

# Gender Bias

(Definitely)

## Positive Precision

If we are imprecise in our observation of where we are in the mix of environments of service, we can be the source of misuse of the doctrine of the Bible. In consideration of our topic of this day, we say that sloppiness may persuade us that we should discard gender bias when we are in the church, in favor of some activist's approach that may be appropriate in the family. Sometimes, we do this as based on, what may be called, equal rights.

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Scripture persuades us to keep precision active in worship. For instance, Scripture draws a distinction in the gender, by establishing a new title of reference. An example of that is seen in the following Scripture's use of the word, prophetess.

*And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.*

*So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.*

(2 Kings 22:11-14)

In that Scripture, the woman is not referred to as being a prophet. Moreover, as is obvious, the prophetess is not a priest. Yes, these distinctions are important: yes, they are very important. A prophet could be called upon to carry out capital punishment, as was done with the prophet Elijah. The action of this prophet of God begins with the gathering together of certain false prophets of Israel.

*And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*

*And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four*

*hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.*

*So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.*

(1 Kings 18:17-20)

Eventually, the people were persuaded that these prophets were in violation of the commandments of God, as given to Moses. For such transgressions, the verdict was death. At this time, the prophet Elijah was the one with the responsibility for completing the event that would accomplish the commandment of the law of Moses.

*And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.*

*Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*

*And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.*

*And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.*

*And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.*

(1 Kings 18:36-40)

Moreover, this was not an incidental, one-time occurrence in Israel. In another portion of Scripture, such behavior is included as part of the charter of the prophet Elisha.

*And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.*

*And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.*

(1 Kings 19:15-17)

Contrarily, the female counterpart to the prophet does not seem to have that level of responsibility. To see the difference, let us look at one of the other specialized groups of the citizens of Israel: the judges. Specifically, there is a judge who was also a prophetess. For that female judge, the assignment that was given seems to be less rigorous, during the time of a certain military conflict.

For an example of that, we review the actions of Deborah, the prophetess and judge of Israel. Deborah was called upon to give instructions for lethal recompense, but she was not pushed to directly participate in it. Her separation from the requirement was evident, even when significant pressure was applied in that direction. In the following situation, even though she was there, Deborah did not participate in the lethal action.

*Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. And they showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.*

*And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee?*

*So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.*

(Judges 4:11-14)

No, Deborah cannot be categorized as being an accessory to the fatal action, even though she was there. Though, initially, Scripture might seem to indicate that she will be involved in it, is her response to the military leader's request.

*And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.*

*And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.*

*And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.*

(Judges 4:8-9)

The woman spoken of in the act of defeating the adversary, Sisera, is not Deborah. This is the incident that reveals the woman that is the central figure in Deborah's rebuke of Barak.

*Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not.*

*And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle.*

*And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.*

*And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.*

*Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.*

*Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.*

(Judges 4:17-21)

On the other hand, the judge Samson was very much active in dispensing recompense to the adversary. First, the LORD set up the background environment that led to some of Samson's intense engagement with the Philistines.

*And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife.*

*Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?*

*And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well. But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.*

(Judges 14:1-4)

As a result of this quiet start, Samson would be moved into a robust act of judgment of the Philistines. And, after the judgment was sealed; then, Samson was sent out as the instrument to execute the sentence that was called for by the judgment. Thereby, the LORD provided the opportunity for Samson to directly carry out judgment against the adversary of Israel. This is a significant difference from the behavior of the judge, Deborah.

*But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber.*

*But her father would not suffer him to go in. And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her.*

*And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.*

*And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the*

*Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.*

(Judges 15:1-5)

We need not perceive that as being a one-time thing, either. The active involvement of this particular male judge was further demonstrated by the following event.

*But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.*

*Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport.*

*And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.*

*And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.*

*Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.*

*And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.*

*And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines.*

*And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.*

(Judges 16:21-30)

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With the judges, we seem to be moving away from some of the gender bias; since, in both cases, we arrive at a function that is without bias in gender. This is a function of the house of God that is open to both genders. In general, it is a bridge between church and state: we saw that Deborah and Samson did that in the Old Testament time.

In a little while, we will see that in the New Age of the New Testament, among the female servants of the Lord, there are liaisons of comparative power. That is why we presented the service area that is composed of teachers. As we proceed, we will add more entries to the list of callings for service to the LORD, by extending the breadth of positive precision in reasoned gender bias, as comes from the LORD God. We want to move closer to this place of rest, in the LORD . . .

*Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.*

*If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.*

*But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?*

*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

*Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

(1 Corinthians 10:24-33)

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So, do not fear to be a judge or a teacher of the church, according to your calling. Moreover, do not be resistant to limiting your self to these stations of service. Please, let your self be willing to enter into this service, solely as the LORD requires of you; and, only as the LORD calls. In that way, the LORD will solidify the witness of your life, in Him. The apostle Paul illustrated the power of this, the LORD'S perpetuation, as he spoke these words to the Hebrews.

*And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

*Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and*

