

# *Women Preachers*



*“Thy Word  
Is  
Truth”*



## **The Apostolic Faith**

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## WOMEN PREACHERS

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Many persons maintain that it is contrary to God's Word for women to testify, preach, teach, or to hold office in the church; and they base their contention on the Apostle's words in 1Corinthians 14: 34, 35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: 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 will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church"; also in 1Timothy 2: 12: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

These two passages of Scripture, taken by themselves, might seem to settle the question without further dispute, were it not for a number of other passages of Scripture which bear upon this same subject. It is manifestly an erroneous method, and one which has led to great evil, to try to settle this question, or any other teaching of the Bible, by selecting one or two isolated verses and attempting to establish a teaching upon them. When, therefore, we begin to examine the Scriptures upon this question of women's place in the church, we find as a matter of fact that God did

select women as well as men to fill offices among His people, both under the Law and under grace.

### **The Bible Prophetess**

Turning to Exodus 15:20, 21, we read: “And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea;” Here the women conducted the song of deliverance after the miraculous passage through the Red Sea; and Miriam led in that song, and is termed a “prophetess.” And there pertained to the office of prophet in Old Testament times all that belongs to the office of a minister in the Christian dispensation; and more too, for the prophet was not only a preacher and a teacher, but he also under divine inspiration foretold the future. Deborah was not only a prophetess, but she also judged Israel; and under her leadership one of the greatest victories in the history of God’s people was won. Barak shared in the command of the army, but the victory was not to his glory, as Deborah had forewarned him; for Sisera, the captain of the enemy’s forces, was delivered into the hands of Jael, also a woman, who slew him

(Judges 4). Huldah is also mentioned as a prophetess (11 Kings 22: 14).

Coming to the New Testament we are told of “Anna, a prophetess” “which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.” And when the infant child Jesus was brought into the temple for the rite of circumcision, “she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:36-38).

It is also stated that Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21: 9). On that memorable Day of Pentecost when the “hundred and twenty” were in the upper room, “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance,” including “the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus” (Acts 1:14). And Peter, standing up and denying the charge that they were drunken, said: “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your **daughters** shall prophesy... and on my servants and on my **handmaidens** I will pour

out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2: 1-18).

### **The Bestowal of the Ministerial Office**

It is manifest from these verses of Scripture that God, who is no respecter of persons, makes no distinction between men and women; His gifts and callings are bestowed upon both alike. And especially from Pentecost on, as is seen from Joel's prophecy, He bestows the prophetic or ministerial office upon His "handmaidens" as well as upon His menservants. Paul himself implies as much, for speaking of those who have been baptized into Christ he says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither **male** nor **female**: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3: 28). Priscilla was associated with her husband Aquila in the work of the Gospel, and when they heard Apollos preach "they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18: 24-26). Paul apparently took no exception to her ministry, for in Romans he writes, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus" (Romans 16:3).

What then did Paul have reference to in enjoining silence upon these women in the church at Corinth? In this fourteen chapter it will be noted

that he is admonishing the Corinthians against disorder and confusion in their worship, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (verse 33). And he has reference to the same thing in commanding the women to keep silence, who obviously were causing confusion, by talking and asking question. Therefore "if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home," not in the meetings. It is evident then that here Paul did not intend to prohibit women from testifying, or even preaching and teaching; but only meant to correct confusion, that all things might be done "decently and in order" (verse 40). In 1 Timothy 2: 12 Paul is not speaking of those women who have been called of God, but of those who have "usurped authority" and assumed their office without a divine call. And there are many such, not only women but also men. Of course, Paul would not suffer such to teach; but none would have been quicker than Paul to recognize and accept one who was called of God to the ministry, whether man or woman. We may therefore conclude from the Scriptures that the Word of God does not discriminate between men and women in respect to the gifts and calling of God.