

~PHOEBE (59)

(Phoe'be) [Pure, Bright, Radiant]

- A Christian sister of the **First-Century** congregation in Cenchreae. Paul, in his letter to the Christians at Rome, recommends this sister to them and calls on them to render her any needed assistance as one who proved to be a defender of many, yes, of me myself.
- I recommend to you **Phoebe** our sister, who is a minister of the congregation that is in Cenchreae. (**Romans 16:1**)
- That you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the holy ones, and that you may assist her in any matter where she may need you, for she herself also proved to be a defender of many, yes, of me myself. (**Romans 16:2**)
- It may be that **Phoebe** delivered Paul's letter in Rome or else accompanied the one who did.
- Paul refers to **Phoebe** as a minister of the congregation that is in Cenchreae. This raises the question as to the sense in which the term *dí-a'ko-nos*, **minister**, is here used.
- Some translators view the term in an official sense and hence render it, **deaconess**, **RS**, **JB**. But the Scriptures make no provision for female ministerial servants. Goodspeed's translation views the term in a general sense, and translates it **helper**.
- However, Paul's reference is evidently to something having to do with the spreading of the Good News, the Christian ministry, and he was speaking of Phoebe as a female minister who was associated with the congregation in Cenchreae.
- And in the last days, God says, I shall pour out some of my spirit upon every sort of flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy and your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams. (**Acts of Apostles 2:17**)
- And even upon my men slaves and upon my women slaves I will pour out some of my spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. (**Acts of Apostles 2:18**)

- **Phoebe** served as a **defender of many**. The term translated **defender**, *pro-sta'tis* has the basic sense of **protectress** or **succorer**, so that it implies not mere cordiality but a **coming to the aid of others who are in need**. It may also be rendered, **patroness**.
- **Phoebes freedom to travel and to render notable service in the congregation may indicate that she was a widow and possibly a woman of some material wealth.**
- **So, she may have been in position to use influence in the community in behalf of Christians who were being wrongly accused, defending them in this way, or she may have provided refuge for them in time of danger, serving as a protectress. The record gives no details.**