



THE ANÁSTASIS CENTER
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & MINISTRY

The Rights of Women in the Bible: The Beauty of God's Restorative Story

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The Anástasis Center for Christian Education and Ministry

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- This is The Rights of Women in the Bible, Part 2
- To read Part 1, please find the link on www.anastasiscenter.org/church-women-leadership
- The full file can also be found at the page above

Outline

- Old Testament: Protections for Women
- New Testament: Protections for Women
- **Old Testament: Opportunities for Women**
 - Could only men be elders, judges, prophets, priests, kings (Ex.16; Dt.17 – 18)?
- New Testament: Opportunities for Women

Old Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Laws: Community
 - Could only men be elders, judges, prophets, priests, kings (Ex.16; Dt.17 – 18)?

Old Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Hebrew is a gendered language, like Spanish
 - In Spanish, 'el' and 'ella' are pronouns for 'him' and 'her.'
 - But 'el' can also mean 'person' generally, without restricting the meaning to men. This is the 'inclusive male tense.'
 - How do you tell whether 'el' refers to 'him' as specifically male or 'that person' generally? Context.
- In this case, what does the rest of Scripture say?

Old Testament: Opportunities for Women: Judge

- Jdg.4:4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was **judging** Israel at that time. ⁵ ...the sons of Israel came up to her for **judgment**. ⁶ Now she...summoned Barak...and said to him, ‘Behold, the LORD...has commanded, ‘Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men... ⁷ I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army...and I will give him into your hand.’



Old Testament: Opportunities for Women: Prophet

- Ex.15:20 Miriam the **prophetess**, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing.



- Jdg.4:4 Now Deborah, a **prophetess**, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

Old Testament: Opportunities for Women: Prophet

- Isa.8:3 So I approached the **prophetess**, and she conceived and gave birth to a son.
- ² Ki.24:14 So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the **prophetess**, the wife of Shallum... and they spoke to her. ¹⁵ She said to them, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel...
- Neh.8:14 Noadiah the **prophetess**



Old Testament: Opportunities for Women

- The Old Testament writers viewed Israel's roles of elder, judge, and prophet as open to women, not just to men.
 - Gordon Hugenberger, "Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey of 1 Timothy 2:8-15." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25 (Summer 1992), p.341 - 360)
- Parallel: Recall the divorce legislation of Deuteronomy 24:1 - 4.
 - Phrased for husbands, but applied to wives
 - Jesus affirmed that view in Mark 10:12

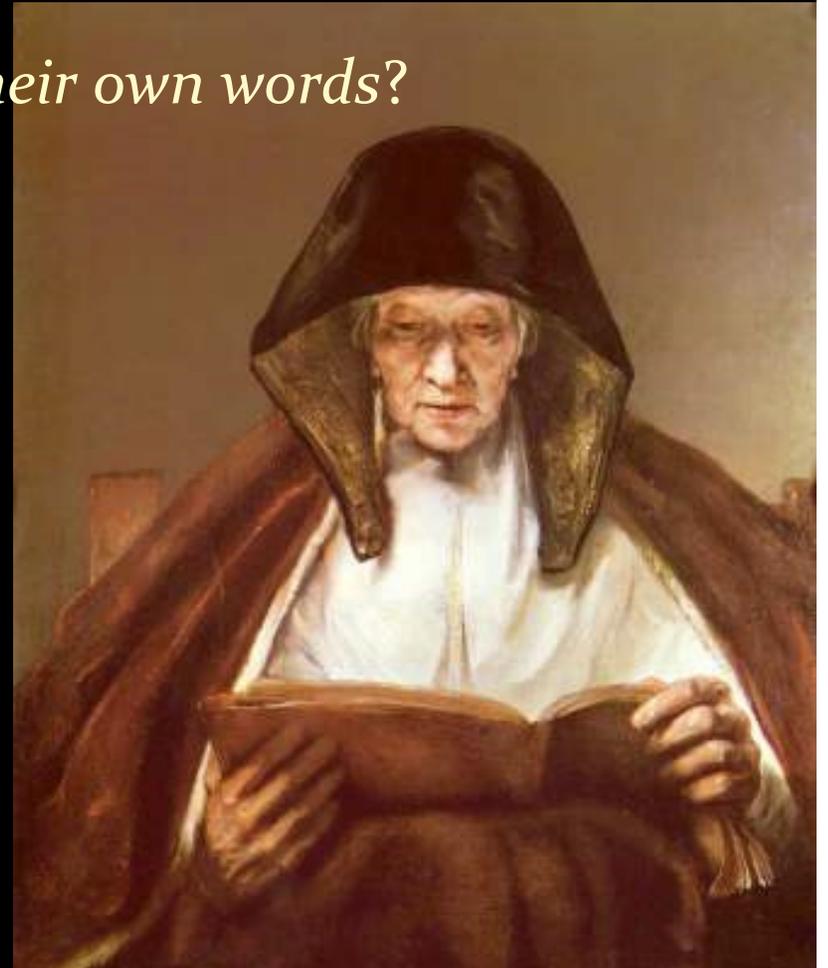
Women Speaking in Israel: As Human Authors of Scripture

- Miriam (Ex.15:20)
- Deborah (Jdg.4 – 5)
- Hannah (1 Sam.2)
- Probably Ruth (book of Ruth)
- King Lemuel's mother (Pr.31)
- Probably Esther (book of Esther)
- Mary (Luke 1)



Women Speaking in Israel: As Human Authors of Scripture

- Women being the human source of Scripture
 - Is fairly decisive
 - How could women *not teach their own words*?



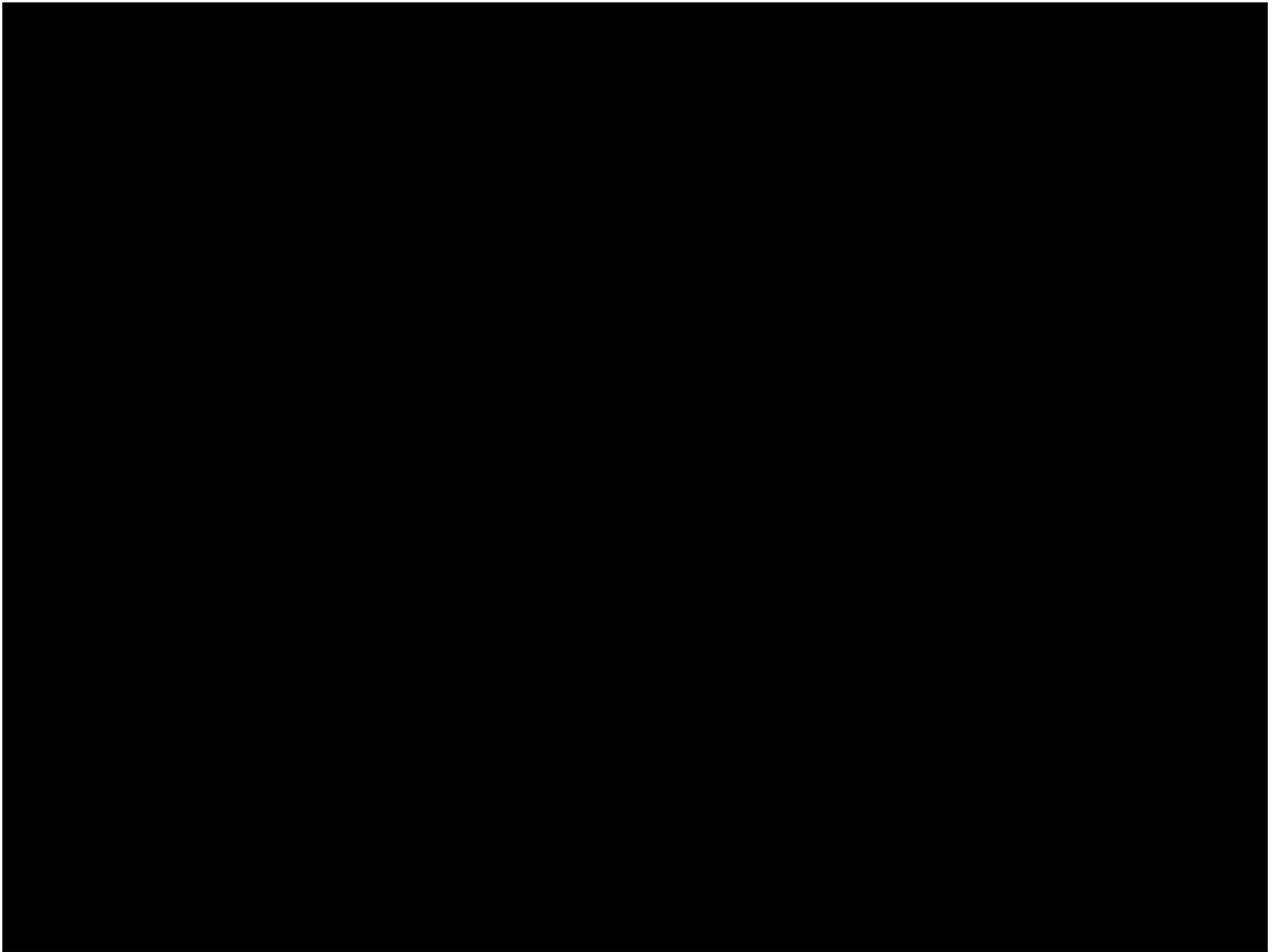
Women Speaking in Israel: In the Restoration of True Humanness

- ²⁸ It will come about after this
That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;
And your sons and **daughters** will prophesy,
Your old men will dream dreams,
Your young men will see visions.
²⁹ Even on the male and **female** servants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days. (Joel 2:28 – 29)
- This passage is quoted by Simon Peter in Acts 2, as programmatic for the church.



Women Speaking in Israel: Priests and Kings?

- Priests and Kings were men
 - Probably out of association with death
 - Priests: animal sacrifice to reenact Moses' role as covenant mediator
 - Kings: war
- Jesus is the final priest and last king
 - Hebrews 7 – 9: “once and for all”
 - Matthew 28:16 – 20: “all authority has been given to me”
- Jesus alone mediates the covenant now
 - We are just witnesses, messengers
 - He returns the people of God to elders (male and female)



Outline

- Old Testament: Protections for Women
- New Testament: Protections for Women
- Old Testament: Opportunities for Women
- **New Testament: Opportunities for Women**
 - **Vocation and Singleness: 1 Corinthians 7**
 - Authority in the Church: 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Timothy

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- 1 Corinthians 7: A 'vocation' of singleness, or increased availability for mission
 - 'But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time has been [compressed], so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none... and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.' (1 Cor.7:28 – 31)
- Singleness → Monasteries → Catholic Orders → Protestant Parachurches → Corporations

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- 1 Corinthians 7: A 'vocation' of singleness, or increased availability for mission
 - Beyond marriage and motherhood
 - Married life is tempered, too (7:29)
 - Paul's context: Augustus' tax on those who do not bear three children, for the Roman army
 - Paul demonstrates no concern for having lots of kids

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- 1 Corinthians 6:19 – 20: Jesus is the primary owner of your body
 - ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- 1 Corinthians 6:19 – 20: Jesus is the primary owner of your body
- Be cautious and reserved about how much authority you give other people over your body
 - Slavery: ‘if you are able also to become free, rather do that... You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.’ (7:21, 23)
 - Repeats: ‘You were bought with a price’ (6:19)
- This became part of the early church argument for manumission and abolition

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- 1 Corinthians 6:19 – 20: Jesus is the primary owner of your body
- Be cautious and reserved about how much authority you give other people over your body
 - Marriage: be single if you can; if you are married, 'be as though you were not' (7:29)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Is 1 Corinthians 6 – 7 normative?
- Yes: Paul was *not* expecting Jesus to come back tomorrow, so we cannot nullify 1 Corinthians 7
 - ‘this present distress’ (7:26) = ?
 - ‘the time has been *compressed*’ (7:29) not ‘shortened’
- Yes: Paul was declaring a permanent principle for practical Christian ethics and personal decision making (6:19 – 20) and confronting slavery and marriage with it (7:1 – 40)

Early Church: 4th century



- Gregory (335 – 395 AD), bishop of Nyssa, honors his sister Macrina the Younger, his mentor, theologian, and founder of a monastic community where slaves and free people were equals, and co-leader of a monastery
 - Gregory's *Life of Macrina* was his biography of her (379 AD)
 - Gregory's *On the Soul and Resurrection* were his dialogues with his sister as she taught him Christian doctrine
 - Macrina was the granddaughter of another Christian female philosopher, Macrina the Elder



Early Church: 4th century

- Melania the Elder (325 – 410 AD)
 - Wealthy widow
 - Founder of a dual (male and female) monastic community on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, in 375 AD
 - Left her young son in Rome to do so, and was *honored for it* in Christian literature (!)
 - Called a ‘Desert Mother’
 - Friend of Jerome, Augustine, Paulinus of Nola
 - Mentor to Evagrius of Pontus



Early Church: 4th century

- ‘The Church firmly rejected, of course, the Roman notion of a permanent stigma attached to women who had once been prostitutes. Because all people were considered sinners who must repent to be saved, prostitutes found themselves in no especially stigmatized category but were accepted, like all other sinners, provided they abandoned their former life. Indeed, several of the female saints of the early Church were former prostitutes. Thus, **the Church's position on prostitution, crystallized by the fourth century,** consisted of these three elements: acceptance of prostitution as an inevitable social fact, condemnation of those profiting from this commerce, and encouragement for the prostitute to repent.’

- Leah Lydia Oates, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, p.13

Early Church: 5th century

- Pulcheria, born 398/9 AD
- Daughter of Emperor Arcadius and Empress Eudoxia
- Became an orphan with her siblings at age 10/11, in 409 AD
- Became guardian of younger brother Theodosius II at age 15/6, in 414
- Became *augusta* in 414
- With her sisters, took a vow of virginity to Christ



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Early Church: 5th century

- “She devoted her virginity to God, and instructed her sisters to do likewise. To avoid cause of scandal and opportunities for intrigue, she permitted no man to enter her palace. In confirmation of her resolution she took God, the priests, and all the subjects of the Roman empire as witnesses... It is said that God frequently in many other cases revealed to the princess what was about to happen, and that the most occurred to her and her sisters as witnesses of the Divine love. They all pursue the same mode of life; they are sedulous about the priests and the houses of prayer, and are munificent to needy strangers and the poor. These sisters generally take their meals and walks together, and pass their days and their nights in company, singing the praises of God.” *Sozomen, Church History*

book 9



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Early Church: 5th century

- Influenced the Third Ecumenical Council, Ephesus 431
- Probably became sole emperor for a short time when Theodosius II died in 450
- Married Marcian in 450, thus providing continuity, while keeping vow of chastity
- Influenced the Fourth Ecumenical Council, Chalcedon 451
- Died in 453, giving all her remaining wealth to the poor



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New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Authority in the church: 1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16



1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16

^{11:2} Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

church practice

³ But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

⁴ Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.

men: covered disgraces

⁵ But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.

women: uncovered disgraces

women: shaved head is disgraceful

⁶ For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.

⁷ For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

men: head not covered

⁸ For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man;

origin: man not from woman
woman from man

⁹ for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

creation
dependence

¹⁰ Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

authority of women

¹¹ However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

new creation in the Lord
dependence

¹² For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.

origin: woman from man
man birthed from woman

¹³ Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

women: head covered

¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,

men: long hair is dishonor,

¹⁵ but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her?

women: long hair is glory

women: hair is a covering

For her hair is given to her for a covering.

¹⁶ But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.

church practice

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- A: All churches do this
- B: Heads: Men uncover; women cover
- C: Women reveal who Humanity is
- D: Respect where you come from: Eve from Adam
- E: Gender interdependence in creation
- F: Women wear a sign of authority on their heads
- E': Gender interdependence 'in the Lord'
- D': Respect where you come from: man from mother
- C': Women wear a hair covering
- B': Heads: Men uncover; women cover with hair
- A': All churches do this

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Head (*kephale*) – body (*soma*) relation
 - Authority?
 - Source?
 - Both?
 - Something else?

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Why was this coming up?
 - Roman law required:
 - Honored women: *stola* and *palla*
 - Prostitutes, adulteresses: male *toga*; braided, uncovered hair
 - How should ex-prostitutes gifted to preach dress?
 - Is she appearing like a man? Does that break Jewish law?
 - Is she sexually signaling?
 - Should we break Roman law to honor a Christian woman preacher? And not signal low status or sexuality?

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Paul's Answer: A and A'
 - Every church was taught this tradition, and keeps it (11:2 - 3, 16)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Paul's Answer: B and B'
 - Head coverings: Men uncovered; Women covered
 - Long hair: Men no; Women yes, and is covering enough
- Argument respecting cultural context:
 - 'Nature' (*physis*) as a term is relational, used for a situational contrast
 - Hairstyles for men and women are different

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Paul's Answer: C and C'
 - Men uncover their heads because they are the image and glory (revealing) of God; women are the glory (revealing) of man
 - Women cover their heads

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Paul's Answer: D and D'
 - Woman originates from man, like Eve from Adam (11:8)
 - Man originates from woman, like son from mother (11:12)
- 'You gotta respect where you come from'
 - Women listening to a male preacher: think of Eve honoring Adam as source
 - Men listening to a female preacher: think of your mother, honoring her as source
 - 'Hear, my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching' (Prov.1:8)
 - Even if she is your wife, daughter, or from lower class of honor
 - Lust, disrespect are your problems, men (Mt.5:27 – 30)
 - Men don't lust after or disrespect their mothers

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Paul's Answer: E and E'
 - Dependence (11:9): In creation, woman created for the man's sake (as partner in procreation and gardening)
 - Dependence (11:11): 'In the Lord,' restoration, mutual interdependence (as partners in the new creation)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Paul's Answer: F
 - Women wear a sign of authority on their heads (11:10)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- A: All churches do this
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- E: Gender interdependence in creation
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- C': Women wear a hair covering
- B': Heads: Men uncover; women cover with hair
- A': All churches do this

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Long hair is sufficient (11:15) because women can 'pray and prophesy,' with 'authority on their heads' as hair
 - God did not create Eve with a hat or headscarf
 - God intended clothes and covering in creation for purposes of honoring
- Gordon D. Fee did not perceive the chiastic structure
 - Fee read 11:4 – 6 and 11:14 – 15 as contradictory, not as a development in thought
 - Fee believed Paul's point or thought process was beyond our ability to recover

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- No inherent 'conflict of position'
 - Wives may preach even to their husbands in the congregation
 - Daughters may preach to their fathers(!)
 - Formerly disgraced women to honorable men and women
 - See my notes <http://anastasiscenter.org/bible-messiah-paul-corinthians>, "Men and Women in Worship"

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Jesus has authority, is the head of the body
 - Men and women do not have authority per se, in their persons
 - Men and women only **manifest** Jesus' authority **when** they speak Jesus' words, repeat his teaching
 - Jesus' word has the authority
 - The head-body relationship of preacher-congregation leads to shared authority insofar as Jesus' word is centered

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- What about 1 Corinthians 14:34?
 - “The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.”
 - Quoting them sarcastically, to refute them, just like:
 - 1 Cor. 4:18; 6:12 – 13; 7:1; 8:1
 - Paul overturns ‘Greek wisdom’ throughout 1 Corinthians
 - When he quotes a real OT passage, he says, ‘it is written’ (1:19, 31; 2:9; 3:19 – 20; 9:9; 10:7; 14:21; 15:45, 54)
 - There is no place in ‘the *Jewish Law*’ that says this
 - Most likely, the *Roman law*
 - See my notes <http://anastasiscenter.org/bible-messiah-paul-corinthians>, “Women and Speech in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14”

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- ‘Head’ (*kephale*) had too many variations of meaning in ordinary Greek usage, including in the LXX, so:
 - Jesus and the apostles appear to have defined ‘head’ according to how they established it in Christian worship, where women preached and prayed, exercising ‘headship’ with men on a rotating basis (1 Cor.11:2 – 16)
- The challenge to Protestants:
 - Scripture does not come ‘before’ the Church
 - On this occasion, interpretation of Scripture requires Church practice and context
 - Context, context: ‘I’m mad about my flat’
- The challenge to Orthodox and Catholics:
 - Did not preserve the worship liturgy perfectly

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Embodying this thread of meaning of *kephale*
 - Head (*kephale*) – body (*soma*) relations cascade
 - Source of God's words for shared authority:
 - God → Adam → Eve
 - 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.' (Gen.2:16 – 17)
- Adam/Eve (in oneness, Gen.1:27) → their descendants
 - 'Hear, my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake **your mother's teaching**' (Prov.1:8)
 - 'Be fruitful and multiply...' (Gen.1:28) and 'have dominion' (Gen.1:29)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Embodying this thread of meaning of *kephale*
 - Head is the 'organ' or 'body part' of speech
 - 'Head' refers to the person who speaks or supplies God's words
 - God spoke things into being, and worked by speaking through men and women who then became 'prophets' to God's people (Am.3:7) or teachers, etc.

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Embodying this thread of meaning of *kephale*
 - God to Moses to Aaron

‘Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be *as God to him*’
(Ex.4:16)

- God was a ‘head’ (speaker of words) to Moses
- Moses was a ‘head’ (speaker of words) to Aaron
- Compare ‘God is the head of Christ’ in 1 Cor.11:2 – 3

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Embodying this thread of meaning of *kephale*
 - God to leaders to people

‘Now hear this, *heads* of the house of Jacob
And rulers of the house of Israel,
Who abhor justice
And twist everything that is straight...
Her leaders *pronounce* judgment for a bribe;
Her priests *instruct* for a price;
And her prophets *divine* for money.’ (Mic.3:9 – 11)

- The ‘heads’ were to speak God’s words to the people:
pronounce judgements, instruct, and prophecy
- Compare ‘God is the head of Christ’ in 1 Cor.11:2 – 3

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Who can serve as a 'head' (11:2 – 16) to the 'body' (11:17 – 14:40)?
 - Both men and women, gifted and knowledgeable in Jesus' teaching
 - Shared preaching reflects how Jesus actually trained many disciples/apostles, including:
 - Mary of Nazareth
 - Samaritan woman
 - Mary of Bethany
 - Women who proclaimed the resurrection
 - God is restoring His 'creation order', but with men looking at women preachers as 'mother,' not 'wife' or 'potential partner' or 'daughter' or 'dishonored'
 - Joel 2:28 – 29 in Acts 2

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- The 'head-body' relationship in church preaching establishes the normative meaning of 'head' in a Christian context because the 'head'
 - Does not have permanent authority in his/her person
 - Does not have authority over the congregation in every regard, like where you should buy your groceries or even whether you should get married (1 Cor.7:25)
 - Shares preaching authority with others, because Jesus trained many disciples
 - Manifests, while preaching, the 'head-body' union of Christ with the church (1 Cor.11:2 – 16)
 - Is authoritative because Jesus' teaching is

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- The 'head-body' relationship in marriage (Eph.5:21 – 33) does not create a conflict of authority when women are in church leadership
 - Daughters can preach to fathers, wives to husbands
 - Single women to married men
- Paul *applies* the 'head-body' relationship in marriage (Eph.5:21 – 33) to unity and service
 - Christ 'the head' spoke to his church 'the body' to bring about a union and unity (Eph.5:25 – 33)
 - The husband needs to not distance or blame
- Note: Women can be 'masters' of male 'servants' without a gender conflict (Eph.6:5 – 9; 1 Tim.5 – 6)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Simply put, we need to read 1 Corinthians before we read Ephesians
 - Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus, so the Ephesians must have known the content of 1 Corinthians
 - 1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16 was practiced in every church, Paul said, *including Ephesus*
 - Jesus challenges and reshapes ‘social hierarchy’ by 1 Corinthians, *and in Ephesians*
- Turning Ephesians into ‘Jesus reinforces social hierarchy’ makes 1 Corinthians unworkable on both marriage and slavery

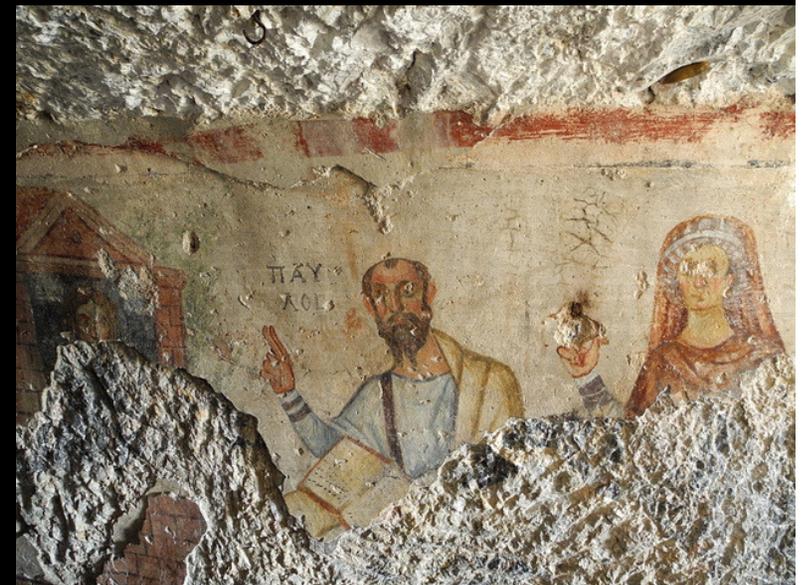
Early Church: 2nd century

- The Acts of Paul and Thecla
 - Known before 190 A.D.
 - ‘Go and teach the word of the Lord,’ so ‘she went to Seleucia and enlightened many in the knowledge of Christ...certain gentlewomen heard of the virgin Thecla and went to her to be instructed in the oracles of God’ (ch.10)
- An extremely popular work, read in many places, endorsing a woman teacher

Statue of St. Thecla in Syria



Fresco of Paul and Thecla in Ephesus



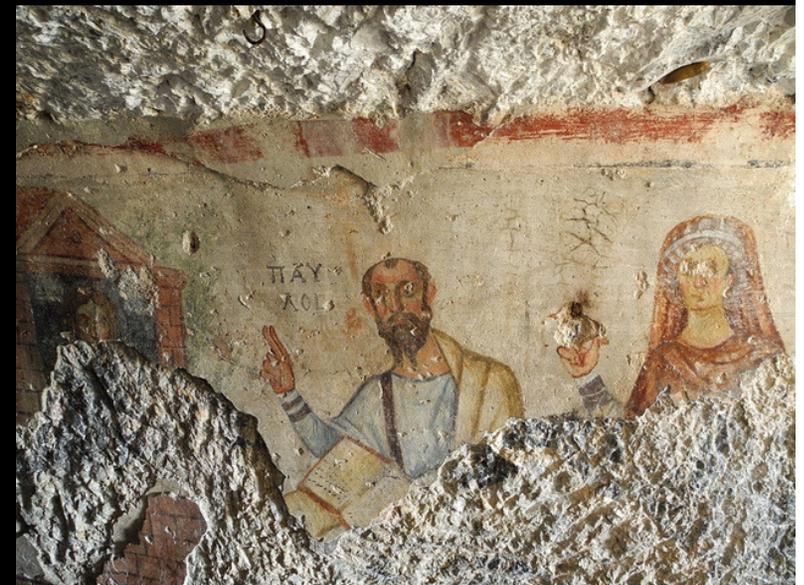
Early Church: 2nd century

- The Acts of Paul and Thecla
 - Around 200 AD, Tertullian of Carthage, *On Baptism* 17, complains that ‘the example of Thecla’ is used by those who ‘defend the liberty of women to teach and to baptize.’

Statue of St. Thecla in Syria

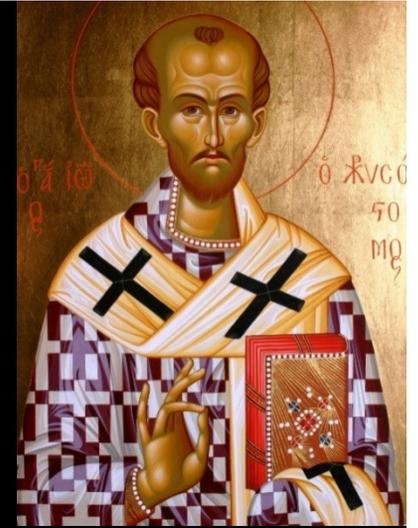


Fresco of Paul and Thecla in Ephesus



New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- John Chrysostom (c.349 – 407 AD)
 - Priest in Antioch (386 – 397), Archbishop of Constantinople (397 – 407), one of the three holy hierarchs and fathers of the Eastern church



‘Their women used both to pray and prophesy unveiled and with their head bare, (**for then women also used to prophesy**) but the men went so far as to wear long hair as having spent their time in philosophy...’

John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, Homily 26 on 11:2 – 16

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

The chiastic structure of 1 Timothy

- A. Fight the Good Fight (1:1 – 1:20)
- B. Christian Household & Witness, Part 1 (2:1 – 15)
- C. Church Leaders: Elders & Deacons (3:1 – 13)
- D. The Truth at the Heart of the Church (3:14 – 5:2)
- C'. Church Leaders: Older & Younger Widows (5:3 – 25)
- B'. Christian Household & Witness, Part 2 (6:1 – 11)
- A'. Fight the Good Fight (6:12 – 21)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

D. The Truth at the Heart of the Church (3:14 – 5:2)

- Genesis Creation Order: Pro-marriage, pro-eating
 - He refers to 'men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth' (1 Tim.4:3)
- Paul is concerned about a Hellenistic denial of Jewish-Christian creation theology
- God is restorative, so God's original vision needs to be remembered

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

C. Church Leaders: Elders & Deacons (3:1 – 13) and

C'. Church Leaders: Older & Younger Widows (5:3 – 25)

- Older widows (5:3 – 10) were heads of household in house churches and are therefore a subset of the 'elders' who 'work hard at preaching and teaching' (5:17 – 18)
- Wives typically 8 – 10 years younger than husbands
- Note: Women were 'masters' of 'slaves' without gender conflict (6:1 – 11)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- The gender of 'elders' and 'deacons' in 3:1 – 13 is actually 'anyone,' which is inclusive of men and women based on the Greek pronoun *tis* in 3:1 and 3:5
- The other conjugated verbs do not have a pronoun, and therefore have to take the most recent pronoun subject, which is 'anyone'
- 'He' and 'his' in 3:1 – 7 are really inferences of the translator
- The phrase 'one-wife husband' is acknowledged by complementarians Douglas J. Moo and Thomas Schreiner to mean 'monogamous'

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

B. Christian Household & Witness, Part 1 (2:1 – 15) and
B.' Christian Household & Witness, Part 2 (6:1 – 11)

- It is quite reasonable to think that some in Ephesus promoted the idea of 'celibate marriages' with the Stoic inclination popular at the time – perhaps especially the wives addressed in 2:11 – 15
- Stoicism was culturally dominant, esp. Roman army

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

NASB 1 Timothy 2:12 – 15

- 1 Tim.2:12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. 13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. 14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- What about 1 Corinthians 11:2 – 16, where Paul wants women (dressed as women) to pray and prophecy to all?
- Does 'gyne' = 'woman' or 'wife' here?
- The word 'authentein' (not 'exousia')
 - is translated 'exercise authority over' without exception by NASB; yet
 - has to do with power or domination ('to overpower,' 'to dominate') in all known extrabiblical instances of 'authent-' prior to the second century AD (usage contemporaneous with or prior to Paul)
 - Including the two occurrences in the LXX
 - Wisdom of Solomon 12:5 – 6
 - 3 Maccabees 2:28 – 29)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- 2:12 But I do not allow a *'wife'* to *'lead a husband into error'*, but to remain quiet. 13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. 14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. [*implied: And she easily led Adam into knowing rebellion against God*] 15 But *'she'* [i.e. Eve] will be saved through *'the Childbearing'* *'when and if'* they [i.e. the wives referred to in 2:9] continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.
 - See Marg Mowczko, Gordon Hugenberger, Gordon Fee, Douglas Moo, Gilbert Bilezikian, Ann Bowman, Aida Besancon Spencer

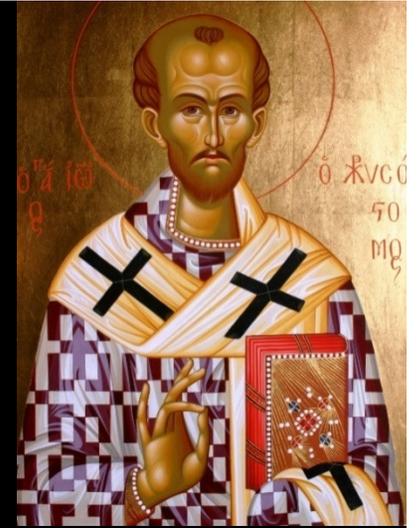
New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130 – 202 AD), on the question of why the serpent targeted Eve:

‘Why also did it not prefer to make its attack upon the man instead of the woman? And if you say that it attacked her as being the weaker of the two, [I reply that], on the contrary, **she was the stronger**... For she did by herself alone resist the serpent, and it was after holding out for a while and making opposition that she ate of the tree, being circumvented by craft; whereas Adam, making no fight whatever, nor refusal, partook of the fruit handed to him by the woman, which is an indication of the utmost imbecility’ (*Fragment 14*)

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- John Chrysostom (c.349 – 407 AD), on the question of Eve being subordinate to Adam from creation



‘Wherefore you see, she was **not subjected** as soon as she was made; **nor, when He brought her to the man, did either she hear any such thing from God, nor did the man say any such word to her:** he said indeed that she was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh’

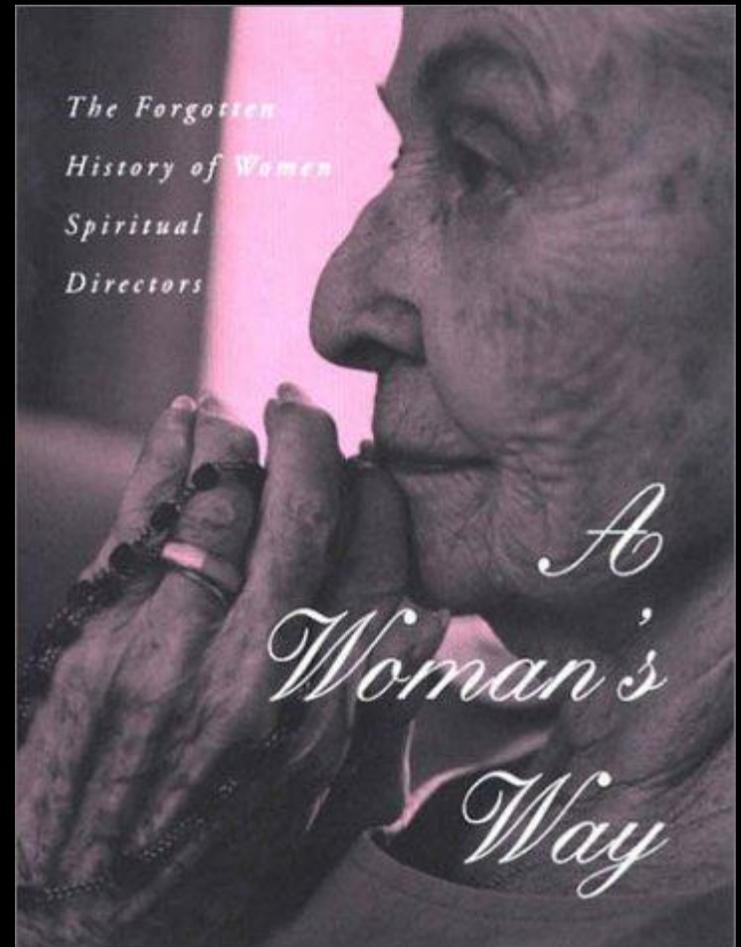
John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, Homily 26 on 11:2 – 16

New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- For more info, see: “The Implications of the Chiastic Structure of 1 Timothy on the Question of Women in Church Leadership”
- <https://www.anastasiscenter.org/bible-messiah-paul-pastorals>

Early Church

- ‘The premise that women are men’s spiritual equals is accepted and endorsed in all early Christian sources without exception.’
 - Patricia Ranft, *A Woman’s Way: The Forgotten History of Women Spiritual Directors*, p.26.



Early Church: 1st century

- Priscilla in the Catacombs of Priscilla, Rome



Early Church: 2nd – 3rd centuries

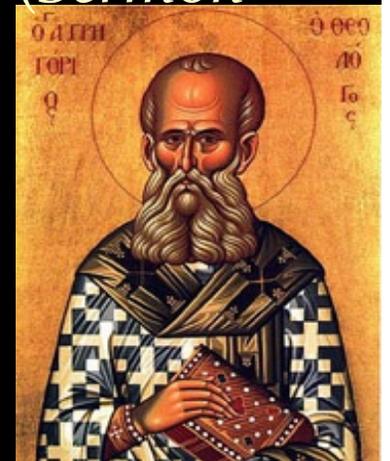
- Opponents of Christianity said the Christians were 'led by women'
 - Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.55
 - cf. Margaret Y. MacDonald, 'Was Celsus Right? The Role of Women in Early Christianity', edited by David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek, *Early Christian Families in Context*, p.157 – 158

Early Church: 4th century

- Council of Laodicea (360 AD), Canon 11
 - 'Why

Early Church: 4th century

- Gregory of Nazianzus (c.329 – 390), archbishop of Constantinople, condemned laws made by men for men:
 - ‘Why did they punish the woman but considered the man innocent? The wife is considered sinful while the unfaithful man does not suffer. I don’t accept this legislation. I don’t accept this tradition. Men are legislators and all the laws are against women.’ (*Sermon 38*).



Early Church: 9th century

- ‘Theodora Episcopa’ = Bishopess Theodora
 - Church of Saint Prasseda, Rome
 - Built by Pope Pascal I towards the end of the 9th century to honor four holy women, including his mother

