”

**BY
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Dauid Ben Israel**

Women In Ministry

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DEDICATION

To my wife Kimberly, and to women everywhere that pursue Elohim's call upon their lives to serve in the ministry.

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FOREWORD

Concerning the subject Women In Ministry, there has been a lot to say about the matter and yet there remains a great deal more that needs to be said. Many scholars have ventured to exhaust the subject and have given their opinions as to who should or should not be involved in ministry. They have quoted and misquoted Apostle Paul's writings and have clouded the understanding of the hearer until discerning truth has become a major undertaking. Finally, here we have a book, yet not simply a book, but an "unfolding of hidden truths" that has come to set in order those things misrepresented and to enlighten the misinformed.

Knowledge is freedom and when one acts out of knowledge that freedom can never be taken away. Perhaps when our Lord spoke the words "And ye shall know the truth and the truth SHALL set you free," and whosoever the truth sets free is free indeed, meant exactly that. Having had the privilege of being "set free" by the truths contained in this book, I thought it not robbery to speak on behalf of the author, my beloved husband, concerning the excellent manner in which this book was put together. And as a witness of the genuine fervor to equip the body of Christ, of which women play a vital role, I say to every woman called to minister, rise up! Embrace the truth, and be empowered to do the work of the Most High!

Kimberly A. Mode

New Covenant Messianic Ministries

INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that women have been called of the Most High to function in roles of ministry in almost every major era of human history. Verification of this fact is evident in biblical history, historical sources outside biblical history, and through archaeological evidence.

Looking at biblical history, beginning with Israel after its exodus from Egyptian captivity, there was a prophetess named Miriam who was a figure of prominence among the people. During the period of the Judges in Israel there was Deborah who was a prophetess and a judge. In the era of the Kings of Israel there was Huldah the Prophetess. At the circumcision of Yahshua the Messiah there was Anna the Prophetess. The Messianic community of the first century notes a variety of women. There were Philip's four daughters who operated in the prophetic gift of ministry. There was Priscilla who, along with her husband, was a pastor of an assembly in her home, and assisted Paul the Apostle in his ministry. There was Lydia, the business woman, who had an assembly in her house. There was Phoebe, called a minister of the assembly in Cenchrea, who operated in a pastoral role. There Junia, a female apostle, who was a figure of prominence. Also, there were other female leaders of whom Paul sent greetings.

Sources outside biblical history give account of women in ministry. Prior to the birth of Messiah, the Jewish diaspora throughout the ancient Near East produced the rise of synagogues to continue the Jewish religious life. In different locations throughout the Near East, there is evidence of women becoming leaders of synagogues. In the latter half of the second century CE, two female prophets of the Motanist movement by the names of Maximillia and Prisca were known for their prophetic ministry. Also, Pliny in his letters to Trajan speak of "two female slaves who were styled deaconesses (female ministers)."

There remains archaeological evidence to the fact that the female gender occupied leadership roles in the Ecclesiastical ministry. Frescos, mosaics, and inscriptions have depicted women to be in ministerial offices of leadership. In a catacomb of Rome is found a fresco dating back to the fourth century where a woman is identified as a bishop.

During the time of the second and third centuries CE, ecclesiastical maneuvers were made to silence women from functioning in the prophetic office, and forbid them from functioning in roles of ministerial oversight in the congregation. These maneuvers placed them under the domination and regulations of a male controlled ecclesiastical system, instead of a spirit controlled and biblically oriented ministry. This began with the intentional failure to recognize the Apostolic and the Prophetic offices within the fivefold ministry. The understanding developed whereby the offices of the Apostle and the Prophet were absorbed into the office of the Bishop. With this view in mind, the offices of the Apostle and the Prophet were eliminated. Next, the office of the Deaconess (female minister), having existed as part of the Ecclesiastical orders of ministry until the fifth century, was eliminated. In CE 441 at the Council of Orange, an edict was made to remove women from the Ecclesiastical ministry. The edict stated the following: "Let no one proceed to the ordination of deaconesses anymore."

Negative attitudes and mindsets toward women developed among the early church Fathers, and assisted in bringing them under the dominance of the male gender in the ministry of the church. By looking at the statements of some early church Fathers concerning women, one is able to see the development of the diabolical plot against them.

Tertullian said, “You are the devil’s gateway... you are the first deserter of the divine law; you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of your desert – that is, death – even the Son of God had to die.”

Augustine said, “The poison to deceive man was presented him by woman, through woman let salvation for man’s recovery be presented; so let woman make amends for the sin by which she deceived the man, by giving birth to Christ.”

Thomas Aquinas said, “Accordingly, since it is not possible in the female sex to signify eminence of degree, for a woman is in a state of subjection, it follows that she cannot receive the sacrament of Order.”

Quoting from Bell concerning the church Fathers she states, “In an effort to nullify her pernicious influence, they repeatedly insisted that the female body is not really an attractive object, but a vessel of filth, and that the production of children is not a joyful and rewarding experience, but a degradation.”

Such an attack made on women by the religious maneuvers of the church Fathers paved the way for centuries of belief that the female has no place in the Ecclesiastical orders of ministry. However, in recent times this belief has been challenged to determine its veracity. Those who have taken the challenge to examine the subject of women in ministry have found it to be one of great debate in theological circles of our day. There are a variety of opinions concerning the place and involvement of the female gender in the ministry. There are those who continue to believe that women have no place in ministry, other than teaching women and children. There are those who believe in allowing women to preach and teach, but limit them from functioning in a position of oversight. Also, there are those that view women as having equal place and involvement in ministry possessing the ability to serve in any capacity of ministry in which the Most High has called them

It is the purpose of this author to provide a sound biblical perspective concerning women in ministry.

I

The Societal Classification of the Female in Scripture

It is important for us to know that the female gender is referred to by different terms used in the scriptures to describe her within the framework of society. Such terms of classification are damsel, virgin, maiden, daughter, woman, wife, and widow. There is a purpose for the use of these various terms as seen from their Hebrew and Greek definition.

“Damsel,” “maiden” and “virgin” are the Hebrew term *naarah*, which is defined as a girl from infancy to adolescence. Also, it refers to a woman that has never been married.

“Daughter” comes from the Hebrew term *bat*, which means a descendant of or a female descendent.

“Woman” and “wife” come from the Hebrew term *ishah*, meaning “married woman.” Also, it is used to refer to the woman that has had a previous marriage

“Widow” is the Hebrew term *almanah*, which is defined as a desolate place, or one who is made desolate.

In the Hebrew language each word has a separate meaning. On the contrary, in the English language one word can have a variety of meanings. Since this is the case, then we must give an explanation for the variety of English terms used for translating one Hebrew word. When looking at the words “damsel,” “maiden” and “virgin” from the Hebrew language they all have the same meaning and are not separate words. “Damsel,” “maiden” and “virgin” are only English words which help to a fuller meaning to the Hebrew word *naarah*. The same explanation is to be applied with the words “woman” and “wife.” These two English words also help to provide a fuller meaning to the Hebrew *ishah*. There may be some that disagree with this explanation concerning the words “woman” and “wife.” This is because many people understand these two words as having separate definitions to the cultural understanding of our present age. To have a proper understanding of the use of the term *ishah*, which is translated “woman” and “wife,” we must understand the Hebrew cultural perspective of the female gender in biblical history.

In the Hebrew culture, the damsel (virgin), being also someone's daughter, remained in the home of her father until she was to be married. If the case was that she was not given in marriage to a man, then she would remain in her father's house. She would be recognized as a "daughter" within the framework of society. If the case was that she was to be married to a man, then she would be classified as a "woman" and a "wife." To be more explicit she would be recognized as a "married woman" within the framework of society. If the case was that a married woman lost her husband by way of death, then she would be classified as a "widow" within the framework of society. Yet, in the case of the widow, the "woman" (*ishah*) is applied, because she was a married woman.

The same cultural perspective is seen when looking at the New Covenant Greek definition of the same terms defined from Hebrew.

"Damsel" is *koiasion* in Greek meaning a little girl, a maid or maiden.

"Daughter" is *thugater* in Greek meaning a female child or descendent.

"Virgin" is *parthenos* in Greek meaning a maiden. Also, it is used to refer to an unmarried daughter.

"Woman" and "Wife" come from the Greek word *gune* meaning married woman. Also, it is used to refer to the woman that has had a previous marriage.

"Woman" is also *thelus* in Greek, which means "female." This Greek word *thelus* is used specifically to describe the gender of a woman and can be applied to all women.

"Widow" is *chera* in Greek meaning deficiency and lacking a husband.

II

The Role of the Woman in the Marriage

The purpose of the woman being created was to provide companionship and to be a suitable helper for the man. Also, to share the responsibility of exercising rule and oversight in the earth. Scripture reveals that Elohim gave them (both the male and the female) dominion over the earth.

Genesis 1:27-28 states,

“So Elohim created man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him; male and female created he them. And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim 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.”

Prior to the fall of mankind through disobedience, there is no indication that the man (Adam) was above his wife (Eve). However, what we do see from the scriptures is that both the man (Adam) and his wife (Eve) shared in the exercise of rule (dominion) over the earth. After the fall of mankind, being initiated by Eve's disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit, there came a change in the relationship between the husband and wife. Genesis 3:16 tells us of Elohim's judgment upon the wife due to her disobedience. The scripture states,

“Unto the woman (ishah), he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”

This is the first instance where the wife is to be subject to the authority of her husband. This verse is also the basis for the fact that Elohim has set the husband to be the head in the marriage relationship. The Apostle Paul confirms this fact in the latter to the Ephesians.

“Wives (gune), submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord, For the husband is the head of the wife (gune), even

as Messiah is the head of the assembly: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the assembly is subject unto Messiah, so let the wives (gune) be unto their own husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:22-24).

In the Hebrew culture there was a custom whereby an individual could recognize a married woman. The custom was that a married woman wore a covering over her head. The covering on her head symbolized that she was in submission to a man by marriage. Although at times unmarried women, and men, covered their heads for other reasons, the married woman was the only one that could not remove her covering in public.

Another reason for the married woman covering her head was to shroud her beauty from other men. Her beauty was to be seen only by her husband. The hair of a woman represented her beauty. The Apostle Paul states, ***"But is a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her..." (I Corinthians 11:15a).*** The word "glory" is synonymous with the word "beauty." The word "glory" is translated from the Greek term *doxa*. *Doxa* is equivalent to the Hebrew term *tipharah*. When looking at the Hebrew definition of *tipharah* the words "glory" and "beauty" are synonymous and without distinction. The Jewish New Testament renders I Corinthians 11:15a as saying, ***"But a woman who wears her hair long enhances her appearances..."*** In this rendering the term *doxa* is translated as "enhancing the appearance."

III

Distinction between the Women's Role in Marriage and Ministry

We have noted that the role of the married woman is different from that of any other female because she has a husband, and is in submission to him. At this point, it is necessary that a distinction be made between her role in marriage and her role in ministry. We must first define “ministry.”

The term “ministry” with respect to one’s relationship with Messiah means “service rendered to Messiah.” Service to Messiah is not based upon the gender of an individual, but the rather the obedience to follow the will of the Father. Every believer has been called to the service of Messiah.

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Messiah, and every one members one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:4-8).

The scripture text reveals that every believer has a particular office of ministry according to the gift of Elohim. Because “gifts and callings are without repentance” (Roman 11:29), the believer is obligated to perform service to the Father in the area and calling that is given by the Father. This is the case because Elohim does not change his mind about the gifts and callings that he places upon the life of the believer. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all believers to discharge their duties of ministry or be judges for being slothful, as was the case of the man with the one talent spoken of in Matthew 25:15-30.

The scriptural text of Romans 12:4-8 does not make a difference in gender concerning ministry gifts. When looking at the scripture text from face value, some may be inclined to make a difference in gender concerning ministry gifts. For example, the ministry gifts noted by the phrases “he that teacheth,” “he that exhorteth,” and “he that ruleth” may be seen as exclusively for the male gender because of the pronoun “he.” However, the word “he” is not an accurate translation from the original Greek word *autos* in the scriptural text. The Greek word *autos*

means “self,” and is a genderless term. In other scriptures where the word “she” is used, the Greek root is also *autos*. The best translation for the Greek word *autos* is the phrase “the one” in place of the word “he.” So then, the phrases of Romans 12:7-8 should be “the one that teacheth,” “the one that exhorteth,” and “the one that ruleth.”

The woman in ministry must recognize that she has a responsibility before Elohim to exercise her ministry gift. Also, she must recognize that Elohim is not partial to gender regarding gifts and callings.

IV

The Sovereignty of Elohim

Sovereignty is an attribute of Elohim which describes Him as having the absolute power and freedom to do whatever he desires. For more clarity, let us define the word “sovereignty.”

Sovereignty – supreme power; freedom from external control; autonomy; controlling influence.

With this definition in mind, let us now see how the scriptures attest to the sovereignty of Elohim.

“Remember the former things of old: for I am Elohim, and there is none else; I am Elohim, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isaiah 46:10).

“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Daniel 4:35).

“Whatsoever YHWH pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places” (Psalm 135:6).

“I know that, whatsoever Elohim doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can put to it, nor anything taken from it, and Elohim doeth it, that men should fear before him” (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

From observing the scriptures that attest to Elohim’s sovereignty, it is evident that all of Elohim’s choices, decisions, and actions are according to his own will. It must also be known that there is nothing that can influence or manipulate what Elohim chooses to do. In the words of A. W. Pink, “Subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent; God does as He

pleases, only as He pleases, always as He pleases.” To be more explicit, there are no special circumstances that will cause Elohim to alter his intended purposes. For example, it is the will of Elohim to decree judgment on the wicked. However, the will of Elohim is also accomplished when the wicked repents, and Elohim’s judgment is withdrawn. It may appear that their repentance was a special circumstance to stop Elohim’s impending judgment on wickedness, but their repentance was according to the sovereign will of Elohim.

“YHWH is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward; Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

An example of this would be found in the book of Jonah, wherein Jonah was sent to pronounce judgment on the city of Nineveh. Due to the repentance of the people of Nineveh after hearing the preaching of Jonah, Elohim spared them of his coming judgment.

Concerning women in ministry, it is the sovereign choice of Elohim to call the female gender to ministry, and to gift her to be used in any capacity of spiritual leadership.

V

Women in Ministry throughout the Scriptures

Before we begin looking at the various women in ministry throughout the scriptures, a word must be stated concerning the prophetic office of ministry. It would be noted that this office of ministry was occupied by most of the women that will be discussed.

A. The Prophetic Ministerial Office

The prophetic office of ministry was highly regarded because the person who stood in this office was recognized as a channel of communication between Elohim and men. Those who stood in this office were often sought after to give people a word from Elohim, and were also used to deliver to people direct messages from Elohim. A person had to be proven before being recognized (ordained) in the prophetic office. The proving of a person for the prophetic office was based upon (1) the veracity of the prophetic utterance, and (2) Elohim being the source of the prophetic utterance. Let us look at the scriptures that deal with the proving of those called to the prophetic office.

*“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other elohim, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which YHWH hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of YHWH, if the thing not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which YHWH hath not spoken but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him”
(Deuteronomy 18:20-22).*

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer or dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other elohim, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not harken

unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for YHWH your Elohim proveth you, to know whether ye love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after YHWH your Elohim, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death..." (Deuteronomy 13:1-5a).

Based upon the above mentioned scriptures, the result for not passing the test of being proven for the prophetic office was death. However, those who passed the test were given recognition of having been ordained by Elohim into the prophetic office.

B. Women in Ministry in the Scriptures

1) Miriam

Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, was a prominent figure during the time of the Exodus from Egypt. Little is known about her, except that which has been spoken concerning her influence in the congregation of Israel. Quoting from Lockyer, "She is brought as a leader and pattern to the women of Israel." The text of Exodus 15:20a calls Miriam "the prophetess." The fact that she was given the title of "prophetess" reveals that she was regarded by the people as such. Being labeled a prophetess automatically placed Miriam in apposition of prominence among the people.

Her leadership and influence are seen by her leading the women in singing and dancing to YHWH (Exodus 15:20-21). To her infamy, Miriam's noted prominence among the people is indirectly implied by her, along with Aaron, voicing disapproval of Moses being married to an Ethiopian (Cushite) woman. They boldly stated,

***"Has YHWH spoken only to Moses?
They asked. Hasn't he also spoken
through us" (Numbers 12:2).***

This disapproval of Moses being married to an Ethiopian (Cushite) might have been shared by many of the people. However, Miriam's voicing her opinion appears to display that she held a degree of influence among the people (see Numbers 12:1-15).

2) Deborah

Deborah was a remarkable woman of significance during the period of the Judges. Quoting Schepps, "Deborah's greatness consisted...in her superior mental and spiritual

attainments, which were recognized and revered by her nation, men and women alike.” Her life and ministry are recorded in Judges 4:1-5:31. She was a prophetess and a judge. Having been given the title of “prophetess” reveals that Deborah was publicly recognized as one ordained of Elohim in the prophetic office. As a prophetess, she called Barak and prophesied to him that Elohim would deliver the Canaanite army into his hand. She also gave instructions about how to prepare to fight the battle against the Canaanites.

Being a judge in Israel, Deborah occupied the highest position of authority. The Judges were raised up after the same order and pattern as Moses. First, they were to deliver Elohim’s people from the bondage of the enemy, and secondly, they were to provide counsel and judgement (see Exodus 18:13-26 and Deuteronomy 17:8-11). In other words, the Judge was Elohim’s leader for the people of Israel. There we can say that Deborah was a leader the people of Israel since she was a judge. She had all Israel under her jurisdiction, and from the palm tree that bore her name she dispensed righteousness, justice and mercy. Judges 4:4 attests to the fact that Deborah was a leader. The text states,

“Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.”

The statement made by Deborah in Judges 5:7 also attests to the fact that she was a leader and a prominent figure in Israel. The text states,

“...the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, a Mother in Israel” (Judges 5:7).

3) Huldah

Huldah appears on the scene during the period of King Josiah’s reign in Judah. She was married, living in the Second District of Jerusalem, and was regarded as a prophetess. Both II Kings chapter 22 and II Corinthians chapter 34 give reference concerning her ministry the scriptures speak of Huldah being consulted by Hilkiah the Priest concerning the scroll of the Law that was found. She verified that the scroll of the Law contained the message of Elohim, and provided direction for the king to lead the nation toward spiritual restoration. Because the scriptures record only this incident in the life of Huldah, it would appear that she had little notoriety as a prophetess. Yet, there is evidence that reveals the contrary.

First, King Josiah was not specific about who should be consulted when he ordered Hilkiah to get a word from YHWH concerning the scroll of the Torah that was found.

Second, the scriptures reveal four prophets that were available for consultation during the time of Josiah’s reign when the scroll of the Torah was found. These prophets were Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Nahum and Zephaniah. It would seem logical that one of these prophets would have been consulted by Hilkiah. They were male prophets, and their prophetic ministries were already underway. If not Habakkuk, Nahum or Zephaniah, then Jeremiah would have more than likely

been consulted because he was the son of Hilkiah the High Priest, and close to King Josiah. However, none of these prophets were consulted. The Prophetess Huldah, a woman, was consulted.

Because of these facts, we must believe that Huldah was a prophetess of notoriety. In Israel, when people wanted a word from YHWH, they looked for one in the prophetic office noted for being a reliable source of divine utterance. Huldah was one who fit that category.

4) Anna

Anna is another woman who we must consider although little is said of her in the scriptures. She is first noted as a prophetess, which means that she was in the prophetic office. She came on the scene in biblical history during the time of the presentation of Yahshua the Messiah at the Temple. She was a widow for many years. During the Days of Teshuvah in preparing for Yom Kippur, she ministered to YHWH in the Temple with fastings and prayer both day and night. While at the Temple during the time of Yahshua's presentation, she saw him, and gave thanks to YHWH.

It appears that she was the first person to declare that Yahshua was the Messiah and the promised redeemer of Israel (see Luke 2:36-38).

5) The Four Daughters of Philip

The four daughters of Philip were noted for being used in the prophetic ministry. Although the scriptures only make mention of them in Acts 21:8-9 in connection with prophesying, they were known for their prophetic ministry by the Messianic community of the 2nd century CE.

6) Priscilla

Priscilla was noted as “a fellow worker in Messiah.” Priscilla worked with her husband Aquilla in ministry. She, along with her husband, helped the Apostle Paul in his ministry at Corinth and Ephesus (Acts 18), and explained to Apollos the way of Elohim more accurately (Acts 18:24-26). The scriptures imply that she shared with her husband in the pastoral ministry because there was a congregation that met in her home (Romans 16:3-5, I Corinthians 16:19). Priscilla appears to be a person of importance because her name is listed before her husband's name four times in the scriptures. For example, Romans 16:3 states,

“Greet Priscilla and Aquilla...”

During that time in biblical history it was not commonplace for the wife's name to be mentioned before her husband's name, unless she was an individual of importance.

7) *Lydia*

Lydia was an important figure in the forming of the church in Philippi. She was called a worshipper of Elohim (Acts 16:14), which means she was proselyte (Gentile who converted to faith in the Elohim of Israel). She believed on Messiah at Philippi by the preaching of the Apostle Paul during a meeting for prayer and worship on the Sabbath held on the beach. It appears that Lydia was the first leader of the congregation in Philippi because she possessed leadership abilities, and had the congregation in her house (Acts 16:40). To qualify the previous statement, we must take a closer look at Lydia.

First, Lydia was recognized as “a seller of purple.” This denotes that she was a successful business woman. Second, Lydia was the head of her household. This denotes that she was an unmarried woman with other people living under her authority. It is most probable that those living in her house were servants. The selling of purple was a very profitable business for Lydia. Since purple was very expensive, her business catered to those of affluence in the society. So, she was afforded to the luxury of having her home with servants to operate the business.

Lydia’s experience as a business woman proves that she must have possessed skills in management and administration. Therefore, it is quite likely that Lydia was the first pastor of the congregation in Philippi.

8) *Phoebe*

Phoebe was a woman of high regard. She was commended by the Apostle Paul to the congregation at Rome. Paul describes her as a “minister” of the congregation in Cenchrea according to Romans 16:1. Prominent translations of the scriptures, such as KJV and NIV, have used the word “servant” instead of “minister.” There are a variety of words in Greek that can be translated “servant.” However, the word *diakonia*, which is derived from the Greek term *diakonos*, as used in Romans 16:1, specifically refers to the person who serves in a ministerial office of leadership, whose primary function is preaching, teaching and disciple making. The Apostle Paul uses this Greek term *diakonia* in Romans 11:13, being translated as “office” (KJV) or “ministry” (NIV) with reference to his apostleship to the Gentiles. Paul uses the term *diakonos* in I Corinthians 3:5 to refer to himself and Apollos as “ministers,” and in II Corinthians 3:6 to refer to himself and others as “ministers” of a new covenant. Again, the term *diakonos* is used referring to the leadership position in the congregation translated “deacon” according to I Timothy 3:8-11. It should be noted that the Deacon of the first century was the equivalent of the present day Assistant Pastor. Therefore, we can say that Phoebe was a “minister” or “one in the office of ministry.”

There is a strong indication from the scriptures that Phoebe occupied a position of oversight in the office of the Pastor. This is seen in Romans 16:2 by properly translating the meaning of the Greek term *prostatis* which has been translated “succourer” (KJV) or “great help” (NIV). Because of the specific nature of the Greek, the Apostle Paul would have used the Greek term *beothos* if he wanted Phoebe to be recognized as a “succourer” or “great help.” However, in choosing to use the term *prostatis* to describe Phoebe, the Apostle wanted us to see

her in a leadership position. *Prostatis* literally means “one who stands over” and “one who stands by in the case of need.” It describes the Greek trainers of the Olympics, who stood by athletes to ensure that they were properly trained and rightly girded when they lined up for the signal. The Greek understanding of *prostatis* suggests that Phoebe was one who stood by to train and equip people. The verb form of *prostatis* is *proistemi*. *Proistemi* means to stand before, to preside, to maintain, to be over, to rule. According to Strong’s Concordance, *prostatis* has been translated “patroness.” A patroness, the feminine equivalent of patron, is like a mother figure in some respects who is a guardian, protector and benefactor. Being a “mother like figure” denotes the position of authority and leadership. Being a “guardian and protector” denotes the responsibility of oversight. Being a “benefactor” denotes the responsibility of providing spiritual care.

Quoting Phipps, “*Prostatis* is virtually equivalent to *episkopos*, overseer, which designates the office of bishop in the New Testament.” The fuller definition of *prostatis* reveals a female in the role of a pastor. With this understanding in mind, Phoebe is to be recognized as one in the ministerial office of the Pastor.

9) Junia

Junia was noted by Paul as “*eminent among the apostles*” (Romans 16:7). In major translations the Greek name *Junia* has been translated *Junias* making the name masculine instead of leaving it feminine. However, no masculine form of the name *Junia* existed in the Hellenistic world. The statement of Paul reveals that she was a female apostle, and one of prominence.

VI

Paul's View on Women

Much of the writings of Paul concerning women have been interpreted that the female is subject to the male gender. However, taking a deeper look into the language of the New Testament scriptures, and considering the cultural implications during the time of Paul's writings reveal a different perspective compared to what has been previously stated.

We shall proceed with examining a variety of scriptural texts that set forth Paul's view concerning women.

A) I Corinthians 11:3-7

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Messiah; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Messiah is Elohim. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn; but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of Elohim; but the woman is the glory of the man.”

Due to the use of the terms “man” and “woman” in the scriptural text, many have interpreted I Corinthians 11:3-7 to mean that the female gender is subject to the authority of the male gender. Although many may hold to this understanding, we shall discover that it lacks proper exegesis. To help properly interpret the scriptural text, we shall deal with the Greek terms for “man” and “woman,” and also discuss the cultural understanding of head coverings that was previously discussed in chapter II.

The Greek term *aner*, which is translated “man,” also means “husband” or “married man.” The same Greek term is used in every place where the word “husband” is found in the New Covenant scriptures. It should be noted that in most of the New Covenant *aner* is used to directly refer to the married man.

The Greek term for “woman” is *gune*, and it literally meaning “wife” or “married woman.” *Gune* is also used in every place where the word “wife” is found in the New Covenant scriptures. By understanding the Greek words for “man” and “woman” we are given the first indication that the text is referring to the husband and the wife.

As for the covering of the head, this practice was done by both men and women within the Israelite culture of that day. However, married women were not allowed to remove their head covering because it was a sign to others that they were married. If a married woman removed her covering in public she would be viewed as a woman of loose morals. When the scripture speaks of a woman having her head uncovered to be equal with having her hair cut (shorn) or shaved off, she is being equated with a temple prostitute of the pagan religions. For the temple prostitutes cut their hair or were bald headed. That is why the scripture says that it is,

***“a shame for a woman to be shorn (to cut her hair) or shaven (to be bald headed).”
(I Corinthians 11:6b)***

Within the cultural framework of that time, it was of utmost importance that a married woman kept her head covered to honor her husband.

Based upon these two points, (1) the Greek meaning for the words “man” and “woman,” and (2) the cultural understanding of the head covering, the scripture text must be interpreted to refer specifically to the husband and the wife. The proper translation for I Corinthians 11:3 where it says, *“the head of the woman (a married woman) is the man,”* should read, *“the head of the wife is the husband.”*

Therefore, Paul does not view the female gender as subject to the male gender, but views the wife as subject to her husband.

B) I Corinthians 14:34-35

***“Let your women keep silence in the assemblies;
for it is not permitted unto them to
speak; but they are commanded to be under
obedience, as also saith the law. And if they
learn anything, let them ask their husbands
at home; for it is a shame for women to speak
in the assembly.”***

The scriptural text given has been used as a basis for the belief that women are not allowed by Elohim to preach or teach in the worship service. However, the following examination of the above scripture shall prove that such a belief has no foundation.

First of all, Paul is not speaking concerning all women as has been assumed by many. He is speaking with reference to married women. There are two clues in the text that clearly confirm

the previous statement. The first clue is given by using the Greek term *gune* for “women,” which literally means “married women” or “wives.” The second clue is given in the text where it states, **“...let them ask their husbands at home.”** These clues confirm the fact that Paul was referring specifically to married women.

Second, Paul’s statement concerning married women holding their peace in the assembly was a response to them that asked questions regarding the sermon or teaching. It should be noted that a worship service in the first century church had a time of questions and answers after the sermon or teaching. According to the cultural framework of that period in history, when a wife was in the presence of her husband, she did not speak out to publicly represent herself. If she spoke out, then she would be viewed as not being in submission to her husband. Paul addressed only married women in order to place emphasis on the husband’s position as the head and the one who represented the family. Therefore, it was appropriate for the wife to hold her questions regarding the sermon or teaching, and to present such questions for her husband to address. By doing this she would protect herself from being viewed as a wife that showed disrespect and lack of submission toward her husband.

So then, Paul is not forbidding the woman to preach or teach, but that the married woman shows respect and submission to her husband by allowing him to represent the family. According to the text, the husband was to answer his wife’s questions at home. If Paul was forbidding the woman to preach or teach in the assembly, then he would be in contradiction to what he wrote in I Corinthians 11:5. Evidently this verse points out that the married woman prophesied in the assembly.

C) I Timothy 2:11-15

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

The above scripture has been interpreted by many that the woman is not allowed to function in a teaching position in the assembly with men under her instruction, and neither is she allowed to be a pastor. The reasoning behind this interpretation is based upon understanding I Timothy chapter 2 as the Apostle Paul giving instructions for the order of worship. Yet, the proper exegesis of I Timothy chapter 2 reveals that such an interpretation is incorrect.

The Apostle Paul does not give instructions concerning the order of worship. He is writing to Timothy giving him instructions for different groups of people in the body of Messiah

at Ephesus. 1) He gives an exhortation that all of the believing men in Ephesus should pray (I Timothy 2:1-8). 2) He gives an admonition concerning the outward appearance of married women (I Timothy 2:9-10). 3) He gives instruction for the married woman to learn submission to her husband (I Timothy 2:11-15).

In exegeting I Timothy 2:1-8, it is observed first that verses 1-7 deal with supplications and intercessory prayer being made for all people. When observing verse 8, we see that men are exhorted to do the praying. It must be understood that in Paul's exhortation for men to pray it does not mention a specific place where prayer should be made. Rather, it states that men should pray "everywhere," or "in every place" according to the literal translation from the Greek. Since the Apostle Paul does not limit prayer to a specific place, then it must be recognized that he is only giving instruction for men to pray. This is not the first indication to show that Paul was not dealing with the order of the worship service, but giving exhortation for men to pray.

Another point that must be emphasized to confirm that Paul was not giving instructions for the order of worship is to compare I Corinthians chapters 11-14 with I Timothy 2:1-8. By observing I Corinthians 11-14, it is clear that Paul is giving instructions for the order of worship. In I Corinthians 11, 1) he deals with the use of head coverings by the husband and wife and its relationship to praying and prophesying; and 2) he deals with the Lord's supper. In I Corinthians 12, he deals with spiritual gifts. In I Corinthians 13, he deals with charity (love) as being the motive for operating in spiritual gifts. In I Corinthians 14, 1) he deals with the use of tongues and prophesying in the church worship; and 2) he instructs that everything done in the worship should be conducted orderly for edification. For example, I Corinthians 14:26 gives a summary of the worship activities that individuals participated in, and Paul's admonition of edifying.

"How is it then brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm (song), hath a doctrine (teaching), hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Corinthians 14:26).

There were specific statements made by Paul that confirm he was giving instructions concerning the order of worship. For example, I Corinthians 11:2 states, "...keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you"; I Corinthians 11:17 states, "...ye come together..."; I Corinthians 11:18 states, "...when ye come together in the assembly"; I Corinthians 11:20 states, "When ye come together..."; I Corinthians 11:33 states, "...when ye meet together"; I Corinthians 14:19 states, "...in the assembly..."; I Corinthians 14:23 states, "...the whole assembly comes together"; and I Corinthians 14:26 "...When ye come together."

Now looking at I Timothy 2:1-8 in comparison to I Corinthians 11-14, we must note the following: 1) there is no mention made of the church coming (gathering) together; 2) there is no mention of the Lord's Supper; 3) there is no mention of the use of tongues and prophesying in the assembly gathering; 4) there is no mention of certain activities in the worship service that individuals participated in such as singing, teaching, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues

and imparting revelation. Since all of Paul's letters contain specific detailed information related to an issue or question to be addressed, one cannot blindly accept the view I Timothy 2:1-8 was concerning with the order of worship. If I Timothy 2:1-8 was concerning the order of worship, then Paul would have included more specific information for his audience to remove all doubt about the subject he was addressing. Therefore, it is concluded that I Timothy 2:1-8 is an exhortation for men to pray.

2) In I Timothy 2:9-10, Paul deals with the outward appearance of married women. Although the text uses the word "women," the proper translation is "married women" because its Greek term is *gune* (see I Peter 3:1-5 where *gune* is properly translated as "wives"). The purpose of Paul addressing this subject is better understood when considering the cultural implications that concern the married woman's outward appearance.

In the Hebrew culture, the married women kept their heads covered which shielded their beauty bringing less attention to themselves by other men. However, the married women of Gentile cultures were the opposite. They were accustomed to enhancing their appearance by plaiting their hair, wearing expensive clothing, and decking themselves with jewelry.

The Messianic community in Ephesus, being composed of married women from Hebrew and Gentile cultural backgrounds, needed to have a balanced perspective concerning the adornment of married women. Paul did not indicate that married women ought to adorn themselves after the manner of the believing Hebrew wives, which wore head coverings. Rather, he advised them to adorn themselves modestly. It was not the intent of Paul to give the impression that married women should not enhance their beauty, but to give a word of caution that married women should not adorn themselves in a way that would draw the attention of other men.

3) I Timothy 2:11-15 is concerning the marriage relationship where Paul gives instruction to the married woman to be subject to her husband. There are three points that establish the fact that Paul referred to the marriage relationship. The first point is the use of the Greek terms for "woman" and "man." The Greek term used for "woman" is *gune* meaning "married woman" or "Wife." The Greek term used for "man" is *aner* which also means "husband." The second point is the reference to Adam and Eve, the first married couple. In this reference, Paul highlights the fact of Eve being first deceived to establish the basis for the wife being subject to the authority of her husband (see Genesis 3:13-16). The third point is the reference in I Timothy 2:15 of the woman being "saved in childbearing." It should be noted that Paul was not referring to all women bearing children. Two reasons justify this point. The first reason is that Paul's instruction was directed toward believers. The second reason is that it is biblically immoral for an unmarried woman to get pregnant.

Based upon the previous exegesis, a more accurate translation of I Timothy 2:11-12 can be developed to help clarify that the text is referring to the marriage relationship.

TRANSLATION:

“Let the wife learn, through holding her peace (being in quietness), to be fully submitted or full submission. But I do not allow the wife to instruct, nor to exercise authority over the husband, but to hold her peace (be in quietness).”

VII

Addressing the Arguments against Women in Ministry

ARGUMENT NO. ONE:

The divine order (arrangement) is exclusively for men (male gender) to be leaders in the congregation because the man is the head of the woman.

In addressing this argument, we must note that there is no scriptural basis for the supremacy of the male gender over the female gender. This idea is contrary to the scriptural statement of Galatians 3:28, which says

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Messiah Yahshua.”

Also, it is contrary to Romans 12:4-8, which clearly points out that ministry gifts are given to members of the body of Messiah without respect to gender (see chapter III). The only instance where the scriptures declare the female to be in submission to the male is within the marriage relationship. In fact, the statement “the man is the head of the woman” refers directly to the husband being the head of the wife (see chapter VI-A). However, if it is true that Elohim’s divine order is for men to be the only leaders in the congregation, then the immutability and continuity of Elohim’s purpose for the male gender alone usurping ministry leadership must be questioned. If the argument is true, then Elohim is seen as in contradiction to his divine order by calling Deborah to be Judge over the nation of Israel. But Elohim is not in contradiction with any of his divine arrangements. In addition, the scriptures have proven to be silent concerning women being forbidden from church leadership. Therefore, this argument has no justification to forbid women from assuming roles of leadership in the congregation.

ARGUMENT NO. TWO:

Women are not allowed to preach or teach in the worship assembly because I Corinthians 14:34-35 concludes that women are not allowed to speak in the assembly.

In addressing this argument, we must understand that I Corinthians 14:34-35 is not referring to women preaching or teaching in the assembly, but to married women asking questions concerning the sermon or teaching (see chapter VI-B). Since the text uses the Greek term *gune*, which literally means “wife” or “married woman,” then Paul’s instruction was directed toward married women. Another factor that verifies the previous statement is the first part of I Corinthians 14:35, which states, *“And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands*

at home.” Based upon this portion of scripture, Paul leaves no doubt in the minds of his audience that his instruction is exclusively for married women since they are the only ones who have husbands.

Another point that must be considered is that Paul would be contradicting himself if his instruction in I Corinthians 14:34-35 meant that women were not permitted to preach or teach. This is the case because in I Corinthians 11:5 Paul speaks of the married woman prophesying.

ARGUMENT NO. THREE:

Women are not allowed to teach in the assembly, nor to have a position of authority over men according to I Timothy 2:12.

In addressing this argument, one must understand that I Timothy 2:12 is not instruction regarding the female gender usurping authority in the assembly over the male gender. Rather, instruction to the married woman that she should not try to instruct her husband, nor take authority over him. Because many interpret I Timothy chapter 2 as instruction for the order of worship, I Timothy 2:12 has been understood to mean that women are not permitted to have a role of authority in the church over men. However, I Timothy chapter 2 does not pertain to the order of worship (see chapter VI-C). There are three points that justify the fact that I Timothy 2:12 is instruction to the married woman.

1) The words “man” and “woman” used in I Timothy 2:12 literally mean “husband” and “wife.” 2) In I Timothy 2:13-14, Paul refers to the first married couple, Adam and Eve, to show that it was the sin of the first wife that placed her in a position of being subject to the authority of her husband (see Genesis 3:16). 3) In I Timothy 2:15, Paul refers to the woman being “saved in childbearing.” Because it is biblically immoral for an unmarried woman to get pregnant, it is only logical to accept that married women are being referred to as “saved in childbearing.”

Based upon these three points there is no doubt that I Timothy 2:12 is instruction for the married woman to be submissive to the authority of her husband.

ARGUMENT NO. FOUR:

Women of the Bible used in ministry did not have a continuing (on going) ministry.

It appears that this argument is based on the premise that the women of the Bible were only used in ministry at those times where the scriptures record their ministerial activity, but at no other time in their life outside what is recorded. However, this premise reveals a lack of scriptural understanding concerning the various offices of ministry. The Prophetess Huldah shall be used as an example.

Huldah is mentioned in the scriptures concerning her prophetic word about the scroll of the Torah after being consulted by Hilkiah the Priest. The scriptures call her “the prophetess” (II Chronicles 34:22), which lets us know that she had obtained the title by being tested. The method

of testing for the one called in the prophetic ministry was to speak a prophetic message that would come to pass. If the prophetic message did not come to pass, then the one who spoke the message would be stoned to death. Since Huldah passed the test, there is proof that she operated in the prophetic ministry at least one other time than what is recorded in the scriptures. This confirms that Huldah's ministry was on-going. In addition, Huldah must have been a prophetess of reputation because the respected priest Hilkiah consulted her for a word from YHWH when he could have consulted Jeremiah (Hilkiah's son), Habakkuk, Nahum and/or Zephaniah who were all male prophets.

Therefore, this argument has no validity to forbid women from being in the ministry.

ARGUMENT NO. FIVE:

Women of the Bible were used in ministry because of "special circumstances."

The premise for this argument is based on the assumption that there were no righteous men qualified at those times when Elohim chose to use women in certain phases of ministry. The idea of there being "special circumstances" to cause Elohim to change His divine arrangement of things violates the omniscience and sovereignty of Elohim.

Since Elohim is omniscient, he knows all things, this includes the past, present and future. The purposes of Elohim, with references to humanity, have been set in motion from the beginning of time according to His foreknowledge. Therefore, the purposes of Elohim cannot be changed or manipulated.

The sovereignty of God tells us that all of Elohim's acts and decisions are based upon His sovereign will. In other words, Elohim does what He wants to do without the influence of any source outside Himself. When Elohim calls an individual into ministry, it is always based upon His sovereignty, not the qualifications of the individual. An example is seen in the calling of Isaiah and Gideon.

When Isaiah was called to the prophetic office, he said of himself,

"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5).

This statement reveals a sinful condition in the life of Isaiah. His confession of having unclean lips reveals that Isaiah was not in a position to prophesy the word of YHWH. However, YHWH qualified Isaiah to be a prophet by having a seraph touch his mouth with a coal from the altar of YHWH to cleanse his lips and remove his sin (see Isaiah 6:6-7).

Consider the call of Gideon. When Israel was oppressed and impoverished by the Midianites, Gideon is depicted hiding in a winepress threshing wheat in fear of the Midianites confiscating his wheat. Since Gideon was in fear and retreated from the enemy, he did not have

the courage necessary to lead Israel to victory over the Midianites. Yet, when the angel came to speak to Gideon concerning the call of Elohim, the angel made this statement,

“YHWH is with thee, thou mighty man of valour” (Judges 6:12).

As with Isaiah, Elohim qualified Gideon to carry out his calling. It was Elohim’s sovereignty in operation to speak courage into Gideon to fulfill the purposes of Elohim.

Therefore, when Elohim chooses to use a woman in ministry, He does it because HE WANTS to do it according to His sovereign will.

ARGUMENT NO. SIX:

A woman should not be in the ministry because no woman ever served in the Levitical priesthood.

To address this argument, we must first consider the purpose of the Levitical priesthood. The Levitical priesthood was designed for the purpose of mediation, reconciliation, and redemption for Israel under the Mosaic covenant. The function of the priests was to serve Elohim in the Tabernacle/Temple on the behalf of the people as mediators going before Elohim with the various offerings given by the people of Israel. The Levitical priesthood was different from any other office of ministry because it focused on ministering to Elohim, whereas the other offices of ministry focused on ministering to the people. It should be noted that the Levitical priesthood was operative only with the existence of the Tabernacle/Temple. Without the Tabernacle/Temple the Levitical priesthood could not function. In the process of time, the Levitical priesthood ceased to exist because of the redemptive work of Yahshua the Messiah fulfilling every aspect of the Levitical priesthood and the ministry of the Tabernacle/Temple.

It is a fact that women were not called into the Levitical priesthood, however, this was not based upon the premise that Elohim could only use men in ministry. For when the Levitical priesthood was in operation, there were women in the prophetic office of ministry, and one was in the office of the Judge. Yet, there appears to be reasons why Elohim chose not to call women into the Levitical priesthood. One reason may have been the physical demands placed upon the body that made it highly improbable for woman of that time to function in this office. However, a more likely reason for women not being called into the Levitical priesthood would be associated with the female menstrual cycle. This physiological condition in the female would create the inability for her to consistently function in such an office. For example, a woman on her monthly menstrual period was recognized as unclean, and had to be separated seven days according to the Torah (Leviticus 15:19). With this reason in mind, it would be conducive to have a woman in the Levitical priesthood.

Based upon these factors previously mentioned, we must conclude that is inappropriate to use the fact of women not being called to the Levitical priesthood as a basis for excluding them from being in the ministry.

ARGUMENT NO. SEVEN:

Women are allowed to function in all areas of the ministry except those that are of an episcopal and presbyterial role.

Those who hold this position recognize that the scriptures allow the female gender to function in the ministry of teaching, preaching and prophesying, but does not allow her to function in a position of oversight such as those of the Apostle, Pastor and Elder. There are three points of justification used by many who hold this view. 1) Yahshua chose twelve men to be his apostles. 2) Paul's qualifications for an overseer were directly related to men. 3) There is no evidence of women exercising presbyterial functions.

Addressing this argument requires six of the following points to be considered: 1) An examination of Deborah's role as Judge; 2) The ministry gifts are distributed without respect of gender; 3) Phoebe being called *prostatis* by Paul in Romans 16:2; 4) Junia as a female apostle; 5) Archaeological evidence of female overseers; and 6) I Timothy 3:1-7 are general qualifications for overseers, and not exclusive qualifications that are only applicable to men.

1) Deborah's role as Judge depicts her in a governmental position over the nation of Israel. The Judge was responsible for leading the nation by providing direction and counsel from Elohim for the people. Judges 4:4 confirms that Deborah was leading Israel. For it states,

***“Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time”
(Judges 4:4).***

2) The ministry gifts are distributed without respect to gender. In Romans 12:7-8, the word “he” proceeds the stated ministry gift. For example, let us highlight the phrase “he that ruleth.” It would appear that only the male gender can occupy a position of “ruling,” but according to the Greek it was not the intent of Paul to specify gender. Looking at the word “he” reveals an improper translation of the Greek word *autos*. *Autos* means “self” and it is a neutral term. It can refer to a male, female, or an inanimate object. The proper translation of *autos* in Romans 12:7-8 is “the one.” By understanding the phrase of Romans 12:8 as “the one that ruleth,” we can clearly see that there is no respect for gender when ministry gifts are given.

3) Phoebe was called a *prostatis* by Paul in Romans 16:2. In using the term *prostatis* to describe Phoebe, Paul recognizes her in a position of leadership. *Prostatis* literally means “one who stands over.” The verb form *proistemi* means to stand before, to preside, to maintain, to be over, to rule. *Prostatis* has been translated as “patroness.” A patroness, the feminine equivalent of a patron, is like a mother figure in some respects who is a guardian, protector and benefactor. *Prostatis* was only used this one time in the New Covenant. The word translated “succourer” in Romans 16:2 was an improper term to use to describe the full meaning of *prostatis*. If it was the intent of Paul to describe her as a succourer, he would have used the Greek word *beothos*, which

specifically means succourer, helper, or an aid. Paul specifically used *prostatis* to denote that Phoebe was in a position of oversight at the congregation in Cenchrea.

4) Junia was recognized by Paul in Romans 16:7 as an apostle. The scripture speaks of her being “***eminent among the apostles***” (Romans 16:7). The fact that she was called “eminent” denotes that she was a distinguished leader of prominence. The fact that she was said to be “among the apostles” reveals that she was in the office of an apostle.

5) Archaeological evidence has been discovered to prove the existence of female overseers in the early Messianic community. A Latin tombstone reads *femina episcopa*, which means “female bishop.” In Rome a catacomb fresco dating back to the fourth century, CE, identifies a woman as a bishop. These findings are enough to clearly point out that women occupied positions of oversight in the early Messianic community.

6) I Timothy 3:1-7 are general qualifications for overseers, and not exclusive qualifications that are only applicable to men. First, one must consider that if such qualifications are exclusive for overseers, then an overseer must be of the male gender and also a married man. This would imply that single men could not exercise the office of an overseer. This means that the Apostle Paul who wrote I Timothy 3:1-7 would be in conflict with his own instructions. The scriptures clearly show that Paul was an unmarried man and an apostle. As an apostle, Paul was an overseer of pastors and the congregations that he planted. Also, Paul pastored the congregation in Ephesus for 2 years (see Acts 19:1-10). Paul was not out of the will of Elohim by being an overseer. However, if one believes that Paul was not in conflict with his instruction regarding the office of the overseer, then one must also regard his instruction as general qualifications without being limited to married men.

Second, Paul drew from his background as a Pharisee to establish these general qualifications for overseers. Within Pharisaic Judaism, the sect of the Pharisees developed these qualifications for those who desired to become Pharisaic leaders. However, the Most High never stated in the scriptures that overseers had to exclusively meet the qualifications listed by Paul. Although Elohim is in agreement with these qualifications in the general sense, he is not obligated to limit the call to be an overseer to married men. Yet, I Timothy 3:1-7 are considered general qualifications because they apply to the individual situations of those called to be overseers. Consider the following case. (i) The person that is married must be faithful to and have only one spouse. (ii) The person that is unmarried must be able to meet the other qualifications (applicable to all) concerning the maintenance of an upright character and an orderly lifestyle. Therefore, as general qualifications I Timothy 3:1-7 allows married men, unmarried men and women the opportunity to be overseers.

After considering these six points, one must come to the realization that the scriptures allow room for the female gender to occupy a position of oversight in the episcopal and presbyterial role as well as the male gender.

ARGUMENT NO. EIGHT:

Phoebe was not in a position of oversight because she could have been an overseer of Paul who was an apostle.

This argument is based upon how Romans 16:2 has been grammatically situated after being translated from the Greek language. It reads,

“I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me” (Romans 16:2).

In the King James Version (KJV), the phrase “great help” is “succourer” and both are poor translations of the Greek term *prostatis*. If we replace “great help” with the word “overseer,” which more accurately describes *prostatis*, then Phoebe would be viewed as the overseer (pastor) of Paul. Because of the nature of Paul’s rank as an apostle, Phoebe could not have been Paul’s pastor. Because of this reason, translators have minimized the definition of *prostatis* by stating that Phoebe was a “great helper.” This type of manipulation in translating scripture reveals deception and camouflage concerning the truth of Romans 16:2.

Let us consider another method of situating the scriptures after the translation which will depict Phoebe as a pastor, but not as Paul’s pastor.

First of all, we must consider that the New Covenant Greek was written in a continuous narrative form. It had no punctuation marks, such as commas, colons, semicolons and periods to determine the structure of sentences. With this in mind, we understand that the sentence structure of the translated scriptures was left to the discretion of the translator.

Second, let us look at a particular phrase found in the latter part of Romans 16:2. In the King James Version (KJV), this phrase reads, ***“and of myself also.”*** The NIV reads, ***“including me.”*** The phrase could be translated as, “Also of myself” or “Also I myself.” Both the King James Version (KJV) and New International Version (NIV) translations connect this phrase with the statement of Phoebe being a *prostatis* of many people. However, the phrase should be attached to the beginning of Romans 16:3. With the phrase being attached at the beginning of verse three, the text would read, “Also of myself greet Aquilla and Priscilla,” or “Also I myself greet Aquilla and Priscilla.” By situating the phrase in connection with verse three, the accurate definition of *prostatis* is maintained with Phoebe being viewed in a pastoral role without being viewed as a pastor over Paul who was an apostle.

CONCLUSION

After looking at the factual information presented concerning women in ministry, one must acknowledge that from a biblical perspective there are no proper grounds to forbid women from ordination into the Ecclesiastical ministry, or from functioning in roles of ministerial leadership. Those who have been against women being in ministry must take another look at their position, and with an open mind consider the facts presented. For the revelation of a biblical truth challenges the believer to come in alignment with that truth. The truth is that women share with men an equal place and involvement in the ministry.

To those who refuse to accept women in ministry because of personal views outside the scriptures, it would be wise for you to get involved in a ministry possessing a male leadership. However, it is strongly advised that you do not speak out against or condemn women that are in leadership positions of ministry because they are ministers of Elohim, and one should not touch the YHWH's anointed.

To those women who accept the call into the ministry, be advised of the following particulars that must be brought to your attention. (1) You must be equipped for ministry. This is accomplished by diligent personal prayer and study of the scriptures coupled with entering a program designed for ministry/theological training and preparation. The Most High must first prepare you before he can use you. (2) Be open to the wise counsel of your pastor who will be directly involved in your preparation for the ministry. If your pastor does not accept women in ministry, then it would be in your best interest to come under the spiritual authority of a pastor who accepts women in ministry, to help properly prepare you for ministry without any hindrances. (3) If you are married and/or have children, then you must understand that fulfilling your obligation to your family is a prerequisite to serving in the ministry. Although I Timothy 3:5 and I Timothy 5:8 are directly applied to the man, they are indirectly applied to the woman. Therefore, if you cannot take care of your responsibilities toward your family, then you are not qualified to take care of the responsibilities of the ministry. The points of admonition that have previously been given are paramount for fulfilling the call of the Most High upon your life.

May the people of Elohim understand that YHWH is not partial regarding those that He calls into the ministry. Neither does He consider one gender more spiritually qualified than the other. According to the sovereign will of Elohim, ministry gifts and callings are distributed equally upon all believers – both male and female.

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