

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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THE GENESIS CONNECTION AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE LORD'S CHURCH (Part One)

by Ted J. Clarke

Introduction

Last month we began a series on the role of women in the Lord's church. These articles are appearing as a response to questions asked and requests by some of our readers. For those who accept the Bible as inspired of God there are still problems with interpretation of passages and topics that create differences of beliefs. One who takes a pessimistic view, deciding that we all can never agree upon such issues, belittles the very purpose of Scripture.

Jesus said we **can know** the truth of His word and abide in it (John 8:31-32). The Lord later prayed for those who believed on Him through the word of the apostles, that all believers might be as one (John 17:20-21) The Berean Jews were called "noble" because *"they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched (examined-ASV) the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"* which were taught to them by Paul and Silas (Acts 17:11). Second Timothy 3:16-17 states that the God-inspired Scriptures are for teaching (doctrine), reproof, correction, and instruction, so that Christians may be completely furnished for every good work. All of those descriptive words imply that we can know the truth, live the truth, and teach the truth to others. Truth is unified. It does not go off in all different directions. If we disagree, one of us has to be wrong in our claim to have the truth.

The apostle Paul's plea to the church at Corinth was that they *"all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Corinthians 1:10). This must be the desire of all of us. God does not teach contradictory truths which would confuse us on any topic (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:33). For those who love God, the Scriptures, when properly considered, are the final authority on any religious

matter. We approach the subject of the role of women in the Lord's church in these articles believing that God has spoken authoritatively in His word. If you believe that we are wrong we ask you to show us where and why.

The Same Old Truth

Last year I spoke on the topic of these articles at a church lectureship in Arkansas. An elder from another congregation in the city (where they since have begun giving women a public leadership role in worship) told one of the elders of the church which hosted the lectureship, "I didn't hear anything new." While it surely was not intended as a compliment, I took it as one. The closest I could come to new truth is about 2,000 years ago at the close of the New Testament record. Even then we are sent back thousands of years earlier to the events of creation and Eden.

In at least three places in his letters Paul referred to creation and Eden as the basis for teaching that women are to be in a submissive relationship to man. First Corinthians 11:3-10 relates the first century custom of women being veiled as a sign of submission to the order of creation (the male Adam first and the female Eve second - v. 8) and the purpose for creating the female (the woman for the man - v. 9). While the veil itself was a symbolic custom which does not now bear the same connotation in many parts of the world, the reasons which Paul gave for wearing the veil are permanent, rooted in the order of creation and the purpose of God in creating male and female as He did. Also, when living in areas of the world where such a custom of the veil prevails, Christian women would be bound to observe it. Later in this same letter Paul restricted the ability of women to engage in the leading of worship activities in Christian assemblies (14:33-37). In commanding women to *"keep silence in the churches,"* Paul reminded them that they are *"to be under obedience (in*

subjection-ASV), as also saith the law," obviously referring to the law of Moses (v. 34). The third reference made to creation and Eden is found in First Timothy 2:11-14. In this passage Paul told *"the woman to learn in silence with all subjection,"* and *"not...to teach nor usurp (have authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (vv. 11-12). Why? Paul says, *"For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression"* (vv. 13-14). We will study each of these passages in future articles.

The Genesis Connection

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. It tells how the heaven and earth came to be; the creation of man and woman, their purposes and relationships; and Eden, the temptation and fall into sin, and the curses God placed upon the serpent, woman, and the man (Genesis 1-3). In short, it tells how things were originally in creation and how things came to be as they are now. In the creation of God's highest earthly creatures, made in His image, man was made first (Genesis 2:7, 18). Then God made woman as *"a help meet for him (a helper suitable for him)"* [2:21-24]. It is to these events that Paul refers when discussing the role of woman as related to the order of creation and the purpose of woman (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:13).

Paul's reference to the woman being deceived and falling into transgression (1 Timothy 2:14) refers to Genesis 3:1-13. His comment in First Corinthians 14:34 about woman's need to be in obedience being mentioned in the "law" may be an allusion to Genesis 3:16 where God pronounced a curse on the woman. As the representative of women, just as Adam was the representative of all men, Eve was told that she would bear children in sorrow and pain, *"thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."* However, the reference is more likely to the general teaching of Genesis two regarding the created roles of headship and submission into which God placed each respectively as male and female (2:7, 18, 21-23).

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Genesis, chapters one through three, is a key to understanding the **God-ordained** roles for men and women and their relationships toward each other. We must realize that both man and woman are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Both sexes have been given dominion over the rest of God's creation on earth (Genesis 1:26-28).

However, in chapter two, distinctions are made regarding particular male/female roles and relationships. The **male** is the **central character** in chapter two. He is the **first made** (vv. 7, 18); he is placed in the Garden of Eden made for him (vv. 8-9); man is to dress and keep the Garden, obeying the prohibition to not eat the forbidden fruit (vv. 15-17); he needs a **companion suitable for him** (v. 18); he names the animals but finds none suitable as his helper (vv. 19-20); God formed **woman from man** and **brought her to man** (she was **for man**) [vv. 21-22]; **man accepted her** as coming **from himself** and exercised his God given authority in **giving her a name** (v. 23; cf. 3:20); and finally Adam described the institution of marriage as God originally intended it to be (v. 24; cf. Matthew 19:4-6).

The fact that woman was called a "helper" does not in itself signify that she was given a subordinate role to man. The Hebrew word for "helper" is also used of God about sixteen times (cf. Psalms

121:1-2; et al). Certainly God is not subordinate to man. But it cannot be said of God that he was created to become a helper suitable to man's needs, as it was said of woman (Genesis 2:18). Also, while the context of Genesis two implies the subordination of woman to man, **New Testament teaching explicitly (clearly) affirms it!** "*Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man*" (1 Corinthians 11:9).

Paul makes his point both by denying that man was made for the woman and by affirming that the woman was made for the man! Genesis two notes that man was the first created of the creatures made in God's image, and that woman was made for man. The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, said that these are two reasons why God gave woman a submissive role in her relationship with man.

A third reason which Paul gives for this role of subjection is found in Genesis three and the sin into which Eve fell through deception (1 Timothy 2:14). A study of that event must await our next issue, as we continue our study.

Conclusion

No woman should consider her submissive role to man as a sign of inferiority assigned to her by God. In her love for God who created her in His own image and for Christ who died that she might be saved, she should accept her role as given and be the very best of God's women. In Philippians 2:5-9 we are told to have "the mind of Christ." Jesus did not consider His equality with God a thing to be held onto at all cost, and to save mankind He "emptied Himself" and became like man, to bear our sins in His death on the cross. Godly women are those who have the mind of Christ, willing to do what is necessary to love God and to serve Him. No matter what role in this life one has; male, female, slave, freeman, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, we can be saved through Christ and one great day be elevated to behold God on His throne. Whatever sacrifices we need to make to insure we will reach that goal will be worth it all. No one, male or female, will enter heaven without accepting the obligations God has given to us.

[Continued next month]

Pride is a killer that has slain many spiritual giants. When a person gets wrapped up in himself, he makes a pretty small package.

With Tremendous Support From The Brotherhood, Memphis School of Preaching Nears Goal

by Bobby Liddell

A generous response from our beloved brethren has brought us near enough our goal to see the light at the end of the tunnel. In November, 1995, Memphis School of Preaching, a work of the Knight Arnold Church of Christ, set a goal raising \$900,000 to build a new school building. God has greatly blessed us, and through your prayers and support, we now have just over \$800,000 in hand. That means we lack *less than \$100,000* in reaching our goal.

Now, we simply need to add the finishing touch to bring this effort to a close.

We are happy to extend our sincere appreciation to all who have helped in what we trust is a needed work, and worthy of the support of faithful brethren. Many have given to this cause by denying themselves, because of their love for the Lord and His church. God will surely reward you with far better than our expression of gratitude. Simply put, without your active interest, and your putting money where your heart is, we could not be as near the finish line as we are today. Thanks so much, brethren!

Possibly, some have not given all they planned to give, and are ready to do so before the year ends. We look forward to hearing from you. Others, who have already helped, may be willing to go the second mile, and contribute again. Now is the time, brethren. You will have the great satisfaction of contributing toward the training of men who will traverse the globe with the Gospel of Christ. In addition, your help will, if this world stands, continue to benefit the brotherhood for decades to come, as the School continues to train men to be "Men of the Book."

While we know this is not a primary concern, we do understand the need, and the benefit to you, of a receipt for your contribution. We respond to each one who helps with a letter of thanks and a receipt acceptable to the IRS. Your financial support is tax deductible.

With your help, brethren, we can reach our goal before the year ends. How

great that would be to put our fund raising efforts behind us, and to go forward with the completion of the new School building.

4400 Knight Arnold Road
Memphis, TN 38118

The Fifth Season (Galatians 6:9)

by Burt Jones

Spring is a beautiful season of the year. We take pleasure in new growth and in the sounds of the earth awakening after a long hibernation. We are vitalized once again with the sound of the robins and bees and the winds of March.

Summer cannot be held back as it engulfs us with warm, impatient fervor, reinforcing the omnipotence of God. Things which had died are alive again and the season is literally charged with the grandeur of God.

Autumn arrives where green grass had grown and the enticing currents of the warming winds caress us, offering a brilliant kaleidoscope of reds and browns and yellows and golds.

Winter comes forth as the red sun grows old and the day grows short, to exhibit a wonderland of white and pristine beauty unmatched in any other time of year.

Each of the seasons thus far has had its own charm and fascination for us all. However, there is another season, often overlooked and hardly ever considered. This season will ultimately hold more allure, more appeal, more attraction for us than did any of the seasons earlier described.

The season which will, in God's good time, beckon all those who are His children is the season **due**. "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in **due** season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). Motivation has always been the key to any successful undertaking. As someone said, "If we would "climb the highest mountain," we must first desire to ascend that formidable tower!" If children of God lack incentive, they are no more than salt "which hath lost its savour," and a candle which hath surrendered its illumination to the surrounding darkness" (Matthew 5:13,15). For some, the only stimulus to running with patience this race that is set before us is fear and dread (Hebrews 12:1). To others it is the habitual routine which, like a stream tenaciously carving its way

through the surface of the earth, has formed a rut so frequently used, that, to get out of it, would require almost superhuman effort.

You see, this season is not the "convenient season" of Acts 24:25, nor is it the season for the pleasures of sin recorded in Hebrews 11:25. It is not even the "season to rejoice" in the light of John, the immerser, mentioned in John 5:35. This season is the culmination of all the efforts of a faithful Christian who has sowed to the Spirit, and as a result shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Galatians 6:8). If we are to reap the rewards of having sown to the Spirit, there must be spiritual endurance and stamina. Paul calls this quality longsuffering, that which is defined as endurance in all situations. Christ said, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

Some claim that we who stand before audiences as gospel preachers say that being a Christian is easy, while others reply that Christ Himself said that His burden is light, His yoke easy (Matthew 11:29). Little things drive us to despair. Unresolved frustration, so insignificant that it seems silly, mounts until we are blinded to the path before us. We all have days when things simply do not seem to go the way we want them to. Even as Christians we are not exempt from trial and hardships and chastening, because where there is no contention there can be neither victory nor defeat.

Due season. The more one studies this and the word of God, the more he will discover that our Lord's favorite prefix is "**re**" – restore, rejoice, regain, redeem. And, in one of those profound paradoxes so often found in the Record, while man seeks always to go forward, he soon learns that, in order to progress, he must **re**-turn to the old paths.

Be not weary in well-doing. Sometimes life may not seem fair to you...and, it isn't! Life is neither fair, nor unfair. Life...is...life. Some seem to be blessed in going about their tasks bathed in adulation. Others go quietly with a great sense of purpose. "As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). This due season will be reached by the faithful child of God when they have learned, as did the early disciples, that when they found themselves in circumstances involving great stress, when

they experienced hardship, with everything and everyone turning against them so that it seemed that they could endure no longer; they never gave up, because that is the precise place and time that the tide turned in their favor.

Just when is the "due" season due for the Christian? It is due when he fully understands that he is to, "fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life: (Revelation 2:10). May God assist us as faithful children of His in remembering

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that we have this assurance: "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Galatians 6:17).

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A TRULY HUGE THANK YOU!

As editor of this paper and preacher for the Church of Christ in Mammoth Spring, AR, I want to express our sincere gratitude for all of you who have been so generous in your donations toward the work we are doing with the **Fulton County Gospel News**. Some of you are regular contributors as local churches or individuals. You provide us with regular support that we know we can depend on each month. You are a tremendous help and constant encouragement to us. Others of you have donated as you have had the thought and opportunity to do so, and you too make a big difference in what we are able to accomplish. **Thank you for all your generous support over the years!** I'm sure we have not said that often enough.

What is more, so many of you were so kind to recently respond to some special needs we have had, that over the past two months of September and October we received \$2,563.00 more than for the same two months last year. This has been a significant help to us in reducing the pinch we were in from having to spend \$4000.00 on a new computer and mailing program for the paper. We received hundreds of dollars from some congregations and lesser amounts from others which we appreciate as well. Some individuals mailed us \$100.00 and others sent far less, but like the widow's mite, it may have been all they could do! We are so appreciative of every dollar sent. May God bless the work you do in assisting us to send out the **Fulton County Gospel News** to nearly 10,000 each month. We do not regularly ask for help, but how thankful we are that you were so generous and loving in your desire to see **FCGN** continue. Words are not adequate to express our affection for you all. We pledge to keep publishing the paper as long as we are able to do so, sending forth the gospel of Christ through the printed page, seeking only to know and print the truth that will make us all free!

Luther Nicholson, Bill Pace,
and Bob Simers, Elders;

Ted J. Clarke, Minister and Editor.



A Worm In An Apple

How does a worm get inside an apple? Perhaps you think the worm burrows in from the outside. No, scientists have discovered that the worm comes from the inside.

But, how does he get in there? Simple. An insect lays an egg in the apple blossom. Some time later the worm hatches in the heart of the apple, then eats his way out.

Sin, like the worm, begins in the heart and works out through the person's thoughts, words and actions. For this reason David once wrote, "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

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FCGN

GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; 16:1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-23).

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