

# What About Women Prophecy?

George L. Faull, Rel.D.

In this article I wish to propose an idea for my readers' consideration. I believe that Scripture will bear out this idea. One of the meanings of the word "prophecy" as used in Scripture is "to sing an inspired song."

**First: The hermeneutical principle of "the law of first mention."** The way a word is first used in the Scriptures is usually the way a word is used from then on. In this case, the first prophetess is Miriam. God used her by the songs through which she led the women.

**Exodus 15:20-21,** "20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

**Second: The meaning of the word "prophetess."** From Stong's #05031 on my **On-Line Bible Software** the very first meaning of the word **prophetess** is "Ancient type endowed with the gift of song."

**Third: One of the meanings of prophecy** is obviously "to sing inspired songs," I give you examples:

A. **I Samuel 10:5-6, 10-13,** "5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where [is] the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place **with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:** 6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt **prophesy with them,** and shalt be turned into another man. 10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, **a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.** 11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, **he prophesied among the prophets,** then the people said one to another, What [is] this [that] is come unto the son of Kish? [Is] **Saul also among the prophets?** 12 And one of the same place answered and said, But who [is] their father? Therefore it became a proverb, [Is] **Saul also among the prophets?** 13 And when he **had made an end of prophesying,** he came to the high place."

B. **Habakkuk 3:1 and 19,** "1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. 19 The LORD God [is] my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' [feet], and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments."

C. **I Chronicles 25:3,** "Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, **who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD.**"

D. **Psalms 49:4,** "I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will **open my dark saying upon the harp.**"

**Fourth: In the Scriptures, The prophetesses gave inspired songs or prophesied while singing:**

A. Miriam's song is given in Exodus 15.

B. Deborah's song is given in Judges 5:1-3.

C. Elizabeth's song is given in Luke 1.

D. Mary gave her song, The Magnificat in Luke 1.

E. Heman's daughters who prophesied on the harps.

**I Chronicles 25:1-7,** "1 Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, **who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals:** and the number of the workmen according to their service was: 2 Of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph under the hands of Asaph, **which prophesied according to the order of the king.** 3 Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, **who prophesied with a harp,** to give thanks and to praise the LORD. 4 Of Heman: the sons of Heman; Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamtiezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, [and] Mahazioth: 5 All these [were] the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn. **And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. 6 All these [were] under the hands of their father for song [in] the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God,** according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. 7 So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed **in the songs of the LORD, [even] all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight."**

**F. Even Huldah was a prophetess in the temple:**

**II Kings 22:14,** "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."

**G. Anna is called "a prophetess" in the temple.**

**Luke 2:36-37**, "36 And there was one Anna, a **prophetess**, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; 37 And she [was] a widow of about fourscore and four years, which **departed not from the temple**, but served [God] with fastings and prayers night and day."

These two were probably of those women who were instructed in song in the temple, for they both worked there. They may well have been of those groups of women which Solomon appointed at the temple. History records that women did service (in song) at the temple.

**H. Perhaps Philip's daughters were inspired singers.** Agabus, not Philip's daughters, foretold of the fate of Paul, even though they were in Philip's house. I certainly am not saying that I think "**singing**" is always meant whenever the word "**prophesy**" appears in Scripture. **I do believe that the primary work of a prophetess was to compose inspired songs of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord in song.** I believe the above bears this out.

In review:

This position is reasonable and consistent with Scripture.

1. **It harmonizes the alleged contradiction where in one verse, women are said "to prophesy" and in the other told "to not speak (teach)."**

**I Corinthians 11:5**, "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with [her] head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven."

**I Corinthians 14:34**, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but [they are commanded] to be under obedience, as also saith the law."

2. **It harmonizes with the expression "As also saith the law":**

**I Corinthians 14:34**, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but [they are commanded] to be under obedience, **as also saith the law.**"

3. **It harmonizes with the Jewish practice of women being allowed to sing but not teach men.**

4. **It harmonizes with Paul's prohibition in I Timothy 2:12 where women are forbidden to teach men.**

**I Timothy 2:12**, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

5. **It harmonizes with the usage of the word as a verb (prophesy) when done by a woman.**

6. **It harmonizes with the fact that some of the Psalms were specifically written to be sung by the young maidens, as seen in the headings of the Psalms.**

**Conclusion:**

I conclude, this is often the meaning of the word "prophesy" and that when women are said to prophesy, this is likely what they were doing.