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Man & woman: One In Christ  
Zondervan

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## BACKGROUNDS TO PAUL'S TEACHING REGARDING MAN AND WOMAN

Before analyzing Paul's teachings on women, it is fitting first to examine influences on his view of women, his women colleagues, and his theological axioms, since it is reasonable to expect a correlation among these. This chapter begins with Paul's Hellenistic and Jewish cultural context, including his teacher, Gamaliel. It then examines the most profound influences on Paul's view of women: the Holy Scriptures and Jesus.

### HELLENISTIC CULTURE

The apostle Paul was born in Tarsus of Cilicia. His travels and the bulk of his ministry were in the Gentile, Greek-speaking world, so it is inevitable that he had extensive contact with Hellenistic thought and practice. The treatment of Hellenistic women varied dramatically from region to region; from Sparta and Rome, where women had political responsibilities, to Athens, where wives of the wealthy were essentially imprisoned.<sup>1</sup> Women tended to have more freedom in the western portions of the Hellenistic world<sup>2</sup> and in Egypt. The first-century BC Greek historian Diodorus Siculus 1.27.2 wrote that in Egypt "it was ordained that the queen should have greater power and honour than the king and that among private persons

1. Johannes Leipoldt, *Die Frau in der antiken Welt und im Urchristentum* (3rd ed.; Leipzig: Koehler und Amelang, 1965); Markus Barth, *Ephesians* (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 2:655-61; A. Oepke, "γυνή," TDNT 1:777-84; and the articles on woman and marriage in RGG, RAC, PW, and IDB summarize the spectrum.  
2. Cf. Oepke, "γυνή," 1:777.

the wife should enjoy authority over her husband, the husbands agreeing in the marriage contract that they will be obedient in all things to their wives.<sup>3</sup> In Paul's day Musonius Rufus (*frag.* 13A and 14.94.2–19) praised marital love and the deep union between husband and wife.<sup>4</sup>

Hellenism, however, had a broad misogynist streak, as has been demonstrated in many studies.<sup>5</sup> Euripides' (ca. 479–406 BC) *Hippolytus* calls women "this bane to cheat mankind" (616–17), "a great bane" (627), and "this creature of ruin," and he wishes that men could just buy sons for gold at the temple (620–23);<sup>6</sup> "I shall never take my fill of hating women" (664–65).<sup>7</sup>

Even Plato (ca. 437–347 BC), who occasionally affirms the virtue of particular women (a woman could be a guardian, though not a philosopher-king in his republic), calls men superior to women (*Tim.* 42a). He writes, "Do you know, then, of anything practiced by mankind in which the masculine sex does not surpass the female on all these points? . . . [The] one sex is far surpassed by the other in everything, one may say . . . the woman is weaker than the man"<sup>8</sup> (*Resp.* 5.455c–e). He warns that "whoso has failed therein [in life] shall be changed into woman's nature at the second birth"<sup>9</sup> (*Tim.* 42b).

Aristotle (384–322 BC), too, says, "the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject"<sup>10</sup> (*Pol.* 1254b.13–15), "for the male is by nature better fitted to command than the female"<sup>11</sup> (*Pol.* 1259b.2–3, b.10), since man is rational and woman irra-

tional (*Pol.* 1260a.5–9). Consequently, "for the two parties to be on an equal footing or in the contrary positions is harmful in all cases"<sup>12</sup> (*Pol.* 1254b.9–10). Even their virtues are qualitatively different. Man has "the courage of command, and the other [woman] that of subordination"<sup>13</sup> (*Pol.* 1260a.23–24). He describes "the female is as it were a deformed male"<sup>14</sup> (*Gen. an.* 737a and 775a).

Menander (ca. 343–291 BC) calls woman "nature's greatest misfit" (*Fr.* 488) and writes, "where woman is, there is all evil" (*Fr.* 804) and "to instruct a woman is simply to increase the poison of a dangerous serpent"<sup>15</sup> (*Fr.* 702). Democritus (a.k.a. Democritus) states, "To be ruled by a woman is the worst insult for a man" (*Saying* 111).<sup>16</sup> In Hellenistic Judaism, 2 *En* 30.18 (written between 30 BC and AD 70) describes God's purpose in creating a wife for Adam, "that death should come to him by his wife." After the second century AD, Pseudo-Lucian states, "Let women be ciphers and be retained merely for child-bearing; but in all else away with them,"<sup>17</sup> "perfect virtue grows least of all among women,"<sup>18</sup> and "all the gods, methinks, hate what he [Prometheus] did in fashioning females, a cursed brood."<sup>19</sup>

In first-century Hellenism, women were generally treated as their husband's property. In order not to dishonor their husbands, faithful observance of social conventions was expected, particularly in avoiding the appearance of an adulteress or prostitute. Plutarch (ca. AD 46–120), in *Advice to the Bride and Groom*, describes harmonious marital life: "The wife ought to have no feeling of her own, but she should join with her husband in seriousness and sportiveness and in soberness and laughter" (14, *Mor.* 140a). "A wife ought not to make friends of her own, but to enjoy her husband's friends in common with him" (19, *Mor.* 140d). "And control ought to be exercised by the man over the woman, not as the owner has control of a piece of property, but, as the soul controls the body, by entering into her feelings and being knit to her through goodwill" (31, *Mor.*

12. *Ibid.*, 20–21.13. *Ibid.*, 62–63.14. Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 175 (A. L. Peck, LCL).

15. Oepke, "γυνή," 1:777.

16. C. C. W. Taylor, *The Atomists, Leucippus and Democritus: Fragments: A Text and Translation with a Commentary* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1999), 238; cf. pp. 44–45, Fr. 137 (IV.2.199), "A woman is much more impetuous in foolish speech than a man"; Fr. 138, "Having little to say is an ornament for a woman."17. Lucian, [*Am.*] 38.8:210–11 (M. D. Macleod, LCL). Cf. TLG 248.18. *Ibid.*, 51.8:228–29.19. *Ibid.*, 43.8:216–17, quoting Menander; cf. similarly, [*Am.*] 9.3. *Diodorus of Sicily* 1:84–87 (C. H. Oldfather, LCL). Cf. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.35, 60; Barbara S. Lesko, *The Remarkable Women of Ancient Egypt* (Berkeley: B. C. Scribe Publications, 1978), 30–31.4. Musonius Rufus, *frag.* 3, 42.33, 23, also encouraged women to study Stoic philosophy, which emphasized self-control. Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (LEC 6; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 46, however, writes, "there is no record of any women among his own pupils." Cf. R. B. Ward, "Musonius and Paul on Marriage," *NTS* 36 (1990): 281–89; Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992), 97.5. E.g., Evelyn and Frank Stagg, *Woman in the World of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 56–78; John T. Bristol, *What Paul Really Said about Women* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 1–30; Alvin J. Schmidt, *Veiled and Silenced: How Culture Shaped Sexist Theology* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1989), 1–129.6. Its continuing influence is evident in its quotation after the second century AD by Pseudo-Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart* 38.7. Euripides, *Children of Heracles*, *Hippolytus*, *Andromache*, *Hecuba* 184–89 (D. Kovacs, LCL).8. Plato, *Resp.* 1:447 (P. Shorey, LCL).9. Plato, *Tim.* 7.90–93 (R. G. Bury, LCL).10. Aristotle, *Pol.* 20–21 (H. Rackham, LCL).11. *Ibid.*, 58–59.

142d).<sup>20</sup> Plutarch said that married people "should pour all their resources into a common fund.... [The] property and the estate ought to be said to belong to the husband even though the wife contribute the larger share"<sup>21</sup> (20, *Mor.* 140–41). This attitude continued after Paul's time, as seen in Aelius Aristides's affirmations about husband and wife:

... not waiting to listen to his wife, he will tell his wife what must be done; nor does he attend to her words... he will make his wife conform as closely as possible to his own nature, as a better person would treat an inferior one.... God is superior and more perfect than man, and the ruler than the private citizen, and the master than the slave and the husband than the wife... or everything would be topsy-turvy.<sup>22</sup>

Yet in Paul's day, new roles were appearing for women. Various philosophical, political, financial, religious, poetic, and romantic forces promoted equal rights or greater equality for women.<sup>23</sup> The Isis cult taught, "Thou [Isis] gavest to women the same power as to men."<sup>24</sup> Women of status could study, organize meetings, and participate in religious ceremonies and demonstrations. By staying at least three days in her parents' home each year, a Roman woman avoided becoming the property of her husband.<sup>25</sup> First-century AD Roman law permitted women to hold political and religious offices, own and dispose of property, make a will, give testimony, terminate a marriage, and other things, such as sue for child support and custody.<sup>26</sup>

Many of the pagan roles for women, however, were repugnant to Christian morality, not just because they were sexually immoral, but because they did not treat women as full persons. This left Paul with a thorny problem: How could women demonstrate Christian liberty and equality in

Christ without bringing offense to the gospel?<sup>27</sup> He does this by honoring women as fully human even though this clashed with cultural conventions, and he affirms prophecy by women if done with modest deportment (1 Cor 11:4–5).

Most women lacked formal education, resulting in their widespread disdain.<sup>28</sup> This disdain was furthered by the prominence of homosexual relations between men and teenagers in educational circles, particularly in the gymnasias and the symposia. Many of the pillars of Greek literature, including Plato, Aristotle, Euripides, Aeschylus, and Hesiod, were critical of the abilities of women and wrote highly of homosexual relationships. The pederasts described in Plutarch, Achilles Tatius, and Lucian viewed women as "vicious, lazy, and vain."<sup>29</sup> Achilles Tatius (2.38) describes the character of a youthful male as noble, unaffected, and soul-satisfying, but all a woman "says and all her actions too are figments for the occasion."<sup>30</sup>

#### GAMALIEL AND CONTRASTING JEWISH CULTURE

Acts 22:3 reports that Paul (Saul) had the highest possible credentials in Pharisaic rabbinic education: "brought up in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel, I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today." Paul's teacher was none other than the famous Rabban Gamaliel I (the Elder) who, like his grandfather (or possibly father) Hillel, was held in high esteem, so high that *m. Soitah* 9:15 states, "When Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died, the glory of the Law ceased and purity and abstinence died." He is the Gamaliel described in Acts 5:34 as "a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people." His learning and character earned him the title "Rabban," given to only seven Jewish doctors.

27. E. A. Judge (*Rank and Status in the World of the Caesars and St. Paul* [University of Canterbury Publications 29; Christchurch, New Zealand: University of Canterbury, 1982], 9) argued that Paul accepted recognized social ranking but repudiated conventions of status used for exploitation; cf. his "Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul: Some Clues from Contemporary Documents," *TynBul* 35 (1984): 12. Based on this, Timothy J. Harris, "Why Did Paul Mention Eve's Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett's Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2," *EvQ* 62 (1990): 337, argues that Paul would accept today's equal professional and social ranking for women and men.
28. Bennett Simon, *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece: The Classical Roots of Modern Psychiatry* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978), 250.
29. Richard C. Kroeger and Catherine C. Kroeger, "St. Paul's Treatment of Misogyny, Gynophobia, and Sex Segregation in First Corinthians 11:2–16," in *SBLSP* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979), 215.
30. Achilles Tatius, 130–31 (S. Gaselee, LCL).

20. Plutarch, *Mor.* 2:308–9, 310–11, 320–23 (F. C. Babbitt, LCL). Cf. below, pp. 217–18.
21. Plutarch, *Mor.* 2:312–13 (Babbitt, LCL).
22. In *Défense of Oratory* 129 (41D), written between AD 145 and 147; Plutarch, *Arist.* 354–57 (C. A. Behr, LCL).
23. Barth, *Ephesians*, 2:656; Linda L. Belleville, "Ιουλιανή ... ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστολῶσι; A Re-examination of Romans 16:7 in Light of Primary Source Materials," *NTS* 51 (2005): 248–49.
24. *P.Oxy.* 1380, 214–215 in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (ed. Bernard P. Grenfell, et al.; London: Egypt Exploration Fund/Græco-Roman Branch, 1915), 11:200; cited in Barth, *Ephesians*, 2:656–57.
25. Cf. above, pp. 315, 392–93.
26. Linda L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 71–96; Belleville, "Ιουλιανή," 248–49.

Gamaliel emphasizes the sovereignty of God in his address to the Sanhedrin recorded in Acts 5:35–39. When the Sanhedrin wanted to put the apostles to death, Gamaliel warns them, “For if their purpose or activity is . . . from God, you will not be able to stop these people” (5:38–39). Paul like his teacher Gamaliel, lays strong emphasis on God’s sovereignty (e.g., Rom 8–9). Gamaliel’s references to “the kingdom of heaven” (e.g., *m. Ber.* 2.5) are reflected in Paul’s fourteen references to the kingdom of God and of Christ.<sup>31</sup> Gamaliel claims that he “saw directly by the holy spirit” (*i. Soṭah* 9.15).<sup>32</sup> The Holy Spirit is also a key theme in Paul’s letters, with “spirit” (*πνεῦμα*) occurring 143 times, including its occurrence in each of the Pastoral Epistles. Both Gamaliel and Paul exemplify care for particular slaves. “Like Tabi before him, Onesimus could hope for a better deal than most in his station.”<sup>33</sup>

The surviving sayings of Rabban Gamaliel I indicate a favorable attitude toward women in sharp contrast to the rabbinic tradition as a whole. All but two (*m. ‘Abot* 1:16; *m. ‘Or.* 2:12, neither mentioning women) of the six sayings of Rabban Gamaliel I in Danby’s index of the Mishnah<sup>34</sup> explicitly treat women and men equally (*m. Roš Haš.* 2:5, freedom to walk; *m. Yebam.* 16:7, to testify in court; *m. Giṭ* 4:2, in recording divorce) or promote the welfare of women (*m. Roš Haš.* 2:5; *m. Yebam.* 16:7; *m. Giṭ* 4:3), and none are derogatory to women. Gamaliel is considerate of the practical needs of women, as in freeing midwives to go anywhere to help a delivery (*m. Roš Haš.* 2:5) and allowing “a woman to marry again on the evidence of one witness [that her husband had died, including evidence] . . . from a slave or from a woman or from a bondswoman” (*m. Yebam.* 16:7). Paul also grants women freedom to remarry in Rom 7:1–3 and 1 Cor 7:15: “If the unbeliever divorces, let him divorce. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances.”

Gamaliel ordains that a widow may make a vow to collect payment for her *Ketubah* (*m. Giṭ* 4:3). Similarly, Paul defends women’s marital rights

(1 Cor 7:3–40). Y. Ber. 9.1 (136b), which says that a man should bless God every day that he was not created a woman, also says: “R. Gamaliel once pronounced the formula of blessing on seeing a very pretty pagan woman. Is it possible? cried the doctors. [Have not six rabbis, each named, said] . . . that one must not attribute the gift of beauty to pagans?”<sup>35</sup>

Gamaliel’s affirmations of woman pave the way for *Midr. Rab. Exod.* 14, 15: “Before God all are equal: women and slaves, poor and rich”; and *Tanna Eliabim R.* 9: “Whether Israelite or Gentile, man or woman, male or female slave — according to their works the Holy Spirit dwells also upon him.”<sup>36</sup> Paul develops Gamaliel’s positive assessment of women, slaves, and Gentiles (e.g., Gal 3:28). Paul, too, takes women seriously; so seriously that he testifies, “I persecuted this Way to death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons” (Acts 22:5; cf. 8:3; 9:2). In rejecting the petty limits of legalistic Pharisaism and championing freedom and equality, Paul extends the trajectory of his teacher, particularly as regards women.

Gamaliel’s affirmations of women and his unusually free spirit, combined with the affinities of Paul to his great teacher, should caution against assuming that Paul shared the lowly view of women that characterized much of Pharisaic Judaism. Many commentators dismiss Paul’s view of women as “the point of view of first-century Judaism, which he did not leave behind when he became a Christian.”<sup>37</sup> P. K. Jewett argues that Paul’s Jewish perspective was incompatible with his Christian insight into the equality of man and woman and that “Paul himself sensed that his view of the man/woman relationship, inherited from Judaism, was not altogether congruous with the gospel he preached.”<sup>38</sup> On the next page Jewett notes, “one can only suppose that the apostle’s remarks in 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 reflect the rabbinic tradition which imposed silence on the woman in the synagogue as a sign of her subjection.” But surely, if Paul himself taught male-female equality in Christ, one should examine carefully what Paul does say about man and woman before jumping to

31. Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9, 10; 15:24, 50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1, 18.

32. Cf. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1948), 331.

33. Bruce D. Chilton and Jacob Neusner, “Paul and Gamaliel,” *BBR* 14.1 (2004): 41.

34. Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah, Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1933), 822. All subsequent citations from the Mishnah are from this edition.

35. Moses Schwab, *The Talmud of Jerusalem. Translated for the First Time Vol. I Berakhoth* (1886; repr., New York: Hermon Press, 1969), 156.

36. Translation cited from Barth, *Ephesians*, 2:1660 n. 212.

37. Kenneth J. Foreman, *The Layman’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 21: *The Letter of Paul to the Romans, The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1961), 94.

38. Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 113.

the conclusion that he is promoting the common Jewish view—and thus contradicting himself.

With few exceptions, such as the adulation of Sir 26:13–18, the overall picture of Jewish tradition from around the time of Paul is fairly consistent in its low view of women. Josephus asserts, "The woman, says the Law, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive, not for her humiliation but that she may be directed; for the authority [τὸ χράτος] has been given by God to the manspirit" (*Ag. Ap.* 2.201).<sup>39</sup> He writes that the Essenes disdain marriage because "they wish to protect themselves against women's wantonness, being persuaded that none of the sex keeps her plighted troth to one man" (*Ant.* 2.121).<sup>40</sup>

Philo declares, "The woman, being imperfect and depraved by nature, made the beginning of sinning and prevaricating; but the man as being the more excellent and perfect creature, was the first to set the example of blushing and of being ashamed, and indeed of every good feeling and action" (*QG* 1.43). He writes that "mind corresponds to man, the senses to woman"<sup>41</sup> (*Creation* 165; cf. 167) and that woman is "irrational" (*Alleg. Interp.* 3.50; cf. 2.38). He calls woman "the weaker and more effeminate soul. For nature is of men, and to follow nature is the mark of a strong and truly masculine reason"<sup>42</sup> (*Drunkennes* 55; cf. *Embassy* 319). He teaches that "woman is not equal in honor with man" (*QG* 1.27) and that women are easily deceived (*QG* 1.23, 33, 46). Moreover, "virgins and wives are not allowed full control of their vows by the law ... [since that] would not be to their husband's advantage"<sup>43</sup> (*Spec. Laws* 2.24).

Sirach says, "A man's spite is preferable to a woman's kindness; women give rise to shame and reproach" (*Sir* 42:12b–14 JB). "Any spite rather than the spite of woman! ... No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman, may a sinner's lot be hers!" (*25:13, 19*).<sup>44</sup> In *T. Rev.* 5:1, the author even states, "Women are evil ... women are overcome by the

spirit of fornication more than men, and in their heart they plot against men" (cf. 3:10; 4:1; 6:1–2). Rabbinic writings, which though conserving earlier traditions are generally later than Paul, are particularly misogynistic: "Ten portions of empty-headedness have come upon the world, nine having been received by women and one by the rest of the world" (*b. Qidd.* 49b). R. Joshua says: A woman has more pleasure in one *kab* [measure] with lechery than in nine *kabs* with modesty" (*m. Sotah* 3.4). "Women are greedy, inquisitive, lazy, vain" (*Gen. Rab.* 45b). "Woe to him whose children are females" (*b. Qidd.* 82b).

Based on this view of woman, Jose ben Johanan of Jerusalem, one of the earliest scribes of the rabbinic tradition (ca. 150 BC) counsels: "Talk not much with womankind.' They said this of a man's own wife: how much more of his fellow's wife! Hence the sages have said: He that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the Law and at the last will inherit Gehenna" (*m. 'Abot* 1:5; cf. *b. 'Eruv.* 53b). *B. Qidd.* 70a–b forbids giving a woman a greeting, and *b. Ber.* 43b says it is disgraceful for a scholar to speak with a woman in the street. *M. Ketub.* 7:6 states a wife who "speaks with any man" may be divorced without payment of her dowry. Philo says that assemblies are for men and that "women are best suited to the indoor life which never strays from the house, within which the middle door is taken by the maidens as their boundary, and the outer door by those who have reached full womanhood.... A woman ... should seek a life of seclusion"<sup>45</sup> (*Spec. Laws* 3.169–171). The "middle door" identifies this as a description of the wealthy of Jerusalem.

The social status of women is summed up in the common phrase, "woman, slaves, and children" (*m. Ber.* 3:3; 7:2), for all three have over them a man who is their master. Legally, women lacked many normal human rights. They were almost entirely at the disposal of their father or husband. During the first century AD, however, women did have various legal and property rights paralleling those granted in Roman law.<sup>46</sup>

The inferiority of women was particularly evident in religious matters (*Str-B* 3:558–62). A prayer recommended for daily use says, "Blessed be

39. Josephus, 1:372–73 (Thackeray, LCL).

40. *Ibid.*, 2:368–69.

41. Philo, 1:130–31 (F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL); cf. Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990).

42. Philo, 3:344–45 (Colson and Whitaker, LCL).

43. Philo, 7:320–2 (F. H. Colson, LCL).

44. Barth (*Ephesians*, 2:658 n. 208) cites "a warm attitude toward woman" in *Sir* 26:1ff., which does praise a "good wife," but contrast 26:7–12! For Sirach, "A silent wife is a gift from the Lord" (26:14). In his desire to counter "traditional, popular, and scholarly anti-Semitism fostered in the Christian church" (2:660), Barth minimizes the extent of misogyny in the Jewish tradition, as he also does of the Hellenistic tradition (cf. 2:656).

45. Philo, 7:580–83 (Colson, LCL).

46. Belleville, *Women Leaders*, 71–96; Belleville, "Τοῦτα," 248–49.

God that hath not made me a woman."<sup>47</sup> This may have been adopted from Hellenistic writers who attribute similar statements to Thales, Socrates, and Plato.<sup>48</sup> In religious standing, women were almost "non-persons." According to *m. Ber. 7:2*, "Women or slaves or minors may not be included (to make up the number needed) for the Common Grace." Nor was it customary<sup>49</sup> for women to lay their hands on the head of the sacrificial victims or to wave the portions of the sacrifice. Women apparently desired to participate more as evidenced in *b. Hag. 16b*, where women laid their hands on the victim, for this is added: "Not that that was customary for women, but was to appease the women." Rabbis even debated whether fathers should teach their daughters the Law (*m. Soṭah 3:4*), and *m. Qidd. 4:13* forbids women to teach even children.

Josephus describes "the two sections of a synagogue mentioned in the law of Augustus, ἀρββαρεῖον and ἀνδροῶν (*Ant.* 16.164), the first, where the liturgical service took place, was open to women too; but the other part, given over to the scribes' teaching, was open only to men and boys as its name suggests."<sup>50</sup> *T. Meg.* 4.11, 226 reads: "All are qualified to be among the seven (who read the Torah in the synagogue on Sabbath mornings), even a minor and a woman. But a woman should not be allowed to come forward to read (the Torah) in public." Although the evidence suggests a variety of practice in Palestine and the Diaspora, where women were more involved,<sup>51</sup> in general, during the liturgical service women were simply to listen. They were not considered part of the assembly or regular or full participants. Thus, they were not included in the quorum required to establish a new synagogue or to worship. In gatherings for worship, the ancient synagogue forbade women to speak in practice as well as principle (*Str-B 3:467*). In every case where we have records, the rabbinic schools were solely for boys, never girls.<sup>52</sup>

47. Cf. below pp. 84–85 for citations.

48. Cf. Oepke, "γυνή," 1:777; Barth, *Ephesians*, 2:656 n. 198; below p. 84 for citations.

49. *T. Menah.* 10.13, 528. *m. Menah.* 9:8 says it was not permitted.

50. Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (trans. F. H. and C. H. Cave; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 373.

51. Lee I. Levine ("Women in the Synagogue," in *The Ancient Synagogue* [2nd ed.; New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2005], 499–518) notes inscriptional evidence for women elders (*presbytera*) and women given the title *archisynagogos*, ruler of the synagogue.

52. Moses S. Zuckerman, *Die Befreiung der Frauen von bestimmten religiösen Pflichten nach Tosefta und Mischna: Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklung der Halacha im Anschluss an meine Darstellung in dem Buche: Tosefta, Mischna und Boraita* (Breslau: M&H Marcus, 1911), 22.

### HOLY SCRIPTURE

According to Paul, in Christ believers stand in a new relationship to the law. Particularly in contrasting the law and faith, Paul makes statements that stand in stark contrast to anything from his Jewish contemporaries, such as: "Christ is the end of the law" (Rom 10:4); "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Gal 3:13); "we are no longer under the supervision of the law" (Gal 3:25); and "Christ abolished in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations" (Eph 2:15).

Nevertheless, Paul teaches that the God who revealed his ethical requirements in the past is the same today. Thus, Paul encouraged Christians to submit their minds to God's law (Rom 8:5–7). He affirms that "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good" (Rom 7:12) and "that the law is spiritual" (7:14) and "good" (7:16). He says, "in my inner being I delight in God's law" (7:22). He taught in Rom 8:4 that Christ came so "that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us." Acts 24:14 records Paul's statement to Governor Felix, "I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets." In 2 Tim 3:16, Paul<sup>53</sup> affirms, "All Scripture is inspired by God." In 1 Tim 1:8, Paul suggests the resolution between his critique of the law and his affirmation of it, "the law is good if one uses it properly." The goal of the law is love (1 Tim 1:5; Gal 5:14; Rom 13:9–10), and its proper interpretation must center on Christ, the fulfillment of the law (1 Tim 1:11, 14–16; 2:4–6; Rom 10:4). Thus, the OT was a key influence on Paul. His teaching about women sometimes refers to the law, particularly its account of the creation and fall.

### 1. The Creation and Fall of Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3

The creation of man and woman is summarized at the end of the grand overview of the whole of creation: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image,'<sup>54</sup> according to our likeness,<sup>55</sup> and let them have dominion over

53. Cf. below, pp. 291–95 on Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim backgrounds).  
54. εἰκόνι means "likeness, image," HALOT 3:1029, as does LXX εἰκόνα. Gen 9:6 states, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." Thus, the image of God is a basis for respect for the value of each individual human life after the fall. This also indicates that part of what it means to be in the image of God is that human beings have moral responsibility and have been granted authority to defend what is right morally. Cf. Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 138–39.

55. "Likeness" (εἰκόνι) "is an abstract formation from the verb 'to be like' . . . and means 'that which is like something, likeness, representation' . . . . The word is used in Hebrew only when something

... all the wild animals of the earth....' So God created man in his image in the image of God he created him;<sup>56</sup> male and female he created them (Gen 1:26-27). "Man" (Heb. אָדָם) is explained as "them"<sup>57</sup> and as "male and female," and Gen 5:2 explicitly states, "he called their name 'man' [אָדָם] in the day he created them [male and female]"; thus, אָדָם in these verses clearly refers to "human beings" (TNIV, NCV), "humans" (CEV), or "humankind" (NRSV). It is only later in the text that this name is applied to the first male human being, Adam. God's image is not restricted to the male, nor does the text imply any difference between the image of God in man and woman.

God's repeated references to himself as "us" in 1:26 highlight the relational interpersonal aspects of God and implies that there is a relational interpersonal aspect to male and female being "in the image of God."<sup>58</sup> There is an analogy between God in community ("let us make")<sup>59</sup> and man in community ("male and female"). It is not that God, who is spirit, is sexual, but that personal relationships are essential to the being of God and of humankind. "God is, according to this bold affirmation ... mirrored ... as a community."<sup>60</sup> Correspondingly, the revelation of Jesus Christ, the image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15), "embodies a call for a new human community."<sup>61</sup> Ephesians 4:24-25 reflects this: "put on the new self, created to be like God [τὸν χαραῖ θεοῦ χρισθέντα] in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must ... speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

God's blessings in Gen 1:28 encompass both man and woman and highlight their intimate personal relationships: "God blessed them, and God

and to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over ... every living thing that moves upon the earth' ..." (NRSV). The surrounding pagan creation myths say nothing about God granting both man and woman authority over the earth and its creatures.<sup>62</sup> This blessing in Genesis gives no hint that God gave man more authority than woman or that God subjected woman to man. God's granting of authority to man and woman without differentiation supports that they are equally created "in his image."<sup>63</sup> In Gen 1:29, God grants man and woman together all plants for food. Nothing in the first chapter of Genesis grants man priority in status or authority over woman.

Genesis 2 focuses on the creation of man and woman. Its narrative structure climaxes in the creation of woman. In contrast to the refrain, "it was good," for every other stage of creation, it highlights man's need for woman by stating: "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a partner for him" (Gen 2:18, 20 NEB). Some argue that Gen 2-3 describes man in a position of authority over woman so that it is a Christian duty for women to be subordinate to men. Although nothing in Gen 2-3 teaches this directly, they argue that certain elements in the story imply that God put man in a position of authority over woman. Various proponents of this view give eleven arguments to support it, just as feminists point to various elements in the text that might suggest that God put woman in a position of authority over man. The following examination of these points shows that neither assertion is justified. Instead, the dominant focus of the text is on the equal status and mutual responsibility of man and woman.

1. Man was created before woman, and therefore should have authority over woman. For instance, K&D 1:89 states, "By this [the creation of the man first, then the woman] the priority and superiority of the man, and the dependence of the woman upon the man, are established as an ordinance of divine creation." This logic, when applied to Genesis, would imply that the creatures of the sea and the birds of the air created in the fifth day should have authority over the land animals—and all of these should have

62. Cf. *ibid.*, 37.63. David J. A. Clines ("What Does Eve Do to Help? and Other Irredeemably Androcentric Orientations in Genesis 1-3," pp. 1-22 in *What Does Eve Do to Help? and Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament* [ISOTSup 94; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990], 18) affirms that the image of God is related "to humankind's having rule over the animals," yet writes, "to say ... that women as well as men are created as the image of God is to move beyond the horizon of the text." This does not do justice to the definition of humankind as "male and female" in Gen 1:27.

is compared with something else." Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11* (trans. John J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984; London: SPCK, 1984), 146. Consequently, mankind "is the only creature ... which discloses to us something about the reality of God ... where power is received, decisions are made" (Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1982], 32).

56. The singular "him" accords with "the man [אָדָם]" in 1:27, where the article is used "to denote the sum total of individuals belonging to the class" (GKC §126m), referring back to אָדָם in 1:26: "The masculine as prior gender includes the feminine" (GKC §122g; cf. §132d). This also applies to "him" in Gen 5:1.

57. Verse 26 describes "man" using the plural verb "let them have dominion," and in v. 27 the suffix "them" identifies "man" as plural: "male and female he created them," with no punctuation in Hebrew separating this from the affirmation that man is in God's image. "Them" occurs twice in v. 28, where God addresses them with five plural verbs, including the same verb "have dominion" over animals in v. 26. This shows that אָדָם in v. 26 identifies the same group as אָדָם in v. 27. God gives "you" (plural twice) seed-bearing plants and fruit in v. 29.

58. This affirmation that humankind reflects God is particularly striking in light of Judaism's absolute prohibition of images of God (Exod 20:4-5).

59. Cf. Gregory T. Armstrong, *Die Genesis in der alten Kirche: die drei Kirchenwörter* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1962), 39, 69-70, 132 n. 1; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, III/1* (trans. J. W. Edwards, O. Bussey, and H. Knight; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 191ff.60. Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 34.61. *Ibid.*, 34.

authority over the human race since they were created prior. This logic is contradicted by God explicitly granting authority to both man and woman over animals and plants in Gen 1:26, 28–29.

Furthermore, in context, the significance of the woman being created second is to highlight man's need for a partner corresponding to him, not to man's authority over woman. The primary message of Gen 2:18–20 is that no animal is a suitable partner for man. Nothing in the context implies that man has authority over woman. Only after humankind's disobedience does God predict, "he will rule over you" (Gen 3:16).

2. *Man should have authority over woman because God said in 2:18, "I will make a helper suitable for him."* Not only is this translation in doubt, it depends on the assumption that helpers are naturally under the authority of those they help. The noun used here, however, throughout the OT does not suggest "helper" as in "servant," but "help, savior, rescuer, protector" as in, "God is our help." In no other occurrence in the OT does this noun refer to an inferior, but always to a superior or an equal.<sup>64</sup> Fifteen times it describes God as the rescuer of his people, their strength or power; the remaining four times of a military protector.<sup>65</sup> "Help" expresses that woman is a help/strength<sup>66</sup> who rescues or saves man.

The expression following "help," "as in front of him,"  $\text{פָּ} = \text{as} + \text{מָּ} = \text{in front of/before} + \text{י} = \text{him}$ , is explained by HALOT 2:666, "like his opposite > proper for him." Both the LXX of Gen 2:20 and Tob 8:6 translate this verse, "Let us make a helper [βοηθός, as in Heb 13:6, 'the Lord is my helper'] like unto [ὁμοιος] him." The LXX of Gen 2:18 similarly translates it "corresponding to [κατ']<sup>67</sup> him." The expression "in front of" man is more appropriate for a superior or equal than for a subordinate.<sup>68</sup> Freedman translates this phrase, "a power (or strength) equal to him."<sup>69</sup> The etymologically

64. When describing God it does not imply that God is subordinate to man, *pace* Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1–3," RBMW 95–112, 104. Cf. God: Exod 18:4; Deut 33:7, 26, 29; Ps 20:3, 33:20; 70:6; 89:20; 115:9, 10, 11; 121:1, 2; 124:8; 146:5. Of a military protector: Isa 30:5; Ezek 12:14; Dan 11:34; Hos 13:9. For more on the background of this expression, see Aida B. Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Woman Called to Ministry* (Nashville, Tenn.: Nelson, 1985), 23–29.

65. On the meaning "strength, might," see HALOT 2:812, citing Deut 33:26; Ps 33:20; 115:9, 10, 11. Cf. Ps 89:20.

66. BDAG 512 (κατά 5): "similarity or homogeneity, according to, in accordance with, in conformity with."

67. Though it can refer simply to something in the presence of another, as in Ps 119:168. R. David Freedman, "Woman, a Power Equal to Man: Translation of Woman as a 'Fit Helpmate' for Man is Questioned," BAR 9, no. 1 (January–February 1983): 56–58.

related noun  $\text{מָּ} = \text{to lead}$  and according to HALOT 2:667–68 means, "the one declared (by Yahweh) to lead ... chief, leader, prince ... officer ... governor of a town ... court official ... head of a family ... eminent person ... cult official ... the high priest ... overseer ... supervisor ... the leader of Israel, appointed by Yahweh." It is used of David's and Solomon's rule over Israel in 1 Sam 9:16; 13:14, and 1 Kgs 1:35. Consequently, this expression highlights the role of the woman as the rescuer of the man, "a strength corresponding to him," and hence no less than an equal. Only with her is he able to fulfill his command to multiply and fill the earth, and together, they "rule over all the creatures." Consequently, nothing in the lexical background of "help meet" implies that the woman is to be under the authority of the man.<sup>70</sup>

3. *The man must have authority over the woman since he has a more active role than the woman. He names the animals, rejoices over the woman, names her, leaves father and mother, and cleaves to his wife.* Each of these arguments fails to stand up to scrutiny. The point of naming the animals is made clear by the statements that bracket this passage, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a partner corresponding to him.... But for man no partner corresponding to him was found" (Gen 2:18, 20). The following verse, "So God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep," confirms that the primary message of verses 18–20 is not that man names the animals, but that no animal is a suitable partner for man. At the crucial point of the creation of woman, man is entirely passive. God is the active creator, who "took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib<sup>71</sup> he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man" (2:21–22). The man's joyful exclamation, "Finally<sup>72</sup> bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (2:23), emphasizes the man's recognition that man and woman share the same essence. Throughout Scripture, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" identifies shared

70. *Pace* Clines, who correctly identifies the crucial role of woman in procreation ("Eve," 10–11), but contrary to Gen 1:28, associates this role solely with the woman and without textual warrant reads subordination into it. In implying on p. 12 that "procreation is the sole purpose ... of women," he ignores God's purpose that she subdue the earth and have dominion over every living thing (Gen 1:28–30) and for her personal relationships (Gen 2:23–25).

71. The correctness of this meaning, which is given by all the ancient versions, is evident from the words, "God took one of his ribs (  $\text{וּמִצְּרוּרָא}$  )," implying he had several of them. This is further confirmed by the man's response in 2:23.

72. HALOT 3:952, sub  $\text{עַל}$  (5).



standing or kinship, never subordination. Complementarians<sup>73</sup> like Raymond C. Ortlund Jr. assert the man's "sovereign act" in naming woman: "he also names her ('she shall be called Woman').... [In] naming the creatures... Adam brought the earthly creation under his dominion. This royal prerogative extended to Adam's naming of his helper... [God] allowed Adam to define the woman."<sup>74</sup> According to Gen 1:26, 28, however, God, not the man's naming, grants humankind (not just man) rule over the animals. Nothing in the text implies that God allowed the man to define woman.<sup>75</sup> The use of "the woman" (אִשָּׁה) three verses later (3:1) proves that "woman" is not being used here as a proper name. The man names Eve only after the fall (Gen 3:20). There, but not in 2:23, is the Hebrew naming formula: to call + name (קָרָא) + a proper name. Only one of these three parts of the formula is in 2:23, the verb to call. In Gen 2:23, the name woman (אִשָּׁה) is merely a derivative from the word for man (אָדָם) with a feminine ending. Their corresponding names reinforce their oneness of essence, also implied by woman's origin in man. Since these words mean "male and female" twice in Gen 7:2 (HALOT 1:43, 93), it is clear that the feminine ending identifies woman as the man's female sexual counterpart.<sup>76</sup> Since that is its obvious function, it is arbitrary and unsupported by the text also to read dominion into this recognition.

Genesis does not say that Adam left father and mother and cleaved to his wife. Adam, after all, had no father or mother, so this is not about his initiative or action. Instead, leaving and cleaving stresses the independence of the new family begun by marriage and its priority over all other human relationships. Strikingly, this statement is the opposite of Hebrew experience, where the woman typically left her father and mother to live with her husband. If the text had read, "For this reason shall a woman leave her father and mother and be united to her husband," doubtless complementarians would interpret this as the perfect confirmation that a woman must

73. Since both egalitarians and complementarians believe men and women complement each other, the designation "complementarian," though politically convenient to hide the true difference, is unhelpful to distinguish the views.

74. Ortlund, "Male Headship," RBMW 102-3.

75. Cf. George W. Ramsey, "Is Name-Giving an Act of Domination in Genesis 2:23 and Elsewhere?" CBQ 50 (1988): 24-35, who argues that name-giving is an act of discernment, not domination. Cf. also Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality: Overtures to Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 100.

76. Pace Clines ("Eve," 13), who acknowledges, "if he called her 'female' because she was taken out of 'male,' there would be no naming."

always be under the authority of a man, leaving her father's covering to come under her husband's covering. The text, however, does not endorse this normal pattern of Hebrew patriarchal society.

Instead, the man leaving father and mother suggests the equal standing of father and mother. This equal standing is immediately reinforced both by "and be united to his wife"<sup>77</sup> and "they will become one flesh."<sup>78</sup> Jesus confirms the Gen 2:24 definition of marriage in Matt 19:5.

4. *Woman is morally inferior to man or less discerning because woman first took of the fruit of the forbidden tree and then gave to the man.* James Hurley states, "Satan through the serpent led Eve to persuade her husband that God had lied about the fruit for selfish reasons."<sup>79</sup> Genesis 3:6, however, states, "She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." This passage says nothing about the woman (who was not yet named Eve) persuading her husband that God had lied about the fruit, but rather states that he was with her, and so he probably heard (or overheard) the dialogue with the serpent and desired to be like God, knowing good and evil. His being with her shows that he shared moral culpability with her. This is underscored by God's separate statements of the consequences of their acts directed first to the woman and then to the man. Paul confirmed Adam's disobedience and culpability in Rom 5:12-19 and 1 Cor 15:21-22.

5. *Eve usurped the man's headship when "she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it" (Gen 3:6b).*<sup>80</sup> The sin, however, is identified in Gen 3:11 as disobedience to God's command. The text nowhere mentions male headship or states that women taking initiative would be usurping the man's authority.

6. *God's question to the man in 3:9, "Where are you?" implies that the man was the "God-appointed head... [who] bore primary responsibility to lead their partnership." Otherwise, "Why doesn't God summon both Adam and Eve to account together?"*<sup>81</sup> First of all, God did call them to account together, as

77. This points to mutuality, the "deepest corporeal and spiritual unity of man and woman" (K&D 1:90).

78. Paul interprets "one flesh" as conjugal union: "he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body! For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh'" (1 Cor 6:16).

79. James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 220-21. Cf. pp. 215-16, "Eve was deceived by the serpent about the central theological issue of the truthfulness of God. Adam was not."

80. Ortlund, "Male Headship," RBMW 107, where he also identifies this as "sex role reversal" without evidence.

81. *Ibid.*, 108.

the waw consecutive<sup>82</sup> implies in God's question to the woman in verse 13, "Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?'" The order of the questions introduces a chiasmic review of the events in reverse that exposes the sin and traces it back to the serpent's deception. This in turn is followed by a recapitulation of the consequences for the participants in their original order: serpent, woman, man. This literary structure would be broken if the order of the questioning were changed. Furthermore, this order exposes the man's passing the buck in verse 12<sup>83</sup> and the woman's admission that the serpent had deceived her.

The chiasmic structure of Gen 3:1–19 is as follows:

- A The Serpent deceived the woman (3:1–5).
- B The woman ate the forbidden fruit (3:6a).
- C The woman gave to the man the forbidden fruit, and he ate it (3:6b)
- D They realized they were naked (3:7).
- E They heard the sound of God in the garden and hid (3:8).
- F "The LORD God called to the man" (3:9a).
- E' Qn./Ans. "I heard your sound in the garden and hid" (3:9b–10).
- D' Qn. "Who told you that you were naked?" (3:11a).
- C' Qn./Ans. "She gave to me from the tree, and I ate." (3:11b–12).
- B' Qn./Ans. "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (3:13).
- A' God identifies the Serpent's deception as the reason he will face judgment (3:14a).
- A" God curses the Serpent (3:14b–15).
- B" God identifies consequences of the woman's disobedience (3:16).
- C" God identifies consequences of the man's disobedience (3:17–20).<sup>84</sup>
- D" God provided a solution to their nakedness (3:21).
- E" God banished them from the garden (3:22–24).<sup>85</sup>

82. The Hebrew "and" used to introduce a series of past events occurring consecutively. Cf. GKC §49.

83. Ironically, Ortlund concludes from this that Adam bears the final responsibility ("Male Headship," RBMW 108).

84. As in C', Adam reacts to God's pronouncement by shifting attention to his wife. His naming her Eve reminds the woman of both aspects of her punishment: that he will rule over her (by naming her) and that she will bear children in pain (as mother of all the living).

85. Banishment echoes hiding (in E and E') because both show man's separation from God. The shift from hiding to banishment signifies the movement of the text from man's sin to God's

A question from God introduces each of the chiasmic reversals from E' through B'. These questions confirm the steps of this chiasmic structure. God explains his curse on the Serpent, but the Serpent apparently does not deserve the platform that a question would provide.

7. *Beginning in Gen 3:9, "it is the man who is addressed and questioned. . . . The exchange between God and the couple suggests throughout that the husband was presumed to be the one responsible for religious decisions and the spokesman for the couple with God."*<sup>86</sup> The woman, however, is addressed directly by God in 3:13, showing she needs no spokesman. And what is the evidence that the husband was presumed to be the one responsible for religious decisions? That is a huge jump from God simply calling to him, "Where are you?" But Hurley goes even further, stating, "Adam functions as priest, husband, and perhaps as head of the social unit."<sup>87</sup> Nothing in Gen 1–3 implies Adam's religious or social leadership. The allegation that the Genesis creation narrative teaches "headship"<sup>88</sup> is without clear basis in the text. Contrast the clear hierarchical message of the Slavonic Books of *Adam and Eve* (32:1): "The archangel Joel said to Adam: 'Thus saith the Lord; I did not create thy wife to command thee, but to obey; why art thou obedient to thy wife?'"<sup>89</sup> Current hierarchical understandings of roles in marriage clearly reflect pseudepigraphical writings in a way that has no clear analogy in the Genesis account of creation.

8. *God's prophecy to the woman in Gen 3:16, "he will rule over you," is a command; that is: "he should rule over you."*<sup>90</sup> Since the text identifies this as a consequence of the fall, it must describe something new and not preexisting, just like all the other results of the fall in 3:14–19. Furthermore, all the other results of the fall are future; none are obligatory ("should"). Even Piper and Grudem agree that this "is not a prescription of what should be."<sup>91</sup> Grudem argues that 3:16 "should never be used as

judgment. Initially man willingly separated himself from God by hiding. By banishing man from the garden, God took away not only access to the tree of life but also the unbroken relationship with God that man had previously enjoyed in the garden but had rejected.

86. Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 216, 219.

87. *Ibid.*, 219.

88. *Ibid.*, 212; Ortlund, "Male Headship," RBMW 107–12; Grudem, EF 42.

89. APOC 2:134.

90. Ortlund, "Male Headship," RBMW 109. Ortlund does not even acknowledge the grammatically most obvious reading, "he will rule over you," namely the use of "rule" as something new, acknowledged by Hurley (*Man and Woman*, 192).

91. John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "Charity, Clarity, and Hope: The Controversy and the Cause of Christ," RBMW 403–22, 409.

a direct argument for male headship in marriage.<sup>92</sup> Virtually all versions of the Bible translate this as future, just like the other effects of the fall.<sup>93</sup> Everything in 3:14–19 is disastrous news for the party addressed, and every other result of the fall for humankind is something people should try to overcome, such as pain in childbearing (through medical techniques) and removal of thorns and thistles (through weeding and farming). People should not foster, but rather alleviate, the consequences of the fall, including the husband's rule over his wife. Claus Westermann astutely concludes that "the domination of the husband and the consequent subordination of the wife is seen as something which is not normal (hence as punishment)."<sup>94</sup>

The woman receives bad news: "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire [will be] toward your husband, and he will rule over you" (Gen 3:16). K&D 1:103 notes, "she was punished with a desire bordering upon disease" (הַשְׂקָרָה) from שָׁקַר, run, "to fill with longing, desire, craving".<sup>95</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew in 3:16b, "towards [אֵל] your husband [is] your desire [הַשְׂקָרָה], and/but [וְ] he will master [יִשָּׁר] over [אֵל] you," closely parallels Gen 4:7, "towards [אֵל] you [is] sin's desire [הַשְׂקָרָה], but [וְ] you must master [הַשְׂקָרָה] over [אֵל] it." The imperfect verb can be either future, "you will master," or modal, "you must master" over it, but since Cain then killed Abel, Cain clearly did not master over sin, so in this instance it makes more sense as modal. God tells Cain he must fight back to master sin and its desire to dominate him. "Sin's desire [is] towards you" means that sin desires to master or manipulate Cain. Analogously, "your desire will be for your husband" means "your desire will be to master or manipulate your husband," but he will master you. Every other result of the fall is future, so

92. "We should never try to perpetuate the elements of the curse!" (EF 40).

93. Benjamin Davidson identifies this as future (*Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament* [London: Paternoster, n.d.], 322).

94. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 262. He argues that there is no subordination of woman to man in Genesis 2 (Genesis [BKAT; Neukirchener-Vlg.: Neukirchener, 1966], 311–16).

95. HALOT 4:1448. Song 7:11 later uses this word positively to mean romantic attraction, "I am my beloved's and his desire is for me," but how would this describe a new situation caused by the fall? It could if the newness comes in "but he will rule over you." This nuance, however, does not fit the context of Gen 3:16 as naturally, and the other elements of this construction are missing from Song 7:11: שָׁקַר + י + a future sense of הַשְׂקָרָה + over [אֵל] you.

96. י is usually coordinative ("and" sixteen other times in 3:14–19) but can be adversative ("but," as in the 4:7 parallel).

in this context the imperfect naturally has its future sense, just as rendered in virtually all versions.

The fall transformed the relationship of Adam and Eve from equality into a power struggle. "Far from being a reign of coequals over the remainder of God's creation, the relationship now becomes a fierce dispute, with each party trying to rule the other. The two who once reigned as one attempt to rule each other."<sup>97</sup>

Hebrew has many words for "rule" and some of them imply bad rule or oppression. The word used in Gen 3:16, however, is by far the most common word for "rule" and for God's rule in the Hebrew Bible. HALOT 2:647–48 and BDB 605 analyze every OT instance of מָלַךְ and list no negative meaning for this word. It does not imply bad rule;<sup>98</sup> rather, it is simply that due to the fall, man will rule over woman. Since man's ruling over woman is a result of the fall, man must not have ruled over woman before the fall. It would be out of harmony with every other consequence of the fall to interpret man's rule over woman as something good that should be fostered. This passage no more teaches this than it teaches that women ought to have pain in childbirth.

9. "Because you listened to your wife" in 3:17 implies Adam "abandoned his headship" and "this moral failure . . . led to his ruination."<sup>99</sup> Ortlund misses the obvious reason why God addresses the man in this way. It is specifically because he blames his eating the fruit on "the woman you put here with me" for giving him the fruit to eat (v. 12) that God rebukes him for listening to his wife and eating it. Unlike the woman, who admitted she was deceived in verse 13, the man blamed the woman and blamed God for putting her with him. The man was fully culpable for eating the fruit. He knew this was in direct disobedience to God's command. If the fruit had been from any other tree, it would not have been a sin for the man to listen

97. Cf. Hamilton, *Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 202.

98. Pace George W. Knight III's assertion that this is "rule" in an autocratic, unloving way ("The Family and the Church: How Should Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Work out in Practice?" RBMW 345–57, 346), and Piper and Grudem's assertion that this is "fallen rulership" not "God-ordained headship" ("Charity," RBMW 409), and Grudem's defining this verb, "a rule that was forceful and at times harsh" (EF 40; cf. 43, 123). Grudem rightly corrects assigning a negative "meaning" to a different word (p. 38 n. 27), so he should know that it is wrong to assign a negative meaning to a verb simply because other words describe its subject negatively in other passages (Neh 9:37; Isa 19:4).

99. Ortlund, "Male Headship," RBMW 110.

to his wife and eat. God's rebuke highlights both his disobedience and his refusal to take responsibility.

10. *The statement to Adam in 3:17, "Cursed is the ground because of you," teaches that "Adam was the head, the finally responsible member of the partnership. His disobedience, not Eve's, was the pivotal factor in the fall."*<sup>100</sup> "The woman is not told that her curse flows from her deed."<sup>101</sup> In 3:13, however, God says to the woman, "What is this you have done?"<sup>102</sup> In proving that God was concerned with her deed. Paralleling the man's acknowledgment "I ate," the woman, too, says, "I ate," acknowledging her deed. God's statement of consequences for the woman precedes the consequences for the man, which shows just how dubious is the speculation that she is cursed for the man's sin rather than or as well as for her own. If both sets of effects were a result of the man's disobedience, the text should have included both after God's statement to the man rather than separating them and having the effects on the woman stated directly to her first.

11. *God's naming the human race "man" in Gen 5:2 implies male leadership.*<sup>103</sup> It is precisely Gen 5:2's identification of "man" [אָדָם] as "male and female" "in the day he created them" that most clearly shows that the "man" [אָדָם] created in God's image in Gen 1:26–27 and 5:1 refers to man as "male and female." God's giving "male and female" humanity the same name highlights their oneness and supports their equality.

In summary, none of the eleven alleged indications that God put man in authority over woman stand up to scrutiny, and several of them are, if anything, more likely to suggest the opposite. The description of the creation of man and woman in Gen 1 does not contradict Gen 2–3, and neither shows that the man should have authority over woman. Genesis 1–3 consistently depicts the unity of the man and the woman as equal partners, not woman under man. Twenty statements in Gen 1–3 depict man and woman equally:

1. God creates both male and female in God's image and likeness (1:26–27; cf. 5:1–2).

100. Ibid.

101. Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 218.

102. E.g. Grudem, *EF* 34–36.

2. God gives both male and female rule over animals and all the earth (1:26b, 28).
3. God gives both male and female the same blessing and tells them together to be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth, and subdue it (1:28–29; cf. 5:2).
4. God speaks directly to both man and woman (1:28–29 "to them," "to you" plural twice).
5. God gives male and female together all plants for food (1:29 "to you" plural).
6. Woman is a "help" to man, a noun the OT never elsewhere uses of a subordinate (2:18, 20).
7. Woman "corresponds to" man, literally "in front of" man, face-to-face, not below (2:18, 20).
8. God makes woman from the man's rib, so she is made of the same substance as he (2:21–23).
9. The man recognizes, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (2:23).
10. "Father and mother" are identified without hierarchical distinction (2:24).
11. A man is "united" to his wife, implying oneness (2:24).
12. A man becomes "one flesh" with his wife, implying unity (2:24).
13. Both the man and woman are naked<sup>103</sup> and feel no shame, sharing moral sensibility (2:25).
14. The woman and the man are together at the temptation and fall (3:6); both faced temptation.
15. Both the woman and man eat the forbidden fruit (3:6), both exercising a (bad) moral choice.
16. The eyes of both are opened, they realize they are naked, and sew coverings (3:7).
17. Both hide from God (3:8), showing they both experience guilt.
18. God addresses both directly (3:9–13, 16–19), showing both have access to God.
19. Both pass the blame (3:12–13), showing both have this weakness.

103. Naked (עָרְוָה) is a play on the word עֵרָה, the serpent's cunning, craftiness in the next verse. It contrasts the transparency of humanity and the cunning of the serpent, who is bent on evil—getting humankind to disobey God. Thus, the purpose of this narrative is not to describe the origin of evil, but the origin of evil choices by humans.

20. God announces to both specific consequences of their sin (3:16–19); both are responsible.

In the curse against "the serpent,"<sup>104</sup> God affirms the seed of the woman "will crush your head" (Gen 3:15).<sup>105</sup> K&D 1:102 notes, "as it was through the woman that the craft of the devil brought sin and death into the world, so it is also through the woman that the grace of God will give to the fallen human race the conqueror of sin, of death, and of the devil . . . [Christ] the destroyer of the serpent was born of a woman (without a human father)."<sup>16</sup> In 1 Cor 15:21–26 and 1 Tim 2:14–15 Paul implies Christ's fulfillment of the Gen 3:15 *Protoevangelium*, the earliest prediction of the costly victory of Christ over Satan.<sup>106</sup>

## 2. *Woman's Marital Position in Holy Scripture*

OT descriptions of how women were treated should not be confused with prescriptions of how women *ought* to be treated. The OT says little about how marital relations ought to be structured. Proverbs criticizes bad wives and praises good wives (e.g., Prov 12:4; 19:13–14), but affirms, "He who finds a wife finds what is good and obtains favor from the LORD" (18:22).

The most extensive passage on the position of a wife and her activities is the description of an excellent wife in Prov 31:10–31. Its final position in the book gives it prominence. Though not an exhaustive description or even a normative pattern that all women must follow, it clearly encourages emulation. The "excellent wife" is an efficient executive with a well-ordered domestic staff. She deals in real estate, carries on a clothing concession, and cares for the poor as well as her own household. She has her own earnings and seems to be the primary income earner in the family. She is a wise and kind teacher. The prominent position of this passage in the canon of

104. The article with every reference to the serpent (cf. GKC § 126.2[d]) on its use to restrict reference to a particular individual), the description of the serpent as "more cunning than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made," the words of the temptation, undermining the truth of God's word and epitomizing the causes of sin, and the sweeping consequences of the temptation all demand a more serious purpose to the story than "why snakes crawl on their bellies" or "why women hate snakes." Together these factors imply that the serpent represents ultimate moral temptation, namely the Tempter, Satan.

105. "He will crush" is a third person singular verb, and "his" in "you will strike his heel" is a third person singular suffix. Both are appropriate for a particular descendant. Cf. pp. 420–24 and 434–40 on the seed of the woman and 1 Tim. 3:15.

106. Cf. below pp. 417–42.

Hebrew Scripture implies that the kind of roles it mentions for a wife were not offensive either to Jews of that day or to God, who inspired it to be written as Scripture.

## 3. *Woman's Social Position in Holy Scripture*

Various passages describe women in public places and attending festivals (Gen 24:13–28; Exod 2:16–21; Judg 21:9–23), but what is particularly striking are women who held political leadership. The prophetess Miriam is sent by God "to lead" Israel (Mic 6:4; cf. Exod 15:20–21). Deborah is one of the judges whom "the LORD raised up" and who "saved Israel from the hands of their enemies" (Judg 2:16, 18), the highest leader in all Israel in her day (4:4). She is gifted by God for her administrative and prophetic role and is richly blessed in her position of authority over all the men of Israel. She delivers Israel from Canaanite rule (4:10, 14, 24; 5:1–31). Judges 4:4–5 states, "Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was leading Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided." She has authority to command Barak, the military commander of Israel, "Go!" (4:6, 14) and he goes. Her power to unite the people is compatible with her being a wife and mother (5:7).

Queen Esther has sufficient influence to bring about the destruction of the house of Haman along with 75,000 enemies of the Jews (Esth 7:1–10; 9:1–32). She, along with Mordecai, "wrote with full authority . . . decreed . . . established for themselves and their descendants . . . Esther's decree confirmed these regulations" (9:29–32).

The records of the kings of Judah always note or name the queen mothers (cf. Jer 13:18; 29:2; 2 Kgs 24:15). They include Bathsheba (1 Kgs 2:17–19), Maacah (10:13, 15),<sup>107</sup> and Nehushta (2 Kgs 24:8), who is enthroned and crowned. Queen Athaliah "ruled the land" for six years (2 Kgs 11:1–3; 2 Chr 22:10–12). Although Athaliah and Jezebel (1 Kgs 18:4), like most of Israel's kings, were wicked, neither they nor any other woman leader of Israel is criticized in Scripture for being in authority on the grounds that this is an inappropriate role for a woman.

107. She is queen-mother with both her son, Abijam and her grandson, Asa, 1 Kgs 15:2, 10, 13; 2 Chr 15:16.

#### 4. *Woman's Religious Position in Holy Scripture*

The OT never commands that women be silent in religious gatherings. To the contrary, Isa 40:9 commands, "O woman who brings good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. O woman who brings good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!'" Psalm 68:11 (12 MT) reads, "The Lord announced the word; the women proclaiming [feminine plural]<sup>108</sup> are a great company." Various passages describe women in public religious events (Deut 12:12; 2 Sam 6:5, 15, 19–22).

The priests consult the prophetess Huldah when they find the lost book of the Law. The king, the elders, the prophets, and the people accept her word as divinely revealed (2 Kgs 22:14–23:3; 2 Chr 34:22–32), and their obedience to her word sparks what is probably the greatest revival in the history of Israel (2 Kgs 22:14–20; 23:1–25; 2 Chr 34:29–35:19). Marriage does not hold her back from ministry. The priests choose to consult her rather than her contemporaries, Jeremiah (1:2) and Zephaniah (1:1).<sup>109</sup>

Joel predicts a future, greater prophetic role for women: "afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy.... Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days" (Joel 2:28–29; cf. Acts 2:14–21).

God uses women to communicate several key portions of inspired Scripture: the song of the prophetess Miriam (Exod 15:21), the song of the judge Deborah (Judg 5:2–31), the prayer of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1–10), and in the NT, the Magnificat of Mary (Luke 1:46–55).

Complementarians typically describe these as exceptional cases that establish the rule. If this is the case, however, the rule is not an absolute established by God's creative will, but must be reduced to a "general rule" or observed cultural pattern. These examples of God appointing women to leadership positions prove that God does approve women to exercise authority over men, at least in certain circumstances. Furthermore, none

108. Davidson, *Analytical Hebrew*, 191.

109. Note also Noadiah (Neh 6:14 = 2 Esd 16:14), who is called "the prophetess" in Hebrew but in the LXX is called "the prophet" (ὁ ἰεροφάντης), from the masculine word for prophet, not the feminine word for prophetess (ἰεροφάντις). Rabbinic tradition includes Sarah, Hannah, Abigail, and Esther as prophetesses. E.g., Str-B 2:140; Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the Temple: A Study with Special Reference to Mt. 19:3–12 and 1 Cor. 11:3–16* (trans. N. Tomkinson et al.; ASNU 24; Lund, Sweden: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1965), 159. Just as there were good prophets and prophetesses, there were evil prophets and prophetesses, e.g., Ezek 13:1–16, 17–23.

of these texts says that God gives women social and/or religious authority over men only because of special circumstances, nor do they describe these cases as exceptions to a "general rule." In fact, Paul identifies such a high proportion of women in his circle of ministry that "general rule" becomes merely a slightly higher proportion of men than women, if that.<sup>110</sup>

The only social or religious position of significance that women are not recorded in the OT as holding was that of priest. The most obvious reason for this is the association of priestesses in some heathen cults with prostitutes. God repeatedly forbade his people from giving an appearance of following the immoral practices of the surrounding nations,<sup>111</sup> and to have women priestesses would give that appearance. The history of Israel supports the legitimacy of this concern.

#### JESUS CHRIST

Paul affirms "I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). Christ's example in all his deeds and words was to treat women as persons equal with men. He respected their intelligence and spiritual capacity as is evident in the great spiritual truths he originally taught to women. To the Samaritan woman he said, "The water I give will become a fountain of water springing up to eternal life... salvation is from the Jews... true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.... God is spirit.... I who speak to you am [the Messiah]" (John 4:14–26). To Martha he taught, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25–26).

Although a woman's testimony was not recognized in the courts, Jesus demonstrated his respect for their testimony by appearing first to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection (John 20:14–18) and instructing her to tell the others. After Jesus taught the Samaritan woman, she acted as the first missionary to her people, and many of her people believed (John 4:39–42).

Jesus seems to be unconcerned with gender differences in the kingdom of God. When a woman in the crowd says, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts you nursed," Jesus responds, "On the con-

110. Cf. below, pp. 61–68, especially 68.

111. E.g., Lev 18:3; 20:23; Ps 106:35.

trary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:27–28). Jesus affirms that those who do the will of God are his brothers and sister and mother in Mark 3:34–35; Matt 12:49–50; and Luke 8:21, showing that obedience, irrespective of gender, is more important than kinship. Elsewhere, Jesus explains that in heaven there will be no marriage, but those who rise from the dead will be like angels (Luke 20:34–35).<sup>112</sup> Significantly, Jesus does not rebuke the mothers at the feeding of the four thousand for leaving their domestic duties for three days to listen to his teaching (Matt 15:38). Similarly, when Mary was "listening to the Lord's word, seated at his feet," the posture and position of a disciple, Jesus affirms her: "Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:38–42).

Jesus gives no hint that the nature of God's will for women is different than for men. He made no distinction in the righteousness demanded of both. The issues facing all people at the last judgment apply equally to men and women: giving food and drink to the hungry and thirsty, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, and visiting those sick and in prison (Matt 25:31–46).

The equality of the sexes is evident in Jesus' vocabulary. He calls a crippled woman a "daughter of Abraham" (Luke 13:16), a linguistic usage seventy years prior to the first recorded rabbinic equivalent (Str-B 2:200). He says, "You are all brothers" (Matt 23:8), and he treats obligations to father and mother equally (Mark 7:10–12). Jesus occasionally breaks social customs, causing consternation, as when he speaks alone with the Samaritan woman at the well and allows a sinful woman to touch him. He also touches many women with his healing hands.<sup>113</sup>

Jesus is sensitive to the social structures oppressing women. He attacks the divorce customs of his day that allow only the husband to file for divorce—and for practically any reason (Matt 19:3). Similarly, he denies the common view that a man cannot commit adultery against his own wife, only against another man.<sup>114</sup> Jesus attacks traditions in a way that includes a significant change in the status of women in Israel. There is no

112. Matt 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35–36.

113. Matt 8:15; 9:25; Mark 1:31; 5:41; Luke 4:40; 8:54; 13:13.

114. Mark 10:10. Cf. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 370–71; T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus as Recorded in the Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Luke Arranged with Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM, 1949), 136 (first published as Part II of the *Mission and Message of Jesus* in 1937).

close parallel to Jesus' overall treatment of women as equal to men in the records of any of his Jewish contemporaries.

Although nothing in Jesus' teachings advocates male/female role distinctions or the subordination of women, Jesus' choice of the twelve disciples has been thought by some to imply these. Practical issues related to the supremely personal union" (TDNT 4:442) of Jesus and his disciples, however, explain this. It is one thing for a number of women to be mentioned as following Jesus from time to time in his preaching in the towns (Mark 15:40–41; Luke 8:1–3), but traveling full time for three years with late night meetings such as at the Garden of Gethsemane and spending periods of time in the wilderness are quite another thing. Strong cultural objections and moral suspicions would undoubtedly be raised not only about Jesus, but also about the men whom he chose to be with him. Married women could hardly leave their families for such a long period, and single women would have been even more suspicious. To have chosen women disciples would have raised legitimate suspicion undermining the gospel.

Neither Jesus nor Paul says why Jesus chose only Jewish free men for the Twelve. The church should no more exclude women from its leadership simply because none of the Twelve were women than it should other social groups since they were not among the Twelve, including Gentiles, slaves, and freed slaves. Why exclude based on silence?

This survey of the influences on Paul reveals a stark contrast between the low view of women that pervaded both Hellenism and Judaism and the respect for women espoused by the primary guiding influences on Paul: Holy Scripture, Gamaliel, and Jesus. Awareness of this contrast enriches analysis of Paul's teachings about women, as does the following study of what Paul wrote about his female colleagues in ministry.

