

PART II

CONSIDERING THE “CONTRADICTIONS”

A. “Women Pastors and Preachers”

Beloved, now that we have seen clearly the truth of God’s word in regard to women’s role in the assembly or positions of authority, let us consider some of the most frequently expressed opinions contrary to this “sound doctrine” (Tit. 1:9; II Tim. 4:3).

Let us now consider the women of the scriptures that people commonly bring forth as “proof” that “women can and are to lead and have the same ministry as men.” Before we do this, we should look at some most important and revealing scripture from the prophet Isaiah.

He wrote,

“And I will give children [youths] to be their princes [rulers], and babes [the immature] shall rule over them.” (Isa. 3:4)

And again,

“As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.” (Isa. 3:12)

We must consider these verses in the context of at least the first five chapters of the book. Isaiah is writing about his day and the state of the church, the city of God.

The times are perilous, and God's chosen people are rebellious, spiritually blind, and exceedingly sinful (Isa. 1:2-4). There is great mental illness and spiritual cowardice (Isa. 1:5). There is rampant physical sickness, and there are no healings being brought forth by the pastors who have been given this responsibility (Isa. 1:6). The country is desolate; strangers and foreigners are everywhere, boldly and openly burning the cities (Isa. 1:7).

There is only a small remnant of the faithful left (Isa. 1:9). However, there still are plenty of church services going on, yet the Lord says He is fed up with them; they are sinful in His sight (Isa. 1:11-15). Even the “prayer meeting,” as

Paul told the Corinthians about their coming together in the church, is a time of coming together for the worse instead of the better (I Cor. 11:17-18). I pray to God we would have less formal meetings and get down on our knees alone or with a few who are serious about godliness and **“seek the Lord while He might be found”** (Isa. 55:6).

It is so like our God of love to give a word of grace in the midst of this rebuke. If we sit down with the Lord and judge ourselves and confess our sins and return to Him, we shall be cleansed as **“white as snow”** (Isa. 1:18).

The church, the city of God, which was once faithful to the Lord, has become a religious harlot, professing love for the Lord but only religious in ways that benefit itself. Where it once was full of those who lived righteously according to the laws of God, it is now filled with those who murder each other, which would include even their own unborn children (Isa. 1:21).

The leaders of God's people are rebellious and keeping counsel with the ungodly (Isa. 1:23). They are serving for gifts and money and are not properly caring for the widows and orphans; this is the very opposite of true religion, as James states (Isa. 1:23; Jas. 1:27). In the midst of all this, however, God is going to restore His people to holiness. He will accomplish it by judgment, and converts shall be gained through righteousness (Isa. 1:27). Then we have a prophetic statement,

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.”
(Isa. 2:2)

Now let us continue reflecting upon Isaiah's commentary on Israel, the church of that day, and apply it to the church today which has backslidden into a deplorable state, indeed a **“Laodicean age”** (Rev. 3:14-22). The true children of God do not realize their spiritual poverty. They have used Babylonian ways, which are the ways of man and not God (Isa. 2:6). Directed by man and not the Holy Spirit, these are **“customs of the East,”** foreign religion and ideologies. They follow false prophets, mix themselves in marriage, business, and friendship with the unsaved (Isa. 2:6). They even make agreements with the ungodly. Peace pacts with atheists are not new, but still an abomination, which ends in judgment. They heap up material wealth and military armor (Isa. 2:7). They worship the almighty dollar and deem success as the world does, not realizing their spiritual, eternal poverty (Isa. 2:8). The Lord is taking away their supplies of foodstuffs, preparing for more judgment (Isa. 3:1). They have lost their prophets and wise counselors and judges (Isa. 3:2-3). They are oppressed by each other, and the children are insolent and rebellious against their elders (Isa. 3:5). There is not only a shortage of ministers who can bring deliverance, but few men even want to do the work (Isa. 3:7). The expression on their faces reflects their emptiness and lack of the Spirit of God (Isa. 3:9). The sins of the land are as they were in Sodom and Gomorrah, yet they are not only unashamed, but proclaim their vileness openly before all (Isa. 3:9; 1:10). They have taken advantage of the poor, and their deceitful practices are only to fill their own pockets (Isa. 3:14). Children are oppressing the people and women are taking over the rule of church and state (Isa. 3:12). The **“Women's Liberation**

Movement" is growing. The Christian women are proud and seductive. They are dressed with all sorts of external jewelry and expensive clothing while their best men are being killed in wars (Isa. 3:16-25).

Immorality and illegitimacy are widespread; however, the Spirit-filled saints of God are set apart unto the Lord in true holiness (Isa. 4:1). God is cleansing ungodliness from His people by judgment and by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire, and signs and wonders are forthcoming to testify to all of this wonderful restoration (Isa. 4:2-5).

The unproductive churches are being judged severely as God removes His protecting hand. They are being consumed and destroyed. The Holy Spirit is not entering in to give refreshment and drink to thirsty souls (Isa. 5:5-7). Refusal to bear fruit is always a serious sin. God's judgment is upon the land and now it is becoming unproductive (Isa. 5:8-10). Materialism also is being judged! Alcoholism is epidemic (Isa. 5:11). The Christians are eating, drinking, and entertaining themselves with music and not looking to the true work of God (Isa. 5:12). Because they disregard the works of the Lord and do not perceive what He is doing, they have no understanding and, therefore, have gone into captivity, both spiritually and physically (Isa. 5:13). Because judgment is delayed by God's mercy, the people mock God's prophetic word (Isa. 5:19). Oh, the mercy of God! From the "pulpits" of the land, the people hear perverted speech, such as calling evil good, and good evil (Isa. 5:20). Praise is given to the rebellious and ungodly, and scorn against the truly righteous, while the pulpiteers drink and preach for financial and personal gain, discrediting the righteous (Isa. 5:21-23). The judicial system has also become corrupt, as judges serve not justice, but for their own benefit -- judicial bribery and oppression is rampant (Isa. 5:23, 7; 1:21, 23, 26, 27; NAS).

Because the word of God is rejected and despised, the Lord will do a quick work of judgment, even using foreign people, and the end will be darkness and sorrow when "**the light is darkened in the heavens**" or, as rendered in the New Testament, "**the sun shall be turned into darkness**" (Isa. 5:24-30; Acts 2:20).

From the preceding scripture then, we understand that when God's people backslide, women will become pastors or elders and as the situation gets worse, even the children will rule over the parents, both the men and the women. The leaders will cause the people to go astray by not rightly dividing the word of truth and, thus, destroy "**The [true] way of holiness**" (Isa. 3:12; 35:8).

With this in mind, let us now look at several of the women often held up as leaders of the people.

First, there is Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron. She is called "**Miriam, the prophetess**" (Ex. 15:20). Therefore, let us consider here the scriptural meaning and usage of the word "prophet." Primarily a prophet is one appointed by God to speak for Him. When the Spirit of the Lord is upon a person, and he speaks forth under direct inspiration of the Spirit of God, that which is spoken is called prophecy. It is forthtelling, that is, God using the person to speak forth His words for edification, exhortation, or comfort; in addition, it may include foretelling, that is, words inspired by God and predicting future events (I Cor. 14:3; Isa. 46:10-11). The term prophet is used, also, for one

man speaking for another man as in the case when Moses said to the Lord, **“O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue”** (Ex. 4:10-16; 7:1-2). Therefore, God said, **“Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet,”** thus making Aaron the spokesman for Moses. Also, in the scriptures of the New Testament, we find the word used in reference to a Cretian man who spoke of his people (Tit. 1:12).

In the record from Exodus, if we study the entire context, we find out how Miriam functioned there. The children of Israel had just escaped Egypt through the Red Sea. Moses then led all the men, women, and children in a song. Immediately afterward, Miriam led only the women in part of the same song with timbrels and dances (Ex. 15:20-21). That Miriam had the gift of prophecy is established, since it is also indicated in the other major account of Miriam, the one in which she and Aaron spoke against Moses for marrying a woman of another race (Num. 12:1-15). They said, **“Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?”** (Num. 12:2). Miriam being the woman had the greater sin and was stricken with leprosy by the Lord (Num. 12:10). Then she remained silent and Aaron pleaded for her to Moses, calling him Lord, for he had been made to him as God (Ex. 4:16). Moses then interceded with God, and Miriam was healed (Num. 12:13). We must remember that although one has the gift of prophecy, this does not make him a leader or hold the office of a prophet. Paul writes that **“all may prophesy”** but, also, **“all are not prophets, are they?”** (I Cor. 14:24, 31; 12: 28-30 NAS; Eph 4:11).

In the church today, we find many “Miriams,” godly women who by receiving salvation escape from the world (Egypt) and are given the gift of prophecy, a song, and the ministry of leading other women. However, when they overstep their rule, they sin, often bringing in false doctrine that splits the church, with the result that the Lord chastens them with weakness, sickness, and even premature death (I Cor. 11:29-32). How wonderful, though, when they fulfill their ministry; how greatly needed are women who will bring other women into their proper ministries.

Secondly, we have Deborah. Notice first that **“Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord”** (Judg. 4:1). Therefore, **“the Lord sold them into the hand”** of their enemy (Judg. 4:2). As was God’s procedure at that time, after the people cried under the oppression and sought Him, He **“raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them”** (Judg. 2:16 NAS). Deborah was a prophetess and she used to sit under a palm tree and the sons of Israel came to her for judgment (Judg. 4:4-5). Her prominence was a continual reminder of their backslidden condition. When the Israelites cried unto the Lord, God stirred up Deborah to prophesy an encouraging word from the Lord to Barak, a leader of the people (Judg. 4:6-7). She did not have authority over the people or army of God, nor lead them in battle as other judges did, but she was the instrument of God to get men who were leaders of Israel to do their job. Barak was the one chosen by God to lead the people. He wanted Deborah to go with him as he needed the “voice of God.” Barak led the victory over their enemy, and then he and Deborah sang together beginning:

“For that the leaders took the lead in Israel, for that the people offered themselves willingly, bless ye the Lord.” (Judg. 5:2 ARV rev.)

And again,

“The rulers in Israel ceased, they ceased in Israel until I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.” (Judg. 5:7 ARV)

And again,

“My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the Lord.” (Judg. 5:9)

Please note that in the book of Hebrews, in the list of God’s faithful, Barak is listed alone to receive the honor from this occasion (Heb. 11:32). He is the one that “led captivity captive” and Deborah acted as “**a mother in Israel**” (Judg. 5:12, 7; Eph. 4:8). Praise God for a woman like Deborah. How I wish there were many more like her that sought and knew the voice of God and would exhort the leaders to lead and, thus, to bring victories in the battles against the enemy. She knew her gift from God and did not try to exercise authority over the man God had ordained to leadership and, thus, bring defeat. Instead, she prophesied encouragement and exhortation to Barak, for him to take his stand and fight, because God commanded it.

Thirdly, let us consider Huldah (II Kgs. 22:1-20; II Chr. 34:1-33). She was a prophetess in the time of Josiah, the king, who turned Judah back to serving the Lord. Notice if you will that although they had the temple (the church today), they had lost the law of God (His ways and instructions for building His nation). One day Hilkiah, the high priest, found the book of the law in the house of the Lord (the body of Christ), and Shaphan, the scribe, brought it and read it to King Josiah. The king rent his clothes. He recognized God’s people were in gross idolatry and must return to God in spirit and in truth. He wanted to hear from the Lord directly so he sent to Huldah the prophetess, and she delivered a message from God. She did not take a place of authority or try to teach the people; she prophesied the word of the Lord. Thank God, Josiah’s heart was tender and humble. With tears of supplication, he sought the Lord, and the Lord heard him and brought about a mighty restoration and revival through him. Josiah made all Israel serve the Lord and destroyed Baal, that Babylonian religion that is still forever plaguing God’s people (II Chr. 34:33; II Kgs. 23:4-5). How we need “Huldahs” today, to prophesy not out of their own hearts, but prophesy the word of the Lord. So we find that Huldah was not a leader either. She was there in prominence because of the backslidden condition of Judah.

The fourth great woman of God, occasionally used as an example of a woman leader, is Esther, the beautiful queen. However, as we study the book, we find her beauty not only physical, but spiritual as well. The men in those days held the authority in the home and nation. Esther came to her position when Queen Vashti disobeyed that authority (Esth. 1:12). Now please notice that Esther subjected herself not only to King Ahasuerus, but also to Mordecai, her

first cousin, who reared her as his own daughter (Esth. 2:7). We read, **“Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her, for Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care”** (Esth. 2:20 NAS).

Although Esther held the position and responsibility of being a queen, and as such functioned in that office, she was a humble woman of God under proper authority and fasted and prayed for her people (Esth. 4:16). I wish that all women would do the same today. Thank God for those who do.

Now for a fifth woman, commonly said to be in an official position of authority, let us go to the New Testament and consider Phebe, said to be a “deaconess.” We read about her from Brother Paul’s letter to the Romans which states:

“I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant [*diakonon*] of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she has been a succourer of many, and of myself also.”

(Rom. 16:1-2)

The word translated servant is from the Greek word “*diakonon*” and means servant or minister and is so translated here and elsewhere. For example, Jesus makes a statement to His apostles as recorded by Matthew:

“Whoever will be great among you, let him be your minister [*diakonos*, servant]; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant [*doulos*, meaning bondsman]. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto [*diakonethenai*, served], but to minister [*diakonesai*, serve], and to give his life a ransom for many.”

(Mt. 20:26-28)

We know, of course, that Jesus was not a deacon, and neither were His apostles for they had seven chosen when needed as recorded in Acts, chapter 6. They said, **“We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry [*diakonia*] of the word.”** Would to God that the spiritual leaders would do so today, that is, put prayer first and then the serving of the word of God in the naturally following truth, revelation, and power of the Holy Spirit, rather than allowing themselves to get caught up in “serving tables,” especially all the material, financial, and man designed “spiritual” programs of carnal methods of promotion that we have today.

Let us now consider that this letter to the Romans was written from Corinth while Paul was staying in the home of Gaius and ministering to the church there and the neighboring harbor ports (Rom. 16:1, 2, 23; I Cor. 1:14). Cenchrea is the small eastern port of Corinth, which has two very large natural harbors, one opening on the eastern coast and one on the western coast of Greece. Paul does not indicate specifically why Phebe was going to Rome; he merely mentions that in **“whatsoever business”** she has need of there, the church should help her. The word translated “business” often means official trade or could refer to any matter, incidental or spiritual. Phebe had been a

succorer of many, including Paul himself. The Greek word means “patroness, protectress, helper.” The word “succorer” is a good translation and means “helper, one who gives assistance and relief in time of need or distress.” From these facts, we can deduce that Phebe had financial means enough to take this trip and since she helped Paul and many others in her service to the church in Cenchrea, now she should be helped in her time of need by the church in Rome. Paul states in his second letter to the Corinthians that he had not taken wages from them but had from other churches in order to do them service (*diakonian*) (II Cor. 11:8). Possibly some of it came from our sister Phebe when he took a trip over to this neighboring town. In any event, we know that Phebe’s service was directly from her and not as a “deaconess” in the church in Cenchrea. The credit was given to her and not to the church in Cenchrea, and also as a woman she does not meet the qualifications laid down by the apostle as stated before when he wrote:

“Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.”
(II Tim. 3:12)

Let us give thanks for our faithful sister Phebe. How very important are the faithful women who serve in the manner she did.

At this point, let us consider briefly the ministry of women in regard to this type of service. First, let us look at the life of our Lord Jesus. We find many women following Him from place to place and ministering unto Him of their substance and whatever they could do for Him. He needed their services as any man does, and God carefully records them in the three synoptic gospels (Mt. 27:55-56; Mk. 15:40-41; Lk. 8:2-3). We find such women as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, Salome, Joanna, and Susanna. It was a custom in that day for wealthy women to support men of God. The scribes, however, were abusing this privilege and Jesus warned his disciples against them when He said, **“Beware of the scribes...which devour widows’ houses”** (Mk. 12:38, 40).

Paul mentions in his first letter to the Corinthians how he and Barnabas had a right to take along a sister or a wife just as Peter and the other apostles (I Cor. 9:5). The way Paul states this as a question implies that the women would be of help to them. In Paul’s letter to the Romans, we find him mentioning not only Phebe, but also Mary who **“labored much for them”** (Rom. 16:6). Also, when saluting Rufus, he mentions his mother as also his (Rom. 16:13). This is an expression that we often use which indicates that this woman was very dear to him and had undoubtedly served him very affectionately as her own son, and Paul appreciated it. Brethren, how grateful I am to the many mothers in Christ, and sisters in the Lord, for all the loving help and assistance they have given me. How very faithful is our Lord to His word when He said:

“There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”
(Mk. 10: 29-31; Mt. 19:29-30; Lk. 18:29)

Also, I want to thank God for a very special aunt who ministered to me both in her life and in her death; she is now with Jesus.

And I want to thank God especially for my own dear, wonderful mother for all the love and care she has untiringly bestowed upon me from the time I was but a hope, and a promise of prayer, through all the trying and difficult years of my life without Christ, and now in my service dedicated to the Master. The more God's love matures in me, the more I am able to see the depth and to appreciate the commitment of my mother's love, which is really God's love for me in her. Thank you, Mother, and thank you, God!

And I thank God for all the women who have a part in this ministry. How faithful our God is, and how I appreciate His handmaidens who labor with me for Him.

The sixth woman we shall consider is Anna (Lk. 2:25-38). In Luke's writings, we find that she was a prophetess, but examination reveals her ministry was not that of a leader. Her ministry was serving God by fastings and prayers, night and day, and she had done this faithfully for many years ever since she had become a widow early in life. Her praise to the Lord was inspired by the prophetic revelation she received concerning the infant Jesus and His mission of redemption. Paul writes similarly to Timothy how a true widow is to be supported as she "**continues in supplication and prayers night and day**" (I Tim. 5:3-5).

The seventh woman we shall consider, who occasionally is used as an example of a woman pastor, is Kyria. In John's second epistle, we find the salutation to be:

"the elder unto the elect lady and her children." (II Jn. :1)

The Greek word here translated "lady" is "*Kuria*," which is a proper name translated into English as "Kuria" or "Cyria." It should be so here. It appears also in verse 5, and in this context, it can be understood clearly that John is addressing a woman. This is also consistent with his third epistle which he addresses to an individual by name, Gaius (III Jn. :1). Also, the complimentary close of both letters in the same (II Jn. :12-13; III Jn. :13-14). Further, internal evidence reveals that she is not to allow deceivers that are antichrist into her house nor to give them even the common salute which is elsewhere translated "Hail" and "Greeting," and which to us might be "Hello" or "Goodbye" (II Jn. :7, 10, 11; Mt. 26:49; 27:29; Lk. 1:28; Jas. 1:1). John's complimentary close also included a farewell bid from Cyria's sister's children (II Jn. :13). Nowhere may it even slightly assumed that Cyria was a pastor.

The eighth woman that we shall consider who is occasionally reported to be in authority is Junia, who is said to have been an "apostle" because of the instructions to the Romans:

“Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.”

(Rom. 16:7)

First, Let us look at the Greek text, and here we find the name spelled “*Iounian*.” This is the Greek accusative form and, therefore, does not tell us whether the person is male or female. It may be from the masculine form “*Iounias*” or feminine for “*Iounia*,” and students of the scripture have long been uncertain as to which it is from; and, therefore, whether the person is a man or a woman. However, Ivan Panin in Paper VII of his monumental works on Bible Numerics proves that this person is a woman named Junia, and so we shall thank God for her and proceed. Now, the really significant fact of the statement concerning her and Andronicus is the phrase “**of note among the apostles.**” The words “**of note**” are from the Greek word “*episamos*” which is used only one other place in scripture, and that is when Barabbas is referred to as “**a notable prisoner**” (Mt. 27:16). A better translation of the word would be “well known.” Therefore, since Barabbas was a well known prisoner among many of the general populace, but was not a free member of it, Junia was “well known among the apostles,” but was not one of them.

In addition, if Andronicus was an apostle, a fact of which we are not certain, and Junia traveled with him, then she was part of his apostolic ministry, but not an apostle herself. What is also significant is that Paul reveals to us that Andronicus and Junia were both Jews and were converted before he was. This gives us the answer as to why they were well known by all of the first apostles. They were part of the first Jews converted, probably at Jerusalem. Since they were now in Rome, they possibly were among those visiting from Rome on the day of Pentecost and were converted on that day. Since they were also fellow-prisoners with Paul, they were of proven character which would have facilitated their becoming well known or “**of note among the apostles**” in the infant church at Jerusalem.

The ninth and last woman we will consider is another very precious sister named Prisca. She is reported by some to be a teacher and by others to be even an evangelist and teacher superior to her husband. This is indeed almost unbelievable if it were not for the knowledge that some people will go to all extremes without any support for their claims to try to justify a false position they have laid hold of. After all, how can a false teaching or claim be supported by anything other than false supposition and “wicked imaginations” (Pro. 6:18). When we study the four occasions in which Prisca is mentioned, we clearly find that neither she nor her husband Aquila was a teacher or an evangelist, but they were beloved workers in the gospel with Paul and, therefore, trained, zealous supporters of the church of the living God (Acts 18; Rom. 16:3-5; I Cor. 16:19; II Tim. 4:19). Always opening up their home to the saints for worship, as was not just the custom of the early church but was apostolic revelation, they traveled from place to place working under apostolic authority and bearing fruit accordingly.

We first find Prisca mentioned by Luke in the Book of Acts where we find her husband Aquila mentioned first. He is described as recently having come from Italy. Then Priscilla’s name, the diminutive form of the formal, proper, or

given name of Prisca, is mentioned next. Paul always uses, as evidenced by the best manuscripts, the given name Prisca. No reason is given as to this difference between Luke and Paul, but experience and conjecture lead me to believe that Paul, who made tents with Prisca and Aquila and lived with them for over eighteen months in Corinth, knew Prisca very well and loved her enough (as Paul loved all women, especially those who labored and lived for Christ) to inquire and to call her by the name she preferred. Luke's use of the name Priscilla which we might consider a nickname is used in narrative, while Paul uses Prisca either as a personal greeting to or salutation from this wonderful woman of God.

How well I know of a particular sister whom everyone calls by her nickname, but few realize or love her enough to understand that she prefers to be called by her proper given name. Love is the difference. Although her proper name is more difficult to use, love will use what she prefers, not what is more convenient for us, or that which we prefer.

We can tell by Luke's account that not only was Prisca not a teacher, which would be contrary to scriptural truth, but neither was Aquila for two reasons. First, Luke consistently identified men with the ministry they held, whether that of apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, or deacon, or for that matter, even disciple, leader, high priest, orator, centurion, or king (Acts 1:26; 2:14; 9:10; 10:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:14; 15:22, 32; 16:1; 18:12; 21:8; 23:2, 24; 24:1).

They did, however, both have important functions in the body of Christ. First, they lodged Paul and he worked with them making tents to support himself. I am sure Prisca did his laundry and cooked his meals and performed the other necessary domestic tasks for Paul so that he could devote more time to ministry. Paul taught them and took them with him to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19).

After Paul left, Apollos came and spoke publicly in the synagogue and they took him "**aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately**" (Acts 18:26 NAS). This private ministry does not make them teachers and is no indication Prisca ever taught in the synagogue or in church. Even when Aquila taught the church in his own house, this did not make him a teacher any more than prophesying made one a prophet. The second reason we know Prisca and Aquila were not teachers or evangelists in the body of Christ is that they did not teach or baptized those who were coming to Christ. We find this to be true because when Paul returned to Ephesus, he found certain disciples who had not even heard there was a Holy Spirit, let alone received Him, and, also, they had not been baptized into Christ (Acts 19:1-6). Philip, who was an evangelist, baptized new believers immediately (Acts 8:12, 38). Later, Paul's letter to the Romans reveals Prisca and Aquila had returned to Rome after living in Ephesus and again had the church meeting in their house, a very important ministry and one in which they were faithful wherever they went (Rom. 16:3-5). Paul thanked them for having laid down their own necks for his, for which they received an added testimony to their ministry that affected all the Gentile churches.

The last time we hear about Prisca and Aquila is when Paul is in prison at Rome and he writes his second letter to Timothy and sends greetings to them, indicating they had left Rome again and probably had returned to Asia Minor (II Tim. 4:19).

To some, the mere mention of Prisca's name preceding that of her husband Aquila, as in "**Prisca and Aquila,**" is sufficient proof that she was a

teacher and evangelist superior to her husband; however, these same persons ignore sequences of "**Aquila and Prisca**," since this sequence does not support their assumptions. We can conclude that this is a good example of what the scriptures call a "**wicked imagination**" and "**imaginings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God**" (Pro. 6:18; II Cor. 10:5). We must cast down these "**imaginings**" or "**high things**" contrary to scriptural knowledge. They are the result of pride, bitterness, jealousy, and sometimes "**seducing spirits and doctrines of devils**," which are so evident when reading in detail the false arguments people put forth (I Tim. 4:1).

Luke definitely gives Aquila his proper role as head of his wife, Priscilla, and then graciously places Priscilla's name first in the affectionate form as he continues his narrative (Acts 18:2, 18, 26).

Paul gives Aquila's name first when sending a salutation from them both and Prisca's name first when sending a greeting to them both so how anyone can speculate from this that she is a teacher or an evangelist of a rank superior to that of her husband is beyond comprehension except for the understanding of seducing spirits leading people according to their own prideful lusts for power, importance, acceptance, dominance, or superiority (I Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:3; II Tim. 4:19).

To conclude, then, we find people teaching that a woman is a teacher in the body of Christ merely because she helps her husband in private instruction or an evangelist of a rank superior to her husband because her name is given before his. This is a horrendously false teaching and exposes the extremes to which people will go and the straws at which they will grasp in order to try to support scripturally a false doctrine for which Holy Writ gives absolutely no defense.

Rather we find Prisca, a woman who together with her husband, continually gave her home and her life, moving her entire household as the Lord directed, in order to serve the people of God. And she did this, not because she or her husband were ordained into one of the five-fold ministries of the church, nor because either of them was relieved from secular employment, but because she gladly served in that supportive ministry to which God had called her and her husband, counting the things of this world as nothing and risking not only her own life, but even that of her own husband in order that they might spare the life of a beloved brother (Rom. 16:3-5; Eph. 4:11). Jesus said, "**Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends**" (Jn. 15:13 NAS).

What a tribute, then, to this great woman of God and her husband that we find them mentioned again and again by Paul, that dedicated and singular apostle of Christ. We have, then, a memorial testimony given to us by the Holy Spirit Himself through the scriptures, a memorial of great significance to the body of Christ -- thrilling, motivating, and instructional, to those who study and consider their manner of life and ministry.

How many thanks have gone up to God for them, not only in that first century as recorded, but even now as we remember their glorious life of service to Christ and His church. Thank you, Lord, for such wonderful people, such as inspiring couple, such a glorious example, such true servants of Yours!

Now, then, besides the fact that we have seen that these women just mentioned were not leaders of God's people, another fact should be mentioned.

Eleven words are used in the New Testament for the spreading of the gospel and translated “preaching.” We shall consider here the two most common which shall explain the point we wish to make. The first is “*euangelizo*,” which means, “to tell the good news.” “*Euangelion*” is a combination of two words, “*eu*,” which means, “well” and “*angelion*,” which means “news or message.” We use the word “gospel” which means “good news.” The word “*angelos*” is the word “angel” which means “messenger.” “*Euangelizo*,” the word meaning to “evangelize,” is used in reference to the ministry of all Christians. It may refer to public preaching or the personal witnessing of men, women, or children. Everyone who is born again has this ability and ministry. It results in reconciling or re-establishing mutual friendship between God and man. Paul declares this truth when he says,

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation...”

(II Cor. 5:17-18)

When the early church was persecuted in Jerusalem and scattered abroad, all of them went everywhere “**preaching** [Greek: *euangelizomenoi*, evangelizing, announcing the good news of] **the word**” (Acts 8:4). These were men, women and children! It would have helped tremendously if the translators had given us a consistent, literal translation here and elsewhere for this word.

The second word used for preaching that we shall examine is the Greek word “*keerusso*” and means, “to cry, to proclaim, to herald” and infers a public ministry “with a suggestion of formality, gravity, and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed.” It is never used with respect to a woman, either in referring to the present New Testament or past Old Testament preachers. The noun “*keerux*” is used for “a herald or a messenger vested with public authority who conveyed the official messages of kings, magistrates, princes, and military commanders, or who gave a public summons or demand and performed various other duties.” This is the word for one of the gifts Paul had received which he lists when he wrote to Timothy, and is translated “preacher” (I Tim. 2:7; II Tim. 1:11). It is also used in such instances as when Philip the evangelist went down to Samaria and “**preached Christ unto them**” (Acts 8:5). After studying these two words, and the other nine which fit the category of either one or the other of the two examined we find that there are no women preachers in the New Testament scriptures.

In summarizing this section, we can say that there were no women ever called by the Lord as preachers, pastors, teachers, or into any position of leadership over men in God’s kingdom, either before or during the Old or New Covenants as revealed to us by the scriptures.

In closing, let us answer the question most often asked after this truth is revealed.

“Why, if God does not call women as preachers and pastors, does He bless some of those who are?”

This is a good, logical, and legitimate question. The answer is simple if we understand a few basic facts. First, there are many, literally dozens of gifts and callings of God, either to full or part-time spiritual ministry for both men and women. For too long, practically everyone receiving “a calling from God” and given various gifts of ministry has been considered “a preacher” and often a following has gathered, and he or she has then become a “pastor.” Anyone in a traveling ministry or anyone not a pastor has labeled himself an “evangelist.” Because of the fact that there have been relatively few mature and anointed apostles functioning, many basic truths have not generally been taught. The result is that instead of one true united local church in each community, we have a scattered, confused, disorganized group of man-made and man-directed organizations called churches. The fact that a person has a following, no matter how large or small, is in itself no indication of that person’s ministry even being of God. One only has to look at the false cults to see this. If we look at the women who are true believers in Christ and have a large ministry, we find that the anointing of God’s Spirit is not on their ministry of “pastoring” or “preaching” as revealed in a true New Testament ministry, but is upon the gifts and callings that God has given. The gifts that most often help to create a large following are those of faith, healings, miracles, and word of knowledge. The first three are gifts of power, and in such a sick body of Christ as we have today, they are greatly needed, and thank God for every woman who has them and will yield herself to God as His instrument. As God raises up the three most important ministries to the body, those of apostle, prophet, and teacher, and gives them the gifts of miracles and healing, Christians will learn not to look to the Lord and see the individual human instrument, but to look to Him and see His body, and God’s order will be restored (I Cor. 12:28). When we find a smaller gathering around a woman’s ministry, we often find her gifts are the utterance gifts of prophecy, tongues, and interpretation which are in essence the voice of God, which most Christians are seeking. The problems here are that often the utterances are not judged and that there are no qualified men present to judge those pertaining to scriptural truth (I Cor. 14:29). What causes schism is a woman’s assumption that because she has these wonderful much-needed gifts, she is a “preacher, pastor, or teacher” and that she may endeavor to function in these capacities. Her ministry is then a mixture, partly of God which draws people unto Christ, and partly not of God which repels many people from her, and thus from Christ.

There are relatively few women who “**preach the word**” and, as Paul charges Timothy, “**reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine** [teaching]” (II Tim. 4:2). It is not the function of women, nor is it proper, for them to publicly reprove or rebuke men and women and to expound the scriptures at length. A pastor must also exercise discipline in the church, and if a woman is in order in the home, she has neither the experience nor qualifications, and neither is it a fitting nor proper ministry for her. When any woman, even if she has a tremendous ministry of healing and miracles, tries to function with the gift of teaching or leading God’s people, it invariably leads to heartaches, false teaching, and division. This is true, also, of any man who is not called to do so.

Even when men are in authority and teaching, if women are permitted to talk and ask questions out of God's order, many men and some women are repelled and choose not to share in this type of fellowship. This is a major reason why many fellowships soon find themselves with the women far outnumbering the men in attendance.

To all who have a vision of the many membered body of Christ and who have a love and respect for each member and for the various gifts given to each one and who have an appreciation of how they are to work together complementing one another under the headship of Christ for the mutual upbuilding of the whole body of Christ, it is a continual source of sadness and grief to experience the schism in the body when women or men who have been given tremendous gifts from God and are, therefore, thrust into public prominence, go their independent ways and thus, out of personal ambition to increase the status and scope of their own ministries, function in ways that they are not called to do and, therefore, in capacities in which they cannot possibly properly perform.

We must remember that we are going to give an account of our stewardship of the gifts God has given to us, not only as to how frequently we allowed ourselves to be used, but also as to how we used them to unify, edify, and enlarge the one corporate body of Christ. Paul warns the Corinthians about this very thing. Corporately, all the Christians in the city were one temple (I Cor. 3:16). A person will be judged as to how his work affected that one temple! A person can by carnal methods, use spiritual gifts to build a ministry of his own and call it a church, ministry, organization, or what have you, and it may look good when only considering "their" portion of the body, but when one considers how their ministry affects all the members of the body living in that particular city, the one true local church, it will be found to be schismatic and on Judgment Day, "**wood, hay, [or] stubble**" (I Cor. 3:12). In fact, Paul warns that "**If any man defile [Greek: *phtheirei*, corrupt] the temple of God, him shall God destroy [Greek: *phtherei*, corrupt]; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are**" (I Cor. 3:17). Some of His children are being judged now in weakness, sickness, or death (I Cor. 11:29-32). Beloved, let us each build on Christ with "**gold, silver, [and] precious stones**" (I Cor. 3:12).

God honors His word, however, whether the person giving it is called of Himself or not. Many people have come to Christ through hearing the Word of God from a minister that is not even converted himself. This is why Paul can say even of ministers who are preaching from envy, strife, and selfish ambition: "**whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice**" (Phil. 1:15-18). God's love for fallen man causes him to save, heal, and help people through faith in His word and the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter through what instrument it is received. The Lord Jesus sent Judas to preach the gospel even though he was a thief. He sent Balaam to prophesy even though he was a soothsayer. Jesus said,

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? [Greek: *dunameis*, works of power,

miracles] **And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity** [Greek: anomian, lawlessness].”

(Mt. 7:21-23)

They worked without the law of love. They did not do the Father’s will, but their own. They followed not the cross, but their own appetites (Rom. 16:17-19). They did not desire first the kingdom of God, the building of one body, but served first their own little kingdom, their own selfish ambitions (Gal. 5:20-21).

Beloved, let us be careful how we build on Christ (I Cor. 3:10-12). Let us not be **“saved; yet so as by fire”** but let us work to please Him and gain an abundant entrance into the **“everlasting kingdom”** (I Cor. 3:15; II Pet. 1:11).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror [fear] of the Lord, we persuade men.” (II Cor. 5:9-11)

This is the end of The Public Ministry of Women, Part 2 A
For Part 2 B & C, visit www.JohnRothacker.org