

AN INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION METHODS
INCLUDING
AN EXPOSITIONAL STUDY OF 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15

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AN INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION METHODS

The following is a study of what feminists Bible critics believe, not what the present writer endorses.

I. Feminist Criticism Presuppositions, Principles, and Terms

A. Presuppositions

1. "Loyalist" feminists¹

- a) Assert the notion that the Bible is regarded as the word of God and divine revelation²
- b) Biblical characters, books, and themes can be relevant to modern women's situations³
- c) The New Testament will not allow for a universal interpretation of 1 Cor. 14:34-36, 1 Tim. 2:11-15, or 1 Tim. 3:8-15, but only a particular (limited) interpretation⁴

¹Claudia V. Camp, "Feminist Theological Hermeneutics: Canon and Christian Identity," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 157. Camp credits Carolyn Osiek with developing this five-part typology for understanding feminist theological hermeneutics.

²Ibid.

³John P. Newport, "The Challenge of Recent Literary Approaches to the Bible," in *Beyond the Impasse*, ed. Robison B. James and David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 72.

⁴Sheri Adams, *What The Bible Really Says About Women* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 1994), 22. The present writer would classify Sheri Adams as a "Loyalist Feminist." While there seems to be a relatively high view of Scripture, certainly much higher than the view of the feminist types to follow, she does not proffer a solid personal view of Scripture in her book. Statements like, "It seems fair to say that some of the New Testament books grew out of different communities of faith; and, while all expressed belief in Jesus as savior, they may have differed on some things--like how much freedom should be given to slaves or women" (p. 14) make this writer think Adams is looking

- d) Some of these troublesome texts may be glosses⁵
 - e) Women are not second-class citizens for whom biblical ideals are scaled down⁶
 - f) The prophetic tradition included women as well as men from the beginning⁷
 - g) God wills men and women to live in true happiness and mutual respect⁸
2. "Revisionist" feminists⁹

for differences and possible discrepancies, rather than harmony between various books in the Bible. Without question, her text is replete with examples of what she calls "particulars," which she intends to contrast with alleged "universals," and she will, of course, argue for a limited, restricted, "particular" application of troublesome texts, especially those dealing with women. The present writer is uncomfortable with a system such as this.

⁵Ibid., 92. It must be noted that Adams herself does not seem to endorse this view.

⁶Ibid., 22.

⁷Ibid. 43-4. This assertion by Adams is a stretch. To say the prophetic tradition included women from the beginning is one thing, to demonstrate it is another thing altogether. The fact that women prophesied is a foregone conclusion, but what that involved (singing, praising, foretelling, forthtelling, teaching and preaching to men, exercising spiritual oversight, shepherding adult males) is debatable. Moreover, even a cursory reading of Scripture, in both the Old (the Old Testament identifies five women as prophetesses: Miriam [Exod. 15:20], Deborah [Judg. 4:4], Huldah [2 Kings 22:14 and 2 Chron. 34:22], Isaiah's unnamed wife [Isa. 8:3], and Noadiah [Neh. 6:14]) and the New Testaments, reveals that a common denominator was evident in nearly every case prophetesses are mentioned: a shortage of men willing to be obedient to God. Is, then, the mentioning of prophetesses referencing God's "Plan A," or God's "Plan B?" Regardless of the "Plan," one can be sure these conditions are indictments against men and heroic texts for women, but they are not the norm and are, therefore, not paradigmatic.

⁸Camp, 157. By this statement, it is likely that equality in essence for Camp necessitates equality in office too.

⁹Ibid.

- a) Biblical characters, books, and themes can be relevant to modern women's situation¹⁰
 - b) Biblical texts are best read exclusively from a female perspective to see the difference this makes¹¹
 - c) The patriarchal mold in which the Judeo-Christian tradition has been cast is historically, not theologically, determined¹²
 - d) Reform can be achieved by reading the Bible looking for positive role models for women and by depatriarchalizing the interpretation of texts¹³
3. "Sublimationist" feminists¹⁴
- a) There exists an essential distinction between the masculine and the feminine¹⁵
 - b) Female traits are exalted as equal to or greater than male traits¹⁶
 - c) This mode tends to focus on the world of symbols¹⁷
4. "Rejectionist" feminists¹⁸

¹⁰John P. Newport, "Contemporary Philosophical, Literary, and Sociological Hermeneutics," in *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction To Interpreting Scripture*, ed. Bruce Corley, Steve Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 1996), 139. It should also be noted that each time Newport is cited, both from this text and others, he is rendering an academic viewpoint and not his own position.

¹¹Newport, *Beyond*, 72.

¹²Camp, 157.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

- a) Women's experience in the Bible has often been misunderstood or denigrated by men¹⁹
- b) Women's experience in the Bible has often been masked or trivialized by women²⁰
- c) Biblical texts are best read exclusively from a female perspective to see the difference this makes²¹
- d) The Bible myth of patriarchy must be exploded²²
- e) The Scriptures show an innate prejudice against women²³
- f) The Bible must be exposed as a potential tool of oppression²⁴
- g) Divine inspiration of Scripture is denied²⁵
- h) The Bible is written in androcentric language²⁶

¹⁹Aída Besançon Spencer, "Literary Criticism," in *New Testament Criticism & Interpretation*, ed. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 239.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Newport, *Biblical*, 139.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Newport, *Beyond*, 72.

²⁵Statements referencing this fact are too numerous to cite. Nevertheless, Fiorenza herself (p. 4), as one of the leading feminist scholars, stands against "plenary inspiration," along with Cady Stanton, who stressed that the Bible was written by men, and, as such, it reflects the male interests of its authors. Further, in reviewing the work of Stanton and her committee which produced *The Woman's Bible*, Fiorenza writes, "By treating the Bible as manmade and not as a fetish, and by denying divine inspiration to its degrading ideas about women, her committee, she claims, has shown more reverence for God than have the clergy or the church."

²⁶Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Transforming the Legacy of The Woman's Bible," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 5.

- i) Feminist interpretation can be a launching pad for transforming societal and religious institutions
 - j) Feminist interpretation requires a rhetorical rather than a scientific positivist conceptualization²⁷
 - k) Feminist theology and theory empowers women to become theological subjects rather than objects, and to participate in the critical construction of biblio-theological meaning
 - l) There is no need for canon; to create a female counter-canon simply supports the notion of a canon²⁸
5. "Liberationist" feminists²⁹
- a) Defines salvation as liberation in this world.³⁰
 - b) Adopts an advocacy position, using the struggle of women against male oppression as its hermeneutical key, thus striving toward transforming and liberating the social order³¹
- B. Principles
- 1. Experience, tradition, intellectual research, and the biblical witness are sources of authority³²
 - a) Tradition must be used selectively, since patriarchy has dominated the history of theology³³

²⁷Ibid., 19.

²⁸Kathleen O'Brien Wicker, "Teaching Feminist Biblical Studies in a Postcolonial Context," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 373. Fiorenza also assumes this same posture regarding the Bible and canon (pp. 9-10), as do Malbon and Anderson (p. 243).

²⁹Camp, 157.

³⁰Ibid. Clearly, the evangelical definition of salvation is not endorsed.

³¹Ibid.

³²Newport, *Beyond*, 72.

³³Ibid.

- b) Experience means that of oppressed women and others struggling for liberty³⁴
- 2. Ideological reading is somewhat required, reading Scripture with a definite political and ethical agenda
- 3. A "hermeneutics of indeterminacy" is called for³⁵
 - a) This rejects the notion of Scripture as a consistent, unitary, true text³⁶
 - b) This insists on a multilayered, contradictory indeterminacy of meaning (anything goes)
 - c) Canonical authority is rejected³⁷
- 4. A "hermeneutics of suspicion" is called for (approach the canonical text as a "cover-up" for patriarchal murder and oppression); do not take androcentric texts at face value³⁸
- 5. A "hermeneutics of re-vision" is called for³⁹
 - a) Search the text for values and visions that can nurture those living in subjection and authorize their struggles for liberation and transformation⁴⁰
 - b) Search for submerged meanings, lost voices, and authorizing visions⁴¹
 - c) Seek to dislodge the text from its patriarchal frame by reading it against its kyriocentric grain⁴²
- 6. A "hermeneutics of remembrance," which seeks to move beyond specific texts on women to reconstruct

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Fiorenza, 8.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 9.

³⁸Ibid., 11.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

women's history obscured by androcentric historical consciousness, is needed⁴³

7. A "hermeneutics of proclamation," which assesses all scriptural texts and evaluates them theologically for their own oppressive impact or liberating tendency, is needed⁴⁴
8. A "hermeneutics of creative actualization," which stimulates woman's creative powers to recall, embody, and celebrate the achievements, sufferings, and struggles of the biblical women who are the foremothers of the faith, is necessary⁴⁵
9. The "politics of submission" espoused by the Pastoral Epistles must be overcome⁴⁶

C. Terms

1. *Anatomy of Destiny Theory*: Females are more gullible and easier to deceive (Eve), as a result of her sin, pregnancy and childbearing became woman's lot in life⁴⁷
2. *Androcentric*: Male centered⁴⁸
3. *Androgynous*: Having the characteristics or nature of both male and female
4. *Decentering*: A hermeneutical strategy that avoids privileging a single interpretive framework by affirming multiple oppressions⁴⁹
5. *Decolonization*: The process of identifying the ideological assumptions and assertions of historical and discursive colonization in order to reevaluate or to reject them⁵⁰

⁴³Alison M. Cheek, "Shifting the Paradigm: Feminist Bible Study," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 339.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Fiorenza, 13-4.

⁴⁷Adams, 33.

⁴⁸Fiorenza, 7.

⁴⁹Wicker, 377.

⁵⁰Ibid.

6. *Discursive Colonization*: Psychological domination of people through appeals to authority, based on asserted superiority of one race, gender, class, or culture over another⁵¹
7. *Egalitarian*: Equality of the sexes
8. *Endogamy*: Marriage within a specific group or family⁵²
9. *Feminism*: The political oppositional term to patriarchy
10. *Gynocriticism*: Study and recovery of texts authored by women and ways in which women's writing is constantly in dialogue with male and female literary traditions⁵³
11. *Historical Colonization*: Political, economic and social domination of people of less developed countries by those from more developed countries⁵⁴
12. *Imago Dei*: Image of God
13. *Immascultation*: The process of a woman reading and identifying as a male when reading an androcentric and patriarchal text⁵⁵
14. *Kin-dom*: Emphasizes the relatedness of all and rejects androcentric overtones of "king-dom"⁵⁶
15. *Kyriarchal*: Elite male domination⁵⁷
16. *Matriarchal*: Social organization marked by supremacy of the mother
17. *Misogyny*: The hating of women

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Adams, 49.

⁵³Elizabeth Struthers Malbon and Janice Capel Anderson, "Literary-Critical Methods," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 243.

⁵⁴Wicker, 377.

⁵⁵Malbon and Anderson, 251.

⁵⁶Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "La Palabra de Dios en Nosotras-The Word of God in Us," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 91, 95.

⁵⁷Fiorenza, 7.

18. *Mujerista*: Hispanic feminist⁵⁸
19. *Patriarchal*: Social organization marked by supremacy of the father⁵⁹
20. *Patrilineal*: Lineage counted through the males⁶⁰
21. *Patrilocal*: Burial place of the patriarch was considered the home territory of the tribe⁶¹
22. *Polyandry*: Having more than one legal husband
23. *Polygynous*: Having more than one legal wife (synonymous with polygamy)
24. *Resurrection*: New life in different senses and situations, a return to a quality of human life, not a return to life after total physical death, but a transcendence of situations wherein death, murder, injustice, or destruction of people has been present⁶²
25. *Salvation*: Liberation for the oppressed⁶³
26. *Sororal Polygyny*: Sisters marrying the same man⁶⁴
27. *Womanist*: Black feminist⁶⁵

II. Examples of Feminists Hermeneutical Conclusions

A. Genesis 1-3

1. The Genesis Creation accounts are best interpreted as creation occurring from lower forms of life to

⁵⁸Teresa Okure, "Feminist Interpretations in Africa," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 76.

⁵⁹Adams, 50.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ivone Gebara, "The Face of Transcendence as a Challenge to the Reading of the Bible in Latin America," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 182.

⁶³Cheek, 340.

⁶⁴Carol Devens-Green, "Native American Women, Missionaries, and Scriptures," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 132.

⁶⁵Okure, 76.

- highest. Woman, then, is superior since she was the last or crown of God's creation⁶⁶
2. The serpent spoke to Eve because she was the more intelligent of the two, not more gullible⁶⁷
 3. The tempter rightly perceived that the greatest resistance would come from the woman, for if she gave in, Adam would follow suit⁶⁸
- B. 1 Corinthians 11:10
1. The text regarding women covering their heads lacks authority because it is based on an absurd Hebrew legend⁶⁹
 2. This is another obvious example where androcentrism and patriarchal overtones are heard
- C. 1 Corinthians 14:34-36
1. This text may be a gloss⁷⁰
 2. Verses 34-35 are what the men were saying and verse 36 is Paul's response to them⁷¹
 3. Paul simply instructed the women to submit to the social codes of the day⁷²
 4. Paul is quoting the Judaizing party, thus, these are not his words⁷³
- D. 1 Timothy 3:8-15 and Leadership

⁶⁶Elisabeth Gössman, "History of Biblical Interpretation by European Women," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 36.

⁶⁷Ibid., 30.

⁶⁸Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 42.

⁶⁹Judith Plaskow, "Anti-Judaism in Feminist Christian Interpretation," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 122.

⁷⁰Adams, 92. Adams does not endorse this view.

⁷¹Ibid. This is the "best" interpretation according to Adams.

⁷²Ibid., 93. Adams also endorses this concept.

⁷³Bilezikian, 147-51. Bilezikian argues strongly for this idea.

1. This epistle does not prohibit women from being deacons in churches today⁷⁴
 2. Women were probably in authority over men or this would not have been an issue⁷⁵
 3. Refuses to interpret the Bible's teaching on these issues in light of troublesome passages alone⁷⁶
 4. Troublesome passages are not universals but particulars with temporal and local application⁷⁷
 5. If God calls a woman to a job that requires ordination, then she should be ordained⁷⁸
 6. Since woman gave birth to the child of God, women can be leaders setting the world right side up⁷⁹
 7. The exclusion of women as priests in Israel was because of concern that people not think of God as a sexual being
- E. Mark 7:24-30 and Christology
1. Jesus' encounter with the Syrophenician woman is her active challenge to Jesus' own prejudice⁸⁰
 2. Jesus had his faults too
 3. He was sometimes negatively affected by the culture and prejudices in which he was raised
 4. The historical Jesus of biblical scholarship has never been identical with the earthly Jesus⁸¹

⁷⁴Adams, 89.

⁷⁵Ibid., 88.

⁷⁶Ibid., 87.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., 97.

⁷⁹Karen Baker-Fletcher, "Anna Julia Cooper and Sojourner Truth: Two Nineteenth-Century Black Feminist Interpreters of Scripture," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 49.

⁸⁰Kwok Pui-lan, "Racism and Ethnocentrism in Feminist Biblical Interpretation," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 115. The statement is cited by Pui-lan in endnote 29 where she is actually drawing from Gerd Theissen's *The Gospels in Context*.

⁸¹Monika Fander, "Historical-Critical Methods," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY:

- F. Theology
 - 1. Why do human beings adore a God whose main attribute is power, whose interest is subjugation, who is afraid of equal rights?⁸²
 - 2. How is it that this self-sufficient being sides with certain lives and destroys others and justifies individual and collective murders in the name of life?⁸³
 - 3. Speaks often of God in terms of father and mother, sometimes even "she"⁸⁴
- G. Soteriology
 - 1. Romans 9-11 suggest that Paul envisioned separate paths of salvation for Jews and Christians⁸⁵
 - 2. Religious pluralism is necessary since there is more than one road to salvation

III. Feminist Criticism Strengths and Weaknesses

- A. Strengths
 - 1. Issues and themes are brought to light
 - 2. A high view of the role of women has indisputable elements of truth⁸⁶
- B. Weaknesses
 - 1. Reading the Bible through certain lenses (a pre-set agenda) often leads to distortion⁸⁷
 - 2. Giving tradition, experience, and research equal authority with Scripture is ludicrous

Crossroad, 1993), 216.

⁸²Gebara, 175.

⁸³Ibid., 176.

⁸⁴Denise Lardner Carmody, *Feminism & Christianity: A Two-Way Reflection* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1982), 21. One wonders if God, as feminists contend, is androgynous, do they believe there really is a Satan and is she androgynous too?!

⁸⁵Barbara H. Geller Nathanson, "Toward a Multicultural Ecumenical History of Women in the First Century/ies C.E.," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 275.

⁸⁶Newport, *Biblical*, 140.

⁸⁷Ibid.

3. Modern contexts are more easily allowed to control the biblical texts⁸⁸
4. Feminist criticism is far too subjective
5. Speaking of God in terms of both father and mother creates the notion of a bisexual God, not a sexually neutral God⁸⁹

IV. Key Names and Works Utilizing the Feminist Approach

- A. Key Names: Janice Capel Anderson, Katie Geneva Cannon, Anna Julia Cooper, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Judith Plaskow, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Ann Tolbert, Sojourner Truth, Antoinette Clark Wire
- B. Key Works
 1. Anderson, Janice Capel, and Stephen D. Moore, eds. *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*
 2. Bridges, Linda McKinnish, "Silencing the Corinthian Men, Not the Women: An Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:34-36." in *The New Has Come: Emerging Roles Among Southern Baptist Women*
 3. Cady Stanton, Elizabeth, et al. *The Woman's Bible*
 4. Cannon, Katie G., and E. Schüssler Fiorenza, eds. *Interpretation for Liberation: Semeia 47*
 5. Clark, Elizabeth. *Women in the Early Church*
 6. Colenso, John William. *The Pentateuch and The Book of Joshua Critically Examined*
 7. Cooper, Anna Julia. *A Voice from the South*
 8. Grant, Jacquelyn. *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response*
 9. Plaskow, Judith. *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective*
 10. Pobee, John S., and Barbel von Watenberg-Potter, eds. *New Eyes for Reading: Biblical and Theological Reflections by Women from the Third World*
 11. Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Elizabeth A. Castelli, "Les Belles Infideles/Fidelity or Feminism? The Meanings of Feminist Biblical Translation," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 203.

12. _____. *Womanguides: Readings Toward a Feminist Theology*
13. Russell, Letty, ed. *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*
14. Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*
15. _____. *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation*
16. _____. *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation*
17. _____. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*
18. Schneiders, Sandra M. *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*
19. Sugirtharajah, R. S., ed. *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*
20. Suskin Ostriker, Alicia. *Feminist Revision and the Bible*
21. Tamez, Elsa. *Bible of the Oppressed*
22. Teubal, Savina. *Hagar the Egyptian: The Lost Tradition of the Matriarchs*
23. _____. *Sarah the Priestess: The First Matriarch of Genesis*
24. Torjesen, Karen Jo. *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of Their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity*
25. Tribble, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*
26. Wainwright, Elaine M. *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew*
27. Weems, Renita J. *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women's Relationship in the Bible*
28. Winter, Miriam Therese. *WomanWord: A Feminist Lectionary and Psalter: Women of the New Testament*
29. Wire, Antoinette Clark. *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric*

An Expository Study of 1 Timothy 2:8-15

The Author of 1 Timothy

Along with 2 Timothy and Titus, 1 Timothy is almost unanimously regarded by evangelical scholars as one of the apostle Paul's "Pastoral Epistles." External evidence in the form of allusions to 1 Timothy in First Clement (ca. A.D. 96), the writings of Ignatius (ca. 110-117), and the works of Polycarp, all strongly attest to a belief in Pauline authorship by high-profile, first-century Christians. Additionally, early Christians such as Clement of Alexandria (ca. 190-200), and Tertullian (ca. 200) regularly attribute authorship of the Pastoral Epistles to Paul as well.⁹⁰

Compelling internal evidence for Pauline authorship includes the presence of Paul's name in the salutation of his letters, autobiographical remarks,⁹¹ and enough Pauline-like statements and words to cast serious doubt on any claims of non-Pauline

⁹⁰E. Glenn Hinson, *1 Timothy*, in *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, ed. Clifton J. Allen, vol. 11, *2 Corinthians-Philemon* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1972), 299.

⁹¹Wilbur B. Wallis, *1 Timothy*, in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison (Nashville, TN: The Southwestern Company, 1962), 1367.

authorship. Moreover, the fact that the church undeniably accepted the Pastorals as Pauline,⁹² and that it was not until the nineteenth century that the Pauline authorship was seriously questioned each suggest that Christians from the time of the apostle until the nineteenth century had no substantial reasons for doubting the position of authentic Pauline authorship.

Then, early in the nineteenth century, J. E. C. Schmidt (1804), F. E. D. Schleiermacher (1807), and J. G. Eichhorn (1812), among others, began to challenge the foregone conclusion of biblical scholars and laymen alike, which had dominated for nearly 1800 years.⁹³ Today, there are three basic views on authorship: (1) Paul, (2) a later hand, (3) a later hand drawing from Pauline fragments.⁹⁴

Scholars who challenge Pauline authorship do so because of the presence of many words found in the vocabulary of the Pastorals which do not appear in the known writings of Paul,⁹⁵

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid., 299-301.

⁹⁴Ibid., 300. For an excellent discussion on the "Fragment Theory" see Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 4, *The Thessalonian Epistles, The Epistle to the Galatians, The Pastoral Epistles, The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 185-98. This text is a reprint of Vincent's original book published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1887, a year not too far removed from the first non-Pauline tremors.

⁹⁵C. A. Trentham, *Studies in Timothy* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1959), 1.

alleged differences in doctrine, instructions concerning church organization, the nature of the heresy being dealt with, and the historical setting of the Pastorals not fitting easily into the framework of Paul's lifetime;⁹⁶ yet, it is entirely possible, because the subject matter addressed in the Pastorals is so radically different from the subject matter dealt with in the other writings of Paul, that employment of words not previously used would be perfectly logical.⁹⁷ Moreover, one must also be aware that the age and maturity of the writer would most certainly depict a different vocabulary from that of the younger, less spiritually-mature years.⁹⁸ Too, one wonders why a forger, intent on passing his work off as genuinely Pauline, would pour forth non-Pauline words at a rate of approximately seventeen words per page of Greek text!⁹⁹ Additionally, since the recipients of the Pastorals were individual men, not individual churches, well acquainted with Paul's theology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and more, one should not be surprised to find

⁹⁶Hinson, 300-3. He provides the reader with one of the fullest accounts of the problem of authorship, and is well versed in the debate, since he did his Th.D. dissertation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on the subject in 1962.

⁹⁷Trentham, 1.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Wallis, 1367.

stylistic differences,¹⁰⁰ as well as ecclesiological instructions Paul was eager to see implemented at the respective locations of Timothy and Titus. Further, the elements of ecclesiastical organization present in the Pastorals are also found elsewhere in Scripture.¹⁰¹

Since many scholars now believe that Gnosticism did not emerge until sometime in the second century, to allege a late date for 1 Timothy on the hypothesis that it was a polemic against Gnosticism, and is thus to be dated no earlier than the second century, is tenuous to say the least, particularly when capable scholarship has proposed another target for its contents, as will be discussed below. Even if Gnosticism of the second century happened to be Paul's targeted heresy, it is not outlandish to posit that inspiration from God had led him to write before the fact rather than after the fact.¹⁰² Also, evangelically conservative scholars find no doctrinal conflicts between 1 Timothy and other writings attributed to Paul, nor do they find conflicts with church organizational information either.

As to charges that the historical setting found in the Pastoral Epistles cannot be easily fitted into the framework of

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 1368.

¹⁰²Ibid., 1367.

Paul's life, one must remember that information about his life is obtained mostly from The Book of Acts, which has been shown to be an incomplete picture of his activities, and should not be regarded as an exhaustive chronological account of the great apostle's missionary endeavors.¹⁰³

In conclusion, then, this study surmises that the Pastoral Epistles in general, and the book containing the text under consideration in particular, are authentically Pauline. By this the present writer means he regards the Pastorals as both inspired by God and genuinely Pauline.

The Date of 1 Timothy

The Book of 1 Timothy was probably composed while Paul was on a stay in Philippi, a city of Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3). Scholars conjecture that he was released from his first Roman imprisonment around A.D. 61, then rudely arrested once again and imprisoned, this time to be martyred by Nero, either in conjunction with the burning of Rome in A.D. 64, or in A.D. 67.¹⁰⁴ Thus, 1 Timothy can be dated sometime prior to 67, but not before 61.

The Occasion of 1 Timothy

It is most likely that 1 Timothy was written by Paul as a polemic against Judaistic opposition to the apostle's missionary

¹⁰³Hinson, 303.

¹⁰⁴Trentham, 6.

endeavors to the Gentiles.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Hinson proposes the Pastorals be renamed and called "missionary epistles."¹⁰⁶ Moreover, it is also probable that 1 Timothy, along with 2 Timothy and Titus, were Paul's instructions and admonitions to pastors, namely Timothy in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete. Hence, the familiar title "Pastoral Epistles"; however, as Hinson has proposed, it might be more accurate to dub them "missionary epistles," since both Timothy and Titus were serving as missionary-pastors. Further, all three epistles were authored for the purpose of opposing heresy (opinion, doctrine, or practice contrary to truth or generally accepted standards, that which is in opposition to orthodoxy), establish a definite church polity (form of church government), and urge adherence to doctrine (basic principles, fundamental teachings, and instructions) which had been previously established by Paul and other inspired writers.

The Recipient of 1 Timothy

Both 1 and 2 Timothy are addressed to Timothy, pastor, or evangelist, of the church at Ephesus, whom Paul had left behind to carry on the work (1 Tim. 1:3). His name means something akin to "God-valued," a description he seems to have lived up to most admirably, for he was "Paul-valued" as well! Additionally,

¹⁰⁵Hinson, 304.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

Timothy was one of Paul's own disciples (Acts 16:1-4), and these epistles suggest that Timothy and Titus each desperately needed the inspired thoughts of the apostle concerning church order, soundness of faith, and discipline in their congregations. Early on, the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Philip, Nathanael, and Jude) were probably able to regulate matters related to these areas discussed, with later assistance coming from Matthias, the replacement for Judas, and other church leaders like James, the half brother of Jesus. Nevertheless, by the end of the first century, it became necessary that clear, authoritative, inspired, written instructions be given for the guidance of the churches which had sprung up as a result of various missionary endeavors by Paul and others. It is the unswerving position of this writer that these epistles are applicable to Christian pastors of every era, as well as Christian churches of every age.

The Exposition of 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Instructions to Men: Concerning Spiritual Leadership (v. 8a)

Verse 8. With verse eight, Paul begins a new paragraph which runs through verse fifteen, the final verse of chapter two. In an effort to maintain continuity of thought, the present writer has opted to include verse eight in his expositional study, rather than omit it. In fact, verse eight appears to be instructions to

men, while verses nine through fifteen seem to be instructions to women. In both cases, the apostle is writing concerning procedures for public worship.

Paul's opening instructions to men in this new paragraph are in reference to spiritual leadership. His emphasis implies that men (aner), as opposed to women (gune), should lead in public worship.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, his words incessantly remind that prayer is not to be confined only to certain locations, for he admonishes the men to pray everywhere. Additionally, there is here an eloquent hint that his letter was not particular in its application, but universal. It is as if Paul expected this letter, or its instructions, to be circulated to every place where Christians might gather. Thus, we see his emphasis on the spiritual leadership of the men. The fact that he referenced the plural "men" rather than the singular "man" reinforces the notion of a gathering of Christians together for worship, hence, his instructions regarding corporate worship practices.

Instructions to Men: Concerning Prayer with Purity and
Expectation (v. 8b-8c)

The second and third portions of verse eight reference how Paul wanted the men to pray. Namely, Paul urged the men to pray with purity and with expectation. Clearly, Paul knew God wanted

¹⁰⁷Kenneth S. Wuest, *1 Timothy*, in *Wuest's Word Studies From the Greek New Testament*, vol. 2, *Philippians - Hebrews - The Pastoral Epistles - First Peter - In These Last Days* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), 45.

men to pray with pure intentions, not with impure goals and hidden agendas. Also, it is common knowledge that posture communicates much about intentions, motives, and character. Just as kneeling expresses submission and humility, the lifting of the hands represented the expectation of receiving a blessing. There is nothing sacred about either kneeling or praying and praising with outstretched arms. In much the same manner that a wide receiver would raise his hands and open his palms in expectation of a thrown football dropping into his arms, ancient Jews frequently lifted their hands with the palms turned upward, assuming a posture which symbolized the expectation of divine aid.¹⁰⁸ Holiness is not produced by posture, but by lifestyle. Too, the lifting of the hands may have suggested the taking of an oath,¹⁰⁹ and the holding up of the hands was symbolic of openly showing the cleanliness of the heart, the life, the soul of the person. What, then, is Paul saying? He is saying that males (aner) who have hands (hearts) free from wrath are permitted to lead, and, in fact, should be the heads in public worship services in every church and corporate gathering where Christians assemble. Males who have hands free of disputatious reasoning,

¹⁰⁸Hinson, 315.

¹⁰⁹Marvin R. Vincent, *The First Epistle to Timothy*, in *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 4, *The Thessalonian Epistles, The Epistle to the Galatians, The Pastoral Epistles, The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 221.

men who are leading an uncontested, holy lifestyle are to be the kind of leaders God wants in his churches and assemblies. Paul knew that proper prayers could not be offered when one was out of fellowship with God or others. He was setting a standard for church leaders to meet, and for church members to expect. He recognized the importance for all Christians, especially the leaders, to strive to live above reproach.

Instructions to Women: Concerning Modeling the Christian Faith
(vv. 9-10)

Verse 9. As mentioned above, verses nine through fifteen constitute Paul's shift from instructions to men regarding procedures for public worship, to instructions for women. Verses nine and ten concern themselves with modeling. But it is not modeling clothing that Paul has in mind. It is modeling the Christian faith that he wants to discuss.

The Bible mentions 187 women by name, many of whom provide excellent patterns for godly living;¹¹⁰ yet, these ladies of Ephesus were hardly setting high standards for Christian women to follow! Paul rebukingly asserts that the worship service is not the place for a fashion show, suggesting that some forms of dress, and behavior, identify one with the world, and perhaps insubordination, and thus need to be avoided.

¹¹⁰Rhonda Harrington Kelley, *Life Lessons from Women in the Bible* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 1998), 7.

Verse 10. Paul caringly warns his readers not to overspend on costly, unnecessary items, but, instead, to spend money and expend effort and energy on works of piety and charity.¹¹¹ Hence, one may easily conclude that Paul was placing a premium on inward beauty, not on outward adornment. Whereas with the men Paul had employed the hands as outward expressions of inward purity, with the ladies he utilized their attire as outward expressions of an inward godliness. In both cases, Paul would agree that what is on the inside of a person eventually surfaces. Like James, Paul wanted faith and works, orthodoxy and orthopraxy, and he believed, lived, and taught that genuine Christianity on the inside manifests itself in every area of the believer's life, even one's clothing. Thus, the clothing of a female should be distinctively feminine and appropriate for a Christian, and the clothing of a male should also be distinctively male and becoming of a Christian. Truly godly persons will not dress in any way which might distract, incite lust, or make themselves the central focus in the worship service.

Instructions to Women: Concerning Learning the Christian Faith
(v. 11)

Verse 11. Verse eleven continues Paul's discourse in reference to the women (gune). Whereas in verses nine and ten he

¹¹¹Matthew Henry, *1 Timothy*, in *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 6, *Acts to Revelation* (McLean, VA: McDonald Publishing Company, n.d.), 813.

addressed modeling the Christian faith, in verse eleven Paul instructs his readers concerning learning the Christian faith. He admonishes the ladies to listen quietly¹¹² and submissively, suggesting an attitude of receptivity,¹¹³ utilizing an imperative

¹¹²Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 179. Bilezikian believes that Paul is referencing here the "docile disciple who receives instruction eagerly and without contradiction or self-assertion," identifying the targets of Paul's words as those women who were still in the "learning stages," who first had to "earn their credentials" before they could speak up. This smacks both of eisegesis and arbitrary application as to the scope of Paul's words. If Paul had been referencing certain unlearned women why did he not say "these particular women," or "these unlearned women?" Instead, Paul references "woman," as in all females, and offers no qualifying statements, which Bilezikian desperately wishes for. Further, Bilezikian (p. 299) believes "among the prime targets of the false teachers were women who would listen to anybody and could not arrive at a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:6-9), and that Paul's "ban on teaching by women had been issued as one of several emergency measures during an extremely critical period in the history of the Ephesian church." But, is this not a case in point with reference to women being more easily deceived than men? Why did Paul not include men in his ban? All he would have needed to do was use anthropos. Also, why was the ban never lifted, for there was a later letter to Timothy? Then, in chapter three, why did Paul specifically designate aner as pastors instead of anthropos (1 Tim. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:2)? Thus, the injunction stands as both universal and timeless.

¹¹³Sharon Hodgkin Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1991), 129. Gritz surprisingly concludes that Paul's injunction is not particular in its application (p. 157). Although the local situation did occasion the letter, it "remains relevant for and applicable to believers today"; however, she also posits that the passage relates particularly to wives and husbands, and, therefore concludes further that the passage teaches that the wife should not teach her husband or exercise authority over him (p. 158). Thus, she believes, "All women do have the right to enter the ministry as God so calls and equips them" (p. 158). But, this conclusion necessarily begs the

form of manthano (I learn), in the public assemblies. His words, then, disallow outbursts like probably happened in pagan worship services to which the people had been accustomed. Paul was well aware that some might attempt to incorporate pagan practices, either unwittingly or purposely, into Christianity. Dealing with matters such as this swiftly, expediently, decisively, and authoritatively is likely what Paul had in mind, in 1 Corinthians 14 as well as here. In fact, scholars recognize these passages as the only ones in the entire New Testament which specifically regulate the ministry of women in a restrictive fashion.¹¹⁴ Is the 1 Corinthians passage (14:34) only applicable in Corinth, and the 1 Timothy passage only applicable in Ephesus? This writer says

question of how a married female pastor could keep from teaching her husband and exercising authority over him, unless he was a member of another congregation, thus dividing the family unit relative to corporate worship, which Paul would loathe. Also, this discounts the likelihood that Paul's words were directed to unmarried females as well, and, in an indirect way, promotes both unmarried females entering the teaching, preaching, authoritative ministries, and the same on behalf of married females who do so without teaching their husbands or exercising authority over them; however, this does not correlate well with Paul's use of *gune* without the article, which strongly suggests that it refers to women in general, not simply to wives. Thus, while Gritz states that she rejects particularizing the passage, she still does so by restricting its meaning and intent, a position most conservative evangelicals, including this writer, will not accept. Though her work is mostly sound and thorough, she halts one step removed from the inevitable: taking the text at face value.

¹¹⁴Walter L. Liefeld, "Women, Submission and Ministry in 1 Corinthians," in *Women, Authority and The Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 148-9.

no, for Paul explicitly stated that he was teaching these same precepts in "all" the churches (1 Cor. 14:33-34). While cultural considerations do have hermeneutical importance, it is time Christians recognize that God has a peculiar culture he wants adopted. It is a blatantly Christian culture, regardless of geographical location. It is a culture characterized by honesty, morality, and truth as depicted in his word. It is a system of values which transcend time, place, and customs, and is a strategy intended to be embraced without adaptation or attempted manipulation. It is this writer's conviction that Paul's words here are prescriptive, not merely descriptive, being both timely as well as timeless.

Instructions to Women: Concerning Teaching the Christian Faith
(vv. 12-15)

Verse 12. The third, and final, section of this closing paragraph in chapter two presents some of the most hotly debated words in all the Bible. After giving instructions to and for the women concerning modeling the Christian faith, and pertaining to learning the Christian faith, Paul advances to present instructions to the ladies involving teaching the Christian faith. In a sentence, Paul states that women should not teach men. Moreover, it is extremely unlikely that this verse is simply a prohibition against females teaching any Gnostic mythology, as

has been proposed by some.¹¹⁵ In fact, it is clear that Gnosticism did allow for women in the ministry, even to the point of occupying authoritative positions over men. Whether localized to Corinth or Ephesus, Paul would not tolerate any amalgamating of pagan practices with Christianity, hence his ridged words regarding this matter.

Nevertheless, women should take active parts under the guidelines given, although the principle of masculine leadership is still primary.¹¹⁶ The males are recognized as having authority in matters of doctrine and interpretation.¹¹⁷ Thus, women are hereby excluded from being pastors or doctrine teachers in schools.¹¹⁸ Moreover, it would not be seemly for a woman to teach

¹¹⁵Catherine Clark Kroeger, "1 Timothy 2:12--A Classicist's View," in *Women, Authority and The Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 232. Kroeger's argument is all the more tenuous when one realizes that it is based almost entirely on the theory that a Gnostic heresy was present in the church at Ephesus, particularly in light of the fact that Gnosticism did not even emerge until the second century. While Kroeger certainly demonstrates that she is a capable scholar, one wonders why she would resort to such mental gymnastics in trying to explain Paul's words. Some of the best works done on Gnosticism are *Gnosis*, by Kurt Rudolph (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Survey of the Proposed Evidences*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983) by Edwin M. Yamauchi, and *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*, eds. Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, Jr. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, Publishers, 1986).

¹¹⁶Wallis, 1373.

¹¹⁷Wuest, 48.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 49.

a class, doctrinal in nature, to a group of mixed adults either.¹¹⁹ So, what can women do? This writer has identified a number of ministries in which women can and should participate: (1) actively participate in music (Judg. 5:1); (2) give testimonies (John 4:28-29); (3) provide clothing for the needy (Acts 9:36, 39); (4) show hospitality in ministry to others (Acts 12:12); (5) assist their husband in giving personal instruction in a non-corporate worship setting (Acts 18:26); (6) function as servant emissaries of a church (Rom. 16:1); (7) care for widows (1 Tim. 5:3-16); (8) teach children (2 Tim. 3:15); (9) teach other women (Titus 2:4-5); (10) anything except teach or preach to adult males or exercise authority over the same. In fact, there is nothing in Scripture to suggest that women may not pursue careers or earn a living.¹²⁰

Verse 13. But why did Paul record these words, words replete with restriction and possible offense? The answer is theological in nature. It has to do with the priority of creation, which Paul was convinced established man's headship: (1) Adam was created first, and (2) Adam named Eve, a privileged event which further suggests man's headship over woman.¹²¹ If, as some have argued,

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰John R. W. Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1996), 262.

¹²¹John MacArthur, Jr., *Different By Design* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 19.

these limitations are particular in nature rather than universal, why such a forceful illustration from origins?¹²² Logic itself suggests that, since creation cannot be altered, neither can the scope of Paul's words. In an effort to limit the extent and force of Paul's words, most feminist critics simply deny the inspiration of Scripture, as was demonstrated earlier. Others,

¹²²Bilezikian (p. 180) believes Paul's teaching in this passage has "an absolute and universal relevance"; however, he also asserts that females in the "learning stage" are still in mind here, and, thus, should not teach until such time as they have "learned sufficiently," which once again reeks of eisegesis due to the arbitrary insertion of "learned sufficiently." He bases this on Paul's use of a present tense verb for "I do not permit," and assumes Paul means "I do not permit right now, but will later." That present tense verbs can be translated as meaning "presently" is indubitable. But, that they imply "alright at a later date" is preposterous. The Holy Spirit, neither through Paul nor any other biblical author, never amended or altered this injunction either implicitly or explicitly. Hence, we can only conclude that this injunction was given timeless force. Inferences such as these become common to the hermeneut unwilling to accept the text of God's word at face value, particularly when it forcefully states what one does not wish to hear. Further, he seems to qualify his "universal relevance" assertion by arguing that the troublesome problem of incompetent women vying for positions of prominence was not universal, but particularly severe in Ephesus, and concludes by adding a condition to his "universal relevance" by stating that the text has universal application when a case of incompetent, insufficiently learned women holding leadership and or teaching positions exists (p. 298, endnote 45). In essence, he recognizes the universality of the text and wants to be faithful to it, but he does so by particularizing it such that it is devoid of meaning except under specific conditions, namely those he assumes were present in Ephesus. Thus, unless what he thinks was going on in Ephesus is being sufficiently duplicated, his universally relevant text has only particular relevance, and is otherwise rendered meaningless. Has he not redefined "universal relevance"? And if he is guilty of redefining this, what else is he redefining? One can only conclude that his meaning here is "particularly universal," which is tantamount to meaningless.

who appear to desire to remain loyal to God's word, seem bent on picking and choosing between New Testament universalities and particulars. The very fact that most feminist critics simply deny the inspiration of Scripture, rather than wrestle with the plain sense of meaning expressed by Paul's words, communicates the notion that there is no way of interpreting his message other than interpreting it exactly as he has stated it.¹²³ The clear sense of meaning is difficult to swallow for modern-day interpreters.¹²⁴ Ours is a more permissive, excusing mentality,

¹²³Bilezikian (p. 297) argues that the primacy of Adam as a safeguard against deception shows that Paul is concerned with the competency of the teacher, not the chronology. He posits that the ensuing reference to Eve as being created after Adam is an inference to her vulnerability to deception, presumably because she was not present to hear God's instructions for herself. The present writer believes there is a noteworthy point here, namely the need for first-hand, personally experienced encounter with God's word and his spirit before spiritual competency can be achieved. Nevertheless, Bilezikian errs when he so easily discounts the likelihood that Paul was referencing both competency and chronology. In fact, it was indeed Adam's chronology which contributed to his competency, which is precisely what this writer believes Paul is saying here. Thus, this chronological sequence of creation, taken in conjunction with other texts, can be regarded as paradigmatic for understanding gender roles, leadership, teaching, and preaching. To teach otherwise is to render the chronology of Adam being formed first out of dust, and then the woman out of the man, as meaningless. Is it not significant that woman was not created from the dust and man from one of her rib bones? There is more meaning here than simple competency. The chronology does mean something.

¹²⁴Bilezikian (pp. 177-78) begins his discussion on this text by arguing that spiritual gifts and ministry gifts are ranked. As such, he posits that, since higher-ranking gifts, like prophecy, are allowed for women, based on his conclusions from 1 Cor. 14:34-35, teaching also ought to be allowed, since it is a lower-

whereas God's seems to be a more rigorous, restrictive mentality. The priority of creation argument denotes the subordination of woman to man, and has been espoused for centuries by capable scholars.¹²⁵ It recognizably teaches that woman was formed from man,¹²⁶ and that, because of this priority in creation, it is

ranking gift. He offers the illustration of a female in the military being allowed to accede to the rank of colonel, but not being allowed to be promoted to captain. His theory, of course, hinges on many things: (1) Is Paul actually ranking the gifts? (2) If so, are they ranked by importance or spectacularity? (3) Is it clear that women were indeed given apostolic approval in acceding to the professional ministry of a prophet? (4) Does one conclude, with Bilezikian, that Paul's words in 1 Cor. 14:34-35 were spoken only as quotes employed by Judaizers in an effort to refute them, and not spoken endorsingly by Paul? The present writer does not agree with Bilezikian's conclusions regarding 1 Cor. 14:34-35. While he certainly demonstrates outstanding scholarship, his argument on this latter point remains interesting, though unconvincing. For his full statement, refer to his endnotes found on pp. 283-285, where he also lists seven books which support his view. It seems that he conveniently omitted the other hundred or so texts and articles on 1 Corinthians that disagree with him.

¹²⁵Henry, 813.

¹²⁶How about a bit of humor? Adam was walking around the Garden of Eden feeling quite lonely when he heard the voice of God say to him, "What is wrong with you?" Adam responded by saying he was lonely and did not have anyone to talk to. Then God told Adam he was going to give him a woman as a companion, saying, "This person will cook for you, wash your clothes, agree with every decision you make, bear your children, will not nag you, and will freely give you love and compassion. But, it will cost you an arm and a leg to get her," to which Adam responded, "What can I get for just a rib?" The rest is history! Another Adam and Eve joke reports that Adam was returning home late one night when Eve confronted him. "You're seeing another woman, aren't you?" she said. "Don't be silly," he replied. "You're the only woman on the earth for me!" Late that night, Adam woke up, feeling a tickle on his chest. "What are you doing?" he asked Eve. "I was trying to get some sleep." "What do you think?" she

improper for women to instruct, teach, or preach the subject matter of the word of Christ to men, particularly in an authoritative fashion,¹²⁷ which, by the way, is a hallmark of the

said. "I'm counting your ribs!"

¹²⁷Philip Barton Payne, "What Does Kephale Mean in the New Testament?," in *Women, Authority and The Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 128. Bilezikian (pp. 215-52) devotes the appendix of his text to "A Critical Examination of Wayne Grudem's Treatment of Kephale in Ancient Greek Texts," as if to imply that such an exercise, or that even Grudem's own study, would settle the matter of women, men, and authority once and for all. It is a misunderstanding of hermeneutics to suppose that a scientific approach to biblical interpretation will result in conclusive proof regarding the meaning and usage of a word, for a purely scientific approach frequently emasculates the spirit of a text. It is false to assume that spiritually endorsed definitions and nuances, intended by the authors of the canonized books of the Bible, can be ascertained by analyzing the use of these words by Plato, Philo, Plutarch, Hermas, Libanius or any other non-canonical writer. Words were "borrowed" and given new meanings which transcended previous definitions and scopes. How about logos? Could any classical Greek writer have ever imagined that it would be used to communicate the second person of the trinity, who was 100 percent God and 100 percent man? Moreover, one can readily discern that Bilezikian's hermeneutic is laden by a predisposition to search for, and seemingly "discover" what he calls "code language" (p. 303). This "code language" he thinks was the author's clever way of communicating. After reading Bilezikian's conclusions about 1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-15 one can only surmise that he has somewhat hermeneutically "structuralized" their contents, and would have us believe he has also successfully decoded their meaning too (along with arguing for the Priscillian authorship of The Book of Hebrews based on decoding!). Therefore, it is the present writer's opinion that Bilezikian's hermeneutics are questionable from the outset. Like the incarnation paradigm, biblical hermeneutics is best regarded as both a human and a divine enterprise. It cannot be an either/or methodology. Many interpreters may say they include the divine, but their methodological approaches shout otherwise. Conversely, many claim to include the necessary academic (grammatical-historical) elements, but their methodological approach also shouts otherwise. This writer believes a both/and

preaching event. Moreover, the same position denotes the dependence of woman upon man for leadership, particularly in the spiritual realm.¹²⁸ Further, this argument reminds that woman was made for man (1 Cor. 11:9) and not man for woman.¹²⁹ Who knows why God made things this way? For that matter, who knows why God chose a cross to reconcile the world to himself? Like it or not, roles were assigned by God to the two genders (Eph. 5:22), and Paul is intent on guarding this arrangement, as well as the family arrangement.

Verse 14. No intellectual deficiency is herein alleged. That is a myth that needs to be trashed. But, what is not a myth is the fact that Eve was more vulnerable to deception than was Adam.¹³⁰ When Scripture says she was thoroughly deceived, it means

approach is necessary.

¹²⁸Henry, 813.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Bilezikian (pp. 298-99) agrees that Eve was deceived, not Adam, because Adam was better taught, and argues that "Eve is cited as an illustration of the dangers of being led astray from devotion to Christ by unauthorized and unqualified teachers, posturing as superlative apostles," calling this a "negative illustration." Indeed, one can agree with him here, but he wants to emphasize the competency issue and eschew the chronology issue. Not only did Eve allow herself to be led astray by a cunning serpent posing as an eminently qualified instructor of the things of God, she herself also became the same to Adam. Bilezikian generally wants to focus on the perspectives which support his ideas and downplay the possibility that there is significance to the fact that (1) the serpent went to Eve, not Adam, (2) Eve had to rely upon Adam for instruction (why did God not instruct Eve himself?), (3) she herself was deceived, and,

she knew only half-truths, that she discarded Adam's instructions (revelation) and chose instead to rely solely upon her own reasoning capabilities, making them her ultimate standard for evaluating truth. After all, she had both seen and heard the serpent who was tempting her, and she had also seen the tree the serpent was tempting her with, but she had apparently never seen God. Thus, she relied solely on her senses for determining truth, rather than the word of revelation from Adam.¹³¹ She was fooled into sinning, while, on the other hand, Adam willfully and knowingly sinned. This incident represents what many believe to be a standing truth today: generally speaking, and with particular reference to the spiritual realm, females are, by nature, more easily deceived than males. This observation would seem to be supported by New Age activities and heretical sects throughout history. One writer reports that most trance channelers, psychics, and "healers" are women,¹³² and another

(4) she herself then deceived. So, is the illustration picturing only the dangers of being led astray, or is it also depicting the dangers of not heeding the instruction of the husband, or the male spiritual leader, who has been entrusted with faithfully communicating God's instruction? Once again, Bilezikian, while scholarly, seems to balk at being more exhaustive in what is being conveyed.

¹³¹Ibid., 46.

¹³²John P. Newport, *The New Age Movement and the Biblical Worldview* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 16. It must be added that Newport here does not argue against women in Christian ministry.

scholar reports that it was quite common for the mystery religions of antiquity to elevate the status of women, be initiated on a par with men, be allowed key roles, and receive appointments to the priesthood.¹³³ Moreover, this "more easily deceived" tenet can be traced as far back as to Philo, representing the Jewish tradition, who taught that the serpent spoke to Eve because she was more accustomed to being deceived than Adam, easily giving way and quickly taken in by "plausible falsehoods which resemble the truth."¹³⁴ Origen and John Chrysostom were also proponents of this view.¹³⁵ Additionally, it might be opined that menstruation rendered females ceremonially unclean, thus excluding them from the priesthood in Old Testament times. But, menstruation also normally brings premenstrual syndrome (PMS), a time of significant chemical alteration and

¹³³Gritz, 35. She argues further (p. 43) that the "lesser education of women as well as the social restrictions upon them encouraged them to embrace the mysteries which featured superstition, magic, and opportunities for religious expression," concluding that this explains "the popularity of the Artemis cult among pagan women." This writer is inclined to agree, but wishes also to point out that these same proclivities suggest the possibility of, if not the likelihood of, innate affinities toward the emotional and the tangible, thus lending itself quite nicely to the "more easily deceived" argument, to which Gritz certainly would not agree, although she has, perhaps unwittingly, cited historical evidence which favors such.

¹³⁴David M. Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," in *Women, Authority and The Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 210.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 213.

subsequent mood swings. While it is true that males and females alike are vulnerable to deception, biological changes such as PMS and monthly menstruation, being common to females only, may play a more significant role in helping us understand why God limited the role of women, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The upcoming reference to childbearing necessarily implies ovulation, which also implies menstruation. That females in general are more emotional and more irritable than during non-menstrual days is understandable, yet the concept of vulnerability and heightened emotional stress cannot be easily dismissed. Generally speaking, then, women tend to be more emotional than men. Is this a key to vulnerability? Probably so, for the army of Babylon is associated with women due to its emotional dissonance characterized by fear, lack of courage, and powerlessness (Jer. 51:30).¹³⁶ That women were used in the analogy is no accident. To be sure, there are more reasons as to why God issued these injunctions than what mankind might ever be able to explain.

Other scholars, who seem to want to be true to Scripture, appear to recognize this passage as transcending culture and remaining timelessly applicable, but still want to accept the

¹³⁶MacArthur, 89.

legitimacy of women in the ministry, although not defining the scope of the ministry intended.¹³⁷

Further, man and woman must be regarded as equal in essence, though not in office or function. In the same vein, Christ himself is submissive to his heavenly father, Christians are to be submissive to Christ, and women are to be submissive to men (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 1 Cor. 3:23; 11:3; 15:24-28), and it is essential that all three of these aspects of submission be taken together.¹³⁸

Verse 15. Likewise, there are crisp "official" (office related) or functional distinctions inherent to males and females. One of these contrasts is lauded by Paul: childbearing. He asserts that, regarding humans, childbearing can only be done by females, and seems to be suggesting that fulfillment in life for females can be realized through the bearing and rearing of children, and, in fact, because of this official function, females are hereby rescued from any notion of being lower in status to males.¹³⁹ In other words, there is something built into the fabric of life for females that has to do with procreation

¹³⁷Roger Nicole, "Biblical Authority and Feminist Aspirations," in *Women, Authority and The Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 46-7. It appears that Nicole is at a loss as to how to reconcile the Scriptures and women in the ministry.

¹³⁸MacArthur, 38.

¹³⁹Ibid., 44.

and mothering. This is one peculiar niche that only a female can fit into. Paul's words infer that women find their highest place of well-being in family life, having opportunity to influence the race of mankind, which she helped lead into sin, toward godliness, thus the bearing and rearing of children serves to deliver woman from the "stigma" of Eve's sin.¹⁴⁰ After all, the savior himself entered the world by way of woman, not man. Even here procreation and motherhood are exalted, for Mary stands as an historic example that childbearing serves a specific function with a glory and dignity all its own.¹⁴¹ Moreover, Paul's reference to the woman being saved or delivered through the agency of childbearing may allude to how the savior came into the world, thus glorifying motherhood. And, Paul's closing words instructing the women to continue in faith, love, sanctity, and self-restraint may be implying that, by doing so, they are proving the genuineness of their Christian commitment, and can rest assured that salvation is theirs. The "if" denotes the presence of a third class condition, and means the statement is probable. The subjunctive mood expresses contingency, and is the normal mood selected when speaking with uncertainty, or

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 144.

¹⁴¹Archibald T. Robertson, *First Timothy*, in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 4, *Epistles of Paul* (Nashville, TN: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1931; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, n.d.), 571.

expressing a wish or exhortation,¹⁴² the latter of which is probably Paul's intention. If indeed a contingency exists, the condition of genuineness is not upon God but upon the woman. Since the sentence of pain in childbearing appears to be somewhat of a curse on women as reprisal for the sin of Eve, that is to say suffering at the very beginning of the process of life resembling a preliminary form of death,¹⁴³ Paul assures his readers that Eve's action does not also carry with it other sentences, such as the sentence of certain death in childbearing or exclusion from salvation. His words of inclusion for salvation and life after childbearing would have been warmly welcomed by a generation of ladies who may have felt like second-class citizens after learning of Eve's devilry. In fact, they were probably overjoyed that the sentence of woman, stemming from the effects of her transgression, was only pain in childbearing, and were further encouraged by Paul's reminder that of all the ways God could have chosen to enter the stream of humanity, he chose to exclude man's seed and include woman's seed in his redemptive mission. It was Paul's way of saying God had not tossed woman aside, but had, in effect, placed a limit on her corporate chastisement, and vowed that this reprimand, pain in

¹⁴²James Allen Hewett, *New Testament Greek: A Beginning and Intermediate Grammar* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986), 162.

¹⁴³Bilezikian, 55.

childbearing, should serve as a perpetual deterrent against unwomanly behavior, and should serve as an impetus to prompt her toward genuine salvation, since her near brushes with death would be as frequent as her pregnancies. Near death experiences such as this are common in the natural flow of life only to woman, and God is there as she walks through the valley of the shadow of death (Ps. 23:1-6). Hence, in his closing address to the ladies, Paul exhorts them to continue in faith, love, sanctity and self-restraint, assuring them that by doing so they prove the genuineness of their Christian commitment.

In tribal patriarchalism woman is the brood mare; in hedonistic naturalism woman is the bunny or plaything; in feminist ideology woman is the self-sufficient career lady; in romanticism woman is the fairy princess in distress waiting to be rescued; in biblical faith woman is the partner in ministry.¹⁴⁴ In patriarchalism woman is the property of man; in romanticism woman is the object of man's dreams; in hedonistic naturalism woman is nothing more than a sex partner for man; in feminism woman is the rival of man; in biblical faith woman is the helpmate of man, recognizing that man has a certain priority over woman, but no

¹⁴⁴Donald G. Bloesch, "Is the Bible Sexist?: Beyond Feminism and Patriarchalism," in *Readings in Christian Ethics*, vol. 2, ed. David K. Clark and Robert V. Rakestraw (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996), 317.

supremacy.¹⁴⁵ In patriarchalism women are saved in childbearing; in naturalistic hedonism women are fulfilled through orgasm; in romanticism women are saved by being possessed by their knight in shining armor, the man of their dreams; in feminist ideology women are saved by asserting their independence from the male-dominated social order or family clan; in biblical faith, women are saved by divine grace and for a life of service to Christ and fellow-humanity.¹⁴⁶

Be it understood that the worth of the woman is not intrinsically tied to her ability to bear children. It is, rather, established by the fact that she, too, is created in the image of God. Also, Christ did not die to make it possible for females to bear children; he died to redeem them, along with males, from the wages of sin.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

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