

The Eternal Subordination of the Son to the Father: Orthodoxy or Heresy?

This short seminary paper received a perfect score:¹

In the 1970's, a novel Trinitarian doctrine drove a wedge between the immanent and economic Trinity, claiming that the Son was equal to the Father in his ontology, yet eternally subordinate in his function or role.² Asserting that the Father and Son are equal in their personhood, deity, and importance;³ the proponents of this view maintain that the Father always related to the Son as a human father would. They contend that the Father has eternally directed and held authority over the Son, while the Son has forever acquiesced to the Father.⁴

Professing that his position stems from the Athanasian Creed, Wayne Grudem alleges the following:

“The heresy of subordinationism, which holds that the Son is inferior in being to the Father, should be clearly distinguished from the orthodox doctrine that the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in role or function: without this truth, *we would lose the doctrine of the Trinity* for we would not have any eternal personal distinctions between the Father and the Son, and they would not eternally be Father and Son.”⁵

Donald Fairbairn avers that the Son obeys the Father yet this does not diminish Christ in the least. Therefore, just as the Son willingly obeys the Father, so those called to submit in the home should recognize their subjection as a gift.⁶ Confirming Kevin Giles's claim that this doctrine arose in response to women leading in the church,⁷ Grudem devotes five pages of his chapter titled “Man as Male and Female” to the Trinity,⁸ despite his admission that no analogy can convey the mystery of the Triune God without major error.⁹ R. C. Sproul contends that being given a subordinate position does not infer inferiority, as the Son and Spirit are co-eternal and equal to the Father in power and dignity.¹⁰

This poses several critical questions. What exactly is a “role”? Can one be eternally subordinate in function while remaining ontologically equal? Did the theologians of the past consider women existentially equal to men? Do the creeds of the church regarding the Trinity reflect this position? What does Scripture teach?

A “role” is defined as either “an actor's part in a play, movie, etc.”; or “the function

¹ <https://redemptivehistorytheology.com/blog/the-eternal-subordination-of-the-son-to-the-father-orthodoxy-or-heresy/>

² Kevin Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 83. This differs from the views of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, and Arius, who believed that the Son was ontologically subordinate to the Father by virtue of having been begotten (pp. 60-64).

³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 459.

⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 249.

⁵ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 245 (italics mine).

⁶ Donald Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity press, 2009), 80–1.

⁷ Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate*, 113.

⁸ Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 455–60.

⁹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 241.

¹⁰ R. C. Sproul, *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 131–2. 1

assumed or part played by a person or thing in a particular situation.”¹¹ Therefore, conventional usage indicates that to eternally perform a role consists of an oxymoron. Furthermore, if the authority of the Father over the Son is rooted in the very fabric of the Trinity, then this must be considered an essential quality, making the Son inferior to the Father in his very essence.¹² That anyone can be eternally subject to another while equal in ontology mirrors the famous quote from George Orwell: “All animals are equal but some are more equal than others.”¹³

Theologians prior to the twentieth century would have been astonished to discover that women today are considered existentially equal to men.¹⁴ According to Chrysostom, the Lord set husbands over their wives because women are weaker beings who are light-minded and easily deceived.¹⁵ Augustine argued that the natural order required women to assist their husbands because the lesser serves the greater.¹⁶ Aquinas examined three reasons why women are not in the image of God.¹⁷

Among the Reformers, John Calvin stated, “Wherever even natural propriety has been maintained, women have in all ages been excluded from the public management of affairs...it becomes her to be under subjection.”¹⁸ He asserted that nature has formed a woman to obey, for government by women has always been considered grotesque.¹⁹ John Knox wrote, “No less monstrous is the body of that commonwealth where a woman bears empire; for either it does lack a lawful head (as in very deed it does), or else there is an idol exalted in the place of the true head.”²⁰ John Wesley concurred that women were inferior to men.²¹ Consequently, the notion that women are analogous to Jesus would have seemed blasphemous to the authors of the great creeds of the faith and never intended by them.

Regarding the Trinity, the historic witness of the church declares that an indelible link

¹¹ “Role,” Oxford Dictionaries, accessed November 21, 2014,

http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/role?searchDictCode=all.

¹² Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 308.

¹³ George Orwell, “Animal Farm Chapter X,” *The Complete Works of George Orwell*, 1946, accessed November 21, 2014, http://www.george-orwell.org/Animal_Farm/9.html.

¹⁴ Kevin Giles notes that in his survey of theologians he found not one prior to 1900 who did not believe that woman are inherently inferior to men (*The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate*, 148).

¹⁵ John Chrysostom, “Homily XXXVII: 1 Cor xiv.34,” in *Homilies On First and Second Corinthians*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Talbot W. Chambers Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 12:222.

¹⁶ Augustine, *Questions on the Heptateuch*, 1.153.

¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 33.5.13.

¹⁸ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. vol. 1, Translated by John Pringle (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 468.

¹⁹ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Translated by John Pringle (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 68.

²⁰ John Knox, “The Empire of Women is Subversive of Good Order, Equity and Justice,” in *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, Selected Writings of John Knox: Public Epistles, Treatises, and Expositions to the Year 1559 (July 23, 2011, 1558), under “78,” accessed November 21, 2014, <http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualNLS/firblast.htm>.

²¹ John Wesley, *Notes On St Paul's First Epistle to Timothy* (London: The Wesley Center Online, 1862), under “1 Tim 2:13,” accessed November 21, 2014, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesleys-notes-on-the-bible/notes-on-st-pauls-first-epistle-to-timothy#Chapter+II>.

endures between God's character and his actions;²² no split separates the immanent and economic Trinity.²³ The earliest extant Christian sermon begins,²⁴ "Brethren, it is fitting that you should think of Jesus Christ as of God."²⁵ Gregorius Thaumaturgus avowed that nothing created nor subservient exists within the Godhead.²⁶ Lucian of Antioch noted that the Father is really a Father and the Son really a Son, but in harmony they are one.²⁷ As Augustine stated, "If the Son were not equal to the Father, he would not be the son of God."²⁸

Since the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed claim the deity of the Son but fail to overtly deny his subordination, the Athanasian Creed deftly summarized the first four ecumenical councils (AD 325–451). This "triumphant paean of the orthodox faith,"²⁹ states: "...the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is: such is the Son...they are not three Almighty but one Almighty...And in this Trinity none is afore, or after another: none is greater or less than another...but the whole three persons are coeternal and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid: the unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in unity, is to be worshiped ... [Christ is] equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching his manhood ... This is the Catholic Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."³⁰

Although unlikely to have been penned by Athanasius,³¹ the tone of the Athanasian Creed fits with his statement that Christ, "While ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now he entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level and self-revealing to us."³² Since then, none of the seventeen Evangelical Protestant creeds concerning the Trinity,³³ nor the Council of Trent,³⁴ have promoted the subjection of the Son to the Father.³⁵ Grudem ignores this overwhelming witness of the church, quoting Charles Hodge's 1871 assertion that the Nicene Creed teaches that the subjection of the Son to the Father has "*been accepted by the Church Universal.*"³⁶

Those who maintain that the pre-incarnate Christ was equal to the Father in cosmic authority agree that Jesus obeyed the Father during the Incarnation.³⁷ The Son did not take

²² David S. Cunningham, "What Do We Mean by 'God'?" Pages 76-92 in *Essentials of Christian Theology*, ed. William C. Placher (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 80.

²³ Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate*, 1.

²⁴ William C. Placher, *Essentials of Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Know Press, 2003), 56.

²⁵ Clement, "Second Letter of Clement," Translated by Roberts and Donaldson, 1. Circa 95–140 AD.

²⁶ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, 6th ed. vol. II: The Greek and Latin Creeds*, 1931; (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 25. Circa 270 AD.

²⁷ Schaff, *Greek and Latin Creeds*, 27.

²⁸ Augustine, *Sermon 140.5*, Translated by R. G. MacMullen.

²⁹ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, 6th ed. vol. I: The History of Creeds*, 1931; (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 37-8.

³⁰ Schaff, *Greek and Latin Creeds*, 66-70.

³¹ Schaff, *History of Creeds*, 35.

³² Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 2.8.

³³ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, 6th ed. Vol. III: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds*, 1931; (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).

³⁴ Schaff, *Greek and Latin Creeds*, 79.

³⁵ See Appendix

³⁶ Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 252 (italics original).

³⁷ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 307.

advantage of his equality with God,³⁸ but willingly relinquished that which was *always* his.³⁹ To accomplish this, he “emptied himself,”⁴⁰ pouring himself out completely for the benefit of others (Phil 2:3–8; 2 Cor 8:9).⁴¹ “Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from what he suffered” (Heb 8:5). Furthermore, Jesus prayed, “Father, glorify me with your own glory, that which I was having with you before the world [came] to be” (John 17:5).

Nevertheless, David Pao claims that since “God [is] the head of Christ” (1 Cor 11:3), Jesus’s subordination is undeniable.⁴² However, he ignores the context of verses 3–13, which clearly indicates that here the term “head” refers to the source or origin, as in the head of a river, rather than to a ruler.⁴³ Grudem argues that the Father consistently speaks, initiates, and sends; while the Son always obeys by creating, sustaining, and coming to earth.⁴⁴ Yet, many of these functions are also attributed to Jesus. For example, “Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, thus also the Son to whom he wishes gives life” (John 5:21). During the Last Supper, Jesus promised, “I will ask the Father and he will give the Holy Spirit to you” (John 14:16). Later that evening, he said, “...when the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth...” (John 15:26).

Earlier in his ministry, when Jesus was pressured to reveal his messianic status, he responded, “The works which I do in the name of my Father, these testify concerning me...my sheep are listening to my voice, and I know them and they are following me, and I give to them eternal life, and never shall they perish into eternity. And no one shall seize them from my hand (John 10:25–8)... and no one is able to seize [them] from the hand of my Father. I and the Father are one.” (John 10: 30).

Verse 29 proves to be a mare’s nest, with five variant readings.⁴⁵ “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all” has been rated with a “D” in terms of its probability of being correct.⁴⁶ Ultimately, the United Bible Society Committee determined that the most likely original reading was, “As to my Father, that which he has given to me is greater than all,” with “that” meaning the sheep. This decision remains highly disputed.⁴⁷ Regardless which variant proves correct, a text this questionable should not be used to convince others.

Nevertheless, D. A. Carson, in spite of noting the issues, wrote the following concerning this verse:

“Who has strength or subtlety sufficient to overpower or outwit the sovereign Father? *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all.* Indeed, at certain junctions in the history

³⁸ Roy W. Hoover, “Harpagmos Enigma: A Philological Solution,” *Harvard Theological Review* 64, no. 1 (January 1971): 95–119, 109, 117.

³⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 208 (italics original).

⁴⁰ Where Scripture appears in quotation marks, this represents the author’s translation from the NA²⁸. Whenever possible, the Greek word order is preserved, as this reflects the emphasis of the original author.

⁴¹ Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC vol. 43 (Dallas: Word, Inc., 2004), 117.

⁴² David W. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 262.

⁴³ Verlyn D. Verbrugge, “*kephale*”, Pages 302–4 in *NIDNTA* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 303.

⁴⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 459.

⁴⁵ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC 36 (Dallas: Word, Inc., 2002), 165.

⁴⁶ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 197.

⁴⁷ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 165.

of redemption, the preservation of those the Father has given to the Son is explicitly and immediately assigned to the Father. In particular, when Jesus is about to undergo the isolation and grim agony of the cross, he formally hands over the responsibility for the preservation of his own to his Father (17:12).⁴⁸ However, John 17:12 says, “When I was with them, I was protecting them in your name, the ones you gave to me, and kept watch and none from them perished except the son of destruction, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.”⁴⁹

Congruent with the perfect unity of the Father and the Son, in this era of the now-and-not-yet, Christ rules over all authorities, powers and dominions (Eph 1:20–2). However, once everything is subjected to him, then Jesus shall place everything under the Father, including himself, “in order that God may be all in all” (1 Cor 15:24–8). According to Augustine, due to the unity within the Godhead, whenever one of them is manifested, so is the other. Therefore, “When [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to ...the Father”, Jesus does not take the Kingdom from himself. Just as Christ moves his people to contemplate the Father, doubtless, the Father shall turn their focus to contemplate the Son.⁵⁰

Consequently, the Greek term *perichoresis* best captures the essence of the Godhead: as in a perfectly choreographed dance, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit so interpenetrate one another that their wills are unified.⁵¹ Where there is one, the other two are also, without one being greater than the others,⁵² a community of perfect love.⁵³ Even Grudem acknowledges, “This tri-personal form of being is far beyond our ability to comprehend. *It is a kind of existence far different from anything we have experienced*, and far different from anything else in the universe.”⁵⁴

[Author’s note: I wrote this paper in December 2014. In November 2016, the Evangelical Theological Society affirmed that the concept of the Eternal Subordination of the Son does not conform to the association’s doctrinal basis. My academic advisor, who attended that convention, described it to me as “a bloodbath.”]

[Related posts in Redemptive History and Theology include five posts in Chapter Three of Gen 1–3 and two in Chapter Eight of Gen 1–3: Equality with God (Phil 2:5–6); A Summary of Trinitarian Creeds (Appendix to Phil 2:5–6); Taking the Form of a Slave (Phil 2:7); Obedient to the Point of Death (Phil 2:8); and The Name Above Every Name (Phil 2:9–11); Three Heads (1 Cor 11:3); and Interdependence (1 Cor 11:11–12)]

⁴⁸ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 393-4.

⁴⁹ In all fairness, this may have been simply an error, as verse 15 would make much more sense in that context.

⁵⁰ Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 1.9

⁵¹ Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate*, 113.

⁵² William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd ed. Alan W. Gomes, Ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2003), 250.

⁵³ Placher, *Essentials of Christian Theology*, 59.

⁵⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 255 (italics original).

Appendix: The Creeds of Christendom, Schaff 1996

CREED	DATE	PAGE(S)	EQUALITY/SUBORDINATION
Volume II: The Greek and Latin Creeds:			
Gregorius Thaumaturgus of Neo-Caesarea	ca 270	24–27	“nothing created or subservient”
Lucian of Antioch	300	25–28	“in personality three, but in harmony one”
First Creed of Epiphanius/Nicene Creed 1st Formula	374	33–34	“only begotten Son of God”
The Athanasian Creed	5th Century	66–70	“none is greater or less than another... Three persons coeternal and coequal... Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity”
Volume III: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds:			
The Augsburg Confession	1530	7–9	“unity of the divine essence and persons”
The Formula of Concord	1576	179	“heresy that Father and Son have distinct essences, equal or unequal, we condemn.”
The French Confession of Faith (John Calvin)	1559	359–363	“same essence, equal in eternity and power”
The Belgic Confession	1561	389–395	“there is neither first nor last... the Son is equal to the Father in all things.”
Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of Church of England	1562	487–489	“of one substance, power, and eternity”
The Irish Articles of Religion	1615	528	“in unity... substance, power, and eternity”
The Westminster Confession of Faith	1647	606	“one substance, power, and eternity”
The Westminster Shorter Catechism	1647	677	“same substance, equal in power and glory”

CREED	DATE	PAGE(S)	EQUALITY/SUBORDINATION
Methodist Articles of Religion	1784	807	“in unity of this Godhead, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity”
Evangelical Free Church of Geneva	1848	781–782	“born from a virgin...has been able to obey God in a perfect way”
Articles of Religion of Reformed Episcopal Church	1875	814–815	“in unity of this Godhead, there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity”
The Second Helvetic Confession	1566	835	“in order, one going before another, yet without any inequality”
Presbyterian Church of England Articles of Faith	1890	916	“[Christ] at the right hand of God ...clothed with authority and power as Lord over all”
American Congregational Statement of Doctrine	1883	914	“of one substance with the Father... worshiped and glorified”
Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith	1902	922	“one in substance, equal in power and glory”
The Basis of Union of the United Church of Canada	1925	935–936	“same substance, equal in power and glory...express image of the Father’s person”
Orthodox-Reformed Statement on the Holy Trinity http://www.reformiert-online.net/agora2/docs/18warctd.pdf	1992		“conjoined in all their distinctiveness, for the entire and undivided Godhead resides in each Person, and each Person dwells in or inheres in the Other; so that the whole of one Person is imaged in the whole of the other”

This study summarizes what God has done for relationships between women and men through the process of Creation, Sin, Exile, and Restoration in the Bible. These selected posts are taken from larger studies on Genesis 1–3, Genesis 4–11, and pertinent New Testament passages. You can access all of them from here: <https://redemptivehistorytheology.com/blog/>. Since these are individual posts, some repetition does occasionally occur. There is space on pp. 106–112 for you to write a short summary of each section.

Creation:

Made in the Image of God

1) Gen 1:26: A major issue in this verse concerns the nature of the image (*tselem*) of God, and how that term relates to the “likeness” (*demuth*) of God.⁵⁵ Unlike other creatures, which God created “according to their kind” (*min*) (Gen 1:21, 24–25), he made humanity (*adam*) in his own image. Although this concept forms the basis for understanding Genesis and the rest of Scripture,⁵⁶ the phrase “image of God” appears in only two other verses in the Old Testament (OT) (Gen 1:27 (2x); Gen 9:6).⁵⁷

Complicating matters, this Hebrew word for “image” occurs only seventeen times in the entire OT. Ten of those refer to physical models or idols (e.g. 1 Sam 6:4–5; Ezek 16:17; Num 33:51–52).⁵⁸ Of these, only the images in 1 Samuel remain free from condemnation as illicit representations.⁵⁹ Two uses of “image” in the Psalms compare human existence to a fleeting shadow (Ps 39:6; Ps 73:20).⁶⁰

In the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) perspective, the gods created the world for their own enjoyment. They made humanity as an afterthought to relieve them from the drudgery of doing their own labor.⁶¹ According to Enuma Elish, the gods tired of working to obtain food, so they came up with a plan to create others to feed them. The hero Marduk announced, “Blood I will mass and cause bones to be. I will establish a savage. ‘Man’ shall be his name. Truly, savage man I will create. He shall be charged with the service of the gods that they might be at ease!” Then Marduk slew the god who had incited the cosmic sea monster to rebel. The god Ea mixed clay with Kingu’s blood to fashion people to work as their slaves.⁶²

Throughout the ANE, only a king or high-ranking official could be designated as “the image of God.”⁶³ For example, Egyptians revered pharaohs as both kings and the incarnation of a god. A Pyramid Text states, “For the King is a great power who has power over the other powers; the king is a sacred image, the most sacred of the sacred images of the Great One. And whomsoever he finds in his way, him he devours piecemeal...Thousands serve him, hundreds make offerings for him.”⁶⁴

⁵⁵Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 134.

⁵⁶Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 65.

⁵⁷Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 134.

⁵⁸Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 29.

⁵⁹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 135.

⁶⁰Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 29.

⁶¹Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 1:31.

⁶²“The Creation Epic” (Enuma Elish), *ANET*, lines 6.1–36, 68.

⁶³Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 135.

⁶⁴Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), lines 407–8, 82.

One man wrote, “To the king, my lord, and my sun god say, ‘Thus Biridiya, the true servant of the king. At the feet of the king, my lord, and my sun god, seven times and seven times I fall.’”⁶⁵ According to an Akkadian proverb, “[Humanity] is the shadow of a god, a slave is the shadow of a man; but the king is like the (very) image of a god.”⁶⁶

While in Egypt, Israel’s overlords taught Moses’s original readers that they existed solely to work for the pharaoh. In contrast, Gen 1:26 uses royal language to describe all humanity, from the greatest king to the lowliest slave.⁶⁷

People living in the ANE believed that an image carried the essential nature of what it personified. An Egyptian stele states:

“[Ptah, the Creator-god,] fashioned the gods...He installed the gods in their holy places, he made their offerings to flourish, he equipped their holy places. He made likenesses of their bodies to the satisfaction of their hearts. Then the gods entered into their bodies of every wood and every stone and every metal.”⁶⁸

Consequently, those worshiping an idol considered their activity equivalent to adoration of the god whom the idol portrayed. While a statue may not have looked exactly like the god, it could accomplish the deity’s work.⁶⁹ Similarly, the Hebrew concept of “image” (*tselem*) does not necessarily specify an exact physical likeness.⁷⁰

In Mesopotamia, a son could be born in the image of his father, but only a god could be created in the image of the gods.⁷¹ As a result, ancient rulers set up images of themselves in distant parts of their realms to represent their authority. That explains why Nebuchadnezzar II expressed such outrage when three Hebrew men refused to bow in worship before the statue he erected after his dream (Dan 2:31–45; Dan 3:1, 8–15).⁷²

The Assyrian emperor Shalmaneser III recorded his victories on a black obelisk, noting that after defeating the people of Hattina and installing a new ruler, “I fashioned a heroic image of my royal personage; I had it set up in...his royal city, in the house of his gods.”⁷³ A new god ruled over the temple and the city.

A phenomenal example of this concept appears in Abu Simbel, Egypt. Rameses II had this temple complex carved out of a cliff side along his border with Nubia to display his power. It depicts his victory over the Hittites at Kadesh. Four images of gods—including Rameses the Great himself—sit at the back of the largest temple. On his birthday and coronation day, which

⁶⁵W. F. Albright and George E. Mendenhall, trans., “The Amarna Letters, RA XIX,” in ANET, lines 1–10, 485.

⁶⁶Robert F. Pfeiffer, trans., “Akkadian Proverbs and Counsels,” in ANET, 5.3, 426.

⁶⁷Phyllis A. Bird, “‘Male and Female He Created Them’: Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation,” *HTR* 74, no. 2: 129–59, 144, <http://www.bhporter.com/Porter%20PDF%20Files/male%20and%20female%20he%20created%20them%20Gne%201%202027%20in%20the%20context%20of%20the%20priestly%20account%20of%20creation.pdf>.

⁶⁸James H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 46, <https://archive.org/stream/developmentofrel00brea#page/46/mode/2up>.

⁶⁹Walton, *Genesis*, 130.

⁷⁰Swanson, “צֵלֶם” (*tselem*), *DBLSDH*, 7512.

⁷¹Walton, *Genesis*, 130.

⁷²Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 67.

⁷³Daniel David Luckenbill, ed., *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia (ARAB): Historical Records of Assyria from the Earliest Times to Sargon, Vol. 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1926), 1:208–9, https://archive.org/stream/LuckenbillAncientRecordsAssyria01/Luckenbill_Ancient_Records_Assyria01#page/n223/mode/2up.

are conveniently six months apart, a ray of light shines to the back of the temple, illuminating three of the four idols. Ptah, the god of darkness, remains unlit.⁷⁴

“According to our likeness (*demuth*)” more precisely defines the meaning of “the image of God.”⁷⁵ Most scholars assert that this phrase affirms that some distinctions exist between the creator and humanity,⁷⁶ just as Seth could not have been completely identical to his father (Gen 5:3).⁷⁷ The word “likeness” occurs three times in Ezek 1:26.⁷⁸ Notably, the prophet did not say that he saw a throne or a man,⁷⁹ but “something like” them.⁸⁰ Thus, humanity bears great resemblance to God but does not comprise God himself.⁸¹

What makes sin so serious is that we use our God-given capacities to do things which offend the one who endows us with them.⁸² Yet, Moses did not define what constitutes the image or the likeness of God.⁸³ Some commentators suspect that we read what we most value about being human into the text, leading them to abandon any attempt to explain the term.⁸⁴

Other theologians have been more obliging. They suggest several major categories. The first involves mental and spiritual capacities, such as the ability to reason and to determine a proper course of action, personality, intelligence, self-awareness,⁸⁵ moral sensitivity, a sense of beauty, creativity,⁸⁶ original righteousness, the ability to enjoy fellowship with God,⁸⁷ and the potential to love others sacrificially (Eph 4:32–5:2).⁸⁸

Some scholars contend that the image of God consists of a physical resemblance. This interpretation comes primarily from Gen 5:3, for Adam “fathered [Seth] in his likeness, according to his image.” As noted previously, the most common meaning of “image” involves physical appearance. Since the OT stresses that God does not possess a body and is invisible, this interpretation remains problematic (Deut 4:15–16).⁸⁹ On the other hand, the Lord describes himself as having eyes and ears to communicate his awareness of the plight of the afflicted (Ps 94:9).⁹⁰

To focus upon any one aspect of humanity when seeking to define God’s image is inadequate. Since people function as a unity of body and soul, we cannot elevate one aspect of the Lord’s likeness over the others.⁹¹ As Dietrich Bonhoeffer noted, “If the creator wishes to

⁷⁴History Channel, “Rameses’ Temple at Abu Simbel,” <http://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/ancient-egypt/videos/ramses-temple-at-abu-simbel>. This link is for a three-minute video.

⁷⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 29.

⁷⁶ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 135–6.

⁷⁷ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 29–30.

⁷⁸ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “דְּמוּת” (*demuth*), *BDB*, 198, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/198/mode/2up>.

⁷⁹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 136.

⁸⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 29.

⁸¹ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 66.

⁸² Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 70–2.

⁸³ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 137.

⁸⁴ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 29.

⁸⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 29–30.

⁸⁶ Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 70–2.

⁸⁷ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 137.

⁸⁸ Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 29.

⁸⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 30.

⁹⁰ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 65.

⁹¹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 137.

create the creator's own image, then the creator must create it free. And only such an image, in its freedom, would fully praise God, would fully proclaim God's glory as creator."⁹²

As redeemed people, we seek to become more fully conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:4–11).⁹³ Nevertheless, even those without Christ continue to bear God's image (James 3:8–9). According to the 13th century theologian Thomas Aquinas, "The image of God abides ever in the soul; 'whether this image of God be so obsolete,' as it were clouded, 'as almost to amount to nothing,' as in those who have not the use of reason; 'or obscured and disfigured,' as in sinners; or 'clear and beautiful,' as in the just."⁹⁴

Even John Calvin, who emphasized the frightful deformity of humanity,⁹⁵ wrote this: "Scripture...tells us that we are not to look to what men in themselves deserve, but to attend to the image of God, which exists in all, and to which we owe all honor and love. But in those who are of the household of faith, the same rule is to be more carefully observed...as that image is renewed and restored in them by the Spirit of Christ. Therefore, whoever be the man that is presented to you as needing your assistance, you have no ground for declining to give it to him."⁹⁶

Thus, the image of God remains inseparable from humanity regardless of the way one lives. We do not merely bear the likeness of our creator; we are the image of God.⁹⁷ Every person—no matter how marred that image may be—must be treated with respect. Each human life is sacred. Murder is an affront to our creator, for it destroys God's image (Gen 9:5–6).⁹⁸

That the Son of God came to us in flesh enables us to comprehend more fully what it means to be the image of God: it is to be like Jesus.⁹⁹ Furthermore, as those in whom the Spirit of God resides, we can grow more fully into Christ's image (Eph 4:11–16, 22–24; Col 3:12–15). As we develop character like Jesus's, we better reflect God's image (Col 1:15).¹⁰⁰

In the ANE, the image of God applied to the king primarily in terms of his function and his presence.¹⁰¹ Consequently, in recent years the dominant view among scholars understands the "image of God" in Genesis 1 in terms of exercising dominion over the world, ruling as God's representatives on earth.¹⁰² Even as emperors placed statues of themselves in the temples of their under-lords, so God made Adam and Eve in his image and placed them on earth to signify that the Lord rules the planet.¹⁰³ Given the ANE context, this view has the greatest merit for defining the divine image.

For example, one pharaoh wrote this to his son:¹⁰⁴

⁹² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 61.

⁹³ Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 24.

⁹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province; New York: Benziger, 1947), 1.93.8, <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/summa/FP/FP093.html#FPQ93OUTP1>.

⁹⁵ Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 43.

⁹⁶ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (trans. Henry Beveridge; Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), 3.7.6, 624–5, <https://archive.org/stream/institutesofchr01calv/page/624/mode/2up>.

⁹⁷ Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 65.

⁹⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 31–2.

⁹⁹ Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 22.

¹⁰⁰ Walton, *Genesis*, 131.

¹⁰¹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 30.

¹⁰² Ian Hart, "Genesis 1:1–2:3 as a Prologue to the Book of Genesis." *TynBul* 46, no. 2 (November 1995): 315–36, 317–19, http://tyndalehouse.com/tynbul/library/TynBull_1995_46_2_06_Hart_Gen1Prologue.pdf.

¹⁰³ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 82.

¹⁰⁴ James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures, 3rd Ed. (ANET)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 414.

“Well directed are *men, the cattle of the god*. He made heaven and earth according to their desire, and he repelled the water monster. He made the breath of life [for] their nostrils. *They who have issued from his body are his images*. He arises in heaven according to their desire. He made for them plants, animals, fowl, and fish to feed them. He slew his enemies and injured [even] his [own] children because they thought of making rebellion. He makes the light of day according to their desire, and he sails by in order to see them. He has erected a shrine around about them, and when they weep, he hears.¹⁰⁵

Note the depiction of commoners as the cattle of the sun god. Only the rulers who issued from the sun god’s body were made in the god’s image, not in physical appearance but in their privileges and power.¹⁰⁶ In contrast, the OT view is highly democratic, for God created all people in his image.¹⁰⁷

Read Gen 1:26. In what way did the Hebrew view of humanity differ from that of the nations around them? Taking the ANE context into account, how would you define “the image of God”? How does recognizing the image of God in other people affect the way you treat them?

Stewards of the Earth

2) Gen 1:26 cont.: Concerning humanity—the ones made in his image—God said, “And let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and over the beasts of all the earth and over all of the creeping things which creep about on the earth.” In Akkadian, a related Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) language, the word “rule” means to guide or drive animals. Thus, this term connotes exercising dominion by caring for creation.¹⁰⁸

Typically, the Hebrew verb “rule” (*radhah*) applies to human relationships (Lev 25:43; 1 Ki 4:24) or nations (Ps 72:8–14).¹⁰⁹ It implies protection and care for those under one’s dominion.¹¹⁰ Within Israel, the Lord condemned rulers whom he compared to shepherds abusing their flocks (Ezek 34:1–4, 10).¹¹¹

Regarding just dominion, an Egyptian pharaoh wrote this to his son: “Foster thy younger generation, that the residence city may love thee, and increase thy adherents with *recruits*. Behold, thy citizenry is full of new growing (boys). It is twenty years that the younger generation is happy following its heart, (and then) *recruits [come] forth anew*... Make thy officials great, advance thy [*soldiers*], increase the younger generation of thy [follow]ing, provided with *property*, endowed with fields, and rewarded with cattle.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵John A. Wilson, trans., “The Instruction for King Meri-Ka-Re,” in *ANET*, lines 131–5, 417, Italics mine.

¹⁰⁶Walton, *Genesis*, 130.

¹⁰⁷Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 66.

¹⁰⁸Philip J. Nel, “רָדָה” (*radhah*), *NIDOTTE*, 1056.

¹⁰⁹H.-J. Zobel, “רָדָה” (*radhah*), *TDOT* 13:331–6, 331.

¹¹⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 137–8.

¹¹¹Zobel, “רָדָה” (*radhah*), *TDOT* 13:333.

¹¹²Wilson, trans., “The Instruction for King Meri-Ka-Re,” in *ANET*, 59–61, 415. Italics original.

Our commission and empowerment to govern creation comprises a significant aspect of our likeness to God.¹¹³ Far greater than the ANE view of humanity as slaves of the gods, the Lord made us to serve as creators and laborers with him to promote the flourishing of the world.¹¹⁴ Compassion must characterize our dominion, not exploitation (Prov 12:10). Even in Eden, the ones created as lords of all served the garden (Gen 2:15).¹¹⁵

As representatives of the Lord,¹¹⁶ he calls us to manage the earth for its true owner (Ps 24:1–2).¹¹⁷ Freedom to rule involves being bound to those over whom we exercise dominion, for when we care for creation, it cares for us.¹¹⁸ Therefore, believers must seek the redemption of not only people but of our environment and all who dwell within it.¹¹⁹

Read Gen 1:26. How do you fulfill God’s mandate to rule over all the creatures of the earth? What steps can you take to improve the way you care for our planet?

Male and Female He Created Them

3) Gen 1:27: Three brief sentences define the most compelling aspects of human existence.¹²⁰ In a shift from poetic narrative, here we read the first true poetry in the Bible. This verse highlights the unique standing of humanity in God’s creation.¹²¹

“And God created humanity (*adam*) in his image. In the image of God, he created it.¹²² Male and female, he created them.” The verb “created” (*bara*) is singular, contrary to the “us” of Gen 1:26. This supports the view that the Lord had been speaking to his heavenly council regarding his plans to fabricate people.¹²³ Here *adam* refers to all of humanity,¹²⁴ in contrast to a male person (*zakhar*).¹²⁵ The first usage of “Adam” as a personal name does not occur until Gen 3:17.¹²⁶

¹¹³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 66.

¹¹⁴ Venema and McKnight, *Adam and the Genome: Reading Scripture After Genetic Science*, loc. 2945 of 5792.

¹¹⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 138.

¹¹⁶ Hart, “Genesis 1:1–2:3 as a Prologue to the Book of Genesis,” 317–9, http://tyndalehouse.com/tyndalehouse/library/TynBull_1995_46_2_06_Hart_Gen1Prologue.pdf.

¹¹⁷ Douglas J. Moo, “Nature and the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment,” *JETS* 49, no. 3 (September 2006): 449–88, 478, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/49/49-3/JETS_49-3_449-488_Moo.pdf.

¹¹⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 66.

¹¹⁹ Moo, “Nature and the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment,” 474, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/49/49-3/JETS_49-3_449-488_Moo.pdf.

¹²⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 32.

¹²¹ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 67.

¹²² The pronoun here is third person masculine singular, which can mean either “it” or “him.”

¹²³ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 138.

¹²⁴ Gesenius, *GKC*, 402, <https://archive.org/stream/geseniushebrewgr00geseuoft#page/402/mode/2up>.

¹²⁵ Holladay, “זָכָר” (*zakhar*), *CHALOT*, 89, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/270/mode/2up>.

¹²⁶ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “אָדָם” (*adam*), *BDB*, 9, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/8/mode/2up>.

Moses wrote, “Male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27 characterizes humanity by sexual differentiation. Unlike the animals, which God created in various species and kinds (*min*), he described people in terms of gender. Not until the flood narrative did the Lord portray creatures as male and female (Gen 6:19).¹²⁷

Therefore, this verse affirms that God created both men and women in his image to rule over creation, even though sexual identity and function remain foreign to the Trinity. Our sexuality comes from God as a gift, rather than an accident of nature or a mere biological phenomenon. Indeed, the Lord’s next words blessed human fertility (Gen 1:28).¹²⁸

Since neither gender comprises all of humanity, men and women need interactions with each other.¹²⁹ God created us as men and women. Therefore, he designed us to experience community across gender lines (Gen 2:18; 1 Cor 11:11–12). Only then can we express all that it means to be fully human,¹³⁰ whether we marry or remain single.

Read Gen 1:26–27. Why is it significant that God created all of humanity to rule over his creation? If your family had been enslaved for generations, believing that the sole reason for your existence was to serve the god Pharaoh, how would learning that you had been created in the image of the creator of the universe affect your view of yourself? How do you interact across gender lines?

The Blessing of Fruitfulness

4) Gen 1:28: This text sits at the heart of western religious tradition concerning humanity’s place in our world.¹³¹ It states, “And God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and become numerous and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the heavens, and over all the living things which move about on the land.’”

People who do not follow Christ remain in the image of God (Gen 1:26). This enables them to retain some glimmers of truth in their conception of God and of humanity.¹³² An Akkadian text asserts that the formation of the earth and of people were divine processes: “When the god Anu created heaven, [when] the god [of waters] created the...ocean, his dwelling, the god Ea pinched off a piece of clay in the...ocean, created the [brick god] for the restoration of [temples], created the reed marsh and the forest for the work of their construction, created the gods...to be the completers of their construction work, created mountains and oceans for everything...[created] the abundant products [of mountain and ocean] to be offerings... created the deities...to be presenters of offerings, created the god Kusug, high priest of the great

¹²⁷ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 138.

¹²⁸ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 138–9.

¹²⁹ Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 97.

¹³⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 83

¹³¹ Theodore Hiebert, “Rethinking Dominion Theology” *Direction* 25, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 16-25, 17, <http://www.directionjournal.org/25/2/rethinking-dominion-theology.html>.

¹³² Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 88.

gods, to be the one who completes their rites and ceremonies, created the king to be the provider ...*created men to be the makers*.¹³³

However, Gen 1 differs from the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) conception of the world by asserting that only one God ultimately wields power in the universe. Furthermore, he granted jurisdiction to people made in his image, rather than to lesser gods.¹³⁴ The Lord commissioned Adam and Eve to expand Eden until paradise covers the whole earth, so that everyone could see that the Lord rules through the work of his images (Eph 3:8–10).¹³⁵ By procreating, they would create additional images of God to fill the earth, God’s temple (Isa 66:1).¹³⁶

Yet humans do not possess absolute dominion. Our rule must align with God’s intentions for the earth and its creatures. He intended for us to fill the earth and rule as benevolent kings and queens (Ps 8:3–9).¹³⁷

In the same way that God blessed the animals in Gen 1:22, he immediately granted the first humans with the ability to reproduce.¹³⁸ Genesis often repeats this blessing of fruitfulness (Gen 9:1; Gen 17:2, 20; Gen 28:3; Gen 35:11; Gen 48:4). Its genealogies bear witness that it came to pass (Gen 5, Gen 9, Gen 11, Gen 25, Gen 36, Gen 46).¹³⁹ Since God directly endows humanity with the means to propagate life, this undercuts all rationale for fertility cults in which people engaged in ritual sex to entreat the gods to create and sustain life.¹⁴⁰

Given that God described reproduction as a blessing in Gen 1:28, we should understand it as a privilege, rather than a command to obey. Those who choose not to have children do not violate Scriptural obligations. The Lord gave this blessing so humanity might fill the earth. How wonderful it would be if we succeeded in utilizing our spiritual privileges as well as we have this physical one (Matt 28:18–20).¹⁴¹

The Lord also blessed humanity with the ability to “subdue the earth” and “have dominion” over the animals. Typically, the term “to subdue” (*kavash*) refers to subjecting someone to slavery, physically assaulting a person, treading underfoot, or subjugating people with military power (Jer 34:11; Esth 7:7–8; Mic 7:19; Num 32:29). However, in this context, the word likely described creating civilizations and fostering agriculture and animal husbandry (Gen 2:5–6, 15).¹⁴²

Other cultures within the ANE viewed these tasks as the prerogative of the gods and their offspring, the kings.¹⁴³ For example, Sennacherib, who ruled from 705/704–681 BC, claimed: “I greatly befriended the gods of Assyria, who exalt the great gods in their shrines...[I am the] maker of Assyria, who completes its metropolis; [I am the] *subduer*...[who makes obedient] the enemies’ land, destroyer of their towns; who digs canals, opens wells, runs irrigation ditches, who brings plenty and abundance to the wide acres of Assyria, who furnishes water for irrigation

¹³³A. Sachs, trans., “Ritual for the Repair of a Temple,” in *ANET*, text c, lines 24–37, 341–2. Italics mine.

¹³⁴Walton, *Genesis*, 136.

¹³⁵Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 81–2.

¹³⁶Dennis R. Venema and Scot McKnight, *Adam and the Genome: Reading Scripture After Genetic Science* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2017), electronic version, loc. 3035 of 5792.

¹³⁷Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 67.

¹³⁸Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 139.

¹³⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 33.

¹⁴⁰Bird, “‘Male and Female He Created Them’: Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation,” 147, <http://www.bhporter.com/Porter%20PDF%20Files/male%20and%20female%20he%20created%20them%20Gne%201%2027%20in%20the%20context%20of%20the%20priestly%20account%20of%20creation.pdf>.

¹⁴¹Walton, *Genesis*, 143–4.

¹⁴²Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 139–40.

¹⁴³Walton, *Genesis*, 135.

to Assyria's meadows—engineering and construction such as none had seen in Assyria in the days of old.”¹⁴⁴ People in the ANE viewed enabling agricultural use of previously unfruitful land as one facet of subduing it.

The word translated as “have dominion” or “rule over” (*radhah*) contains the nuance of using authority which one has been granted by another (1 Ki 4:24; Ps 110:1–2). It refers to priests and administrators fulfilling their duties, kings and tribes ruling over other people, and even shepherds with their sheep.¹⁴⁵ God expected Israelite kings to uphold the welfare of their subjects, especially the poor and weak (Ps 72:12–14; Prov 31:4–9).¹⁴⁶ He prohibited abuse and neglect (Ezek 34:1–10).¹⁴⁷ Similarly, he calls us to rule over nature benevolently.¹⁴⁸

Just as the Lord brought structure to the cosmos, our subduing and having dominion should bring order to the world.¹⁴⁹ God intended Adam and Eve to expand Eden into habitable places for his glory.¹⁵⁰ Consider the annals of Sargon II (722–705 BC):

“The site of this [new city] none among the 350 ancient princes who lived before me, who *exercised dominion* over Assyria and ruled the subjects of [the great god] Enlil, had thought of nor did they know how to settle it, nor did they think of digging its canal or setting out its orchards: to settle that city, to build its great shrines, the abodes of the great gods, and the palace for my royal abode, day and night I planned it. I gave the order and I commanded that it be built.¹⁵¹ Ancient Assyrians associated the exercise of dominion with bringing order to the land.

As God's image-bearers, we must fulfill the privileges of subduing and wielding dominion as the Lord did when he formed the cosmos,¹⁵² creating order from chaos and caring for the creatures he made.¹⁵³ This includes domesticating and managing the animals which populate the earth.¹⁵⁴ As the Lord's representatives, we rule over them on God's behalf.¹⁵⁵

Since we are made in God's image, he has conferred upon us his dignity, entrusted us with his authority, and endowed us with the capacity to imitate him. While all of humanity bears the image of God, the presence of the Spirit greatly enhances those capabilities within those whom the Lord has redeemed.¹⁵⁶ As Christians, we tend to think of bringing healing to the world spiritually by extending God's offer of salvation to others (Luke 7:44–50). However, the Lord also calls us to pursue physical healing, social justice, and environmental restoration (Luke 7:20–23; Luke 4:14–19; Rom 8:19–23).

While we wait expectantly for the ushering in of the new age, we must fully engage ourselves in the advancement of the cause of Christ. This involves pursuing the righteousness,

¹⁴⁴Sennacherib, “The Temple of the New Year's Feast,” in *ARAB*: 2:183–9, 184, https://archive.org/stream/LuckenbillAncientRecordsAssyria02/Luckenbill_Ancient_Records_Assyria02#page/n191/mode/2up. Italics mine.

¹⁴⁵ Walton, *Genesis*, 132.

¹⁴⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 33.

¹⁴⁷ Walton, *Genesis*, 132.

¹⁴⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 33.

¹⁴⁹ Walton, *Genesis*, 136.

¹⁵⁰ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 82.

¹⁵¹Sargon II, “The Display Inscription of Salon XIV,” *ARAB* 2:39–45, Section 83, 42, https://archive.org/stream/LuckenbillAncientRecordsAssyria02/Luckenbill_Ancient_Records_Assyria02#page/n49/mode/2up. Italics mine.

¹⁵² Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 33.

¹⁵³ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 83.

¹⁵⁴ Walton, *Genesis*, 135.

¹⁵⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 33.

¹⁵⁶ Walton, *Genesis*, 37.

equity, and eternal life which God intended from the beginning.¹⁵⁷ If the Lord cares for creation enough to restore it in the age to come, then, surely, we who seek to align ourselves with him should nurture it as well. Nevertheless, we must remain cognizant that, although they are not in vain, our own efforts cannot bring a complete end to the groaning around us. God himself will accomplish that transformation (Ps 96).¹⁵⁸

In the meantime, we function as stewards of the cosmos which God has created for himself. We manage it for the glory of the earth's true owner.¹⁵⁹ A key focus of biblical ethics consists of loving our neighbors as ourselves (Lev 19:18; Mark 12:28–34). The harsh realities of the ecological crises around the world force us to consider whether we can truly love our neighbors without caring for the environments in which they live.¹⁶⁰ For example, Noah, a uniquely righteous man among his neighbors, ensured the preservation of nonhuman life (Gen 6:9; Gen 7:1–5; Prov 12:10).¹⁶¹

People placed an image of a god in a temple to carry out the deity's will and work.¹⁶² In keeping with this, Assurbanipal (668–626 BC) wrote, "The great gods, whose name I called upon, extolling their glory...commanded that I should exercise sovereignty [and] assigned me the task of adorning their sanctuaries."¹⁶³ Similarly, Moses's original readers understood that God created Adam and Eve to serve as his ambassadors. He authorized them to fulfill his purposes by faithfully tending, guarding, and governing the earth (Gen 2:15) while displaying the Lord's glory and extending God's kingdom.¹⁶⁴

To accomplish this cultural mandate,¹⁶⁵ God endowed Adam and Eve with his own gifts and abilities. He enabled them to function perfectly in full relationships with God and with each other as they carried out his purposes:¹⁶⁶ expanding the paradise in which they lived throughout the earth,¹⁶⁷ until the whole world serves as God's temple.¹⁶⁸

Read Gen 1:28. What blessing and mandate did the Lord give to Adam and Eve? How can you fulfill it today?

¹⁵⁷Roy E. Ciampa, "Genesis 1–3 and Paul's Theology of Adam's Dominion in Romans 5–6," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis* (ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 115.

¹⁵⁸Moo, "Nature and the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment," 460–1, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/49/49-3/JETS_49-3_449-488_Moo.pdf.

¹⁵⁹Walton, *Genesis*, 141.

¹⁶⁰Moo, "Nature and the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment," 461, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/49/49-3/JETS_49-3_449-488_Moo.pdf.

¹⁶¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 33.

¹⁶²Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 83.

¹⁶³Assurbanipal II, "The Rassam Cylinder," *ARAB* 2:290–323, Section 768, 292, https://archive.org/stream/LuckenbillAncientRecordsAssyria02/Luckenbill_Ancient_Records_Assyria02#page/n299/mode/2up.

¹⁶⁴Walton, *Genesis*, 130.

¹⁶⁵Per Beale, this promise of fruitful multiplying recurs in the OT fifteen times (*The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 265).

¹⁶⁶Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 73.

¹⁶⁷Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 70.

¹⁶⁸Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 97–8.

God Evaluates His Creation

5) Gen 1:31: This verse provides us with God’s evaluation of all that he created.¹⁶⁹ Moses wrote, “And God saw all which he had made, and behold, it was very good.” The Lord’s assessment differs from his previous statements in three ways. First, he proclaimed it “very good,” rather than “good.” While difficult to articulate in English, the expression of goodness here is a superlative:¹⁷⁰ all was the very best it could be.

Moses continued, “And it was evening and morning, the sixth day.” A definite article (“the”) appears only here and on the seventh day.¹⁷¹ On each of the first five days, no definite article occurs before the number of each day (e.g. “a second day”). In Hebrew grammar, authors employed the word “the” (*ha*) to denote a specific person or thing.¹⁷² This likely signifies that the events of the sixth day represented the apex of the Lord’s creative acts.¹⁷³

God’s character shines forth from the harmony and perfection of the heavens and the earth.¹⁷⁴ The Egyptian Theology of Memphis makes a similar statement about the god Ptah: “Thus, all the gods were formed and his [nine major deities were] completed. Indeed, all the divine order really came into being through what the heart thought and the tongue commanded... And so *Ptah was satisfied*, after he had made everything, as well as all the divine order. He had formed the gods, he had made cities...he had put the gods in their shrines.”¹⁷⁵ In contrast with biblical thought, only after creating the gods “Ptah was satisfied.” This fits with the subservient view of humanity which applied to all but the king.

Read Gen 1:31. Why would the addition of people cause God to pronounce his work the very best it could be? How does this affect the way you view yourself and others?

The Lord Breathes Life

6) Gen 2:7: Moses wrote, “And the Lord God formed the human (*adam*) from the dust of the ground (*adamah*). Then he breathed into his nostril the breath (*nephesh*) of life, and the human became a living person (*nephesh*).”¹⁷⁶ The name *adam* means “man” in a generic sense, without reference to gender. Given current language usage, the best translations are “human” or “humanity.” Note the close linguistic relationship with *adamah*, the word for “ground,”¹⁷⁷ the

¹⁶⁹ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 67.

¹⁷⁰ Gesenius, *GKC*, 426, <https://archive.org/stream/geseniushebrewgr00geseuoft#page/426/mode/2up>.

¹⁷¹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 141.

¹⁷² Gesenius, *GKC*, 407, <https://archive.org/stream/geseniushebrewgr00geseuoft#page/406/mode/2up>.

¹⁷³ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 141.

¹⁷⁴ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 34.

¹⁷⁵ John A. Wilson, trans., “Theology of Memphis,” in *ANET*, lines 57–9, 5. Italics mine.

¹⁷⁶ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “נֶפֶשׁ” (*nephesh*), *BDB*, 659,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/658/mode/2up>.

¹⁷⁷ Leland Ryken, James Douglas Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, Colin Duriez, Douglas Penney, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., “Adam,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL; Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 9–14, 9.

material from which God created him. In Hebrew, *nephesh* means “breath,” “life,” “soul,” and “person.” Therefore, this word appears twice in one sentence.¹⁷⁸

Like the account of the animation of Adam, an Egyptian text says, “Well directed are men, the cattle of the god. He made heaven and earth according to their desire, and he repelled the water-monster. He made the breath of life (for) their nostrils. They who have issued from his body are his images.”¹⁷⁹

Read Gen 2:7. How did Moses use word play to describe how God formed Adam and then imparted life to him? What similarities and differences occur between the view of humanity in Genesis and in the Instruction for King Meri-Ka-Re? How does the Lord’s perspective on the value of people affect the way you see yourself and others?

Not Good!

7) Gen 2:18: Coming after a pattern of God declaring his work “good” (*tov*) and “very (*meod*) good,” (Gen 1:4; Gen 1:10; Gen 1:12; Gen 1:16–18; Gen 1:21; Gen 1:25; and Gen 1:31) the phrase “not (*lo*)” is emphatic, abruptly halting the flow of the narrative. What made Adam’s isolation unacceptable? The Lord in whose image he was created exists in a trinity in the middle of a heavenly court.¹⁸⁰ Even God—who has no needs—exists in community, not alone.

Since Adam’s strength remained inadequate,¹⁸¹ the Lord created Eve. She was neither superior nor inferior to him. Instead, she performed an essential contribution for him.¹⁸² Corresponding to the Hebrew verb, the noun translated as helper” (*ezer*) describes someone who works to “provide support,” “save from danger,” or “deliver from death” (Ps 54:4; Job 29:12).¹⁸³ Eve rescued or saved Adam from his isolation,¹⁸⁴ providing him with emotional and physical support.

Contrary to English usage of the word “helper,” *ezer* tells us nothing about the relative status of the helper to the one being helped.¹⁸⁵ It implies that one being helped does not possess enough strength for the task at hand (Josh 1:14; 1 Chron 12:21–22; Ecc 4:9–12).¹⁸⁶ Indeed, the term “*ezer*” applies to God in sixteen of the nineteen times it appears in the Old Testament (e.g. Gen 49:25; Ps 27:9).¹⁸⁷ In the Hebrew context, a “helper” serves above or beside another person, not under a leader.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁸D. C. Frederichs, “נֶפֶשׁ” (*nephesh*), *NIDOTTE*, 3:133–4, 133.

¹⁷⁹John A. Wilson, trans., “The Instruction for King Meri-Ka-Re,” in *ANET*, line 131, 417, https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n441/mode/2up.

¹⁸⁰Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 88.

¹⁸¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 68.

¹⁸²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 88.

¹⁸³E. Lipiński and H.-J. Fabry, “אָזָר” (*azar*), *TDOT*, 11:13–18, 13, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/740/mode/2up>.

¹⁸⁴Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 176.

¹⁸⁵Walton, *Genesis*, 176.

¹⁸⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 68.

¹⁸⁷Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 88.

¹⁸⁸Walton, *Genesis*, 176.

Likewise, “suitable” (*kenegdo*) means “equal and adequate.”¹⁸⁹ The combination of “helper” with “equal and adequate” suggests reciprocal assistance between two people who correspond to each other.¹⁹⁰ Perhaps the best translation to capture these nuances would describe Eve as Adam’s “partner” or “counterpart.”¹⁹¹ She shared Adam’s mandate (Gen 1:27–28), assisted him in his vocation (Gen 2:15), participated in his delight (Gen 2:8–10), and was to respect the prohibition placed upon him (Gen 2:16–17).¹⁹²

God’s concern for mutual support and marital companionship has no parallel in Ancient Near Eastern literature.¹⁹³ For example, in the Epic of Gilgamesh, Enkidu was born and lived in the wild, content to commune with only animals. Finally, Gilgamesh sent a prostitute to seduce him. Only then did Enkidu seek human companionship.¹⁹⁴

Read Gen 2:18. Why did God recognize that Adam should not be alone? What kind of person was best for him? How can you live as an adequate and equal helper?

A Parade of Animals

8) Gen 2:19–20: God first formed the animals from the same ground which he later used to create Adam (Gen 1:20–26; Gen 2:7). Then, Adam began to fulfill God’s directive to exercise authority over the creatures which preceded him (Gen 1:28). He did so by naming them, an activity previously reserved for the Lord (Gen 1:26).¹⁹⁵ In the ancient world, to confer a name indicated that a person spoke from a position of authority and sovereignty.¹⁹⁶ Emperors frequently employed this tactic over their under-lords (2 Chron 36:4; 2 Ki 24:15–17).

In the process of identifying each of the animals, Adam recognized that none could serve as his equal and adequate partner (*ezer kenegdo*). He would have to look elsewhere for assistance with his God-given functions of subduing and ruling to extend the garden-temple (Gen 1:26–28; Gen 2:8–10), serving and keeping it (Gen 2:15), and being fruitful and multiplying (Gen 1:28).¹⁹⁷

Read Gen 2:19–20. How did the parade of the animals increase Adam’s longing? Why do you think God chose to do that to him? How can you encourage someone who lives in isolation?

¹⁸⁹ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “נָגֵד” (*negdo*), *BDB*, 617, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/616/mode/2up>.

¹⁹⁰ Allan M. Harman, “עֶזֶר” (*ezer*), *NIDOTTE*, 3:379.

¹⁹¹ Walton, *Genesis*, 177.

¹⁹² Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 88.

¹⁹³ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 88.

¹⁹⁴ “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” *ANET*, 2:1–26, 77,

https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n101/mode/2up.

¹⁹⁵ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 75.

¹⁹⁶ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 176.

¹⁹⁷ Walton, *Genesis*, 187.

An Equal and Adequate Partner

9) Gen 2:21–23: In the process of naming the animals, Adam recognized that he lacked his own perfect counterpart (Gen 2:19–20). Moses wrote, “Then the Lord God caused a supernatural stupor (*tardema*) to fall upon the man.”¹⁹⁸ God put Adam into a coma, unable to perceive the Lord’s creative work.¹⁹⁹ The raw material for Eve came from Adam’s side. However, just as the ground did not spontaneously form a man, so a woman did not materialize until Yahweh performed a creative divine act.²⁰⁰ He took her from Adam’s side to stand at his side.²⁰¹

Upon awakening, Adam responded with a rapturous poetic outburst, turning all focus to her:

This, this time,
[is] bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh.
This shall be called woman,
for from man was taken this!²⁰²

In Hebrew, the word translated as “flesh” (*basar*) also means “weakness” (Isa 31:3), while we can render the term for “bone” (*etsem*) as “strength” (Gen 26:16).²⁰³ By combining these antithetical terms into a word-pair, Adam employed merism, a literary device which employs a pair of opposites to denote them both and everything in between. Thus, Adam conveyed that he and the woman were alike across the range of human experience.

The phrase “my/your bone and flesh” also reflects a covenant formula of reciprocal unalterable loyalty (Gen 29:13–14; Judg 9:1–2; 1 Chron 11:1–3).²⁰⁴ This forms the biblical counterpart to many modern marriage vows, “in weakness (flesh) and in strength (bone).”²⁰⁵ Adam recognized that he and the woman shared equal footing yet differed from the animals.²⁰⁶

A 25th century BC Pyramid Text used a similar rhetorical device to insist upon the immortality of a deceased pharaoh by identifying him with the resurrected god Osiris. It says:²⁰⁷ “O Atum, the one here is that son of thine, Osiris, whom thou hast caused to survive and to live on. He lives—(so also) this King Unis lives. He does not die—(so also) this King Unis does not die. Thy body is the body of this King Unis. Thy flesh is the flesh of this King Unis. Thy bones are the bones of this King Unis. When thou departest, this King Unis departs. When this King Unis departs, thou departest.”²⁰⁸

Not until after the fall of humanity did Adam name Eve (Gen 3:20). In Gen 2:23, Adam identified her as his true counterpart.²⁰⁹ The term “woman” (*ishah*) is simply the feminine form

¹⁹⁸ Holladay, “תַרְדֵמָה” (*tardemah*), *CHALOT*, 395.

¹⁹⁹ M. Oeming, “תַרְדֵמָה” (*tardemah*), *TDOT* 13: 338–9.

²⁰⁰ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 177, 179.

²⁰¹ Walton, *Genesis*, 188.

²⁰² Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 69–70.

²⁰³ Victor P. Hamilton, “Marriage (Old Testament and Ancient Near East),” in *ABD* 4:559–69, 568.

²⁰⁴ Walter Brueggemann, “Of the Same Flesh and Bone, Gen 2:23a,” *CBQ* 32, no. 4 (1 October 1970): 532–42, 534–5.

²⁰⁵ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 179–80.

²⁰⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 70.

²⁰⁷ Pritchard, *ANET*, 32.

²⁰⁸ John A. Wilson, trans., “The Conquest of Death,” in *ANET*, lines 167–93, 32–3.

²⁰⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 97.

of the word “man” (*ish*)^{210, 211} Moses emphasized the shared identity and equality of this first couple.²¹² This poem portrays the ideal marriage in ancient Israel, characterized by harmony and intimacy.²¹³ While difficult to express in English, God’s pronouncement of “very good” after Eve’s creation forms a superlative: everything was the very best it could be (Gen 1:31).²¹⁴ Within the Ancient Near East, only Israel reported a separate creation account for the first woman.²¹⁵

Read Gen 2:21–23. Why did Adam react as he did when he saw Eve? What did he communicate about her?

A Transfer of Loyalty

10) Gen 2:24: Here Moses inserted an editorial comment regarding the covenant commitment of marriage:²¹⁶ He wrote, “For this reason a man shall forsake (*azav*) his father and his mother and shall cling to his wife.” To forsake someone strongly implies abandonment, as in Ps 22:1.²¹⁷ When a man marries, he must sever one set of loyalties to begin another.²¹⁸ In traditional societies like Israel’s, honoring one’s parents rose to just below the obligation to revere God (Exod 20:1–12), making this remark about forsaking them quite shocking.

The word “cling” (*davaq*) often occurs in the context of maintaining a covenant relationship, as it does here (Deut 4:4; Deut 10:20; Deut 11:22–3).²¹⁹ Thus, the one-flesh union goes beyond sexuality or even the spiritual and emotional bond which develops as newlyweds form a new household. Just as we consider a person’s blood relatives the same “flesh and blood,” so is one’s spouse.²²⁰

Israel exempted a newly married man from military service and other duties which would take him away from home for one year in order that he would “bring joy to his wife” (Deut 24:5). The biblical pattern for establishing a couple’s own home contrasts with what occurs in many cultures even today. In some places, a man brings his new wife into his parents’ house, where she becomes the lowest-ranking member of the family. Jesus quoted this verse to emphasize the permanence of the marriage bond, which a spouse can choose to dissolve only in the aftermath of adultery, desertion, or abuse (Matt 19:4–6).²²¹

Read Gen 2:24. In what ways are men to leave their parents and become one with their wives when they marry? Why would Moses’s original audience have found this shocking?

²¹⁰ Botterweck and Ringgren, eds., “הִשָּׁה” (*ishah*), *TDOT*, 1:429.

²¹¹ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “יִשׁ” (*ish*), 35, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/34/mode/2up>.

²¹² Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 180.

²¹³ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 69.

²¹⁴ Gesenius, *GKC*, 426, <https://archive.org/stream/geseniushebrewgr00geseuoft#page/426/mode/2up>.

²¹⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 177.

²¹⁶ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis, A Commentary*, 90.

²¹⁷ Robert L. Alden, “*azav*,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:364–5.

²¹⁸ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 181.

²¹⁹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 181.

²²⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 71.

²²¹ 20th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, 1992, “Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage,” <http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/divorce-remarriage.pdf>, 292.

Naked and Not Ashamed

11) Gen 2:25: The final verse of this creation account announces, “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and [they were] not ashamed (*bosh*) before one another.”²²² No barrier had yet driven a wedge between Adam and Eve.²²³ Israel’s culture was shame-based, unlike our guilt-based Western society.²²⁴

Apart from this verse, nudity in the Old Testament always connotes humiliation, whether due to poverty or oppression (Job 24:7–10), as a circumstance of birth (Ezek 16:4–5), or—most often—as a symbol of disgrace (Ezek 16:35–39).²²⁵ Prior to the fall, Adam and Eve gloried in their nakedness, unaware of any sense of impropriety (Gen 3:6–7).²²⁶

Read Gen 2:25. Why did Adam and Eve feel this way?

How would you summarize the relationships in Gen 1–2 between God and humanity?

Between male and female?

Between people and the rest of Creation?

Sin:

Serpents in the Ancient Near East

12) Gen 3:1: Humanity experienced a time of probation in the garden through Adam as our representative. God expected Adam to adhere to the prohibition of eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 2:16–17). This test would determine whether Adam accepted his position of power under the Lord, his emperor, when presented with what seemed to be an arbitrary command.²²⁷ Meanwhile, the serpent had a two-fold objective: to halt the spread of the

²²² Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “בֹּשׁ” (*bosh*), *BDB*, 101–2, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/100/mode/2up>.

²²³ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 181.

²²⁴ Timothy C. Tennant, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 83.

²²⁵ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 181.

²²⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 71.

²²⁷ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 104–5.

kingdom of God and to prevent humanity from continuing to serve as the Lord's ambassadors.²²⁸

In the Ancient Near East (ANE) during the second millennium BC, people associated serpents with both death and wisdom.²²⁹ For example, in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the protagonist dove through deep water to procure the "Old Man Becomes a Young Man" plant which one could eat to become immortal. Before Gilgamesh could test it, a snake smelled the plant, sneaked up behind him, and stole it. As the serpent slithered away, it sloughed off its skin, demonstrating that the plant imparted eternal life.²³⁰ Due to this treachery, Gilgamesh was doomed to die, for "Enlil...the father of the gods...has destined thy fate, O Gilgamesh, for kingship, for eternal life he has not destined it."²³¹

The Akkadian story of a man named Adapa also features an account of squandered eternal life.²³² A serpent-shaped god whose name means "Lord Productive Tree" (Gishida) ruled over the netherworld.²³³ He offered Adapa the bread of life to give him immortality. However, another god had already tricked Adapa, saying, "When they offer thee bread of death, thou shalt not eat [it]. When they offer thee water of death, thou shalt not drink [it]. When they offer thee a garment, put [it] on." Therefore, when Lord Protective Tree presented the bread of life to Adapa, he refused it.²³⁴

According to Egyptians, each night the ship of the sun god moved through the skies of the underworld, where a demon named Apophis lurked.²³⁵ This forty-five foot serpent operated as an "anti-god and enemy of order."²³⁶ Therefore, Egyptian priests performed daily temple rituals to repulse him, sparing the land from destruction:²³⁷ "This spell is to be recited over Apophis drawn on a new sheet of papyrus in green color and put inside a box on which his name is set, he being tied and bound and put on the fire every day, wiped out with [your] left foot and spat upon four times in the course of every day. "[The sun god] Re is triumphant," and "Pharaoh—life, prosperity, health!—is triumphant over his enemies"—four times.²³⁸

On the other hand, the serpent Wadjet served as the patron goddess of Lower Egypt. People portrayed her as a cobra on the headdress of the pharaoh. Egyptians viewed Wadjet as very wise and capable of great magic.²³⁹

During the time of Moses, artists depicted the fertility goddess Qudshu on Egyptian amulets and reliefs. Typically, she appeared naked, holding snakes in both hands or flowers in one and serpents in the other.²⁴⁰ She often surfaced in erotic scenes with other minor gods. Later, her identity fused with that of a Canaanite fertility goddess named Astarte or Asherah, who bore

²²⁸ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 120.

²²⁹ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:1.

²³⁰ "The Epic of Gilgamesh," *ANET*, 11:265–89, 96.

²³¹ S. N. Kramer, trans., "The Death of Gilgamesh," in *ANET*, lines 33–5, 50.

²³² Pritchard, *ANET*, 101.

²³³ Walton, *Genesis*, 203.

²³⁴ E. A. Speiser, trans., "Adapa," in *ANET*, lines 20–70, 101–2, 101–3.

²³⁵ James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, 3rd. Ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 6.

²³⁶ Ludwig D. Morenz, "Apophis: On the Origin, Name, and Nature of an Egyptian Anti-God," *JNES* 63, no. 3 (July 2004):201–5, 201, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/424771>.

²³⁷ Pritchard, *ANET*, 7.

²³⁸ John A. Wilson, trans., "The Repulsing of the Dragon and the Creation," in *ANET*, 7.

²³⁹ Walton, *Genesis*, 203.

²⁴⁰ The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, "Plaque 61–14–1655," <http://www.penn.museum/collections/object/338637>. This site features an excellent photo.

seventy sons.²⁴¹ Eventually, Asherah ensnared Israel (Judg 6:24–25; 1 Ki 18:17–19; 2 Ki 23:7). In sum, people in the ANE often worshiped serpents. They represented occult wisdom, chaos, fertility, and immortality.²⁴²

In Gen 2:25–3:1, Moses employed wordplay concerning the man’s and the woman’s innocent nakedness (*arummim*) and the snake’s shrewdness (*arum*). This accentuated the vulnerability of Adam and Eve.²⁴³ A neutral term, we can also translate *arum* as “cunning” or “prudent,” a remedy for naiveté (Prov 1:4).²⁴⁴ Yet, when utilized by those who seek evil, such craftiness connotes danger (Exod 21:14).²⁴⁵

Moses described the snake as an animal, presumably one of the creatures made by God. An evil force came from within the created order; it did not break into the world from another realm.²⁴⁶ The text gives no hint of a supernatural entity,²⁴⁷ except for the fact that the serpent spoke.²⁴⁸ It seems that the snake had heard the prohibition which the Lord had delivered to Adam (Gen 2:16–17).²⁴⁹ He then altered it to ensnare his victims, asking the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from all the trees of the garden?’”.

In effect, the serpent said, “You must have misheard. Surely a good God would not limit someone he loves in that way.”²⁵⁰ As a result, the snake altered the attitude of the creatures toward their creator, encouraging people to make judgments about God’s words rather than simply obeying them.²⁵¹ Genesis does not explain why the serpent addressed Eve,²⁵² nor does it disclose why Adam failed to assist her in rebuffing the snake’s claims.²⁵³

a) Read Gen 3:1. How did people in the ANE view serpents? What act by the serpent in Eden first revealed his craftiness?

A World-Altering Conversation

13) Gen 3:2–5: By the time of Moses, serpents represented occult wisdom, chaos, fertility, and immortality in the Ancient Near East.²⁵⁴ In the garden, a snake engaged Eve in conversation regarding the Lord’s prohibition in Gen 2:16–17. He began by asking, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from all the trees of the garden?’”.

²⁴¹ John Day, “Asherah (Deity),” *ABD* 1:483–7, 484.

²⁴² Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:1–5.

²⁴³ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 90.

²⁴⁴ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “עָרוּם” (*arum*), *BDB*, 791, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/790/mode/2up>.

²⁴⁵ Walton, *Genesis*, 203–4.

²⁴⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 105.

²⁴⁷ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 188.

²⁴⁸ Walton, *Genesis*, 204.

²⁴⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 73.

²⁵⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 106.

²⁵¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 107–8.

²⁵² Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 188.

²⁵³ Walton, *Genesis*, 206.

²⁵⁴ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:1–5.

Moses reported, “The woman said to the serpent, ‘From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but of the tree which [is] in the middle of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat from it, and you shall not touch it, or you will die.”’ The serpent said to the woman, ‘You shall not *surely* die. For God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will become like God, knowing good and evil.’”

She corrected the snake, but not quite accurately, adding a ban on even touching the tree.²⁵⁵ Furthermore, the Lord had warned, “You shall surely die” (*moth tamuth*) (Gen 2:16–17). He underscored the inevitability of death,²⁵⁶ not an immediate loss of life. Eve reported that God said, “...or you shall die” (*temuthun*) which has a slightly different nuance. The serpent recognized Eve’s faulty understanding and capitalized upon it by contradicting her, not God.²⁵⁷

It responded with an unusual construction which occurs only three times in the Hebrew Bible (Ps 49:8; Amos 9:8. By placing the word “not” (*lo*) in front of “surely die” (*lo moth tamuth*), the snake negated the emphatic inevitability of death, not that it would occur.²⁵⁸ The snake asserted, “Death is not an immediate hazard. You have nothing to fear.”²⁵⁹

This event underscores the importance of teaching what God says, rather than making the Bible seem more restrictive than it really is. Since evil can take advantage of this type of exaggeration, we must guard against it.²⁶⁰ If Eve had been informed that she would die if she merely touched the fruit and suffered no harm for doing so, this may have caused her to doubt the veracity of what God forbade and encouraged her to proceed in error. Although placing limits upon ourselves to avoid falling into sin reflects wisdom, we must accurately teach others what Scripture declares (Deut 4:2; Deut 12:32).

After asserting that Eve faced no immediate threat from death,²⁶¹ the serpent directed her attention to the Lord’s inner thoughts, suggesting that he could ascertain the mind of God. Instead of judgment, the snake promised that disobedience would result in blessings.²⁶² The nature of evil entices humans to sit in judgment on God’s word, not to simply hear and obey it.²⁶³

Ultimately, rebellion treats the truth as a lie.²⁶⁴ According to the serpent, Adam and Eve could begin their heavenward climb to becoming like God, moving beyond the limits set by the Lord in understanding his mysteries.²⁶⁵ Had they waited, the wisdom the serpent pledged to Adam and Eve might have been theirs to enjoy in the future when they passed the test and the time was right.²⁶⁶

Read Gen 3:2–5. What did Eve say that the Lord commanded? How does that differ from what he told Adam in Gen 2:16–17? Why was the serpent able to use her misunderstanding to his advantage? What did the snake promise?

²⁵⁵ Walton, *Genesis*, 204.

²⁵⁶ Gesenius, *GKC*, 342.

²⁵⁷ Walton, *Genesis*, 205.

²⁵⁸ Walton, *Genesis*, 205.

²⁵⁹ Walton, *Genesis*, 205.

²⁶⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 109.

²⁶¹ Walton, *Genesis*, 205.

²⁶² Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 189.

²⁶³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 108.

²⁶⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 112.

²⁶⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 190.

²⁶⁶ Walton, *Genesis*, 205–6.

Succumbing to Temptation

14) Gen 3:6: Adam and Eve viewed the snake—a creature under their authority—as the paragon of wisdom (Gen 1:26–28). Folly drove their decision, for they possessed all the good things they needed but wanted more (Gen 1:29–30).²⁶⁷ Consequently, Eve chose to view the fruit from the forbidden tree like all other produce in Eden: good for food and a delight to the eyes (Gen 2:8–9, 16–17).²⁶⁸

Once she determined that the tree was “desirable in order to become wise,” covetousness arose in her heart.²⁶⁹ Unaware of evil, Eve likely saw this as an opportunity to grow in godlikeness.²⁷⁰ Craving something she did not have,²⁷¹ Eve ignored God’s command to pursue aesthetic appearance, sensual desire, and convenience.²⁷²

Moses wrote, “And she took of its fruit, and she ate, and she gave [it] also to her husband [who was] with her, and he ate.” The verb forms point to a chronological sequence of events, with each one representing the logical consequence of what preceded it.²⁷³ This rapidly cascades to push the narrative forward.²⁷⁴ The text does not convey that Eve tempted Adam. We do not know what type of fruit they ate. The notion of an apple comes from the Latin words for “apple” and “evil” sounding alike.²⁷⁵

Read Gen 3:6. What changes took place in Eve’s heart? How did Adam respond when his wife offered him forbidden fruit? Why do you think he did that? In what sense did Adam and Eve die that day? How do you respond to things which delight your eyes and offer a short-cut to achieving your goals?

Their Eyes Are Opened

15) Gen 3:7: In one respect the serpent told the truth. Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened, but to a shocking discovery (Gen 3:4–5). They were naked!²⁷⁶ The duality of good and evil demolished their prior unity of knowledge, with all things beneficial.²⁷⁷ Thus, a sign of their healthy relationship suddenly became shameful (Cf. Gen 2:25),²⁷⁸ and they immediately experienced the

²⁶⁷ Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, 103.

²⁶⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 75.

²⁶⁹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 190.

²⁷⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 113.

²⁷¹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 190.

²⁷² Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 91.

²⁷³ Gesenius, *GKC*, 328, <https://archive.org/details/geseniushebrewgr00geseuoft/page/328>.

²⁷⁴ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 75.

²⁷⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 191.

²⁷⁶ Walton, *Genesis*, 206.

²⁷⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 122.

²⁷⁸ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 191.

alienation of spiritual death (Gen 2:16–17).²⁷⁹ Ironically, fig leaves come from trees which symbolize the fertility of life.²⁸⁰

Read Gen 3:7. How did the opening of their eyes differ from what Adam and Eve had expected? What did their shame lead them to do? How do you react to shameful experiences?

A Day of Reckoning

16) Gen 3:9–13: Genesis 3:9–19 forms a chiasm. This type of parallelism takes the form A–B–C–B–A. First, God addressed the man, then the woman, and finally the serpent. The penalties for their rebellion occur in the reverse order. In a chiasm, the most important point usually comes at the center, as it does here (Gen 3:14–15).

The passage opens with the Lord calling Adam to account, just as a pharaoh later demanded an explanation from Abraham (Gen 12:14–20).²⁸¹ Afraid to answer the question but not daring to lie, Adam explained that he hid because he was naked, even though he had covered himself (Gen 3:6–8).²⁸² Ironically, we can translate “I heard (*shama*) your voice in the garden” as “I obeyed your voice in the garden.”²⁸³ That is what Adam failed to do.²⁸⁴

The Lord gave Adam an opportunity to confess his transgression. He asked, “Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” (Gen 2:16–17).²⁸⁵ Adam exhibited the divisive effects of rebellion, instead of acknowledging his sin. God’s silence indicates that he rejected this explanation.²⁸⁶ Eve also failed to express contrition. However, she blamed neither God nor her husband.²⁸⁷ Nevertheless, sin obliterated the harmony between God and humanity, between men and women, and between people and animals (Gen 1:26–31; Gen 2:18–25).²⁸⁸

Read Gen 3:9–13. How did Adam’s evasive answer indict him? Who did Adam blame for his actions? How did Eve explain her behavior? Why do we tend to exhibit this pattern?

²⁷⁹ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 92.

²⁸⁰ Walton, *Genesis*, 206.

²⁸¹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 76.

²⁸² Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 193.

²⁸³ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “שָׁמָע” (*shema*), *BDB*, 1033–4, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/1032/mode/2up>.

²⁸⁴ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 93.

²⁸⁵ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 194.

²⁸⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 77.

²⁸⁷ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 194.

²⁸⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 78.

The First Good News

17) Gen 3:15: This is one of the most famous verses in all of Scripture.²⁸⁹ Early Christian commentators, beginning with Justin Martyr (ca. 160 AD) and Irenaeus (ca. 180 AD), called this inaugural Old Testament messianic prophecy the Protoevangelium (“first good news”).²⁹⁰ The Lord said to the serpent, “And enmity I will put between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head and you will strike his heel.”

In his grace, the Lord intended to convert Eve’s inclinations toward Satan to righteous desire for himself (Cf. Gen 3:1–6).²⁹¹ God’s counterattack started with the woman, where the serpent’s assault began.²⁹² Therefore, the Lord ordained conflict between the serpent’s seed and the seed of the woman.²⁹³

Like in English, we can translate “*zera*” (seed) as either singular or plural. It refers to an immediate descendant, distant offspring, or a collective group of descendants.²⁹⁴ Here Moses developed and merged all three nuances.²⁹⁵ “Seed of the serpent” consists of people living in rebellion against God (Matt 12:34; Matt 23:33; John 8:44).²⁹⁶ It does not denote physical snakes or demons. Angels—even fallen ones—do not procreate (Matt 22:30). Everyone who unites against the Lord will fight against God’s people. This struggle forms a major theme of the remainder of Genesis (e.g. Gen 4:1–8).²⁹⁷

The serpent and his descendants shall share the same fate. Since the serpent symbolized sin, death, and malevolence, the curse upon him envisaged a long struggle between good and evil, with redeemed humanity triumphing.²⁹⁸ While the seed of the woman incline their hearts toward God, hostile unbelief characterizes the seed of the serpent (Matt 13:24–30, 36–43). Moses’ unspoken question to the reader is, “Whose seed are you?”²⁹⁹

To accomplish God’s plan of redemption announced in Gen 3:15, the Lord allows the serpent to test the faithfulness of each generation. This teaches God’s covenant people to vie against Satan and his followers. It also fits with the nuance of the “seed” as a plural.³⁰⁰ However, the oldest Jewish interpretations understood this verse as the serpent being vanquished by a single messiah. For example, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible utilized a singular noun (*spermatos*) to describe him.³⁰¹ While all of God’s people participate in the fight, this would ultimately result in a battle of champions,³⁰² much as David and Goliath each represented their armies in single combat (1 Sam 17:8–10, 48–50).

²⁸⁹ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 197.

²⁹⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 81.

²⁹¹ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 93.

²⁹² Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 133.

²⁹³ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 198.

²⁹⁴ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “זֵרָע” (*zera*), *BDB*, 282–3,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/282/mode/2up>.

²⁹⁵ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 93.

²⁹⁶ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 93–4.

²⁹⁷ Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, 108.

²⁹⁸ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 79–80.

²⁹⁹ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 93–4.

³⁰⁰ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 93–4.

³⁰¹ Brannan, et al., *The Lexham English Septuagint*, Gen 3:15.

³⁰² Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 94.

Regarding what they would do to each other, both verbs are the same word (*shuph*), appearing in a form which implies repeated attacks by both sides.³⁰³ Thus, their enmity would be ongoing, with repeated skirmishes.³⁰⁴ Among the translation options for this verb are “bruise,”³⁰⁵ “crush,” “snap at,” “snatch at,”³⁰⁶ and “strike at.”³⁰⁷ Since the parallelism employed dictates translating these words the same way,³⁰⁸ the most suitable option is, “He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

While not all serpents produce venom, those which do tend to be the most aggressive. Thus, people in the Ancient Near East considered an attack by a snake a potentially mortal blow.³⁰⁹ Indeed, grievous wounds would afflict the messiah (Isa 53:4–5),³¹⁰ even to death. Both the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent would attack the most vulnerable part of the other.³¹¹ Based upon the body parts involved, it appears that the serpent would strike as the seed of the woman stepped on him, resulting in both injuries occurring at once.

Read Gen 3:15. What is the difference between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent? How would you characterize yourself? Why? What happens to someone whom a viper strikes on the heel?

An Anguishing Process

18) Gen 3:16: The Lord told Eve, “I will increase greatly your anguish (*itsabon*) and your conception (*herayon*). With pain you shall bear children.” Notably, God did not curse Eve but instead spoke of the outcome of her foolish choice (Gen 3:1–6). He cursed only the snake and the ground (Gen 3:14, 17).³¹² Nevertheless, the arrival of the seed which the woman would conceive would cause her agony (Gen 3:15).³¹³

Moses likely chose the word for pain used here (*etseb*) for its resemblance to the word for a tree (*ets*), rather than using the typical term. Ultimately, a tree led to her trauma,³¹⁴ hardship, pain, and distress (Gen 2:16–17).³¹⁵ The consequences of sin produced difficult labor for both

³⁰³ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 80.

³⁰⁴ Marten H. Woudstra, “Recent Translations of Genesis 3:15,” *CTJ* 6, no. 2 (November 1, 1971): 194–203, 200–1, https://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/otesources/01-genesis/text/articles-books/woudstra_gen3_15_ctj.htm.

³⁰⁵ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “שָׁפַח” (*shuph*), *BDB*, 1003, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/1002/mode/2up>.

³⁰⁶ Holladay, “שָׁפַח” (*shuph*), *CHALOT*, 364.

³⁰⁷ Woudstra, “Recent Translations of Genesis 3:15,” 202, https://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/otesources/01-genesis/text/articles-books/woudstra_gen3_15_ctj.htm.

³⁰⁸ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 197.

³⁰⁹ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:15.

³¹⁰ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 94.

³¹¹ Walton, *Genesis*, 226.

³¹² Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 81.

³¹³ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 200.

³¹⁴ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 81.

³¹⁵ Holladay, “עֲצָבֹן” (*itsabon*), *CHALOT*, 280.

Eve and Adam, for *itsabon* occurs in both verdicts of judgment (Gen 3:17).³¹⁶ Although the only other Old Testament use of *itsabon* appears in Gen 5:29, nouns using the same Hebrew root connote agony, difficulty, grief, and anxiety.³¹⁷ Childbirth itself involves the pain and toil associated with strenuous work.³¹⁸ However, emotional anguish accompanies the physical pain.

Commentators disagree whether the correct translation is “conception” or “pregnancy,” as the Hebrew term *herayon* can refer to either one.³¹⁹ Even conception can evoke pain, for attempting to conceive can certainly produce misery and anxiety. Most likely, this is another example of merism, where the entire process from conception to childbirth causes emotional travail and/or physical pain. Walton paraphrases Gen 3:16a as, “I will greatly increase the anguish you will experience in the birth process, from the anxiety surrounding conception to the strenuous work of giving birth.”³²⁰ Without the blessing of modern medicine, people in the ancient world deemed the pain accompanying childbirth the worst of agonies (Mic 4:9–10; Isa 13:6–8; Isa 21:3).³²¹

Due to the high rate of miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant mortality in Mesopotamia, people considered expectant mothers and newborns prime targets for attack by the demons Lamashtu and Pazuzu. In the later months of pregnancy, many women wore an amulet depicting the head of Pazuzu, often inscribed with an incantation. Lamashtu appears as a hideous nude woman with long talons, the head of a bird or lion, and dangling breasts. This demon slithered through a small crack into a house and, upon finding an unattended infant, would suckle the baby to kill it.³²² People also attributed the pain of childbirth to her.³²³

The second half of verse 16 says, “and for (*el*) your husband your longing (*teshuqah*) shall be,³²⁴ and he will rule (*mashal*) over you.” A recent revision of the ESV has ignited controversy by departing from all other major translations in translating *el* as “contrary to,” rather than depicting movement from the woman toward her husband. While Eve longed to reestablish their relationship of equality and partnership,³²⁵ Adam would seek to rule over his wife (Cf. Gen 2:18–24).

The verb *mashal* means simply “rule, have dominion, reign” without any sense of tyrannical behavior.³²⁶ It describes how the sun and moon govern the day (Gen 1:17–18), while

³¹⁶Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “עִצְבוֹן” (*itsabon*), *BDB*, 781,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/780/mode/2up>.

³¹⁷Walton, *Genesis*, 227.

³¹⁸Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “עָצַב” (*etseb*), *BDB*, 780,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/780/mode/2up>.

³¹⁹M. Ottosson, “הֵרָה” (*herayon*), *TDOT*, 3:436,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/248/mode/2up>.

³²⁰Walton, *Genesis*, 227.

³²¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 81.

³²²Erle Lichy, “Demons and Population Control,” *Expedition*, vol. 13, issue 2, Winter 1971: 23–4,

<http://www.penn.museum/documents/publications/expedition/PDFs/13-2/Lichy.pdf>. This includes a sketch.

³²³Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 3:16.

³²⁴Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “אֵל” (*el*), *BDB*, 38–40,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/38/mode/2up>, and “תְּשׁוּקָה” (*teshuqah*), *BDB*, 1003,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/1002/mode/2up>.

³²⁵Janson C. Condren, “Toward a Purge of the Battle of the Sexes and ‘Return’ for the Original Meaning of Gen 3:16b,” *JETS* 60, no. 2 (April 1, 2017): 227–45, 245, https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/60/60-2/JETS_60-2-227-245_Condren.pdf.

³²⁶Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “*mashal*”, *BDB*, 605,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/606/mode/2up>.

also depicting how God and people can have dominion over humanity (Judg 8:23; Ps 89:8–9).³²⁷

No longer reigning in unity as co-equals over creation (Gen 1:26–28), fierce disputes would characterize their marriage.³²⁸ Eve’s subordination to her husband resulted from a broken creation,³²⁹ rather than as a punishment from her creator.³³⁰

Read Gen 3:16. How did Moses express similarities between what the man and the woman experienced? Why did he likely choose an unusual word to express the woman’s pain? How was the experience of childbearing altered? What does this verse imply about Adam and Eve’s prior interactions?

A Renewed Covenant

19) Gen 3:20: Moses wrote, “Now, the man called the name of his wife “Eve,” for she became the mother of all the living.” People in the Ancient Near East associated giving someone a name with the one in authority making a covenant with a subordinate, either for protection or exploitation (Gen 17:1–5; 2 Ki 24:17, 20).³³¹

Not until after the fall of humanity did Adam name his wife. Previously, he identified her as his true counterpart (Gen 2:18, 23–24).³³² In Hebrew, the term “woman” (*ishah*) is simply the feminine form of the word “man” (*ish*).^{333,334} This emphasizes the shared identity and equality of this couple.³³⁵ By calling her “Eve” (*khauah*), Adam noted her identity in keeping with her destiny as the mother of all “the living” (*khay*).³³⁶

Read Gen 3:20. Why did naming the woman indicate that Adam’s relationship with her had changed? Do you think his renewed covenant with her reflected his desire to protect her or to exploit her? Why? How do you relate to people with whom you have made a covenant?

³²⁷ Philip J. Nel, “*mashal*”, *NIDOTTE*, 2:1137.

³²⁸ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 202.

³²⁹ Howard N. Wallace, “Eve (Person),” *ABD* 2:676–7, 677.

³³⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (IBC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 51.

³³¹ Smith, *Micah–Malachi*, 232.

³³² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, 97.

³³³ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “*אִשָּׁה*” (*ishah*), *BDB*, 61,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/60/mode/2up>.

³³⁴ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “*אִישׁ*” (*ish*), 35.

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/34/mode/2up>.

³³⁵ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 180.

³³⁶ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 95.

Eve Acquires a Man

20) Gen 4:1: Moses began Gen 4 by writing, “And the man had known (*yada*) his wife,”³³⁷ a Hebrew idiom for a sexual relationship.³³⁸ The verb indicates that the couple experienced a deep personal involvement culminating in a hallowed act,³³⁹ an intimate communion they received through their physical senses.³⁴⁰ More than fulfilling a hormonal desire, this refers to a non-exploitative, profound understanding of the other.³⁴¹

Hebrew authors never employed this verb when describing the mating of animals, which comprises an instinctual behavior.³⁴² When human sexuality did not involve reciprocal enjoyment but reproduction or lust, Scripture instead employs the phrases “go into” (*bo*) (Gen 16:2; Ruth 4:5, 13)³⁴³ or “lie with” (*shakav*) (Gen 39:7–12; 2 Sam 11:4).³⁴⁴ This verb exonerates Bathsheba as an unwilling participant in David’s sin.³⁴⁵

Whether the “knowing” between Adam and Eve occurred prior to or after the fall cannot be determined from the text.³⁴⁶ The remainder of verse one says, “and she conceived and gave birth to Cain (*Qayin*), and she said, ‘I have acquired (*qaniti*) a man, the Lord.’”³⁴⁷

The Old Testament often contains wordplay between a person’s name and birth circumstances (e.g. Gen 25:24–26; Gen 29:31–35; Gen 38:27–30). Although the verb associated with Cain’s name occasionally carries the nuance “I created,” far more often the word means “I gained, acquired, or purchased.”³⁴⁸ In this context, either sense of the word fits.³⁴⁹ While Gen 1–3 focused upon God creating,³⁵⁰ other Ancient Near Eastern cultures attest names such as “I acquired him from the gods.”

Scholars debate whether Eve regarded herself as creating with God, or whether she saw Cain as one whom the Lord provided for her.³⁵¹ Attempting to acquire for one’s own the blessings which God can give does occur repeatedly in Genesis (Cf. Gen 3:1–7; Gen 16:1–2;

³³⁷John C. Collins, “The Wayiqtol as ‘Pluperfect’: When and Why,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 46, no. 1 (1995): 117–40, 135. Wherever Scripture appears in quotation marks, this represents my translation from the Hebrew (*BHS*) or Greek (*NA²⁸*) text. Since both languages utilize word order for emphasis, with the most important points coming first, I maintain the original word order wherever feasible.

³³⁸William L. Holladay, “יָדָעַ” (*yada*), *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (CHALOT)* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 128–9.

³³⁹Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 96.

³⁴⁰Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 100–1.

³⁴¹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 220.

³⁴²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 96.

³⁴³Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, “בֹּא” (*bo*), *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 98. <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/98/mode/2up>.

³⁴⁴Holladay, “שָׁכַב” (*shakav*), *CHALOT*, 368.

³⁴⁵Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 220.

³⁴⁶Walton, *Genesis*, 260.

³⁴⁷Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 221.

³⁴⁸Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “קָנָה” (*qanah*), *BDB*, 888–9, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/888/mode/2up>.

³⁴⁹Walton, *Genesis*, 261.

³⁵⁰Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 101.

³⁵¹Walton, *Genesis*, 261.

Gen 17:15–21). This lends credence to the notion that Eve’s words reflect her belief that she replicated what the Lord had done by creating a man.³⁵²

On the other hand, God frequently promised “to be with” the patriarchs to help them (Gen 21:20; Gen 26:3, 24; Gen 28:15; Gen 31:3; and Gen 39:2). Thus, Eve may have exclaimed, “I have acquired a man with the [help of the] Lord.” Possibly, she erroneously thought Cain would function as the promised one who would defeat the serpent (Cf. Gen 3:15).³⁵³ Unfortunately, her proclamation remains too ambiguous for us to confidently choose one option over the other.³⁵⁴

Note that Eve—not Adam—performed the authoritative act of naming her son (Gen 3:20).³⁵⁵ By calling him a “man” rather than a baby, she ironically alluded to Adam’s statement that “she will be called woman because from man she was taken” (Gen 2:23). Now a man had come from a woman. As a result, both genders must depend upon each other and ultimately upon God (1 Cor 11:11–12).³⁵⁶

Read Gen 4:1. How does the term “to know” reflect more than a physical action? What are the two possibilities regarding Eve’s view of Cain’s birth? How are men and women dependent upon each other? In what ways do you express your reliance on God?

Two Wives

21) Gen 4:18–19: Moses provided descriptive information for only three of the six generations produced from Cain’s line. He mentioned the others only as early descendants of Adam who assisted in populating the earth.³⁵⁷ As in other Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) traditions, Hebrew genealogies can represent actual father to son records. However, they may condense the ancestral record by omitting some generations or by listing grandsons as sons (compare Gen 35:25 with Gen 46:18).

This also occurs in the New Testament. For example, Matt 1:8 asserts “Jehoram fathered Uzziah,” although he appeared to be Uzziah’s great-great-grandfather (2 Chron 22:1, 8–12; 2 Chron 24:1, 24, 27; 2 Chron 26:1).³⁵⁸ As a result, we cannot ascertain whether more direct descendants in the Adam to Lamech line existed than Moses cited.

³⁵²John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 111.

³⁵³Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 221.

³⁵⁴Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 102.

³⁵⁵Victor H. Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament (IVPBBOT)* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Gen 3:20.

³⁵⁶Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 96.

³⁵⁷Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 238.

³⁵⁸Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 440.

This family line tragically depicts how sin distorts the image of God, leaving destruction in its wake.³⁵⁹ Lamech's violent temperament reflects that of his ancestor Cain, which is likely why the text focuses upon him (Gen 4:23–24).³⁶⁰ Cain and his descendants exhibited increasing depravity. However, they also practiced and expanded the cultural mandate of Gen 1:28. They domesticated and bred animals, developed musical arts, and fashioned metal (Gen 4:20–22).³⁶¹

Moses reported, “And Lamech took to himself two wives.” This directly contradicted his previous editorial comment regarding the Lord's design for marriage, an arrangement which Jesus also validated (Gen 2:24; Mark 10:2–12).³⁶² In ancient Israel, harmony and intimacy characterized the ideal marriage (Gen 2:21–23).³⁶³ Scripture does not report God rebuking Lamech or the patriarchs who practiced polygamy for their multiple wives. Nevertheless, Genesis freely records the devastating impact of bigamy upon family life (Gen 16:1–6; Gen 21:9–10; Gen 30:1–15).³⁶⁴

Read Gen 4:18–19. Why would Lamech's decision have made the harmony and intimacy which God intended for marriage impossible?

Lamech's Ode to Himself

22) Gen 4:23–24: Sandwiched between two birth announcements (Gen 4:19–22, 25),³⁶⁵ Moses recorded one of the earliest examples of poetry.³⁶⁶ In this savage and vicious composition,³⁶⁷ Lamech employed a variety of Hebrew literary devices, such as parallelism, meter, and rhyme to emphasize his cruel egotism.³⁶⁸

“And Lamech said to his wives,
‘Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice.
Wives of Lamech, give ear to my speech,
because a man I have slain for wounding me,
and a youth for striking me.
If seven-fold is Cain avenged,
then Lamech seventy and seven.”

People rarely commit single sins. Pride, mockery, and assault cluster together like grapes and continue to replicate. These distorted relational patterns pass down from parent to child, resulting in dysfunctional family systems.³⁶⁹

³⁵⁹Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 100.

³⁶⁰Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 112.

³⁶¹Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 100.

³⁶²Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 238.

³⁶³Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 69.

³⁶⁴Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 238.

³⁶⁵Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 240.

³⁶⁶Walton, *Genesis*, 277.

³⁶⁷Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 240.

³⁶⁸Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 114.

³⁶⁹Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 54–5.

Family violence continues for generation after generation. Parents beat their children, who attack younger siblings, who beat the family pets. Victims victimize others, causing vengeance to ricochet through their communities. No one carries more potential for violence than a victim.³⁷⁰

Since this song appears in a section which focuses upon various developments in human civilization, Lamech's taunt may signify the initiation of warfare (Gen 4:19–22).³⁷¹ Adah and Zillah had proudly watched their sons develop animal husbandry, music, and metallurgy. In contrast, Lamech's violent boasting must have filled them with horror.³⁷² By embracing such great vindictiveness,³⁷³ Lamech indicated that his depravity exceeded that of Cain, his ancestor (Gen 4:9–10).³⁷⁴

The parallelism in this song suggests that the "man" (*ish*) and the "youth" (*yeled*) are the same person.³⁷⁵ Similarly, the wounding and striking refer to one incident.³⁷⁶ In Hebrew, *yeled* covers a range from premature infants to early manhood (Exod 21:22; 1 Ki 14:21; 1 Ki 12:6–8).³⁷⁷ Cain had felt incapable of self-defense (Gen 4:13–15). His descendant Lamech had no qualms about handling any mistreatment by others on his own.³⁷⁸ In fact, he appointed himself to perform a function reserved for kings (2 Sam 8:15; 1 Sam 15:1–4).

Lamech made a travesty of the office of a ruler by seeking personal vengeance, rather than maintaining justice.³⁷⁹ Taking the law into his hands served as a point of pride. While Cain sought to hide Abel's murder (Gen 4:9), Lamech exulted in his vindictiveness.³⁸⁰

One of the first portions of Scripture recorded included the phrase, "a wound for a wound and a strike for a strike" (Exod 21:23–25). Therefore, Moses's original audience recognized that Lamech violated the law of retaliation (*lex talionis*).³⁸¹ God commanded this principle to prevent the escalation of violence.³⁸² The young man's execution would have been just only if his action resulted in Lamech's death (Exod 21:12).

In Scripture, the number seven signifies completeness. Therefore, seventy-seven represents an unrestricted fullness which one cannot surpass.³⁸³ This intensification of violence could easily erupt into warfare aided by the technological advancements of Lamech's son Tubal-Cain (Gen 4:22).³⁸⁴ Sin acts as a plague which spreads by contagion, like a polluted river which keeps branching into tributaries. It contaminates parents, children, and grandchildren (Exod 34:6–7).³⁸⁵

³⁷⁰Plantinga Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, 57.

³⁷¹Walton, *Genesis*, 278.

³⁷²Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 114.

³⁷³Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 100.

³⁷⁴Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 114.

³⁷⁵Walton, *Genesis*, 277–8.

³⁷⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 114.

³⁷⁷Holladay, "yeledh," *CHALOT*, 135.

³⁷⁸Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 241.

³⁷⁹Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 183.

³⁸⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 241.

³⁸¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 114.

³⁸²H. B. Huffmon, "Lex Talionis," *ABD* 4:321–2, 321.

³⁸³Ryken et. al., "Seven," in *DBI*, 775.

³⁸⁴Walton, *Genesis*, 278.

³⁸⁵Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, 53.

By highlighting this vignette, Moses hinted that all of Cain's descendants would face God's judgment.³⁸⁶ Not only did this intimate the disaster to come (Gen 6:11–13, 17), it served as a warning to Moses's readers. One cannot disregard God's laws and expect to emerge unscathed.³⁸⁷

Read Gen 4:23–24: Why would Moses's original readers have been shocked by this passage? How does it portray the increasing depravity of Cain's descendants? What does revenge do to us? If your family of origin practiced violence, what can you do to break that cycle?

Taking Wives for Themselves *Please note that this post carries a trigger warning.*

23) Gen 6:1–2 cont.: The chapter opens with, “And it came about, when humanity (*adam*) began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, and the sons of the gods saw the daughters of humanity (*adam*), that they [were] good (*tov*). And they took to themselves wives (*isha*), whomever they chose.” Based upon the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) context of Genesis, the “sons of the gods” (*bene ha elohim*) in Gen 6:1–4 refers to kings.³⁸⁸

What exactly was their transgression? Moses reported, “And they took for themselves wives from all whom they chose.” “Taking a wife” usually meant getting married (Gen 11:29).³⁸⁹ Some scholars contend that the sin of these tyrannical rulers consisted of incorporating great numbers of women into their harems.³⁹⁰ However, ANE cultures viewed polygamy as an acceptable, albeit imperfect, practice even within Israel (Gen 30:1–13; 2 Sam 3:2–5).³⁹¹

The key lies in the phrase, “all whom they chose.” Both the pharaoh whom Sarah encountered and David added married women to their harems (Gen 12:10–20; 2 Sam 11:2–5, 27).³⁹² The Lord prevented one king from violating Sarah because Abraham had tricked him into adding her to his wives (Gen 20:1–9). Therefore, this phrase appears to include already-married women. In the “right of the first night,” a king or other government official could demand to spend a woman's bridal night with her before she went to her husband.³⁹³

The Epic of Gilgamesh provides insight into this practice of oppressive rulers.³⁹⁴ Just after noting that Gilgamesh is primarily a god, the epic states: “The onslaught of his weapons verily has no equal. By the *drum* are aroused [his] companions. The nobles of Uruk are worried in [their chamb]ers, ‘Gilgamesh leaves not the son to [his] father. [Day] and [night] is unbridled his arro[gance]. [Is this Gilga]mesh, [the shepherd of ramparted]

³⁸⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 114.

³⁸⁷Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 117.

³⁸⁸Haag, “בן” (*ben*), *TDOT* 2:157.

³⁸⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 140–1. Note that *isha* can mean “wife,” “woman,” or “female” per *BDB* (<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/60/mode/2up>).

³⁹⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 263.

³⁹¹Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 6:2.

³⁹²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 117.

³⁹³Walton, *Genesis*, 293.

³⁹⁴Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 6:2.

Uruk? Is this [our] shepherd, [bold, stately, wise]? Gilgamesh] leaves not [the maid to her mother], the warrior's daughter, [the noble's spouse]!'

"The [gods hearkened] to their plaint. The gods of heaven Uruk's lord [they...]: 'Did not [the gods, the *Aruru*] bring forth this strong wild ox? [The onslaught of his weapons] verily has no equal. By the *drum* are aroused his [companions]. Gilgamesh leaves not the son to his father; Day and night [is unbridled his arrogance]. Is this the shepherd of [ramparted] Uruk? Is this their [...] shepherd, bold, stately, (and) wise?... Gilgamesh leaves not the maid to [her mother], the warrior's daughter, the noble's spouse!'

"When [the god Anu] had heard out their plaint, the great Aruru (goddess of pregnancy and childbirth) they called, 'Thou, Aruru, didst create [the man]. Create now his double; His stormy heart let him match. Let them contend, that Uruk may have peace!..For Gilgamesh, king of broad-marted Uruk, the *drum* of the people is free for nuptial choice, that with lawful wives he might mate! He is the first, the *husband* comes after. By the counsel of the gods it has (so) been ordained. With the cutting of his umbilical cord it was decreed for him!'"³⁹⁵

Even in this tale of a great hero, the text conveys the oppressive nature of Gilgamesh's divinely-ordained right to sleep with any woman he chose on her wedding night.³⁹⁶ This horrific practice continued for many years. Close to 425 BC, the Greek historian Herodotus reported that a group of people in Libya "show the king all virgins that are to be married. The king then takes the virginity of whichever of these pleases him."³⁹⁷

The *Babylonian Talmud* also acknowledges the practice, stating:

"What [was the] danger? If I say that [the Roman authorities] said, 'a maiden that gets married on the fourth day [of the week] shall be killed,' [then how state] 'they made it a custom'? 'We should abolish it entirely!'—Said Rabbah, '[That] they said, "a maiden that gets married on the fourth day [of the week] shall have the first sexual intercourse with the prefect." '[You call] this danger? [Surely] this [is a case of] constraint!—Because there are chaste women who would rather surrender themselves to death'" (b. Kethuboth 3b).³⁹⁸

Violence could easily erupt from this tyrannical practice (Gen 6:13).³⁹⁹ According to the Epic of Gilgamesh, when a mighty man named Enkidu arrived in Uruk:

"The men were clustered about him, and kissed his feet...Suddenly a handsome young man arrived...Enkidu blocked the entry to the marital chamber, and would not allow Gilgamesh to be brought in. They grappled with each other at the entry to the marital chamber, in the street they attacked each other." Gilgamesh lost the fight. He and Enkidu became friends and set off on their epic journey.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁵Speiser, trans., "The Epic of Gilgamesh," in *ANET*, 1.8–32; 4:31–9, 73–4, 78, https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n103/mode/2up. Italics original.

³⁹⁶Walton, *Genesis*, 293.

³⁹⁷Herodotus, "The Histories," in *Herodotus with an English Translation* (trans. A. Godley; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), 4.168.2,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0126%3Abook%3D4%3Achapter%3D168%3Asection%3D2>.

³⁹⁸https://halakhah.com/kethuboth/kethuboth_3.html#PARTb.

³⁹⁹Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 185.

⁴⁰⁰Maureen Gallery Kovacs, trans., *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), tablet 2, <http://jewishchristianlit.com/Texts/ANemyths/gilgamesh02.html>.

By separating the account of the forbidden unions from that of the resulting offspring in Gen 6:4, Moses emphasized the sinfulness of the actions of these men.⁴⁰¹

Read Gen 6:1–2. How would you describe what Moses depicted in these verses? What does God’s reaction in Gen 6:5–7 tell you about his concern for those who experience sexual assault?

Limiting Human Life Spans

24) Gen 6:3: Due to the behavior of the sons of the gods (Gen 6:1–2), “The Lord said, ‘My spirit shall not strive with humanity forever because he is flesh. And it shall be that his days will be 120 years.’” While many words of this sentence have been controversial, in recent years Hebrew scholars are developing a consensus.⁴⁰²

Since God’s spirit produces life,⁴⁰³ Moses emphasized the Lord’s life-giving power. He did not refer to the Holy Spirit in this instance (Cf. Gen 2:7; Ps 104:27–30). Although one can translate the verb *din* as “abide” instead of “strive,”⁴⁰⁴ many modern scholars conclude that God said he would not contend with humans forever (Cf. Prov 22:10; 2 Sam 19:9).⁴⁰⁵ In either case, the same result ensued.

In Hebrew, the word translated as “flesh” (*basar*) has multiple meanings. Usually it refers to physicality, such as of an animal or human body (Exod 21:28; Gen 2:21).⁴⁰⁶ Since weakness, inadequacy, and a transitory nature all characterize flesh, *basar* also conveys the necessity of a total dependence upon the Lord for strength and life itself (Ps 56:4; Isa 40:6–8). An ethical aspect to the word also occurs in connection with the human tendency to commit sin (Ps 78:37–41; Jer 17:5; 2 Chron 32:7–8).⁴⁰⁷

God’s judgment in Gen 6 indicates that both human frailty and sinfulness result from our existence as fleshly creatures.⁴⁰⁸ We cannot survive without God sustaining us (Job 34:12–15; Isa 40:6–8; Luke 12:16–21).⁴⁰⁹ By calling even powerful kings “flesh,” the Lord not only emphasized their mortality but mocked their divine aspirations.⁴¹⁰

Noah lived for 500 years old by the time he fathered his three sons (Gen 5:32). The flood occurred when he reached 600 years old (Gen 7:6). Therefore, some commentators hold that the phrase “his days shall be 120 years” reflects a period of grace before the flood would begin,⁴¹¹ giving people time to repent, just as in the days of Jonah (Jon 3:4–6).⁴¹² They conclude that Noah spent those 120 years building the ark to warn people of the impending judgment (2 Pet 3:3–9).⁴¹³

⁴⁰¹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 265–6.

⁴⁰²Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 141.

⁴⁰³Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 117.

⁴⁰⁴Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 141–2.

⁴⁰⁵V. Hamp, “דִּין” (*din*), *TDOT* 3:187–8. This is contra *BDB*.

⁴⁰⁶Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “דִּין” (*din*), *BDB*, 192,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/192/mode/2up>.

⁴⁰⁷N. P. Bratsiotis, “בָּשָׂר” (*basar*), *TDOT* 2:328–9.

⁴⁰⁸Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 268.

⁴⁰⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 142.

⁴¹⁰Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 188.

⁴¹¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 142.

⁴¹²Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 269.

⁴¹³Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 117.

However, we have no indication that Noah built the ark over a period of 120 years.⁴¹⁴ It appears that Noah's sons were born before he received the Lord's command (Gen 6:10–13). That would leave a maximum of 100 years between God's command to build the ark and the flood.

By limiting human life spans, individuals had less time to accrue power and foist their corrupt practices upon others.⁴¹⁵ We should probably take the meaning of "his days shall be 120 years" at face value. God would no longer permit extraordinarily long lives.⁴¹⁶ Tyrants could no longer oppress and terrorize others for hundreds of years.⁴¹⁷

With this interpretation, we immediately run into a problem. Several biblical patriarchs who lived after the flood survived for more than 120 years. For example, Abraham survived for 175 years; Isaac for 180; and Jacob for 147 years (Gen 25:7; Gen 35:28; Gen 47:28).⁴¹⁸ As God's chosen men, the Lord may have blessed these patriarchs with life spans beyond what he promised to others.⁴¹⁹

On the other hand, God may have gradually implemented this edict, just as Adam did not physically die on the day he ate of the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16–17; Gen 3:19; Gen 5:3–5).⁴²⁰ In the generations after Jacob, the bible records only Aaron exceeding 120 years (Num 33:39). Even Moses lived for only the maximum set by God (Deut 34:7).⁴²¹

Parallels also exist in Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) texts. A tablet from Emar recounts this conversation between the god Enlil and a man named Namzitarra: "[Enlil says,] 'Your fate will be allotted to you [like your name]...you will have silver, you will have lapis lazuli gems, you will have cattle, you will have sheep.' [To which Namzitarra replies, 'Where] will I have taken your silver, your lapis lazuli, your sheep? The days of mankind are declining, day after day they are diminishing. Month after month they are diminishing. Year after year they are diminishing. [The days of mankind]—they are diminishing. 120 years—that is the limit of mankind's life, its term, from that day till now, as long as mankind has existed. So, I am going home. Do not stop me.'"⁴²² This ancient Syrian text affirms the decrease in the limit to human life spans reported by Moses: 120 years.⁴²³

Read Gen 6:3. Do you think that the 120 years refers to a limit of people's life spans or a period of grace before the flood? Why?

Nephilim in the Land *Please note that this post carries a trigger warning.*

25) Gen 6:4: Moses wrote, "The Nephilim were in the land in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of the gods went into the daughters of men. And they bore to them those mighty ones from of old, men of renown." Some scholars remain uncertain how this verse fits with those

⁴¹⁴Walton, *Genesis*, 296.

⁴¹⁵Walton, *Genesis*, 298.

⁴¹⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 142.

⁴¹⁷Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 118.

⁴¹⁸Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 142.

⁴¹⁹Walton, *Genesis*, 296.

⁴²⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 269.

⁴²¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 142.

⁴²²Yoram Cohen, "'Enlil and Namzitarra': The Emar and Ugarit Manuscripts and A New Understanding of the 'Vanity Theme' Speech," *RA* 1, no. 104 (2010): lines 11–28, 87–97,

https://www.jstor.org/stable/23281403?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

⁴²³Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 6:3.

preceding it (Gen 6:1–3).⁴²⁴ While, “In those days” refers to the period before the flood, the phrase “And also afterward” indicates that such people reemerged from among the descendants of Noah.⁴²⁵

This brings us to another point of contention. Who exactly were the Nephilim? Were they typical people living at that time, the sons of the gods themselves, or the progeny resulting from illicit unions between kings and the women they assaulted?⁴²⁶

Within the Old Testament (OT), only the account of the men who did reconnaissance prior to Israel entering Canaan also mentions Nephilim (Num 13:30–33).⁴²⁷ The Greek translation of the OT called these men in the book of Numbers “giants” (Num 30:33).⁴²⁸ “Nephilim” derives from a verb which means “to fall” (*naphal*),⁴²⁹ making a literal translation “fallen ones” (Deut 22:4).⁴³⁰ Their name connotes that anything so gigantic and exalted must fall (Jer 46:6; Ezek 26:15–18; Ezek 31:16–18).⁴³¹

Many commentators identify the Nephilim as children of the violent tyrants of Gen 6:2.⁴³² Their designation refers to particular characteristics of people—⁴³³ men of great physical prowess and military might—⁴³⁴ rather than depicting their ethnicity. Some compare these heroic warriors to knights from the Middle Ages who wandered in search of great quests.⁴³⁵

After the parenthetical comment about these mighty men, Moses again described the sin of the sons of the gods (Gen 6:1–4). He noted that they “went into” the daughters of men. While the word *bo* has many meanings, here it serves as a euphemism for sexual intercourse.⁴³⁶ When human sexuality did not involve reciprocal enjoyment but reproduction or lust, Scripture employs the phrases “go into” (*bo*) (Gen 16:2; Deut 22:13; Ruth 4:5, 13)⁴³⁷ or “lie with” (*shakav*) (Gen 39:7–12; 2 Sam 11:4).⁴³⁸ This verb alone exonerates Bathsheba as an unwilling participant in David’s sin.⁴³⁹

Due to the actions of the sons of the gods, women “bore to them those mighty ones (*gibor*) from of old.” While the word *olam* usually depicts a long duration into the future, it can also denote remote antiquity.⁴⁴⁰ Examples of this occur in Josh 24:2 and 1 Sam 27:8.⁴⁴¹ Although prior to the flood Moses named none of these individuals, we have several examples of these

⁴²⁴Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 142.

⁴²⁵Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 143.

⁴²⁶Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 269.

⁴²⁷Walton, *Genesis*, 296.

⁴²⁸Brannan, et al., *LES*, Num 13:33.

⁴²⁹Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “נָפַל” (*naphal*), *BDB* 656–8, 656, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/656/mode/2up>.

⁴³⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 270.

⁴³¹H. Seebass, “נָפַל” (*naphal*), *TDOT* 9:488–97, 497.

⁴³²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 118.

⁴³³Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 6:4.

⁴³⁴Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 116–7.

⁴³⁵Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Gen 6:4.

⁴³⁶H. D. Preuss, “בָּוֹא” (*bo*) *TDOT* 2:21–49, 21.

⁴³⁷Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “בָּוֹא” (*bo*), *BDB*, 98, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/98/mode/2up>.

⁴³⁸Holladay, “שָׁכַב” (*shakav*), *CHALOT*, 368.

⁴³⁹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 220.

⁴⁴⁰Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “עוֹלָם” (*olam*), *BDB*, 761–3, 761, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/760/mode/2up>.

⁴⁴¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 143.

“mighty ones” later in history. Gilgamesh represents the epitome of these men.⁴⁴² His epic describes him as “accomplished in strength, [who] like a wild ox lords it over the folk.”⁴⁴³

In Gen 10:8–12, Moses depicted Nimrod as one “mighty on the earth.” Nimrod’s activities included great hunting exploits and founding eight municipalities. Several of those cities became the most prominent of antiquity. Instead of the Bible treating legend as history, it appears that actual events have been transformed into the mythologies of the Ancient Near East.⁴⁴⁴

Read Gen 6:4. Who were the Nephilim? How did Moses describe the offspring of the sons of the gods and the daughters of men?

God Grieves

Please note that this post carries a trigger warning.

26) Gen 6:5–6: This passage asserts that the flood resulted from the wickedness perpetrated by the people living at that time,⁴⁴⁵ specifically sexual assault and further violence (Gen 6:1–4). Even during the Old Testament (OT) era, the Lord never acted arbitrarily. Divine judgment came in response to great evil (Gen 15:13–16; Deut 9:4–5).⁴⁴⁶

The contrast with Gen 1:31—where all was the very best it could be—could not be starker.⁴⁴⁷ Moses wrote, “And the Lord saw that great was the evil of humanity on the earth, and all of the purpose of the thoughts of their hearts was every day only evil.”⁴⁴⁸ Humanity reeked of corruption. Fully aware of the situation upon the earth,⁴⁴⁹ God detected the extent and the depth of human sin (Gen 19:13; Ps 53:2–3).⁴⁵⁰ Where the phrase “the Lord saw” occurs elsewhere, the author conveys the idea that God knew of the problem for some time and had at last determined to take decisive action (Cf. Gen 29:31; Exod 3:7–9).⁴⁵¹

Not only did people act wickedly, vile images consumed their attention (Matt 15:18–19).⁴⁵² The biblical concept of the heart (*lev*) included all of an inner person: mind, will, and emotion.⁴⁵³ By repeating “all/every” (*kol*) and “evil” (*raah*) Moses emphasized that these people were entirely wicked all of the time.⁴⁵⁴ This provides an excellent description of total depravity (Gen 8:21; Ps 14:1–4; Jer 17:9–10).⁴⁵⁵ What the text does not say is also important. Moses

⁴⁴²Walton, *Genesis*, 294.

⁴⁴³Speiser, trans., “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” in *ANET*, 1.4.36–9, 75,

https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n99/mode/2up.

⁴⁴⁴Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 118.

⁴⁴⁵Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 2nd Ed., 133.

⁴⁴⁶Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 273.

⁴⁴⁷Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 144.

⁴⁴⁸“Their hearts” is singular (“its heart”) in the Hebrew text since it views humanity as a collective entity. I have substituted plurals for easier reading.

⁴⁴⁹Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 118.

⁴⁵⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 273.

⁴⁵¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 143–4.

⁴⁵²Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 273.

⁴⁵³Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “לֵב” (*lev*), *BDB*, 524,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/524/mode/2up>.

⁴⁵⁴Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 395,

<https://archive.org/stream/geseniushebrewgr00geseuoft#page/394/mode/2up>.

⁴⁵⁵Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 118.

mentioned neither idolatry, nor a false conception of God, nor a human/spirit hybrid form of life.⁴⁵⁶ The Lord's motivation stemmed from humanity's lack of morality.⁴⁵⁷

Other Ancient Near Eastern flood texts lack this moral focus.⁴⁵⁸ In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the survivor of the flood tells the protagonist, "their heart led the great gods to produce the flood."⁴⁵⁹ Later in that tablet, the god Ea decreed, "Let not [the god] Enlil come to the offering, for he, unreasoning, brought on the deluge and my people consigned to destruction."⁴⁶⁰

The version of the flood story in the Atrahasis Epic says: "Twelve hundred years had not yet passed [after the gods created humanity] when the land extended and the peoples multiplied. The land was bellowing like a bull, the god got disturbed with their uproar. Enlil heard their noise and addressed the great gods, 'The noise of humankind has become too intense for me, with their uproar, I am deprived of sleep.'⁴⁶¹

In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the gods acted arbitrarily. The Atrahasis Epic noted that a human population boom disturbed the sleep of the gods.⁴⁶² According to those sagas, sin did not bring about the flood.

Yet, the biblical text does not portray the Lord acting on impulse in a fit of anger.⁴⁶³ Instead, "The Lord was sorry that he had made humanity on the earth. He was vexed to his heart." The verb for "was sorry" (*naham*) derives from the same word as Lamech's desire for Noah to bring relief (*naham*) from his painful toil (*itsabon*) (Gen 5:29). This is related to the term used to describe the Lord's vexation (*itsab*). Thus, Lamech's hope corresponds to the creator's anguish.⁴⁶⁴

This brings us to another quandary. How can our unchanging God regret what he has done (Heb 13:8)? In the OT, there are nine occasions when the form of the verb *naham* which appears here refers to the Lord being sorry for what he has done or choosing to alter his earlier decision (e.g. 1 Sam 15:10–11, 29; Ps 106:40–45; Exod 32:7–14; Jon 3:4–10).⁴⁶⁵

Throughout the OT, this complex word carries a wide range of meaning. One popular Bible, the NIV, translates *naham* in ten different ways. In fact, some of these mean the opposite of the others.⁴⁶⁶ The most authoritative Hebrew dictionary lists these definitions for this specific form of the verb: "become remorseful, repent of something, regret, be sorry, feel sorrow or sympathy, find comfort, be comforted."⁴⁶⁷

By viewing these definitions as an accountant would, John Walton finds that each of them fit together rather than oppose each other. In essence, the debits and credits of personal, national, and cosmic accounts must remain in balance. Good things resulting from the difficult situation counterbalance personal losses (Gen 24:67). When the Lord determines that judgment is due,

⁴⁵⁶Walton, *Genesis*, 308.

⁴⁵⁷Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 273.

⁴⁵⁸Walton, *Genesis*, 308.

⁴⁵⁹Speiser, trans., "The Epic of Gilgamesh," in *ANET*, tablet xi, lines 11, 93, https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n117/mode/2up.

⁴⁶⁰Speiser, trans., "The Epic of Gilgamesh," in *ANET*, tablet xi, lines 166–9, 95, https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n119/mode/2up.

⁴⁶¹W.G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, trans., "Epic of Atra-Khasis," in *Readings of the Ancient Near East (RANE)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 26.

⁴⁶²Walton, *Genesis*, 308.

⁴⁶³Walton, *Genesis*, 308.

⁴⁶⁴ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 144.

⁴⁶⁵H Simian-Yofre and H. J. Fabry, "נחם" (*naham*), *TDOT* 9:340–55, 343.

⁴⁶⁶Walton, *Genesis*, 309.

⁴⁶⁷Simian-Yofre and Fabry, "נחם" (*naham*), *TDOT* 9:342.

repentance by the offenders brings the ledger back into balance, leading God to extend grace by revoking the intended punishment (Jer 26:12–13; Joel 2:11–19). However, those who fail to repent suffer the consequences (Jer 18:7–11).⁴⁶⁸

The unchanging God invariably feels the pain of human sin. For those who refuse to repent, he will always alter his plans to deliver good things to them.⁴⁶⁹ In the same way, he will choose not bring harm to evil people who have a change of heart. When the Lord repents, he begins to act differently (Ezek 33:11–20).⁴⁷⁰ A paradox exists: the unchangeable God is quite willing to change his mind.⁴⁷¹ Nevertheless, the Lord is never impulsive or fickle (Num 23:19). It appears that 100 years passed between when he resolved to destroy humanity and when the flood came (Gen 5:32; Gen 7:11–12). This gave people time to repent. Divine repentance follows a human change of heart, for better or for worse.⁴⁷²

Due to the evil perpetrated by the sons of the gods, the Lord “was vexed to his heart.” This verb is related to the noun which means “pain.” Therefore, *atsab* indicates severe emotional or mental distress (Gen 45:5; 1 Sam 20:3).⁴⁷³ Just as Adam and Eve felt pain due to their sin (Gen 3:16–17), so does the Lord over the sin of humanity. God is neither aloof nor beyond the ability to grieve.⁴⁷⁴

In Hebrew thought, the heart was the center of a person’s thoughts, feelings, morals, and will.⁴⁷⁵ God grieved over the brutality which he witnessed until he felt bitterly indignant, reacting with a combination of anguish and rage. This same word describes God’s emotions in Ps 78:40–41 and Isa 63:10. Dinah’s brothers felt this way after Shechem raped her (Gen 34:1–7).⁴⁷⁶

Due to sexual assaults and the resulting violence, human sin reached the point where God would inevitably intervene.⁴⁷⁷ The deep love of the Lord spurred him to take drastic action.⁴⁷⁸ It was time for the accounts to be put back into balance (Dan 5:27). Justice would be served.⁴⁷⁹

Read Gen 6:5–6. What characterized the people during this time? How did the Lord feel about their thoughts and actions? What comfort does this give to those who have experienced violence? How can God be unchanging and yet change his mind?

Your summary of Sin in Redemptive History (Genesis 3–6)

⁴⁶⁸Walton, *Genesis*, 309–10.

⁴⁶⁹Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 118.

⁴⁷⁰Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 144.

⁴⁷¹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 275.

⁴⁷²Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 144.

⁴⁷³C. L. Meyers, “עָצַב” (*atsab*), *TDOT* 11:278–80, 279.

⁴⁷⁴Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 274.

⁴⁷⁵Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 118.

⁴⁷⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 144–5.

⁴⁷⁷Walton, *Genesis*, 308.

⁴⁷⁸Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 147.

⁴⁷⁹Walton, *Genesis*, 310–1.

Covenant:**Slaves and War Brides**

27) Exod 21:10–11 and Deut 21:10–14: Slavery and war captivity were facts of life in the Ancient Near East. These laws from God protected those most vulnerable to exploitation. As a result, married former slaves and war brides shared the rights of free Israelite women.⁴⁸⁰ If their husbands failed to meet their moral and legal obligations and divorce occurred, these women received freedom without a reduction of their status.⁴⁸¹

Since women seized in war typically suffer sexual assault, forbidding consummation for a month and making the women unattractive discouraged men from taking them.⁴⁸² An unmarried woman captured in this way could mourn the loss of her people before being forced into a new community.⁴⁸³ Shaving her head and allowing new hair to grow, trimming her nails, and changing her clothing also signified the shedding of a former life and taking on a new status as a member of the nation of Israel.⁴⁸⁴

This reminded her spouse not to treat her as a foreigner or slave.⁴⁸⁵ Deuteronomy 21:14 says, “You shall not deal tyrannically (*amar*) with her.”⁴⁸⁶ By the time of Christ, rabbis taught that these obligations also applied to free women and to men (*m. Ketuboth* 5:6–8).⁴⁸⁷

Read Exod 21:10–11 and Deut 21:10–14. What were the rights of slaves and war captives, women who were highly vulnerable to exploitation? Why would this regulation prevent battlefield rape? How does this express God’s concern for all women and men?

Your summary of Covenant in Redemptive History:

Exile:**God Hates Violence**

28) Mal 2:13–16: As a result of the sins of these men, God refused to accept their offerings, leading them to weep and to wail. Despite this, they failed to truly exhibit a broken spirit or a

⁴⁸⁰ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBOT*, Deut 21:10–4.

⁴⁸¹ Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 2002), 475.

⁴⁸² Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, 475.

⁴⁸³ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 496.

⁴⁸⁴ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 281.

⁴⁸⁵ Block, *Deuteronomy*, 496.

⁴⁸⁶ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “אָמַר” (*amar*), *BDB*, 771,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/770/mode/2up>.

⁴⁸⁷ Instone-Brewer, David, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 196, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/etm124.htm>.

contrite heart.⁴⁸⁸ Through the prophet Malachi, the Lord called for marital faithfulness, noting that a marriage covenant exists between three parties: the husband, the wife, and God.⁴⁸⁹

Malachi announced, “The Lord God of Israel said he hates divorcing (*shalakh*) and covering over the garment with violence (*khamas*),⁴⁹⁰ ... so guard yourselves on peril of your life, and you shall not deal treacherously” (*bagadh*).⁴⁹¹ In Hebrew, “violence” can refer to an attitude which oppresses others as well as to physical destruction.⁴⁹²

An official statement of the theologically conservative Presbyterian Church of America says:

“The Committee believes that when there are words and actions on the part of one spouse that threatens the life of the other spouse and/or children, that the one(s) threatened should be counseled by the [elders], or representative thereof, to remove themselves from the threatening situation and the abuser should be urged to seek counsel. Such a procedure will protect those threatened. When the abuser does not cease these words and actions, the [elders] should investigate whether these words and actions are in effect breaking the one-flesh relationship by ‘hating’ the abused spouse and not ‘nourishing and cherishing’ this one (Eph 5:28-29). In counseling the abuser, the reality of his Christian faith should be ascertained. When it is determined by the [elders] that the abuser does not appear to them to be Christian and the abuse continues, the Pauline teaching about an unbeliever leaving a believer should be applied [1 Cor 7:12-16].⁴⁹³

God holds accountable those who break their marriage covenants, causing a divorce.⁴⁹⁴ This passage does not apply to someone who discovers a spouse’s treachery and responds to those broken vows by filing for divorce.⁴⁹⁵

Since one of the terms in 1 Cor 6:9-11 means “reviler, abusive person” (*loidoros*),⁴⁹⁶ Paul recognized that such behavior is incompatible with the presence of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:19-24). In fact, he advised the church to remove abusive people from their fellowship (1 Cor 5:9-13).⁴⁹⁷ Domination and cruelty violate God’s order. He regards them as deplorable, hateful, and completely unacceptable within a marriage.⁴⁹⁸ The National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence produced an Equality Wheel and a Power and Control Wheel to help people differentiate between healthy and abusive relationships. A summary is on the next page.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁸⁸Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 273.

⁴⁸⁹ Smith, *Micah–Malachi*, 325.

⁴⁹⁰ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “שָׁמַח” (*khamas*), *BDB*, 329, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/328/mode/2up>.

⁴⁹¹Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “בָּגַד” (*bagadh*), 93, <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/92/mode/2up>. I cover the topic of divorce extensively in four consecutive posts on 1 Cor 7:10-16.

⁴⁹²H. Haag, “שָׁמַח” (*khamas*), *TDOT* 4:480-7, 480-1.

⁴⁹³ PCA Digest, “Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage.” (To the Twentieth General Assembly, 1992), Appendix 0, 291-2, <http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/divorce-remarriage.pdf>.

⁴⁹⁴Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 57.

⁴⁹⁵Richard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 359.

⁴⁹⁶Danker et al., “λοιδωρος” (*loidoros*), *BDAG*, 602, <https://archive.org/stream/greekenglishlex00liddrich#page/902/mode/2up>.

⁴⁹⁷ Danker, et al., “λοιδωρος” (*loidoros*), *BDAG*, 602.

⁴⁹⁸David W. Baker, *Joel, Obadiah, Malachi* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 260.

⁴⁹⁹<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/EqualitywheelNOSHADING.pdf>;
<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/PowerControlwheelNOSHADING.pdf>. Used with the permission of the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence (http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd_about.html).

Read Mal 2:13–16. How does God depict treachery and violence in this passage? Have you ever experienced people entering a room as if they wore a cloak of violence? Compare the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence’s Equality Wheel to the Power and Control Wheel (both summarized below). How can you identify a healthy relationship? What constitutes abusive behavior?⁵⁰⁰ What does the Lord’s refusal of the offerings of these men tell us about his heart toward those in abusive relationships? What can you do to align yourself with God’s concern?

Categories of Power and Control include:

Intimidation – Causing fear with looks, acts, or physical gestures; breaking things; hurting pets; showing weapons

Emotional Abuse – Criticizing; insulting; calling bad names; causing a person to feel crazy; humiliating; making someone feel guilty

Isolating – Controlling what a person does, sees, or reads; controlling what a person sees; controlling who a person sees or talks to; using jealousy as an excuse

Minimizing, Denying, and Blaming – Does not take a person’s concern about abuse seriously or says it did not happen; refuses to take responsibility for abuse or says the person caused it

Using Children – Makes a person feel guilty about their children; uses the children to send messages; makes visiting children an opportunity to harass someone; threatens to take children

Male Privilege – Treats a woman like a servant; makes all the major decisions; acts like “a king in a castle”; decides what men’s roles and women’s roles should be

Economic Abuse – Stops someone from getting a job; makes a person ask for money or gives an allowance; takes a person’s money; does not let someone understand family income or finances

Coercion and Threats – Threatens to hurt someone, leave the relationship, commit suicide, or report a person to authorities; makes someone drop legal charges; makes someone break the law

Physical Violence –

Sexual Violence –

⁵⁰⁰<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/EqualitywheelNOSHADING.pdf>;
<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/PowerControlwheelNOSHADING.pdf>. Used with the permission of the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence (http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd_about.html)

Categories of Equality include:

Non-Threatening Behavior – Talks and acts so a person feels safe and comfortable to say and do things

Respect – Listens without judging; affirms and understands someone’s emotions; values a person’s opinions

Trust and Support – approves of and helps someone reach personal goals; respects a person’s right to have feelings, make friendships, engage in activities, and express opinions

Honesty and Accountability – Accepts responsibility for own behavior; acknowledges any past violence; admits it when wrong; communicates freely and truthfully

Responsible Parenting – Shares responsibility for children; behaves as a positive role model

Shares Responsibility – Agrees to fairly divide work that needs to be done; makes family decisions together

Economic Partnership – Makes decisions about finances together; ensures both partners benefit from available money

Negotiation and Fairness – Seeks to resolve conflict to satisfy both partners; accepts change; is willing to compromise

Nonviolence –

The Tragedy of Mercilessness

29) Matt 18:35: Jesus immediately made the meaning of this parable in Matt 18:21–35 clear to Peter by providing its application (Cf. Matt 13:1–2, 10–11). Christ concluded by saying, “This also my heavenly Father shall do to you, if each of you will not forgive their brother [or sister] from your hearts.” At last, Jesus confirmed that the king in the parable represents the Lord.⁵⁰¹

The Greek construction of “will not forgive” (*mē aphēte*) forms a strong negation, indicating an unwillingness to extend forgiveness to another person.⁵⁰² It does not mean that we struggle to quench bitterness and find ourselves repeatedly needing to forgive the offender for the same incident. The phrase “from your hearts” refers to sincerity, rather than merely saying that we forgive someone.⁵⁰³

As Christians, God has absolved the enormous debt of our sin (Col 2:13–14). Surely, we can extend that same mercy to people whose transgressions against us trifle in comparison,⁵⁰⁴ especially when they express repentance.⁵⁰⁵ Experiencing the mercy and grace of God transforms

⁵⁰¹Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 540.

⁵⁰²Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek, 3rd Ed.*, 314.

⁵⁰³Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 540.

⁵⁰⁴France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 703.

⁵⁰⁵Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 540–1.

our hearts. Thus, we can extend to others what we have already received (Luke 7:36–50).⁵⁰⁶ God exempts none of us from the command to reflect divine forgiveness.⁵⁰⁷ Mercy received reproduces mercy.⁵⁰⁸ A refusal to forgive someone who expresses repentance casts doubt upon our citizenship in the kingdom of God.⁵⁰⁹

Those who do not know the forgiveness of the Lord can imitate his disciples on a superficial level. However, their words and actions will ultimately reveal their true allegiance (Matt 12:33–37; Matt 15:18–19). People who hold onto bitterness like a treasure will experience eternal damnation.⁵¹⁰ God will not forgive the unforgiving (Matt 7:1–5; James 2:13; Rev 20:11–15).⁵¹¹

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote:

“No one should be surprised that they cannot come to believe so long as, in deliberate disobedience, they flee or reject some aspect of Jesus’s commandment. You do not want to subject some sinful passion, an enmity, a hope, your life plans, or your reason to Jesus’s commandment? Do not be surprised that you do not receive the Holy Spirit, that you cannot pray, that your prayer for faith remains empty! Instead, go and be reconciled with your sister or brother; let go of the sin which keeps you captive; and you will be able to believe again! If you reject God’s commanding word, you will not receive God’s gracious word. How would you expect to find community while you intentionally withdraw from it at some point? The disobedient cannot believe.”⁵¹²

Particularly where trauma has occurred, the concept of extending forgiveness contains some pitfalls. Finding a wise counselor, taking time to process the wounds, and even medical intervention may be required to experience healing and gain the ability to forgive the offender.⁵¹³ In such cases, no one should be pressured to forgive.⁵¹⁴

Where abuse has occurred, real change requires a long-term process, even with third party intervention.⁵¹⁵ We must recognize that abusers often appear genuinely repentant and promise to change. However, this does not last (Prov 19:19).⁵¹⁶ God never calls us to passively accept violence perpetrated against us.⁵¹⁷ Therefore, we must not counsel the recipients of abuse to simply accept an apology and give the perpetrator another chance. Abusers will often portray themselves as the true victims. Such advice can be equivalent to a death warrant.⁵¹⁸

⁵⁰⁶Wilkins, *Matthew*, 625.

⁵⁰⁷France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 703.

⁵⁰⁸Wilkins, *Matthew*, 629.

⁵⁰⁹Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 541.

⁵¹⁰Wilkins, *Matthew*, 625.

⁵¹¹France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 708.

⁵¹²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (ed. Martin Kuske, et al.; vol. 4 of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*; trans. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2003), 66.

⁵¹³Jeffrey M. Brandsma, “Forgiveness,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling, 2nd Ed. (BEPC)* (ed. David G. Benner and Peter C. Hill; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 468–71, 470.

⁵¹⁴Walter Elwell, ed., *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible, 2 Vols. (BEB)* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 87.

⁵¹⁵Paul Hegstrom, *Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them: Breaking the Cycle of Physical and Emotional Abuse, Rev. Ed.* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 2004), 131.

⁵¹⁶Detective Sgt Donald Stewart, *Refuge: A Pathway Out of Domestic Violence and Abuse* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 2004), 44–5.

⁵¹⁷Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb, *Is It My Fault? Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence* (Chicago: Moody, 2014), 128.

⁵¹⁸Catherine Clark Kroeger and James R. Beck, eds., *Women, Abuse, and the Bible: How Scripture Can Be Used to Hurt or Heal* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 234.

The Presbyterian Church of America, a conservative evangelical denomination, published the following official statement on this topic:

“The Committee believes that when there are words and actions on the part of one spouse that threaten the life of the other spouse and/or children, that the one(s) threatened should be counseled by the [elders], or representative thereof, to remove themselves from the threatening situation and the abuser should be urged to seek counsel. Such a procedure will protect those threatened. When the abuser does not cease these words and actions, the Session (elders) should investigate whether these words and actions are in effect breaking the one-flesh relationship by ‘hating’ the abused spouse and not ‘nourishing and cherishing’ this one (Eph 5:28–29). In counseling the abuser, the reality of his Christian faith should be ascertained [1 Cor 6:9–10 includes the term ‘abusive person’ (*loidoros*)]. When it is determined by the [elders] that the abuser does not appear to them to be Christian and the abuse continues, the Pauline teaching about an unbeliever leaving a believer should be applied [1 Cor 7:15].”⁵¹⁹

Forgiveness does not consist of denying, pardoning, or condoning the sin of another. It may neither result in reconciliation nor in forgetting the offense.⁵²⁰ God does not expect us to restore a toxic relationship.⁵²¹ Nevertheless, only by releasing grudges can a victim sever harmful emotional ties to the offender. We must confess and forsake hatred more for our own sakes than for the benefit of those who sin against us.⁵²² Fostering bitterness has the same effect as drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.⁵²³

Read Matt 18:35. Why can people who refuse to forgive those who repent expect a destiny like that of the evil slave? What does forgiveness look like? How should we counsel people in abusive relationships?

Your summary of Exile in Redemptive History:

Redemption/Restoration Begins:

A New Dawn

30) Matt 28:1: As foretold in Gen 3:15, Christ’s conquest of the serpent came via his execution. Nevertheless, few people in Israel expected their messiah to die (Cf. Deut 21:23; John 12:31–34;

⁵¹⁹20th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, “*Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage* (1992), 290–1, [Http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/divorce-remarriage.pdf](http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/divorce-remarriage.pdf).

⁵²⁰Brandsma, “Forgiveness,” *BEPC*, 468.

⁵²¹Hegstrom, *Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them: Breaking the Cycle of Physical and Emotional Abuse*, Rev. Ed., 104.

⁵²²Dr. Henry Cloud, *Changes That Heal: How to Understand Your Past to Ensure a Healthier Future* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 257.

⁵²³ This concept is attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous.

1 Cor 1:22–23). Imagine how forlorn and forsaken Jesus’s followers must have felt (Matt 27:50, 54–61; Luke 24:17–21).⁵²⁴

In keeping with the other gospel writers, Matthew simply announced Christ’s resurrection.⁵²⁵ He did not describe how or even exactly when it occurred.⁵²⁶ The familiarity of his original audience with this event may account for our lack of insight.⁵²⁷ Ancient writers felt little inclination to pay a scribe to record what their intended readers already knew. In that era, a scribe earned twelve days’ unskilled wages for penning a scroll equal to the length of Matthew’s gospel.⁵²⁸

Every resurrection account in the four gospels varies considerably. In the case of Luke 24, the author may have wished to fill the remaining space on his costly scroll. This resulted in a long, detailed report.⁵²⁹ Matthew dictated one of his shortest narratives when discussing the resurrection,⁵³⁰ likely due to the constraints of scroll length, rather than for theological purposes.⁵³¹ A standard papyrus scroll twelve feet long cost the equivalent of eight days’ wages for an unskilled laborer, just for the materials. People also avoided scrolls over thirty feet long as too unwieldy.⁵³²

Each author wrote of this event from a perspective familiar to him, without concern about matching someone else’s details.⁵³³ This points to independent narratives based upon eyewitness traditions circulating in the first century. They broadly converged on the crucial facets of the circumstances of that day:⁵³⁴ several women visited Jesus’s grave on Sunday morning; they encountered one or more angels; then discovered that Christ no longer inhabited the tomb, for he had risen from the dead.⁵³⁵ We have no sense of coordinated deception from the gospel writers.⁵³⁶ Only reliable testimony of Jesus’s bodily resurrection can explain the explosive growth of early Christianity (Acts 4:1–4; 1 Cor 15:1–8).⁵³⁷

Matthew began his account of Easter morning by writing, “Now, after the Sabbath, at the dawning of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.” Early Christians celebrated Jesus’s resurrection on the first day of each week,⁵³⁸ calling it “the Lord’s day” (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1–2; Rev 1:9–10).⁵³⁹ The *Didache* (ca. 50–120 AD), also known as The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, provides us with the earliest extra-biblical record of Christian practices.⁵⁴⁰ It says, “But every Lord's day gather yourselves together, and

⁵²⁴Wilkins, *Matthew*, 933.

⁵²⁵France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1097

⁵²⁶Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 867.

⁵²⁷Wilkins, *Matthew*, 933.

⁵²⁸E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 168–9. I calculated this by comparing the length of Matthew to that of Romans in the Codex Vaticanus (http://www.csntm.org/Manuscript/View/GA_03).

⁵²⁹Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 697–8.

⁵³⁰Wilkins, *Matthew*, 933.

⁵³¹Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 18 note 48.

⁵³²Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing*, 51–2.

⁵³³Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (PNTC; Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1992), 733.

⁵³⁴Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 702.

⁵³⁵France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1097.

⁵³⁶Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 697.

⁵³⁷Wilkins, *Matthew*, 934.

⁵³⁸Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 868.

⁵³⁹Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 698.

⁵⁴⁰Larry W. Hurtado, “Christology: Didache” in *DLNT*, 181.

break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure.”⁵⁴¹

Close to the same era, the Epistle of Barnabas (80–120 AD) states the rationale for gentiles changing the day of the Sabbath (Gen 2:1–3). It proclaims: “[W]hen there is no more sin, but all things have been made new by the Lord, then we shall be able to keep it holy because we ourselves have first been made holy. Furthermore, he says to them, ‘Your new moons and your Sabbaths, I cannot away with’ [Isa 1:13]. Do you see what he means? The present Sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but that which I have made, in which I will give rest to all things and make the beginning of an eighth day, that is, the beginning of another world. Wherefore, we also celebrate with gladness the eighth day in which Jesus also rose from the dead, and was made manifest, and ascended into heaven.”⁵⁴²

In his First Apology (ca. 150–160 AD), Justin Martyr described a service early in church history:

“On the day called Sunday, all who live in the cities or the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits; then when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then, we all rise together and pray...when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying ‘Amen’; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well-to-do and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows, or those, who through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.

“But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world [Gen 1:1–5]; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. For he was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to his apostles and disciples, he taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.”⁵⁴³

The arrival of dawn on that Sunday morning ushered in a new era in human history.⁵⁴⁴

In each of the four gospels, Mary Magdalene emerges as a primary witness to the events at the garden tomb.⁵⁴⁵ The “other Mary” refers to the mother of James. Matthew did not mention at least two other women, either for stylistic purposes or due to the slight differences inherent in eyewitness accounts (Cf. Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1, 9–10; John 20:1).⁵⁴⁶ All of them had watched Jesus during his crucifixion, helped with preparations for his burial, and observed his

⁵⁴¹M. B. Riddle, trans., “The Didache: The Lord’s Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations,” in *ANF* 7. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds. (New York: Christian Literature, 1886), 381, <https://archive.org/details/antenicenefather071913robe/page/380>.

⁵⁴²Lake, trans., “The Epistle of Barnabas,” in *The Apostolic Fathers*, 395–6, <https://archive.org/stream/theapostolicfath00unknuoft#page/334/mode/2up>.

⁵⁴³Justin Martyr, “The First Apology of Justin Martyr: With Text and Translation,” in *ANF01* (trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, rev A. Cleveland Coxe; New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1913), 67, 186, <https://archive.org/stream/antenicenefather01robe#page/186/mode/2up>.

⁵⁴⁴Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19–28*, 664.

⁵⁴⁵Wilkins, *Matthew*, 937.

⁵⁴⁶Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 702.

entombment (Matt 27:55–61; Mark 15:40–47).⁵⁴⁷ Now, they returned to Christ’s grave, likely to express their grief in prayer.⁵⁴⁸

Pope Gregory the Great (540–604) first merged Mary Magdalene’s identity with that of a prostitute in a homily dating to 591. He said, “She whom Luke calls the sinful woman [Luke 7:36–50]...we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected according to Mark [16:9]” (Cf. Luke 8:2).⁵⁴⁹ No evidence exists that Mary Magdalene had ever worked as a prostitute, either within the gospels or in extra-biblical records.⁵⁵⁰

Read Matt 28:1. Why didn’t Jewish people expect their messiah to die, especially by crucifixion? How do the variations in the four gospel accounts of Christ’s resurrection point to the reality of this event? Why did early Christians begin meeting together on Sundays? How would you characterize the people who first visited Jesus’s tomb that morning?

Apostles to the Apostles

31) Matt 28:5–7: Ignoring the guards,⁵⁵¹ the angel of the Lord directed his attention to a selective audience (Matt 28:1–4).⁵⁵² Matthew reported, “The angel said to the women, ‘Do not *you* be afraid, for I know that you are seeking Jesus, the crucified one. He is not here, for he has been raised, even as he said. Come! See the place where he was lying.’”

Due to the soldiers’ reactions, the angel made an emphatic statement,⁵⁵³ adding the grammatically unnecessary word “you” (plural of *su*).⁵⁵⁴ Heavenly messengers typically found it necessary to reassure the people they visited (Cf. Luke 1:13, 30; Luke 2:10).⁵⁵⁵ No doubt the women initially responded with the same terror the guards experienced.⁵⁵⁶

In Koine Greek, the perfect tense denotes a past action which has ongoing consequences. For example, “I had been in the Air Force” implies that one’s past military service influences life today and into the future. By calling Jesus “the one who had been crucified” (*estaurōmenon*) —a

⁵⁴⁷Wilkins, *Matthew*, 936–7.

⁵⁴⁸Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 869.

⁵⁴⁹Michelle J. Morris, “Mary Magdalene” in *Lexham Bible Dictionary (LBD)*. John D. Barry et. al, eds. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), no pages.

⁵⁵⁰Raymond F. Collins, “Mary (Person)” in *ABD* 4:579–81, 580.

⁵⁵¹France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1100.

⁵⁵²Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 702.

⁵⁵³Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 869.

⁵⁵⁴William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek, 3rd Ed.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 0209), 135.

⁵⁵⁵Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 869.

⁵⁵⁶Osborne, *Matthew*, 1066.

term which appears as a perfect participle—the angel announced that the past effect of Christ’s sacrifice would continue in the future (Gal 3:13; Phil 2:5–11).⁵⁵⁷

When an enormous boulder falls upon the soft sands of the seabed, the resounding thud reverberates in all directions, making ripples in the sand. When Jesus rose from the dead, that momentous event affected everything in the cosmos. Both the past and the future, including the era in which we live, have been forever changed (Exod 3:13–14; John 8:56–59).⁵⁵⁸

Although the women had seen Jesus buried in the tomb, the angel triumphantly revealed that he no longer there resided there in death (Matt 27:45–50; John 19:30–31).⁵⁵⁹ The passive verb “has been raised” (*ēgerthē* from *egeirō*) indicates that God himself physically resurrected his son from death.⁵⁶⁰ The tomb remains empty.⁵⁶¹

Just as Jesus predicted, the Son of Man spent three days and three nights “in the heart of the earth” (Matt 12:40; Matt 16:21; Matt 17:22–23; Matt 20:17–19).⁵⁶² The Jewish reckoning of a “day” (*yom*) began at twilight and lasted until the following evening (Gen 1:5; Lev 23:5, 32).⁵⁶³ Even a portion of a day counted. Christ died at approximately 3:00 pm on Friday, remained in the grave on Saturday, and was raised from the dead early on Sunday morning, fulfilling his prophecies (Matt 27:45–50; John 19:30–31).⁵⁶⁴

Ironically, Jesus’s enemies recognized the implications of what Christ had taught, while his own followers did not (Matt 27:62–66; John 20:19).⁵⁶⁵ By raising Jesus from the dead, God thoroughly affirmed his claims of deity and vindicated him of any wrongdoing (Dan 7:13–14; Matt 9:27–34; Matt 26:59–67; Matt 28:16–20). As people who put our trust in Christ’s sacrificial death on our behalf, we all look forward to receiving resurrected bodies in the age to come (1 Cor 15:20–23, 50–55).⁵⁶⁶

The angel invited the women to enter the tomb to verify his claim for themselves.⁵⁶⁷ Then, he charged them, “Now, quickly go, say to his disciples that he has been raised from the dead, and behold, he is going before you into Galilee. There you will see him. Behold, I told you.”

In that era, Greco-Roman and Jewish authorities regarded the testimony of women with suspicion.⁵⁶⁸ Concerning one Vestal Virgin, the Greco-Roman philosopher Plutarch (46–122 AD) noted, “Now Tarquinia was a holy virgin, one of the Vestals, and received great honors for this act, among which was this, that of all women her testimony alone should be received.”⁵⁶⁹ In

⁵⁵⁷Wilkins, *Matthew*, 938.

⁵⁵⁸Oakes, “The Apologetics of Beauty,” in *The Beauty of God: Theology and the Arts*, 220.

⁵⁵⁹Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 869.

⁵⁶⁰Wilkins, *Matthew*, 939.

⁵⁶¹Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 870.

⁵⁶²France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1098.

⁵⁶³W. Von Soden, J. Bergman, and M. Sæbø, “יָוֹם” (*yom*), *TDOT* 6:7–32, 23–4.

⁵⁶⁴Wilkins, *Matthew*, 936.

⁵⁶⁵Osborne, *Matthew*, 1067.

⁵⁶⁶Wilkins, *Matthew*, 939.

⁵⁶⁷Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 870.

⁵⁶⁸Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 698–9.

⁵⁶⁹Plutarch, “Publicola,” in *Plutarch’s Lives, Vol I.* (trans. Bernadotte Perrin; Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; Heinemann, 1914), 8.4, 523, <https://archive.org/details/plutarchslives01plut2/page/522>.

general, men in those societies considered females easily-deceived.⁵⁷⁰ For example, Philo (ca. 20 BC–40 AD) called women “by nature light-minded.”⁵⁷¹

The Jewish historian Josephus (37–100 AD) promoted this view: “But let not a single witness be credited, but three, or two at the least, and those such whose testimony is confirmed by their good lives. But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex.”⁵⁷²

Had the apostles fabricated the events of Easter morning, they would have chosen very different messengers to deliver the news that Jesus had risen.⁵⁷³ On the other hand, the gospel authors delivered a powerful theological statement by preserving these accounts (Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–10).⁵⁷⁴ God selected the same group of women who witnessed Jesus’s death and burial to proclaim his resurrection (Matt 27:55–61; Mark 15:40–47).⁵⁷⁵ In this new era of God’s kingdom, the gospel overcomes traditional gender and social limitations (Gal 3:28; Acts 1:14; Acts 2:1–4, 16–21; Rom 16:1–12).⁵⁷⁶

An “apostle” (*apostolos*) consists of a person formally sent to convey a specific message with the full authority of the sender.⁵⁷⁷ This made the women who received the angel’s proclamation and saw the empty tomb apostles to the apostles (Cf. Luke 24:9–10).⁵⁷⁸

Concerning Mary Magdalene, Thomas Aquinas (1224/6–1274) wrote this: “Notice the three privileges given to Mary Magdalene. First, she had the privilege of being a prophet because she was worthy enough to see the angels, for a prophet is an intermediary between angels and the people. Secondly, she had the dignity or rank of an angel insofar as she looked upon Christ, on whom the angels desire to look. Thirdly, she had the office of an apostle; indeed, she was an apostle to the apostles insofar as it was her task to announce our Lord’s resurrection to the disciples. Thus, just as it was a woman who was the first to announce the words of death, so it was a woman who would be the first to announce the words of life.”⁵⁷⁹ The women’s testimony of Christ’s resurrection comprises the cornerstone of the Christian faith (Acts 2:22–36; 1 Cor 15:1–8; Rom 10:9–13).⁵⁸⁰

Finally, the angel delivered instructions for the remaining disciples to return to Galilee, where Jesus had lived and often ministered (Matt 2:19–23; Matt 3:13; Matt 4:12–25; Matt 19:1–2).⁵⁸¹ There the risen Christ would meet them. Once they arrived, Jesus spent forty days preparing them for their crucial role in spreading the good news of the kingdom of God (Matt 28:16–20; John 21; Acts 1:1–3).⁵⁸² Except for John, the eleven disciples had fled when the

⁵⁷⁰Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 698 note 283.

⁵⁷¹Philo, “That Every Good Person is Free,” in *The Works of Philo Judaeus, Vol. 3* (trans. Charles Duke Yonge; London: Bohn, 1855), 18, 532, <https://archive.org/details/theworksofphiloj03yonguoft/page/532>.

⁵⁷²Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 4.8.15,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D4%3Awhiston%20chapter%3D8%3Awhiston%20section%3D15>.

⁵⁷³Osborne, *Matthew*, 1067.

⁵⁷⁴Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 699.

⁵⁷⁵Wilkins, *Matthew*, 939–40.

⁵⁷⁶Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 698, 702.

⁵⁷⁷Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “ἀπόστολος” (*apostolos*), *TDNT* 1:407–44, 421.

⁵⁷⁸Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 870.

⁵⁷⁹Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* (trans. Fabian L. Larcher; Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1998), John 20, 2519, <https://dhspritory.org/thomas/english/John20.htm>.

⁵⁸⁰Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 870.

⁵⁸¹Sean Freyne, “Galilee: Hellenistic/Roman Galilee” *ABD* 2:895–9, 899.

⁵⁸²Wilkins, *Matthew*, 939–40.

Jewish leaders arrested Jesus (Matt 26:56; John 19:25–27). In contrast, these faithful women who remained with Jesus to the end would not have to wait to see the risen Lord (Matt 26:56; Matt 27:55–61; Matt 28:8–10).⁵⁸³

Read Matt 28:5–7. Why did the angel emphasize that the women should not be afraid? How does Greek grammar indicate that the effects of Christ’s crucifixion continue even today? Why do we say that Jesus was in the grave for three days, when it was less than 48 hours? What did Jesus’s enemies understand about his predictions that even Christ’s disciples missed? How did God upend gender limitations by having the angel deliver his message to the apostles via these women? What credibility does that act give to the resurrection accounts?

A Restoration of Status

32) Matt 28:10: With emotionally-fraught events swirling around Mary Magdalene and the other women,⁵⁸⁴ the risen Christ repeated the angel of the Lord’s comfort and directive, with one major difference (Cf. Matt 28:1–9).⁵⁸⁵ The angel had referred to Jesus’s followers as his “disciples” (*mathētais*).⁵⁸⁶ However, Christ said, “Do not be afraid. Go and speak to my brothers and sisters (*adelphois*) in order that they might go into Galilee. There they will see me.”

In Koine Greek, a masculine plural noun can include women in a group of mixed gender (Matt 12:48–50). During Christ’s arrest, trial, and crucifixion only John and “many women” had remained with him (Matt 26:55–58, 69–75; John 19:25–27; Matt 27:55–61). Jesus experienced desertion by most of his male disciples. Yet, he still included them among his “brothers and sisters,”⁵⁸⁷ even before they expressed contrition for abandoning him.⁵⁸⁸ This indicates that Christ had already forgiven them.⁵⁸⁹

Jesus had lived and often ministered in Galilee (Matt 2:19–23; Matt 3:13; Matt 4:12–25; Matt 19:1–2),⁵⁹⁰ so they likely knew exactly where he wanted them to reunite (Matt 26:31–32;

⁵⁸³France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1098.

⁵⁸⁴Wilkins, *Matthew*, 941.

⁵⁸⁵Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 874.

⁵⁸⁶Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 874.

⁵⁸⁷Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 703.

⁵⁸⁸Osborne, *Matthew*, 1069.

⁵⁸⁹France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1102–3.

⁵⁹⁰Freyne, “Galilee: Hellenistic/Roman Galilee” *ABD* 2:895–9, 899.

Matt 28:16).⁵⁹¹ Matthew focused upon the gradual expansion of God's kingdom to gentiles (Matt 2:1–2; Matt 8:5–13; Matt 27:50–54; Matt 28:18–20).⁵⁹² By employing female disciples as his envoys at this critical point in salvation history, Christ restored women to the status they originally occupied as equal and adequate partners (Gen 1:26–28; Gen 2:18–23; Rom 16:1–12).⁵⁹³

Read Matt 28:10. How did Jesus indicate his forgiveness for even the disciples who had abandoned him? Why did he choose Galilee as their place to reunite? How does this verse point to the renewed equality of male and female disciples of the Lord?

The Spirit Descends

33) Acts 2:1–4: This chapter inaugurates what Jesus promised to the apostles after his resurrection (Luke 24:45–49; Acts 1:4–11; Luke 24:50–53).⁵⁹⁴ Indeed, Christ continued to orchestrate events on the earth even after his ascension into heaven (Acts 2:22–36).⁵⁹⁵ Luke's account begins by reporting on the activity of the disciples, stating, "And when the day of Pentecost had arrived, all of them were together in one place."

The word translated as "had arrived" also means "was fulfilled."⁵⁹⁶ By employing this verb, Luke hinted at the importance of what occurred on that day (Cf. Luke 9:51).⁵⁹⁷ At last the true purpose of the Feast of Pentecost was coming to fruition: the reaping of the first fruits of the new age in salvation history (Rom 8:23).⁵⁹⁸ From this time forward, the Holy Spirit marked members of the church with his intimate presence (John 14:16–27).⁵⁹⁹

Pentecost means "fiftieth."⁶⁰⁰ On the fiftieth day after the early harvest festival, which coincided with Passover, Israelites presented the first fruits of the barley harvest to the Lord (Lev 23:15–21).⁶⁰¹ The OT calls this celebration "the feast of weeks" or "the day of the first fruits" (Exod 23:14–17; Exod 34:22; Deut 16:1, 9–12).⁶⁰² Just as Passover foreshadowed the redemption to come by Christ's death and resurrection, so the Feast of Weeks preceded the first fruits of the salvation we enjoy (Rom 8:16–17; 2 Cor 1:21–22).⁶⁰³

⁵⁹¹Wilkins, *Matthew*, 942.

⁵⁹²Osborne, *Matthew*, 1096–9.

⁵⁹³Wilkins, *Matthew*, 942.

⁵⁹⁴Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race*, 164.

⁵⁹⁵Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan* (ed. D. A. Carson; NSBT; Nottingham; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2011), 50.

⁵⁹⁶Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, "συμπληρώω" (*symplēroō*), *BDAG*, 959.

⁵⁹⁷William J. Larkin Jr, *Acts* (IVPNTCS; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), Acts 2:1, electronic ed.

⁵⁹⁸Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 131, note 7.

⁵⁹⁹Ajith Fernando, *Acts* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 90.

⁶⁰⁰Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, "πεντηκοστή" (*pentēkostē*), *BDAG*, 795.

⁶⁰¹Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 130–1.

⁶⁰²F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 49–50.

⁶⁰³Larkin, *Acts*, Ac 2:1.

By the time of Christ, many Jewish people associated this festival with a commemoration of Moses receiving the law at Mount Sinai. This was due to the close dates on their calendar (Exod 12:17–18; Exod 19:1).⁶⁰⁴ Consequently, the Essenes of Qumran performed the rites of a Feast of the Renewal of the Covenant on the same day as Pentecost (1 QS 1:16–2:25). Part of this ritual involved the expulsion of those who failed to keep the community stipulations.⁶⁰⁵ One document states, “The sons of Levi and [the men] of the camps shall congregate in the third month and shall curse him who turns aside, to the right [or to the left from the] Law” (4Q 266–270).⁶⁰⁶

Thus, the timing of this event implies that life in the Spirit supersedes living according to the Mosaic law (Rom 7:4–6; Rom 8:1–4; Gal 5:18).⁶⁰⁷ On that Pentecost, Jesus began a new covenant for the last days (Acts 2:14–21).⁶⁰⁸ Many Israelites viewed the age to come in this way:⁶⁰⁹

“[The hea]vens and the earth will listen to his Messiah, and none therein will stray from the commandments of the holy ones. Seekers of the Lord, strengthen yourselves in His service! All you hopeful in (your) heart, will you not find the Lord in this? For the Lord will consider the pious and call the righteous by name. Over the poor his spirit will hover and will renew the faithful with his power. And he will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal Kingdom, he who liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the b[ent] (Ps 146:7–8).”⁶¹⁰

Likewise, when the apostles asked Jesus about restoring the kingdom to Israel, he had responded by saying, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (Acts 1:6–8).⁶¹¹ Christ linked the arrival of the kingdom of God with the coming of the Spirit.

As Christ had instructed them before his ascension, his followers were meeting together regularly in Jerusalem.⁶¹² Most likely, this occurred in the upper room where they celebrated the Last Supper (Acts 1:12–15).⁶¹³ Luke wrote, “And it happened suddenly: from heaven a noise like a rushing, violent wind. And it filled the whole house where they were sitting, and there appeared to them divided tongues, just like fire. And it settled on every one of them.”

Visual and aural signs accompanied this supernatural event.⁶¹⁴ Typically, the same Greek word (*pneuma*) denotes wind, breath, spirit, and the Spirit.⁶¹⁵ However, the relatively rare word Luke used here refers strictly to wind or breath, although it can have the nuance of the “breath of life,” as in the Greek translation of Gen 2:7 and in Acts 17:25.⁶¹⁶ Even so, this rushing wind arrived with, and symbolized, the Holy Spirit.⁶¹⁷

The noise was “like” a rushing, violent wind, not an actual gale.⁶¹⁸ Jesus used a similar analogy in his conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1–8). When the Spirit came, he arrived with power.⁶¹⁹ Sound filled the entire house, a dwelling large enough to contain 120 seated people.⁶²⁰

⁶⁰⁴Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts: Expanded Digital Edition* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), Acts 2:1.

⁶⁰⁵Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 117.

⁶⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 54.

⁶⁰⁷Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 131.

⁶⁰⁸Schnabel, *Acts*, Acts 2:1.

⁶⁰⁹Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, Acts 2:1–4.

⁶¹⁰Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 4Q521, Frag. 2, 244–5.

⁶¹¹Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, Acts 2:1–4.

⁶¹²Schnabel, *Acts*, Acts 2:1. The verb “were meeting” occurs in the imperfect tense, which refers to a continuous or repetitive action in the past.

⁶¹³Larkin, *Acts*, Acts 2:1.

⁶¹⁴*Ibid.*, Acts 2:1.

⁶¹⁵Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “πνεῦμα” (*pneuma*), *BDAG*, 832–6, 832.

⁶¹⁶Eduard Schweizer, “πνοή” (*pnoē*), *TDNT*, 6:453.

⁶¹⁷Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 50.

⁶¹⁸Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 132.

⁶¹⁹Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 50.

⁶²⁰Schnabel, *Acts*, Acts 2:2.

In the OT, the Lord usually arrived with a wind (2 Sam 22:7–11; Ps 104:1–4; Ezek 1:4).⁶²¹ The phrase commonly translated “cool of the day” in Gen 3:8 also means “wind of the storm” (Job 38:1–3).⁶²² During Israel’s exile, Ezekiel received a vision foretelling God’s restoration of his people.⁶²³ When Ezekiel prophesied to the wind, it entered the dry bones and revived them with new life from the Spirit (Ezek 37:1–14).⁶²⁴

Concerning Babel, Josephus reported, “Sibyl also makes mention of this tower, and of the confusion of the language, when she says thus, ‘When all men were of one language, some of them built a high tower, as if they would thereby ascend up to heaven, but *the gods sent storms of wind* and overthrew the tower.’”⁶²⁵

Likewise, the divided tongues were “like” fire.⁶²⁶ The imagery here connotes the flickering of flames.⁶²⁷ God’s presence often resembled fire (Exod 3:1–4; Exod 40:33–38; Dan 7:9–10). When the Lord delivered the law to Moses, the entire mountaintop blazed (Exod 19:16–19; Exod 24:17–18). Yet such fire could also portend judgment (Lev 10:1–2; Num 16:1–2, 35; Isa 66:15–16; 1 Cor 3:10–15). Flames also effected purification (Num 31:21–23).⁶²⁸

The Jewish philosopher Philo wrote this regarding Moses’s reception of the law: “And a voice sounded forth from out of the midst of the fire which had flowed from heaven, a most marvelous and awful voice, *the flame being endowed with articulate speech in a language familiar to the hearers*, which expressed its words with such clearness and distinctness that the people seemed rather to be seeing than hearing it. And the law testifies to the accuracy of my statement, where it is written, ‘And all the people beheld the voice most evidently’ [Exod 20:18]. For the truth is that the voice of men is calculated to be heard; but that of God to be really and truly seen. Why is this? Because all that God says are not words, but actions which the eyes determine on before the ears.

“It is, therefore, with great beauty and also with a proper sense of what is consistent with the dignity of God, that the voice is said to have come forth out of the fire; for the oracles of God are accurately understood and tested like gold by the fire. And God also intimates to us something of this kind by a figure. Since the property of fire is partly to give light, and partly to burn, those who think fit to show themselves obedient to the sacred commands shall live forever and ever as in a light which is never darkened, having his laws themselves as stars giving light in their soul. But all those who are stubborn and disobedient are forever inflamed, and burnt, and consumed by their internal appetites, which, like flame, will destroy all the life of those who possess them.”⁶²⁹

Israel’s prophets proclaimed that their messiah would come with fire. He would purge all unrighteousness and purify his people (Isa 4:2–6; Isa 9:1–7; Mal 3:1–6).⁶³⁰ John the Baptist identified Jesus as the one they had been expecting (Matt 3:11–14).⁶³¹

Luke engaged in word play by calling the flames “tongues of fire” which accompanied the ability to communicate in languages unknown to those speaking.⁶³² When the Holy Spirit

⁶²¹Larkin, *Acts*, Acts 2:1.

⁶²²Walton, *Genesis*, 224.

⁶²³Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, Acts 2:2.

⁶²⁴Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 50.

⁶²⁵Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 1.118,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D1%3Awhiston%20chapter%3D4>. Italics mine.

⁶²⁶Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 132.

⁶²⁷Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “διαμερίζω” (*diamerizō*), *BDAG*, 233–4, 233.

⁶²⁸Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, Acts 2:3.

⁶²⁹Philo, *On the Decalogue*, in *The Works of Philo*, 46–9,

<Http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book26.html>. Italics mine.

⁶³⁰Schnabel, *Acts*, Acts 2:3.

⁶³¹I. Howard Marshall, “Acts,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids; Nottingham: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 531.

⁶³²Schnabel, *Acts*, Acts 2:3.

descended upon Israel's camp, seventy elders began prophesying (Num 11:23–29). Peter cited Joel's prediction as evidence of the arrival of the last days (Joel 2:26–32; Acts 2:17–18).⁶³³

This visual manifestation of the Spirit rested upon each one of the believers.⁶³⁴ All of God's people, ranging from the eleven apostles to the lowest slave, received the presence of the Spirit.⁶³⁵ Unlike the arrival of God at Sinai, neither fear nor trembling ensued (Exod 20:18–21). Instead, they declared the mighty deeds of God (Acts 2:11).⁶³⁶ The Spirit transformed Peter from a man who denied knowing Jesus to one who spoke powerfully in his name (Luke 22:54–62).⁶³⁷

“And all were filled of the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak other tongues even as the Spirit was giving them [the ability] to speak.” Being filled with the Spirit empowers us for the Lord's use. He enables us to bear witness via acts of service or speaking (Luke 1:13–17; Acts 4:5–13, 29–30; Acts 9:17–22; Acts 13:8–12).⁶³⁸

The verb which Luke used here conveys greater intensity than another word which also means “be filled.”⁶³⁹ Paul employed the weaker verb when he admonished believers to be continually filled with the Spirit, resulting in giving thanks and mutual submission (Eph 5:18–21). Thus, a person who is already filled with the Spirit can receive renewed or added filling for a special task (Luke 4:1–2; Acts 6:1–8; Acts 7:55–60). Luke employed the phrases “receiving the Spirit” and “being baptized by the Spirit” as synonyms for “being filled” (Acts 1:4–5; Acts 10:44–48; Acts 11:15–18).⁶⁴⁰

In Greek, a “tongue” can refer to the physical organ, an established language, or an ecstatic religious utterance.⁶⁴¹ Paul's letter to the Corinthians commands that the latter should be publicly practiced in the presence of an interpreter (1 Cor 14:1–19).⁶⁴² During Pentecost, the Spirit enabled the believers to speak in human languages which were not their own.⁶⁴³ Aside from the day of Pentecost, speaking in tongues has not been a universal spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:4–11, 27–31). The adjective “other” tongues confirms that Luke was referring to existing languages. So began the new era of God's kingdom.⁶⁴⁴

Read Acts 2:1–4. Why were all the believers gathered in Jerusalem? What made the feast of Pentecost the appropriate time for the Holy Spirit to arrive? How did this event fulfill OT expectations? What effect does being filled with the Holy Spirit have upon a person? How have you experienced being filled by the Spirit?

⁶³³Marshall, “Acts,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 531.

⁶³⁴Schnabel, *Acts*, Acts 2:3.

⁶³⁵Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 132.

⁶³⁶Schnabel, *Acts*, Acts 2:3.

⁶³⁷Fernando, *Acts*, 90.

⁶³⁸Gerhard Delling, “πίμπλημι” (*pimplēmi*), *TDNT* 6:128–34, 130.

⁶³⁹Schnabel, *Acts*, Acts 2:4.

⁶⁴⁰Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 133.

⁶⁴¹Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “γλῶσσα” (*glōssa*), *BDAG*, 201–2.

⁶⁴²Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 52.

⁶⁴³Larkin, *Acts*, Acts 2:1.

⁶⁴⁴Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 132–3.

Partners in Ministry

34) Acts 18:1–3, 18–20, 24–26 and 2 Ki 22:11–23:4: Paul used the formal name Prisca to depict this woman in his letters, while Luke informally called her Priscilla.⁶⁴⁵ In five of the seven times the New Testament mentions Priscilla and Aquila, her name comes before his (Cf. Rom 16:3–4; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19).⁶⁴⁶ That was quite rare in the Greco-Roman era, pointing to her prominence in ministry.⁶⁴⁷

In 1894, A. J. Gordon wrote, “Here a woman is actually taking the lead as a theological teacher to Apollos, an eminent minister of the gospel, and so far setting up her authority as to tell him that he is not thoroughly qualified for his work!”⁶⁴⁸

The Bible cites another “power couple.” Huldah and Shallum provide a sterling example of a wife and husband both serving the Lord in the Old Testament era. Here, too, her ministry garnered greater attention by the biblical author than that of her husband.

While repairing the temple, the high priest Hilkiah discovered the long-lost scroll of the Book of the Law,⁶⁴⁹ which was most likely Deuteronomy (Deut 31:9–13).⁶⁵⁰ He read it to the king. In anguish, Josiah directed him “Go inquire of Yahweh on my behalf.”

To accomplish that task, Hilkiah led a delegation to the female prophet Huldah, even though Shallum’s nephew Jeremiah and Zephaniah actively ministered during that time (Jer 1:2–3; Jer 32:7; Zeph 1:1).⁶⁵¹ She pronounced God’s judgment upon Jerusalem in keeping with Deut 28:58–68, but promised that the Lord would relent until after the king’s death.⁶⁵² In response, Josiah enacted immediate reforms which applied to both the civil and religious arenas of life in Judah.⁶⁵³

Read Acts 18:1–3, 18–20, 24–26 and 2 Ki 22:11–23:4. How did Priscilla and Aquila work together to serve the Lord? What did Huldah do? How did King Josiah respond to her pronouncement? What encouragement does these examples of faithful ministers give to you?

⁶⁴⁵F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 348.

⁶⁴⁶Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 651.

⁶⁴⁷Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 301.

⁶⁴⁸Gordon, “The Ministry of Women,” 917,

<http://www.biblesnet.com/AJ%20Gordon%20The%20Ministry%20of%20Women.pdf>.

⁶⁴⁹Roger W. Uitti, “Hilkiah (Person),” *ABD* 3:201.

⁶⁵⁰August H. Konkel, *1 & 2 Kings* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 635.

⁶⁵¹T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1985), 327.

⁶⁵²Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 385.

⁶⁵³Konkel, *1 & 2 Kings*, 635–6.

Effects of the Fall Reversed

35) Rom 5:12–21: An important key to understanding this text involves the corporate solidarity of patrimonial headship within Ancient Near Eastern societies. The head of a family represented every member of his clan, both for good and for ill (2 Sam 21:1–9; Jer 35; Dan 6:24).⁶⁵⁴ Thus, this passage focuses upon the contrasting effects of the lives of Adam and of Christ.⁶⁵⁵

Due to this theological reality, death comes to all people, for we all sinned collectively in the first transgression of Adam (Gen 2:16–17; Gen 3:1–7).⁶⁵⁶ Unlike most writers of his era, Paul blamed neither Eve nor Satan for sin's entry into the world.⁶⁵⁷ The sin of the first Adam plunged us into ruin by representation and imputation. Likewise, the obedience of the Second Adam redeemed us by representation and imputation (1 Cor 15:21–22). On the cross, Jesus took my place and paid the penalty for my sin. Similarly, God charged his righteousness to me (2 Cor 5:21).⁶⁵⁸

Consequently, when the Father looks at me, he sees Jesus, for the blood of Christ covers all my sin (Ps 103:10–13). Consider the great magnitude of this promise: we can travel to the top of the North and visit the bottom of the South of our planet, but we can never reach the end of the East or the West. By his one act of sacrifice following a blameless life, Christ has reversed the effects of the fall (Gen 3:16).⁶⁵⁹

Now Jesus reigns in the place of Adam and calls us to rule over creation with him (Gen 1:26–28).⁶⁶⁰ As Christians in Rome heard this letter for the first time, they could see a prime example of the effects of this new era in front of them. Paul wrote, “I commend to you Phoebe, our sister, being a deacon of the church in Cenchreae, that you might receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you might put yourselves at her disposal in any task in which she might have need, for she has been a patron of many and also to me” (Rom 16:1–2).

The apostle employed the word translated as “deacon” (*diakonon*) to describe himself and his coworkers in 2 Cor 6:4 and in his charge to church leaders in 1 Tim 3:8–13.⁶⁶¹ Note that the first word in 1 Tim 3:11 can be translated as “Women” or “Wives” (*gynē*). Most scholars hold to the first option.⁶⁶² Due to the form of the noun and the lack of a possessive pronoun in the Greek text, the translation “Their wives” requires grammatical gymnastics. Furthermore, both “women” and “deacons” (1 Tim 3:8) appear in the same noun case (accusative plural).

In Paul's greetings to the church of Rome in Rom 16:1–12, seven of the twenty-seven people he greeted by name were women.⁶⁶³ They served as “a deacon,” his “fellow workers”

⁶⁵⁴ Niehaus, *Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology*, 138.

⁶⁵⁵ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 316.

⁶⁵⁶ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. 1 (ICC; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 277–8.

⁶⁵⁷ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 272.

⁶⁵⁸ R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 1994), 107.

⁶⁵⁹ Moo, “Nature and the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment,” 458.

http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/49/49-3/JETS_49-3_449-488_Moo.pdf.

⁶⁶⁰ N. T. Wright, “Excursus on Paul's Use of Adam,” in *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (John H. Walton; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 170–80, 174.

⁶⁶¹ A. J. Gordon, “The Ministry of Women,” in *The Missionary Review of the World* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1894), 910–21, 916–7, <http://www.biblesnet.com/AJ%20Gordon%20The%20Ministry%20of%20Women.pdf>.

⁶⁶² William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 2000), 202–3.

⁶⁶³ Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 85.

(*synergos*),⁶⁶⁴ “those who work hard (*kopiaō*) in the Lord,” women who “worked very hard” for the Lord or for the church,⁶⁶⁵ and a woman who was “outstanding (*episēmos*) among (*ev*) the apostles.”⁶⁶⁶

In five of the seven times the New Testament mentions Paul’s co-workers Priscilla and Aquila, her name comes before his (Cf. Acts 18:1–3, 18–20, 24–26; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19).⁶⁶⁷ That was quite rare in the Greco-Roman era, pointing to Priscilla’s prominence in ministry.⁶⁶⁸ John Chrysostom (347–407) wrote concerning Junia, “How great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation (name) of apostle!”⁶⁶⁹

Regarding those who had “devoted themselves to the service (*diakonia*) of God’s people,”⁶⁷⁰ Paul charged the church in Corinth.⁶⁷¹ He told them “to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it” (1 Cor 16:15–16).⁶⁷² Concerning this last passage, some translations add the word “men,” possibly due to the masculine plural form found in “such as these.” However, in Greek, a masculine plural can apply to either men alone or include women in a group of mixed gender.⁶⁷³

The Greco-Roman patronage system consisted of asymmetrical relationships between two parties. One person provided food, money, hospitality, advice, and/or introductions to powerful people in exchange for public praise and loyalty.⁶⁷⁴ Almost certainly the carrier of this letter,⁶⁷⁵ Paul’s commendation of Phoebe indicates that she functioned as his envoy.⁶⁷⁶ Thus, Phoebe publicly read Paul’s epistle to the congregation, provided commentary,⁶⁷⁷ and answered any immediate questions raised by the book of Romans.⁶⁷⁸

Read Rom 5:12–21 and Rom 16:1–12. What was the result of Adam’s sin? Why does the death and resurrection of Jesus reverse the effects of the fall? How does God view you? Why did Phoebe’s task provide an object lesson for Paul’s teaching about life after Christ’s victory? What is the significance of the greetings at the end of Romans? How should these passages impact our churches today?

⁶⁶⁴Danker, et al., “συνεργός” (*synergos*), *BDAG*, 969.

⁶⁶⁵Danker, et al., “κοπιᾶω” (*kopiaō*), 558.

⁶⁶⁶Danker, et al., “ἐπίσημος” (*episēmos*), 378.

⁶⁶⁷Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 651.

⁶⁶⁸Walter L. Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 301.

⁶⁶⁹John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (trans. J. B. Morris; Oxford; London: Parker; Rivington, 1841), 489, <https://archive.org/stream/homiliesofsjohnc07john#page/488/mode/2up>.

⁶⁷⁰Danker, et al., “διακονία” (*diakonia*), 230.

⁶⁷¹Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. ed., 918.

⁶⁷²Danker, et al., “συνεργός” (*synergos*), *BDAG*, 969. This is the same verbal root used for “fellow-worker.”

⁶⁷³Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 297.

⁶⁷⁴Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 289.

⁶⁷⁵Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2:780.

⁶⁷⁶Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 553.

⁶⁷⁷Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing*, 202.

⁶⁷⁸Allan Chapple, “Getting Romans to the Right Romans: Phoebe and the Delivery of Paul’s Letter,” *TynBul* 62, no. 2 (1 November 2011): 195–214, 213–4, [Http://www.tyndalehouse.com/Bulletin/62=2011/03_Chapple.pdf](http://www.tyndalehouse.com/Bulletin/62=2011/03_Chapple.pdf).

It Is Good Not to Touch

Please note that this section carries a trigger warning for very disturbing historical information.

36) 1 Cor 7:1–5: Paul began this section by writing, “It is good for a man a woman not to touch” (*haptō*), which appears to contradict what he stated in the very next verses. While commonly considered a euphemism for sexual intercourse,⁶⁷⁹ in actuality the term “to touch” did not refer to a married couple enjoying sex together. Instead, the phrase describes what a man did to the object of his desire: penetrating another for his sexual gratification.⁶⁸⁰

Concerning Sarah’s experience in Gen 12:12–20, the Jewish historian Josephus (37–100 AD) wrote:

“Now, as soon as he came into Egypt, it happened to Abram as he supposed it would; for the fame of his wife's beauty was greatly talked of; for which reason Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, would not be satisfied with what was reported of her, but would needs see her himself, and was preparing to enjoy (*haptō*) her; but God put a stop to his unjust inclinations, by sending upon him a distemper, and a sedition against his government. And when he inquired of the priests how he might be freed from these calamities, they told him that this his miserable condition was derived from the wrath of God, upon account of his inclinations to abuse the stranger's wife.”⁶⁸¹

In Greco-Roman culture, the male head of a household was free to seek sex for pleasure with his male and female slaves, prostitutes, or any unmarried woman. He reserved sex with his wife primarily for procreation.⁶⁸²

Demosthenes (384–322 BC) asserted this:

“For this is what living with a woman as one's wife mean: to have children by her and to introduce the sons to the members of the clan and of the [city], and to betroth the daughters to husbands as one's own. Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our persons, but wives to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households.”⁶⁸³

Greco-Romans expected wives to assent to their husband’s extramarital affairs with good will.⁶⁸⁴ In contrast, Paul wrote, “The wife over her own body does not have authority, but the husband [does]. And likewise, the husband also over his own body does not have authority, but the wife [does].”

Typically, when women reached 14–15 years of age, they married men close to thirty years old.⁶⁸⁵ The sexual abuse of slaves occurred so rampantly that Jewish rabbis ruled that female slaves must have been released by the age of three in order to marry as virgins.

⁶⁷⁹Roy E. Ciampa, “Revisiting the Euphemism in 1 Corinthians 7.1,” *JSNT* 31, no. 3 (2009): 325–38, 325.

⁶⁸⁰Ciampa, “Revisiting the Euphemism in 1 Corinthians 7.1,” 327.

⁶⁸¹Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* (trans. William Whiston; The Complete Works of Flavius Josephus; Auburn and Buffalo, NY: John E. Beardsley, 1895), 1.163, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D1%3Awhiston%20chapter%3D8>.

⁶⁸²Ciampa, “Revisiting the Euphemism in 1 Corinthians 7.1,” 326.

⁶⁸³Demosthenes, “Against Neera,” in *Demosthenes with an English Translation* (trans. Norman W. DeWitt and Norman J. DeWitt; LCL; Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 59.122, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0080%3Aspeech%3D59%3Asection%3D122>.

⁶⁸⁴Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 71.

⁶⁸⁵S. M. Baugh, “Cultic Prostitution in New Testament Ephesus: A Reappraisal,” *JETS* 42, no. 3 (1999): 443–60, 456, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/42/42-3/42-3-pp443-460_JETS.pdf.

Otherwise, they were “amenable to the accusation of non-virginity” (*m. Ketuboth* 1:2)⁶⁸⁶ These religious leaders believed that enough time would pass for the bodies of such women to return to a state as if they had never been violated. They took for granted that a female slave in a Greco-Roman household experienced rape by the age of three.

Within the Jewish community, rabbis applied the obligations of a man to a slave whom he married to both partners (Exod 21:10–11). They reasoned that if slaves and war captives had material and conjugal rights, then so should all men and women (*m. Ketuboth* 5:6–8).⁶⁸⁷ However, Paul went beyond legalistic accounting to a focus on pleasing each other.⁶⁸⁸

Consequently, the idea that wives possessed jurisdiction over their husbands’ bodies was revolutionary in Paul’s time.⁶⁸⁹ Few Greco-Romans could have conceived that a man’s body belonged to his wife.⁶⁹⁰ This implied a full right of both partners to initiate sex within marriage, as well as an expectation of monogamy.⁶⁹¹

Paul then wrote, “Do not continuously deprive one another, except when agreeing for a time, in order to devote yourselves to prayer, and may again be together in order that Satan might not tempt you on account of your lack of self-control.” Many translations omit that Paul employed a verb form (present active imperative) to forbid a continual or habitual depriving one’s spouse of sexual relations, not an occasional refusal.

Imagine a thirty-year old man, accustomed to satisfying his sexual desire at will, suddenly being expected to limit himself to his teenage wife. Making an important distinction, Paul wrote of an obligation to give—not the license to demand—physical love.⁶⁹² He expected both marriage partners to concentrate upon how to please each other in their sexual relationship and in other areas of life (1 Cor 7:32–34).

Read 1 Cor 7:1–5. Why was Paul’s command revolutionary in his era? What does “having authority over” each other’s bodies mean? How does this apply today?

⁶⁸⁶ *Mishnah*, Ketubot 1:1–3, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/etm120.htm>.

⁶⁸⁷ Instone-Brewer, David, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 196, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/etm124.htm>.

⁶⁸⁸ David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 196.

⁶⁸⁹ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 280–1.

⁶⁹⁰ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 175.

⁶⁹¹ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Rev. Ed.* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 311.

⁶⁹² Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 280–1.

Marital Separation

37) 1 Cor 7:10–11: This chapter contains many enigmas for the modern reader despite Paul’s excellent communication skills. Therefore, we must conclude that his original audience interpreted his words through cultural understandings which we no longer share. Thankfully, Jewish and Greco-Roman marriage and divorce papyri from the fourth century BC through the fourth century AD clear up much of the confusion.⁶⁹³

By speaking “to the ones who have married” in v. 10, Paul first addressed situations in which both partners were believers. Here he gave the only command in all of 1 Cor 7:10–16.⁶⁹⁴ He wrote, “A wife from her husband must not be separated. But if she does separate, she must remain unmarried, unless to reconcile with her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.” The apostle emphasized the moral nature of choosing to end one’s marriage. In this chapter, Paul typically addressed men first when he gave instructions to both genders (1 Cor 7:1–4; 1 Cor 7:25–28; 1 Cor 7:32–34). Therefore, it appears that, in Corinth, women initiated most divorces.⁶⁹⁵

The instruction from the Lord almost certainly refers to Mark 10:2–12,⁶⁹⁶ where the context involved a Jewish audience (note the teaching on Deut 24:1–4).⁶⁹⁷ Jewish marriages were based on the concept of obligation, with both partners required to obey the stipulations of Exod 21:10–11. Should the husband violate them, the Mosaic law required a certificate of freedom for his wife. Yet, by the time of Christ, a man could obtain a divorce for any reason he chose.⁶⁹⁸ Since a Jewish woman could legally end a marriage for very few reasons, Jesus’s opposition to divorce defended the rights of married women.⁶⁹⁹ The desperate financial plight of a divorced woman forced her to remarry, which explains the phrase “makes her commit adultery” (Rom 7:1–3).⁷⁰⁰

Divorce among both Jews and gentiles existed to enable marriage to someone else.⁷⁰¹ According to Christ, if one divorces one’s spouse without valid grounds, such as sexual immorality, the marriage does not truly dissolve. A subsequent marriage equates to adultery.⁷⁰² However, Jesus released the innocent party in marriages where sexual immorality had occurred, and he seems to have permitted remarriage (Matt 5:31–32). Paul may have omitted this exception since it both Jews and Greeks recognized it.⁷⁰³

A Jewish woman could leave her marriage but not initiate a legal divorce. Meanwhile, in Greco-Roman societies, such as in Corinth, either party could dissolve the marriage bond.⁷⁰⁴ Paul argued that Christians should not instigate divorce. Instead, both men and women should fulfill the Mosaic obligations to provide emotional support, to care for physical needs, and to fully give

⁶⁹³David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 190, [Http://www.divorce-remarriage.com/](http://www.divorce-remarriage.com/).

⁶⁹⁴Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 323.

⁶⁹⁵Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 291.

⁶⁹⁶Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 323.

⁶⁹⁷Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 138.

⁶⁹⁸Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 191.

⁶⁹⁹Keener, *IVPBCNT*, Matt 19:9.

⁷⁰⁰W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew 1–7* (ICC; Edinburgh; London; New York: T & T Clark, 1988), 528.

⁷⁰¹Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 200.

⁷⁰²Keener, *IVPBCNT*, Matt 19:9.

⁷⁰³Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 138.

⁷⁰⁴Keener, *IVPBCNT*, 1 Cor 7:10–11.

themselves to each other sexually to prevent any rationale for a marital split (Deut 21:10–14; 1 Cor 7:3–6).⁷⁰⁵

Jewish marriage certificates included a list of these requirements based upon the rights of a woman sold into marriage, with the implication that such marital neglect permitted divorce. Rabbis taught that if even a slave woman received such legal protection, so should all women and men.⁷⁰⁶ However, in cases where a spouse failed to meet those stipulations, the court sought to persuade the guilty party to change by increasing or decreasing the wife’s dowry until the person relented or the money was spent (*m. Ketubot* 5.7).⁷⁰⁷

Some couples in Greco-Roman society formalized their divorce with legal documents. Usually, a man sent his wife away with the declaration “take your things [and go].” That effected a divorce.⁷⁰⁸ If the woman wanted to end the marriage, she could gain a separation by simply leaving.⁷⁰⁹ Typically, the man owned their house.⁷¹⁰

The terms “divorce” (*aphiēmi*) and “separate” (*chōrizō*) in these verses were equivalent: a disavowal of the marriage.⁷¹¹ No warning was necessary, nor could either party legally prevent it.⁷¹² Paul addressed this type of illegitimate divorce.⁷¹³ Marriage and divorce contracts employed more than fifty words for “divorce,” pointing to the frequency of marital splits. Often, several of the terms appeared in a single document.⁷¹⁴ During this time, most Greco-Roman marriages ended before the death of one’s spouse.⁷¹⁵ In fact, scribes wrote marriage certificates with this expectation.⁷¹⁶

Seneca (4 BC–65 AD) complained, “Is any woman ashamed of being divorced, now that some noble ladies reckon the years of their lives, not by the number of the consuls, but by that of their husbands, now that they leave their homes in order to marry others, and marry only in order to be divorced?”⁷¹⁷

One funeral inscription from this era noted, “Uncommon are marriages which last so long, brought to an end by death, not broken apart by divorce; for it was our happy lot that it should be prolonged to the forty-first year without estrangement.”⁷¹⁸ Paul’s decree to stay married was truly counter-cultural.⁷¹⁹

Furthermore, where divorce by separation had occurred, Paul called upon believers to do all they could to reverse it and to remain single while the other partner had not remarried.⁷²⁰

⁷⁰⁵ Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 196.

⁷⁰⁶ Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 191.

⁷⁰⁷ Sola and Raphall, trans., *Eighteen Treatises from the Mishna*, Ketubot 5.7, 254–5, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/etm124.htm>.

⁷⁰⁸ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 171.

⁷⁰⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 325.

⁷¹⁰ Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 199.

⁷¹¹ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 292.

⁷¹² Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 190.

⁷¹³ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 140.

⁷¹⁴ Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 199.

⁷¹⁵ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 292.

⁷¹⁶ Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 191.

⁷¹⁷ Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *On Benefits* (trans. John W. Basore; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 3.16.2, 65, <https://archive.org/stream/annaeusenecao0stewgoog#page/n83/mode/2up>.

⁷¹⁸ G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1978* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1983), 34.

⁷¹⁹ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 292.

⁷²⁰ Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 199–200.

Thus, he did not enshrine “no divorce” as law, and the church did not remove the person who initiated the dissolution of a marriage. However, he permitted remarriage only to the original spouse,⁷²¹ unless one partner refused to respect the commitments necessary to maintain the fundamental integrity of the marriage.⁷²²

Read 1 Cor 7:10–11. What exception did Jesus allow concerning divorce? Why did he oppose it? What was Paul’s command to those who had divorced without just cause and whose former spouse remained unmarried?

Concerning Mixed Marriages

38) 1 Cor 7:12–13: In approximately 177 AD, the Greek philosopher Celsus noted that women constituted a large majority of new converts among the gentiles. He complained, “[Christians] desire and are able to gain over only the silly, and the mean, and the stupid, with women and children.”⁷²³

For those whose husbands remained polytheists, these religiously mixed marriages constituted a serious problem. Greco-Roman society promoted household solidarity and male superiority.⁷²⁴ Plutarch (46–122 AD) gave this Advice to a Bride and Groom: “A wife ought not to make friends of her own, but to enjoy her husband's friends in common with him. The gods are the first and most important friends. Wherefore it is becoming for a wife to worship and to know only the gods that her husband believes in, and to shut the front door tight upon all queer rituals and outlandish superstitions. For with no god do stealthy and secret rites performed by a woman find any favor.”⁷²⁵

Compounding the problem, Jewish people and Christians viewed gentiles as sexually immoral people.⁷²⁶ Therefore, the recipients of this letter wondered if sex with an unbelieving spouse would defile a Christian (1 Cor 5:9–13; 1 Cor 6:15–20).⁷²⁷ Indeed, Paul later commanded the Corinthians not to marry non-Christians (2 Cor 6:14). With remarkable mutuality, Paul exhorted these Christian men and women to remain married.⁷²⁸

⁷²¹ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 327.

⁷²² Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 293.

⁷²³ Origen, *Against Celsus* (ed. A. Cleveland Coxe; vol. 4 of *Fathers of the Third Century: Tertullian, Part Fourth; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen, Part First and Second*; trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; ANF; New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1926), 44.3,

<https://archive.org/stream/antenicenefathe00menzgoog#page/n458/mode/2up>.

⁷²⁴ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 294.

⁷²⁵ Plutarch, *Advice to a Bride and Groom (Conjugalia Praecepta)*, 19,

[Http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0181%3Asection%3D19](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0181%3Asection%3D19).

⁷²⁶ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 290.

⁷²⁷ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 135.

⁷²⁸ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 295–6.

However, if the unbeliever chose to leave, God no longer bound the Christian spouse to maintain the union.⁷²⁹ Paul viewed matrimony as a genuine partnership. Consequently, he refrained from urging Christian men to force submission or conversion upon their wives, even within that patriarchal culture.⁷³⁰

Read 1 Cor 7:12–13. What was Paul’s advice to those who converted to Christ while married? Why was that revolutionary in their society? How did that differ from his command for believers who contemplated union with a non-Christian?

Contagious Holiness

39) 1 Cor 7:14: Prior to Christ’s coming, the dominant Jewish view asserted that unclean things contaminated holy ones (Lev 11:24–25; Lev 13:45–46; Hag 2:11–14). However, Jesus exhibited contagious holiness. When he touched unclean people, they became clean without dying and without defiling him (Num 4:15; Luke 5:12–14).⁷³¹

Similarly, Paul contended that the Lord viewed the religiously mixed marriages he mentioned in 1 Cor 7:12–13 as Christian unions.⁷³² He wrote that these partners should remain together, for “sanctified is the unbelieving man in his wife and sanctified is the unbelieving wife in the [Christian] brother. Otherwise, your children are unclean, but now they are holy.”

Women converted to Christianity in far greater numbers than men in the early church.⁷³³ In the event of a divorce in Greco-Roman society, the children typically remained with their father.⁷³⁴

By the first century AD, Jewish people abandoned the notion of marriage as a transfer of ownership from the bride’s parents to her husband. Instead, they adhered to the concept of being set apart for one another. “Sanctify,” “set apart,” “consecrate,” “treat as holy,” and “dedicate” are all translations of one Greek word, *hagiazō*.⁷³⁵ Therefore, a man avowed that his wife was sanctified to him and he would sanctify her, affirming the lawfulness of their marriage. In addition, by having set apart a spouse to oneself prior to coming to Christ, that unbeliever now lived within a godly sphere of influence.⁷³⁶

Unlike the rabbis (*m. Kiddushin* 2:1–3, 10), Paul denoted the believing spouse as the one who sanctifies the unbeliever, regardless of gender. This placed a female Christian in the more

⁷²⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Rev. Ed.*, 329.

⁷³⁰ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 296.

⁷³¹ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 297.

⁷³² Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Rev. Ed.*, 329.

⁷³³ Origen, *Against Celsus*, 44.3, <https://archive.org/stream/antenicenefathe00menzgoog#page/n458/mode/2up>.

⁷³⁴ Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, 1 Cor 7:14.

⁷³⁵ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ἀγιάζω” (*hagiazō*), *BDAG*, 9–10.

⁷³⁶ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 298–9.

spiritually powerful role normally reserved for a Jewish male.⁷³⁷ Elsewhere, he wrote, “there is not Jew nor Greek, there is not slave nor free, there is not male nor female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

Furthermore, Paul’s thought differs from Jewish teaching that any children issuing from a religiously mixed marriage assume the status of the “genealogically blemished” spouse (Ezra 10:1–3, 16–17; *m. Kiddushin* 3:12). Instead, they are holy, with the full right of access to the community of believers.⁷³⁸ The status of their children proves that God has set both spouses apart in his sight.⁷³⁹ This family solidarity derives from the “two becoming one flesh” in the divinely ordained institution of marriage (Gen 2:24). Thus, their home becomes a sacred sphere for God’s transforming power, with increased potential for their salvation.⁷⁴⁰

Read 1 Cor 7:14. What effect does one believing spouse have upon a family? Why is that?

Dissolution of Marriage

40) 1 Cor 7:15–16: Paul continued, writing, “But if the unbeliever separates, let him separate; the brother or the sister is not enslaved in such cases, but in peace God has called us.” In the Greco-Roman context, separation constituted a legal divorce. The apostle taught that a believer should work to continue the marital union (1 Cor 7:10–14).⁷⁴¹ However, if the non-Christian spouse refused to remain in the relationship due to the new believer’s allegiance to Christ,⁷⁴² Paul advised the Christian to allow the dissolution of their marriage.⁷⁴³ Likely, nothing could prevent the divorce anyway.⁷⁴⁴ In these cases, God does not require his people to maintain the spousal affiliation.⁷⁴⁵

On the other hand, new converts must avoid the temptation to start living in the Christian world so completely that they shut out their spouses, leaving their partners feeling so abandoned and estranged that divorce occurs. Instead, new believers should model self-sacrificing love, more committed to the health of their marriages than ever. In that way, only radical prejudice could cause their non-Christian mates to leave.⁷⁴⁶

Since the foundational definition of marriage in the Bible involves cleaving to one’s spouse (Gen 2:23–24; Mark 10:2–12), adultery and desertion rend asunder the one-flesh relationship (Matt 5:31–32). In effect, they each dissolve a marriage even before a court grants a

⁷³⁷Yonder Moynihan Gillihan, “Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage, the Defilement of Offspring, and the Holiness of the Temple: A New Halakic Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:14,” *JBL* 121, no. 4 (12 January 2002): 711–44, 718.

⁷³⁸Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 301–302.

⁷³⁹Gillihan, “Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage, the Defilement of Offspring, and the Holiness of the Temple: A New Halakic Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:14, 715.

⁷⁴⁰Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 299–301.

⁷⁴¹Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 199–200.

⁷⁴²Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 135.

⁷⁴³Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Rev. Ed.*, 333.

⁷⁴⁴Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 135.

⁷⁴⁵Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Rev. Ed.*, 334.

⁷⁴⁶Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 303.

legal divorce. An official dissolution merely acknowledges what has already occurred.⁷⁴⁷

Given the Greco-Roman context, being “not bound as a slave” implies both the freedom to divorce and the right to remarry another believer (1 Cor 7:39).⁷⁴⁸ However, this applies only to the innocent party.⁷⁴⁹ Paul compared having to live as if one were married after being abandoned akin to slavery.⁷⁵⁰ All Jewish divorce certificates and most Greco-Roman divorce decrees included a phrase such as, “you are free to marry any man you wish,” wording that rabbis considered essential (*m. Gittin* 9.3).⁷⁵¹

Concerning other circumstances so damaging that a marriage was already destroyed,⁷⁵² the rabbis also recognized emotional neglect, cruelty, and humiliation as just grounds for a legal divorce (*m. Ketubot* 7:1–5).⁷⁵³ The National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence produced an Equality Wheel and a Power and Control Wheel to help people differentiate between healthy and abusive relationships.⁷⁵⁴ See pp. 47–48 for a summary.

Since one of the terms in 1 Cor 6:9–11 means “reviler, abusive person” (*loidoros*),⁷⁵⁵ Paul taught that such behavior remains incompatible with the presence of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:19–24). In fact, he advised the church to remove abusive people from their fellowship (1 Cor 5:9–13).⁷⁵⁶

Where abuse or neglect occur, we must consider each case on its own merits to avoid the twin errors of easy acceptance of divorce and a complete lack of forgiveness toward those who end their marriages.⁷⁵⁷ Otherwise, we afflict the innocent spouse with even greater physical and emotional damage.⁷⁵⁸ With a desire for reconciliation at the core of our Christian identity, God calls us to adopt a peace-loving approach, for “as much as you are capable, with all people live in peace” (Rom 12:18).⁷⁵⁹

Paul’s words, “For how do you know, wife, if your husband you shall save? Or how do you know, husband, if your wife you shall save?” are somewhat ambiguous. It remains unclear whether he offered hope that if they stay married, their influence would cause their spouses to embrace the faith, or whether he advised them not to fight a divorce because they have no assurance of conversion.⁷⁶⁰ Although Paul previously observed that unbelieving spouses have been sanctified by being married to Christians (1 Cor 7:14), the Lord does not promise their salvation.⁷⁶¹

⁷⁴⁷ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 139.

⁷⁴⁸ Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 201.

⁷⁴⁹ Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, 1 Cor 7:15.

⁷⁵⁰ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 303.

⁷⁵¹ Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 119, 202.

⁷⁵² Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 139.

⁷⁵³ Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, 107–8.

⁷⁵⁴ <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/EqualitywheelNOSHADING.pdf>;

<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/PowerControlwheelNOSHADING.pdf>. Used with the permission of the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence (http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd_about.html).

⁷⁵⁵ Danker et al., “λοιδωρος” (*loidoros*), *BDAG*, 602,

<https://archive.org/stream/greekenglishlex00liddrich#page/902/mode/2up>.

⁷⁵⁶ Danker, et al., “λοιδωρος” (*loidoros*), *BDAG*, 602.

⁷⁵⁷ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 142–3.

⁷⁵⁸ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 139–40.

⁷⁵⁹ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 304.

⁷⁶⁰ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, *Rev. Ed.*, 337–8.

⁷⁶¹ Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, 1 Cor 7:16.

Read 1 Cor 7:15–16. How did Paul advise believers whose non-Christian spouses choose to end their marriages? What do adultery, desertion, and abuse do to the one-flesh relationship? How do pp. 291–292 of the PCA Position on Divorce and Remarriage reflect Paul’s teaching?⁷⁶² In what practical ways can you support people who are experiencing such trauma?

Three Heads

41) 1 Cor 11:3: This verse begins a detailed section of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians concerning the proper appearance of a person’s head when praying and prophesying in church (1 Cor 11:3–16).⁷⁶³ Just prior to this, the apostle commanded that no one give offense to Jewish people, gentiles, or others within the congregation (1 Cor 10:31–11:2).⁷⁶⁴

In that time and place, people considered a woman’s failure to cover her hair a provocative act which stimulated male lust.⁷⁶⁵ Within Judaism, the public display of a woman’s hair constituted grounds for divorce (*m. Ketubah* 7:6).⁷⁶⁶ Consequently, Paul argued that the attire of one’s physical head reflected upon the glory or shame of one’s symbolic head.⁷⁶⁷ The misuse of newfound individual liberty for Christian women without regard for cultural propriety affected relationships within the congregation.⁷⁶⁸

Therefore, Paul wrote, “But I want you to know that Christ is of every man (*anēr/andros*) the head, and a man [is the] head of a woman, and God [is the] head of Christ.” While the arrangement within each word pair suggests precedence, their overall order refutes any notion of

⁷⁶² According to this theologically conservative denomination, “The Committee believes that when there are words and actions on the part of one spouse that threaten the life of the other spouse and/or children, that the one(s) threatened should be counseled by the Session, or representative thereof, to remove themselves from the threatening situation and the abuser should be urged to seek counsel. Such a procedure will protect those threatened. When the abuser does not cease these words and actions, the Session should investigate whether these words and actions are in effect breaking the one-flesh relationship by ‘hating’ the abused spouse and not ‘nourishing and cherishing’ this one (Eph. 5:28–29). In counseling the abuser, the reality of his Christian faith should be ascertained. When it is determined by the Session that the abuser does not appear to them to be Christian and the abuse continues, the Pauline teaching about an unbeliever leaving a believer should be applied [1 Cor 7:15].” 20th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, “Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage,” 291–2. <http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/divorce-remarriage.pdf>.

⁷⁶³ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 503.

⁷⁶⁴ Verbrugge, “κεφαλή” (*kephalē*), *TDNTWA*, 302–4, 303.

⁷⁶⁵ Keener, *IVPBCNT*, 1 Cor 11:2–16.

⁷⁶⁶ Sola and Raphall, trans., *Eighteen Treatises from the Mishna, m. Ketubah* 7:6, 259, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/etm126.htm>.

⁷⁶⁷ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 208.

⁷⁶⁸ Grenz and Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*, 108.

subordination.⁷⁶⁹ Instead, the apostle extolled the order of creation and the continued interdependence of men and women in the new creation (Gen 1:26–28; Gen 2:18–25; Luke 1:26–33; 2 Cor 5:16–17).⁷⁷⁰ By maintaining gender distinctions, women could fully utilize their gifts and callings in the church (Rom 16:1–12).⁷⁷¹

The controversy surrounding this verse centers upon the specific meaning of the word “head” (*kephalē*).⁷⁷² In secular usage, the term referred to something which was supreme, exhibited prominence, or occurred first.⁷⁷³ It did not refer to a chief or leader until the Byzantine Era (330–1453).⁷⁷⁴ How we translate *kephalē* greatly affects our understanding of the relationships within each of the three pairs.⁷⁷⁵ Typically in Paul’s letters, a metaphorical use of the word “head” connects it to a metaphorical body.⁷⁷⁶

Kephalē can refer to a chief or a leader in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX). Yet, it occurs in only six of the 171 times when the Hebrew term *rosh* refers to a ruler (Cf. Judg 11:11; 2 Sam 22:44; Ps 18:43; Isa 7:8–9; and Lam 1:4–5. Typically, the Greek translators used *kephalē* as the word for a physical head—in 226 of 239 total occurrences in the LXX—rather than for a symbolic one.⁷⁷⁷

Within the New Testament, *kephalē* could depict relationships between a person and an entire community.⁷⁷⁸ It does not connote a sense of authority over one individual over another.⁷⁷⁹ The only unequivocally similar usages of the term in the New Testament (NT) occur in Eph 1:22–23 and Col 2:9–12,⁷⁸⁰ where Paul referred to Jesus and the church. In all five NT usages of “head” (*kephalē*) concerning Christ and the church, the word depicts Jesus as the nurturer who provides for our growth and well-being (Eph 4:15–16; Col 1:18–20; and Col 2:18–19). Christ does not hold headship over the church—but for it—as our servant-provider.⁷⁸¹ Therefore, Paul called for all believers to submit to each other, following Christ’s example (Mark 9:33–35; Mark 10:42–45; John 13:1–5, 12–17; Eph 4:15–16; Eph 5:18–30).⁷⁸²

Furthermore, within 1 Cor 11, the word “authority” (*exousia*) appears only once. It refers to a woman’s own prerogative to prophesy (*prophēteuō*) (1 Cor 11:5, 10).⁷⁸³ In the NT, this involved proclaiming God’s plan of salvation and delivering authoritative instruction to others

⁷⁶⁹Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 513.

⁷⁷⁰Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 236.

⁷⁷¹Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 503.

⁷⁷²Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church: A Biblical Understanding of Leadership and Mutual Submission*, 66.

⁷⁷³Heinrich Schlier, “κεφαλῆ” (*kephalē*), *TDNT* 3:673–81, 673–4.

⁷⁷⁴Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, “κεφαλῆ” (*kephalē*), in *A Greek-English Lexicon, 9th Ed.* (rev Sir Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie; Oxford: Clarendon, 1940),

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3Dkefalh%2F>.

⁷⁷⁵Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Rev. Ed.*, 553.

⁷⁷⁶Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 508.

⁷⁷⁷Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 554–5.

⁷⁷⁸Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 514.

⁷⁷⁹Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 815.

⁷⁸⁰Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 67.

⁷⁸¹Gilbert Bilezikian, “The Issue I Can’t Evade: The Headship of Husbands is a New Testament Teaching,” *Priscilla Papers* 17, no. 2 (1 April 2003): 5–6,

https://www.academia.edu/35109479/The_Issue_I_Cant_Evade_The_headship_of_husbands_is_a_New_Testament_teaching.

⁷⁸²Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 157–8.

⁷⁸³Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 532.

based upon the Word of God.⁷⁸⁴ Concerning 1 Cor 11:3, John Chrysostom (347–407) wrote, “Had Paul meant to speak of rule and subjection, as thou sayest, he would not have brought forward the instance of a wife, but rather of a slave and a master.”⁷⁸⁵

Some scholars assert that *kephalē* in this verse connotes prominence, as it does in the first appearance of the term in the Greek translation of Isa 7:8 and in Jer 31:7.⁷⁸⁶ Given the patriarchal cultural context, viewing the husband as the preeminent member of a couple has some merit.⁷⁸⁷

However, the primary controversy within this verse concerns whether *kephalē* carries the meaning “source,” as in 1 Cor 11:8 and Eph 4:14–15.⁷⁸⁸ The Hebrew term “head” (*rosh*) can refer to the first in a series, the beginning of something, or the origin of a river (Cf. 1 Chron 12:9; Isa 40:21; Gen 2:10).⁷⁸⁹ Paul explicitly noted the creation order of humanity later in this chapter (1 Cor 11:8–12).⁷⁹⁰ When taken in the context of the entire passage, the meaning “source” or “origin” provides the best fit.⁷⁹¹

The Greek historian Herodotus (ca. 484–425/413 BC) used the term in this way. He wrote, “From the sources (*kephalē*) of the river Tearus flows the best and fairest of all river waters; hither came...the best and fairest of all men, even Darius... king of Persia and all the mainland.”⁷⁹²

According to the Orphic Fragment 21A (ca. 3rd–2nd century BC), “Zeus is the head (*kephalē*), Zeus the middle, and by Zeus all things were fabricated.”⁷⁹³

The Jewish philosopher Philo (ca. 20 BC–40 AD) reported, “And of all the members of the clan here described Esau is the progenitor, the head (*kephalē*) as it were of the whole creature.”⁷⁹⁴ Jacob’s twin brother served as the source of his entire clan.⁷⁹⁵ Elsewhere, Philo employed wordplay to capture three meanings of *kephalē*. He wrote, “For as in an animal, the head (*kephalē*) is the first and best part...so too the virtuous one, whether single man or people, will be the head (*kephalē*) of the human race and all the others like the limbs of a body which draw their life from the forces in the head (*kephalē*) and at the top.”⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁸⁴Gerhard Friedrich, “προφήτης” (*prophētēs*), *TDNT*, 6:781–861, 848, 851.

⁷⁸⁵John Chrysostom, “Homily 26,” in *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (trans. Hubert Kestell Cornish and John Medley; Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1839), 348–68, 352, <https://archive.org/details/thehomiliesofchr01chryuoft/page/352>.

⁷⁸⁶Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 516.

⁷⁸⁷Alan F. Johnson, “A Review of the Scholarly Debate on the Meaning of ‘Head’ (Κεφαλή) in Paul’s Writings,” *ATJ* 41 (2009): 35–57, 54, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ashland_theological_journal/41-1_035.pdf.

⁷⁸⁸Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 554.

⁷⁸⁹Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “רֹשׁ,” (*rosh*), *BDB*, 910–1, 911, <https://archive.org/details/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft/page/910>.

⁷⁹⁰Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 208–9.

⁷⁹¹Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 555–6.

⁷⁹²Herodotus, *Herodotus, with an English Translation*, Vol. 2 (trans. A. D. Godley; LCL; London; New York: Heinemann; Putnam, 1920), 4.91, 293, <https://archive.org/details/herodotuswitheng02herouoft/page/292>.

⁷⁹³Isaac Preston Cory, trans., “Orphic Fragments,” in *Ancient Fragments of the Phoenician, Chaldaean, Egyptian, Tyrian, Carthaginian, Indian, Persian, and Other Writers* (London: William Pickering, 1832), 289–300, 209, <https://archive.org/details/ancientfragments00coryrich/page/290>.

⁷⁹⁴Philo, “On the Preliminary Studies,” in *Philo in Ten Volumes* (LCL; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker; Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; Heinemann, 1932), 458–551, 61, 489, <https://archive.org/stream/PhiloSupplement01Genesis/Philo%2004%20Tongues%2C%20Migration%20of%20Abraham%2C%20Divine%20Things%2C%20Preliminary#page/n497/mode/2up>.

⁷⁹⁵Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 555, note 46.

⁷⁹⁶Philo, “On Rewards and Punishments,” in *Philo*, Vol 8 (trans. F. H. Colson; LCL; Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1939), 312–389, 125, 389,

Therefore, we can translate this verse as “But I want you to know that of every man, Christ is the source; and of a woman, the man [is the] source; and of Christ, God [is the] source.” As the one through whom all things were created, Jesus originated every man (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15–18; John 1:1–4).⁷⁹⁷ The derivation of a woman from a man refers to God’s fabrication of Eve from Adam (1 Cor 11:11–12; 1 Tim 2:13).⁷⁹⁸ When Christ became human, he came to Earth from the perfect fellowship of the Trinity (John 14:26; John 17:1–5; 1 Cor 3:18–23; 1 Cor 8:6; 1 Cor 11:12; 1 Cor 15:26–28).⁷⁹⁹ Thus, the source of Christ is God.⁸⁰⁰ Their relationship exemplifies unity, love, and bringing glory to one another (John 1:18; John 10:17–18, 30; John 17:24–26).

The great theologian Athanasius (296–373) asserted it was “the Father who generated Him as His beginning; for ‘the Head of Christ is God.’”⁸⁰¹

Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315–386) attested, “As I have said many times, He did not bring the Son from nothing into being, nor take him who was not into sonship, but the Father, being eternal, eternally and ineffably begat one only Son...the Father is the head of the Son; one is the beginning, for the Father begat his Son, Very God, called Emmanuel, and Emmanuel, being interpreted is God with us.”⁸⁰²

Cyril of Alexandria (ca. 375–444) addressed all the elements of 1 Cor 11:3. He wrote, “Thus we say that ‘the head of every man is Christ.’ For he was made by him...as God; ‘but the head of the woman is the man,’ because she was taken out of his flesh...Likewise, ‘the head of Christ is God,’ because he is of him by nature.”⁸⁰³

In this chapter, Paul focused upon the glory and shame in relationship with one’s source, rather than upon who had authority over whom (1 Cor 11:7–9).⁸⁰⁴

a) Read 1 Cor 11:3. Why was Paul concerned about the proper attire for a person’s head in the church? What makes the arrival of Adam, Eve, and Jesus a logical sequence? How did secular Greeks use the word *kephalē* until the fourth century AD? Why does Christ’s relationship with the church fail to promote viewing the term “head” as someone in authority over another person? What did Paul’s use of the typical term for “authority” (*exousia*) enable women to do? Which nuance of the term “head” did early theologians use? How does translating *kephalē* as “source” affect your understanding of this verse?

<https://archive.org/stream/PhiloSupplement01Genesis/Philo%2008%20Special%20Laws%20IV%2C%20Virtues%2C%20Rewards#page/n411/mode/2up>.

⁷⁹⁷Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 515.

⁷⁹⁸Fee, *The First Epistle of the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 556.

⁷⁹⁹Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 515.

⁸⁰⁰Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul*, 33–4.

⁸⁰¹Athanasius, *De Synodis* (ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace; trans. John Henry Newman and Archibald Robertson, rev Kevin Knight; NPNF2–04; Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1892), 1.26.2, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2817.htm>.

⁸⁰²Cyril of Jerusalem, “Lecture 11: On the Son of God as Only-Begotten, Before All Ages, and the Creator of All Things,” in *The Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem* (trans. Richard William Church and John Henry Newman; Oxford; London: Parker; Rivington, 1839), 110–122, 117, <https://archive.org/details/a566189200cypruoft/page/n169>.

⁸⁰³Cyril of Alexandria, *de recta fide ad Arcadium et Marinam*, 5.6 in Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 556, note 49.

⁸⁰⁴Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Rev. Ed., 556.

Women Praying and Prophesying

42) 1 Cor 11:4–6 and 1 Cor 14:34–35: In 1 Cor 11, Paul did not differentiate between acceptable ministry activities for men and for women. Instead, he addressed their physical appearance while participating in spiritual leadership.⁸⁰⁵ People living in the eastern Mediterranean of that era considered a woman's failure to cover her hair as an act provoking male lust,⁸⁰⁶ just as in many areas of that region and the Middle East today.

A Greco-Roman statue in the Louvre portrays a man removing his new wife's veil in the privacy of their bridal chamber (ca. 150–100 BC).⁸⁰⁷ Going out with her head uncovered constituted grounds for divorce in Jewish marriages (*m. Ketubah* 7:6).⁸⁰⁸

Apuleius, a writer from the second century AD, described a Roman householder's seduction of a maidservant. By undressing and unbinding her hair, she "transformed herself to an image of Venus rising from the waves."⁸⁰⁹

This stems from the ancient Greek view that the heads of both men and women produce semen which flows through hollow spaces in their hair.⁸¹⁰ According to the fifth century BC physician Hippocrates:

"As to the growth of hairs, it is as follows. They grow longest and most numerous where the epidermis is most porous and where the hair has a due amount of fluid for its nourishment. Also, where the epidermis becomes porous later, there the hairs grow later too, namely, on the chin, the pudenda, and wherever else they grow. For at the age when the semen is formed, the flesh becomes porous as well as the epidermis, and the veins open up more than before. For in boys, the veins are tiny and the semen does not flow out through them. In girls, the same holds true

⁸⁰⁵Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 504.

⁸⁰⁶Keener, *IVPBBNT*, 1 Cor 11:2–16.

⁸⁰⁷Jastrow, "File: Couple Bridal Bed Louvre Myr268.Jpg,"

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Couple_bridal_bed_Louvre_Myr268.jpg.

⁸⁰⁸Sola and Raphall, trans., *Eighteen Treatises from the Mishna, m. Ketubah* 7:6, 259, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/etm126.htm>.

⁸⁰⁹Lucius Apuleius, A. S. Kline, trans., *The Golden Ass* (2013), 2.17,

http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/TheGoldenAssII.htm#anchor_Toc347223998.

⁸¹⁰Troy W. Martin, "Paul's Argument from Nature for the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11:13–15: A Testicle Instead of a Head Covering," *JBL* 123, no. 1 (1 January 2004):75–84, 77,

<http://www.michaelsheiser.com/TheNakedBible/1%20Cor11%20head%20covering%20testicle.pdf>.

with regard to the menses. At the same age, a way is opened for the menses and for the semen, and in both the case of the boy and the girl, the pudenda become hairy...Those who are castrated in their childhood have neither hair on their pudenda nor on the chin and are smooth all over for the reason that no passage is opened up for the semen.”⁸¹¹

This concept explains the rationale behind Paul’s bewildering question, “Does not nature itself teach you that if a man lets his hair grow long, it is a dishonor to him?” (1 Cor 11:14). In both Jewish and Greco-Roman society, a woman in public with unbound hair conveyed sensual impropriety.⁸¹²

Prophecy (*prophēteuō*) in the early church primarily involved proclaiming the salvation plan of God and delivering authoritative instruction based upon the Word of God to others. It did not usually refer to predicting future events.⁸¹³ Thus, those who prophesy proclaim inspired revelation.⁸¹⁴

Later in the same letter, Paul delivered a seemingly contradictory command that, “Women in the churches should be silent...even as the law says” (1 Cor 14:34–35). Such a prohibition occurs nowhere in the Old Testament.⁸¹⁵ Typically, when Paul made such a pronouncement, he cited the verse in question (Cf. 1 Cor 9:8–9; 1 Cor 14:21–22).⁸¹⁶

Thus, “law” here most likely refers to the Jewish oral tradition, as in this from the Babylonian Talmud,⁸¹⁷ “Our Rabbis taught, ‘All are qualified to be among the seven [who read], even a minor and a woman, only the Sages said that a woman should not read in the Torah out of respect for the congregation’” (*b. Megilah 23a*).

In Greco-Roman society, a married woman conversing with another woman’s husband constituted a scandal.⁸¹⁸ For example, the influential author Plutarch (46–122 AD) wrote of a woman who suffered great embarrassment:

“In putting her cloak about her [she] exposed her arm. Somebody exclaimed, ‘A lovely arm.’ ‘But not for the public,’ said she. Not only the arm of the virtuous woman, but her speech as well, ought to be not for the public, and she ought to be modest and guarded about saying anything in the hearing of outsiders, since it is an exposure of herself; for in her talk can be seen her feelings, character, and disposition.”⁸¹⁹

Greco-Romans regarded a woman’s disclosure of her thoughts as unseemly as physical immodesty. Since Paul’s preaching offended both Jews and gentiles, he considered it imperative to avoid bringing shame to the gospel (1 Cor 1:22–23; 1 Cor 10:31–33; Tit 2:3–8).

Another possibility involves the practice of inquirers asking questions about the future to the oracle at Delphi (Pythia), who resided close to Corinth. Plutarch also wrote, “It seems that

⁸¹¹Hippocrates, *On Intercourse and Pregnancy: An English Translation of On Semen and on the Development of the Child* (trans. Tage U. H. Ellinger; New York: Schuman, 1952), 68–70, <https://archive.org/details/HippocratesOnIntercourseAndPregnancy/page/n33>.

⁸¹²Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 517.

⁸¹³Gerhard Friedrich, “προφήτης” (*prophētēs*), *TDNT*, 6:781–861, 848, 851.

⁸¹⁴Danker, et al., “προφητεω” (*prophēteuō*), *BDAG*, 890.

⁸¹⁵David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 672.

⁸¹⁶Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, *Rev. Ed.*, 791.

⁸¹⁷Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “Correcting Caricatures: The Biblical Teaching on Women,” *Priscilla Papers* 31, no. 4 (1 September 2017):9–14, 13, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resources/article/priscilla-papers/correcting-caricatures>.

⁸¹⁸Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 725.

⁸¹⁹Plutarch, *Advice to a Bride and Groom (Conjugalia Praecepta)* (trans. Frank Cole Babbitt; LCL; Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press; Heinemann, 1928), 31, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0181%3Asection%3D31>.

our beloved Apollo finds a remedy and a solution for the problems connected with our life by the oracular responses which he gives to those who consult him.”⁸²⁰ Seeing God speaking through women in Corinth likely prompted their peers with pressing questions to interrupt the church service.⁸²¹ Such behavior promoted disorder, a condition which Paul rejected (1 Cor 14:26–40).

Read 1 Cor 11:4–6 and 1 Cor 14:34–35. Why would a woman’s uncovered head have given offense while she prayed and spoke in church services? How should we observe Paul’s command in our culture? Why would Paul give instructions for women to pray and prophesy in church and then command their silence?

Having Authority on Her Head

43) 1 Cor 11:7–10: These verses concern propriety in worship, not family relationships.⁸²² However, Paul asserted that a link does occur between our fidelity in marriage and our worship of the Lord.⁸²³ He wrote, “Indeed a man is not obligated to cover the head, for he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man. For a man is not from a woman but a woman from a man. For indeed man was not brought into existence for a woman but a woman for a man.”

In this passage, Paul alluded to Gen 1:26 and Gen 2:18–24. He noted the lack of any contribution of humanity in the creation of Adam (Gen 2:7), but the necessary aspect of the man in forming Eve.⁸²⁴ He never asserted that the Lord created the woman in the man’s image, for God made both in his image (Gen 1:27).⁸²⁵ Later in this letter, Paul claimed that all the Corinthians bore the image of the earthly man and would soon bear the image of the heavenly one (1 Cor 15:49). The Lord created only Adam directly in his image. Everyone else inherits God’s image from him and from our biological parents (Gen 5:3; Gen 9:6).⁸²⁶

Throughout the Ancient Near East, people placed an image of a god in a temple. It represented not only the authority of the deity but also its luminous glory.⁸²⁷ For this reason, craftsmen made such idols from precious metals to reflect the light of the gods they represented

⁸²⁰Plutarch, “The E at Delphi,” in *Moralia in 15 Volumes, Vol. 5* (LCL; trans. Frank Cole Babbitt; Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1936), 199–253, 201, <https://archive.org/stream/moraliainfiftee05plut#page/200/mode/2up>.

⁸²¹Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 235.

⁸²²Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 235.

⁸²³Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 211.

⁸²⁴Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 524.

⁸²⁵Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Rev. Ed.*, 570.

⁸²⁶Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 524.

⁸²⁷Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 88.

(Cf. 2 Cor 3:18; 2 Cor 4:3–6).⁸²⁸ Consequently, Paul contended that Eve completed both Adam’s and God’s creation (Cf. Gen 2:19 with Gen 1:27–31).⁸²⁹ The Greek term “glory” (*doxa*) connotes “reflected radiance.”⁸³⁰

Ancient Greeks believed that hair contained semen.⁸³¹ Therefore, in the Greco-Roman culture, a woman’s uncovered head produced shame (1 Cor 11:4–6).⁸³² However, God intended her to mirror the honor of a man,⁸³³ as the Greek translation of Prov 11:16 indicates. Contrary to how many people today understand these verses, they contain no hint of a woman’s subordination.⁸³⁴

As suggested by 2 Cor 3–4, Paul wanted women to cover their heads to prevent others from focusing upon the grandeur of men during church services.⁸³⁵ Nothing should prevent all glory being directed to God during worship.⁸³⁶ It should go neither to women nor their husbands.⁸³⁷ Bolstering the idea that Paul intended the word “head” (*kephalē*) in 1 Cor 11:3 to refer to the source of women, the apostle argued that the first woman was created from a man for his sake.

Greek manuscripts of this section say, “For this reason, a woman ought to have authority over her head” without mentioning any kind of symbol.⁸³⁸ Typically, the phrase “authority over” (*exousian epi*) conveys having “the right over something” (Matt 9:6; Rev 11:6; Rev 14:18).⁸³⁹ When Paul used the word “authority” in the context of the church, he emphasized freedom balanced with moderation (1 Cor 6:12; 1 Cor 8:9; 1 Cor 10:23).⁸⁴⁰

The puzzling phrase “because of the angels” likely refers to the Old Testament injunction against indecent exposure in worship (Exod 20:24–26; Exod 28:40–43).⁸⁴¹ According to a Dead Sea Scroll, “No man shall go down with them on the day of battle who is impure because of his ‘fount,’ for the holy angels shall be with their hosts. And there shall be a space of about two thousand cubits between all their camps for the place serving as a latrine, so that no indecent nakedness may be seen in the surroundings of their camps” (1QM).⁸⁴²

Impropriety in worship offends both the Lord and the angels who stand in his presence.⁸⁴³ By respecting the proper decorum expected in the presence of God and his angels, women in

⁸²⁸Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 526.

⁸²⁹Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 523.

⁸³⁰Arndt et. al., “δόξα” (*doxa*) *BDAG*, 3rd ed., 256–8, 257.

⁸³¹Hippocrates, *On Intercourse and Pregnancy: An English Translation of On Semen and on the Development of the Child*, 68–70, <https://archive.org/details/HippocratesOnIntercourseAndPregnancy/page/n33>.

⁸³²Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 522–3.

⁸³³Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 211.

⁸³⁴Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 523.

⁸³⁵Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 526.

⁸³⁶Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 237.

⁸³⁷Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 523.

⁸³⁸Also note that the word is *exousian*, a form which reflects a direct object. This means “authority,” not “of authority.”

⁸³⁹Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 212.

⁸⁴⁰Werner Foerster, “ἐξουσία” (*exousia*), *TDNT* 2:560–74, 562, 570.

⁸⁴¹Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 530.

⁸⁴²Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, 4th Ed.*, 132, https://archive.org/stream/pdfy-Uy_BZ_QGsaLiJ4Zs/The%20Dead%20Sea%20Scrolls%20%5BComplete%20English%20Translation%5D#page/n209/mode/2up.

⁸⁴³Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 530.

Corinth could pray and speak words of encouragement and exhortation in worship without shame or disgrace,⁸⁴⁴ just as the men of the congregation did (1 Cor 11:4–6).⁸⁴⁵

Read 1 Cor 11:7–10. How do women reflect the glory of men? Why did Paul command that the women of Corinth should cover their heads during worship? What does wielding authority over her own head enable a woman to do? How do you or the women in your life practice this?

Interdependence

54) 1 Cor 11:11–12: In this instance, “woman” can be translated as “wife” (*gynē*),⁸⁴⁶ while “man” (*anēr*) can also be translated as “husband.”⁸⁴⁷ Note that the Greek words used here for a male (*anēr* and *andros*) differ from the more common term “*anthrōpos*.” That word can be translated as “man” but usually refers to all of humanity, both male and female.⁸⁴⁸ Unfortunately, a failure to recognize this distinction has resulted in an unnecessary furor over some Bible translations.

Paul proclaimed the fundamental interdependence of husbands and wives, as well as of men and women. Procreation mitigates the order of creation. Since everything originates from God—our ultimate authority—he significantly restrains any sense of hierarchy (1 Cor 11:3–10; Gal 3:26–28).⁸⁴⁹

Therefore, in this new era of life in Christ, men and women cannot function without depending upon each other. While distinctions remain between the genders, there is no subordination.⁸⁵⁰ Furthermore, in the age to come, marriage shall no longer exist (Mark 12:25).

Read 1 Cor 11:11–12. What are the implications of the first woman coming from a man and all subsequent men coming from women?

⁸⁴⁴ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 531.

⁸⁴⁵ Timothy J. Harris, “Why Did Paul Mention Eve’s Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett’s Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2,” *EvQ* 62: 335–52, 343–4, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/1990-4_335.pdf.

⁸⁴⁶ Danker, et al., “γυνή” (*gynē*), *BDAG*, 208–9.

⁸⁴⁷ Danker et. al., “άνηρ” (*anēr*), 79–80.

⁸⁴⁸ Danker et. al., “άνθρωπος” (*anthrōpos*), 81–2.

⁸⁴⁹ Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 212–3.

⁸⁵⁰ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 523–4.

Falling for Deception

55) 2 Cor 11:2–4: The serpent employed rhetorical guile to ensnare Eve (Gen 3:1–6). In the same way, Paul’s rivals snaked their way into the Corinthian church. They won its members’ affection and captured their minds with an alluring false gospel.⁸⁵¹

Surprisingly, people did not identify Satan with the serpent in Eden until the second century BC–first century AD.⁸⁵² According to a Jewish apocryphal text, Satan envied humanity because God made them in his image and installed them as his representatives over the created order (Gen 1:26–28). It says, “God formed us to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made us. But by the envy of the devil [that Adam and Eve had dominion over all creation], death entered the world, and they who are allied with him experience it” (Wisdom of Solomon 2:23–4, NABR).

During the centuries before and after the birth of Christ, authors speculated concerning Eve’s deception, with some writing that the serpent physically seduced her.⁸⁵³ In 4 Maccabees (first century AD), the heroes’ mother stated, “No seducer of the desert *or* destroyer in the field destroyed me, nor did the destroyer, the deceitful serpent, maltreat my innocent virginity. So, I remained until the end with *my* husband.”⁸⁵⁴ Later, the Babylonian Talmud made a more explicit assertion: “Rabbi Yohanan (180–279 AD) says, ‘When the serpent copulated with Eve, he infused her with lust’” (*b. Yebam 103b*).

Contrary to a popular view that women are more prone to deception, Paul warned the entire Corinthian church that falling for deceit did not exonerate Eve. Neither would they be without guilt if they followed false teachers.⁸⁵⁵

Read 2 Cor 11:2–4. Why did Paul compare the members of the congregation in Corinth to Eve? What was his concern? Why is it significant that he compared both men and women to Eve? How can you avoid following false teachers?

An Angel of Light

56) 2 Cor 11:13–15: Paul exposed the scandalous nature of the “false apostles” and “deceitful workmen” in Corinth who challenged his position as an apostle.⁸⁵⁶ Unfortunately, successful con men often assume religious personas to pursue their selfish ambition. However, their narcissism and superior attitudes ultimately reveal that they masquerade as people sent by God.⁸⁵⁷

⁸⁵¹Garland David E., *2 Corinthians* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 462.

⁸⁵²New American Bible Revised Edition, Wisdom 2:23–4,

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Wisdom+2%3A23-24&version=NABRE>.

⁸⁵³Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 445.

⁸⁵⁴R. Brannan, et al., *The Lexham English Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 4 Macc 18:8.

⁸⁵⁵Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 463.

⁸⁵⁶Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 524.

⁸⁵⁷Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 484.

One pertinent document, entitled “The Life of Adam and Eve,” was written during the first century AD. This fictitious work describes the lives of the couple after their exile from Eden.⁸⁵⁸ It says, “Eighteen days passed. Then Satan grew angry and transfigured himself into the brilliance of an angel and went off to the Tigris River to Eve.”⁸⁵⁹

Another apocryphal work gives this account of the fall according to Eve: “And the devil spake to the serpent saying, ‘Rise up, come to me and I will tell thee a word whereby thou mayst have profit.’ And he arose and came to him. And the devil saith to him, ‘I hear that thou art wiser than all the beasts, and I have come to counsel thee. Why dost thou eat of Adam's tares and not of paradise? Rise up and we will cause him to be cast out of paradise, even as we were cast out through him.’ The serpent saith to him, ‘I fear lest the Lord be wroth with me.’ The devil saith to him: ‘Fear not, only be my vessel and I will speak through thy mouth words to deceive him.’ And instantly he hung himself from the wall of paradise, and when the angels ascended to worship God, then Satan appeared in the form of an angel and sang hymns like the angels. And I bent over the wall and saw him, like an angel. But he saith to me: ‘Art thou Eve?’”⁸⁶⁰

Since Satan can fashion himself into an “angel of light,” we should not be shocked when his followers disguise themselves as “ministers of righteousness.”⁸⁶¹

Read 2 Cor 11:13–15. Why must we be on guard for false teaching in our churches? How can we protect ourselves from falling prey to con artists and deceptive teachers?

Clothed with Christ

57) Gal 3:26–27: The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians to counter the arguments of Christian missionaries from a Jewish background. They sought to have gentile “half-converts” become “full converts” by obeying the law of Moses, specifically through circumcision (Gal 6:12–16). By writing, “For all sons of God you are through your faith in Christ Jesus,” Paul emphasized “all” by placing it first in his sentence.⁸⁶² This message infuriated those insisting on circumcision (Gal 2:12; Gal 5:11–12).⁸⁶³ Jewish people of that era recognized the term “sons of God” as a distinguishing mark exclusive to faithful members of Israel. However, God welcomes and includes gentiles into the covenant community (Eph 1:5–6; Rom 10:8–13).⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁵⁸Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 351.

⁸⁵⁹Berlie Custis, Gary A. Anderson, and R. Layton, trans., *The Life of Adam and Eve* (1995), 9:1, <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/anderson/vita/english/vita.lat.html>.

⁸⁶⁰R. H. Charles, trans., “The Apocalypse of Moses,” in *APOT, Vol. 2* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 16.1–17.2, 145–6, <https://archive.org/details/CharlesRHTheApocryphaPseudepigraphaOfTheOldTestamentInEnglishVol21913/page/n161>.

⁸⁶¹Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 525.

⁸⁶²Matthew S. DeMoss, *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 100. In Koine Greek, the word “for” can never occur first in a sentence or clause. Authors placed their points of emphasis first in a sentence or clause.

⁸⁶³Scott McKnight, *Galatians* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 197.

⁸⁶⁴Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, 269–70.

Paul contrasted the status of freedom believers enjoy with the slavery and fear of those under the Mosaic law (Gal 3:23).⁸⁶⁵ While Greco-Roman women could become heirs, they faced restrictions regarding how they could use an inheritance.⁸⁶⁶ This is probably why Paul designated believers of both genders “sons” (Gal 3:28–29).

Those “in Christ Jesus” experience unity with each other and a new relationship with God as his children,⁸⁶⁷ a status achieved by means of faith.⁸⁶⁸ Being “in Christ” facilitates communion with Jesus in the most intimate connection imaginable.⁸⁶⁹ Indeed, the presence of the Holy Spirit within us sets us apart as the people of God (Gal 4:6–7).⁸⁷⁰ Yet this neither minimizes nor destroys the Christian’s and Jesus’s distinct personalities; it enhances them.⁸⁷¹

Most likely, Paul derived Gal 3:27–28 from an early Christian baptismal confession.⁸⁷² In the early church, baptism served as the first and necessary response of faith,⁸⁷³ resulting in the practice becoming identified as a rite of initiation into a new humanity with Christ as its head.⁸⁷⁴ Nevertheless, faith and baptism remain distinct so that faith does not negate the need for baptism and baptism fails to make faith unnecessary (Matt 28:18–20; 1 Cor 12:13).⁸⁷⁵

Paul wrote, “All of you who into Christ have been baptized, [with] Christ have clothed yourselves.” Enveloping ourselves with Jesus as our garment symbolizes a new spiritual existence (Job 29:14). By stripping off sin and putting on the virtues of Christ (Eph 4:20–24; Rom 13:12–14),⁸⁷⁶ we have died to our old evil ways, stepping into new life (Rom 6:1–14; Rev 3:5–6).⁸⁷⁷

In the early church, converts disrobed just prior to baptism and put on white clothing after receiving the rite.⁸⁷⁸ According to Hippolytus ca. 170–235 AD):

“Let the candidates stand in the water, *naked*, a deacon going with them...He who baptizes him, putting his hand on him, shall say thus, ‘Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty?’ And he who is being baptized shall say, ‘I believe.’ Then holding his hand placed on his head, he shall baptize him once.

“And then he shall say, ‘Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born of the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was dead and buried, and rose again the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the quick (living) and the dead?’ And when he says, ‘I believe,’ he is baptized again.

“And again he shall say, ‘Dost thou believe in [the] Holy Ghost, and the holy church, and the resurrection of the flesh?’ He who is being baptized shall say accordingly, ‘I believe,’ and so he

⁸⁶⁵Brendan Byrne, “Sons of God,” *ABD* 6:156–9, 158.

⁸⁶⁶Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 43.

⁸⁶⁷Longenecker, *Galatians*, 152.

⁸⁶⁸Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 171–2.

⁸⁶⁹Longenecker, *Galatians*, 154.

⁸⁷⁰Witherington, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 270.

⁸⁷¹Longenecker, *Galatians*, 154.

⁸⁷²Longenecker, *Galatians*, 155.

⁸⁷³McKnight, *Galatians*, 198.

⁸⁷⁴Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 172.

⁸⁷⁵Longenecker, *Galatians*, 155–6.

⁸⁷⁶McKnight, *Galatians*, 198–9.

⁸⁷⁷Alan F. Johnson and Robert E. Webber, *What Christians Believe: A Biblical and Historical Summary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 380.

⁸⁷⁸Longenecker, *Galatians*, 156. See <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310120.htm>.

is baptized a third time... And so each one...is immediately *clothed*, and then is brought into the church.”⁸⁷⁹

This explains why baptism took place away from the congregation.⁸⁸⁰ A third century AD document describes female deacons administering baptism to women converts to prevent men from seeing their nudity.⁸⁸¹

Read Gal 3:26–27. What is the significance of being a son of God? How does the ancient form of Christian baptism reflect the transformation we experience through our identification with Jesus? Specifically, how does clothing yourself with Christ affect the way you live?

Adopted as Sons

58) Eph 1:5-6: Scribes copied Greek manuscripts without punctuation, and no one supplied verse numbers until the 16th century. Therefore, scholars disagree whether the words “in love” refer to what precedes them in Eph 1:4 or to what follows them in v. 5. Since Paul focused upon the Lord’s action, the phrase fits best with v. 5.⁸⁸² This results in the translation, “In love he predestined us into adoption as sons through Jesus Christ into him, according to his good pleasure and will.” All that God has done for us results from his great love (John 3:16–18).⁸⁸³

Apart from Eph 1, the verb “to predestine” (*proorizō*) occurs in the New Testament only four times (Rom 8:29–30; Acts 4:27–28; 1 Cor 2:7). It carries the sense of “decide beforehand.”⁸⁸⁴ God has already determined how people will respond to the events of salvation history (Jer 24:7).⁸⁸⁵ However, there is nothing cold and calculating about God’s election. He chose us because of his great love to be adopted as sons into the family of God (Rom 8:15–17, 23),⁸⁸⁶ even though we were once “sons of disobedience” (Eph 2:1–3).

⁸⁷⁹Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* (trans. Burton Scott Easton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 46–7, [http://www.rore-sanctifica.org/bibliotheque_rore_sanctifica/12-pretendue_tradition_apostolique_d_hippolyte/1934-burton_scott_easton-tradition_apostolique_d_hippolyte/Burton_Scott_Easton_-_The_Apostolic_Tradition_of_Hippolytus_\(1934\).pdf](http://www.rore-sanctifica.org/bibliotheque_rore_sanctifica/12-pretendue_tradition_apostolique_d_hippolyte/1934-burton_scott_easton-tradition_apostolique_d_hippolyte/Burton_Scott_Easton_-_The_Apostolic_Tradition_of_Hippolytus_(1934).pdf). Italics mine.

⁸⁸⁰ Geoffrey Wainwright, “Baptism, Baptismal Rites,” *DLNT*, 112–25, 121.

⁸⁸¹Margaret Dunlop Gibson, trans., *The Didascalia Apostolorum in English* (HSem; London; Cambridge: Clay; Cambridge University Press, 1903), 16, 79–80, <https://archive.org/stream/didascaliaaposto00gibsuoft#page/78/mode/2up>.

⁸⁸² Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 50.

⁸⁸³ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 82.

⁸⁸⁴ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 82.

⁸⁸⁵ Karl L. Schmidt, “προοριζω” (*proorizō*), *TNDT* 5:456.

⁸⁸⁶ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 82.

In Greco-Roman society, a wealthy man without children could choose to adopt an heir, usually an adult male.⁸⁸⁷ This person could also be a slave, a woman, an orphan, or an illegitimate child.⁸⁸⁸ Roman law released an adopted man from the oversight of his birth father and granted him all the rights of a son born into the new family.⁸⁸⁹ This included a new name and status.⁸⁹⁰ Women could also inherit wealth. However, civil laws placed greater restrictions upon them regarding how they could use their inheritance.⁸⁹¹ This is likely why Paul designates Christians of both genders as “sons” (*huios*) (Gal 3:28–29).

Emperors often employed adoption to ensure a smooth succession. For example, Julius Caesar adopted Augustus, the ruler at the time of Christ’s birth. Four of the five Roman emperors in the second century AD, ascended by adoption.⁸⁹²

Adoption comprised an important theme in the Old Testament (OT). After God promised to make Abraham into a great nation (Gen 12:1–2), Abraham complained that one of his servants would become his heir (Gen 15:2–3).⁸⁹³ The people of Israel also enjoyed the status of adopted sons (Deut 7:6; Rom 9:4). In addition, the Lord vowed that he would treat David’s heir as his own son (2 Sam 7:12–16).⁸⁹⁴

According to Jubilees, a second century BC Jewish apocryphal book, this would occur: “Their souls will cleave to me and to all my commandments, and they will fulfill my commandments, and I shall be their Father and they will be my children. And they will all be called children of the living God, and every angel and every spirit will know...that these are my children, and that I am their Father in uprightness and righteousness, and that I love them.”⁸⁹⁵

Thus, election is relational. The Lord is forming for himself a family of sons and daughters in whom he takes great delight (Eph 1:18). This teaching provided great hope for those in Ephesus who had formerly relied upon astrology, magic, and the worship of Artemis to determine their fate (Acts 19:17–20, 27). Even before the world began, the God who created the universe chose them for himself and planned their future (Acts 13:48–49).⁸⁹⁶

Paul wrote that this is, “according to his good pleasure and will.” Our redemption results from the Lord’s delight in bringing people into relationship with him.⁸⁹⁷ God has done this “to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he has bestowed upon us in his beloved one.” This grace consists of the Lord’s unconditional acceptance of us as his people. Due to what God has accomplished on our behalf, we respond by giving him glory.⁸⁹⁸ By his grace, we receive salvation (2 Cor 6:1–2).⁸⁹⁹

“The one being loved” is how the Greek translation of the OT translates God’s nickname

⁸⁸⁷ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 25.

⁸⁸⁸ Frederick W. Knobloch, “Adoption,” *ABD* 1:76–9, 79.

⁸⁸⁹ Trevor Burke, “Pauline Adoption: A Sociological Approach,” *EvQ* 73, no. 2 (04/01/2001): 124, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/2001-2_119.pdf.

⁸⁹⁰ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 82.

⁸⁹¹ Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 43.

⁸⁹² Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 104.

⁸⁹³ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 25.

⁸⁹⁴ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 82.

⁸⁹⁵ Robert Henry Charles, trans., “The Book of Jubilees, or The Little Genesis” (Edinburgh; London: Black, 1902), 1:24–5, 6–7, <https://archive.org/stream/bookofjubileesor00char#page/6/mode/2up>.

⁸⁹⁶ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 83.

⁸⁹⁷ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 26.

⁸⁹⁸ Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 50.

⁸⁹⁹ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 257–8.

for Israel, Jeshurun (Deut 33:26).⁹⁰⁰ That nation initially formed the Lord's beloved people (Isa 44:1–5).⁹⁰¹ In the NT, the Father used this term for Jesus (Matt 3:17; Matt 17:1–5). Due to Christ being God's especially chosen beloved one, those adopted by the Lord are also his beloved ones (Rom 1:6–7).⁹⁰²

Read Eph 1:4–6. How did adoption in Greco-Roman society differ from that of our culture? Why did Paul describe all Christians, both men and women, as “adopted sons”? What are the implications of your adoption as a son into God's family?

Unity in the Spirit

59) Eph 5:18–21: Paul had already enjoined the church community in Ephesus to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” through humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance (Eph 4:2–3). Since “being filled” (*plēroō*) expresses unity with God and the wholeness his salvation brings, Paul called all believers to make ourselves available as vessels for the presence and power of God.⁹⁰³

The Greek text of this passage begins with two imperatives (commands). Paul then employed a string of verbal nouns called participles to delineate the result of being Spirit-filled.⁹⁰⁴

Do not be intoxicated with wine...but be filled with the Spirit,
 speaking to one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs;
 singing and praising
 in your hearts to the Lord;
 being thankful always for all [things]
 in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God,
 even as to the Father;
 being submissive (*hypotassō*) to one another
 in reverence of Christ.

⁹⁰⁰ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 26–7.

⁹⁰¹ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 84.

⁹⁰² Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 51.

⁹⁰³ Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 290.

⁹⁰⁴ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 639. Wallace and Black both note that—based upon the grammar—one cannot separate v. 21 from the preceding verses.

“Being submissive” (*hypotassomenoi*) appears in masculine plural form. In New Testament (NT) Greek, that can encompass either men or a group of both genders.⁹⁰⁵ Consequently, Paul declared that Spirit-filled people submit to each other.⁹⁰⁶

Read Eph 5:18–21. How can you tell if you are being filled with the Spirit and exhibiting reverence for Christ?

Submissive to One Another

60) Eph 5:21–24: This section continues Paul’s discussion of how we can tell if we are living in the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18–21). It opens with, “Being submissive (*hypotassō*) to one another in reverence for Christ.” Verse 22 states, “wives to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” Therefore, when a Bible translator separates verses 21 and 22 into different paragraphs, it leaves verse 22 without a verb.⁹⁰⁷

“Being submissive” (*hypotassomenoi*) appears in masculine plural form. In New Testament (NT) Greek, that can encompass either a group of men or both genders.⁹⁰⁸ As a result, one cannot accurately interpret this phrase as applying to only women. We cannot separate Paul’s exhortation to wives to submit from his charge to husbands (Eph 5:25–30).⁹⁰⁹

In the NT, subordination involves placing oneself under someone else. Yet, it does not necessarily imply obedience.⁹¹⁰ Accounts from the book of Acts indicate that Paul would not have condoned women following their husbands into sinful practices (Acts 5:1–11, 27–29). The apostle also never advocated for women to subject themselves to abuse.⁹¹¹

Regarding verse 24, R. C. Sproul wrote this:

“There is a teaching which has gone widely through evangelical Christianity which says that for a woman to be obedient to this passage, she must obey her husband no matter what he tells her to do. This is not true. For example, if her husband tells her to live a life of prostitution, she is to show her obedience to Christ by disobeying her husband’s wicked commands. That woman must disobey her husband, because her husband is commanding her to do something that God forbids. Similarly, if the husband forbids her to do something that God commands, she must disobey her husband.”⁹¹² Our allegiance to the Lord trumps our loyalty to our spouses (Acts 4:16–20).

In all five NT usages of “head” (*kephalē*) concerning Christ and the church, the word depicts Jesus as the nurturer who provides for our growth and well-being (Eph 1:22–23; Eph 4:15–16; Col 1:18–20; and Col 2:18–19). Scripture does not describe him as one who wields

⁹⁰⁵Longenecker, *Galatians*, 297.

⁹⁰⁶David Alan Black, *It’s Still Greek to Me: An Easy-to-Understand Guide to Intermediate Greek* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 37.

⁹⁰⁷Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 651.

⁹⁰⁸Longenecker, *Galatians*, 297.

⁹⁰⁹Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 374.

⁹¹⁰Gerhard Delling, “ὑποτάσσω” (*hypotassō*), *TDNT* 8:39–46, 41.

⁹¹¹Arnold, *Ephesians*, 380.

⁹¹²R. C. Sproul, *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 1994), 135–6.

authority over his people. Thus, Christ does not hold headship over the church—but for it—as our servant-provider.⁹¹³ This counter-cultural attitude meshes with Jesus’s command to his disciples when they sought positions of preeminence (Mark 9:33–35; Mark 10:42–45).⁹¹⁴

Read Eph 5:21–24. How does the masculine plural form of the verb meaning “being submissive” affect your understanding of this passage? Why should a wife submit to her husband? How do the NT texts depict Christ’s headship? What does this mean for husbands?

Sacrificial Love

61) Eph 5:25–30: We cannot separate Paul’s exhortation to wives to submit from his charge to husbands (Eph 5:18–24).⁹¹⁵ As with fathers and slave owners, he instructed husbands not to abuse their authoritative position (Eph 6:1–4, 9; Col 3:19).⁹¹⁶ Such reciprocity in household codes was unheard of in the Greco-Roman milieu. Typically, they regulated the behavior of women, children, and slaves toward husbands, parents, and masters.⁹¹⁷ Greco-Roman men would have expected Paul to command husbands to rule over their households.⁹¹⁸

For example, the first century BC author Dionysius of Halicarnassus wrote: “This custom still remains...[Roman] law obliged both the married women, as having no other refuge, to conform themselves entirely to the temper of their husbands, and the husbands to rule their wives as necessary and inseparable possessions. Accordingly, if a wife was virtuous and in all things obedient to her husband, she was mistress of the house to the same degree as her husband was master of it.”⁹¹⁹

In contrast, Christian husbands could no longer emulate the harsh, oppressive rule which their fathers practiced as they led their families (Eph 6:1–4).⁹²⁰ When Jesus came to earth, he

⁹¹³Gilbert Bilezikian, “The Issue I Can’t Evade: The Headship of Husbands is a New Testament Teaching,” *Priscilla Papers* 17, no. 2 (1 April 2003): 5–6, https://www.academia.edu/35109479/The_Issue_I_Cant_Evade_The_headship_of_husbands_is_a_New_Testament_teaching.

⁹¹⁴ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 356.

⁹¹⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 374.

⁹¹⁶Fitzgerald, “Haustafeln,” *ABD* 3:80.

⁹¹⁷Balch, “Household Codes,” *ABD* 3:318.

⁹¹⁸Arnold, *Ephesians*, 380.

⁹¹⁹Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, Vol. 1 (trans. Earnest Cary and Edward Spelman; LCL; Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press; Heinemann, 1937), 2.25, 383, <https://archive.org/stream/romanantiquities01dionuoft#page/382/mode/2up>.

⁹²⁰ An official statement of the theologically-conservative Presbyterian Church of America states, “The Committee believes that when there are words and actions on the part of one spouse that threatens the life of the other spouse and/or children, that the one(s) threatened should be counseled by the [elders], or representative thereof, to remove themselves from the threatening situation and the abuser should be urged to seek counsel. Such a procedure will protect those threatened. When the abuser does not cease these words and actions, the [elders] should investigate

adopted a position of extreme abasement diametrically contrasted with his preexistent condition (Phil 2:5–11).⁹²¹ During his ministry, humiliation, suffering, and death, Christ assumed the role of a slave for the sake of the church, his bride (Eph 5:31–32; Rev 19:6–9).⁹²²

Therefore, Paul called Christian husbands to follow the example of Jesus (Mark 9:33–35; Mark 10:42–45; John 13:1–5, 12–17).⁹²³ He charged them to apply the gospel to their cultural context.⁹²⁴ The proper exercise of headship consists of loving self-sacrifice, not self-assertion (Eph 4:15–16).⁹²⁵ Ironically, Paul later directed the women of Ephesus “to rule the house and family” (1 Tim 5:14).⁹²⁶ He used a term of strength (*oikodespotein*) which many translations weaken to mean “keep house.” In Greco-Roman households, homeowners expected their wives to oversee their children, their slaves, and crops growing on their estates.⁹²⁷

Like most other ancient writers, Paul did not specifically mention husbands loving their wives, yet his intent remains clear.⁹²⁸ Believers cannot insist on getting what we want but must love our neighbors as ourselves (Lev 19:18; Luke 6:31; Gal 5:13–26; Phil 2:1–8). Therefore, Paul taught that a Christian husband must exhibit this type of attitude with his wife, putting her interests before his own.⁹²⁹ Paul described this kind of love in 1 Cor 13:4–8a.

The Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus (30–102 AD) provides us with the closest Greco-Roman parallel to Paul’s admonition to Christian couples. He wrote this: “But in marriage there must be above all perfect companionship and mutual love of husband and wife, both in health and in sickness and under all conditions, since it was with desire for this as well as for having children that both entered upon marriage. Where, then, this love for each other is perfect and the two share it completely, each striving to outdo the other in devotion, the marriage is ideal and worthy of envy, for such a union is beautiful. “But where each looks only to his own interests and neglects the other, or, what is worse, when one is so minded and lives in the same house but fixes his attention elsewhere and is not willing to pull together with his yoke-mate nor to agree, then the union is doomed to disaster and though they live together, yet their common interests fare badly; eventually they separate entirely or they remain together and suffer what is worse than loneliness.”⁹³⁰

whether these words and actions are in effect breaking the one-flesh relationship by ‘hating’ the abused spouse and not ‘nourishing and cherishing’ this one (Eph. 5:28–29). In counseling the abuser, the reality of his Christian faith should be ascertained. When it is determined by the [elders] that the abuser does not appear to them to be Christian and the abuse continues, the Pauline teaching about an unbeliever leaving a believer should be applied [1 Cor 7:12–16].” (PCA Digest, “Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage.” (To the Twentieth General Assembly, 1992), Appendix 0, <http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/divorce-remarriage.pdf>, 291–2).

⁹²¹ J. Behm, “μορφή” (*morphē*), *TDNT* 4:750.

⁹²² Alan G. Padgett, *As Christ Submits to the Church: A Biblical Understanding of Leadership and Mutual Submission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 55.

⁹²³ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 380.

⁹²⁴ Gordon D. Fee, “The Cultural Context of Ephesians 5:18–6:9,” *Priscilla Papers* 31, no. 4 (1 September 2017): 6, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resources/article/priscilla-papers/cultural-context-ephesians-518%E2%80%9369>.

⁹²⁵ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 374.

⁹²⁶ Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “οικοδεσποτέω” (*oikodespoteō*), *NIDOTTE*, 2:49.

⁹²⁷ Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 68–9.

⁹²⁸ Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 296.

⁹²⁹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 366.

⁹³⁰ Musonius Rufus, *Musonius Rufus, the Roman Socrates*. Translated by Cora Lutz (YCS; New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1947), 13a, 89, <https://archive.org/details/MUSONIUSRUFUSSTOICFRAGMENTS/page/n27/mode/2up>.

Read Eph 5:25–30. Why is this passage counter-cultural? What did Jesus do for the church? How can a man emulate Christ’s expression of love for his wife? What happens in a marriage when a couple practices self-sacrificial love, submission, and respect?

Obedience in the Lord

62) Eph 6:1: Household codes were quite common in the ancient world.⁹³¹ In the Greco-Roman milieu, they regulated the behavior of women, children, and slaves toward husbands, parents, and masters.⁹³² However, Eph 6:1–4 follows the apostle’s exhortation for all Christians to exhibit submission to each other to express of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives (Eph 5:15–21).⁹³³

Jesus’s call to discipleship infringed upon traditional family responsibilities (Mark 3:31–35; Mark 10:28–31; Mark 13:12–13; Luke 8:1–3; Luke 9:59–62). Thus, Paul’s guidance regarding these relationships provided stability where entire households had converted to Christianity.⁹³⁴ As the apostle typically did, he first discussed the responsibilities of the household member considered subordinate in Greco-Roman society.⁹³⁵

After finishing his charges to wives and husbands (Eph 5:21–33), Paul wrote, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Significantly, Paul directly addressed Christian children.⁹³⁶ Therefore, the church in Ephesus likely included them in worship and community instruction.⁹³⁷

Most girls married in their early teens;⁹³⁸ boys came of age at twenty-five.⁹³⁹ Those of Jewish background recognized that a shift of allegiance occurred when they married (Gen 2:23–24; Eph 5:25–31).⁹⁴⁰ However, in the Roman world, the requirement of obedience lasted until one’s father died.⁹⁴¹

Paul commanded wives to submit (*hypotassō*) to their husbands (Eph 5:22).⁹⁴² That leaves open the possibility of respectful disagreement.⁹⁴³ He ordered children to go a step further

⁹³¹John T. Fitzgerald, “Haustafeln,” *ABD* 3:80–1, 80.

⁹³²Balch, “Household Codes,” *ABD* 3:318.

⁹³³Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 395.

⁹³⁴Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 398.

⁹³⁵Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 395–6.

⁹³⁶Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 336.

⁹³⁷Arnold, *Ephesians*, 415.

⁹³⁸Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 35.

⁹³⁹Witherington, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, 282.

⁹⁴⁰Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 181.

⁹⁴¹Gottlob Schrenk, “πατήρ” (*patēr*), *TDNT* 5:945–59, 951.

⁹⁴²Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 321.

⁹⁴³Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 335–6.

and obey (*hypakouō*) their parents.⁹⁴⁴ This connotes compliance free of objections.⁹⁴⁵

The phrase “in the Lord” (*en kuriō*) generates much controversy. It does not appear in some ancient manuscripts, including some dating back to the fourth century.⁹⁴⁶ However, it does occur in other equally old documents. Therefore, one manuscript (P⁴⁶) dated to ca. 200 makes the determination to include these words.⁹⁴⁷

Another issue concerns exactly what “in the Lord” means. Some scholars assert that the command to obey applies only to Christian parents.⁹⁴⁸ Others claim that children must comply to their parents’ expectations only when their orders do not conflict with God’s.⁹⁴⁹ In Ephesians Paul typically argues for behavior based upon what Jesus has done (Luke 2:41–52; Eph 1:3–14).⁹⁵⁰ However, the most likely possibility takes the context of the other household codes into consideration (Eph 5:18–22; Eph 6:5–7).⁹⁵¹

One aspect of following the Lord consists of obeying one’s parents. In fact, the Spirit enables children to obey.⁹⁵² Elsewhere, Paul equated disobedience to one’s parents with failure to honor God as Lord (Rom 1:28–32; 2 Tim 3:1–6).⁹⁵³ He claimed that such behavior is “right” (*dikaios*). This noun refers to action which conforms to God’s laws.⁹⁵⁴

In the Greco-Roman world, people widely recognized the call to such obedience.⁹⁵⁵ A first century BC Roman historian wrote of the authority granted to fathers in that society: “These, then, are the excellent laws which Romulus enacted... Those he established with respect to reverence and dutifulness of children toward their parents, to the end that they should honor and obey them in all things, both in their words and actions, were still more august and of greater dignity and vastly superior to our laws. For those who established the Greek constitutions set a very short time for sons to be under the rule of their fathers, some till the expiration of the third year after they reached manhood, others as long as they continued unmarried, and some till their names were entered in the public registers... ”

“The punishments, also, which they ordered for disobedience in children toward their parents were not grievous: for they permitted fathers to turn their sons out of doors and to disinherit them, but nothing further. But mild punishments are not sufficient to restrain the folly of youth and its stubborn ways or to give self-control to those who have been heedless of all that is honorable; and accordingly, among the Greeks many unseemly deeds are committed by children against their parents.

“But the law giver of the Romans gave virtually full power to the father over his son, even during his whole life, whether he thought proper to imprison him, to scourge him, to put him in chains and keep him at work in the fields, or to put him to death, and this even though the son

⁹⁴⁴Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 335–6.

⁹⁴⁵Arnold, *Ephesians*, 415.

⁹⁴⁶Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd. Ed., 341–2.

⁹⁴⁷Nestle and Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, 28. revidierte Auflage, 601.

⁹⁴⁸Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 336.

⁹⁴⁹Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 397.

⁹⁵⁰Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 395.

⁹⁵¹Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 321.

⁹⁵²Arnold, *Ephesians*, 415–6.

⁹⁵³Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 398.

⁹⁵⁴Gottlob Schrenk, “δικαίος” (*dikaios*), *TDNT* 2:182–91, 191.

⁹⁵⁵Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 336.

were already engaged in public affairs, though he were numbered among the highest magistrates, and though he were celebrated for his zeal for the commonwealth.”⁹⁵⁶

Notably, Paul placed restraints upon fathers regarding how they treated their children (Eph 6:4). Although people commonly expected children to obey their parents, Paul contended that those who belong to Christ should live in a way which pleases the Lord (Col 1:9–10; Col 3:20; Eph 4:1–3).⁹⁵⁷ This precludes obeying orders which contradict God’s commands.

a) Read Eph 6:1. How did Paul alter the format of Greco-Roman household codes? To whom does this apply? Why did Paul command children to obey their parents? What does such conformity signify?

Life-long Honor

63) Eph 6:2–3: After directing children who were still growing up to obey their parents (Eph 6:1), Paul quoted part of the fifth commandment.⁹⁵⁸ He wrote, “Honor your father and your mother, which is the first command with a promise, in order that good to you it may be, and you will be long-lived on the earth.”

This matches the beginning of the Greek translation of Exod 20:12.⁹⁵⁹ To honor (*timaō*) someone consists of rendering esteem, dignity, and proper recognition to that person.⁹⁶⁰ In Judaism, honoring one’s parents paralleled the reverence accorded to the Lord (Lev 19:1–4).⁹⁶¹ Unlike the command to obey, this mandate applies to adults (Gen 2:23–24; Eph 5:25–31; Matt 19:16–19).⁹⁶² It includes supporting parents with financial needs (Matt 15:3–6; 1 Tim 5:3–6).⁹⁶³

The Jewish philosopher Philo (20 BC–40 AD) asserted: “And so [the aged], living in a tranquility worthy of their time of life, enjoy all abundance, and pass their old age in luxury; while their children make light of all the hardships they undergo to furnish them with the means of support, under the influence both of piety and also of the expectation that they also in their old age will receive the same treatment from their descendants;

⁹⁵⁶Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman Antiquities* (trans. Earnest Cary; LCL; Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; Heinemann, 1960), 2.26.1–4, 387–9,

<https://archive.org/stream/L319DionysiusOfHalicarnassusTheRomanAntiquitiesI12pdf/L319-Dionysius%20of%20Halicarnassus%20The%20Roman%20Antiquities%20I%3A1-2pdf#page/n437>.

⁹⁵⁷Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 321.

⁹⁵⁸Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 336.

⁹⁵⁹Brannan et. al., *The Lexham English Septuagint*, Exod 20:12.

⁹⁶⁰Johannes Schneider, “τιμάω” (*timaō*), *TDNT* 8:169–80, 174.

⁹⁶¹Frank S. Thielman, “Ephesians,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 829.

⁹⁶²Arnold, *Ephesians*, 416.

⁹⁶³Schneider, “τιμάω” (*timaō*), *TDNT* 8:169–80, 178–9.

and so they now discharge the indispensable debt which they owe their parents, knowing that in proper time, they will themselves receive what they are now bestowing.

“And there are also others who are unable to support themselves, for children are no more able to do so at the commencement of their existence, than their parents are at the end of their lives. On which account the children, having while young been fed in accordance with the spontaneous promptings of nature, now with joy do in return support the old age of their parents.

“Is it not right, then, after these examples, that men who neglect their parents should cover their faces from shame, and reproach themselves for disregarding those things...For the children have nothing of their own which does not belong to the parents, who have either bestowed it upon them from their own substance or have enabled them to acquire it by supplying them with the means.”⁹⁶⁴

Within the Ten Commandments, this is the first with an explicit promise for adhering to it.⁹⁶⁵ Although Exod 20:4–6 does contain a pledge, it refers to keeping all the Lord’s mandates.⁹⁶⁶ Paul likely omitted “in the land which the Lord your God gives you” because it pertained to Israel.⁹⁶⁷ For gentiles living in Asia Minor, that was irrelevant.⁹⁶⁸ However, he did retain God’s vow for a good, long life (Deut 5:33).⁹⁶⁹ This refers to temporal—not eternal—benefits.⁹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, we cannot universally apply this assurance. A one-to-one correlation between people who honor their parents and those who enjoy prosperity while reaching an advanced age does not exist.⁹⁷¹ The Lord does not make such guarantees (1 Ki 14:11–13).⁹⁷²

Read Eph 6:2–3. How does honoring parents differ from obeying them? Where did Ham go wrong (Gen 9:20–23)? How can you best honor your father and mother?

Nurturing and Training

64) Eph 6:4: Paul recognized that fathers also needed instruction concerning their behavior toward their children.⁹⁷³ As with husbands and slave masters, he commanded fathers not to abuse their authoritative position (Eph 5:25–28; Col 3:19; Eph 6:9).⁹⁷⁴ Such reciprocity in household

⁹⁶⁴Philo, “A Treatise Concerning the Ten Commandments Which Are the Heads of the Law,” in *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, Vol. 3, (trans. Charles Duke Yonge; London: Bohn, 1855), 23, 162–3, <https://archive.org/stream/workspphilojudaeu03philuoft#page/162>.

⁹⁶⁵Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 396.

⁹⁶⁶Thielman, “Ephesians,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 830.

⁹⁶⁷Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 398.

⁹⁶⁸Arnold, *Ephesians*, 417.

⁹⁶⁹Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 322.

⁹⁷⁰Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 336–7.

⁹⁷¹Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 322.

⁹⁷²Arnold, *Ephesians*, 417.

⁹⁷³Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 338.

⁹⁷⁴Fitzgerald, “Haustafeln,” *ABD* 3:80.

codes was unheard of in Greco-Roman society.⁹⁷⁵

He wrote, “And fathers, do not provoke to anger your children but nurture them in the training and instruction of the Lord.” “Fathers” does occasionally refer to both parents (Heb 11:23).⁹⁷⁶ However, in Greco-Roman society, training and instruction of children was their father’s responsibility, which is likely why he mentions only men here.⁹⁷⁷ Paul had employed the generic word for “parents” in Eph 6:1.⁹⁷⁸

The verb he used for “provoke to anger” occurs only twice in the NT (Rom 10:19). It occurs only three times in Greek classics. Yet it appears twenty-eight times in the Greek OT books accepted by Protestants (Deut 4:25; Judg 2:11–12; Jer 7:18–19).⁹⁷⁹ Paul also employed the related noun in Eph 4:26, which is the only time it occurs in the NT.⁹⁸⁰

His meaning is clear. Fathers must evaluate the effect of their words and deeds upon their children before interacting with them (Col 3:21).⁹⁸¹ Driving children to exasperation or bitterness contradicts God’s plan for families.⁹⁸² This prohibits extreme or arbitrary demands, cruel discipline, biased treatment, sarcasm, and humiliation.⁹⁸³ Fathers must practice consideration and sensitivity to their children’s feelings (Eph 4:29–32).⁹⁸⁴

Fathers in the Greco-Roman world reigned supreme and were expected to treat their children harshly.⁹⁸⁵ In fact, the original recipients of this letter probably expected Paul to command juveniles not to provoke their parents. No comparable admonition exists in ancient literature.⁹⁸⁶

Although children were universally viewed as the property of their parents, a few authors did recommend moderation in raising them.⁹⁸⁷ For example, Seneca (4 BC–65 AD) wrote: “It is, I assure you, of the greatest service to boys that they should be soundly brought up, yet to regulate their education is difficult, because it is our duty to be careful neither to cherish a habit of anger in them, nor to blunt the edge of their spirit... A boy's spirit is increased by freedom and depressed by slavery: it rises when praised, and is led to conceive great expectations of itself: yet this same treatment produces arrogance and quickness of temper: we must therefore guide him between these two extremes, using the curb at one time and the spur at another. “He must undergo no servile or degrading treatment; he never must beg abjectly for anything, nor must he gain anything by begging; let him rather receive it for his own sake, for his past good behavior, or for his promises of future good conduct. In contests with his comrades we ought not to allow him to become sulky or fly into a passion...”

⁹⁷⁵Balch, “Household Codes,” *ABD* 3:318.

⁹⁷⁶Arnold, *Ephesians*, 417.

⁹⁷⁷Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 337.

⁹⁷⁸Arnold, *Ephesians*, 417.

⁹⁷⁹Result of Logos 6 word study on “παροργίζω” (*parorgizo*).

⁹⁸⁰Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “παροργισμός” (*parorgismos*), *BDAG*, 780.

⁹⁸¹Arnold, *Ephesians*, 418.

⁹⁸²Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 338.

⁹⁸³Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 338.

⁹⁸⁴Arnold, *Ephesians*, 417–8.

⁹⁸⁵Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 322.

⁹⁸⁶Arnold, *Ephesians*, 417.

⁹⁸⁷Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 338.

“We should allow him to enjoy his victory, but not to rush into transports of delight: for joy leads to exultation, and exultation leads to swaggering and excessive self-esteem. We ought to allow him some relaxation, yet not yield him up to laziness and sloth, and we ought to keep him far beyond the reach of luxury, for nothing makes children more prone to anger than a soft and fond bringing-up, so that the more only children are indulged, and the more liberty is given to orphans, the more they are corrupted.

“He to whom nothing is ever denied, will not be able to endure a rebuff, whose anxious mother always wipes away his tears, whose [servant who escorts him to school] is made to pay for his short-comings. Do you not observe how a man's anger becomes more violent as he rises in station?...

“Flattery, then, must be kept well out of the way of children. Let a child hear the truth, and sometimes fear it: let him always reverence it. Let him rise in the presence of his elders. Let him obtain nothing by flying into a passion: let him be given when he is quiet what was refused him when he cried for it: let him behold, but not make use of his father's wealth: let him be reprovved for what he does wrong...

“Above all, let his food be scanty, his dress not costly, and of the same fashion as that of his comrades: if you begin by putting him on a level with many others, he will not be angry when someone is compared with him.”⁹⁸⁸

The verb which Paul chose as the standard for child-rearing has two shades of meaning. On the one hand, it refers simply to “bringing up” a child. However, it also refers to nurturing and feeding someone (Eph 5:29; Gen 47:17).⁹⁸⁹

Plutarch wrote:

“Lycurgus would not put the sons of Spartans in charge of purchased or hired tutors, nor was it lawful for every father to rear or train his son as he pleased, but as soon as they were seven years old, Lycurgus ordered them all to be taken by the state and enrolled in companies, where they were put under the same discipline and *nurture* and so became accustomed to share one another's sports and studies.”⁹⁹⁰ Nurturing involves more than simply bringing someone up to adulthood.⁹⁹¹

“Training and instruction” are roughly synonymous,⁹⁹² with the former term incorporating correction and discipline (2 Tim 3:16; 4 times in Heb 12:5–11).⁹⁹³ It was typically used in connection with the complete education of children (Prov 1:2, 7–8; Prov 4:1–5; Prov 19:20). In fact, the word is related to the terms for “child, tutor,” and “teacher.”⁹⁹⁴

Similarly, the second word means “counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct.”⁹⁹⁵ It involves verbal admonition,⁹⁹⁶ with the goal of redirecting a person's

⁹⁸⁸Seneca, “Of Anger,” in *Minor Dialogs Together with the Dialog “On Clemency,”* 2.21, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Of_Anger/Book_II#XXI.

⁹⁸⁹Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ἐκτρέφω” (*ektrepō*), *BDAG*, 311.

⁹⁹⁰Plutarch, “Lycurgus,” in *Plutarch's Lives* (trans. Bernadotte Perrin; Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann, 1914), 16.4.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0047%3Achapter%3D16%3Asection%3D4>. Italics mine.

⁹⁹¹Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 322.

⁹⁹²Arnold, *Ephesians*, 418.

⁹⁹³Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “παιδεία” (*paideia*), *BDAG*, 748.

⁹⁹⁴Arnold, *Ephesians*, 418.

⁹⁹⁵Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “νουθεσία” (*nouthesia*), *BDAG*, 679.

⁹⁹⁶Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 338.

mind onto the right course of action.⁹⁹⁷ This was regarded as one of the primary roles of parents in the OT (Deut 21:18–21; 1 Sam 3:11–14; Ps 78:1–8).⁹⁹⁸

By the Greco-Roman era, once a boy reached seven years of age, the primary influence upon him officially shifted from his mother to his father.⁹⁹⁹ Often, they hired a tutor.¹⁰⁰⁰ Girls received instruction in household management.¹⁰⁰¹

In terms of basic education, women in Rome and in Asia Minor—where Ephesus is located—fared better than those in Judea or Greece.¹⁰⁰² Nevertheless, the rationale for educating Greco-Roman women appears to be so that they could teach young boys.¹⁰⁰³ A great scholar of rhetoric who lived from 35–100 AD wrote:

“I would, therefore, have a father conceive the highest hopes of his son from the moment of his birth. If he does so, he will be more careful about the groundwork of his education...Above all see that the child's nurse speaks correctly...Do not therefore allow the boy to become accustomed even in infancy to a style of speech which he will subsequently have to unlearn...As regards parents, I should like to see them as highly educated as possible, and I do not restrict this remark to fathers alone...And even those who have not had the fortune to receive a good education should not for that reason devote less care to their son's education.”¹⁰⁰⁴

However, highly-educated women were frequently denounced as promiscuous, for in Greco-Roman society, a woman who was bold in her demeanor implied sexual availability.¹⁰⁰⁵

In 115 AD, Juvenal satirized educated women by writing the following:

“There's worse yet, the woman I mean who...starts praising Virgil, forgives the failing Dido, pits the poets against each other, and compares them...The literary men concede, the rhetoricians are beaten, the whole party is silent...such powerful utterance falls from her lips, you might say it's like the sound of dishes being struck, or peals of bells...

“So let the lady reclining next to you, not indulge in her own style of rhetoric, or revolve whole phrases before tangling you in some perverse argument or know every event that occurred in history. Let there be a few literary things she doesn't understand. I loathe a woman who...always observes the laws and rules of speech, a woman learned in antiquities, who knows lines from the ancients unknown to me...if she must appear so excessively learned and eloquent, she may as well be a man...Nothing's more intolerable than the sight of wealthy women.”¹⁰⁰⁶ Significantly, Paul did not limit training to boys.¹⁰⁰⁷ This was rare at that time.¹⁰⁰⁸

⁹⁹⁷Arnold, *Ephesians*, 419.

⁹⁹⁸Arnold, *Ephesians*, 415.

⁹⁹⁹Craig S. Keener, “Family and Household,” *DNTB* 353–68, 358.

¹⁰⁰⁰Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 337.

¹⁰⁰¹Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 322.

¹⁰⁰²Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 958.

¹⁰⁰³Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 144.

¹⁰⁰⁴Quintilian, *Institutes* (trans. Harold Edgeworth Butler; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922), 1.1.4–7,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2007.01.0066%3Abook%3D9%3Achapter%3D2%3Asection%3D29>.

¹⁰⁰⁵Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 243.

¹⁰⁰⁶Juvenal, *The Satires* (trans. A. S. Kline; 2011), 6:434–510,

http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/JuvenalSatires6.htm#anchor_Toc282858866.

¹⁰⁰⁷Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 322.

¹⁰⁰⁸Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 338.

Finally, we have the modifying phrase “of the Lord.” This involves following Christ’s example and practicing what he taught (Deut 6:4–9).¹⁰⁰⁹ The Jewish historian Josephus noted: “The law... commands us to bring those children up in learning, and to exercise them in the laws, and make them acquainted with the acts of their predecessors, in order to their imitation of them, and that they might be nourished up in the laws from their infancy, and might neither transgress them, nor have any pretense for their ignorance of them.”¹⁰¹⁰

Plato recognized the value of modeling proper behavior. In the fifth century BC he wrote, “The most effective way of training the young—as well as the older people themselves—is not by admonition, but by plainly practicing throughout one’s own life the admonitions which one gives to others.”¹⁰¹¹

Paul was certain enough of his own Christian character to offer himself as an example worthy of emulation (1 Cor 4:14–17, 21). The education of our children must occur with a godly demeanor, in addition to emphasizing Christian subject matter.¹⁰¹² Humility, respect, and submission to others represent core values in the families of believers.¹⁰¹³

Read Eph 6:4. How are parents to relate to their children? Why was this revolutionary? What are Christian parents commanded to teach their children?

The Cult of Artemis

65) False Teaching in Ephesus: After considering spousal and congregational relationships as Christians should engage in them (Acts 18:1–3, 18–20, 24–26; Rom 16:1–12; 1 Cor 11:3–12; and Eph 5:18–30), we will now examine how New Testament writers sought to resolve difficult relational situations. Since the Bible is a historically-oriented revelation, we must consider the socio-cultural context of each passage to avoid misinterpretation.¹⁰¹⁴ For example, the Cult of Artemis had a huge impact upon Ephesus, resulting in great tensions for the church in that city (Acts 19:17–34).¹⁰¹⁵

¹⁰⁰⁹Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 398.

¹⁰¹⁰Josephus, “Against Apion,” in *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (trans. William Whiston; Auburn and Buffalo: John E. Beardsley, 1895), 2.204.
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0216%3Abook%3D2%3Awhiston%20section%3D26>.

¹⁰¹¹Plato, “Laws,” in *Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 10* (trans. R. G. Bury; Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann, 1967), 5.729c.

¹⁰¹²Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*, 338.

¹⁰¹³Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 329.

¹⁰¹⁴Douglas K. Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors, 4th Ed.* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 52.

¹⁰¹⁵Wikimedia Commons, “Ephesos,” <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Ephesos>. This site has some good photos. All that remains of the temple of Artemis is one marble column.

The shrine dedicated to the goddess Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.¹⁰¹⁶ According to Pliny the Elder (23–79 AD), “The entire length of the temple is four hundred and twenty-five feet, and the breadth two hundred and twenty-five. The columns are one hundred and twenty-seven in number, and sixty feet in height.”¹⁰¹⁷ Four times larger than the Parthenon in Athens,¹⁰¹⁸ it covered twenty-one times the area of Solomon’s temple.

Early in the history of the cult of Artemis, religious prostitution with a priestess comprised an important feature of worship.¹⁰¹⁹ However, the Roman government abolished those practices throughout their empire by the time of Paul.¹⁰²⁰ Once an Anatolian fertility goddess,¹⁰²¹ Artemis of Ephesus morphed into a tomboy virgin,¹⁰²² pure and inviolable with a retinue of dancing nymphs.

Depicted in Ephesus as a “multi-mammary grotesque,”¹⁰²³ people considered Artemis the protector of human children. Nevertheless, the goddess Hera lambasted her as “a lion among women,” with the right to kill them at will.¹⁰²⁴ Presumably this occurred while they gave birth.¹⁰²⁵

Ancient inscriptions indicate that young virgins from elite families served as priestesses for one-year terms.¹⁰²⁶ According to an account of one of these women: “When we came to the age of fourteen years, by the law—which calls such as us to the office of priesthood—I was maid priest to Artemis...But, as this honor lasts but for a year and our time was expired, we prepared to go to Delos with our sacred attire, and there to make certain games of music and gymnastic and give over our priesthood.”¹⁰²⁷

Some proponents of this cult spoke of the first woman as the conduit of light and life who brought divine enlightenment to humanity. They asserted that Eve existed before creation, consorting with celestial beings.¹⁰²⁸ Consequently, these priestesses wielded tremendous power, were considered superior to men, and dominated over them.

Plutarch (46–122 AD) affirmed Cato the Elder’s (234–149 BC) severe criticism of the prevalent domination by women by quoting him as saying, “All mankind rules its women, and

¹⁰¹⁶Clinton E. Arnold, “Ephesus,” *DPL* 249–52, 250.

¹⁰¹⁷Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* (trans. John Bostock and H. T. Riley; London: Taylor & Francis, 1855), 36.21, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0137%3Abook%3D36%3Achapter%3D21>.

¹⁰¹⁸Arnold, *Ephesians*, 31.

¹⁰¹⁹Chris Church, “Fertility Cult,” *HolBD*, 566.

¹⁰²⁰S. M. Baugh, “Cultic Prostitution in New Testament Ephesus: A Reappraisal,” *JETS* 42, no. 3, September 1999: 443–60, 446, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/42/42-3/42-3-pp443-460_JETS.pdf.

¹⁰²¹Baugh, “Cultic Prostitution in New Testament Ephesus: A Reappraisal,” 452, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/42/42-3/42-3-pp443-460_JETS.pdf.

¹⁰²²Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* (vol. 2 of *The Complete Greek Drama*; trans. Jr. Eugene O’Neill; New York: Random House, 1938), 115–9, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0042%3Acard%3D101>.

¹⁰²³Hubert M. Martin Jr., “Artemis (Deity),” *ABD* 1:464–5, 464. **Other possibilities are gourds or bulls’ testicles.**

¹⁰²⁴Homer, *The Iliad* (trans. Samuel Butler; London: Longmans Green, 1898), 21.475–84, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0134%3Abook%3D21%3Acard%3D468>.

¹⁰²⁵Martin Jr., “Artemis (Deity),” *ABD* 1:465.

¹⁰²⁶Baugh, “Cult Prostitution in New Testament Ephesus: A Reappraisal,” 456, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/42/42-3/42-3-pp443-460_JETS.pdf.

¹⁰²⁷Heliodorus, *An Aethiopian Romance* (trans. Thomas Underdowne, revised by F. Wright and S. Rhoads; London: New York: Routledge; Dutton, 2006), 1.34–5, <http://www.elfinspell.com/HeliodorusBk1.html>.

¹⁰²⁸H. M. Conn, “The Effect of Sin upon Covenant Mutuality,” *NDT*, 258.

we rule all mankind, but our women rule us.”¹⁰²⁹ For example, Plancia Magna, a priestess of Artemis in Perge during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (117–138 AD), held the highest civic office in that city.¹⁰³⁰

In his last meeting with the Ephesian elders, Paul warned them that “savage wolves” would emerge, even from among them (Acts 20:28–30). Sure enough, within a few years false teachers gained significant influence upon the congregation, particularly among widows and wealthy women (1 Tim 5:14–15; 2 Tim 3:6).¹⁰³¹ Therefore, Paul sent Timothy there to restore health to this church, serving as his delegate (1 Tim 1:3–7).¹⁰³²

Paul never specifically described the nature of the false teaching. However, it appears to have involved a form of strict Jewish asceticism designed to promote ecstatic visions, much as in nearby Colossae (Col 2:16–23).¹⁰³³ Internal evidence suggests these dissident leaders promoted abstention from marriage (1 Tim 4:3; 1 Tim 5:14) as well as a misreading of Old Testament texts regarding creation and the fall (1 Tim 2:13–14).¹⁰³⁴

How did the Cult of Artemis change by the time Paul arrived in Ephesus? What role did women play in that religion? How did false teachers affect the Ephesian church?

Prayer without Anger

66) 1 Tim 2:8: Paul wrote, “I desire that men in every place lift up holy hands free of anger and dispute.” Anger and dissension block effective prayer (Matt 5:21–24; Eph 4:29–32; 1 Pet 3:7).¹⁰³⁵ As in Judaism and other Ancient Near Eastern cultures, people in the Greco-Roman world typically stood with their hands raised while praying (Exod 17:8–13; 1 Ki 8:22–26).¹⁰³⁶

Elsewhere in Paul’s letters, *anēr/andros* (“man, male, husband”) and *gynē* (“woman, female, wife”) usually occur together in the context of marriage (Rom 7:2–3; 1 Cor 7:1–4, 10–16, 32–34; 1 Cor 14:34–35; Eph 5:21–33; Col 3:18–19; Tit 1:6). The exception to this appears in 1 Cor 11:3–13.¹⁰³⁷ Therefore, 1 Tim 2:8–15 may apply to spousal relationships, rather than to

¹⁰²⁹Plutarch, *Regum et Imperatorum Apophthegmata* (trans. Frank Cole Babbitt; LCL; Cambridge: London: Harvard University Press; Heinemann, 1931), 81.3, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0193%3Achapter%3D81%3Asection%3D3>.

¹⁰³⁰W. Ward Gasque, “Perge (Place),” *ABD* 5:228.

¹⁰³¹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 44.

¹⁰³²Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 220.

¹⁰³³Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, lxi–lxx.

¹⁰³⁴Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 198.

¹⁰³⁵I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 445.

¹⁰³⁶Keener, *IVPBBCNT2*, 605.

¹⁰³⁷Result of Logos 8 word study on *gynē*.

congregations.¹⁰³⁸ Whichever is correct, the doctrinal disputes concerning women in Ephesus engulfed even the men in the church.¹⁰³⁹

Read 1 Tim 2:8. What makes anger while praying inappropriate? Do you think this verse applies to marriage or to relationships within congregations? Why do you believe that?

Adorned with Good Works

67) 1 Tim 2:9–10: Paul wrote this letter to his lieutenant serving in Ephesus, a city with one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Temple of Artemis. One description of a priestess of Artemis says, “Her apparel wrought with gold glistened against the sun, and her hair under the garland, blown about with the wind, covered a great part of her back. The thieves were greatly afraid...Some of them said indeed it was a goddess—Artemis or Isis—others declared it was a priestess of the gods.”¹⁰⁴⁰

The gospel inherently provoked Greco-Roman society (1 Cor 1:21–31). Therefore, Paul expressed great concern over how outsiders viewed the exercise of freedom by members of the church (1 Cor 10:23–33; Gal 5:13–14). This made modesty and sexual morality among believers especially critical.¹⁰⁴¹

Wealthy women in the Roman Empire loved to display elaborately adorned hair, sometimes braided with gold.¹⁰⁴² Early congregations included fashionable women who could afford the costliest materials (1 Pet 3:3–4).¹⁰⁴³ Due to the scarcity of pearls, some cost the equivalent of millions of dollars (Matt 13:45–46).¹⁰⁴⁴ Such ostentation slighted the poor. Expensive embellishment also provided temptation for the men in the congregation.¹⁰⁴⁵ Greco-Roman and Jewish authors equated the flaunting of wealth through external adornment with seduction.¹⁰⁴⁶

Regarding women, the Jewish philosopher Philo (ca. 20 BC–40 AD) wrote this: “For we confess that our sex is in danger of being defeated, because our enemies are better provided with all the appliances of war and necessities for battle; but your sex is more completely armed, and you will gain the greatest of all advantages, namely the victory...”

¹⁰³⁸Gordon P. Hugenberger, “Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis. A Survey of Approaches to 1Tim 2:8–15,” *JETS* 35, no. 3, September 1992: 341–60, 354, <http://womeninthechurch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/hugenberger%20women%20in%20church%20office%20re%20husbands%20and%20wive%20issue%20in%201%20timothy%202.pdf>.

¹⁰³⁹Marshall and Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 446.

¹⁰⁴⁰Heliodorus, *An Aethiopian Romance*, 1.10, <Http://www.elfinspell.com/HeliodorusBk1.html>.

¹⁰⁴¹Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 213

¹⁰⁴²Keener, *IVPBBCNT2*, 605.

¹⁰⁴³Douglas R. Edwards, “Dress and Ornamentation,” *ABD* 2:232–8, 237.

¹⁰⁴⁴Keener, *IVPBBCNT2*, 81.

¹⁰⁴⁵Keener, *IVPBBCNT2*, 605.

¹⁰⁴⁶Marshall and Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 449–50.

“[W]ithout even a struggle, you will overpower the enemy at the first sight of you, merely by being beheld by him. When they heard this, they ceased to think of or to pay the very slightest regard to their character for purity of life...though during all the rest of their lives they had put on a hypocritical appearance of modesty, and so now they adorned themselves with costly garments, and necklaces, and all those other appendages with which women are accustomed to set themselves off, and they devoted all their attention to enhancing their natural beauty, and making it more brilliant (for the object of their pursuit was not an unimportant one, being the alluring of the young men who were well inclined to be seduced), and so they went forth into public.”¹⁰⁴⁷

Likewise, the Roman satirist Juvenal (ca. 115) charged:

“There is nothing that a woman will not permit herself to do, nothing that she deems shameful, when she encircles her neck with green emeralds, and fastens huge pearls to her elongated ears: there is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman...Her lover she will meet with a clean-washed skin, but when does she ever care to look nice at home?”¹⁰⁴⁸

During the Greco-Roman era, people considered elaborate clothing, expensive jewelry, and intricate hair styles inconsistent with moral behavior.¹⁰⁴⁹ Consequently, Paul exhorted the wealthy Christian women in Ephesus to exhibit the decorum appropriate for a follower of Christ.¹⁰⁵⁰ He urged them to live in such a way that others associated them with good deeds, rather than with their physical appearance.¹⁰⁵¹ While nothing is inherently wrong with dressing nicely in our culture, God commands us to focus upon inner beauty, not external allure.¹⁰⁵²

Read 1 Tim 2:9–10. Why was Paul concerned about how Christian women appeared in public? What does adorning ourselves with good works mean? How can we practice this today?

She Must Learn

68) 1 Tim 2:11: Earlier in this chapter Paul used the same word frequently translated here as “silent” (*hēsychia*) to mean “free of outward disturbance” (1 Tim 2:1–2).¹⁰⁵³ He urged the entire congregation to pray so that they could lead lives characterized by a lack of noticeable agitation.¹⁰⁵⁴

¹⁰⁴⁷Philo, “On the Virtues,” in *The Works of Philo Judaeus, Vol. 3* (trans. Charles Duke Yonge; London: Bohn, 1855), 421–2, <https://archive.org/stream/theworksofphiloj03yonguoft#page/420/mode/2up>.

¹⁰⁴⁸Juvenal, “Satire 6,” in *Juvenal and Persius* (trans. G. G. Ramsay; London; New York: Heinemann; Putnam, 1928), 6:457–68, 121, <https://archive.org/stream/juvenalporsiuswi00juveuoft#page/120/mode/2up>.

¹⁰⁴⁹Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 95.

¹⁰⁵⁰Marshall and Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 450.

¹⁰⁵¹Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 96.

¹⁰⁵²Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 113.

¹⁰⁵³Verbrugge, “ἡσυχία” (*hēsychia*), *TDNTWA*, 235.

¹⁰⁵⁴Harris, “Why Did Paul Mention Eve's Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett's Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2,” 340, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/1990-4_335.pdf.

Verse 11 contains the only command in all of 1 Tim 2:8–15,¹⁰⁵⁵ where Paul ordered, “A woman...must learn” (*manthanō*).¹⁰⁵⁶ This shocking admonition came from a man who had been thoroughly grounded in Pharisaic Judaism (Phil 3:4–6). While some rabbis taught that men should teach the Mosaic law to their daughters, others asserted that doing so amounted to debauchery (*m. Sotah* 3.4). The Jerusalem Talmud went further, contending, “Let the words of the law be burned rather than committed to women” (*y. Sotah* 3:19).¹⁰⁵⁷

Eve had not been created when Adam received the command to abstain from the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16–22), nor had she been properly educated before she succumbed to deception (Gen 3:2–6). Paul taught against the prevailing culture of his era by insisting that women should receive religious instruction. Few Jewish women were trained in the law,¹⁰⁵⁸ although they did acquire some basic instruction to enable them to teach their children. Prior to Jesus’s ministry, women in Israel could never travel with or even study under a religious instructor (Luke 8:1–3; Luke 10:38–42).¹⁰⁵⁹

While praising one woman, the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BC–40 AD) claimed, “The minds of women are, in some degree, weaker than those of men and are not so well able to comprehend a thing which is appreciable only by the intellect...but she, as she surpassed all her sex in other particulars, so also was she superior to them in this, by reason of the pure learning and wisdom which had been implanted in her, both by nature and by study; so that, *having a masculine intellect*, she was so sharp sighted and profound.”¹⁰⁶⁰

In terms of basic education, women in Rome and in Asia Minor—where Ephesus is located—fared better than those in Judea or Greece.¹⁰⁶¹ The literacy rate for Greco-Roman women averaged 10% of that for men in the same social class.¹⁰⁶² Nevertheless, the primary rationale for educating Greco-Roman women appeared to be so they could teach their young sons.¹⁰⁶³ Once children reached seven years of age, the influence upon them officially shifted to their fathers.¹⁰⁶⁴

Quintilian, a great scholar of rhetoric who lived from 35–100 AD, wrote: “I would, therefore, have a father conceive the highest hopes of his son from the moment of his birth. If he does so, he will be more careful about the groundwork of his education...Above all see that the child's nurse speaks correctly...Do not therefore allow the boy to become accustomed even in infancy to a style of speech which he will subsequently have to unlearn...As regards parents, I should like to see them as highly educated as possible, and I do not restrict this remark to fathers alone...And even those who have not had the fortune to receive a good education should not for that reason devote less care to their son's education.”¹⁰⁶⁵

However, many Greco-Roman men denounced highly educated women as promiscuous,

¹⁰⁵⁵Nestle et al, *NA²⁸*, 1 Tim 2:8–15.

¹⁰⁵⁶Danker, et al., “μαθανω” (*manthanō*), *BDAG*, 615.

¹⁰⁵⁷Lightfoot, *From the Talmud and Hebraica: A Commentary on the New Testament*, 580, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/lightfoot/talmud.vii.iii.html>.

¹⁰⁵⁸Keener, *IVPBBCNT2*, 605.

¹⁰⁵⁹Ben Witherington III, “Women: New Testament,” *ABD* 6: 957–61, 957.

¹⁰⁶⁰Philo, “On the Embassy to Gaius,” in *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, Vol. 4 (Trans. Charles Duke Yonge; London: Bohn, 1855), 99–180, 169, <https://archive.org/stream/worksofphilojuda04phil#page/168/mode/2up>. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁶¹Witherington III, “Women: New Testament,” 6:958.

¹⁰⁶²Keener, *IVPBBCNT2*, 605.

¹⁰⁶³Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 144.

¹⁰⁶⁴Craig S. Keener, “Family and Household,” *DNTB* 353–68, 358.

¹⁰⁶⁵Quintilian, *Institutes* (trans. Harold Edgeworth Butler; LCL; Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1922), 1.1.1–7, 19–23, <https://archive.org/stream/institutioorator00quin#page/18/mode/2up>.

for in their society, a bold demeanor in a woman implied her sexual availability.¹⁰⁶⁶ In 115 AD, Juvenal satirized educated women by writing the following:

“But most intolerable of all is the woman who as soon as she has sat down to dinner commends Virgil, pardons the dying Dido, and pits the poets against each other, putting Virgil in the one scale and Homer in the other. The grammarians make way before her; the rhetoricians give in; the whole crowd is silenced...so torrential is her speech that you would think that all the pots and bells were being clashed together...She lays down definitions, and discourses on morals, like a philosopher...Let not the wife of your bosom possess a special style of her own...

“Let her not know all history; let there be some things in her reading which she does not understand. I hate a woman who...who observes all the rules and laws of language, who quotes from ancient poets that I never heard of and corrects her unlettered female friends for slips of speech that no man need trouble about: let husbands at least be permitted to make slips in grammar! There is nothing that a woman will not permit herself to do, nothing that she deems shameful, when she encircles her neck with green emeralds, and fastens huge pearls to her elongated ears: there is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman.”¹⁰⁶⁷

In Paul’s era, instructors expected every male student to learn submissively and quietly.¹⁰⁶⁸ Philo (30 BC–40 AD) asserted, “Silence, then, is a desirable thing for those who are ignorant, but for those who desire knowledge, and who have at the same time a love for their master’s freedom of speech, is a most necessary possession...it is proper for those persons to be silent who can say nothing worthy of being listened to.”¹⁰⁶⁹

Read 1 Tim 2:11. What makes Paul’s command to the Ephesian church so surprising? Based upon what we have read, why would he order women to learn with deference to their teachers?

Domineering Women

69) 1 Tim 2:12–14: Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, successfully taught Apollos in Corinth. Therefore, Paul did not endorse a universal ban on women teaching (Acts 18:24–28).¹⁰⁷⁰ We must consider whether the low level of women’s religious education prompted Paul’s command for them to learn as well as the imposition of restrictions upon their ministry (1 Tim 2:11).¹⁰⁷¹

¹⁰⁶⁶Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 243.

¹⁰⁶⁷Juvenal, “Satire 6,” 6:434–61, 119–21,

<https://archive.org/stream/juvenalpersiuswi00juveuoft#page/118/mode/2up>.

¹⁰⁶⁸Keener, *IVPBCNT2*, 605.

¹⁰⁶⁹Philo, “Who is the Heir?” in *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, vol. 2 (trans. Charles Duke Yonge; London: Bohn, 1854), 4, 96, <https://archive.org/stream/workspphilojudaeu02philuoft#page/96/mode/2up>.

¹⁰⁷⁰Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 123.

¹⁰⁷¹Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 104.

The apostle's instructions elsewhere indicate that the issue arose with these specific women in Ephesus (Acts 18:26; 1 Cor 14:26; Tit 2:3).¹⁰⁷² When Paul reminded Timothy of what he already knew, he typically wrote "we know" (*eidon*) (1 Tim 1:8), referred to "a trustworthy statement" (*pistos ho*) (1 Tim 1:15), or pointed to Timothy's recollection of Paul's experience (2 Tim 3:10–11). Instead, the apostle's instruction indicates that Timothy was not already aware that the women of Ephesus should not teach others.¹⁰⁷³ Paul wrote, "But to teach, I am not permitting a woman, nor to dominate a man, but to be in quietness."

The Ephesian women's ignorance of the Scriptures coupled with their social influence enabled teachers to spread false doctrines (1 Tim 4:3; 1 Tim 5:14; 2 Tim 3:6–7).¹⁰⁷⁴ Paul had already compared the entire church in Corinth with Eve due to their potential for being misled (2 Cor 11:3–4).¹⁰⁷⁵

According to Greco-Roman mythology, the birth of Artemis occurred nine days before that of her twin brother. She then acted as her mother's midwife to deliver Apollo.¹⁰⁷⁶ This may provide the rationale for Paul's reminder that "Adam first was formed, then Eve."

The verb typically used for "having authority" (*exousiazō*) appears four times in the New Testament (NT),¹⁰⁷⁷ the related noun *exousia* has 103 occurrences.¹⁰⁷⁸ One of these instances of the verb *exousiazō* concerns a wife's authority over her husband's body (1 Cor 7:4).¹⁰⁷⁹ With the exception of 1 Tim 2:12, whenever "to teach" and "to have authority" appear together in the NT, the word employed for wielding authority is *exousia* (Matt 7:29; Matt 21:23; Mark 1:22, 27; and Luke 4:32). However, in this passage Paul dictated the word *authentēin*, the infinitive of *authentēō*, a verb which occurs only here in the NT.¹⁰⁸⁰ It has the connotation in extra-biblical sources from that era of domineering and violence,¹⁰⁸¹ such as "to murder" or "to perpetrate a crime."¹⁰⁸²

For example, Philo (30 BC–40 AD) used a noun related to *authentēō* to describe someone who committed suicide, noting, "It is of yourself that you have become the *murderer* (*authentēs*)."¹⁰⁸³ Josephus (37–100 AD) also employed the term when he wrote, "The Samaritans were the beginners of the disturbance, on account of that murder they had committed...Cumanus

¹⁰⁷² Marshall and Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 455.

¹⁰⁷³ Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul*, 112.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Keener, *IVPBBNT2*, 606.

¹⁰⁷⁵ John Jefferson Davis, "First Timothy 2:12, the Ordination of Women, and Paul's Use of Creation Narratives," *Priscilla Papers* 31, no. 4 (1 September 2017): 17, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/PP314-web.pdf>.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Apollodorus, *The Library*, 2 Vols. (trans. James George Frazer; LCL; Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press; Heinemann, 1921), 1.4.1, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0022%3Atext%3DLibrary%3Abook%3D1%3Achapter%3D4>.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, 3rd Ed., 50.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Result of Logos 8 word study on "ἐξουσία" (*exousia*).

¹⁰⁷⁹ Danker et al., "ἐξουσιαζω" (*exousiazō*), *BDAG*, 353–4.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Leland Edward Wilshire, "The TLG Computer and Further Reference to ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1Timothy 2:12," *NTS* 34, no. 1 (January 1988):120–34, 130–1, <http://womeninthechurch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Wilshire-authentew-TLG.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸¹ Ben Witherington III, "Literal Renderings of Texts of Contention--1 Tim 2:8–15," <http://benwitherington.blogspot.com/2006/02/literal-renderings-of-texts-of.html>.

¹⁰⁸² Wilshire, "The TLG Computer and Further Reference to ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1Timothy 2:12," 130, <http://womeninthechurch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Wilshire-authentew-TLG.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸³ Philo, "That the Worse Attacks the Better," in *The Works of Philo Judaeus, Vol. 1* (trans. Charles Duke Yonge; London: Bohn, 1854), 21, 261, <https://archive.org/stream/workspphilojudaeu01philuoft#page/260/mode/2up>.

had given occasion to what had happened, by his unwillingness to punish the original *authors of that murder (authentas)*.”¹⁰⁸⁴

According to the second century AD astrologer Ptolemy, “If Saturn alone is ruler of the soul and *dominates (authentein)* Mercury and the moon...he makes his subjects lovers of the body, strong-minded, deep thinkers, austere, of a single purpose, laborious, dictatorial, ready to punish, lovers of property, avaricious, violent, amassing treasure, and jealous.”¹⁰⁸⁵

Leland Wilshire conducted important research which examined 314 references to *authentein* and its cognates from the Classical Period (4th–5th century BC) into the Byzantine Era (4th–15th century AD). He discovered that not until after Paul’s lifetime did the term lose a violent, abusive aspect,¹⁰⁸⁶ and come to mean “hold authority”.¹⁰⁸⁷

In a rigorous semantic study of *authentēō*, Cynthia Westfall identified the closest parallel to this verse. It appears in a homily from John Chrysostom (347–407).¹⁰⁸⁸ Concerning Col 3:19, he wrote to husbands, “Do not therefore, because thy wife is subject to thee, act the despot (*authentēō*).”¹⁰⁸⁹ That great preacher forbade even men to behave in the way prohibited by Paul.

Consequently, it appears that some Ephesian women were domineering over men when engaging in forms of instruction permitted in other congregations (Eph 4:29–5:2; 1 Cor 11:5; 1 Cor 14:1–4; Rom 16:1–12). Hence, Paul resorted to drastic measures to combat their tendency.¹⁰⁹⁰

Read 1 Tim 2:12–14. What made Paul’s choice of the verb *authentēō*—rather than *exousiazō*—significant? Why aren’t women to domineer over men? How were even the men in Corinth like the Ephesian women? Given what we have read regarding the women of Ephesus in *The Cult of Artemis* (pp. 97–99) and *She Must Learn* (pp. 101–103), why do you think Paul forbade them from teaching? How can you apply this passage to your life?

¹⁰⁸⁴Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, in *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, 2.240, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148%3Abook%3D2%3Asection%3D236>. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁸⁵Claudius Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* (trans. F. E. Robbins; LCL; Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1940), 3.13.137–9, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Ptolemy/Tetrabiblos/3D*.html#13. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁸⁶Wilshire, “The TLG Computer and Further Reference to ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1Timothy 2:12,” 123–4, <http://womeninthechurch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Wilshire-authentew-TLG.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸⁷Harris, “Why Did Paul Mention Eve’s Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett’s Interpretation of 1Timothy 2,” 342, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/1990-4_335.pdf.

¹⁰⁸⁸Cynthia Long Westfall, “The Meaning of Αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *JGRChJ* 10 (2014):138–73, 162, http://www.jgrchj.net/volume10/JGRChJ10-7_Westfall.pdf.

¹⁰⁸⁹John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Oxford; London: Parker; Rivington, 1843), 294, <https://archive.org/stream/homiliesofsjohn14john/page/294/mode/2up>.

¹⁰⁹⁰Marshall and Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 459, 466.

Saved Through Childbearing

70) 1 Tim 2:15: One expert called this sentence “certainly one of the strangest verses in the New Testament.”¹⁰⁹¹ Consequently, scholars have offered numerous interpretations of this verse.

Some assert that it serves as an admonition to live as a traditional wife and mother, making childbearing a means of “working out salvation” via a woman’s God-given role.¹⁰⁹² Others translate the definite article (“the”) to identify “the childbearing” as the birth of Jesus (Matt 1:18–25).¹⁰⁹³

Major difficulties beset those views. Paul advised virgins to remain unmarried, so he did not consider giving birth and raising children a necessary condition for women to receive salvation (1 Cor 7:32–38). The second explanation involves an obscure reference to the nativity. Other Scripture emphasizes the death and resurrection of Christ—not his birth—as the means of salvation (Acts 26:22–23; Rom 6:8–11; 1 Cor 15:3–4; Phil 3:10–11).¹⁰⁹⁴

Paul employed a medical term (*teknogonia*) for the physical act of giving birth.¹⁰⁹⁵ In this instance, the preposition he chose also makes a critical difference. He wrote, “But they shall be saved *through* (*dia*) childbearing, if they remain in faith and in love and in holiness with self-control.” In this instance, he referred to coming through a prevailing circumstance, such as labor.¹⁰⁹⁶

Childbirth during the Greco-Roman era remained a frightening prospect. For example, the wife of a centurion married at the age of eleven. She died while giving birth to her sixth child at the age of twenty-seven. Only one of those children survived to adulthood, a sadly common statistic.¹⁰⁹⁷

Interpreting this passage while considering the cultural context of the cult of Artemis in Ephesus resolves much of the confusion. Women nearing childbirth often prayed and sacrificed to Artemis for protection during delivery.¹⁰⁹⁸ In the Hymn to Artemis, the goddess told Zeus, “The cities of men I will visit only when women vexed by the sharp pang of childbirth call me to their aid.”¹⁰⁹⁹

Even a man prayed to her, saying, “Queen of heaven, whether you are Phoebus’ (Apollo’s) sister, who by relieving women in labor with your soothing remedies have raised up many peoples, and now are venerated at your shrine in Ephesus...help me in this extremity of tribulation.”¹¹⁰⁰

Paul wrote against these practices. Godly women must direct their devotion and prayers to the Lord, not to Artemis (1 Cor 12:2; Gal 5:19–21; Rev 21:8). “Faith, love, and holiness with

¹⁰⁹¹Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 143.

¹⁰⁹²Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 235.

¹⁰⁹³Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 145.

¹⁰⁹⁴Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 103.

¹⁰⁹⁵Marshall and Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 468.

¹⁰⁹⁶Danker, et al., “*δια*” (*dia*), *BDAG*, 223–6, 224.

¹⁰⁹⁷Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 135.

¹⁰⁹⁸Aeschylus, *Suppliant Women*, 2 Vols. (Herbert Weir Smyth; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 674, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0016%3Acard%3D667>.

¹⁰⁹⁹Callimachus, “Hymn III: To Artemis,” in *Callimachus Hymns and Epigrams. Lycophron. Aratus*. (ed. G. R. Mair; trans. A. W. Mair; LCL; London: New York: Heinemann; Putnam, 1921), 20–22, 63, <https://archive.org/stream/callimachuslycop00calluoft#page/62/mode/2up>.

¹¹⁰⁰Lucius Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* (trans. E. J. Kenney; London; New York: Penguin Books; Penguin Putnam, 2004), 11.2, 170–1, https://archive.org/stream/TheGoldenAss_201509/TheGoldenAsspenguinClassics-Apuleius#page/n219/mode/2up.

self-control” do not constitute good works but characterize God’s people (Gal 5:22–25; Eph 3:14–21; 1 Tim 6:11–12).¹¹⁰¹

“Shall be saved” (*sōzō*) can refer to physical deliverance in Scripture (e.g. Matt 9:20–22).¹¹⁰² Nevertheless, the nuance of “salvation” throughout Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus connotes our ultimate redemption in the age to come (1 Tim 1:15; 1 Tim 2:1–6; 1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 1:8–12; 2 Tim 2:10; 2 Tim 3:14–15; Tit 2:11–14; Tit 3:4–7).¹¹⁰³

God never promises that a woman shall live through childbirth.¹¹⁰⁴ Yet, a believer who approaches her time of delivery can rest in the assurance of the salvation of her soul and the resurrection of her body after the return of Christ. Indeed, when Paul described his impending death in 2 Tim 4:6–8, 16–18, he used the same verbal root to depict his expectation of salvation.

Read 1 Tim 2:15. How did Paul advise the women of Ephesus to spiritually prepare themselves for childbirth? What made his declaration counter-cultural? How can we apply this in our culture?

A Minority Religion

71) 1 Pet 3:1–2: First Peter 3:1–9 features many similarities to 1 Tim 2:8–15.¹¹⁰⁵ In the early church, Christianity spread faster among women than among men. Converting to a despised minority religion proved more costly to males in terms of their social status.¹¹⁰⁶ Noting the great discrepancy in numbers, Celsus, a 2nd century AD Greek philosopher, complained, “[Christians] desire and are able to gain over only the silly, and the mean, and the stupid, with women and children.”¹¹⁰⁷

Greco-Roman husbands held the authoritative position within a marriage.¹¹⁰⁸ “To submit” (*hypotassō*) involves placing oneself under someone else. Yet, it does not necessarily include compliance.¹¹⁰⁹ In contrast, the obedience expected of wives in Greco-Roman antiquity included

¹¹⁰¹Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 103.

¹¹⁰²Danker, et al., “σώζω” (*sōzō*), *BDAG*, 982–3.

¹¹⁰³Werner Foerster and Georg Fohrer, “σώζω” (*sōzō*), *TDNT*, 965–1024, 994–5.

¹¹⁰⁴Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 144.

¹¹⁰⁵Hugenberger, “Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis. A Survey of Approaches to 1 Tim 2:8–15,” 355, <http://womeninthechurch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/hugenberger%20in%20church%20office%20re%20husbands%20and%20wive%20issue%20in%201%20timothy%202.pdf>.

¹¹⁰⁶Keener, *IVPBBNT2*, 692.

¹¹⁰⁷Origen, “Against Celsus,” in *Fathers of the Third Century: Tertullian, Part Fourth; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen, Part First and Second*, vol. 4 (ed. A. Cleveland Coxe; trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; ANF; New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1926), 3.44, 482, <https://archive.org/stream/antenicenefathe00menzgoog#page/n458/mode/2up>.

¹¹⁰⁸Keener, *IVPBBNT2*, 692.

¹¹⁰⁹Gerhard Dellling, “ὑποτάσσω” (*hypotassō*), *TDNT* 8:39–46, 41.

allegiance to their husbands' religions.¹¹¹⁰ Most households included shrines containing figures of the gods.¹¹¹¹

Plutarch (ca. 46–120 AD) gave this Advice to a Bride and Groom:

“A wife ought not to make friends of her own, but to enjoy her husband's friends in common with him. The gods are the first and most important friends. Wherefore it is becoming for a wife to worship and to know only the gods that her husband believes in, and to shut the front door tight upon all queer rituals and outlandish superstitions. For with no god do stealthy and secret rites performed by a woman find any favor.”¹¹¹²

Polytheistic husbands regarded Christian women as highly insubordinate solely by virtue of their religious commitment. Peter commanded these wives not to compound the difficulty by abrasive or unseemly behavior.¹¹¹³ Thus, he directed wives to submit in order to influence their non-Christian husbands toward embracing the faith, consistent with his teaching that Christians must live such holy lives that those who malign the gospel would see their error (1 Pet 2:11–12).¹¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, a believer's reverence belongs to God, not to one's spouse (Acts 4:18–20; Acts 5:27–32).¹¹¹⁵

Read 1 Pet 3:1–2. What made the gospel more attractive to women than to men in Peter's era? Why would people consider the women whom Peter addressed subversive? How could living in submission to an unbelieving husband win him over to the gospel? In what ways can people living in those circumstances today apply Peter's teaching?

In the Spirit of Sarah

72) 1 Pet 3:3–6: Peter's admonition to develop “a gentle and quiet spirit” does not apply to women alone (Matt 5:5; Matt 11:28–30; 1 Pet 3:8, 15). While Sarah did call Abraham her “lord” (*adon*) (Gen 18:12) and typically deferred to him (Gen 12:10–15; Gen 20:1–2), she ordered Abraham to send his son Ishmael away, making her husband “very displeased.” According to Ancient Near Eastern cultural values, Abraham held the right to determine family policy. Yet, because Sarah's demand corresponded with God's plans, the Lord told Abraham to

¹¹¹⁰Keener, *IVPBBCNT2*, 692.

¹¹¹¹Laura Hutchinson, “The Roman House at Hopkins: Household Gods.” John Hopkins Archaeological Museum, <http://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/the-collection/object-stories/the-roman-house-at-hopkins/household-gods/>.

¹¹¹²Plutarch, *Advice to a Bride and Groom (Conjugalia Praecepta)*, 19,

[Http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0181%3Asection%3D19](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0181%3Asection%3D19).

¹¹¹³David L. Balch, “Early Christian Criticism of Patriarchal Authority: 1 Peter 2:11–3:12,” *USQR* 39, no. 3, January 1, 1984: 161–73, 166.

¹¹¹⁴Scott McKnight, *1 Peter* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 183.

¹¹¹⁵J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 157.

listen to his wife and do what she said (Gen 21:9–14).¹¹¹⁶ Note that the word translated as “listen to” (*shema*) also means “obey” in Hebrew.¹¹¹⁷

Thus, these words from Peter gave Christian women more freedom and power in their repressive world than their polytheistic friends enjoyed. Due to the differences between Greco-Roman culture and ours, people now tend to view these verses as more restrictive for believers than for non-Christian women.¹¹¹⁸

Going to Christian meetings and refusing to worship the family gods would have almost certainly upset the unbelieving husbands of Greco-Roman women.¹¹¹⁹ Such men likely would have employed various types of intimidation—physical, emotional, and social—to try to force Christian women to align themselves with their religious beliefs.¹¹²⁰

Therefore, Peter called these wives to practice gentleness, inner tranquility, and subordination to their husbands in areas which did not negatively affect their Christian faith.¹¹²¹ However, he also exhorted them to stand firm by calmly refusing to give in to the threats and sanctions of their spouses.¹¹²² Given the cultural context, it is startling that no penalty for a wife’s failure to submit appears anywhere in Scripture.

Read 1 Pet 3:3–6. How did Peter encourage wives to adorn themselves? What made Sarah a great example of what Peter was seeking to teach these women? How can women married to unbelievers avoid giving in to fear in living out their faith?

Living Together with Understanding

Please note that this post carries a trigger warning

73) 1 Pet 3:7–9: In this letter primarily concerned with how to interact with authority figures prone to oppressing others, Peter addressed husbands last and in only one verse (1 Pet 2:13–3:6).¹¹²³ People in Greco-Roman society expected a wife to automatically adopt her husband’s religion.¹¹²⁴ However, a woman may have appeared to embrace her husband’s new faith without experiencing true conversion.¹¹²⁵ Christian husbands could enforce external conformity, such as

¹¹¹⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 83.

¹¹¹⁷ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “*shema*”, *BDB*, 1033–4,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/1032/mode/2up>.

¹¹¹⁸ Balch, “Early Christian Criticism of Patriarchal Authority 1 Peter 2:11–3:12,” 169.

¹¹¹⁹ Balch, “Early Christian Criticism of Patriarchal Authority 1 Peter 2:11–3:12,” 166.

¹¹²⁰ Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 121.

¹¹²¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 153.

¹¹²² Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 121.

¹¹²³ Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter, Jude*, 159.

¹¹²⁴ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 169.

¹¹²⁵ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 207–8.

outlawing the worship of household gods. However, Peter charged them to live counter-culturally, in submission to the needs of their wives (Cf. Eph 5:25–30).¹¹²⁶

The apostle wrote, “Husbands, likewise, live together with understanding—as with a weaker vessel—with your wife, paying her respect even as co-heirs of the gracious gift of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” A “vessel” (*skeuos*) can refer to a container, object, or implement (John 19:29; Acts 10:11; 2 Tim 2:20–21). Figuratively, it can mean a person’s body as a housing for the spirit (2 Cor 4:5–10; 1 Thess 4:4).¹¹²⁷

The Shepherd of Hermas (ca. 100–160 AD) admonished: “Be...long-suffering and prudent and you shall have power over all evil deeds and shalt do all righteousness. For if you are courageous, the Holy Spirit which dwells in you will be pure, not obscured by another evil spirit, but will dwell at large and rejoice and be glad with the body (*skeuos*) in which it dwells.”¹¹²⁸

The term “weak” (*asthenēs*) can refer to illness, to emotional inadequacy, or to physical frailty.¹¹²⁹ Greco-Roman law and social codes enforced the subordination of women to men, as people considered males inherently superior to females.¹¹³⁰

According to Aristotle (384–322 BC):

“Divine Providence has fashioned the nature of man and of woman for different purposes. For they are distinguished from each other by the possession of faculties not adapted to the same purposes but, in some cases, for opposite ones, though contributing to the same ends. For Providence made man stronger and woman weaker (*asthenes*), so that, in virtue of his manly prowess, he may be ready to defend the home, and she, by reason of her timid nature, may be ready to keep watch over it.”¹¹³¹

While praising one woman, the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BC–40 AD) claimed:

“The minds of women are, in some degree, weaker than those of men, and are not so well able to comprehend a thing which is appreciable only by the intellect...but she, as she surpassed all her sex in other particulars, so also was she superior to them in this, by reason of the pure learning and wisdom which had been implanted in her, both by nature and by study; so that, having a masculine intellect, she was so sharp-sighted and profound.”¹¹³²

Despite that cultural background, New Testament authors give no hint of women as intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually weaker than men (Cf. Acts 16:13–15; Acts 18:24–28; Rom 16:1–12).¹¹³³ Paul employed an entirely different word in 2 Tim 3:6–7. He used the diminutive term “little women” (*gynaikarion*) to describe specific people in Ephesus whom false teachers led astray (1 Tim 2:8–15).¹¹³⁴

¹¹²⁶ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 122.

¹¹²⁷ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “σκεῦος” (*skeuos*), *BDAG*, 927–8.

¹¹²⁸ John Lightfoot, trans., “The Shepherd of Hermas,” in *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. 2 (ed. J. R. Harmer; London; New York: MacMillan, 1891), 5.1–2, 87, <https://archive.org/details/apostolicfathers02lakeuoft/page/86>.

¹¹²⁹ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ἀσθενής” (*asthenēs*), *BDAG*, 142.

¹¹³⁰ Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 67.

¹¹³¹ Aristotle, “Oeconomica,” Pages 323–426 in *Metaphysics: Books 10–14* (trans. Hugh Tredennick and G. Cyril Armstrong; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 1.1343b, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0048%3Abook%3D1%3Asection%3D1343b>.

¹¹³² Philo, “On the Embassy to Gaius,” in *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, Vol. 4, 99–180, 169, <https://archive.org/stream/worksofphilojuda04phil#page/168/mode/2up>.

¹¹³³ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 160.

¹¹³⁴ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “γυναικάριον” (*gynaikarion*), *BDAG*, 208.

Furthermore, in the preceding verses, Peter exhorted women married to unbelievers to exhibit strength of character as they adhered to God's commands. He called them to yield to their husbands' desires when they could yet live in a manner contrary to Greco-Roman cultural expectations (1 Pet 3:1–6).¹¹³⁵ Consequently, “weaker” (*asthenēs*) in this context most likely refers to physical strength.¹¹³⁶

The Greek philosopher Xenophon (430–354 BC) wrote:

“Since all work, both indoors and out, demands labor and diligent attention, Heaven, I think, so ordered our nature as to fit the woman for things demanding labor and diligent attention within, and the man for such things as demand them without. Heaven so made their bodies, and set their lives, as to render man strong to endure cold and heat, journeyings and warfare, so laying on him the works of the field; but to the woman, he gave less strength for such endurance, so laying, I think, on her the works of the house...

“It was made the duty of the woman to guard the things brought into the house; so Heaven, knowing that for the guarding of goods a fearful heart is nothing ill, gave to the woman a larger share of fearfulness than to the man; whilst in the knowledge that he who works in the field must defend himself against all injury, there was given to the man the greater share of courage.”¹¹³⁷

“Weaker” may also allude to a lack of social standing in a civilization which devalued women (Cf. 1 Cor 1:26–29).¹¹³⁸ Women in the Greco-Roman world—as in ours—remained vulnerable to exploitation.¹¹³⁹ In that culture, the head of a family (*paterfamilias*) held absolute power over his household, even determining whether a member of it should die or be permitted to live.¹¹⁴⁰

Therefore, Peter commanded Christian husbands to treat their wives with respect (*timē*) (Cf. Eph 5:33). In fact, he may have expanded that admonition.¹¹⁴¹ By writing “live together with understanding...with the female” (*gynaikeios*), rather than the typical term for a wife (*gynē*), the apostle likely included all women in the household.¹¹⁴² In the Greco-Roman culture, the male head of a household was free to seek sex for pleasure with his male and female slaves, prostitutes, or any unmarried woman. He reserved sex with his wife primarily for procreation.¹¹⁴³

Demosthenes (384–322 BC) asserted this:

“For this is what living with a woman as one's wife mean: to have children by her and to introduce the sons to the members of the clan and of the [city], and to betroth the daughters to husbands as one's own. Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our persons, but wives to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households.”¹¹⁴⁴

¹¹³⁵ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 123.

¹¹³⁶ Danker, et al., “ἀσθενεία” (*astheneia*), *BDAG*, 142.

¹¹³⁷ Xenophon, *The Economist of Xenophon* (ed. John Ruskin; trans. Alexander D. O. Wedderburn and W. Gershom Collingwood; Bibliotheca Pastorum; London; Kent: Ellis and White; George Allen, 1876), 7:22–5, 47, <https://archive.org/details/economistofxenop01xenouoft/page/n46>.

¹¹³⁸ Silva, “ἀσθενής” (*asthenēs*), *NIDNTE*, 1:420–4, 423.

¹¹³⁹ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 123.

¹¹⁴⁰ J. Ryan Davidson, “Family Relations in the First Century,” *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, no pages.

¹¹⁴¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 160–1.

¹¹⁴² Jobes, *1 Peter*, 207.

¹¹⁴³ Roy E. Ciampa, “Revisiting the Euphemism in 1 Corinthians 7.1,” *JSNT* 31, no. 3 (1 March 2009): 325–38, 326, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0142064X08101527>.

¹¹⁴⁴ Demosthenes, “Against Neaera,” in *Demosthenes with an English Translation* (trans. Norman W. DeWitt and Norman J. DeWitt; LCL; Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 59.122,

Greco-Romans expected wives to assent to their husband's extramarital affairs with good will.¹¹⁴⁵ Typically, when women reached 14–15 years of age they married men close to thirty years old.¹¹⁴⁶

The sexual abuse of slaves occurred so rampantly that Jewish rabbis ruled that female slaves must have been released by the age of three to marry as virgins. Otherwise, they were “amenable to the accusation of non-virginity” (*m. Ketuboth* 1:2)¹¹⁴⁷ These religious leaders believed that enough time would pass for the bodies of such women to return to a state as if they had never been violated. They took for granted that a female slave in a Greco-Roman household experienced rape by the age of three.

Men who claim to know Christ must treat those around them with the respect due to people they love.¹¹⁴⁸ Peter stated that a Christian husband must not be demanding or selfish in his marital relationship. Instead, he should practice consideration and sensitivity as he serves his wife,¹¹⁴⁹ rendering appropriate honor (*aponemō timos*) to her.¹¹⁵⁰ This includes expressing respect verbally and exhibiting appropriate deference due to her increased physical and societal vulnerability as “a weaker vessel.”¹¹⁵¹

Christian men who fail to treat their wives lovingly—even where cultural expectations permit authoritarianism—cannot expect God to hear their prayers.¹¹⁵² Similarly, Paul asserted that abusive behavior is incompatible with a true relationship with the Lord.¹¹⁵³ One of the terms he employed in 1 Cor 6:9–10 (*loidoros*) means “reviler, abusive person.”¹¹⁵⁴

Peter described both partners as “co-heirs of the gracious gift of life.” In God's eyes, a husband and wife share equal standing (1 Cor 7:1–5; Gal 3:28).¹¹⁵⁵ A man who desires a close connection with God must cultivate a healthy relationship with his wife (Cf. Matt 5:23–24; Matt 6:12–15; James 4:1–12).¹¹⁵⁶ The Lord shuts his ears to the prayers of abusive people.¹¹⁵⁷ Greco-Romans believed that the well-being of a household depended upon the prayers of the

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0080%3Aspeech%3D59%3Asection%3D122>.

¹¹⁴⁵Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians*, 71.

¹¹⁴⁶Baugh, “Cultic Prostitution in New Testament Ephesus: A Reappraisal,” 456, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/42/42-3/42-3-pp443-460_JETS.pdf.

¹¹⁴⁷*Mishnah*, Ketubot 1:1–3, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/etm120.htm>.

¹¹⁴⁸Marshall, *1 Peter*, 1 Pet 3:7.

¹¹⁴⁹McKnight, *1 Peter*, 186.

¹¹⁵⁰Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ἀπονέμω” (*aponemō*), *BDAG*, 118.

¹¹⁵¹Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 122.

¹¹⁵²Jobes, *1 Peter*, 209.

¹¹⁵³An official statement of the theologically-conservative Presbyterian Church of America states, “The Committee believes that when there are words and actions on the part of one spouse that threatens the life of the other spouse and/or children, that the one(s) threatened should be counseled by the [elders], or representative thereof, to remove themselves from the threatening situation and the abuser should be urged to seek counsel. Such a procedure will protect those threatened. When the abuser does not cease these words and actions, the [elders] should investigate whether these words and actions are in effect breaking the one-flesh relationship by ‘hating’ the abused spouse and not ‘nourishing and cherishing’ this one (Eph. 5:28–29). In counseling the abuser, the reality of his Christian faith should be ascertained. When it is determined by the [elders] that the abuser does not appear to them to be Christian and the abuse continues, the Pauline teaching about an unbeliever leaving a believer should be applied [1 Cor 7:12–16].” (PCA Digest, “Report of the Ad-Interim Committee on Divorce and Remarriage.” (To the Twentieth General Assembly, 1992), Appendix 0, <http://pcahistory.org/pca/studies/divorce-remarriage.pdf>, 291–2.

¹¹⁵⁴Danker et al., “λοιδορος” (*loidoros*), *BDAG*, 602.

¹¹⁵⁵Silva, “γυνή” (*gynē*), *NIDNTE*, 624.

¹¹⁵⁶Dauids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 123.

¹¹⁵⁷Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 161.

paterfamilias to the family gods.¹¹⁵⁸ Xenophon recalled this statement by Socrates (469–399 BC):

“Heaven is lord of agriculture as much as of war. And in war, I think, you see men propitiating Heaven before setting forth on any warlike enterprise and inquiring there with sacrifices and oracles what they must do and what avoid. And in agriculture, think you there is less necessity to win the favor of Heaven? For, know this well, he added, that good men offer prayer about every kind of produce—about oxen and horses and sheep—yes, about all that they have.”¹¹⁵⁹

Peter alluded to that cultural thought while forbidding domestic violence.¹¹⁶⁰ According to the apostle, access to God is both the goal and the test of a man’s faith.¹¹⁶¹

Read 1 Pet 3:7–9. Why would Peter write this corrective to Greco-Roman Christian husbands? What makes Peter’s threat to men who fail to treat their wives with proper honor and understanding so severe? Compare the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence’s Equality Wheel to the Power and Control Wheel How can you identify a healthy relationship (summary on pp. 47–48)? What constitutes abusive behavior?¹¹⁶²

¹¹⁵⁸Jobes, *1 Peter*, 209.

¹¹⁵⁹Xenophon, *The Economist of Xenophon*, 5.19–20, 34–35, <https://archive.org/details/economistofxenop01xenouoft/page/34>.

¹¹⁶⁰Jobes, *1 Peter*, 209.

¹¹⁶¹Edward G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), 188.

¹¹⁶²<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/EqualitywheelNOSHADING.pdf>; <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/PowerControlwheelNOSHADING.pdf>. Used with the permission of the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence (http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd_about.html).

Marriage throughout Redemptive History

74) How would you summarize what God has done for spousal relationships through the process of creation, sin, exile, and redemption? These are the pertinent sections:

Creation:

Made in the Image of God (Gen 1:26) –

Stewards of the Earth (Gen 1:26 cont.) –

Male and Female He Created Them (Gen 1:27) –

The Blessing of Fruitfulness (Gen 1:28) –

The Lord Breathes Life (Gen 2:7) –

Not Good (Gen 2:18) –

A Parade of Animals (Gen 2:19–20) –

An Equal and Adequate Partner (Gen 2:21–23) –

A Transfer of Loyalty (Gen 2:24) –

Naked and Not Ashamed (Gen 2:25) –

God Evaluates His Creation (Gen 1:31) –

Your summary:

Sin:

Serpents in the Ancient Near East (Gen 3:1) –

A World-Altering Conversation (Gen 3:2–5) –

Their Eyes Are Opened (Gen 3:7) –

A Day of Reckoning (Gen 3:9–13) –

The First Good News (Gen 3:15) –

An Anguishing Process (Gen 3:16) –

A Renewed Covenant (Gen 3:20) –

Eve Acquires a Man (Gen 4:1) –

Two Wives (Gen 4:18–19) –

Lamech’s Ode to Himself (Gen 4:23–24) –

Taking Wives for Themselves (Gen 6:1–2 cont.) –

Limiting Human Life Spans (Gen 6:3) –

Nephilim in the Land (Gen 6:4) –

God Grieves (Gen 6:5–6) –

Your summary:

Covenant:

Slaves and War Brides (Exod 21:10–11 and Deut 21:10–14) –

Exile:

God Hates Violence (Mal 2:13–16)

Redemption:

The Tragedy of Mercilessness (Matt 18:35) –

A New Dawn (Matt 28:1) –

Apostles to the Apostles (Matt 28:5–7) –

A Restoration of Status (Matt 28:10) –

The Spirit Descends (Acts 2:1–3) –

Partners in Ministry (Acts 18:1–3, 18–20, 24–26 and 2 Ki 22:11–23:4) –

Effects of the Fall Reversed (Rom 5:12–21 and Rom 16:1–12)

It is Good Not to Touch 1 Cor 7:1–5) –

Marital Separation (1 Cor 7:10–11) –

Concerning Mixed Marriages (1 Cor 7:12–13) –

Contagious Holiness (1 Cor 7:14) –

Dissolution of Marriage (1 Cor 7:15–16) –

Three Heads (1 Cor 11:3) –

Women Praying and Prophesying (1 Cor 11:4–6 and 1 Cor 14:34–35) –

Having Authority over Her Head (1 Cor 11:7–10) –

Interdependence (1 Cor 11:11–12) –

Falling for Deception (2 Cor 11:2–4) –

An Angel of Light (2 Cor 11:13–15) –

Clothed with Christ (Gal 3:26–27) –

Adopted as Sons (Eph 1:5–6) –

Unity in the Spirit (Eph 5:18–21) –

Submissive to One Another (Eph 5:21–24) –

Sacrificial Love (Eph 5:25–30) –

Obedience in the Lord (Eph 6:1) –

Life-long Honor (Eph 6:2–3) –

Nurturing and Training (Eph 6:4) –

The Cult of Artemis (False Teaching in Ephesus) –

Prayer without Anger (1 Tim 2:8) –

Adorned with Good Works (1 Tim 2:9–10) –

She Must Learn (1 Tim 2:11) –

Domineering Women (1 Tim 2:12–14) –

Saved through Childbearing (1 Tim 2:15) –

A Minority Religion (1 Pet 3:1–2) –

In the Spirit of Sarah (1 Pet 3:3–6) –

Living Together with Understanding (1 Pet 3:7–9) –

Your summary: