

## jenaministries – Part 4 Bible Characters

### 7. Women in the Early Church

In some of Apostle Paul's letters in the New Testament, it can seem that Paul sometimes talks about women as though they are lower class, unimportant, and irrelevant (**Scriptures 1. Paul Writes About Women**). But before he wrote those letters, in the book of Acts, when Paul converted from a Pharisee (called Saul) to an Apostle Christian (called Paul), there were women involved in his ministry of starting and strengthening Christian churches. These women had significant roles in the Christian advancement.

After his conversion, Paul traveled around starting and/or strengthening Christian churches (**Scriptures 2. Paul Traveled Town to Town**).

While he was in Philippi, Paul was looking for a place to pray. But he instead found several women gathered. Paul started telling them about Jesus. One of the women, Lydia (**Scriptures 3. Lydia**), was so moved by Paul's message that she persuaded Paul and his companions to stay at her house. It sounded like Lydia was the head of the household and may not have been married.

Every day, Paul and Silas were out spreading the good news and one day got arrested. They were stripped, beaten, and flogged. Then thrown into prison. They were singing and worshipping in prison when the prison doors flew open and their chains fell off. The prisoner guard went to kill himself, but Paul stopped him and told him about Jesus. That is when Paul said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

After they were released from prison, Paul & Silas went back to Lydia's house. They met with their brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Lydia's house was a haven for them during the very important time of starting the Philippian church.

In Thessalonica, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. Some Jews, Greeks, and several prominent women joined Paul & Silas (**Scriptures 4. Quite a Few Prominent Women**). These prominent women were a significant part of the early Christian church in Thessalonica.

While in Athens, a woman named Damaris became a follower of Paul (**Scriptures 5. Damaris**). So she may have traveled with Paul and his companions, certainly serving and witnessing along the way.

After Paul left Athens, he went to Corinth, where he stayed for quite a while. He met Priscilla and Aquila at Corinth (**Scriptures 6. Priscilla**). Paul spoke of Priscilla in higher regards than her husband Aquila, and always mentioned her name before his. After Paul left to reason with the Jews, there was a learned Jewish man, knowledgeable in scripture, preaching about Jesus. But he only knew about the baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquila taught him the way of God more accurately. Paul spoke about Priscilla and Aquila in Romans 16 saying "my co-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them".

In Romans 16:1-2, Paul commended sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae (**Scriptures 7. Phoebe, a Deacon**). And said she had been the benefactor of many people, including himself.

In Caesarea, Paul stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist. Philip had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. (**Scriptures 8. Four Daughters who Prophesied**).

So women were involved in the early Christian church. They were a very important part. They were benefactors, deacons, prophets, and teachers. Some risked their own lives and some opened their houses for Apostle Paul and his ministry. Paul had a deep gratitude for them. Jesus used women in a mighty way. And he still does, even today.

## jenaministries.com – Part 4      7. Women in the Early Church

### Scriptures 1. Paul Writes About Women

1 Corinthians 11:3-9 But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

1 Timothy 2:9-14 I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

### Scriptures 2. Paul Traveled Town to Town

Acts 16:3-5 Paul wanted to take him (Timothy) along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

### Scriptures 3. Lydia

Acts 16:14-15 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Acts 16:40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

### Scriptures 4. Quite a Few Prominent Women

Acts 17:2-4 As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

### Scriptures 5. Damaris

Acts 17:34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

### Scriptures 6. Priscilla

Acts 18:1-3 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.

Acts 18:18-20 Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined.

Acts 18:24-26 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

Romans 16:3-4 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

2 Timothy 4:19 Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.

### Scriptures 7. Phoebe, a Deacon

Romans 16:1-2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.

### Scriptures 8. Four Daughters who Prophesied

Acts 21:8-9 Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.