

Women as Leaders Amongst the Believers

For decades many congregations have been taught that women should not have leadership roles, teach men, or speak out in the assembly. What we are left with is an assembly without women. How did this understanding come to be? Did Jahshua teach this doctrine?

Jahshua commands: “Go therefore and **make disciples** of **all** the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:19-20

Jahshua commanded us all to make disciples and to teach and He never placed limits on women. Strangely this belief is based **on only two passages** spoken not by Jahshua, but by Paul. Paul cannot annul the commands of Jahshua. Since these two places contradict Jahshua, they must be either misunderstood or mistranslated.

We have many scriptures written by Paul that praise women active in a teaching role and explain that there is no difference between males and females in the body of the Messiah.

Paul teaches, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for we are all one in Messiah Jahshua.” Gal 3:28. He is saying in the Body of Believers it makes no difference whether you are a female or a male! If there is no difference between male and female then why do some of you brothers rise up against allowing converted women to participate in leadership roles in the body?

Our doctrines are to be based on **many** scriptures, here a little and there a little, throughout the entire WORD.

Let’s take a look at the two passages in the writings of Paul that causes all the confusion.

The first is found in I Cor.14. Notice the member participation in services and disorder in the Corinthian assembly is centering around prophesying:

1 Cor 14:26-40

1 Cor 14:26 How is it then, **brethren**? Whenever you come together, **each of you** has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

This word **Brethren** is “adelfoi” and according to Thayer’s this can be **any** fellow believer.

In the phrase **‘Each of you’**, Paul used the word “hekastos” 1538, a neuter word referring to both males and females having a part in services!

Continuing with verse 27

1 Cor 14:27 If *anyone* (*again, neuter*) speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.

1 Cor 14:28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in assembly, (*Paul tells men to “keep silent” under certain conditions using the same verb “sigatoo” that he uses in vs. 34 addressing wives!*) and let him speak to himself and to Eloah.

1 Cor 14:29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

1 Cor 14:30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.

1 Cor 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

Again Paul uses a neuter word, “pantes” 3956, indicating both male and female participation.

1 Cor 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

Paul is clearly dealing with disruptive outbursts. He explains that prophets can control their spirits and insinuates they should control themselves.

1 Cor 14:33 For Eloah is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.

1 Cor 14:34 Let your women (or wives “gunaikes”) keep silent in the assemblies, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.

This word **silent** is “sigatoosan”, same basic verb “sigatoo” used in correcting the men in verse 28.

This refers to Gen.3:16“...he will rule over you.” Indicating a wife’s submission to her husband within her marriage, **not submission to all men**. There is no other principal Paul could be quoting.

1 Cor 14:35 But if they desire to learn anything, let them question their husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in an assembly.

These were unconverted wives and were not allowed to participate in the services as the converted women members were doing! These disruptive women were probably

prophesying as pagan prophetesses did, because Paul asks sarcastically if Eloah's original words came from them!

1 Cor 14:36 Or did the word of Eloah
come originally from you?

Or was it you only that it reached?

1 Cor 14:37 If anyone (“ei-tis”¹⁵³⁶, neuter)
thinks *himself* (*inclusive of all- male & female*)
to be a prophet or spiritual
let them (neuter) acknowledge that the things
which I write to you are
the commandments of Jahuah.

Verse 37 reveals, “**If any think themselves to be a prophet, or spiritual**, (*these wives believed themselves to be spiritual*) let them (*the Greek is neuter indicting all*) acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of JAHUAH.”

These wives considered themselves prophets so Paul sets a policy that the unconverted wives are not permitted to have a part in the services!

1 Cor 14:38 But if anyone is ignorant,
let him be ignorant.

Ignorant of Paul's decision on this.

1 Cor 14:39 Therefore, brethren,
desire earnestly to prophesy,
and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

This word *brethren* like the Spanish word Amigos could mean men masculine, but is also inclusive of all people present in the neuter form.

1 Cor 14:40 Let all things be done
decently and in order. (Again, avoid disruption!)

When Paul writes in verse 31, “**For you can all prophesy in turn...**” he uses a neuter word! He was saying, “**You'll each get your turn.**”

Both men and women members were participating, but some uproar had occurred, possibly pitting some of the prophets against unconverted wives who considered themselves prophets sent by pagan gods to straighten out these Followers of the Way!

Remember, Paul was setting guidelines to prevent further disorder. These unconverted wives were disrupting services, probably prophesying as pagan prophetesses did!

Paul corrects first the men, and then the unbelieving women in I Cor. 14:35 where he says, “If they want to learn something, (*showing they do not yet understand, and may not really want to learn*) let them ask their own husbands (*indicating believing husbands*) at home; for it is a shame for women (*wives*) to speak in the assembly.”

These wives were unconverted, untaught, and thus were not permitted to take part in services. The earlier part of the passage tells us “...**you may all prophesy one by one**” and Paul is not changing that. The “*everyone*” (the neuter, “hekastos”) used earlier in verse 26 shows converted women would continue to participate in an orderly manner. These unconverted wives were to be in submission to their husbands, *even if* they **did** consider themselves to be prophets!

Untaught, they are not permitted to speak. Paul concludes in verse 40, “**Let all things be done decently and in order.**”

Looking at one half of the correspondence is like hearing only half of a telephone conversation. We have greatly misunderstood what Paul was saying, and cannot continue to use this passage as “*proof*” in denying converted women participation in our services.

Paul praises “...**women who work hard in Jahuah**” (Romans 16:12). How does one work hard *in Jahuah* without teaching about Jahshua?

Paul records Pricilla going on an evangelizing trip and teaching the minister Apollos. He praises Pricilla (listed first) and Aquila as “fellow workers in Messiah Jahshua” to whom he owes his life and greets the assembly that meets at their house, Acts 18:18-26, Romans 16:3-5.

He praises a man and woman, Andronicus and Junias, saying, “They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in the Messiah before I was.” Romans 16:7.

How can a woman be “outstanding” as an apostle and yet never teach one single man? Would Eloah put such a restriction on her? Is it against Eloah’s will for a woman to teach a man to better understand Eloah’s truth? If so, why did Paul praise both Junias and Pricilla?

Paul lists spiritual gifts including, “the message of wisdom”, and clearly explains these gifts are for all Believers of the Way, “**Now to each one (“hekastos” 1538) the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.**” I Cor. 12:7.

Also, “It was he (the Messiah) who gave *some* to be apostles, *some* to be prophets, *some* to be evangelists, and *some* to be pastors and teachers, to prepare Eloah’s people for works of service, so that the body of Messiah may be built up.” *Eph. 4:11-12*.

Here the word “*some*” in the Greek is “tous” 3588, a neuter word, not the word “man”. For the Messiah gives these spiritual gifts to both men and women!

The female apostle Junias is further proof that both men and women were serving in each of these offices using their spiritual gifts! Modern scholars affirm that Junias and other early leaders of the Followers of the Way were female.

Thayer’s confirms Junias was female, and states that she was “*a Christian woman at Rome, mentioned by Paul as one of his kinsfolk and fellow prisoners.*”

All spiritual gifts come from Eloah as He sees fit to build and strengthen The Body. The gift given does not depend upon a person’s gender.

Eloah is not opposed to women in leadership positions for Eloah put Deborah in charge of Israel as a prophetess, judge and leader of HIS nation, Judges 4:1-8. Eloah spoke directly to Deborah, told her who was to be the military commander under her, and went on to give a great victory.

Jdg 4:4 And Deborah the wife of Lapidoth, a woman prophetess, was judging Israel at that time.

Jdg 4:5 And she lived under the palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel, in the hills of Ephraim. And the sons of Israel went up to her for judgment.

We can clearly see here that not only was Deborah a prophetess and judge she was also MARRIED... Women are instructed to not come up over their husbands, but this does not prevent them from fulfilling Jahuah’s work that HE calls them to do.

Eloah does not change; He is the same in our era as He was then. “For there is no partiality with Eloah,” Romans 2:11. HE can call women leaders today.

The second of the two passages used against women is I Tim. 2:11-12.

First let’s look at how these verses are read in the *Original King James* version-

I Tim. 2:11-12 [I] let (the) woman/^{or} wife learn in silence with all subjections. But I suffer [I permit] not (a) woman/^{or} wife to teach nor [not even] to usurp authority [to dominate] over the man/^{the} husband but to be in silence.[**KJV**]

Now let’s take a look at the original order of the Greek words. Notice in the above translation to teach *is moved out of its original place* and into the **next thought**, changing the meaning! This totally changed what Paul wrote in Greek, and disabled women for centuries by rendering them unable to follow the Messiah’s command to teach!

THE ORIGINAL ORDER OF THE GREEK WORDS of I Tim. 2:11-12

1Ti 2:11-12 (A) woman/^{or} wife (¹¹³⁵ Gune) in quietness I let learn with all obedience (in subjection) to TEACH- But (a) wife/^{or} woman I permit not even to dominate (a) husband/man but to be in quietness

Paul uses the word “Gune”¹¹³⁵ which can be translated wife or woman. As you see by the original order of the Greek words, *to teach*, “*didaskhein*” was originally placed right after obedience, at the end of that thought. Moving “*to teach*” into verse 12 totally changes the meaning and contradicts Paul’s other writings! Leaving “*to teach*” in its original place Paul’s words translate:

1Ti 2:11-12 A woman (*or wife- gune*) in quietness I let learn, with all obedience, to teach. But a wife I do not permit not even to dominate a husband but to be in quietness.

Paul writes first, a woman/wife “let learn with all obedience to teach” and then he adds further instruction to temper what some rabbinical Jews would see as a radical pronouncement.

Remember Mary was allowed to learn at the feet of Jahshua, Luke 10:42. Why did Jahshua teach her? Someday she was to teach others, both male and female, as Jahshua had taught her! It makes sense that a woman be taught how to teach, for the Messiah commands his disciples to teach new disciples through the end of the age.

Paul goes on in I Tim. 2:13 to talk about Adam and Eve, husband and wife.

1Ti 2:13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

This is further indication that in 1Tim. 2:12 he is instructing wives not to dominate their husbands. Also, Paul suggested in 1Cor.14:35 that wives *needing instruction* are to be taught by their husbands at home *not those who are already taught in the Way*.

In Titus 2:3, Paul instructs, “Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, *but to teach what is good*.”

Here the original Greek translated “*to teach*” means “*a teacher of the right*” (Strong’s 2567), the right way of life!

If “to teach” is left in its original position in I Tim. 2:11-12, then these two scriptures fit together perfectly, for both show that women are to learn to teach so they may become teachers of the right way of life.

We must study all of what the Bible has to say on a particular doctrine, here a little and there a little keeping all understanding in context. The doctrine, based on these two misunderstood passages, conflicts with all the rest of Paul’s writings and contradicts the

words of Jahshua! Many have ignored all other scriptures Paul and others wrote that show Eloah is impartial and uses women as well as men to spread His WORD.

Jahshua never intended doctrinal restrictions be put on women who serve Him, restrictions preventing women from using all the spiritual gifts He has given them! Women amongst the early *Believers* served Him fully. It didn't matter whether you were male or female!

Paul wrote about two women who "fought at my side in the cause of the gospel" as we read in Phil. 4:2-4 from the Apostolic Bible Polyglot.

Php 4:2 Euodia I appeal to, and Syntyche (*Soon-too-chay*)
I appeal to, to think the same in the Messiah

Php 4:3 Yes, I ask also you genuine fellow-companion
aid these *women!* Who in the good news fought together
with me; also with Clement, and the rest of my fellow-workers,
whose names are in the book of life.

Php 4:4 Rejoice in the Messiah at all times,
again I say, Rejoice!

These women were teaching both men and women, contending for the true gospel at Paul's side. Women hosted assembly meeting in their homes. Nympha is mentioned in Col. 4:15. Also Lydia's story in Acts 16:14-40.

The book of II John was written "to the chosen lady" (chosen by Eloah) and loved by "all who know the truth," obviously a very well-known female leader.

John sends a warning about "many deceivers" who are coming to her area. Due to dangerous times, there is not a single name in the entire letter; her name is not mentioned nor is the exact location of her assembly. She is one "Chosen" or "Elect", written as the Greek "Eklektee" picked out or chosen by Jahuah, (Strong's 1588).

She is addressed as "**Kuria**" (a feminine form of Kurios, 2962) a title expressive of respect and reverence, a high position and great authority. To translate "Kuria" as "lady" is about like referring to an ambassador as "woman." It doesn't convey her real standing!

She is a female known and loved "by all who know the truth" and her fame had made her a target just as Paul was, someone the authorities would like to arrest and kill! John writes an urgent warning for her to beware of deceivers coming and urges her not to allow these into her house-assembly.

John talks about her spiritual converts as "children" in verse 4 just as he refers to his own converts as "children" throughout IJohn and in 3John verse 4, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of **my children** walking in the truth."

As Thayer's confirms, "In the New Testament pupils of disciples are called **children** of their teachers," These are "her children" in the same way, her converts. They would understand this reference, where outsiders wouldn't. **John looks forward to seeing her "face to face"** (or mouth to mouth as the Greek idiom is for talking in person, vs. 12).

During the winter of 55-56 AD Paul dictated the book of Romans to Tertius (Rom16:22) in Corinth and sent the epistle by Phoebe who traveled to Rome.

Paul begins Chapter 16 with an introduction of Phoebe, "I commend to you (I introduce favorably) our sister Phoebe, who is a "**diakonon**" of the assembly which is at Cenchrea." This is technically a deacon or deaconess translated as "minister" and is the same word Paul uses when he writes, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but **ministers (G1249 diakonos)** through whom you believed, as the Messiah gave to each one?" **1Cor 3:5**

The clear meaning here referring to Phoebe is deaconess, but because she is a woman the translators could not accept her position and hid her true place in the assembly at Cenchrea. They translated "servant", but all ministers and deacons are servants in the base word.

Cenchrea is the port city very near Corinth. Look at a Bible map and you will see it is a great distance from Corinth to Rome, especially in New Testament times. For a woman to be traveling by ship, alone this great distance carrying this letter from Paul, proves that she was a woman of considerable faith, responsibility, and spiritual gifts.

Paul continues, "That you receive her in the Messiah in a manner worthy of the saints," "And that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you;"

This tells us that she would need help from the local Assembly in accomplishing the matter that has caused her trip to Rome. She is apparently on Assembly business, and carries the letter from Paul as her introduction to the assembly there.

They are to treat her well and help her with the matter that brings her to Rome. If she is not the deaconess or minister of the assembly at Cenchrea, then why did she, a woman, come on such an important mission? Why didn't the "real" minister of the assembly come? Because Phoebe **was** a minister.

The rest of the passage reveals even more in the original Greek. "For she herself has also been a "**prostatis**" of many, and of myself as well." Thayer's defines "prostatis" as "a woman set over others, a protectress, a patroness!"

Many women leaders served the New Testament ecclesia. Did Jahshua intend for today's ecclesia to be operating at only half capacity as we face the end times? Did He plan a for half of His **BODY** to work only in the background? Is He pleased that over half of His

BODY is unable to fully use all their spiritual gifts? Did Jahshua intend for His BODY to become a BODY without women?

Notice also that Philip had four daughters that were prophetesses, Acts 21:8-9;

Act 21:8 And the next day, the ones around Paul having gone forth they came unto Caesarea. And having entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist, being *one* of the seven, we stayed with him.

Act 21:9 And to this man there were four virgin daughters who prophesied. (ABP)

Remember, a prophet and or prophetess is second only to apostle as a spiritual gift, and out ranks minister or pastor. Jahuah tells us in Acts 2:18 that women are given this gift along with men!

Act 2:18 And indeed upon my manservants and upon my maidservants in those days I will pour out from my spirit; and they shall prophesy.

Prophesy is a direct message from Jahuah to be given to a certain person or to the entire group. Deborah publicly revealed the message Eloah had given to her. Jahuah doesn't change! He would not have blessed Deborah and allowed her to be a prominent leader of an entire country if He was against women leading publicly- *as some think*.

Teaching, preaching, talking, evangelizing, call it what you will, Jahuah does not prohibit women from doing it!! Mised traditions of men hold back women, Jahuah does not. We cannot continue to force women into subservient roles if JAHUAH has ordained them with spiritual gifts requiring leadership or service as elders.

Who do we think we are that **we** can deny a woman any spiritual gift that requires teaching/speaking/preaching/whatever ??? It is so insulting to think that men can control what Jahuah does, or who He gifts with what gift!

So, brethren let us come together as one body, men and women alike, to lift one another in the spirit in order to accomplish the Work that the Messiah and HIS FATHER has set us to do- in the calling in which you were given. All to the Glory of the Most-High.
Hallelujah!