

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 Two)

by Ted J. Clarke

Review and Introduction

Last month's article sought to demonstrate a direct Genesis connection between the order and purpose of the creation of male and female and the statements of the apostle Paul restricting what functions women have in the church of Christ. We noted that each of the three passages relating to this subject in Paul's writings (1 Corinthians 11:1-16; 14:33-37; 1 Timothy 2:11-14) relate directly to information recorded in Genesis, chapters 1 & 2. Paul connects the submissive and restrictive role of women to: (1) the fact that man was created first; or (2) that the woman was made for man; or (3) the specific fact that the law of Moses states that women are to accept male headship as ordained of God. *If you did not receive a copy of the first two articles you may write and request them.*

This month we will look at the third reason that Paul gave for restricting women's role in the church, namely, that Eve, *"being deceived, fell into transgression"* (1 Timothy 2:11-14; cf. Genesis 3:1-13). Paul implies that the very act of Eve partaking of the forbidden fruit, without consulting first with Adam, was an act of rebellion against Adam's headship in their marriage relationship. Paul plainly says, *"Adam was not deceived,"* and neither would Eve have been if she had first turned to Adam. Eve also took the lead in giving the prohibited fruit to Adam (Genesis 3:6, 12). The fact that Eve did not die immediately upon eating the fruit may have emboldened her to entice Adam to follow her lead in eating of it (cf. Genesis 3:2-4). Eve's decision to act on her own, disregarding her husband's God given authority in their family, introduced sin into the world. What penalties did God place on Eve as the first of women? We shall see.

History or Myth

While it is popular among liberal theolo-

gians and some women's groups to say that the events of Genesis 1, 2, & 3 are simply mythical representations or symbolic legends, the New Testament record treats these three chapters as actual historical events; things that literally happened. Of course, if the events of these chapters were not literally true, then Paul would have no basis in fact to say that God has restricted the role of women as to what they may do in Christ's church.

However, the apostle Paul treats the record of Genesis 1-3 as factual historical events upon which one may draw definite conclusions about authority and submission in male/female relationships. Paul claimed that his authority to write as he did, including the passages in First Corinthians 11:1-16 and 14:33-37, came from the Lord Jesus Christ, saying, *"the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord"* (14:37). Christ Himself quoted directly from Genesis 1 & 2, placing His stamp of approval on the historical accuracy of those chapters (Matthew 19:4-6). While Jesus did not quote from Genesis 3, He did inspire the apostle Paul to refer to those events more than once. Paul said to the Corinthians that he spoke and wrote with *"the mind of Christ"* (1 Corinthians 2:16). Thus, when Paul wrote what he did on the subject of male headship and female submission in First Corinthians 11 & 14, he was writing what the *"mind of Christ"* led him to write (cf. Matthew 10:40; Luke 10:16; John 13:20). Elsewhere Paul mentions that *"the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness"* and that *"the woman being deceived, fell into transgression"* (2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14, NKJV), which also implies Paul's belief in Genesis 3 as historical fact!

The inspired apostle concludes that the woman is not *"to teach or to have authority over a man"* because: (1) *"Adam was first formed, then Eve,"* and (2) *"Adam was not*

deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Timothy 2:11-14, NKJV). It is difficult to see how anyone can escape or ignore this Genesis connection restricting the role of women, unless one denies that Genesis, chapters 1-3, are historical events and likewise denies that Paul wrote by the inspiration and authority of Christ. Paul did not write what he did because of first century culture. He connects what he wrote with Genesis 1-3, referring to matters thousands of years before. This is the order for man and woman in every culture for all time. Neither does Paul write as a cranky old bachelor who had it in for women, unless you are prepared to say that Christ inspired him to write with such an attitude. The exact opposite is true. Paul's epistles breathe a spirit of appreciation and exaltation of women (cf. Romans 16:1-16; Philippians 4:1-3; Ephesians 5:25-33 et al.).

The Sin and the Curse

Because the sin of Eve included her enticing her husband to follow her lead in eating the forbidden fruit, God placed a curse upon the man, woman, and the serpent who acted as Satan's agent (Genesis 3:14-19). Our concern in this article relates to God's comments to Eve. He said, *"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow (pain NKJV) thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee"* (Genesis 3:16). Please note that the woman was not made subject to man because of her fall into sin. We have established that man's priority in being made first and the woman being made for man had already established man's headship over the woman. However, Paul uses the woman's being deceived and falling into sin as an illustrative example as to why this order was to be observed in the first century and for all time, as Eve should have observed it in Eden. What then are the elements of the curse on women in Genesis 3:16?

Regarding the first part of this verse, it is useless to speculate, as some have

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done, whether or not Eve would have had any pain in childbirth before this sin. If she would have had some pain in childbirth before her sin, it was to be "greatly multiplied" now, after the sin. If she would not have experienced pain in giving birth before the fall, the Lord guaranteed that she would have plenty from that point forward.

What did the Lord mean when He said, "thy desire shall be to thy husband?" Two possibilities seem most likely. One thought deals with the sexual nature of man and woman and is related to the childbirth of the first part of the verse. The Lord may be telling woman that in spite of the fact that childbearing and birth will be associated with great pain, she will "desire" to have that sexual relationship with her husband in order to become a mother. The New American Standard Bible seems to favor this view when it translates this part of Genesis 3:16, "In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband." The Hebrew word for "desire" here is used in only two other places. One is in Song of Solomon 7:10 where it is used of sexual desire - "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me." The "desire" of Genesis 3:16 could be sexual, since that would fit nicely with the theme of childbirth in the verse.

However, the matter is not so easily set-

tled. A second view of "thy desire shall be unto thy husband" is that "desire" here means that the woman seeks to have dominion or control over man, when it is God's will that man have authority over the woman. Before you react too adversely to this view, it is important to know that the only other place where this Hebrew word for "desire" is found is in Genesis 4:7. When Cain had sinned and had his sacrifice rejected by God (Genesis 4:1-5), God told him to do right and he would be accepted. If Cain did not do well "sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it" (Genesis 4:7, NKJV). God pictures sin "crouching" (ASV) at the door like a wild animal, ready to pounce on Cain to have control over him; but the Lord tells Cain, "but do thou rule over it" (ASV).

The likeness between Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 seem too striking to ignore. Both passages are in the context of sin and judgment. The Hebrew words for "desire" and "rule" are the same in both verses. In 3:16 Eve had disregarded the headship of Adam established by God to "do her own thing." Judgment and punishment followed. In 4:17 Cain ignored God's established order for proper worship and sacrifice to "do his own thing," offering what he wanted rather than offering by faith what God had required, as Abel had done (cf. Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17). Judgment and punishment followed. Sin's "desire" was to gain dominion or control of Cain, but he was to "rule" over it. In Genesis 3:16 God may be recognizing the "desire" of woman to have authority or dominion over man, but He does not permit it. Rather, "he (man) shall rule over thee (woman)." This view of this passage may also be reflected in Paul's statement in First Timothy 2:12, "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (ASV).

Besides the penalty of pain and sorrow associated with childbearing and giving birth, God gave Eve, and all woman through her, a forceful rebuke (much as He did with Cain) to accept His established hierarchy, placing man in the role of leadership with all its attendant responsibilities, and the woman in the role of a submissive helper suitable to man's needs.

Conclusion

The strong affirmation of man's leadership role and the woman's subjection to that order in Genesis 3:16 is liable to abuse. However, the abuse of any prin-

ciple does not negate its validity and importance. There is to be a mutual love and respect in male/female relationships, which Paul illustrates with Jesus Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:22-33). The beloved apostle Peter says much the same, showing that the two sexes are "heirs together of the grace of life," indicating that we need to honor each other and help each other go to heaven (1 Peter 3:1-7). A relationship that concentrates on this will not be broken, because the husband will not exercise a harsh autocratic rule, nor will the wife seek to domineer over her husband.

While the curse and consequences of sin in Genesis 3:13-19 are not removed in this life, we have the promise of eternal life which forgiveness of sins through Christ will bring. The beloved apostle John, seeing the things yet to come, assures us that in heaven there will be neither pain nor sorrow, no toil nor sweat, no sickness and no death (Revelation 21:3-5). Neither will there be any "curse" (Revelation 22:3).

It is sad, but true, that there are probably more men who have cast off their God given responsibilities of being leaders in the home and church than there are women who want to rule. God will judge both classes for neglecting or perverting His established order. How happy are those who trust His wisdom and enjoy His grace by being what He created us to be.

During 1997 we will have articles which deal with specific New Testament passages which treat the role of women in the church in more detail. Rather than continue this series for three or four more months at the present, we will disperse future articles over the course of the year. We do not mean to imply that this is not a crucial matter, but that there are many topics which need coverage, including this one. We welcome your suggestions for topics you would like discussed. However, we cannot promise that we can deal with all the suggestions we receive as quickly as you might prefer.

*'Tis not enough to bend the knee,
And words of prayer to say;
The heart must with the lips agree;
Or else we do not pray.
For words, without the heart,
The Lord will never hear;
Nor will He to those lips attend,
Whose prayers are not sincere.*

WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?

by Allen Webster

If you are a Christian, have you ever considered how blessed you are to have been one of the few in the world's history to be saved? Jesus said that there will be only a few who will get in heaven (Mt. 7:13,14). Who will qualify? When lists are made of those to attend president's banquets or king's feasts, few are considered worthy of invitation. Who is bidden to the marriage feast of the Lamb? The disciples once marveled when Jesus said how hard it was for a rich man to go to heaven. They asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus said it would be impossible for any to be saved by man, but with God all things are possible (Mt. 19:23-26).

Let us look at those converted in the Bible and find out what kinds of people were saved. What kind of person needs conversion? Acts of Apostles is the book of conversions. What does it teach about the backgrounds of those who were saved?

THOSE DEVOUT IN FALSE RELIGION CAN BE CONVERTED (Acts 2:1 - 47). Those gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost were devout men from every nation under heaven (2:5). Many had traveled a great distance and sacrificed a great deal to be there for this religious event. These were *religious* people. Surely they would not be in need of conversion. When Peter and the other apostles stood to preach, it was made clear that those in attendance were lost. They needed to do something in order to be saved (2:22, 37, 38). Three thousand were convinced that they needed to believe in Christ, repent and be baptized (2:41). They were saved and added to the church (2:47). Many people today think that devout, religious people do not need conversion. The Lord does look for dedication in His followers, but He also looks at whether what they believe and practice is *right* or *wrong*. Those who are devoted to false religion will not be saved (Gal. 1:6-9; Rm. 9:2,3; 10:1-3).

THOSE DECEIVED BY "MIRACLES" CAN BE CONVERTED (Acts 8:4-12). Simon the sorcerer deceived many into believing that he worked great miracles. He had for "a long time bewitched them" (8:11). But they saw the true power of God and heard the preaching of Philip, they were converted to Christ (8:12). These gullible people were not unlike many today. There are charlatans today who claim to be "some great one" who works miracles, heals the sick, predicts the future, and tells the secrets

of God. They go to school and learn how to move an audience and carefully stage their productions. They have learned psychology and closely screen their applicants. Many people are fooled by their sorcery. These people need conversion. They have not obeyed God's truth and no "miracle working prophet" is going to save them in the end. Miracles have ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-10), but Jesus has not ceased working. He still saves those who come to Him (Mt. 11:28-30) and adds them to His church (Acts 2:47). Further, these people can be converted. They need to see that God wants us to follow His Word and not our feelings. The standard that will judge us is the Bible (Jn. 12:48).

THOSE WHO ARE SINCERE, BUT IN ERROR, CAN BE CONVERTED (Acts 10:1-48). In comparison to Saul (Acts 9), Cornelius was on the other end of the scale. He was a good man, God-fearing, generous, and religious (10:2). If any man would *not* need converting, it would appear that Cornelius was the man. But the Lord sent him a vision and he sent for Peter to learn what God wanted him to do. Peter came and Cornelius was converted along with his household (10:48). There are many today who do not think they need to be converted because they possess good morals, give generously to good causes, obey the laws of the land, and, perhaps, attend services regularly. But Cornelius says, "You are not ready to meet God. You need to be converted."

THOSE COMPLETELY IGNORANT OF GOD NEED TO BE CONVERTED (Acts 16:30-34). The jailor who was charged with keeping Paul and Silas was not a Jew. He had not been prepared for the coming of Christ by learning and keeping the Old Law. This man was ignorant of any Bible teaching, though he was possessed with plenty of mental ability. He lacked exposure and instruction. When circumstances permitted, Paul and Silas soon taught him that he needed to believe on Christ to be saved. They informed him of what to believe and he and his household were soon baptized. He is then said to be a believer. The jailor says to us that those ignorant of crucial Bible instruction are candidates for conversion. There are those who oppose foreign evangelism because, they reason, these may not even be Bible-believers. But the jailor says, "Please do not ignore us. We need the truth. We can learn and will obey."

THE IMMORAL CAN BE CONVERTED (Acts 18:8). There was no Las Vegas or San Francis-

co in the Roman Empire, but there was Corinth. Evangelism in this city struck fear into the heart of the seasoned, veteran Apostle Paul (Acts 18:9,10; 1 Cor. 2:3). These people were known for their gross immortality. "Surely," Paul must have thought, "I am wasting my time here." But the Lord knew what Paul did not. There were many in such a place who would obey when they heard. These were not just those who possessed morals living amid decadence. Those who would compose the membership of the Corinth Church of Christ could have been featured in a gossip column or in police files, regarding their lives before they become Christians. (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Yes, the Gospel is powerful enough to reach the immoral and the "out-and-out sinner." It can tear the bottle from the drunk, the cigarettes from the smoker, and the needle from the addict. It can take from one's heart the love for sexual perversion and the unlicensed fulfillment of the lust of the flesh. We should never judge one as being unfit for Gospel instruction. Jesus worked among the

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sinner and publicans. He changed them. The Gospel can do that today. Further, those who have been involved in such behavior should not judge themselves unworthy of conversion or think that they cannot change. They can. It may not be easy, but, with the strength of Christ (Phil. 4:13), it can be done.

THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN BAPTIZED SOMETIMES NEED TO BE CONVERTED (Acts 19:1-6). Paul came upon some in Ephesus who had been taught about baptism and had submitted to this ordinance. Upon questioning, Paul determined that they had not been taught correctly about baptism. He taught them the truth about it, whereupon they were baptized again. There are many today who have been baptized who need to be converted. They may have been taught they were saved before baptism. They may have not been baptized in the correct manner (immersion is the only acceptable form, Rm. 6:4). Others have been baptized without repenting and thus never changed their lifestyle. They need to be converted and baptized correctly.

As one can readily determine, *everyone* can be saved. These examples are comprehensive and show that anyone who is willing to obey God, can be saved. These also teach Christians about the nature of soul-winning. We are sure to have confidence in the Gospel's power to reach every type of person. May God help our efforts to save the souls of those living at our time in history.

If you are not a Christian, but have learned what to do to be converted, we encourage you to *immediately* obey God and appropriate His grace for your spiritual warfare. *You can be saved!*

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A Little Place

"Father, where shall I work today?
And my love flowed warm and free.
Then He pointed me out a tiny spot
And said, "Tend that for Me."
I answered quickly, "Oh, no, not there,
Why, no one would ever see
No matter how well my work was done.
Not that little place for me!"
And the word He spoke, it was not stern.
He answered me tenderly:
"Ah, little one, search that heart of thine,
Art thou working for them or Me?
Nazareth was a little place...
And so was Galilee."

A FINAL REMINDER!



This December issue may be your last. For several months we have asked that you check your mailing label and send us any corrections necessary for us to be able to Zip + 4 and fully barcode your address. Even if the Post Office has been delivering your paper to you, we cannot mail it to you in January of 1997 unless we have your nine digit Zip Code, plus your delivery point barcode. Our mailing program will look up your last four digits of your Zip Code and place your own unique barcode on your address label, only if we are using an address approved by the Postal Service. Check to the left of your mailing label in the box usually showing "God's Plan of Salvation" or "God's Approved Worship." If there is another label covering this box telling you that we need a better address for you, we cannot mail to you in January 1997 and thereafter, unless you supply us with the correct information. Please contact your local Post Office and ask them what they consider your full address to be. Then send us that full and correct information.

As of January 1997 postal regulations require us to have the nine digit zip code and delivery point barcode on 100% of our addresses for the Fulton County Gospel News. We do not want to drop you if you want to receive the paper, but after several months of pleading for address corrections, we can only assume that you do not care to receive FCGN. When you quit receiving the paper you can be reinstated to the mailing list at no cost by simply providing your full and current address which is approved by the Post Office.

Also remember to send complete address information on any names you send to us to add to our mailing list. It would be too costly for us to write to you individually to remind you of this. However, we will issue periodic reminders in the paper. Presently we have about 195 names without a sufficient address. These will be dropped at the end of December unless we receive an address correction from you. We hope that you will not be one. Also, those who go on the emergency 911 systems must advise us of your new addresses! The Post Office does not provide you or us with that change of address notification.

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GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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