

The Feminine Voice of God: Women as Prophets in the Bible

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Introduction

When God speaks in the Bible, it is with authority—and this is no less the case when God speaks through women. Sometimes it is privately through ordinary women like the matriarch Rebekah (Gen. 25:25) or the young woman Mary of Nazareth (Luke 1:26–38). Elsewhere, women serve as public heralds of Israel's deliverance (Ps. 68:11, Isa. 40:9), and later of Christ's resurrection (Matt. 28:1–10, Mark 16:1–18, Luke 24:1–12, John 24:1–12). In the book of Proverbs, the very wisdom of God is personified as a woman who calls the foolish to repentance and the wise to obedience. She also provides an idealized model for a person of wisdom as the “woman of valor” in the poem that King Lemuel's mother taught him (Prov. 31). And throughout biblical history, the official “thus saith the LORD” of the prophets is heard through courageous women like Miriam in the exodus from Egypt (Exod. 15:20–21, Mic. 6:4), Deborah during the era of the judges (Judg. 4–5), Huldah at the time of the kingdom's fall (2 Kings 22:14–20, 2 Chron. 34:22–28), as well as the New Testament examples of Anna (Luke 2:36), Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9), the unnamed women who prayed and prophesied at Corinth (1 Cor. 11), and the prophesying daughters of Israel in the last days announced by the prophet Joel (Joel 2) and celebrated by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17).

This article focuses on representatives of the women who served God, and the people of God, in the important leadership role of prophet.¹ But, before looking at their examples, one clarification needs to be made. Though prophets are well known in the ancient Near East as early as the patriarchal era, the distinction of their role from that of priest and judge/king in the Old Testament can be most clearly illustrated in the lives of Moses and Aaron at the time of the great redemptive event of the exodus. First, as the greatest of the Old Testament *prophets*, Moses delivered the word of God to the people of God at Mt. Sinai.² His job as God's prophet was to reveal the formative will of God for the new nation, to confront the ongoing sin of the people, and to promise blessing and hope for the future, if repentance and obedience are forthcoming. Second, as a *judge*, Moses both settled civil disputes³ and led the people in warfare when such actions were necessary.⁴ Centuries later, the informal charismatic office of judge was replaced by a dynasty of *kings* that had essentially the same function, though expressed in a more formal and permanent structure. Third, in contrast to both prophet and

judge/king, Aaron was chosen to begin a succession of *priests* who would be responsible for interceding on behalf of the people before God through the sacrificial system.⁵ They, along with their tribal cousins the Levites, also read the law of Moses to the people at the tabernacle (and later the temple) on Sabbath and other special holy days.

Thus, the prophets spoke as God's audible voice to the people, revealing God's will, challenging God's people to covenant loyalty, and foretelling the consequences of blessing or judgment depending on the people's response to the prophet's message. In this sense, their voices, masculine and feminine, were as authoritative as the sound of God's voice that thundered forth on the lofty heights of Mt. Sinai. To be clear, it was not the prophets' own authority, but rather the authority of the God on whose behalf they spoke.⁶ Nevertheless, given this awesome responsibility—sometimes described as a “burden”⁷ that the prophet carried—it is understandable why false prophets faced a death penalty for impersonating the real thing, and why true prophets were often reluctant to volunteer for the job. With these characteristics in mind, let us consider six examples of women who faithfully served God's people as prophets throughout biblical history.

Miriam: prophet of the exodus

Listen to what the LORD says . . . “I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam.” (Mic. 6:1, 4)⁸

Did women actually function as significant leaders in the Bible? And, more importantly, did the community of faith, including writers of the Bible, affirm women in such positions?⁹ The prophet Micah answers these questions in the affirmative when he lists Miriam and Aaron alongside Moses as being sent by God to lead Israel in the most important event in Old Testament history.

Moses was clearly a special prophet in that he is said to have known the LORD “face to face” (Deut. 34:10), and, because he was God's instrument to establish Israel as a nation, provided it with its first written revelation from the LORD. However, his brother and sister were also honored as prophets in the same historical context. Because of Moses' reluctance at the time of his calling—due to his inability to speak well (Exod. 4:10–17)—the LORD said to him, “I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your *prophet*” (Exod. 7:1).

Later, Miriam also bore the same honor. After the crossing of the Sea of Reeds, Moses led Israel in a victor's hymn of praise to the LORD (Exod. 15:1–19). Then, “the *prophet* Miriam” took a tambourine in her hand, and with all the women following, she called them to “Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted” (Exod. 15:20–21). Miriam repeats the first four lines of Moses' hymn of praise (Exod. 15:1), but changes the form of the first verb from “I will sing” to the imperative, “*You sing!*” Miriam functions as a prophet by publicly commanding others to join in the act of wor-

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ship.¹⁰ Thus, the TNIV's paragraph heading to Exodus 15:1–21, "The Song of Moses and Miriam," is appropriate—the prophetic task had been shared by the greatest of prophets and his prophet sister, who leads in public worship, has a following, and speaks with authority.

In fact, Miriam's influence on the people was significant. Many years later, she was struck with leprosy because of her and Aaron's criticism of Moses (Num. 12). This event brought the entire nation to a standstill in the wilderness until Miriam was restored from her judgment. Despite her failure on this occasion, she was still respected by the people as an essential member of the leadership team.

But, one might be quick to point out that, whereas Moses and *Israel* sing together, Miriam commands the *women* to join with her in song. Is it possible that God wants women prophets to lead and speak with authority solely to *women*, as opposed to a mixed group including men? Our next example, Deborah, speaks to this question.

Deborah: prophet and judge

In the days of the judges, the prophet Deborah was judging Israel under her palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and Israel came to her for judgment. (Judg. 4:4–5, author's condensed paraphrase)

The first thing one notices about Deborah is that she was both *prophet* and *judge* of Israel in the period before the monarchy. Regarding the latter, the geographical location of her court suggests that she was a regional judge like her successor Samuel who would settle disputes that could not be handled adequately by the local judges.¹¹ In fact, Samuel later takes up his work as judge on this same itinerant route, placing him near the memorial "palm tree of Deborah" (Judg. 4:5, 1 Sam. 7:15–17). Also, it is important to note that, in contrast to Miriam's experience, here it is *Israel* that comes to Deborah for judgment, not just the women. Thus, Deborah's delegated authority from God to render regional judgments for Israel accentuates her already authoritative prophetic work.

But, as a prophet, Deborah's authority from God is clear in its own right. Again, with the imperative, she *summons* Barak and *commands* him *in the name of the LORD* to go and *prepare* for war against the Canaanites in the volatile Jezreel Valley, international crossroads of northern Israel (Judg. 4:6). Though Barak is sometimes accused of being weak or even cowardly for submitting to Deborah's leadership and seeking her accompaniment,¹² the writer of the book of Hebrews (in contrast) identifies him as one of the great persons of faith in Israel's history (Heb. 11:32)—and, in fact, the Old Testament text confirms this interpretation in several ways.

First, it was common for ancient kings (or, in this case, judges) to consult prophets so as to have a word from the LORD in the event that critical field decisions needed to be made in the heat of battle.¹³ Understandably, this would be even more important for Barak, since Deborah had a well-established reputation as both

a judge and a prophet, while he functioned in a secondary role as her military general.¹⁴ Thus, his request is better interpreted as one of faith and wisdom (cp. Heb. 11:32). Second, Deborah's affirmation, "I will certainly go with you!" should not be taken as an accommodation to some weakness or failure on Barak's part,¹⁵ but rather as her willingness to fulfill her calling, even at great

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personal risk. Third, her caveat that the credit for victory would go not to Barak, but to a woman (Jael in Judges 4:17–22), serves to keep both Barak and Deborah humble, just as God's reduction of the size of Gideon's army did for him in the parallel account in Judges (Judg. 6–8, esp. 7:2–8). The NRSV puts it best here when it renders, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory" (Judg. 4:9).

Much like Miriam had done centuries earlier (Exod. 15:20–21), Deborah also leads Israel in a victor's hymn of praise (Judg. 5). However, this time it is not merely as one who brings the words of Moses to the women of Israel. Rather, Deborah is listed first as the initiator of the hymn, which she sings with Barak to all the people. In it, she is honored and remembered as a "mother in Israel" who arises and commands the people (Judg. 5:7–9). Therefore, she not only fulfills a leadership role in Israel, but, further, is confirmed and honored in that position by the community of faith.

But, could it be that a women was chosen in this case because there were no good men to lead during the days of the judges? No. Both the affirmation of Barak as a person of faith in Hebrews 11:32, and the following example of Huldah, dispel such a notion.

Huldah: prophet of the kingdom

King Josiah sent Hilkiyah (the high priest), Ahikam (the father of a future governor), Achbor (a prophet's son), Shaphan (the royal secretary), and Asaiah (the king's ambassador) to consult the prophet Huldah regarding the book of the law found in the Temple. (2 Kings 22:8–20, 2 Chron. 34:19–28, author's condensed paraphrase)

The discovery of the book of the law in the temple was second only to the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai. The northern kingdom of Israel had already fallen to the Assyrians, and the remaining kingdom of Judah was on the verge of being conquered by Babylon. At this critical juncture, Josiah sends a royal delegation (including the son of a prophet) to find a person who can serve as God's voice to the king. The consensus of this prestigious group is to consult the prophet Huldah.

Were there other *men* who might have been approached to advise the king? Indeed, there were. At this time, well-known prophets like Jeremiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah (the last a relative of the king) were also ministering—but the royal delegation sought Huldah's counsel. As official representatives of the community of faith, they honored her with the task of advising one of Judah's best kings in a time of national crisis (much like Deborah advised Barak).

And, how did Huldah react? Did she defer to the *male* leadership of the day? No. On the contrary, she accepted the responsibility that accompanied the gift that God had given her, and she acted with boldness. Moreover, her response confronts the entire nation with prophetic authority. She declared: “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says . . . ‘I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people . . . because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods’” (2 Kings 22:15–17, cf. 2 Chron. 34:22–25). And to Josiah she delivers these words of comfort: “Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the LORD . . . your eyes shall not see all the the disaster I am going to bring on this place” (2 Kings 22:19–20, cf. 2 Chron. 26–28).

And, what did the king do? Did he confirm such an authoritative judgment by checking with other male prophets? No. At the words of Huldah, Josiah immediately put into place one of the most extensive religious reforms in the history of Judah and Israel (2 Kings 23:1–27, 2 Chron. 34:29–35:19).¹⁶ Like Barak, Josiah put his faith into action by submitting to the word of the LORD delivered through the prophet—the fact that she was a woman made no difference.

Summary of Old Testament examples

We have seen in Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah women who served as prophets—spokespersons for God—at the most important junctures in Israel’s history. Moreover, they were sent by God, spoke with prophetic authority, and were accepted—even sought after—by the male leadership of the day, as well as the community of faith.

But, does this affirmation of women as prophets continue into the New Testament? Indeed, it does—from Anna (Luke 2:36–38), to Philip’s daughters (Acts 21:9), to the unnamed women at Corinth (1 Cor. 11), and those prophesying daughters of Israel anticipated in the last days (Joel 2:28–29, Acts 2:17–18).

Anna: prophet at the dedication of the Messiah

When Mary and Joseph dedicated Jesus at the Temple, there was a prophet named Anna, daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher. She was an elderly widow who worshiped in the Temple with fasting and prayer night and day. (Luke 2:22, 36–38, author’s condensed paraphrase)

The New Testament accounts of women prophets are not as extensive as those in the Old Testament, but are nonetheless just as powerful. In the Old Testament, they appeared at the Exodus, during the days of the judges, and near the end of the kingdom era. Here we find a godly woman at the most important juncture in the Bible, the dedication of Jesus, the Messiah.

A righteous man named Simeon, also present at the dedication ceremony, had just finished blessing the child Jesus and praising God for the privilege of seeing this historical event. At that moment, the prophet Anna, an elderly widow,¹⁷ stepped forward. Since the day of her husband’s death, she had committed herself to full-time worship and service in the temple, including extensive times of prayer and fasting. When she saw the infant

Jesus, she “began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38).

Simeon had just told Jesus’ mother Mary that he was “destined for the rise and fall of many in Israel,” that he would be opposed, and that “a sword” would “pierce her soul” (Luke 2:34–35). Anna spoke as a prophet to *all* who were there, augmenting the prophecy of Simeon as she spoke “of the redemption of Jerusalem.”¹⁸ As the Spirit provided Simeon with the basis for his subsequent action in verse 25, so here Anna is called a prophet in preparation for her inspired identification of the child in verse 38.¹⁹

Women prophets at Corinth²⁰

Paul writes:

But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head. . . . It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels. (1 Cor. 11:5, 10)

Though most scholars agree that this well-known passage is fraught with both exegetical and theological complexities, it is referenced in this article because it recognizes without challenge or contradiction the fact that women functioned as prophets in the New Testament church. The apostle Paul is concerned here with the proper appearance of the women who serve the body of Christ in this way, especially as it relates to the “traditions” and “customs” (1 Cor. 11:1, 16) common to the Greco-Roman culture in which they lived—but he has no problem with women as prophets.

The only actual instruction in the passage (1 Cor. 11:1–16) is Paul’s statement in verse 10 that “a woman ought to have authority over her head,” which is still anything but clear. Taken in the most literal sense, it would suggest that the woman prophet, though she should be sensitive to her surrounding culture, still ought to exercise authority over her own literal head and determine what would be an appropriate head covering. But the fact that “head” is used figuratively of the husband or man in verse 3 may suggest that she ought to have *prophetic* authority over even her husband when she exercises this spiritual gift.²¹

Still other interpreters believe that, because of the cryptic nature of the instruction, the idea of “*a symbol of authority*” should be read into the text. If this is true, one is still left to identify whose authority is in view, and the most obvious answer is that the “head covering” in this situation would serve as a symbol of the prophet’s authority when she speaks. The least likely reading is that the woman prophet should wear a symbol of her husband’s authority—an idea otherwise absent from any other biblical example of women prophets.

Elsewhere in this passage, Paul works hard to balance out the relationship between men and women. For instance, though at creation the first woman was taken from Adam (Gen. 2), ever since that time, men have been taken from women, and we all come from God (1 Cor. 11:12). Thus, the apostle cautions, neither man nor woman is independent of the other (1 Cor. 11:11). In light of this emphasis, it seems best to conclude that Paul’s opening statement that “man is the head of woman” is balanced out with

his judgment that a woman, when praying and prophesying, ought to have authority over her “head,” that is, husband. This assumes that the term for “head” in this context carries any connotation of authority, which easily may not be the case.²²

So, this text confirms that the inclusion of women in the authoritative tradition of biblical prophecy carries forward from the old covenant into the new covenant era inaugurated by the death and resurrection of Christ. They continued to participate in a ministry to which Paul gives priority in his discussion of spiritual gifts that follows this passage in his letter to the Corinthians. Prophets are listed as second in the leadership gifts only to apostles (1 Cor. 12:27), and believers are instructed to “follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, *especially the gift of prophecy*” (1 Cor. 14:1; italics added). Paul then goes on to emphasize the superiority of prophecy over the gift of speaking in unknown languages (1 Cor. 14:2–22). This apostolic affirmation in the New Testament makes it impossible to deny the authority with which women prophets spoke in the Bible.

Israel’s prophesying daughters in the last days

“In the last days,” God says, “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. And they will prophesy!” (Acts 2:17–18, cf. Joel 2:28–29, emphasis author’s)

The citation of Joel’s prophecy by Peter on the day of Pentecost serves as a fitting conclusion to this survey of women as prophets. It is not a specific example of women as was seen with Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Anna, nor does it contain instructions, as Paul’s words did to the unnamed women at Corinth. Rather, it speaks in general yet powerful terms of God’s intention for both men and women in the last days to pour out his empowering Spirit on both genders equally, so that they can serve the community of faith side by side in this ministry.

But when are these days of which Joel spoke? Peter identifies them with the new covenant era further inaugurated by the outpouring of God’s Spirit on Pentecost. In fact, he punctuates Joel’s prophecy with his own emphatic words, “And they will prophesy!” (cp. Acts 2:18 with Joel 2:29). This is consistent with the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament writers who understand Christians at that time to be living in the last days, while still anticipating a climactic event in the future. The unnamed women prophets at Corinth, as well as the brief reference to Philip’s four daughters who were prophets (Acts 21:9), foreshadow the ultimate realization of this phenomenon.

Yet, as we have seen, this is not really a new phenomenon. It has always been God’s intention that women and men work side by side in the prophetic ministry of Israel and the church

(Miriam with Moses and Aaron; Deborah with Barak; Huldah with Jeremiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah; and Anna with Simeon). But, it breaks with the patriarchal traditions of treating sons with priority, or giving an inheritance to daughters only if there are no sons. It is more like the model of the righteous Job who freely gives an inheritance to his daughters *along with* his sons (Job 42:15). Likewise, the inheritance of the gift of God’s Spirit is given without discrimination to the brothers and sisters of the church.

Summary of the New Testament examples and conclusion

Thus, the New Testament confirms that which was also evident in the Old Testament: women serving side by side with men as

God’s spokespersons to the community of faith at critical junctures in the history of redemption. This prophetic partnership began at the Exodus event, continued through the eras of the judges and kings to the birth of Messiah, and found its climax in the church age of the last days. It is affirmed by biblical teaching and em-

braced by the early community of faith.

Though there are disagreements among evangelicals on the nature and practice of prophecy in the contemporary church, allow me to share my own thoughts on the practical implications of our study. In the Old Testament, the prophets served as the preachers of the day, both confronting and encouraging God’s people. This was in contrast to the judges/kings who functioned as military leaders and administrators, and the priests who were set apart to represent the people to God.

With the arrival of the new covenant era, some things have changed and others have remained the same. *First*, there is no longer a need for military leaders, but administrators such as bishops, pastors, elders, and deacons continue to be important. Deborah’s legitimate and authoritative role of judge speaks to this issue, opening the door for women in this kind of leadership role in the church today.

Second, the high priesthood of Christ and the general priesthood of *all* believers have clearly replaced the exclusive Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament.²³ Thus, the exclusion of women from serving as priests under the old covenant is no longer relevant in the more inclusive new covenant era. Paul’s declaration of “neither male nor female in Christ” speaks to this concern.

Third, whereas the role of prophet as one who reveals God’s inspired word to the community of faith may have changed with the completion of the New Testament canon, the function of the prophet as a preacher—that is, one who brings the good news—continues. The people of God will always need confrontation and comfort from the contemporary prophet-preachers of the church. Though we should remain sensitive to our cultural settings (as Paul instructed the women at Corinth to do), we must continue to hear, in a new and fresh way, the affirmations of the

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biblical writers for women to serve alongside of men in bringing to us the authoritative message of God's word. May the examples of the great women of faith in the Scripture—often women prophets—as well as the great women preachers in the history of the church, encourage us to that end!

Notes

1. In this article, I have chosen to use the phrase “woman prophet,” in contrast to “prophethess,” because there is no distinguishable difference in either the Old or New Testament between the roles of women and men as prophets, and because modern English translations have generally abandoned the use of masculine and feminine noun forms in favor of the generic (so the NRSV, TNIV, and NLT).

2. Exodus 19:1–6, 10–15, 21–25, culminating in the giving of the Ten Commandments (20:1–17).

3. Due perhaps to the volume of cases, Moses delegated much of this task to others who were appointed to judge. However, in the event that a case was too difficult to judge, it would be brought before Moses, and he would command “all the things that you should do” (Deut. 1:16–17).

4. While it seems that Moses did not personally lead Israel into battle (Num. 31:1–12, Deut. 20:9), he was responsible for the census and organization of Israel's armies (Num. 1:1–46, 2:1–34, et al.), the sending out of spies (13:3), and issuing specific rules of warfare (31:13–20). For this general function after Moses, see Judges 2:16, and more specifically 3:9–10, where Othniel is ordained by God to deliver Israel by leading it into battle.

5. God first establishes the “perpetual priesthood” of Aaron and his progeny just before the tabernacle is erected (Exod. 40:12–15). Thereafter, the priesthood functions ceremonially as an intermediary between Israel and God, carrying out specific sacrificial tasks. Similarly, the Levites are set apart over the “tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it” (Num. 1:50, author's condensed paraphrase). Before that, Moses functioned informally as a priest on behalf of Israel, delivering the words of Israel to God at Sinai (e.g., Exod. 19:8).

6. The authoritative position of the prophet, more specifically, the prophet's message, is solely a matter of divine appointment. A fine example of this is found in God's words to Jeremiah: “I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms . . .” (Jer. 1:9–10 TNIV). It is clear that the content of the prophet's message finds its ultimate source in the words of God (e.g., Ezek. 2:7).

7. However, because of its contextual association with the message given to the prophets, the Hebrew noun *massa* (Nah. 1:1, Hab. 1:1, Mal. 1:1) is often translated “oracle” (NASB, ESV, RSV, NIV) or “prophecy” (TNIV). The two connotations are not necessarily exclusive of each other.

8. All scripture citations are taken from the TNIV unless otherwise noted.

9. Linda L. Belleville asks these questions in her helpful essay “Women Leaders in the Bible,” *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, 2nd ed., ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (Westmont, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005), 110–125. I am indebted to her for several insights regarding women prophets in the Old Testament.

10. The significance of this shift to the imperative is also felt by Peter Enns, who comments: “This is a formulaic call to worship, through which Miriam is inviting (or even commanding) the Israelites, and hence the readers of this book, to sing of Yahweh's Exodus deliverance.” Peter Enns, *Exodus, NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000), 307, n. 15.

11. This is supported by the use of legal language such as *hammishpat*, which speaks of decisions made in response to particular legal inquiries. See Linda Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” 112 n. 8; and Robert Boling, *Judges, Anchor Bible 6a* (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 95 n. 5.

12. See for example B. Lindars, “Deborah's Song: Women in the Old Testament,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 65:2 (Spring 1983) 158–75, esp. 161, 164.

13. Consider, for example, the failed enterprise of Jehoshaphat with Ahab in 2 Chronicles 18:4–27.

14. It would not have been practical for a woman to lead in hand-to-hand combat with an all male army.

15. *Contra* Thomas Finley, who views Barak's response as a refusal to “act immediately upon what the Lord told him through Deborah” (Thomas Finley, “The Ministry of Women in the Old Testament” in *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective*, ed. Robert L. Saucy and Judith K. TenElshof [Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 2001], 79).

16. As a result, Belleville suggests “Huldah's role in Josiah's reforms may have helped elevate all the true prophets to their rightful place in Judah's religious community.” See Linda Belleville, “Women Leaders in the Bible,” 113.

17. The Greek is somewhat ambiguous as to Anna's age. She may have been 84 at this time, or it is possible that she was widowed after seven years of marriage and had remained a widow for 84 years (making her about 105 at this time). For this view, see I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1978), 123–24.

18. Indeed, Luke establishes a strong connection between the two prophetic messages. The inauguration of the messianic age (termed the “consolation of Israel” by Simeon, and the “redemption of Jerusalem” by Anna) serves as an inclusio and brackets the Simeon and Anna accounts (Robert Stein, *Luke: New American Commentary* [Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1992], 117–18).

19. See John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20: Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1989), 122.

20. I am indebted here to the essay by Gordon D. Fee, “Praying and Prophesying in the Assemblies,” Pierce and Groothuis, *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 142–60.

21. Cp. Luke 9:1 (disciples given *authority over* demons and diseases), 9:17 (disciples given *authority over* cities), Rev. 2:26 (saints given *authority over* nations), 6:8 (death and Hades given *authority over* a fourth of the earth), 11:6 (witnesses given *authority over* waters), 13:7 (the Beast given *authority over* nations), 14:18 (the angel has *authority over* fire), 16:9 (God has *authority over* plagues), etc.

22. See the overviews of this ongoing debate by Gordon Fee, “Praying and Prophesying in the Assemblies,” and I. Howard Marshall, “Mutual Love and Submission in Marriage,” Pierce and Groothuis, *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 149–55, 198–200.

23. See Stanley J. Grenz, “Biblical Priesthood and Women in Ministry,” Pierce and Groothuis, *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 272–86.

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