

What does it truly mean to be “Pentecostal”?

([Acts 2](#)) 5783 B”H

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Infilling. Indwelling. Whatever you’d like to call it, you need it! We all do.

The infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Often called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the infilling, indwelling presence of the Third Person of the Trinity is the [Promise from the Father](#), a gift that all believers may receive!

[“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Luke 24:49](#)



Pentecostal Christianity

Despite the fact that the largest organized evangelical Christian fellowship in the world ([the Assemblies of God](#)) just so happens to be Pentecostal in belief and practice, most Americans do not know very much about Pentecostal Christianity.

Globally, here are the number of adherents in some of the largest and most well-known classical Pentecostal movements or denominations:

[Assemblies of God: 85 million](#)

[Pentecostal Holiness: 4 million](#)

[Church of God \(Cleveland\): 7 million](#)

[Church of God in Christ: 3 million](#)

These particular denominations are **Trinitarian** with **sound doctrine**. Pentecostal fellowships in general, but particularly the Assemblies of God, have always emphasized global missions.

The fruit of that determined investment are these combined 99 million+ members around the world. This is proof that Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered evangelism is effective!

“Send it on down, LORD, let the Holy Ghost come on down.”
Hosanna Music

The Erroneous Jesus-only doctrine

The [United Pentecostal](#) (UPCI) Oneness denomination is growing, currently with 5 million members, but this group **denies** the Triune nature of God. In most cities, UPCI churches are known as “The Pentecostals of . . .” leading many to believe all Pentecostals share this type of erroneous doctrine. The UPCI teaches what is termed, “apostolic doctrine.” This is a doctrinal problem that new leaders need to be able to confront and correct with love because it is more than just a semantic issue. These churches are often known as “Jesus-only” churches because they do not baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but rather in the Name of Jesus, only.

The UPCI teaches that women must have uncut hair, may not wear makeup, and that men should not wear shorts. I applaud their efforts to emphasize modesty, but I do believe they have gone a bit too far.

Because of outward appearance (particularly of UPCI women), many people in the United States have equated *all Pentecostals* with this type of legalism.

But the reality is, being **Pentecostal is about what the Holy Spirit has done on the *inside***, and yes, our outward appearance should reflect holiness, but in a balanced way, not infringing on personal freedom. I personally **choose** to wear skirts and dresses, but **I am not required to do so** by the organization with which I am affiliated.

What makes a person “Pentecostal?”

We need to reclaim the term “Pentecostal” for all who are [genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit.](#)

Clothing or hairstyle does not make a person “Pentecostal.”

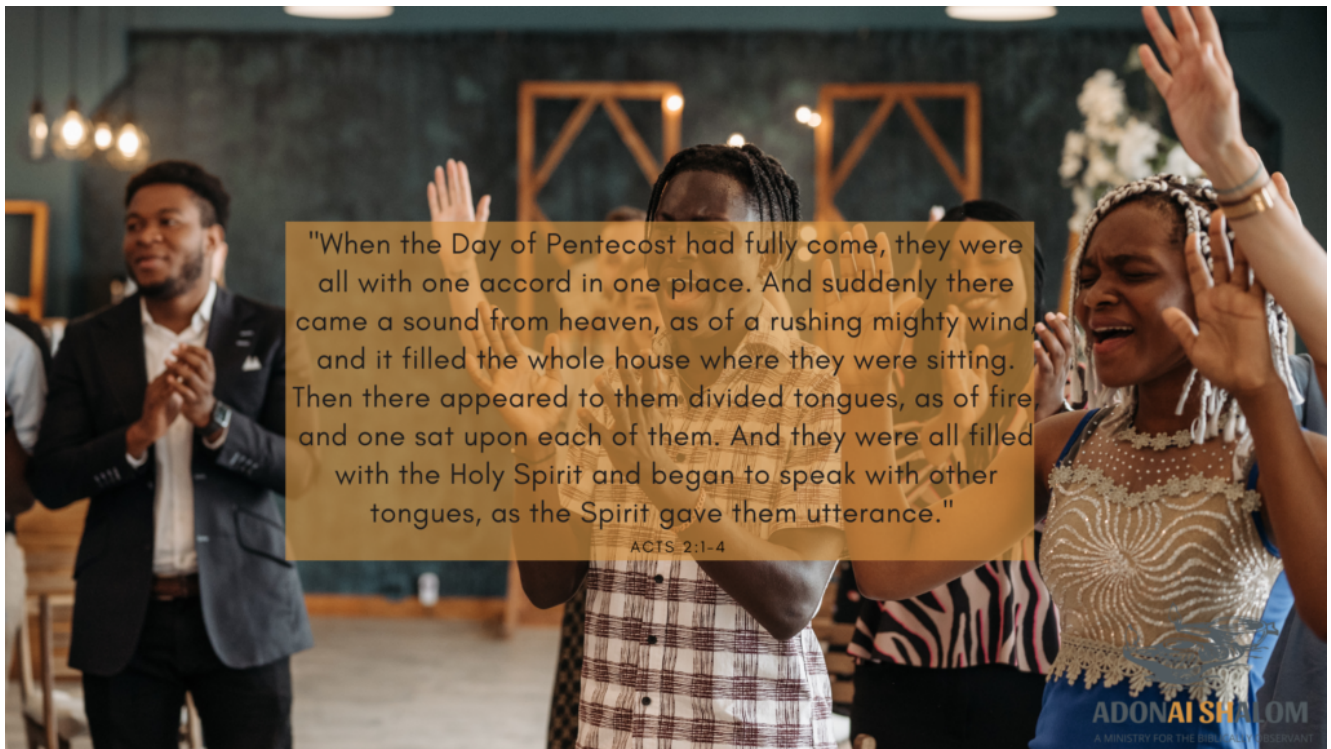
Nor does emotionalism. Sometimes Pentecostals have a reputation for being expressive or “too” emotional. God has given us emotions and there are appropriate moments even in the context of a worship service when emotion can and should be expressed and even encouraged! But emotion for the sake of a show or drawing attention to oneself... that is not what makes a person a “Pentecostal.” A true Pentecostal person has a healthy understanding of how God ministers to our emotions.

The Spirit of the LORD makes a person [“Pentecostal.”](#)

Power from on high makes a person “Pentecostal.”

Being filled with the Holy Spirit (with evidence) (more on that later), makes a person truly “Pentecostal.”

[“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:1-4, NKJV](#)



The Full Gospel

Notice that [Acts 2:1](#) says “When the Day of Pentecost had **fully** come” (*emphasis added*)

The [Day of Pentecost](#) was actually the [Feast of Shavu’ot](#), that had been celebrated for years. It’s just that this time, in Acts, God was going to do something so much greater. If you are interested in learning about the [Feast of Shavu’ot](#) and the [Biblical Spring Feasts](#), click [here](#) for my [post](#) that goes more in-depth on that particular subject.

When I usually read this, I focus on the fact that the Jewish Feast day had come, but let’s look at the important adverb there: fully.

The Feast day had **fully** come. It was the precise day . . . but also: this was a day of fulfillment. The Day prophesied by the Prophet [Joel](#) had **fully come** – the LORD was going to even more **fully** work in the lives of His people.

[“And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;](#)

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
And also on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”

Joel 2:28-30, NKJV

There is a fullness to the Gospel. Never again shall you hunger or thirst for Living Water because that Living Water will come to you and indwell you.

The **Full** Gospel is that which the Pentecostal communities proclaim: that the Gospel didn't end at the Resurrection! There was more yet to come! The LORD would unite His people through the power of the Holy Spirit and dwell **inside** of them.

Prior to the Pentecostal outpouring of Acts 2, the Spirit of the LORD came upon God's servants, but only for a certain moment or occasion, for a certain purpose. After Acts 2, the Spirit of the LORD would dwell within those who are called by His Name. Hallelujah!

Pentecostalism is about receiving all that the LORD has for you

I love how God does things holistically.

We find this to be true throughout the Bible. For example, a Biblical term, “*shalom*,” meaning “peace,” is more than a simple “peace” that we understand in our English language today. The Hebrew “*shalom*” that the Bible talks about is holistic – an all-encompassing wholeness that only the Prince of Shalom could bring.

So God doesn't just deal with one part of us – its not just “accept Jesus in your heart” and that's it. Our heart is vitally important and so is our soul and spirit, but also this

physical body we are living in right now.

The LORD of All wants you to have a relationship with Him that includes aspects that are very experiential. Being baptized in water is a *physical* symbol of your dying to your sin and rising with Him to new life. Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is also physical! Your physical *body* will feel the glorious spiritual effects – you will be filled with a uncontainable joy and your tongue will speak praises to God with amazing fluidity.

Yes, God can use people who have not (yet!) received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But He can use you for so much more greatness if you receive the awesome gift He has for you. He wants so much for you – don't limit your experience with the LORD because of your preconceived notions of what it might mean to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Don't fear! The LORD designed all of this so beautifully. Receive what He offers you!

What is the Biblical Evidence of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

The Biblical Evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is often called the ["Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit."](#)

["And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."](#)
[Acts 2:4, NKJV, emphasis added](#)



The people were ALL filled with the Holy Spirit (all of them – there were no exceptions or exemptions. No one was left out. The LORD blessed those who had gathered in the Upper Room to wait for the Promise of the Father by pouring out His Spirit upon every.single.one.

The Biblical pattern is this: when people are filled with the Holy Spirit **then** they begin to speak with other tongues as given by the Holy Spirit.

Speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

But some churches don't "believe" in speaking in tongues.

Some even preach against the practice, saying that this occurred only on that particular Pentecost Day.

But read your Bible carefully!

No where does the Word of God suggest that people stopped receiving the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit, so certainly He continues to fill His people!

Most people who claim not to believe in the Holy Spirit baptism are people who have actually prayed and asked God for it, but did not (yet!) receive it. They conclude that because they have not received it, then it must not exist. A very poor conclusion indeed.

Some people are quite nervous or frightened about the whole idea of speaking in tongues. I know I wasn't raised around that and I didn't quite understand what it was all about until I received the blessed outpouring. The Bible tells us to not be afraid! Seek Him with your whole heart and He will fill you!

Speaking in tongues will give you a holy boldness to share the Good News with others and will help your prayer life tremendously! If you want to be able to pray effectively and with power, you need the baptism of the Holy Ghost!

“Pentecostal” or “Spirit-filled?”

Being “Pentecostal” is fairly synonymous with being “Spirit-filled.”

It has become more widely accepted and more popular to be “Spirit-filled,” perhaps because this term carries less baggage as I explained with the Trinitarian vs. Oneness doctrinal controversies.

“Spirit-filled” carries its own set of issues at times because some of the new age movements (I may be harsh, but I call it “charismatic witchcraft”) are also comfortable calling themselves Spirit-filled and this causes confusion and division *within* the Pentecostal movement.

Both terms are appropriate. It is just important to know to what exactly you are referring!

Pentecostal and Spirit-filled worship services are vibrant and full of life! If you've never visited a Pentecostal church, I

encourage you to find one to visit in your area! Expect to see people raising their hands in praise and worship and plenty of music and prayer!

Pentecost Sunday (*The Feast of Weeks/The Feast of Shavu'ot*)

This Sunday, followers of our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) from around the world will celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday (*Shavu'ot*). I encourage you to go beyond a once-a-year celebration.

Know this: the Holy Spirit can endue you with Pentecostal power, a gift you may enjoy every single day of the year. If you don't receive the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit right away, do not get discouraged. It will happen in God's perfect timing.

Pray today that the Holy Spirit will baptize you in His Holy Fire!

Are you seeking the Holy Spirit baptism? I'd love to pray for you. Leave a comment below!

Biblical Mothers of the Faith: Phoebe, Priscilla, and Junia

Today, let's analyze [Romans 16](#). This is a chapter in the Bible that highlights women serving in ministry. These women are mothers of the faith. This Mother's Day weekend, let us

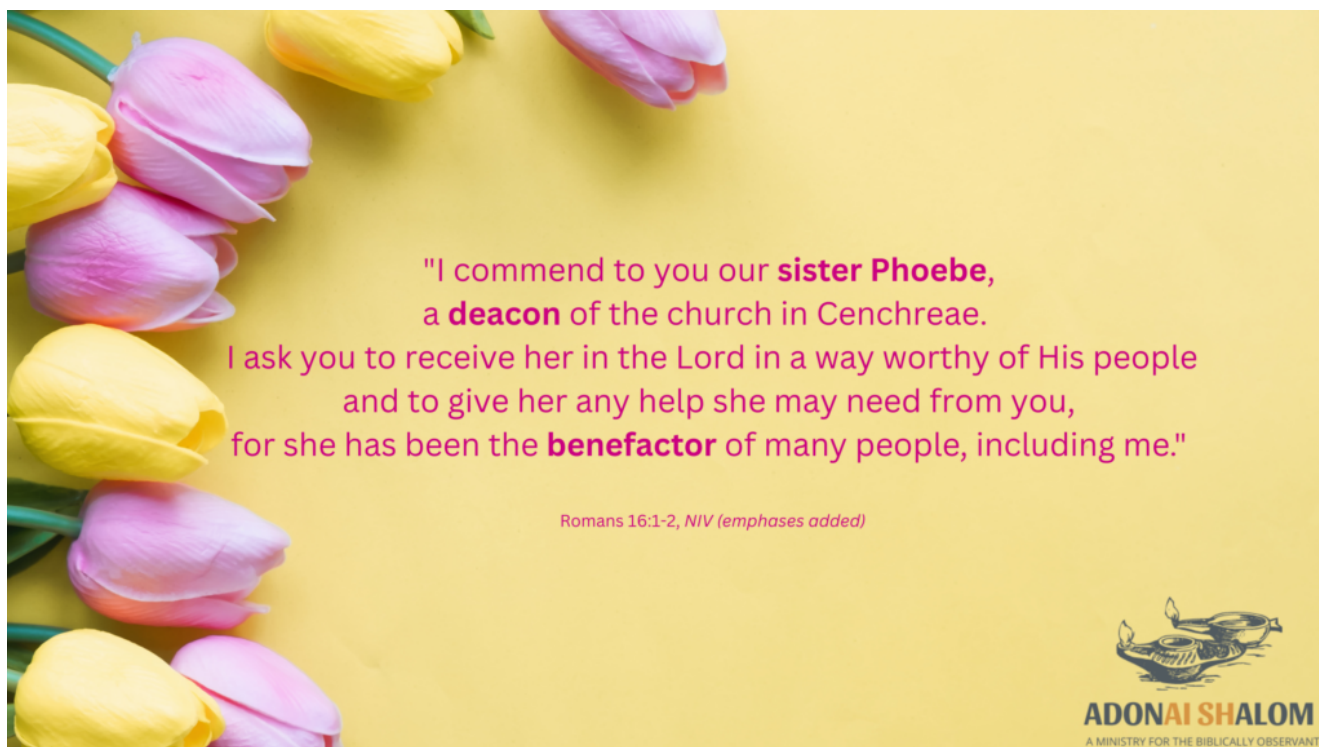
rejoice and praise the LORD for all the believing mothers who pray and teach and lead with a godly example.

- [Phoebe: A “servant” or a “deacon”?](#)
- [Priscilla: A “Co-worker” of the Apostle Paul](#)
- [Junia: Female Apostle](#)
- [Mothers of the Faith](#)

The Apostle Paul’s [Letter to the Romans](#) is filled with instruction and exhortation. Paul does not hesitate to credit those around him (including wives and mothers!) who have worked hard alongside him for the sake of the Gospel. In [Romans 16](#), Paul names names – and most of the people named in this chapter just so happen to be **women**.

Phoebe: A “servant” or a “deacon”?

The New International Version (NIV) rightly describes Sister Phoebe as a “deacon”:



Phoebe: Deaconess

[“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.” Romans 16:1-2, NIV, (emphases added)

She is described as a person of means – a “benefactor,” well able to minister to God’s people. She gave to others both materially and spiritually. Phoebe was a spiritual mother in the faith!

But sadly, the New King James Version **demotes** our dear sister. She is relegated to the status of a “servant” and “helper.”

I typically prefer the NKJV translation over the New International Version (NIV) because the NKJV is a literal translation truer to the original languages, but as with any human translation, **bias** can be found, and this really is a stark example:

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.” Romans 16:1-2, NKJV

Let me address my sisters in the LORD for a moment: has this ever happened to you?

Did God ever inspire you to lead or to teach – to be a spiritual mother – but someone brushed you off as “just a servant?” Oh mothers, please know you are valued in the Kingdom and there is a place for you.

Our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) wants us to have the heart of a servant, but it is one thing to submit and surrender ourselves joyfully to Him and a totally different thing to have your spirit crushed by those who think women aren’t intended to minister. It is so very important to look to the Bible to see **what God says** about women in ministry leadership positions.

Sister Phoebe was a leader in the church!

While “servant” and “deacon” can be used interchangeably, it is notable that had the name listed been male, it is most likely “*deacon*” would be the preferred translation. The modern American mindset limits the meaning because it has become commonplace to teach that women are prohibited by the Bible to serve in an official capacity such as a “deacon.” This teaching is biased and errant and must be corrected. There are many instances in Scripture in which we see women held what we would consider positions of authority – **Prophetess Miriam, Judge Deborah, Deaconess Phoebe** . . . The LORD has chosen to use many women throughout history to reach the nations and to serve as spiritual mothers!

Priscilla: A “CoWorker” of the Apostle Paul

Notice that when Paul extends greetings to Priscilla and her husband, Aquila, he names Priscilla first. This was quite uncommon in both the Jewish and the Roman cultures, as it is even in our own today. Generally, we name the husband first. This serves to highlight Priscilla’s strong role as a “fellow worker” alongside Paul in the mission to reach the nations with the Good News. To make it easier for us to understand in our modern context, the NIV aptly uses the term “coworker” to describe this ministry relationship. Both Priscilla and Aquila were recognized as critical parts of the ongoing ministry, but in most instances of Scripture, Priscilla is named before Aquila. She was very much a leader:

[“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.” Romans 16:3, NKJV](#)

In [2 Timothy](#), the ministry couple is again addressed, and

again Priscilla is named first:

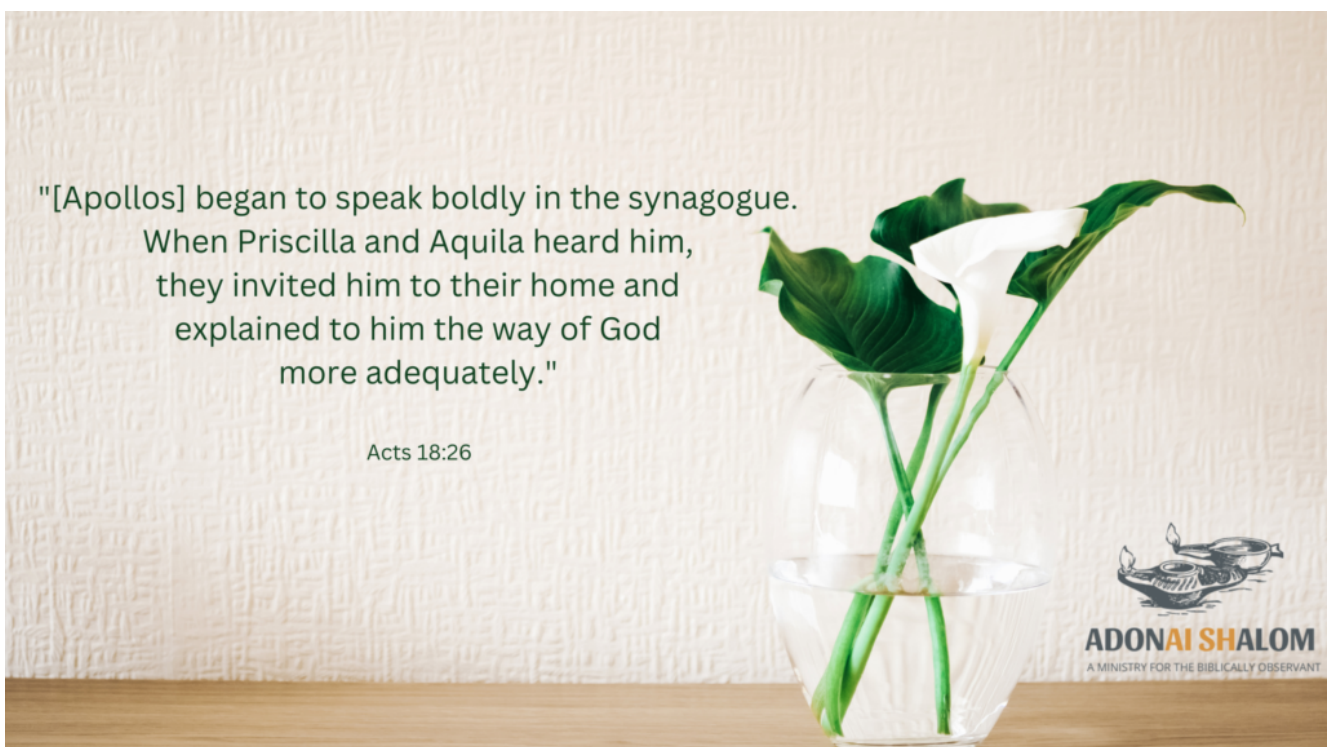
[“Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.”](#)
[2 Timothy 4:19, NIV](#)

Both Priscilla and Aquila sailed as missionaries with Paul.

[“Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.”](#) Acts 18:18ab, NIV

In Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila helped mentor Apollos as he began preaching. Here, they are both most certainly operating in the role of **pastors** and spiritual parents:

[“\[Apollos\] 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.”](#) Acts 18:26, NIV



The church even met at their house:

[“Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.”](#) 1 Corinthians 16:19b, NIV

Priscilla and Aquila were a model pastoral couple. They worked as a team and Paul recognized **both** of them as ministry leaders. A spiritual mother and father working together to bless the people of Ephesus.

Truly, Priscilla and Aquila's ministry is an ideal pattern for us to follow. Here was a married couple who loved the LORD and could minister together. I am blessed to be married to a man of God who also happens to be a pastor, and this model has worked so wonderfully for us.

Junia: *Female* Apostle

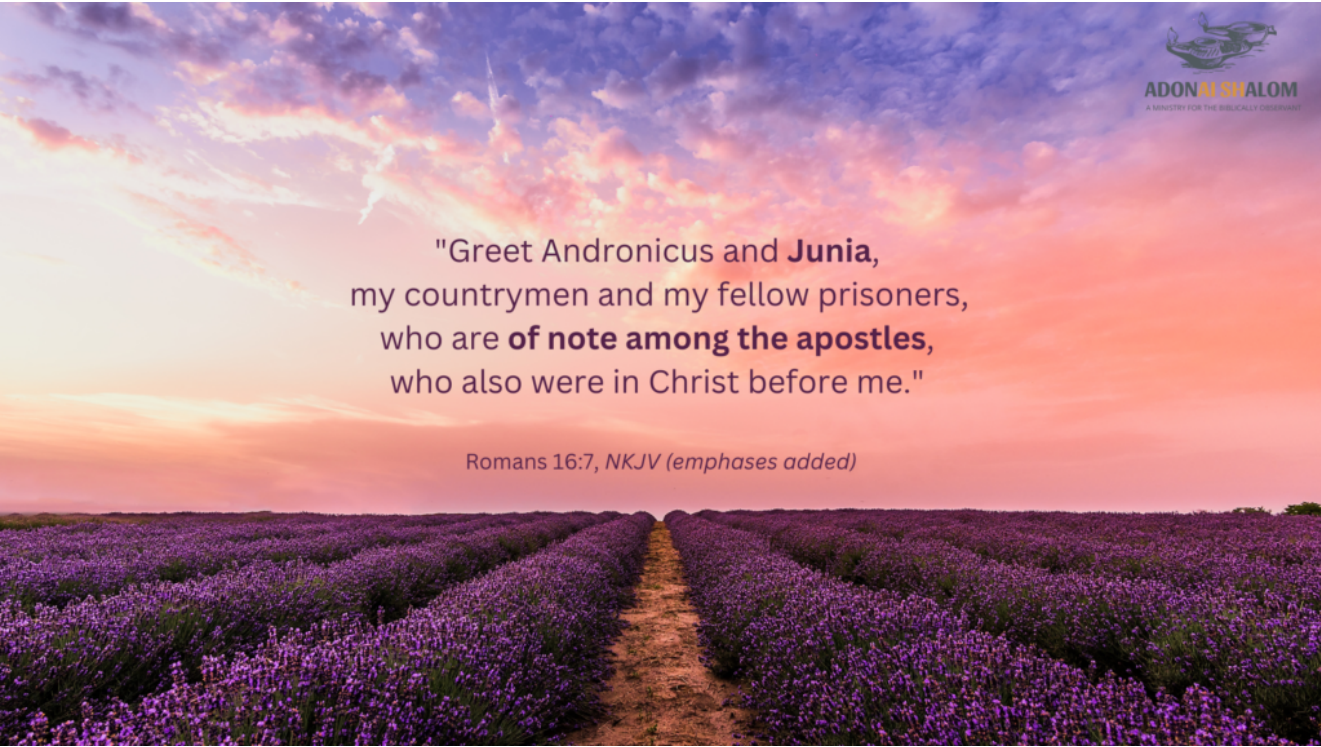
Junia is a *female* name.

Some translations have opted to translate this name as "Junias" to *masculinize* it!

This is due to some translators' personal discomfort with the idea that a woman could be an apostle!

But the Scriptures are clear and for generations "Junia" was translated as "Junia." It ***is*** a female name!

Paul is very consistent in his positive descriptions of women in ministry. Not only does Paul refer to Junia as an apostle, he calls her a person "of note" – noteworthy, outstanding! There is no place in Scripture that prohibits wives or mothers or single women from serving in the ministry.



"Greet Andronicus and **Junia**,
my countrymen and my fellow prisoners,
who are **of note among the apostles**,
who also were in Christ before me."

Romans 16:7, NKJV (*emphases added*)

"Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." Romans 16:7, NKJV (*emphasis added*)

Mothers of the Faith

If anyone has told you that women are not to serve as deacons, pastors, or apostles, you might want to share these passages from Scripture with them.

Women, just as men, must demonstrate godly qualities in order to serve as leaders in ministry, but in our day, it seems there are often extra hoops for women to jump through in order to be considered equally qualified. Believe me, I am no feminist, but I do know that I have had to truly stand up for myself on many occasions as a female pastor. If you are a young woman who has been called to the Gospel ministry, reach out! I'd love to hear from you and encourage you.

Our LORD is the One who saves, who calls, and who equips. We should rejoice that God uses **both** godly men and women to minister!

Phoebe, Priscilla, and Junia are our spiritual foremothers who demonstrated persistence, passion, boldness, and commitment to the work of the ministry for the sake of the Gospel.

So this Mother's Day, think of who the spiritual mothers are in your life.

Are there any women who have journeyed alongside you on the path of faith?

Who are the women who have prayed you through tough circumstances?

Be thankful for their witness and show them your appreciation!

If you are a woman who is mature in her faith, be that spiritual mother for someone else. If you are a mother, you know what it is to care for your children and pray for their well-being and exhort them to live well for the LORD!

Look for ways to allow the Holy Spirit to work through you so that you may bless others.

Be one of those mothers who prays consistently and fervently.

And have a wonderful Mother's Day!