

## WOMEN ELDERS



Today, many women feel called into the role of Bishop (Elder). Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not one example of even a female Deacon existed in Christian literature.<sup>5</sup> The following early witnesses are recorded<sup>6</sup>:

Source	Quote	AD
Tertullian	"...but neither [is it permitted her]...to offer, nor to claim to herself a lot in any manly function, not to say sacerdotal office"	206
Didascalia	"For it is not to teach that you women...are appointed...For, if it had been necessary that women should teach, then our Teacher (Jesus) would have directed them to instruct along with us."	225
John Chrysostom	"[W]hen one is required to preside over the Church and to be entrusted with the care of so many souls, the whole female sex must retire before the magnitude of the task..."	387

### 'Glass Ceiling'

Since the 1960s, the second wave of feminism (Women's Liberation Movement) enabled 'affirmative action' (*Exec. Order 11246, 1965*) and baby-murder (*Roe Vs Wade, 1973*). Gender equality policy today pits woman against man in all areas of society, the casualty being the God-designed family unit.



The rise in 'churches' ordaining women elders has been in lock-step with the modern feminist agenda<sup>7</sup>. With some creative eisegesis, Satan has helped 'godly Christians' discard 2000 years of teaching and conform the Church to world culture:

**"And be not conformed to this world:" Romans 12.2a**

Fortunately, the pastoral epistles to Timothy clearly define God's standard for the New Testament office of Bishop: a man, limited to one wife, gifted teacher, etc. (1 Timothy 3). This given *straight after* women are precluded by the **created order** and proven naivety (chp.2, vv.11-14).

A dishonest appeal in favour of women Elders is often made to Galatians 3.28, that "...there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." The context is not the office of Elder or Deacon, rather justification by faith and the believer's inheritance of Abraham's promise as **one** seed, the Body of Christ (cf. Romans 4.16).

Despite equal salvation and priesthood, Christian men remain men, and women women. Specific God-ordained roles have been given by authority to each for the Church to be at full strength winning the lost. Anything different causes a sick body and creates confusion:

**"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." Isaiah 3.12, AV**

<sup>5</sup>Brian M. Schwerty, *A Historical and Biblical Examination of Women Deacons*, MI, Reformed Witness, 1998, Ch. 1  
<sup>6</sup>catholic.com/tracts/women-and-the-priesthood, 25.12.12 <sup>7</sup>religiousintolerance.org/femctng13.htm, 25.12.12  
<sup>8</sup>therichest.org/celebnetwork/celeb/authors/joyce-meyer-net-worth/, 23.12.12 <sup>9</sup>Joyce Meyer, *The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make*, 1991, p. 35 <sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 37 <sup>11</sup>Joyce Meyer, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, audio, STL, Christian Life Centre, n.d. (youtube.com/watch?v=5dmHdM63hk, 26.12.12)

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On the sixth day of the universe there was a time only man existed. As head of creation, Adam had named all the animals and been set to work in the Garden of Eden: "And the LORD God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." **Genesis 2.15**



Despite animal companionship Adam was alone and without a helper for his work. For this reason God made a special being, using one of his bones:

"And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." **Genesis 2.22**

As before, God required Adam to name this new creation and so Woman was born! God was successful: Adam was no longer alone and the universal ministry for all women had been founded, that of comforting and helping man. Man and woman would join to become one flesh yet still retain their individuality.

#### Old Testament

After the fall of man God decreed roles for both men and women, how they would minister to Him as well as each other:

Miriam the **prophetess** was sister to Aaron the High Priest. She spoke to men and women what God revealed to her, as well as being a leader of other women:

"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." **Exodus 15.20**

As the leading voice against Moses for marrying an Ethiopian woman (Aaron also rebelled), God punished her with leprosy. She now stands as a memorial against those over-reaching God-ordained roles:

"Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt." **Deuteronomy 24.9**

Women also separated themselves to the Lord as **Nazarites**, neither drinking nor eating anything of the vine tree, cutting their hair or coming at a dead body (Numbers 6.2,4,6).



After Joshua and the elders died, Israel began to do evil in the land and were repeatedly punished with oppression. Over 300 years<sup>2</sup> thirteen **Judges** were raised up for deliverance. Only one (the fourth) was a woman, called Deborah. Also a prophetess, the people went up to her for judgment under a palm tree.

Two women were noted for their depravity: Jezebel and **Queen Athaliah**.

The former was a Baal worshipper which slew the prophets of God. She stirred up the wickedness of King Ahab and sought to kill Elijah, who foretold the dogs would eat her carcass in the streets. There wasn't enough of her left to bury.

After her wicked son King Ahaziah was dead, Athaliah killed the royal seed to secure her Queenship. After six years she was put to the sword-one escaped.

While the roles of prophetess, judge and queen are weighty, they are separate to spiritual teacher.

This office of **priesthood** was given only to Levi's sons, never daughters:

And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office..." **Exodus 28.1**

Priests taught the people from the pulpit with authority:

"And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding... And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose;" **Nehemiah 8.2,4a**

<sup>1</sup>All scriptures are taken from the Holy Bible which is the Authorized Version (AV)

<sup>2</sup>Othniel to Samson (see Dr. Floyd Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament*, AZ, Master Books, 2007, p.74)

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#### New Testament

After the resurrection, the New Testament was in force and the old done away with. All men (not just those of Levi's loins) as well as women could now be **priests** of the Most High God. New directions were given how His Church would function on earth:

(i) There would never be one single earthly ruler (e.g. 'pope').

(ii) Deacons (*διακόνους*) would administer daily affairs.

(iii) The Elder (*πρεσβύτερος*), Bishop (*ἐπίσκοπος*) or Pastor (*ποιμήν*) would oversee each congregation as spiritual teacher. These three offices are interchangeable in scripture (Titus 1.5-7, 1 Peter 5.1-4).

(iv) Every part of the Body would have some gift to exercise: wisdom, knowledge, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues or interpretation (1 Corinthians 12.4-10).

(v) Apostles and evangelists to be commissioned by Christ Himself (Ephesians 4.8-12).

As with the Old Testament, scripture again shows us the roles women took up: Anna was an aged widow who lived in the temple. Upon seeing the baby Jesus she prophesied he was the redeemer of Israel (Luke 2.36-38).



At Corinth a woman named Priscilla is first mentioned, as wife of a Jew named Aquila (Acts 18.1-2). Church was held at their house, here also Aquila is mentioned first which is appropriate as head of his wife (1 Corinthians 16.19, Ephesians 5.22-23). They also ministered to one Apollos in Ephesus who had learnt a faulty gospel from his birthplace in Alexandria, Egypt<sup>3</sup>. Again Aquila's name is given first (Acts 18.24-26).

Phoebe was a **servant** (*διακόνον*) of the church at Cenchrea, Corinth (Romans 16.1). The specific word God preserved for us in English, servant, is not deacon. Certainly all deacons are servants, but the reverse does not hold. While she helped many including Paul himself, Phoebe never held the office of either Deacon or Elder.

Both Andronicus and Junia were noted apostles (*αποστόλους*), labouring in the Gospel from before Paul (Romans 16.7). That a female was an apostle is plain from this scripture, what is also clear is not all with this title held the **office** (see (v) above). One who had seen the risen Christ (whether male or female), or sent by Him could be called 'apostle' (a 'sent one'). By this even Mary Magdalene was an 'apostle' (John 20.17). Those who persist are unable to pass a final barrier, an Apostle is not a Bishop.

Having Junia an Apostle proper pits scripture *against itself*<sup>4</sup>. God warns:

"As also in all his epistles, speaking in terms of those things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." **II Peter 3.16**

The final mention of a Church office in the Bible is that of prophetess, namely Jezebel of Thyatira. Not only did she abuse this position to deceive and gain influence over a weak congregation, she also took it upon herself to teach (*διδάσκειν*) thereby usurping a Bishop. Her satanic doctrines were fornication and idolatry (Revelation 2.20-24).

Older women 'elders' are entrusted with a great Christian teaching ministry, to the younger women: sobriety, how to love and obey their husbands, love their children and keep their home (Titus 2.3-5). God says when this is neglected His word is **blasphemed**.

<sup>3</sup>Not surprising given Egypt is the source of the most corrupt extant Greek codices, including Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (S). Seen today in the NU28 (Nestle 28<sup>th</sup>/UBS Greek NT) the foundation of perversion for 'modern' bibles.

<sup>4</sup>The antithesis of the sound hermeneutical principle *Scriptura Scripturae interpretis* (i.e. the Word interprets itself).

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