

WOMEN IN THE WORK OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

World Assembly 2023 Conversatorio

WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S STORY:

I. WOMEN LEADERS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Miriam – in Exodus 15:20-21

Deborah – in Judges 4 & 5

Huldah – in 2 Kings 22:11-20

Esther – in the Book of Esther

II. JESUS & WOMEN - AN OVERVIEW OF THE GOSPELS

WOMEN AS DISCIPLES:

Luke 8:1-3 - Jesus was followed by men and women, and the women provided financial support!

Matthew 27:55-56 & Mark 15:40-41 - report of women being present at the crucifixion.

Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-11; John 20:1-18 – record of women being the first witnesses to the resurrection!

WOMEN IN CONVERSATION:

John 4 - one of Jesus' longest dialogues is with a Samaritan woman.

Matthew 15:21-28 - Jesus' dialogue with a Canaanite woman. (He seems harsh at some points, yet clearly affirms the woman's faith in the end!)

Luke 10:38-42 - Jesus affirms Mary for sitting at his feet, as a male disciple did!

John 11:17-27 - one of the clearest statements regarding Jesus' divinity comes from Mary's sister Martha as they interact around the death of Lazarus.

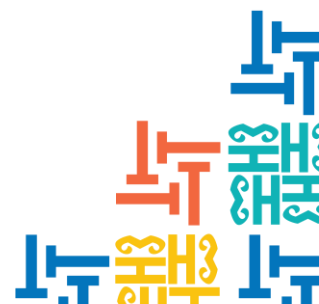
OTHER WOMEN INTERACTING WITH JESUS:

Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8 - Mary (of Bethany, above) anoints Jesus, who is on his way to the cross. She seems to be one of the few who really understand what is about to happen; in Matthew, Mary is highly commended by Jesus.

Luke 7:11-17 - Jesus raises the widow's son!

Luke 7:36-50 - a sinful woman anoints Jesus' feet and he forgives her and commends her for her faith.

John 8:2-11 - Jesus protects, forgives and instructs the woman caught in adultery.



WOMEN JESUS HEALED:

Matthew 8:14-15 and Mark 1:29-31 - Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law.

Mark 7:24-30 and Matthew 15:21-28 - Jesus heals the daughter of the Canaanite woman.

Mark 5:21-43 & Luke 8:41-56 - Jesus heals both Jairus' daughter and a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years.

Luke 13:10-17 - Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath, and calls her "a daughter of Abraham", clearly including her in God's covenant people.

WOMEN AS EXAMPLES IN JESUS' TEACHING:

Luke 18:1-8 - a woman as an example of persistent prayer.

Matthew 13:33 - a woman demonstrating the kingdom's work.

Luke 15:8-10 - a woman searching for her lost coin.

Matthew 25:1-3 - patient bridesmaids waiting for the groom.

Mark 12:41-44 - the widow and her mite.

Luke 4:25-27 - the widow who sheltered Elijah.

Matthew 5:27-28 - women should not be the subject of lust!

Luke 11:27-28 - as Jesus' mother is blessed, Jesus calls all who hear and obey God blessed.

From *Apology to Women* by Ann Brown.

III. PAUL & WOMEN PARTNERS IN MINISTRY:

Acts 16:11-15 - Lydia, who sold purple cloth, was the first convert in Europe, in the city of Philippi. (It's also quite possible the church in Philippi met in her home.)

Philippians 4:3 - Euodia & Syntyche are described by Paul as "women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel."

Acts 17:4 - Tells us that "not a few prominent women" joined Paul & Silas.

Acts 17:34 - Tells of a woman named Damaris who was a convert in Athens.

Colossians 4:15 - Paul sends greetings to "Nympha and the church in her house."

Romans 16:1-2 - Paul commends Phoebe, a Deacon (diakonon) in the church in Cenchrea as one who greatly helped many, including himself.

Romans 16:3 - Paul also greets Priscilla & Aquila (He also serves with this couple in Corinth and Ephesus in Acts 18)

Romans 16:7 - Paul greets Junia as outstanding among the apostles

Acts 18:24-26 - Priscilla and Aquila together are teachers of Apollos

All but Romans 16:7 citing from *Apology to Women* by Ann Brown.



Romans 16:7:

"In the fourth century, John Chrysostom noted that it is a woman about whom Paul is speaking: "Indeed to be apostles at all is a great thing.... But to be even amongst these of note, just consider what an encomium (a speech or piece of writing that praises someone or something highly) this is! Oh, how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!"

Later church leaders, uncomfortable with a woman apostle, changed her name and created one that is unknown in Greek sources – Junias. The name is nowhere attested in any inscription, public monument, graffito or literary document." The IVP Women's Bible Commentary p. 644-5

IV. PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGING PASSAGES & OTHERS

1. Humility – particularly towards those we may not agree with!
2. Love & Respect for one another in our dialogue
3. Context is Key
4. Gospel comes first

V. QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING PARTICULAR PASSAGES

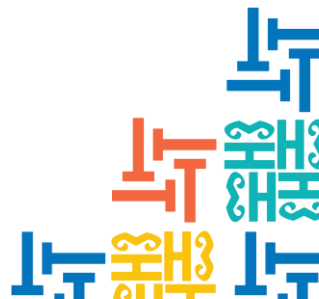
1. Where is this text located in the overarching story of Scripture and how does that impact the way we interpret it?
2. How did this text speak to the original audience to whom it was written? How is it culturally, linguistically and historically shaped?
3. How does this text continue to speak to us and guide us as participants in God's ongoing story?

Notes on 1 Corinthians 14:33-35:

Note - context - 1 Corinthians 11-14 is ALL about worship; 1 Corinthians 14 ends with particular focus on order in worship, with three commands for "silence":

1. 1 Corinthians 14:28 - If there is no interpreter, the speaker should **keep quiet** (sigatō) in the church and speak to himself and God.
2. 1 Corinthians 14:30 - And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should **stop**.
3. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 - women should remain **silent** in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church

Note: end of passage - 1 Corinthians 14:40 - but everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.



Notes on 1 Timothy 2:11-15:

¹¹ A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women **[lit. the woman]** will be saved through childbearing **[lit. childbirth]** — if **they** continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Note - context - Paul is writing to Timothy who is serving a young church in Ephesus. Ephesus is home to the goddess Artemis/Diana - the temple in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world! The cult of Artemis/Diana was served by female priests and it's likely that it was taught that creation began with women.

Paul's first concern, shown in v.11, is that women should be learning.

This passage is very difficult! The word Paul uses for "authority" in v. 12 **authentein** is used only once in all of the NT. It's a word that means "authority" but likely it also means using authority inappropriately or grasping (usurping in the KJV) that authority.

Paul's prohibition here is NOT for all women at all time - but for the particular women in Ephesus when Paul is writing to Timothy. These were women who had only recently come to faith, many likely coming out of the Artemis/Diana cult. They would need to learn and be disciplined before they could assume any roles of teaching - although they may have been teachers in the Artemis/Diana cult.

Paul appeals to Genesis to establish that God first created Adam and then Eve. In Ephesus, Artemis was considered the author of creation; he is refuting that claim.

Verse 15 is another very confusing verse as it begins with a singular verb - to be saved, and then switches to a plural verb to continue. The first verb - "the woman will be saved" could be a reference to God's promise within the curses of Genesis 3:15 for a child to come from "the woman."

Genesis 3:15 - "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

The childbirth that will save women is the birth of Jesus! (See Christianity Today 11/23/16 article by Wendy Alsup on this verse!)

The plural verb that follows - if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety - is referring to the women of Ephesus. These are the areas they will need to grow in before becoming teachers in the church.

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* Although Bowens is drawing on African American readings of Paul, there are many African American women who saw Paul as an advocate for women as image bearers who were called to preach and teach.

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