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The Bible & The Role Of Women

By Rubel Shelly

A jingle designed to sell a specially manufactured (slightly smaller diameter) and specially labelled (for women only) cigarette to the female members of our society proclaims: "You've come a long way, baby, to get where you've got to today!"

But some women are wanting more than their own cigarette! The Women's Liberation movement is demanding (1) a chance at jobs traditionally reserved for men only with equal pay for equal work, (2) nationwide abortion reform -- ideally, free abortions on demand and (3) round-the-clock, state supported child-care centers in order to free women from "involuntary servitude" at home. Some groups are making far more radical demands than these, but these three goals are generally agreed upon by all the liberation groups.

These Women's Liberation societies are opting for a society of people without legal gender! And several women have made headlines recently by landing such jobs as hockey goalie, professional football player, Las Vegas blackjack dealer and Protestant minister! But there are going to be some unpleasant legal side-effects to this kind of total equalitarianism. Women can be sued for alimony by ex-husbands who earn less than they do and, theoretically at least, they can be drafted into the military!

Bible Teaching on Women's Rights

But what does the Word of God say? First, the Bible teaches that a woman has the right to pursue a career if she so chooses. This may be done with the help and/or leadership of a man (e.g., Priscilla, Acts 18:2-3) or independently of a man (e.g., Lydia, Acts 16:14-15). Just as surely as there are men who do not desire to marry or who are not suited to be married, so there are women in the same state. Such a woman should not become a parasite on her family or the society in which she lives! Thus, she should seek a job. Or it may be that a woman is widowed

and must work to support herself and her children. If she has no children, she must avoid the temptation to become an idle busybody! And whereas Paul's counsel to such young widows is that they remarry and bear children (I Tim. 5:11-14), propriety and good judgement demand that such remarriage not take place the next day after the burial of her first husband! But what means of livelihood will she have while she recovers from the trauma of having lost her husband and while circumstances gradually move toward the time when she may consider a second marriage? She will seek employment outside the home. And, in any case, when a woman seeks employment she should be treated fairly and given an opportunity to do work for which she is qualified! This is just a practical application of the Golden Rule.

Second, the Bible teaches that women who choose to marry have a primary responsibility to their families. Paul commanded the older Christian women to "train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home . . ." (Titus 2:4-5). Furthermore, he taught that a Christian wife and mother "shall be saved through her child-bearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety." (I Tim. 2:15). This statement clearly implies that Christian mothers will be lost if they fail to responsibly rear their children so as to encourage their "faith and love and sanctification with sobriety." So, while it is conceivable that circumstances may arise which will require a married woman to leave her home responsibilities and seek outside employment, this is never advisable or best while there are young children at home who need the guidance and care of a mother. The mother who voluntarily abandons her career as a housekeeper for some other generally deprives every

member of the family of blessings which only a devoted mother can bestow!

Third, married women must be in subjection to their husbands. No institution can function efficiently without a head, a decision-maker. The home is no exception! And, by decree of God, the husband is always given the responsibility of assuming the leading role in the family unit. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (I Cor. 11:3). "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body." (Eph. 5:23). And a woman is no more dishonored by being in submission to her husband than the church is dishonored by being in submission to Christ!

Fourth, women are not allowed to have authority over men in the affairs of the church. "As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law." (I Cor. 14:33-34). "Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." (I Tim. 2:11-12). No instruction could be coached in clearer language! When the church is assembled, women can not lead such an assembly (assuming that it is mixed). She can not scripturally direct the congregation in singing, lead it in prayer, or preach to it! These roles are forbidden them by God.

In challenging the position I have just set forth, one writer said that Paul "maintains the typically Jewish opinion (emphasis mine, RS) that the husband is the lord of the wife and that she is his obedient servant. He is to love her and care for her, to be sure; but she is unquestionably

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What Saith The Scriptures

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"Every scripture inspired of God, is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). The above passage being absolutely true, there is no need for us to be sophomoric or sentimental about capital punishment.

Note three passages which set forth God's law on murder. (1) "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. 9:6). (2) "He that smiteth a man, so that he dies, shall be surely put to death." (Ex. 21:12). (3) "So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed (expiate) of the blood that is shed therein, but the blood of him that shed it." (Nu. 35:33). How can the land be cleansed? "... but by the blood of him that shed it." This teaching existed before Mt. Sinai and is universal in its application. (Rom. 13:1-7). The force of the reasons is that man "is made in the image of God" and "no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."

You object by asking "Did not the sixth commandment state, thou shalt not kill?" (Ex. 20:3-17). Yes but this law was taken out of the way when Jesus died. (Col. 2:14-17). Christians live under the law of the New Testament. (Heb. 8:6-

The Devil's Miracles

By Harold Turner

It isn't often that we hear of one who relates the idea of miracles with the work of Satan. Most people think of anything resembling a miracle as being a work of God. But from the earliest of time, the devil has tried to work in parallel with God. Whatever God has done, the devil has tried to duplicate, at least in such a way as to deceive people from believing in the truth of God. This truth can be seen in numerous places in the Bible. In the Old Testament we have a good illustration of this truth. When God sent Moses and Aaron to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt, he gave them power to perform miracles, but they met an opposing force working what seemed to be the same miracles. In Exodus 7:8-13, when Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh King of Egypt, Aaron cast his rod before Pharaoh, and it became a serpent. But Pharaoh's magicians also cast down their rods, and they also became serpents. The same thing happened with other miracles worked through Moses and Aaron. Was God working miracles through Pharaoh's magicians? Was God opposing himself? Or, was Satan working through these magicians to deceive the heart of Pharaoh and his people.

The problem that Moses encountered has repeated itself on numerous other oc-

13). Although the commandment should be translated, "Thou shalt do no murder," Matt. 19:18, reason demands this. As it is, "Thou shalt not kill" was the sixth commandment and "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," was the fourth. The fourth injunction carried the death penalty. (Nu. 15:32-36). If the sabbath command invoked the death penalty for violation, and the sixth command forbade killing under ANY CONDITION, then one of these commands would cancel the other. God had Achan killed. (Joshua 7:25). Also, Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-11). When Jesus referred to this sixth command, He said, "Thou shalt do no murder." (Matt. 19:18). The apostle Paul said that murderers, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 1:21). Even to hate our brother is murder, "And ye know no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (I John 3:15). Paul recog-

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casions. In Acts 8:9-11, when Philip went to Samaria to preach Christ, he met a man who had the whole city believing that he was a great power of God; because he had bewitched them with sorceries. Satan had worked through this man, Simon, in a very effective way. Everybody in the city of Samaria believed he was a great man of God because they saw him work what appeared to be miracles.

In Revelation 16:14 the writer speaks of "the spirit of devils, working miracles". And in Revelation 13:14 he pictures the powers of Satan deceiving "them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do." It is a serious thing to be carried away with what seems to be miracles. In II Thessalonians 2:9-10 Paul warned of one "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." Many people are so impressed by what they think they see or feel, that they lose all interest in the teachings of God's Word. Some have expressed how the Spirit has just swept over them and saved them so unexpectedly. They weren't planning or even thinking about being saved. No repentance took place. No obedience was expressed. What actually happened? Did God really save them in this way? Or is it possible that Satan swept over them leading them to believe they were saved? Others have expressed how they have

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THE DEVIL'S MIRACLES

seen people healed of diseases, and have heard people speak in an unknown tongue, and various other types of miracles. All of these have unquestionably been accredited to the power and work of God. The sad thing about all this is that these people will cling to what they think they have seen, felt, or experienced above anything that the Bible may have to say about the matter. In II Thess. 2:9-10 Paul made it clear that Satan will deceive people by his signs, powers and wonders, from a love of the truth, that they might be saved. The truth is the only thing that can and will save the lost. But man must obey the truth before it will save him (I Peter 1:22; Romans 6:17-18).

The devil works effectively through religion to deceive people from doing the will of God. Paul warned in I Timothy 4:1, saying, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." The devil is persuasive enough to turn many people from the truth. He does this as we have seen from II Thess. 2:9-10, by deceiving people with signs, powers, experiences, etc. In spite of what one may have experienced, felt, or seen, the only thing that gives assurance of salvation is the truth, God's word. In John 8:31-32 Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." But men today are teaching this is not the case. They say if you get filled with the Holy Ghost, the Spirit will take over your life and direct you. The devil knows that the truth is God's power to salvation (Rom. 1:16). He knows that if one will not obey the gospel he will be lost, no matter how religious he thinks he is. In Rom. 6:17-18 Paul shows clearly that one is made free from sin when he obeys from the heart the gospel of Christ. And in II Thess. 1:7-9 he wrote that those who do not obey the gospel will be eternally separated from God and punished.

God warns us continually not to be deceived. We had better not place our faith in the powers that we think we see or experience, but in the gospel of Christ. The devil is still alive and very active. He will do any and every thing to deceive us. If it takes miracles to turn us from the truth, the devil will perform miracles, as we have seen in this lesson. We had better be more concerned about knowing and

BIBLE AND THE ROLES OF WOMEN

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not his equal." (Warren Lewis, "Women at Worship," Mission, July, 1968). First, I deny that anything included in the Bible is mere "typically Jewish opinion." Every word in sacred Scripture is there because it expresses the will of God for mankind. No statement of scripture springs from Jewish tradition, a man's personal prejudices or another's studied conclusion, but from the Holy Spirit! "No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Pet. 1:20-21). Second, in reply to this challenge to Paul's position, let it be observed that the Bible never teaches woman's inferiority to man. Woman is not inferior to man, but she is subordinate to him! The fact that one person is employer and another is employee does not establish a superior-inferior relationship. The fact that one is president and another is vice-president does not demand that we infer a superior-inferior relationship. These are relationships of subordination! The same is true in the home and the church with regard to the relationship of man and woman! God's refusal to assign woman the public leadership role in the affairs of the church does her no injustice at all.

Fifth, the Word of God offers women untold opportunities for spiritual service through the church. One of the great mistakes in the thinking of both men and women is the false notion that "church

doing the will of God than seeking some experience. What does the Bible teach me to do about my salvation? This is the question that I need to seek an answer from God's word. There is no assurance given in feelings or experiences. God has promised salvation to those who obey his will. In his commission, to preach the gospel to the whole world, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16). This is a pattern that can be seen in every example of conversion following this commission. If we do what New Testament Christians did, we will be what they were, and we can have the assurance that God promised them, if not, we have no assurance from God. May we place our faith in what God has said, rather than in what something may seem to be. Salvation does not depend on miracles, but on obedience.

work" is confined to public acts of speaking in assemblies of the saints (i.e., preaching, leading prayer, directing singing, etc.). The truth of the matter is that a very small part of the work of the church is done by public speaking. There are many members (both male and female) of the one body of Christ (the church). And whatever is done by any member of the body under divine direction is "church work." The bearing and rearing of children (I Tim. 2:10-14), good house-keeping (Titus 2:3-5), godly and humble Christian living (I Pet. 3:1-2), private teaching of individuals (Acts 18:26) and teaching of women and children in groups (Tit.2:3; Acts 16:13). And, of course, women may -- and indeed must -- participate in the public worship assemblies of the church. They cannot lead in the teaching, singing or praying, but they must follow and join in the public acts. Women may also assist the leadership of the church in doing benevolent work. (Cf. Rom. 16:1; Acts 9:36-42). Women have not been relegated to an inferior and deprived status by the Word of God!

Real Equality Only in Christ

The truth of the matter is that real equality for all human beings is found only in Christ. The New Testament affirms: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:26-28).

Yes, there is total equality in Christ. But this does not mean that all distinctions vanish! A man is still a Jew or Gentile after he becomes a child of God. Neither does this mean that social distinctions disappear after baptism! A man is either free or a slave -- depending on his status before conversion. The fact of conversion did not erase such relationships even among Christians. (Cf. Philemon). And it does not mean that divinely ordained and established relationships of subjection have been abolished! Women are still to be subject to the authority of their husbands in family affairs and to male leaders (elders in particular) in church affairs.

Galatians 3:26-28 affirms spiritual unity before God. This text affirms that no person has an advantage over another in attaining salvation because of sex, racial origin or other similar considerations. The equality here proclaimed relates to spiri-

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tual life and standing before God, but does not extend to abolish other scripturally established relationships of subjection which are specified in the New Testament.

Conclusion

The Word of God consistently affirms that a woman who faithfully fulfills her divinely appointed roles of spiritual service is worthy of especially high honor. "Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates." (Prov. 31:30-31).

But observe that this praise is reserved only for the woman who "feareth Jehovah." And to fear Jehovah involves respecting and submitting to his will for one's life! May God give us more women who are willing to take pleasure in filling the role he has assigned them! May those women who are rebelling against that role repent of their sinful arrogance and submit to his will!

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES

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nized this principle before Festus as he said, "For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die." (Acts 25:11).

The law that God gave to Moses was a politico-religio system, a civil law as well as a religious law. The New Testament is a purely spiritual law and physical (Political and Social) affairs are left in the hands of civil governments and the home. (Rom. 13:1-7). The only exception is, if and when these powers go contrary to the Word of God, "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29). Capital punishment is not murder. It is the enforcement of a command of God for one who has violated this teaching. With such authority, civil governments can execute murderers because God extended His law to them in this instance. (Rom. 13:4).

In light of these Bible facts, it seems clear and conclusive that capital punishment is not to be settled either by the philosophies or the sympathies of men, but by **WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES!**

How to Become a Christian

The most important question ever asked is: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Then, the **HOW** become equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matt 3:8, Luke 13:

3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

BECOME A CHRISTIAN