




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

Is Gender a Good Reason?

Sections 

The Washington Post



Sign In

Acts of Faith

God might not want a woman to be president, some religious conservatives say

By Julie Zauzmer July 20 



Most Read

1 Leave it to a Canadian ad campaign to deliver the most inspiring message of this U.S. election



2 U.S. police chiefs group apologizes for 'historical mistreatment' of minorities



3 The 20 stations Metro could close during off-peak hours to save money are mostly in communities of color



4 Want college to pay off? These are the 50 majors with the highest earnings.



A Male-Dominated Field?



Outline

- Old Testament: Protections for Women
- New Testament: Protections for Women
- Old Testament: Opportunities for Women
- New Testament: Opportunities for Women

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- *Cohen v. State of Israel* (1981)
 - Mr. & Mrs. Cohen were separated; he violently attacked her and forced her to have sex with him against her will
 - After their divorce, she accused him of rape retroactively
 - He appealed his conviction on the principle that a man cannot be guilty of raping his wife
- Judge David Belchor noted the position of English law at the time
 - English law influenced the State of Israel before 1948

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- England:
 - In the 1980's and 90's, three cases dealt with the crime of indecent assault within marriage.
 - 'Yes' at the altar meant 'yes' ever after, even if the husband later contracted a venereal disease
 - Additionally:
 - *R v. Caswell* (1984): A married woman's consent to sexual intercourse covered all acts preliminary to that intercourse
 - *R v. H* (1990): The marital rape exemption applied even to an estranged couple

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- United States:
 - ‘Despite vast differences between the fifty states..., until the late 1970’s they all shared this in common: a man was legally entitled to rape his wife.’
 - ‘A husband cannot be guilty of raping his wife unless he forces her to have sexual intercourse with a third person. Immunity shields the husband even though all the other elements of the offense are present – force, penetration, and lack of consent. He is immune from a rape charge in most states, however violent the force he uses and however long he and his wife have been living apart...For instance, a wife whose husband comes home drunk every night and violently forces sex on her...is not protected by the rape laws of forty-six states.’
 - *New York University Law Review* 52 (1977): 306 – 323

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- Israel:
 - *Cohen v. State of Israel* (1981): ‘Judge Belchor stated that he was ‘delighted’ not to have to follow English law on this issue because that would involve endorsing the marital rape exemption.’
- Judge Belchor concluded:
 - ‘The people of Israel can take pride in the progressive and liberal approach of **their blessed heritage and the position of Jewish law on this matter from time immemorial.**’

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- Israel:
 - *Cohen v. State of Israel* (1981): ‘Judge Belchor stated that he was ‘delighted’ not to have to follow English law on this issue because that would involve endorsing the marital rape exemption.’
- Judge Belchor concluded:
 - ‘The people of Israel can take pride in the progressive and liberal approach of **their blessed heritage and the position of Jewish law on this matter from time immemorial.**’
- Really? Why has Jewish law always held this?

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- What is Jewish Law? Sources?
 - The Bible
 - Considered divine revelation
 - Final organization ~450 BCE and 70 CE
 - The Talmud
 - The 'oral law' of the Torah (*Mishnah*, compiled 200 CE)
 - Further commentary (*Gemara*, compiled 500 CE)
 - Commentaries and codifications

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- What is Jewish Law? Sources?
 - The Bible
 - ‘In the image of God He created him, male and female He created them’ (Gen.1:27)
 - ‘He may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights’ (Ex.21:10)
 - ‘When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken.’ (Dt.24:5)

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- What is Jewish Law? Sources?
 - The Talmud
 - ‘A man is forbidden to compel his wife to have intercourse with him.’ (*Talmud Eirubin* 100b)
 - ‘This Talmudic ruling appears in all the major codifications of Jewish law’ (Goldstein, *Defending the Human Spirit*, 2006, p.170; cf. Rambam, *Hilchot Ishut* 15:17; Tur and Code of Jewish Law, *Orach Chaim* 240:3; *Even HaEzer* 25:2)

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- What is Jewish Law? Sources?
 - Commentaries and codifications
 - ‘He may not rape her by having intercourse with her against her will, but rather, he must do it with her consent and in an atmosphere of open communication and joy.’ (Rambam, 1135 – 1204, *Hilchot Ishut* 15:17)
 - ‘If she finds her husband repulsive, she is freed from her conjugal duties.’ (Rambam, *Hilchot Ishut* 14:8, quoted by Warren Goldstein, 2006, p.172)
 - ‘Certainly she is not subject to him incessantly when she does not wish it...’ (*Responsa Maharit* 1:5)
 - ‘Even those who would permit [unconventional sexual intercourse] do so only when the woman is willing, but if a husband forces it upon the woman he is called a sinner’ (*Responsa Yaskil Avdi* 6:25)

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- What is Jewish Law? Sources?
 - Commentaries and codifications
 - ‘The vulnerability principle is the most influential one when it comes to Jewish law’s outlawing of rape in marriage.’ (Goldstein 2006, p.176)
 - ‘A woman’s conjugal duty is limited to having intercourse at certain regular intervals [‘determined with reference to, on the one hand, the wife’s needs and, on the other hand, the husband’s capacity’ (p.186)]...She is not required at all to ensure that her husband is sexually satisfied. He is responsible to guarantee to the best of his ability that his wife never feels unfulfilled sexual desire, which means that according to Jewish law a man must with great sensitivity constantly attune himself to his wife’s sexual needs...The reason is that fulfilling her desires constitutes a Biblical commandment, whereas fulfilling his does not.’ (Goldstein 2006, p.184 – 9)

Example: Does Rape Exist in Marriage?

- What is Jewish Law? Sources?
 - Commentaries and codifications
 - ‘According to Jewish law, sexual satisfaction is primarily the husband’s duty and the wife’s right. Married women need legal protection to ensure that their husbands treat them sensitively in the potentially volatile area of sexual relations. Men do not need to be protected; they need to be restrained and educated to think of their wives and not to view them as their sex objects.’ (Goldstein 2006, p.190)



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- Old Testament: Protections for Women
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 - Creation
 - 'Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob'?
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- Old Testament: Opportunities for Women
- New Testament: Opportunities for Women

How to Read Biblical Narrative

- Grasp the story, and its literary conventions
- Understand the interactions



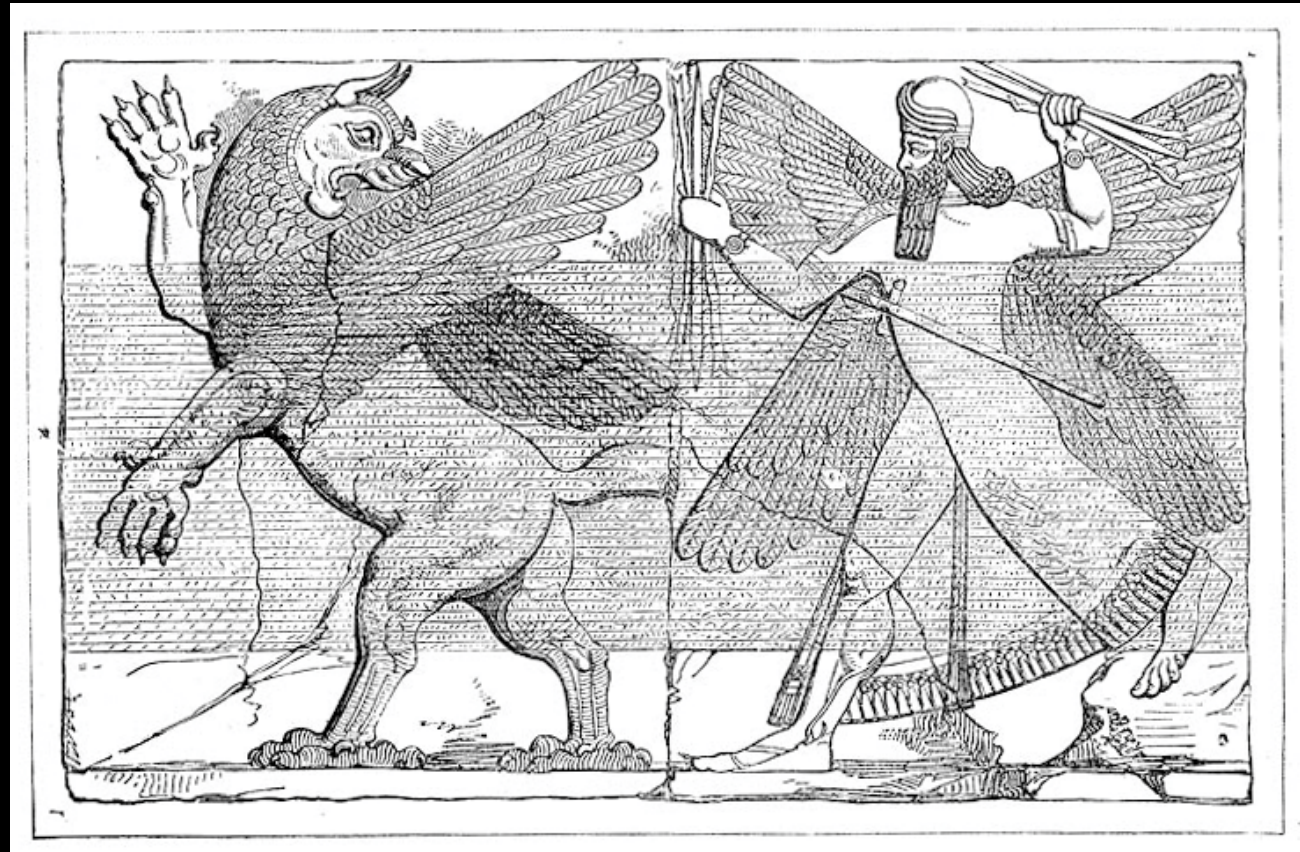
How to Read Biblical Narrative In Creation: Male and Female

- In Greek myth, Pandora was created by the gods to plague men with mischief and trouble, to punish them for receiving fire from Prometheus



How to Read Biblical Narrative In Creation: Male and Female

- In Babylonian myth, Tiamat was the first female being, a dragon goddess slain by the male god Marduk



How to Read Biblical Narrative In Creation: Male and Female

- Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 (introduction to Genesis)
 - Creation gets better and better
 - God made humanity both male and female (not just human kings) in the image of God
 - God's plan for us being image-bearers involves marriage and childbearing
- Genesis 2:4 – 4:26 (first of ten genealogies in Genesis)
 - Creation gets better and better
 - Man, Woman, Marriage (2:4 – 25)
 - Every new couple retells the creation story



How to Read Biblical Narrative In Creation: Male and Female

- In traditional cultures, the wife becomes the lowest ranking member of her husband's family and has little to no standing – true patriarchy
- Genesis 2:24
 - 'A man will leave his father and mother'
 - Each married couple enters society equal with all the other households
 - Who wrote Genesis 1 & 2? Humans alone?



How to Read Biblical Narrative In Creation: Male and Female

- Sociologically, for women to have leadership roles in society, the power of *the extended family* must be limited and checked
- Genesis 4 as ‘The Fall, Continued’
 - Cain further corrupted himself
 - Cain damaged his relationship with the land
 - Cain wanted to defy God and not wander
 - Cain built a city and named it after his son, Enoch
 - Cain forced his son to stay and farm
 - Cain prevented his son from ‘leaving’
 - Dominance of older over the younger
 - Polygamy started in Cain’s line



How to Read Biblical Narrative In Creation: God Fashioned Eve

- God 'formed' Adam as the potter 'formed' clay (Isa.29:16; Jer.18:4)
- God 'fashioned' Eve as Israel's builders 'fashioned' the temple (1 Ki.5:3, 5, 18)

How to Read Biblical Narrative

In Creation: Eve and God as 'Helper'

- Twice, Eve is said to be a 'helper' (*ezer*, in Gen.2:18, 20)
- Sixteen times, God is said to 'help' or be 'a helper' (Ex.18:4; Dt.33:7, 26; Ps.20:2; 33:20; 70:5; 89:17; 115:9 – 11; 121:1 – 2; 124:8; 146:5; Hos.13:9) as a military ally or deliverer
- Three times, people provide, or fail to provide, 'help' as in life-saving and/or military assistance (Isa.30:5; Ezk.12:14; Dan.11:34)

How to Read Biblical Narrative In Creation: Eve and God as 'Helper'

- What *ezer* does not mean
 - 'Helper' in a diminished sense
 - As if Eve were the inferior to Adam, or
 - As if Adam 'delegated' tasks to Eve and parsed roles with her
- God created Eve in order to save Adam from perishing on his own, a condition which God says jarringly was 'not good,' so that Adam might live and flourish
 - The context requires a robust understanding of the creational blessing and mission God eventually gave humanity (Gen.1:26 – 28) to spread the garden over the earth, down the riverways (Gen.2:10 – 14).

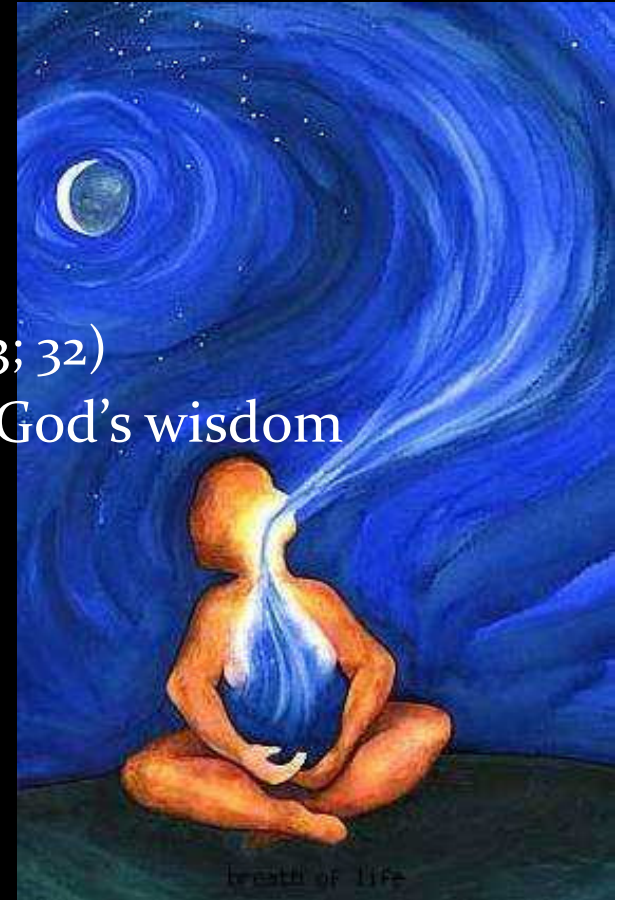
How to Read Biblical Narrative In Creation: Eve 'Against' Adam

- The Hebrew is 'a helper against you' (Gen.2:18) – implies a potential opposition between wife and husband, which was interpreted by rabbis as a realistic view of marriage!
- *Genesis Rabbah* 17.2 – 3 explains this 'opposition' by making it a range: 'if he is fortunate, she is a help; if not, she is against him.'
 - *Genesis Rabbah* is a commentary on the Hebrew text compiled in writing between 300 – 500 AD
- The Greek Septuagint translation blunts the Hebrew text: βοηθὸν κατ' αὐτόν means 'helper corresponding to him' or 'helper suitable for him.'

How to Read Biblical Narrative In Creation: Male and Female

‘Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and
Do not forsake **your mother’s teaching**’ (Prov.1:8)

- God’s wisdom
 - Is from creation
 - Is sown into creation
 - Guides creation into fulfillment (Prov.8:22 – 23; 32)
 - Both men and women were to internalize God’s wisdom and bear it into the creation



The Hindu Tradition



- ‘Men may be lacking virtue, be sexual perverts, immoral and devoid of any good qualities, and yet women must constantly worship and serve their husbands.’
 - Hindu Manusmriti 5.157
- ‘Women have no divine right to perform any religious ritual, nor make vows or observe a fast. Her only duty is to obey and please her husband and she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven.’
 - Hindu Manusmriti 5.158



The Islamic Tradition

- ‘If a man calls his wife to his bed and she refuses, and he spends the night angry with her, the angels will curse her until morning.’
 - Hadith al-Bukhaari, 2998, 4795; cf. Hadith Sunan Abu Dawd 2159 and Qur’an 2:223
- ‘It is not permissible for her to rebel against him or to withhold herself from him, rather if she refuses him and persists in doing so, he may hit her in a manner that does not cause injury.’
 - Majmoo’ al-Fataawa, 32/279



The Islamic Tradition

- ‘No woman can fulfill her duty towards Allah until she fulfills her duty towards her husband. If he asks her (for intimacy) even if she is on her camel saddle, she should not refuse.’
 - Sunan Ibn Majah 1853
- ‘When a man calls his wife to fulfill his need, then let her come, even if she is at the oven.’
 - Jami at-Tirmidhi 1160



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How to Read Biblical Narrative In Redemption: Male and Female

- Abraham and Sarah: Adam and Eve version 3.0
- God restoring His image in all people
- God's process shows His purpose and original plan
 - True humanity in a garden land
 - Bear more life through the union of loving marriages
 - 'the seed of the *woman*' (Gen.3:14 – 15)



How to Read Biblical Narrative

The Story of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar

- A. God calls Abram to trust His word, leave his homeland, gives promise of seed (11:27 – 12:3)
- B. **Abram builds an altar, calls on the name of the Lord (12:4 – 9)**
- C. Abram and Sarai sojourn in Egypt, Abram lies about Sarai but God protects Sarai (12:10 – 20); separation of Lot (13:1 – 13); God's blessing of land and many descendants (13:14 – 18)
- D. **Abram wars on Sodom and Gomorrah, rescues Lot (14:1 – 24)**
- E. God prevents Abram from naming Eliezer as his heir, again promises Abram seed despite Abram's old age (15:1 – 6); God promises birth of Israel from a hopeless situation: bondage (15:7 – 21)
- F. **Sarai and Hagar: Sarai relies on herself and fails (16:1 – 6); God hears Hagar and promises blessing on Ishmael (16:7 – 16)**
- G. **God's five speeches: (1) children, (2) Abram to Abraham, (3) circumcision, (2') Sarai to Sarah, (1') Ishmael (17:1 – 27)**
- F'. **God again promises Sarah seed despite her old age; Sarah laughs, believes (18:1 – 15)**
- E'. God invites Abraham to pray for the righteous of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:16 – 33) God implicitly promises to deliver 'the righteous' out of them
- D'. **God wars on Sodom and Gomorrah, rescues Lot (19:1 – 38)**
- C'. Abraham and Sarah sojourn in Gerar, Abraham lies about Sarah but God protects Sarah (20:1 – 18); Isaac's birth(21:1 – 7), separation of Ishmael; God's blessing on Ishmael of land and many descendants (21:8 – 21)
- B'. **Abraham plants a tree and calls on the name of the Lord (21:22 – 34)**
- A'. God calls Abraham to trust His word, sacrifice his son, gives blessing on the seed (22:1 – 19)

How to Read Biblical Narrative

The Legitimate Wife and Heir

Hagar = Abraham = Sarah



Ishmael

Isaac

Eliezer

How to Read Biblical Narrative

The Legitimate Wife and Heir

- God affirms His original creation order:
 - God works through the rightful wife: Sarah
 - God limits male power; God cuts off:
 - Abraham's ability to hide his wife (Gen.12:10 – 20)
 - His power to name an heir outside his bloodline (Gen.15:1 – 6)
 - His ability to father a child without Sarah (Gen.16:1 – 16)
 - Part of Abraham's penis! (Gen.17:1 – 27) **Any clearer?**

How to Read Biblical Narrative

The Legitimate Wife and Heir

Abraham

- God gives blessing (12:1 – 3)
- Child from your body (15:1 – 6)
- God redeems his sin (12:10 – 20)
- God renames him (17:5)
- Abraham laughs (17:17)

Sarah

- God promises blessing (12:1 – 3)
 - Child from your body (17:16)
 - God redeems her sin (16:1 – 15)
 - God renames her (17:15)
 - Sarah laughs (18:11)
-
- God wanted Sarah's faith, not just her body (Gen.18:1 – 15; Rom.4:16 – 25; Heb.11:11)
 - ^{21:1} Then the LORD took note of **Sarah** as He had said, and **the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised** (Genesis 18:9 – 15; 21:1ff.)

How to Read Biblical Narrative

The Stellar Woman

Isaac = Rebekah

How to Read Biblical Narrative

The Stellar Woman

- Rebekah: A Restoration of Eve (Gen.24)
 - ‘God of heaven and earth’ (24:3)
 - ‘Heaven and earth’ (1:1)
 - Rebekah speaks seven times (24:18, 19, 24, 25, 30, 58, 65), showing hospitality, faith, courage
 - Seven days of creation
 - Eliezer speaks ten times, comes with ten camels, bracelets weighing ten shekels; Laban and Bethuel bless Rebekah to be mother of ten thousands
 - God spoke ten times in creation; ‘be fruitful and multiply’
 - Rebekah was by a well, met Isaac by another well
 - Well of water in Eden (Gen.2:10 – 14); marriage by water
 - Rebekah takes the same journey Abraham and Sarah did

How to Read Biblical Narrative

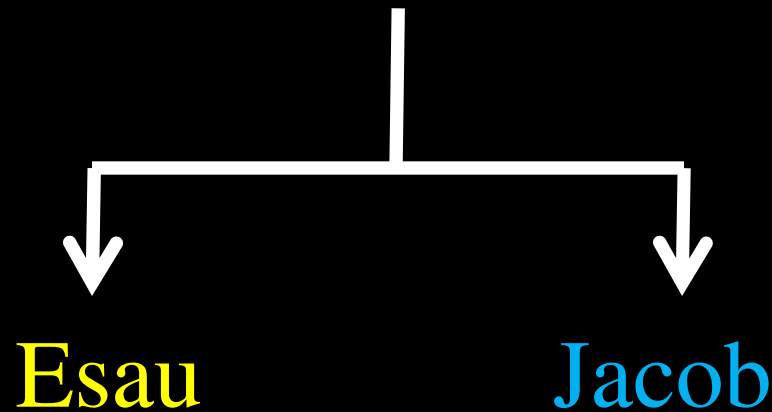
The Stellar Woman

- Rebekah: Faith Over Stomach (Gen.25 – 27)
 - Rebekah prayed to ask God about her womb; God gave her the prophecy
 - Rebekah directed Isaac's appetite
 - Isaac was going to bless Esau based on his stomach
 - Isaac suspected, could have called for help, but just went along
 - Rebekah dressed Jacob in animal skins
 - God dressed Adam and Eve in animal skins
 - Rebekah was faithful to God, and prioritized faith over appetites in herself and her marriage
 - Adam and Eve prioritized appetites over faith
 - Rebekah was not 'a manipulator'

How to Read Biblical Narrative

The Legitimate Wife and Heir, Undoing the Sibling Rivalry of Cain and Abel

Isaac = Rebekah



How to Read Biblical Narrative

The Story of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah

- A. God makes promise; struggle in childbirth; Jacob and Esau born; Jacob buys birthright (25:19 – 34)
 - B. Rebekah endangered in a foreign palace, Isaac lies about her, pact with foreigners (26:1 – 34)
 - C. Jacob fears Esau and flees the Promised Land (27:1 – 28:9)
 - D. At night, God speaks to Jacob in a dream (ladder with angels), Jacob names Bethel, makes deal with God (28:10 – 22)
 - E. Jacob meets Rachel and Laban (29:1 – 14)
 - F. Jacob must acknowledge the rights of the firstborn (Leah) and is vulnerable to Laban, Laban deceives Rachel (29:15 – 30)
 - G. Jacob experiences conflict between his two wives (29:31 – 30:13)
 - H. Rachel lets go of rights to Jacob; Leah bears children (30:14 – 21)
 - H'. God 'remembers' Rachel; Rachel bears Joseph (30:22 – 24)
 - G'. Jacob experiences conflict with Laban but accepts a handicap with his flocks, relinquishes his rights (30:25 – 36)
 - F'. God prospers Jacob and protects him from Laban; Rachel deceives Laban (30:37 – 31:35)
 - E'. Laban departs from Jacob (31:43 – 55)
 - D'. At night, God wrestles Jacob, Jacob named Israel, asks God for blessing (32:1 – 32)
 - C'. Jacob returns to the Promised Land and is restored to Esau (33:1 – 20)
 - B'. Dinah endangered in foreign palace, Jacob's sons lie, pact with foreigners (34:1 – 31)
 - A'. God fulfills promise; Jacob named Israel again at Bethel; struggle in childbirth, Rachel dies; Reuben forfeits birthright; Isaac dies, Jacob and Esau bury him (35:1 – 29)

How to Read Biblical Narrative

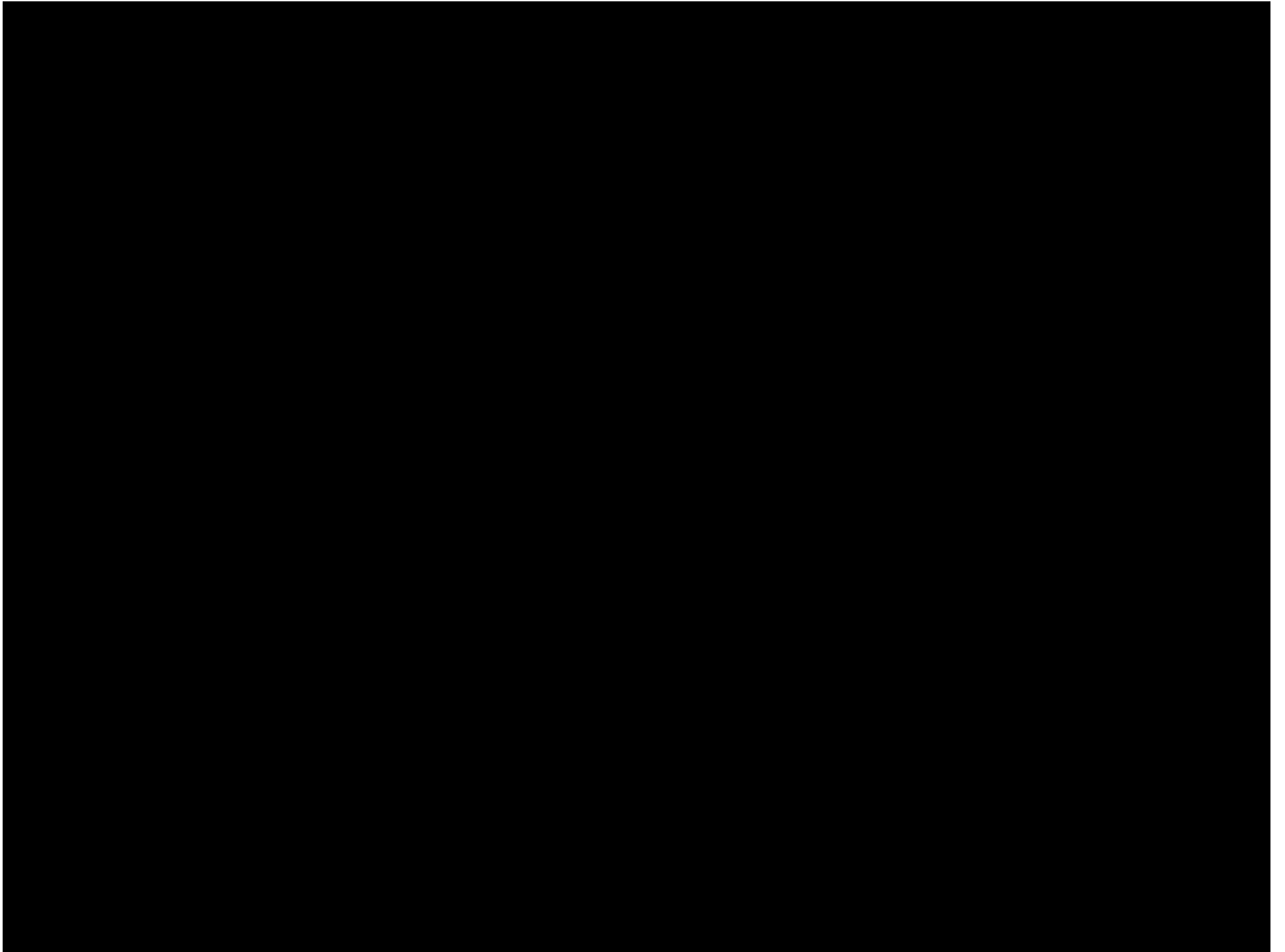
The Legitimate Wife and Heir

	Leah	Zilpah	Rachel	Bilhah
1	Reuben (disqualified)			
2	Simeon (disqualified)			
3	Levi (disqualified)			
4	Judah			
5				Dan
6				Naphtali
7		Gad		
8		Asher		
9	Issachar			
10	Zebulun			
	Dinah			
11			Joseph	
12			Benjamin	

How to Read Biblical Narrative

The Legitimate Wife and Heir

- God affirms **His original creation order**:
 - God works through the rightful wife: Sarah, Rebekah, Leah
 - God limits male power, and cuts off:
 - Isaac's ability to decide alone how to bless his sons
 - God calls the wife (not just the husband) to trust Him
 - Sarah (Gen.18:1 – 15)
 - Rebekah (Gen.25:22 – 23)
 - Leah and Rachel (Gen.29:31 – 30:24)
 - God blesses mothers to name their children:
 - Both Isaac and Rebekah name their children (Gen.25:25 – 26)
 - Rachel and Leah, not Jacob, name their children (Gen.29:31ff.)
 - God undoes sibling rivalry
 - Rachel and Leah, then Jacob and Esau, undo Cain and Abel



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- New Testament: Protections for Women

The Pentateuch: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Narratives
 - God cared for Ishmael but not Hagar (Gen.16)?
 - God sent her back to Sarai despite abuse (Gen.16)?
 - God then dismissed Hagar (Gen.18)?
 - Feminist theologian Phyllis Trible called the story of Hagar one of the 'texts of terror'

TEXTS OF TERROR

Literary-Feminist Readings
of Biblical Narratives

Phyllis Trible

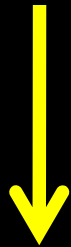


OVERTURES TO BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

How to Read Biblical Narrative

Hagar & Ishmael in Genesis 16

Hagar = Abraham = Sarah



Ishmael



Isaac

Eliezer

How to Read Biblical Narrative

Hagar & Ishmael in Genesis 16

- Key question:
 - Is Not: How is Hagar's situation normative?
 - Is: What is the narrator's evaluation of Hagar and her situation?

How to Read Biblical Narrative

Hagar & Ishmael in Genesis 16

- The Literary Motif of Sight
 - Sarai 'took...and gave...to her husband' (16:3). Sound familiar?
 - Eve 'took and gave to her husband' (Genesis 3:6)
 - The narrator believes Sarai and Abram were sinning, despite it being culturally acceptable

How to Read Biblical Narrative

Hagar & Ishmael in Genesis 16

- The Literary Motif of Sight
 - **Saw** fruit (Gen.3:6), then nakedness (3:7)
 - Sarai was 'despised in her **sight**' (16:4)
 - Hagar '**saw** that she had conceived' (16:5)
 - Hagar's spite comes out of seeing and focusing on a human comparison; she does not see God's blessing and patience.
 - Sarai '**saw**' Hagar's spite in v.4 – 5.
 - Then, Abram had said to Sarai, 'Do what is good in your **sight**' (16:6), surrendering to Sarai's moral short-sightedness, relativism, and vindictiveness
 - After Hagar encounters the angel of the LORD, however, she knows that God **sees** her, and she has **seen** Him (16:13)!
 - That is a stunning turnaround of the theme of sight.

How to Read Biblical Narrative

Hagar & Ishmael in Genesis 16

- God promises Hagar that her son will be fruitful and multiply
 - ‘I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count’ (16:10)
 - God blesses Hagar to be a ‘matriarch’
- This is God’s creational blessing
 - Adam and Eve (Gen.1:26 – 31); Noah and family (8:17; 9:7)
 - Renewed with Abram and Sarai (12:1 – 3; 15:5; 17:2 – 7)
 - God blesses ‘the other woman and the other son’!
 - Notice her reaction: Hagar *names God* (*El Roi* – ‘the God who sees me’), the only person in the Bible to ever do this

How to Read Biblical Narrative

Hagar & Ishmael in Genesis 16

- God instructs her to name her son Ishmael, sharing with her the power of naming
- God instructs Hagar to return to Abram and Sarai. Why?
 - For Hagar to not express spite and disdain for Sarai but support and compassion (Hagar has higher status!)
 - For Abram and Sarai to change the way they relate to Hagar
 - For Abram and Sarai to embrace Ishmael and care for him
 - Abram and Sarai are a microcosm of God's future blessing of the Gentile world
 - Compare Qur'an: Hagar was 2nd wife; no reference to conflict, reconciliation, or covenant community

How to Read Biblical Narrative

Hagar & Ishmael in Genesis 16

- God limits power
 - Abraham's power as a patriarch
 - Sarah's power as matriarch
- God did not *cause* the male-privileged culture of the 'patriarchal' era
 - God was undoing it, correcting people's mistakes as they went.
- God renews Eden story
 - Abraham and Sarah become equal partners in marriage
- God redeemed Hagar back to His creational blessing
 - Undo Hagar's contempt
 - Undo Sarai's sin and Abraham's complicity



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 - **Specific laws**
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The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Laws: Personhood, Family, and Community
 - A woman's menstrual period makes her unclean (Lev.15)?
 - A daughter is more unclean than a son (Lev.12)?
 - A daughter did not inherit land (Num.36)?
 - Was a wife her husband's property (Ex.20)?
 - Could only husbands divorce their wives (Dt.24)?

The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Laws: Personhood
 - A woman's menstrual period makes her unclean (Lev.15)?
 - A daughter is more unclean than a son (Lev.12)?
- What was being represented?
 - A man's 'emissions' were also unclean (Lev.15:16 – 18)
 - Death was unclean: scavengers, tombs, dead bodies, life passing into death (egg, sperm)

The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Narrative
 - Circumcision: a symbolic 'cleansing'
 - Physically borne by the men, from Abraham onwards
 - Spiritually promised to both men and women (Dt.30:6)
 - Human reproduction is both holy (creation) and contaminated (fall)
- Sinai Laws
 - Circumcision reduces the symbolic uncleanness for boys

The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Laws: Family
 - A daughter did not typically inherit land (Num.36)?



The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Laws: Family
 - A daughter did not typically inherit land (Num.36)?
- True, but land was stewarded for future children
 - God gave the garden-creation to Adam and Eve as a married unit, to give the creation to their descendants
 - Israel's garden land belonged to future generations, not to the present generation, and not individualistically



The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Laws: Family
 - A daughter did not typically inherit land (Num.36)?
- True, but land was stewarded for future children
 - Jubilee principle of restoring family land, freeing indentured servants to return to family land (Lev.25)
 - Jubilee possible by family land inheritance; individualistic ownership of land would have made this impossible



The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Laws: Family
 - A daughter did not typically inherit land (Num.36)?
- True, but land was stewarded for future children
 - Future children got a vote about land ownership
 - Israel commanded to care especially for those who could not own land individually: widows, orphans, aliens (e.g. Dt.10:18; 14:29; 16:11 – 14; 24:17 – 22; 26:12 – 13; 27:19)

The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Laws: Family
 - Was a wife her husband's property (Ex.20:17)?
 - 'Do not covet your neighbor's house...his wife...or his ox...'
- No: Just because the list contains people *and* objects doesn't mean that people *were* objects
 - Coveting applies to objects, relations, qualities, experiences, etc.
 - See my material on slavery:
<https://www.anastasiscenter.org/race-slavery>
 - Slavery in the Bible
 - Slavery in Christianity 1st – 15th centuries

The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Laws: Family
 - Was a wife her husband's property (Ex.20:17)?
 - 'Do not covet your neighbor's house...his wife...or his ox...'
- No: Wives could retain their own property separately from her husband.
 - Jesus' parable of the lost coin: woman searches for one of ten coins, a set (Lk.15:8 – 10), given by her husband to her father and then to the woman; it was not conditioned on her marriage (the so-called 'bride-price' of Ex.22:16 – 17).
 - Married American women didn't have full legal control over their own financial assets until after the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Kirchberg v. Feenstra* in 1981.

The Pentateuch Laws: Some Apparently Misogynistic Passages

- Laws: Family
 - Could only husbands divorce their wives (Dt.24:1 – 4)?
- No. Wives could divorce their husbands
 - Jesus affirmed wives could divorce husbands (Mk.10:12)
 - Hebrew was a gendered language, so this was the inclusive male tense that includes the female (e.g. Jn.4:14; 1 Tim.5:18)
 - Elephantini from Egypt (5th cent BCE) also shows women divorcing their husbands
 - Greek cultural influence in Israel in the 5th cent BCE influenced rabbinical interpretation negatively



Outline

- Old Testament: Protections for Women
- **New Testament: Protections for Women**
- Old Testament: Opportunities for Women
- New Testament: Opportunities for Women

New Testament: Protections for Women

- Caveat: The church was a voluntary community and did not have a state or a land
- Relational standards and recourse
 - Appeal to church leaders in case of domestic abuse, etc. (Matthew 18:15 – 20)
 - Excommunication possible (1 Corinthians 5:1 – 13)

Early Church: 2nd – 3rd centuries

- Prostitution was sinful, but the *male customer* was to blame
 - ‘Despite its condemnation of all premarital and extramarital sexual activity, the Church recognized prostitution to be an inevitable feature of worldly society, which it had no hope or ambition to reform... Canonical wrath was focused, rather, on those who profited from this commerce, for, while prostitution was regarded as a social phenomenon distinct from the sin of fornication, procuring was considered by the Church to be synonymous with the sinful act of encouraging debauch (since the latter is usually associated with a pecuniary motive, whereas fornication can be committed out of passion as well as out of desire for money). **Procuring was therefore considered to be a matter of spiritual jurisdiction, and strong measures were taken against it at the Council of Elvira (c. 300), whose canons were included in most of the major canon-law collections of the Middle Ages.** Leah Lydia Oates, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, p.12 – 13

Early Church: 4th - 6th centuries

- 313 AD: Constantine converts to Christianity, issues Edict of Milan (tolerance, not theocracy)
- 315 AD: Constantine imposes the death penalty on those who kidnap and enslave children (especially girls)
- 318 AD: Constantine declares infanticide (especially girls) to be a crime, later forbids separating slave families, and permits manumission before a bishop.



Early Church: 4th - 6th centuries

- 322 AD: Constantine financially helps parents
 - In response to economic distress in Italy and North Africa.
 - ‘If any parent should report that he has offspring which on account of poverty he is not able to rear, there shall be no delay in issuing food and clothing, since the rearing of a newborn infant will not allow any delay.’
 - Inspired by the Roman church (?), who had been running a food network for 4000 (?) poor people



Early Church: 4th - 6th centuries

- 329 AD: Constantine financially helps parents again
 - Issues an edict in response to economic distress in North Africa.
 - ‘Therefore if any such person should be found who is sustained by no substance of family fortune and who is supporting his children with suffering and difficulty, he shall be assisted through Our fisc before he becomes a prey to calamity.’



Early Church: 4th - 6th centuries

- 329 AD: Constantine grants that extremely poor parents can sell (rather than expose) their children, but are not immediately entitled to get them back
- 374 AD: Valentinian I mandated the rearing of all children, since exposing babies (especially girls), was still common, and would continue to be
- 381 AD: Council of Constantinople declares infanticide to be homicide



Early Church: 4th - 6th centuries

- 525 AD: ‘Theodora had hardly been crowned when she started a crusade against prostitution... Brothel keepers and procurers of Constantinople were living off the earnings of poor women who were virtually their slaves.

Justinian and Theodora rid the city of them and converted a palace into a convent that might serve as a refuge for women who had escaped prostitution.’

- James Allan Evans, *The Empress Theodora*, p.31 – 32



Early Church: 4th - 6th centuries

- 534 AD: Actresses (also prostitutes) were free to leave the theatre; coercion made illegal
- 535 AD: Women cannot be imprisoned because male guards could rape them.
- 541 AD: Marriages between social unequals was permitted and legalized
- Divorced wives given rights to children, finances, estate
- Justin II: divorce only by mutual consent
 - James Allan Evans, *The Empress Theodora*, p.36 – 39





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

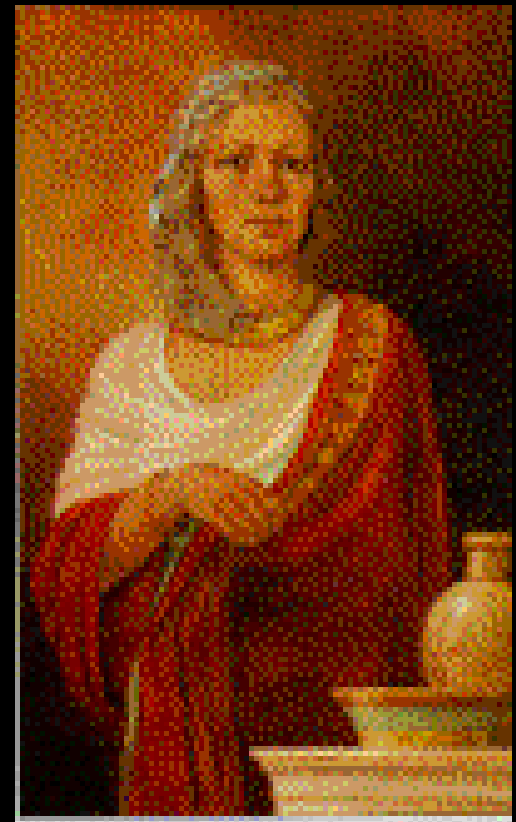
- Ex.15:20 Miriam the **prophetess**, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing.



- 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**

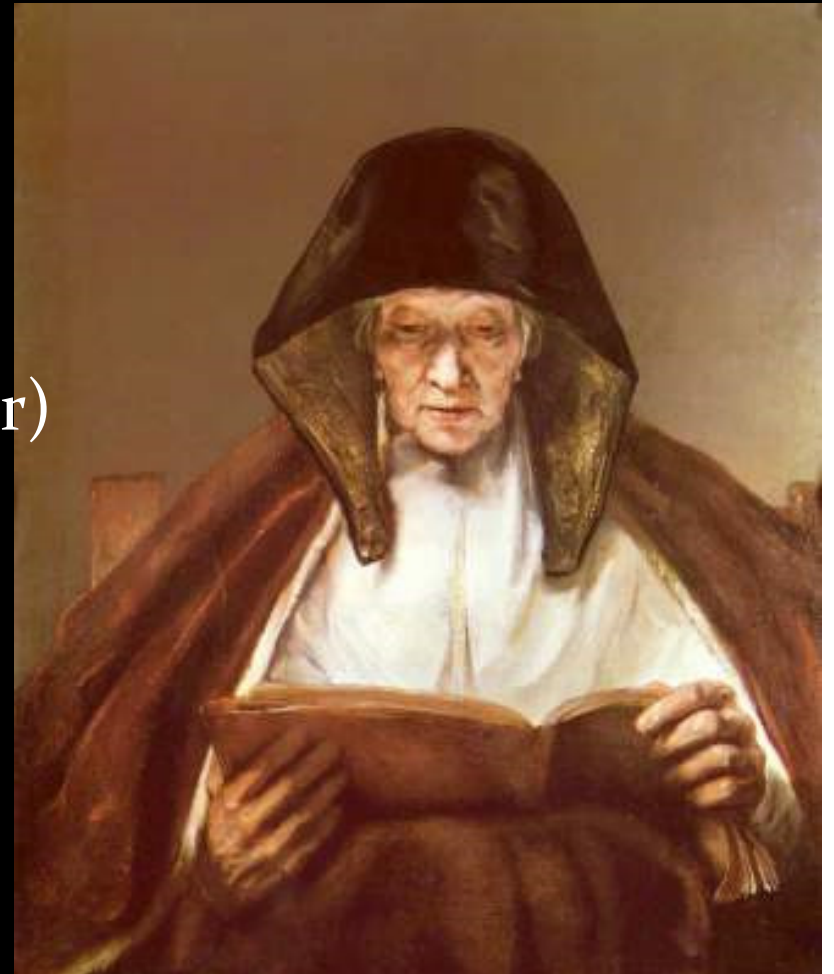


Old Testament: Opportunities for Women

- 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

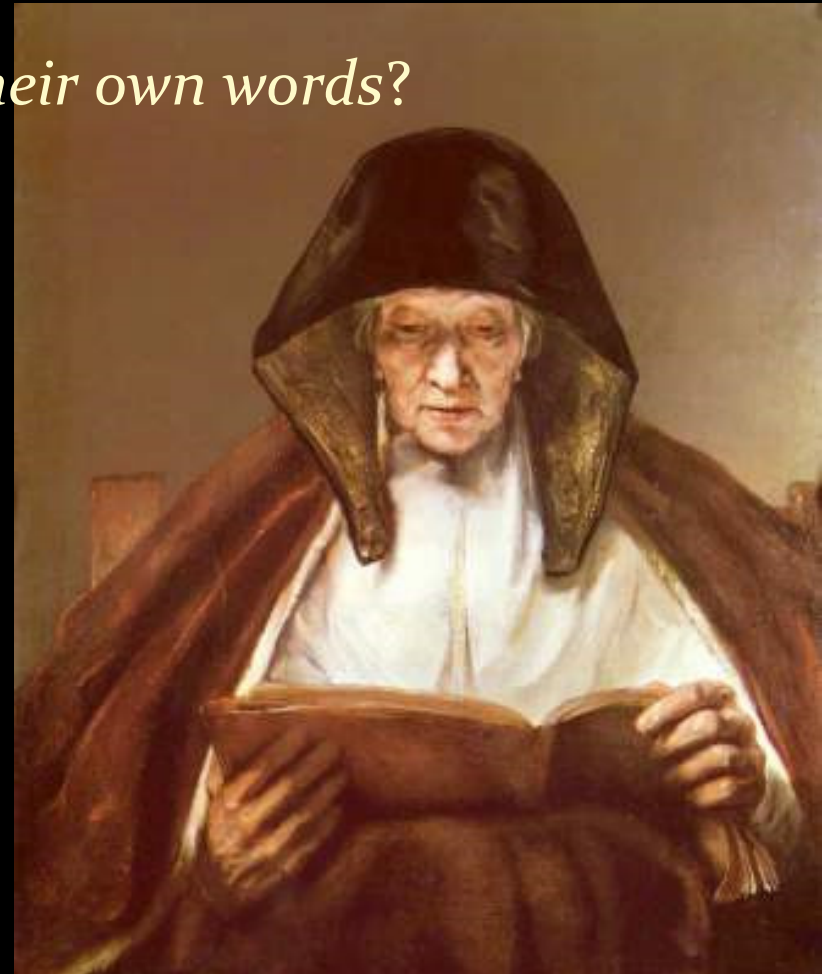
Women Speaking in Israel: As Human Authors of Scripture

- 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

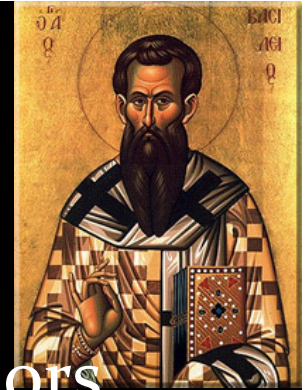
New Testament: Opportunities for Women

- 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



Photo credit: Classical Numismatic Group; CC by-SA3.0, Wikimedia and Flickr

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



Photo credit: Classical Numismatic Group;
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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



Photo credit: Classical Numismatic Group; CC by-SA3.0, Wikimedia and Flickr



Outline

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, ¹⁵ but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her?

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

men: covered disgraces
women: uncovered disgraces
women: shaved head is disgraceful

men: head not covered

origin: man not from woman
woman from man

creation
dependence

authority of women

new creation in the Lord
dependence

origin: woman from man
man birthed from woman

women: head covered

men: long hair is dishonor,
women: long hair is glory
women: hair is a covering

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
- 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

- 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’

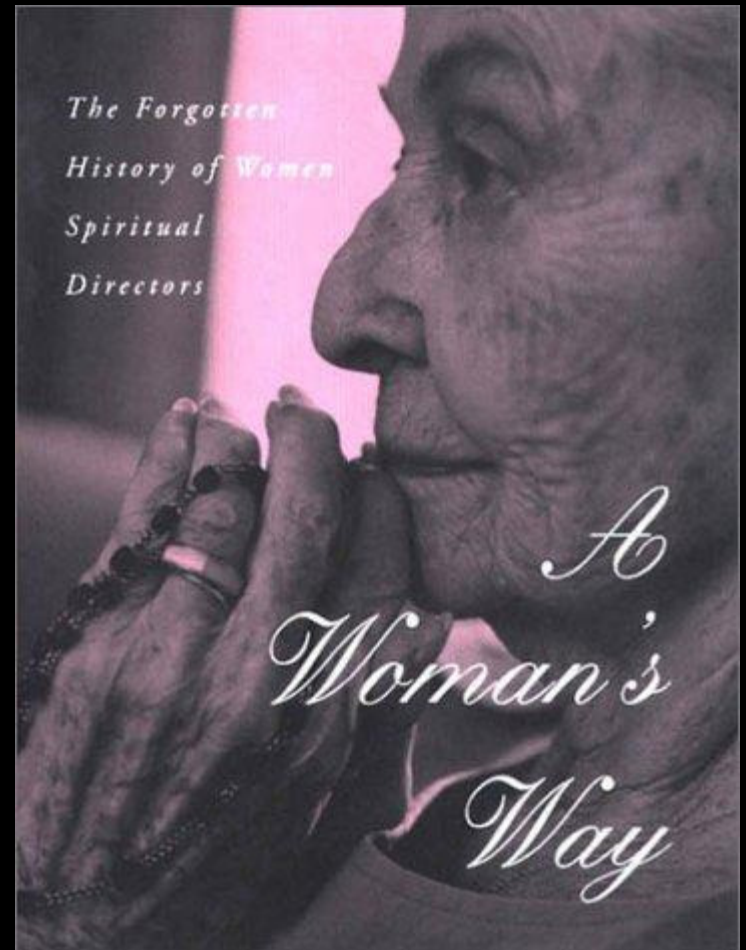
John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, Homily 26 on 11:2 – 16

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

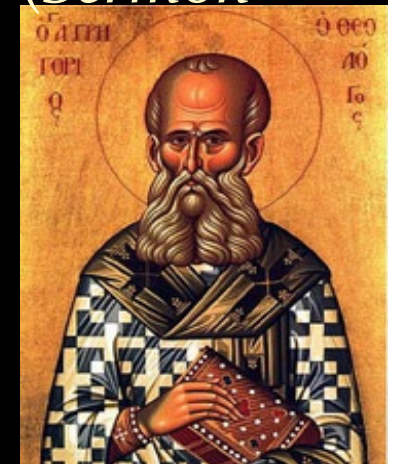
- Opponents of Christianity said the Christians were 'led by women'
 - Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.55
 - cf. Margaret Y. MacDonald, 'Was Celsus Right? The Role of Women in Early Christianity', edited by David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek, *Early Christian Families in Context*, p.157 – 158

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

