

Joy A. Schroeder & Marion Ann Taylor. *Voices Long Silenced: Women Biblical Interpreters through the Centuries*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2022. 378 pages. \$25.99.

It is astonishing that Joy Schroeder and Marion Ann Taylor have analyzed more than seven hundred books and articles written by and about female biblical interpreters and have presented more than three hundred of these interpreters in a chronological order from 100 CE to the present over the seven chapters of their book. Chapter 1 focuses on women's biblical interpretation during late antiquity. Twenty-seven Christian and Jewish women, both named and unnamed, are introduced, along with their life stories, writings, and artworks. These women were martyrs, queens, copyists, skilled painters, and leaders of Christian churches and Jewish synagogues. Among many insights, this chapter offers the consideration of personal diaries—such as the prison diary of martyr Perpetua (ca. 203), and the Holy Land travel diary of Spanish pilgrim Egeria (ca. 381-84)—as a literary form for biblical interpretation, suggesting that reflection on daily life in light of biblical texts is a practical way of interpreting the biblical text for contextual preaching.

Chapter 2 presents forty-six medieval women who studied and interpreted the Bible in various literary and artistic ways. Female theologians, who were mostly nuns, abbesses, and anchoresses, offered women's perspectives on biblical passages in a misogynistic ecclesial culture that suppressed women's voices. This chapter also includes Byzantine Christian women who wrote hymns and poetry, women leaders in the Coptic Church of Egypt, and female Jewish scribes and scholars.

Chapter 3 offers the stories and works of twenty-three female biblical scholars and preachers—both Christian and Jewish—during the Reformation era. Many of these women used the printing press to publish and circulate their theological and biblical debates on the rights of women to study and preach the Bible.

Chapter 4 presents globally, forty-eight female biblical interpreters during the early modern period of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, who not only interpreted Scripture from a female perspective but also advocated for women's education, literacy, and the study of Scripture. The chapter also informs us of Walatta Petros (1592-1642) and other female biblical interpreters who gave voices against colonialism, racism, sexism, and enslavement.

Chapter 5 selects seventy-two women from hundreds of female biblical interpreters and preachers of the nineteenth century and presents their diversified voices based on their different racial and cultural experiences. For example, Black and white female abolitionists and suffragists' different views on race and gender resulted in conflicts and divisions among them in interpreting biblical texts.

Chapter 6 discovers forty-two women who participated in biblical interpretation across denominations, geographic regions, and religious backgrounds, from 1918 to 1970. It emphasizes that some women pursued graduate-level education and pioneered teaching at colleges and seminaries and published their writings in professional journals.

The last chapter focuses on contemporary women's biblical interpretations from the 1970s to 2020 by presenting fifty-six female biblical interpreters. The chapter identifies the distinctiveness of this historical period as its diversity and points out that the diversity of contemporary female biblical interpreters' voices depends on their audiences, ranging from a radical revisionist type of feminism to quiet protest, and even those who might not want to be called feminists.

The uniqueness of the book is that the chapters lead us to understand the breadth and depth of women's ways of biblical interpretation globally, without essentializing their experiences and ways of thinking. Moreover, this book contributes to the critical evaluation of the history of women's biblical interpretation by revealing the shortfalls in female biblical interpretation in given historical and cultural contexts, such as anti-Judaism, racism, colonialism, classism, white supremacy, and even adoption of patriarchal worldviews and the oppressive masculine notions of values of ideal womanhood. This candid self-criticism of female biblical interpreters and preachers helps us recognize and identify our own limitations and encourages us to critically evaluate the ethical value of women's biblical interpretations.

Nowadays, many female scholars publish books and teach the Bible from a variety of female perspectives. Yet, most of their books tend to be recommended or suggested resources for a course, rather than primary texts. In this situation, it is significant to reconsider the learning goals and outcomes of a course by raising questions such as: What is different about teaching the history of biblical interpretations from female perspectives? Why is it necessary to decenter the disciplines of biblical interpretation and preaching where male voices have taken center stage for two millennia? How can our teaching and research help students and readers decenter their approaches to biblical interpretation and preaching? This book challenges us to consider these questions as teachers, scholars, and preachers.

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