

SNOW WHITE AWAKENS
THE STORY OF EVE'S REDEMPTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine whether women today are required by God to be subservient to men, specifically within the work and worship of Christian churches. The methods used to find the answer have been the study of the Bible, including the meanings of Greek and Hebrew terms; perusing and gleaning wisdom from the writings of Bible scholars; discussing the issue with, and receiving feedback from, present-day Bible students; and listening to the voice within as to the nature of God and the meaning of love.

Issues considered are as follows: the beginning of creation; the curse and its meaning; the curse exemplified in the pages of the Bible; God's laws of protection; a contextual exegesis of the passages used to subject women within the Christian community; and whether the curse, and any authority God may have given men over women, has been removed in Christ, and if so what the ramifications of that truth are.

The conclusion drawn from this study is that women are not to be subservient to men in the spiritual community. Galatians 3:28 reveals that males and females are equal in the sight of God; Galatians 5:1 states that Christ has set all people free, and 5:14 admonishes people to love their neighbor as themselves; and Romans 13:10 teaches that love does not harm his neighbor. Considering these facts, coupled with the understanding gained regarding the other issues pertaining to the subject, the conclusion drawn is that women are free in Christ to perform all spiritual services in full participation and with complete equality with men.

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I dedicate this paper to my late son, Aaron Joseph Collins (1982-2012), whose generous heart prompted a national movement that NBC's Kerry Sanders called "The Inspirational Power of Sharing (TIPS)" (aaroncollins.org). Aaron taught me to spend each moment fulfilling my heart's desire; and, with regard to this thesis, I can say, "Yatta!" ("I did it!").

DISCLAIMER

By way of disclaimer, the author wishes to state that she strongly upholds the role of wife and mother, and highly esteems women whose main focus is the home. She in no way wants to leave the impression that the stance she has taken on the equality of men and women within the Christian community comes with a desire toward rejection of a woman's duty to her husband, her children, and her home.

All women of God must weigh their freedom in Christ with the demands of the lives they have chosen for themselves. God bestows talents, knowledge, and skills to women as he sees fit, and it is up to each individual to exercise her particular qualities and capabilities as seems appropriate and best for her circumstances. "All things are lawful . . . but all things are not expedient" (1 Cor. 6:12, 10:23). May God grant wisdom and prudence to his beloved daughters as they walk with him in his kingdom.

INTRODUCTION

The basic traditional doctrine regarding the beginning of humanity is that God created the literal heavens and earth along with its first people, Adam and Eve, placing the couple in the Garden of Eden with one command—not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). Not long after, this couple disobeyed God and they were cursed and cast from the Garden; and it seems the worst result of the Fall as it pertains to the woman is that "he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16). That one short sentence has greatly impacted the lives of women to this day, placing them in a subservient role not only in their homes but in their relationship to the people of God regarding their work and worship within Christian churches.

Today some are looking at this narrative again and are reconsidering their position on the doctrine of the subservience of women. Some view the story of Adam and Eve not as the biological formation of human beings but rather as an account of God's revelation of himself in order to initiate a covenant relationship with his creation.¹ Whether the story of Adam and Eve (and their curse) is to be taken literally or not, the text itself, when carefully considered, presents a far different picture than has traditionally been taught. Furthermore, many well learned people today have come to the conclusion that God's relationship with mankind has been restored in Christ and the new heavens and earth of Isaiah 65 are here; therefore, the curse of Adam (and Eve), as well as any headship a man might have employed over a woman because of the order of creation, has been removed.

¹ John H. Walton, PhD., *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 162-163. Walton is Professor of History at Wheaton College. See also: Timothy P. Martin and Jeffrey L. Vaughn, PhD, *Beyond Creation Science: New Covenant Creation from Genesis to Revelation* (Whitehall, MT: Apocalyptic Vision Press, 2007).

CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING

The first two chapters of Genesis tell an intriguing story, and traditional Christianity has assumed the rhetoric to be a literal account of the creation of the universe and its initial people. Dr. Christopher Witcombe wrote: "Though the intent of the story is clear, as a narrative it lacks sense. Even the literalists who want to read it as straight fact find themselves following pretzel-like paths of explanation."² This chapter will consider the events portrayed in the creation chronicle as metaphorical rather than literal.

- Genesis 1 (WEB):1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- 2 Now the earth was formless and empty. Darkness was on the surface of the deep. God's Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters.
- 3 God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

It is easy to assume this passage is referring to the light that greets one upon awaking in the morning. But is that a fact?

- John 1 (WEB):1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 The same was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things were made through him. Without him was not anything made that has been made.
- 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness hasn't overcome it.

John stated that the light shining in the beginning, in whom was life, was the Son of God.

Jesus was not, of course, literal light gleaming down out of heaven; he was the spiritual light that was glowing in the darkness of the world.

John 8:12 (WEB) Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life."

² Christopher L. C. E. Witcombe, PhD, "Eve in Genesis," [Eve and the Identity of Women](http://witcombe.sbc.edu/eve-women), witcombe.sbc.edu/eve-women, n.d., web, 9 Sept. 2013.

Genesis and John are not the only books in the Bible that explicate the events in the beginning. The Apostle Paul wrote:

2 Corinthians 4:6 (KJV) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. [See also: Acts 26:18.]

Paul was, obviously, echoing Genesis 1:3. If Paul and John understood the light in Genesis to be spiritual light shining in spiritual darkness, should their readers not view it the same way? Indeed they should, and they ought also to realize that the story of the "first people" is not an account of the literal creation of a man from the dirt and a woman from the man's rib.

Timothy P. Martin and Dr. Jeffrey L. Vaughn, authors of Beyond Creation Science: New Covenant Creation from Genesis to Revelation, wrote:

Why are the elements of Genesis creation symbolic? Again, the answer is the *framework* of the Genesis creation. There are statements in the creation account that indicate the subject at hand is God's people:

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. (Gen. 2:1 NKJV)³

Martin and Vaughn continued:

Genesis 2:4 (KJV) offers another indicator: "These are the *generations* of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens." Why is it that the "heavens and earth" involve generations? The form of this verse ("These are the generations of . . .") is used throughout Genesis (e.g., 5:1; 6:9; 10:1, 32; 11:10). In *every other instance* where this form is used, the reference is to people. Genesis 2:4 references generations in conjunction with "heavens and earth" because the creation account speaks about the original formation of God's people. Genesis creation is a symbolic statement, involving real people in real history, describing the "beginning" of God's covenant world of friendship and relationship with His people.⁴ The Prophet Jeremiah also offered insight on this subject.

3 Timothy P. Martin and Jeffrey L. Vaughn, PhD, "What Is Covenant Creation?" Fulfilled! Magazine: Proclaiming the Good News of Fulfilled Prophecy and Life in Christ, Brian L. Martin, ed. (Ione, CA: Fulfilled Communications Group, 3:4, Winter 2008): 11; see also: beyonddcreationscience.com.

4 Martin and Vaughn, 11-12.

Jeremiah 4 (KJV):22 For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

23 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.

Jeremiah was not saying that the earth, once again, was void of people; nor was he describing a literal planet with its sun, moon, and stars. "No light" and "without form" mean no true knowledge, wisdom, or understanding. This passage portrays people who had removed God from their lives. "No light" means darkness, but not physical darkness.

Isaiah 50:10 (WEB) Who is among you who fears Yahweh, who obeys the voice of his servant? He who walks in darkness, and has no light, let him trust in the name of Yahweh, and rely on his God.

1 John 1:5 (WEB) This is the message which we have heard from him and announce to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

This point needs to be stressed: in the beginning there was no light among men, but God said "Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3, Jn. 1:1-5). The Bible is concerned with God and his relationship to his people, not with teaching about the origins of biological man.

Quoting again from Martin and Vaughn:

Jeremiah speaks in the context of the impending judgment on Judah and Jerusalem in 586 BC, but he uses the exact same language (Hebrew, *tohu wahohu*) found only in Genesis 1:2! The "heavens and earth" had, quite literally, become "without form and void" again because of wickedness in the land. Jeremiah could use that language to describe the corrupt nation because he understood that the Genesis creation speaks about the formation of God's people by covenant. Creation had become undone because God's people had violated the covenant.⁵

Like Jeremiah, the book of Hebrews speaks of a return to darkness when it describes those who had turned back from serving God.

Hebrews 6 (WEB):4 For concerning those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,
5 and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come,

⁵ Martin and Vaughn, 12-13.

6 and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify the Son of God for themselves again, and put him to open shame.
7 For the land which has drunk the rain that comes often on it, and brings forth a crop suitable for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receives blessing from God;
8 but if it bears thorns and thistles, it is rejected and near being cursed, whose end is to be burned.

This is not depicting enlightenment from the sun, tangible precipitation, or actual thorns and thistles; it too is referencing a spiritual concept. Just as Jeremiah reveals that "void" and "no light" are non-literal terms, so Hebrews confirms that "enlightenment," "land," and "thorns and thistles" are figurative. God's Word is not about physical characteristics of the earth; instead, it speaks of a covenant connection between God with man. Thorns and thistles were real, but they were obstacles or stumbling blocks that made it impossible to restore a relationship between God and men—until the Messiah came. Clearly, the context of the book of Hebrews is the spiritual condition of those who were rejecting God.

As for Adam and Eve, the Bible states that God created them.

Genesis 1 (WEB):27 God created man in his own image. In God's image he created him; male and female he created them.

To be true to the Word, must one teach that God brought this couple into being in a miraculous manner? If so, what is to be made of the following passages?

Psalms 102:18 (WEB) This will be written for the generation to come. A people which will be created will praise Yah.

Malachi 2:10a (WEB) Don't we all have one father? Hasn't one God created us?

The word "created" is the same in all of these verses. It is "bará" and means "to create, shape, form."⁶ God did not supernaturally create bodies for the people referred to in Psalms and Malachi; the word therefore does not convey the view of creation that modern man has

⁶ "Create," Lexicon, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 21 Aug. 2013
<<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H1254&t=KJV>>.

assumed.

These passages confirm that the Genesis story is not an account of God's formation of the literal earth and people. The story is a metaphor explaining how God began to make men aware of his presence. At some point God chose a man from among all the men made of "dust" (all men are made of dust) and put life (God's Spirit) in him, joining with him in fellowship in the Garden (paradise, presence of God, God's bosom). According to Ewen Callaway: "The biblical reference is a bit of a misnomer because this Adam was by no means the only man alive at his time."⁷

Since the last book in the Bible, Revelation, is highly symbolic, one might expect the beginning to be the same. (Later in this document facts regarding the book of Revelation will be presented to further confirm that the Genesis creation story is indeed not to be taken literally.) The Bible is not a history, science, or biology book about the creation of humans and the earth, sun, moon, and stars. Early on an interesting indication of this truth is presented when Joseph dreams about the sun, moon, and stars. His father, Jacob, immediately understands that the dream is about him, his wife, and his sons (Gen. 37:9; see also Rev.12:1-6). The creation story describes God's illumination of himself to humanity by means of the establishment of a covenant relationship with the head of a particular people. If the beginning of the world and its curse is covenantal rather than literal, the end, as will be demonstrated, must also be covenantal. These truths have great bearing on the curse of Eve, and on the cure.

⁷ Ewen Callaway, MA, "Genetic Adam and Eve did not live too far apart in time: Studies re-date 'Y-chromosome Adam' and 'mitochondrial Eve,'" *Nature: International Weekly Journal of Science*, nature.com, 6 Aug. 2013, web, 1 Sept. 2013 <<http://www.nature.com/news/genetic-adam-and-eve-did-not-live-too-far-apart-in-time-1.13478>>.

CHAPTER 2

THE CURSE

From Chapter 1 it should be clear that the early Genesis story is not a factual account of the beginnings of the planet, the celestial bodies, and the earth's first people. No doubt God is responsible for the creation of the physical universe, but the saga he has provided to mankind is not that story. Therefore, when considering the narrative about Adam and Eve, it is important to remember that much of what is written must be understood metaphorically. For instance, how could an apple, or any piece of fruit, from a literal tree teach Adam and Eve anything about good and evil (Rom. 7:7-9)? Yes, a poisoned apple can put Snow White into a deep sleep, but fruit from a healthy tree does not kill. While anything is possible with God, the rational mind should easily recognize the probability that at least some elements of Adam and Eve's story are symbolic. Furthermore, the nature of the curse must be examined as to the intent of God when he spoke his words of gloom and doom. Was he angry and, just because he was "bigger and badder," chose to make life miserable for his new friends? After considering these two issues, the curse will be reflected on in relation to the cure, as much can be learned about the true nature of the curse by recognizing the realities of life when the wretchedness would be no more.

God had warned Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that was in the midst of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9, 3:3). Beginning in Chapter 3 of Genesis, the traditional view of the scenario is that the "wicked queen" (Lucifer, the angel of light, "fairest of them all") presents the lovely, pure, untainted "Snow White" with an "apple." Unfortunately, if Snow White takes a bite she will die, and cannot be awakened until the coming of the Prince who will bring her back from the dead. As in all good fairytales, she falls victim to the evil

antagonist: she eats the fruit, bringing upon herself not only death and a defiled conscience, but also a life of servitude. The curse God then speaks is as follows:

Genesis 3 (BBE):16 To the woman he said, Great will be your pain in childbirth; in sorrow will your children come to birth; still your desire will be for your husband, but he will be your master.

17 And to Adam he said, Because you gave ear to the voice of your wife and took of the fruit of the tree which I said you were not to take, the earth is cursed on your account; in pain you will get your food from it all your life.

18 Thorns and waste plants will come up, and the plants of the field will be your food;

19 With the hard work of your hands you will get your bread till you go back to the earth from which you were taken: for dust you are and to the dust you will go back.

20 And the man gave his wife the name of Eve because she was the mother of all who have life.

Thus begins the story that has taken on a life of its own in the Judeo-Christian world.

Taken literally, the passage would create enormous hardship, as it contains difficult injunctions.

First, the woman must experience great pain in childbirth. Where are the Bible scholars

demanding the cessation of all analgesics so women can bear this curse? Adam was told that the

plants of the field were to be his food, so why are all Bible believers not vegan? Finally, a man

was to procure his bread with sweat and the hard work of his hands. This statement leaves no

room to hire servants to toil the soil and plant a garden, it does not allow a man to seek assistance

from his wife, nor does it let the disabled off the hook. While no sermon has ever been preached

about how God cursed the ground for the man's sake and man must therefore be diligent to

ensure that it remains blighted, women are constantly urged to stay in their place and remain in

step with the strict requirements of their curse. Steve Parker wrote:

In all but one of the consequences concerning Adam and Eve, most people — including those who argue that the woman being ruled by her husband is the way God commands things to be — do all they can to reverse their effects. We use poison to eradicate weeds in our gardens and do all we can to control their growth. During labour, midwives do all they can to reduce pain during childbirth. In both of these cases, we assume that the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin

are an *intrusion* into the perfect world that God has made and that we need to minimise the effects of those consequences.⁸

If this is the case, why is it argued that the relationship between the husband and wife portrayed in Genesis 3 is the way God intended it to be? Shouldn't we treat this consequence in the same way we treat weeds and pain in childbirth? Shouldn't we do all we can to minimise this consequence of sin? Shouldn't we counteract the tendency of the husband to rule over his wife?

Sin had consequences; what Adam and Eve did was bad, and the consequences would be bad.

Death, thorns and thistles, and the rule of men over women are all terrible outcomes. A man's control of a woman is not and never has been the ideal; but if one claims that a curse of servitude was placed on women and is still binding today, then that person has an obligation to accept that the entirety of the curse must be applied.

Before the application of any part of this rhetoric, the intent of the curse should be determined.⁹ Was God's purpose to punish or cause adversity for these people, or was the curse simply a consequence, possibly even with only spiritual application, of their lost relationship with God? Most students of the Bible assume that God was angry when Adam and Eve disobeyed his command. They presume that he placed the tree of knowledge of good and evil before them as a test of their obedience. If they obeyed, they lived; if they refused to obey, God punished them in his wrath. But is this belief justified?

The fact that the man would reign over the woman (after the Fall) was not necessarily the result God desired. He was not putting a hex on Eve but was rather stating a truth, foretelling what was to come. God's words mean only that the relationship between man and woman would now be contaminated by sin, guilt, shame, and selfishness. When a baby is born into a family,

8 Steve Parker, "He Shall Rule Over You," *Quodlibet Journal*, 3:1, Winter 2001; quodlibet.net, web, 15 Sept. 2013 <<http://www.quodlibet.net/articles/parker-women.shtml>>.

9 God's words to Adam and Eve have been referred to as a "curse"; therefore, for convenience, this paper uses the terminology. But God never actually called his statements a curse; that word is used only in reference to the serpent and the ground (Gen. 3:14, 17).

often someone says, "You won't get a good night's sleep for the next eighteen years." That is not a reverse Snow White curse a friend or relative places on new parents or their child; it is simply a statement of fact. Perhaps the best way to look at the curse of Adam and Eve is that God explained to these people that once they broke fellowship with him, the relationship between him and them would be dead—destroyed by the man and woman, not by God. The man might strive to correct the situation, but he would be beating against the wind (fighting thorns and thistles) because he had no power to change the effect of his actions or take away his guilt and shame (Rom. 7).

The beginning of this struggle is presented in the First Book of Adam and Eve as follows:

XI:5 Then Adam cried, in deep affliction, and beat his chest; and he got up and said to Eve, "Where are you?"
6 And she said to him, "Look, I am standing in this darkness."
7 He then said to her, "Remember the bright nature in which we lived, when we lived in the garden!
8 O Eve! Remember the glory that rested on us in the garden. O Eve! Remember the trees that overshadowed us in the garden while we moved among them.
9 O Eve! Remember that while we were in the garden, we knew neither night nor day. Think of the Tree of Life, from below which flowed the water, and that shed lustre over us! Remember, O Eve, the garden land, and the brightness thereof!
10 Think, oh think of that garden in which was no darkness, while we lived in it.
11 Whereas no sooner did we come into this Cave of Treasures than darkness surrounded us all around; until we can no longer see each other; and all the pleasure of this life has come to an end."¹⁰

Adam bemoans the loss of his "bright nature" and "glory," not the physical ease with which he had lived in the Garden. Eve does not speak here except to say she is in darkness (life without God is dark), but the great pain in childbirth that she was to experience would be the knowledge that she was bringing forth children into a fallen world instead of into a world where her offspring would be at peace in the presence of the Creator.

¹⁰ Joseph Lumpkin, ed., The First and Second Books of Adam and Eve (Blountsville, AL: Fifth Estate Publishers, 2009), XI:5. God comforted Adam as follows: VII: 2 Then God had pity on them, and said: "O Adam, I have made My covenant with you, and I will not turn from it; neither will I let you return to the garden, until My covenant of the great five and a half days is fulfilled.

As for the rule men would wield over women, it surely was not of God (Phil. 2:3) but came into existence because men were not willing to honor women; therefore women were forced into a constant struggle for freedom.

Genesis 3:16 (DR) To the woman also he said: I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee.

The King James Version of this verse translates "thou shalt be under thy husband's power" as "thy desire shall be to thy husband." This is difficult to understand, but Douay-Rheims, above, seems to present it with a more logical reading. The following words, spoken to the first murderer, Cain, help to explain the meaning of the phrase.

Genesis 4 (WEB):6 Yahweh said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why has the expression of your face fallen?

7 If you do well, will it not be lifted up? If you don't do well, sin crouches at the door. Its desire is for you, but you are to rule over it" [KJV: "thou shalt rule over him"].

Sin would want Cain (or he would be under its power), but he was to rule over it (this was not a curse but an admonition).

From the standpoint of man and woman, the woman would be under her husband's power and he would have dominion over her. It is possible that the "desire" Eve had for her husband would be a yearning to take his place, steal his authority, be the one with the power, or at least find her way out from under the curse. The word is used in three places in the Bible—with regard to Eve and Cain and in the following verse:

Song of Songs 7:10 (WEB) I am my beloved's. His desire is toward me.

This word, "tēshuwgah," means "desire, longing, craving: of man for woman, of woman for man, of beast to devour."¹¹ While it obviously does not denote any craving for power in the Song of

¹¹ "Desire," *Lexicon*, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 19 Aug. 2013
<<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H8669&t=KJV>>.

Songs, perhaps it does convey an inordinate longing in both sin (toward Cain) and Eve (toward Adam). If true, that fact would strengthen the claim of this paper that the curse was not God's will. If the woman's unwarranted pining to seize control from her husband was inappropriate, then his ruling over her was just as unacceptable, improper, and unbecoming. God most surely did not command Eve to attempt to seize her husband's position; he therefore did not command Adam to rule over Eve. Such a wretched life is what the couple chose for themselves when they rejected God's will for their lives.

From a covenant point of view, Israel (inheritor of the covenant with Adam) would be the woman, bringing her children into a world separated from her true husband, God, having only a promise of restoration and redemption (through the Messiah) at some point in the future, and struggling to obey the cumbersome demands of the Law of Moses. From that perspective, law/sin/death would, of course, rule over Israel like an abusive husband, as she would certainly be under its power (Gen. 2:17; Jer. 3:8; Jn. 8:44; Rom. 4:15, 6:14, 7:1-11, 8:2; 1 Cor. 15:56-57; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 2:19, 3:10-13, 4:5; Eph. 2:15). God would no longer stand beside Israel as her friend and bosom companion the way he did in the beginning with Adam and Eve, and the knowledge/law she chose was of little comfort.

When God dwelt with Adam and Eve, life was easy; he gave them only one command, and that was not to turn away from an intimate relationship with him to walk according to their own knowledge of good and evil (in other words, they were to remain faithful to God). God is love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16); and he wanted his people to live in his "love-light." He urged them not to follow the thinking of a carnal mind or earthly/worldly wisdom (foolishness to God, 1 Cor. 1:19, 2:6, 3:19), which would bring only suffering and death. His desire was that Adam and Eve work side by side in the Garden in his presence (Gen. 1:28). When the relationship was broken,

intimacy with God was a challenging task—in fact, it was impossible to accomplish; and the Law made it even more difficult. What did God say when the Israelites wanted a king over them?

1 Samuel 8 (WEB):6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. Samuel prayed to Yahweh.

7 Yahweh said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people in all that they tell you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them.

Rejecting God for earthly rule/law/knowledge was unfaithfulness on the part of the people. What did God predict this desire for worldly wisdom and rule would bring upon Israel?

1 Samuel 8 (WEB):11 He said, This will be the manner of the king who shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them to him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots;

12 and he will appoint them to him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots.

13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

14 He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive groves, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

15 He will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

16 He will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your best young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your flocks: and you shall be his servants.

18 You shall cry out in that day because of your king whom you shall have chosen you; and Yahweh will not answer you in that day.

19 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; and they said, No: but we will have a king over us,

20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

That was life for Israel, living according to the "knowledge of good and evil" (Rom. 8:6-9).¹²

The male/female relationship under the curse reflected the same struggle. Before the curse, the woman's role was to dwell with and stand beside her husband as a help meet; after the curse, a struggle ensued. Just like God and his people, the man and his wife were separated by

¹² As will be shown later, worldly wisdom and knowledge would vanish in Christ (Jn. 17:15,18:36; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 2:6, 3:19, 13:8; 1 Jn. 2:16-17).

sin and failed to live with each other according to a standard of love (1 Cor. 2:14). The future God depicted was bleak for an association between God and mankind. His words also conveyed a special problem for women, who represented Eve, because they were forced to live out this prediction under the rule of their husbands. In fact, the sin of Adam and Eve brought hardship on every human being, as a tug of war commenced in the heart of all (Rom. 7) (See Appendix A). Fortunately, for Israel, women, and all people, in the curse upon the serpent was found a glimmer of hope for redemption.

Genesis 3:15 (BBE) And there will be war between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed: by him will your head be crushed and by you his foot will be wounded.

The woman's seed, the Messiah, would one day crush the power of the "serpent" and destroy the effects of sin—redeeming the woman from her curse. She was "sold" into slavery, but her Redeemer would come to "buy" her back.

Although it would be her unfortunate role (due to the man's hard, stony heart) until the Savior arrived to rescue her, the woman was not created to be subservient to her husband. The Genesis narrative states that man was alone, and God considered that "not good"; so he created Eve as a "help meet" for Adam (Gen. 2:18). The word translated as "help meet" in the King James Version of the Bible is "èzer" and means "help, succour, one who helps."¹³ It in no way implies servant-hood. In fact, "the Hebrew word helper is more commonly used for *God* as a helper of humans (e.g., Ex. 18:4)—the word does not presume lesser authority."¹⁴ Here are some passages where God is shown as a help meet to mankind (all taken from the King James Version of the Bible):

13 "Help meet," Lexicon, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 10 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5828&t=KJV>>.

14 "Men and Women in Genesis 1-3," Grace Communion International: Living and Sharing the Gospel, n.d., web, 31 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.gci.org/church/ministry/women3>>.

Deuteronomy 33:7 And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies.

Psalms 20:2 Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion;

Psalms 33:20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield.

Psalms 121:1 <<A Song of degrees.>> I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

Hosea 13:9 O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.

Is a "help meet" subservient? Since God is a help meet to humanity, the answer is no. Adam's control over Eve was a part of the curse, but it would not last forever.

The short account in Genesis provides little in the way of understanding the implications of the dire circumstances God foretold (either to Israel in general or women specifically), as it merely lists the consequences of the sin without giving much explanation. However, as stated above, the wretchedness was, at some point, to end; and perhaps the best way to comprehend the new, sorrowful life God envisioned is to view the cure God promised, looking at the new earth as it was prophesied to be after the curse's removal. God spoke the following words to Israel, who had become a harlot, failing to remain faithful to him:

Isaiah 65 (KJV):9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there . . .

12 Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear . . .

13 . . . my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry . . . my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty . . . my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:

14 . . . my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

15 And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name . . .

17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

The passage above is Messianic; it was written to the Jewish nation and provides a prophecy about the coming of the Messiah to take away the sin, removing the curse. (This passage clarifies that the major impact of the curse was toward a people rather than a specific man and woman; and it was about the removal of the first world, or earth.) This land without a curse is the new heavens and earth, as opposed to the old, cursed earth. It would come into existence after God had slain the Jews, his bride, for their adultery and unbelief (Mt. 8:11-12, 23:37-38; Rev. 17:1, 19:2). The new Jerusalem (new heaven and earth) would be a place of rejoicing because all thorns, thistles, and anything that created enmity between God and mankind, would be removed. The people would no longer be under a curse—hungry, thirsty, and crying (Lk. 6:25; Jn. 6:35; Gal. 3:10, 13; Phil. 4:4)—as the water of life would be provided freely in the heavenly Jerusalem and the inhabitants would enjoy all the (spiritual) food they needed without difficult toil (Mt. 5:6; Lk. 6:21; Jn. 4:10, 6:35; Rev. 7:17).

Continuing with Isaiah 65:

20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together [see Acts 10:28], and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

In verse 23 is the reversal of the curse of Eve. She would not "bring forth for trouble," as her children were to be the "seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." Eve's descendants would bear children in the new heavens and earth and enjoy their lives and their work—planting fields and eating of the produce, as their labor would no longer be in vain or troublesome. While Adam toiled among thorns and thistles and got nowhere (Rom. 7), this was not to be the case for his descendants in the new heaven and earth. God would be nearby, dwelling among his people; and the wolf and lamb would feed together, no one harming anyone else (Is. 11:9, 65:25; Mt. 7:15, 20:25-26; Jn. 21:16 -17; Acts 20:29). This is a beautiful prophecy of the realized kingdom of God, and the fulfillment of this prophecy is the death blow to the curse of Adam and Eve. The picture presented here clearly exhibits the spiritual nature of the curse and foretells the glorious realities to be expected in the new heaven and earth that was prophesied to come.

The cure for the curse was not to be enjoyed in Adam and Eve's generation. As a matter of fact, it would not come for some time. In the meantime, the words God spoke to Adam and Eve played out just as he said they would. Their descendants lived in a world where the strong ruled over and devoured the weak, and where the Law (the ministration of death, 2 Cor. 3:7) was a millstone around their neck and impossible to obey (Acts 15:10).

When the time came for the curse to end, as Isaiah 65 states, it brought with it more than just an end of death. Isaiah 26 and 27 provide additional information regarding this event.

Isaiah 26 (KJV):19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust . . .
20 hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.
21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. . .

6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. . .

9 By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

Based on the above passage, the following events were to occur when deliverance came:

- (1) Resurrection
- (2) Judgment
- (3) End of the serpent/dragon
- (4) Jacob's taking root and Israel's blossoming in the earth with fruit
- (5) Iniquity of Jacob purged and the forgiveness of sins
- (6) The altar stones turned to chalkstones

God assured his people that when the time was right, light and life would return. Paradise would be regained, and nobody would fight thorns and thistles to receive it, as it would be given freely.

The wolf and the lamb would feed together because the strong would not rule over the weak (sin/law/death would no longer rule over Eve's descendants).

The point of this chapter has been to explain the meaning of God's proclamations to Adam and Eve and to provide a picture of what life would be like when the damage was repaired. The main aspect of the curse is the spiritual decadence of the people who once were enlightened and the struggle that was theirs as they sought to regain their relationship with God. They were dead with no way to enliven themselves again. The import this would have on the roles of men and women and their relationship to one another is simply a part of living in the land of death; the curse would be exemplified in the lives of human beings until the cure arrived, and through their suffering they would learn to understand the futility of life in darkness living according to the wisdom of their carnal and temporal world.

CHAPTER 3

THE CURSE EXEMPLIFIED

The apple was eaten, Snow White fell asleep, she lost all ability to think or act on her own behalf, and seven little men had to take care of her. While that might be taking Eve's predicament a little too far, it is a caricature of the view some cling to with regard to women. With the curse in place, the issue to be understood with regard to women, particularly from the pages of the New Testament, is: how did women of the Bible, those who followed the will of God and would have reflected his mind on the issue, behave among God's people under a curse that said "he shall rule over thee"?

The word of God came through prophets and prophetesses. Both the Old and New Testaments present women who spoke for God. One woman, the sister of Moses and Aaron, even led a "worship service."

Exodus 15 (KJV):20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Miriam took it upon herself to dance and play the timbrel in the company of Israel. She had no qualms about leading a group of women in a worshipful song and dance to the Lord, in the presence of men, as she praised God for his deliverance. But that is not all—Miriam was a leader of Israel.

Micah 6 (KJV):3 O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.

4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

Also in the Old Testament, a woman named Deborah judged Israel with God's full endorsement (Judg. 4:4-5). As such she had rule and authority over men as well as women.

Deborah had a husband, Lapidoth, and since he was under her jurisdiction she would have ruled over him too. Therefore, God was comfortable with a woman's ruling over men in the congregation, which included the man in her bed. This was not an anomaly; God was not desperate for a leader and forced to go against his own rules by placing a woman in charge. Deborah was a prophetess, inspired by God himself, and "the children of Israel came up to her for judgment." Deborah also led the general of an Israelite army (Judg. 4-5).

1 Samuel 2:1-10 tells the story of Hannah, who prayed and prophesied in the temple in the presence of Eli the priest and her husband Elkanah. Chapter 25 of the same book relates Abigail's total disregard for her husband's wishes, when she did the opposite of what he had clearly stated by giving David and the men with him food from her husband's house. While David and his men were hungry, and Nabal, Abigail's husband, was being mean-spirited, the fact remains that Abigail refused to obey her husband, going against his strict orders. Nabal was cursed by God and died, and Abigail became wife to David; so God approved of Abigail's rebellious and disobedient behavior of acting on her own and against the desires of her husband.

So far, the evidence regarding the role of women living under the curse has produced a woman in charge of Israel who led a "worship service" in the presence of men, a woman praying and prophesying in the temple in the presence of men, a woman ruling over her husband and other men (and leading an army), and a woman blatantly disobeying her husband. And there is more. Rahab, a harlot, committed treason against her own people (going against every man in the city of Jericho) and was blessed of God (Josh. 6:22). Huldah, a prophetess, was sent by King Josiah to hear word from the Lord, and she prophesied evil toward the king, thus interceding between God and a king (2 Chron. 34:19-28).

One more example from the Old Testament must be considered before moving to the New Testament. To get a picture of God's ideal for his beloved daughters, one needs to look only at the following beautiful description of a worthy woman.

Proverbs 31(WEB):10 Who can find a worthy woman? For her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband trusts in her. He shall have no lack of gain.

12 She does him good, and not harm, All the days of her life.

13 She seeks wool and flax, And works eagerly with her hands.

14 She is like the merchant ships. She brings her bread from afar.

15 She rises also while it is yet night, Gives food to her household, And portions for her servant girls.

16 She considers a field, and buys it. With the fruit of her hands, she plants a vineyard.

17 She girds her waist with strength, And makes her arms strong.

18 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp doesn't go out by night.

19 She lays her hands to the distaff, And her hands hold the spindle.

20 She opens her arms to the poor; Yes, she extends her hands to the needy.

21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household; For all her household are clothed with scarlet.

22 She makes for herself carpets of tapestry. Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

23 Her husband is respected in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land.

24 She makes linen garments and sells them, And delivers sashes to the merchant.

25 Strength and dignity are her clothing. She laughs at the time to come.

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom. Faithful instruction is on her tongue.

27 She looks well to the ways of her household, And doesn't eat the bread of idleness.26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

28 Her children rise up and call her blessed. Her husband also praises her:

29 "Many women do noble things, But you excel them all."

30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain; But a woman who fears Yahweh, she shall be praised.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands! Let her works praise her in the gates!

Whether this description is of the ultimate woman or the image God has of his people, it reflects a competent being in full command of her own life and resources. Many women stare with envy upon the woman of Proverbs 31, and with sadness in their hearts because they think

they cannot measure up to her standard. They sometimes feel this way while they slink into the background and wait for their husbands to tell them what to do. But does the Proverbs 31 woman move quietly about in the shadows and wait for instructions? She seeks her own materials—she even considers a field and buys it, seemingly without any input from her husband, as he is not mentioned. This lady plants a vineyard, she produces and sells products, she is the source of her family's ability to enjoy proper clothing, and she is even the reason her husband is well spoken of in the community. She takes care of her family and administers her home as she sees fit. She opens her mouth with wisdom. Does she speak her wisdom only to other women? One would have a difficult time proving that since this lady is out and about among the merchants and other townspeople (she "brings her bread from afar").

Regarding Proverbs 31:10-31, an article posted online by United States Council of Catholic Bishops states:

An acrostic poem of twenty-two lines; each line begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. As with many other acrostic poems in the Bible, the unity of the poem is largely extrinsic, coming not from the narrative logic but from the familiar sequence of letters. The topic is the ideal woman described through her activity as a wife. Some have suggested that the traditional hymn extolling the great deeds of a warrior has been transposed to extol a heroic wife; the focus is on her exploits. She runs a household distinguished by abundant food and clothing for all within, by its trade (import of raw materials and export of finished products), and by the renown of its head, her husband, in the community. At v. 28, the voice is no longer that of the narrator but of her children and husband as they praise her. The purpose of the poem has been interpreted variously: an encomium to offset the sometimes negative portrayal of women in the book, or, more symbolically (and more likely), a portrait of a household ruled by Woman Wisdom and a disciple of Woman Wisdom, i.e., he now has a worthy wife and children, a great household, renown in the community.¹⁵

According to this, the praise for the worthy woman expresses the idea that she is exactly like a worthy warrior. She is a heroine.

¹⁵ "Proverbs, Chapter 31," United States Council of Catholic Bishops, n.d., web, 4 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.usccb.org/bible/proverbs/31/>>.

The Proverbs 31 model presents the lady of each home as ruler over her house. The home seems to have been more like a business that this woman ran. Just as her husband had his work to accomplish, the wife was completely in charge of her home and its workings, inside as well as outside in the community. How much input did her husband offer? None at all that can be seen. This was the woman's concern and she was in charge. In fact, it may well have been her own home before she ever married her husband, as free women brought a dowry with them when they married (Ex. 22:17).

But what about during the time of Christ and the apostles? What were women told then? Continuing with the same line of thinking as the Law of Moses, the writers of the New Testament exhorted women to "rule the house" (1 Tim. 5:14). The word "guide" in the King James Version is "oikodespoteō" and is defined as follows: "(1) to be master (or head) of a house; (2) to rule a household, manage family affairs."¹⁶ Nothing is said in this passage about a woman's need to seek approval from her husband as she rules her household. This should give pause to those who view the home as the husband's domain to rule.

As pertains to the woman's role in the church, the New Testament provides examples of women functioning in a way that many churches today refuse to allow women to enjoy because they misunderstand the essence of the Bible.

Romans 16 (KJV):1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:
2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

The word in verse 1 above that is translated "servant" in the King James Version is actually the same word that is in other places translated as "deacon" (Phil. 1:1). 1 Timothy 3 reveals

¹⁶ "Guide," Lexicon, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 30 Jul. 2013
<<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G3616&t=KJV>>.

requirements needed for one wishing to be a bishop or deacon. First the bishops' regulations are stated and then the deacons'. Nothing is said of the wives of bishops; but when the requirements for deacons are listed, the King James Version of the Bible speaks of the qualifications of the deacons' wives. That seems odd as one would normally think it more important that the bishops' wives be what they ought to be than it would be for the deacons' wives to be so. The answer to this dilemma is that the word "wives" in 1 Timothy 3 should be translated as "women," as women were deaconesses in the early church; therefore, the requirements listed are for these women, not the deacons' wives. Mark Williams wrote the following:

Those who object to women holding the office of deacon have translated "women" in I Tim 3 as "wives [of deacons]"; Koine Greek does not distinguish between the words "woman" and "wife" (as in many languages), so the context has to dictate which applies. Why would Paul require deacons' wives to be temperate and mature, **but not require elders' wives** to be temperate and mature, when elders were usually designated as having a higher calling than deacons (elders were to teach and shepherd, whereas deacons were to serve)?¹⁷

Phoebe is not the only woman in the New Testament working alongside men. On the first Pentecost after Christ arose from the grave, the Holy Spirit came upon both men and women (Acts 2:17-18). These gifts were given for a purpose; if a woman could prophesy or speak in tongues, she was to use her gifts.

The name of a woman, Priscilla, is often mentioned in the sacred texts before her husband Aquila's, indicating that she was the major player in the work she and her husband performed to further the gospel (Acts 18:18-26, Rom. 16:3). Romans 16:7 names a woman, Junia, who is "of note among the apostles" for her work in the gospel, imprisoned along with another of Paul's relatives because she somehow put herself out in the public eye; and one would not presume that she was imprisoned because she "washed the saints' feet" but rather

¹⁷ Mark Williams, "Phoebe the Deaconess," *Ex-Church of Christ Blog*, 22 Dec. 2012, web, 8 Aug. 2013 <<http://exchurchofchrist.wordpress.com/2012/12/22/phoebe-the-deaconess/>>.

because she was outspoken. Philip had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9), and the Bible speaks of women in general praying and prophesying in public (1 Cor. 11:5). If women were not participating in these acts in the presence of men, Paul would not have explained to them that they needed to be covered, according to the custom of the day, in order to do so; if they were simply speaking with women, or in private, they would have had no need to cover their heads as there would be no shame involved.

The woman Jesus encountered at Jacob's well ran to town to tell her neighbors about the man who told her everything she had ever done (Jn. 4:39). Some argue that this proves nothing with regard to women's work in the church since she did not preach from a pulpit, in a formal "worship assembly," between the hours of 11:00 and 12:00 on a Sunday morning. The reasoning seems to be that it is fine and good for a woman to proclaim the "Good News" (seriously, is this really still "news" today?) about Jesus, as long as she has the good sense not to do so "in church." Dr. Lance Pape, Assistant Professor of Homiletics at Brite Divinity School, disagrees. He wrote the following:

All indications are that we are far more concerned with such formal distinctions about time and place than Jesus ever was. A woman by a well once asked him to offer a ruling on a longstanding dispute about worship practice. His response revealed his disinterest in the externals of worship, endless debates about sacred times, spaces, and techniques. Instead he announced a new era in which the focus would rest squarely on the orientation of the worshiper's heart: "the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth."¹⁸

One verse in the New Testament seems to be a silver bullet to destroy any belief that God requires women to be subservient to men when performing service to God.

Galatians 3:28 (KJV) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor

18 Lance Pape, PhD, MDiv, "The First Female Gospel Preacher," gal328.org., n.d., web, 8 Aug. 2013 <<http://gal328.org/resources/essays-and-articles/624-2/>>. Now the Granville and Erline Walker Assistant Professor of Homiletics at Brite Divinity School, Lance Pape is one of the original founders and the first editor of gal328.org.

free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

The passage above is often used to prove that people of all races and all walks of life are of equal worth and therefore should be treated equally, but when the question arises regarding the reason women are not allowed the same freedoms as men with regard to the work of the church, the answer is that the verse means only that all people are offered salvation. To the contrary, Lance Pape argued:

We can scarcely imagine Paul consoling Gentiles forced to sit at a separate table with the assurance that they are equal in God's sight, but must resign themselves to a different "role" in the community. In Galatians, Paul argues and imagines a community with no second-class citizens. For Paul, the new status enjoyed by both Jews and Gentiles "in Christ" is the reality that trumps all others—a "new creation" that will be reflected in every facet of community life.¹⁹

A new ("kainos," fresh, unprecedented)²⁰ creation is what the Messiah would establish when he came to reconcile mankind to God. The old creation (order of creation, deception of Eve, curse) would melt away and a new creation would come into existence.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Revelation 21:5 (KJV) And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

As will be discussed in further detail later, God does not want a hierarchy among his people (Lk. 22:24-27).

John Shelby Spong, a former Anglican bishop, in his book Jesus for the Non-Religious, bemoaned the fact that Christianity has not been allowed to evolve into what he believes it can and should be. He thinks it is headed for a Renaissance.

19 Lance Pape, PhD, MDiv, "(FRO) Frequently Raised Objections," gal328.org., n.d., web, 7 Aug. 2013 <<http://gal328.org/resources/essays-and-articles/fro-frequently-raised-objections/>>.

20 J. H. Thayer, Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Ada, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1977), "kainos," p. 818. "Kainos" denotes the new primarily in reference to quality, "fresh, unworn."

The religion called Christianity is dying, the casualty of an expanded worldview. The God experience in Jesus—that experience upon which Christianity was built—is newly dawning and will in time create new forms through which that new vision can live. Once Jesus is freed from the prison of religion, a renaissance and a reformation are possible. Jesus for the non-religious comes into view.²¹

It is time for some traditions to be abolished. Certainly any tradition ought to be discarded if it does not fit with the concept of the nature of God and his love for all of humanity, and was never meant to last throughout all generations or was never so in the first place. Forbidding women to offer insight, on both spiritual and business matters, is carried out at great cost to the church: the wisdom of half the congregants (all the women) is being ignored or cast aside as rubbish. This is the worst form of prodigal abuse.

The real oddity regarding this issue is that a statement to a woman regarding her husband ("he shall rule over thee") has been twisted into a requirement that all Christian women must allow all Christian men to rule over them, and in a far greater sense than the women would ever accept from their own husbands. Today if a woman's husband built a house and decorated it, ruled the affairs of the home without so much as allowing the woman to be in the room when he was pondering his judgments, and made every single decision about how each penny (including the wife's pennies) was spent, that woman would consider her husband abusive and uncaring—and he would be. Many women confronted with such circumstances would not simply send their husbands to the couch but they would send them packing. Strangely, these same women endure this type of behavior in their religious circles without batting an eye.

The Scriptures present evidence that women within the pages of the Bible understood the curse of Eve far differently than the way many of today's Christian churches interpret its meaning. Women of the Bible were in charge of the people of God, judged over them, and led

²¹ John Shelby Spong, MDiv, *Jesus for the Non-Religious* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 290. For further information, see video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6AfFcAmx-Ro&feature=youtu.be>.

them into battle. They were a strong presence within their home and their community. They prayed, prophesied, and worshiped in the presence of men. They taught the gospel alongside men, and they were deacons in the church. Women today may look to these Bible heroines as noble examples when considering their own service to God.

CHAPTER 4

WIVES, CONCUBINES, AND SLAVES

Biblical scholars are often tormented in their attempt to comprehend regulations in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, regarding laws pertaining to wives and slaves. Every so often someone questions why Moses enacted laws that seemingly placed women and the downtrodden into positions of inferiority and hardship. The New Testament echoes these laws by stating that wives are to obey their husbands as the church obeys Christ (Eph. 5:24) and as servants, or slaves, obey their masters (1 Pet. 2:18, 3:1). Why would a loving God, who is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), make such laws? What was his purpose, and do these laws affect the issue of women's rights in the family of God today? The answer to that question is quite simple. The time of Adam and Moses was the time of the walking dead (Rom. 5:12-14, 2 Cor. 3:7). Someday the Messiah would come and life would return, but in the meantime God himself made laws to give some protection to the sheep dwelling among wolves.

Exodus 21:7-11 speaks of a man's selling his daughter to be a maidservant. At least under Western law today, a man is not granted the right to sell his daughter, and if he were to do so he would go to jail; but when one recognizes that the culture in which this law was written had no public welfare system in place to take care of women and children, the justice in such a law becomes evident. If a Hebrew man was poor his daughter would be better off if he sold her to a fellow Hebrew.

The story of Jacob and Rachel in Genesis 29 is an account of wife buying. Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, and then seven more years because he was tricked into marrying her older sister, Leah. This was the price he paid for his brides because he had left his father's home without taking an inheritance and therefore had no money to buy a wife. It was a good deal for

both Jacob and Rachel's father, Laban. While he was working for Laban, Jacob was able to save money; and by watching Jacob work, seeing his wisdom, diligence, patience, and endurance, Laban was assured that his daughters were getting a good husband who could provide for them.

Jacob's father, Isaac, also married a woman who was purchased for him (this brings a whole new meaning to the term "bought woman"). Isaac's father, Abraham, sent his eldest servant back to his country and his kindred to buy a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24). The servant went and, upon finding Rebecca and negotiating to make her Isaac's wife, "brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things" (Gen. 24:53).

David's bride price to Saul for the hand of Michal in marriage was the head of Goliath and the foreskins of 200 Philistines (1 Sam. 18:27). A man was not simply handed a woman; he had to buy her.²² The father under the patriarchal system was head of the family, and responsible financially for his daughters—until he sold them to another man as a wife or concubine. At that point the wife was "adopted" by the man who bought her and he became responsible for her upkeep.²³ It was not a bad system for the prospective husband, however, as many times all or most of the bride price was returned to him as the girl's dowry.²⁴ It was definitely a good system for a potential bride as her dowry belonged to her even after marriage; and if her husband frivolously divorced her, she took that money with her back to her father's house or to a new husband's home. Thus she was assured that she would always be provided for, and her father knew that she would not be a burden on him if the marriage did not work. If he had been paid for

22 Gary North, Tools of Dominion: Case Laws of Exodus (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), 213-214.

23 North, 218-219.

24 North, 224-25.

her and she brought her dowry back, she would not be a financial liability.²⁵ A daughter was not responsible for her parents in their old age; sons were.²⁶ So it was a righteous commandment that the daughter go out with her dowry and also morally just that her suitor, who would not be responsible for her parents, pay a price for her at the time of the marriage so that he would be providing some (upfront) money for her parents. The dowry was the girl's inheritance; the bride price was her part in taking care of her parents. Parents could keep what they wanted of the bride price and give the rest to the girl, or they could retain it all and sell their daughter as a slave.²⁷

There were two types of marriage in Israel: free marriage and concubinage. (Isaac was the son of a free woman and Ishmael was the son of a bondwoman, Gal. 4:21-31.) If a girl did not have a dowry she was a concubine, or slave. This may sound bad but it was actually a good concept; it made it possible for even poor girls to escape from their poverty and be taken into the home of a man who could provide for them.²⁸ It was better to eat as a slave than starve as a free woman. Gary North wrote:

In effect, this option of concubinage was a poor girl's way out of poverty. Her father had no way to protect her economically. If every marriage had required a dowry, she might never have been able to marry. Her future as a mother would have been cut off. So God graciously established a way out: concubinage.²⁹

While the dowry was not a requirement, the bride price was. The bride price was the means a father had to screen a future husband to make sure he could take care of his daughter.³⁰

25 North, 266.

26 North, 253.

27 North, 224-25.

28 North, 276.

29 North, 252.

30 North, 276.

If a man came to the father empty handed, he left with no bride. The wisdom of God is clearly seen in this arrangement. When a man took a wife in biblical times, she became his sister and his responsibility. Abraham therefore rightly called Sarah his sister (Gen. 26:7), and the Song of Solomon states:

Song of Songs (KJV) 4:9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse;
thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.
10 How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than
wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

Even today a wife becomes a daughter (in-law) and a sister (in-law) when she marries. She is adopted as a member of the husband's family and thus becomes his sister and wife—and his responsibility. She also usually gets an engagement ring, which she takes with her if the marriage does not prosper.

A woman with no dowry, a concubine, did not have the same rights as a wife, but she could be redeemed by her father or near kinsman. Even if a husband died, a near kinsman redeemed the man's wife. This is what Boaz did for Ruth (Ruth 3-4), and it is what the Messiah would do for Eve. Humanity's first husband, Adam, placed himself and his bride, and their heirs, into bondage—the bondage of sin. Eve became a slave because of her husband; thus, she needed to be redeemed by a near kinsman, Jesus.³¹

In Ezekiel 16 God calls Israel his bride. Israel was illegitimate. Her father was an Amorite and her mother was a Hittite, but both had abandoned her. She was not just an orphan; she was a bastard orphan.³² God had mercy on Israel, spread his skirt over her, and betrothed her to himself—entering into a covenant with her. God decorated Israel with gold, silver, and fine linen, and even put a crown on her head. Her renown spread far and wide among the heathen

31 North, 227.

32 North, 249.

because of her beauty. As Israel's father, God provided a huge dowry, and as her suitor an amazing bride price, showing that he intended to take her as his legitimate wife and that he never planned to divorce her. Sadly, Israel played the whore and squandered God's blessings. The fact that God lavished her with amazingly good gifts makes her unfaithfulness even more an act of shame and disgust.³³

Later, God sent his Son back to his country to redeem his bride as the kinsman-redeemer. Jesus paid the ultimate bride price; he gave his life for the bride. But, despite the fact that God offered the most wonderful marriage a wife could ever imagine, most of Israel continued to spurn him and refused his gifts and his Son's payment.

When viewing the role of women in the Old Testament in this light, one sees how the Law was indeed a schoolmaster to bring the Jews to Christ (Gal. 3:24-25). Had they been more astute and understood the spiritual components of the laws God imparted to them, they would have been more aware of what was happening when Jesus arrived. But, alas, they killed their kinsman-redeemer, not knowing what they were doing (Lk. 23:34).

Despite the fact that women were protected by the Law of Moses with these regulations, some today find these laws unpalatable and judge God to be unrighteous in his dealings with women. However, the New Testament directive regarding widows indeed (1 Tim. 5:9-13) presents the same picture. If an older woman had family, they were supposed to provide for her if her husband died (or they would have denied the faith and been worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. 5:8); if she did not have family, the church "redeemed" or "adopted" her, and she basically sold herself into "slavery" as she was bound to keep her vow and never marry again. The church in

33 North, 251.

such a case became the kinsman-redeemer of the widow.³⁴ The law itself was not evil (1 Tim. 1: 5-11); it was the dependence on law, the need for it, the desire for it, rather than a mature and heartfelt relationship with God and humanity, that was the problem.

The marriage law leads easily into a discussion of slavery in the Old Testament (which is the same in the New). It should be understood at this point that slavery too was a merciful act of God to protect the lambs. North wrote:

There are cases where righteous people fall into poverty or trials through no fault of their own. In order to give them a way back into profitable service as debt-free producers, God makes indentured servitude available to them. It is God's means of grace to them, a means of release from debt bondage.³⁵

God made it possible for a person who was down and out to submit himself to become a servant to another for seven years, learning from one who obviously knew how to make money, so that he could pull himself up by his bootstraps and find his way again, at which time he could redeem himself. God graciously provided a way for people to make a living for themselves, either through slavery for the man or concubinage or ordinary slavery for the woman.³⁶

This chapter is presented for the purpose of showing that God loves all people and his laws are just and fair, and for the purpose of good not evil. (Also, the symbolic nature of these laws regarding women and slaves in representing Israel and her redemption surely is understood.) Laws pertaining to the headship of a man over his wife and the servant status of some who found themselves in dire straits do not apply to the church. Even in the patriarchal society of Abraham and Jewish heads of families (at a time when a man had authority to disallow his wife's vows, Num. 30:1-16), women enjoyed leadership roles among the people of God. A

34 North, 270.

35 North, 221.

36 North, 227.

woman of God has freedom to serve him, alongside her brothers, especially in today's society when Christ has redeemed mankind from the curse of the Law. The church does not promote the selling of humans into service, and it ought not promote the placing of women under the bondage of men. God protected the lambs from the wolves in the ancient world while he was tutoring his people in their infancy (Gal. 4:2). But these laws regarding wives and slaves no longer exist; today, those wishing to reinstate some of the laws of God regarding women must be sure to reinstate them all (Gal. 5:1-4). Although these laws are no longer relevant, however, they are important to understanding the reversal of the curse and the redemption of Eve. God always desired a better program of operation than law, and Christ came to bring about the Father's will.

CHAPTER 5

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

God revealed himself to humanity gradually over the course of time, in various ways that the people to whom he spoke could understand (Heb. 1:1). The Old Testament includes a variety of strict laws, particularly in the Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy). The New Testament contains no books of law; it does, however, offer principles that are to be applied in love and with the motivation to support and comfort rather than to harm. The New Testament does not demand that every detail of every directive be lived out in the lives of all people for all time, regardless of the circumstances involved.³⁷ When interpreting the Scriptures, it is important to consider who, what, where, when, and why; historical context must be considered; one must not pick and choose among the sentences, keeping what is pleasing and discarding the rest; and, finally, a passage must be understood within its biblical context. With these thoughts in mind, an attempt will be made to properly interpret passages in the Bible that have led to inappropriate subservience of women in the Christian community.

Most people generally understand that cultural activities presented in biblical texts are not necessarily to be observed and that certain passages are not directed toward people of today. Most have accepted the idea that the practice of foot washing, for instance, was a custom of the first century AD and needs not be performed in the twenty-first century. They understand this truth despite the fact that Jesus emphatically stated to his apostles:

John 13 (KJV):14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

³⁷ Martin Zender, *The First Idiot in Heaven: Secrets of the Apostle Paul (And why the meek merely inherit the Earth)* (Canton, OH: Starke & Hartmann, Inc., 2012), 121.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Verse 4 of John 13 states: "He riseth from supper." Jesus had just finished instituting his Supper in which he proclaimed the bread to be his body and the wine to be his blood. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance that has been practiced since that time; and on the tail end of this instruction regarding the Supper, the Lord commanded his followers to continue his practice of foot washing. Yet, many who claim to follow Christ have, for understandable reasons, failed to do so, asserting that the act was simply one of service and customs today are different.

Another cultural behavior resisted by people of God is the holy kiss. Interestingly, the kiss is mentioned in the one and only passage that calls the early body of believers "churches of Christ."

Romans 16:16 (KJV) Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

As with the Lord's Supper and the holy kiss, many today pick one aspect of this verse and discard another. They ignore the kiss—the complete context of the passage—and cling rather to the name "Church of Christ," declaring that name to be the one and only name the people of God should don today. (They will admit that other names may be used, but when a congregation attempts to do so it soon finds itself judged and ostracized from most groups calling themselves Church of Christ.)

Because of first-century culture, the Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11, speaks of a head covering for women during prayer and prophecy. This covering was a custom of the day, just as the Jews had a custom of releasing a prisoner at Passover (Jn. 18:39, 1 Cor. 11:16).³⁸ These two instances are the only times the word "custom" is used in the New Testament, and it is clear from the meaning in John 18 that the word does not imply law or regulation but rather a common

38 Cheryl Schatz, "Shaming the head (1 Corinthians 11:3-7)," *A Bible Student*, abiblestudent.com, 24 September 2011, web, 15 Sept. 2013 < <http://www.abiblestudent.com/search/label/Women%20in%20Ministry>>.

practice. The word is "synétheia" and means "intercourse with one (intimacy); custom; a being used to, accustomed."³⁹ Today, the head covering is generally considered optional, audible praying by women is condemned, and people seek only to require the headship of men over women in the congregation. Paul provided a covering for women when they prayed or prophesied in the assembly; today's preachers often say, "You don't need to cover your head because you can't pray or even speak in our assemblies." Some even declare, "Cover your heads but you still cannot speak."⁴⁰

Culture is usually considered when Bible scholars explain the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:9-15. As they do with the passages regarding the holy kiss, the Lord's Supper, and the head covering, many pick and choose through the language when determining what they will and will not observe. In the framework of how women were to adorn themselves, Paul gave further teaching that a woman was not to teach or usurp authority over "the man." Today women sit in pews with "braided hair, gold, pearls, or expensive clothing," yet constraints are placed on them because of the next words that proceeded from Paul's pen.

What prompts people to demand one aspect of a passage to be binding while ignoring other teachings presented? Dr. Daniel Crabtree wrote:

If part of the passage is interpreted as having universal application, then all of it should be interpreted the same way. If Paul's forbidding women to teach or have

39 "Custom," Lexicon, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 6 Sept. 2013
<<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4914&t=KJV>>.

40 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 deals extensively with the headship of the man over the woman. This researcher does not deny that the Apostle Paul's arguments here are based not only on the curse but also on the creation order. The passage will not be considered extensively because it pertains to a man and his wife, which is not the main focus of this paper; the head covering Paul speaks of is obviously cultural; for a time the Jewish Christians continued practices brought on by the curse or based on creation order; and in the new creation men and women are equal, and are not even beneath angels, who were created prior to men (1 Cor. 6:3; Heb. 2:5-18, 12:22). (The new creation will be discussed in-depth in a later chapter.)

authority is universal, then . . . the same argument could be made concerning the braided hair, gold, pearls, and expensive clothes mentioned in verse 9.⁴¹

Regarding this passage Dale Pauls stated:

When we pick and choose sometimes from within the same passage (e.g. 1 Tim. 2:9-15) those matters to which we will apply the letter of the law (while disregarding historical context) and those to which we will not, we are not being objective, reasonable, or consistent.⁴²

This passage, 1 Timothy 2:11-15, is one that the modern church sometimes uses to forbid women from participating alongside men in the activities of the church.

1 Timothy 2 (WEB):11 Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection.
12 But I don't permit a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness.
13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.
14 Adam wasn't deceived, but the woman, being deceived, has fallen into disobedience;
15 but she will be saved through her child-bearing, if they continue in faith, love, and sanctification with sobriety.

In doing research the author found several plausible expositions for this passage, and all will be considered here.

Oscar Miles promotes a cultural view of the text. He stated in an e-mail:

I believe Paul was making application to THEIR culture. Should I take his specific instruction for their culture and apply it to mine? If so, why? Women were not permitted to have authority over a man BECAUSE it was not done in their society, and thus it should not be done in the church. My opinion is that because women are OFTEN in places of authority over men in our culture, it is perfectly acceptable also in our churches.

In other words, Paul's instruction for the church was based on the society in which he lived. For women to be put in authority in the church would have turned

41 Daniel Crabtree, DMin, MDiv, "An Examination of 1 Timothy 2:8-15," The Network: A Called Community of Women, n.d., web, 2 Sept. 2013 <http://ag.org/wim/0703/0703_1Timothy2_8_15.cfm>. Daniel Crabtree is an associate professor at Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri. For twelve years he was senior pastor of churches in Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio. This article is adapted from "Let Them Preach: A Class on Women in Ministry," Dr. Crabtree's doctoral project in 2006.

42 Dale Pauls, "Seven Questions," gal328.org, n.d., web, 7 Aug. 2013 <<http://gal328.org/articles/Pauls-Seven.html>>. Dale Pauls is a minister at the Stamford Church of Christ, Stamford, Connecticut.

the order of their society on its head. It was unworkable. It should not be done in the church because it COULD NOT be done in their society. But in our society, it seems to be perfectly workable outside the church. So, if I'm applying the principle like Paul did, wouldn't I say, "To forbid women places of authority inside the church would be to rebel against our culture, since our culture teaches that to show gender bias by restricting leadership to men is immoral"?⁴³

Miles' position gains strength from the fact that the Apostle Paul, in giving these instructions, reiterated what he said in 1 Corinthians 11 (regarding the head covering for women), that his words were based partially on the fact that man was created first. If he presented that argument for the custom of the head covering, then his use of it here might well indicate that his teaching was related to cultural issues.

Augustus Hopkins Strong often stated, "theology is a science."⁴⁴ In science, one does not set out to prove that a hypothesis is true; hypotheses are proven false. Anything left on the table after one has weeded out the hypotheses that cannot be true is the only view(s) that can be considered as truth. If a position cannot be true, then that position must be dismissed.

According to Dr. Jeffrey L. Vaughn, 1 Timothy 2:11-15 cannot be true as most interpret it. He believes the passage has been twisted to mean something it does not say.

As for 1 Timothy 2:11-15, it is badly translated. That applies especially to verse 15. For example the NIV says: "But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety." However, the Greek doesn't say "women." Young's Literal Translation has "she," singular, a specific woman. This is not speaking of all women in general. It refers either to Eve in the previous verse or the specific woman in vss. 11-12. Eve doesn't match the verb tense. Therefore, vss. 13-14 is a parenthetical comment. The woman of vss. 11-12 is the woman of verse 15.

43 Oscar Miles, MA, NCC, DCC, "Re: Is the Curse in Genesis 3 Covenantal?" message to the author, 1 Aug. 2013, e-mail. NCC stands for National Certified Counselor. DCC is Distance Credentialed Counselor, which means Miles is credentialed in using all forms of distance counseling: video (e.g., Skype), e-mail, IM, phone, etc. He is also Teaching and Counseling Minister with the Ardmore Family of God in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

44 Augustus Hopkins Strong, DD, LLD, Systematic Theology: A Compendium Designed for the Use of Theology Students (public domain, 1903), 27.

The verse says "if they continue." Who is "they"? It is the specific woman and the specific man in vss. 11-12. This is not speaking about all women. This is a particular man and a particular woman, who have a relationship that typically includes childbearing—that is, a woman and her husband.

My paraphrase: "A wife is not to be placed in authority over her husband. It is not done outside the church. You are not to do it inside the church. A woman's proper Christian duty is the woman's proper duty to her husband. It is her duty to raise her husband's children. Whatever you think that Christian duty is or how she should perform it, it is not your concern. Leave them alone to 'work out their own salvation.'"⁴⁵

Once again, all that must be done to prove that the customary understanding of this passage is not correct is to prove that it is false. According to Vaughn, "1 Timothy 2:15 cannot mean 'women' (plural) as is (1) translated, and (2) assumed by all the commentaries. It is 'woman' (singular) and 'if they' (husband and wife)."⁴⁶ Vaughn continued:

That simple fact destroys the standard Fundamentalist line that places every 13-year-old young man over every woman in the congregation. And it destroys the standard liberal view that Paul meant to have every 13-year-old young man in authority over every woman in the congregation back in that culture, but it is simply not true for us because we live in a different time and place.

Notice, both views start with the same error. One wants to make that error law. The other says they can't live with what they claim the text says, and makes excuses for ignoring the text.⁴⁷

The thrust of Dr. Vaughn's argument is that a woman should not be placed in authority over her husband, and Young's Literal Translation actually says in verse 12: "nor to rule a husband." This line of reasoning supports the patriarchal headship of a husband over his wife, according to the order of creation, and as long as the curse remained. According to Vaughn, the

45 Jeffrey L. Vaughn, PhD, "Re: Is the Curse in Genesis 3 Covenantal?" message to the author, 21 Aug. 2013, e-mail.

46 Vaughn, Ibid.

47 Vaughn, Ibid.

passage has nothing to do with all women or all men, and especially does not suggest the practice of placing little boys in "authority" over grown women.

Dr. Daniel Crabtree, associate professor at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, interprets this passage from a different perspective. His contextual view of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 is as follows:

Paul is forced to fight on two fronts. He disagrees with those who seek to limit a woman's role in the church (Galatians 3:28, 1 Corinthians 14:33-36), and at the same time he wants to uphold the sanctity and importance of a woman's role in marriage and family (1 Timothy 4:3; 5:11-15). . .

Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus to deal with the false teachers (1 Timothy 1:3). The false teachers had seduced and deceived "weak-willed women" who were "always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth" (2 Timothy 3:6,7). Some of these women began spreading the false teaching from house church to house church. The evidence for this is found in 1 Timothy 5:13 where women are "going about from house to house ... saying things they ought not to." The assumption is that the church met in houses, which is made more probable by Paul's statement concerning how he taught "from house to house" while at Ephesus (Acts 20:20). Paul describes the false teaching at Ephesus as including "old wives tales" (1 Timothy 4:7), something Paul took seriously enough to feel that it posed a threat to the congregation. The seriousness of the women's error is demonstrated by the fact that some of them had "already turned away to follow Satan" (1 Timothy 5:15). If the "gossiping" the women did from house to house was only saucy tidbits, then it is unlikely that Paul would have declared that some of them had "already turned away to follow Satan." His condemnation indicates that false teaching must have been involved. Paul's solution to the problem is that the women should settle down, get married, have children, and manage their homes in order "to give the enemy no opportunity for slander" (1 Timothy 5:14). This is the same advice he gives to women in 1 Timothy 2:15 when he tells them they will be "saved through childbearing." Thus, this very difficult verse begins to make sense only when it is interpreted in light of the situation at Ephesus. Paul's conclusion to the passage on women (1 Timothy 2:9-15) is advice given to a particular group of women at Ephesus. If this is true of his conclusion, then it seems reasonable that the rest of the passage is also directed toward the same group of Ephesian women.⁴⁸

Crabtree's view is that the women Paul wanted to sit down and be quiet were those who were unlearned and therefore had no business trying to teach.

48 Crabtree, *Ibid.*

Some claim that Paul's warning to Timothy regarding the wearing of gold, pearls, and costly array is merely a caution not to allow outer adornment to be the main concern of a woman, not that she may not decorate herself but simply that she should be more concerned about her inner self. Perhaps so, but could the same argument not be used for the entirety of the passage?

Dr. Crabtree thinks so.

When Paul places restrictions on women in 1 Timothy 2:11,12, he has in mind these women spreading false teaching. It is them he admonishes to "learn in quietness and full submission" and does not permit to teach or "to have authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:11,12). What is often overlooked is his command that "a woman should learn" (1 Timothy 2:11) is in the imperative in the Greek. In fact, this is the only imperative in the entire passage. Many think Paul is commanding women not to teach, but instead he is specifically commanding them to learn. This is of critical importance because learning is the antidote to the disease of heresy. Paul is interested in "saving" the women, a concern that is demonstrated in his treatment of women throughout 1 Timothy.⁴⁹

If indeed the context of Paul's words is to place emphasis on the inner person rather than the outer (not that the outer is not important), then it is highly probable that he was also conveying that, in the situation at Ephesus at the time of his writing, it was more important for the women to learn rather than to teach. They could teach later, when they were more knowledgeable.

Crabtree stated:

While these women are learning, they are not to teach or usurp authority. When Paul speaks of not allowing women to teach, he uses the present tense which could be translated, "I am presently permitting no woman to teach. . ."

In conclusion, in 1 Timothy 2:8-15, Paul instructs a group of women who have been deceived by false teachers to learn in submission. While they are learning, they are not to teach, but rather remain silent. For some of them, especially the younger widows, Paul encourages marriage and having children . . . Paul demonstrates that he is not in favor of restricting the role of women in the church on the basis of gender, but instead that he upholds the sanctity of marriage and family.⁵⁰

49 Crabtree, Ibid.

50 Crabtree, Ibid.

The final analysis of this passage will be quoted here. It is put forth by Bob Edwards, former Director of Counseling Studies at a multi-denominational Bible college.

It was also Jerome who significantly—and for all time since—altered the meaning of 1 Timothy 2:12. This passage allegedly prohibits women from teaching or leading men in the church. Thanks largely to Jerome's example, a key verb here (authentēin) has been translated "to exercise authority". In Jerome's time, it was rendered more in terms of "having dominion over" or "dominating" a man. Prior to this, the word more commonly referred to the instigation or commission of an act of violence, suicide or murder. In the Greek Septuagint, for example, a noun form of the word (authentās) refers to those who engaged in ritual violence in the worship of a false god.

In Timothy's time and locale, the goddess Cybele (called Artemis by the Greeks) was worshipped through violent rituals against men that symbolized the murder/suicide of a false god named Attis. In his letter to Timothy, Paul repeatedly warns against false doctrines, mythology and extreme forms of self-denial (1 Timothy 1:3-7, 4:1-5, 6:20-21), referring to the false teaching and related practices as "demonic". The violent act symbolizing the death of Attis was indeed an extreme form of self-denial. Male priests of Cybele and Attis renounced all sexual feeling, irrevocably, through ritual castration.

Prior to Jerome's translation, 1 Timothy 2:12 would probably not have been understood as a prohibition against female authority. It is more likely—given the most common usage of "authentēin," the nature of Paul's concerns, and the context of the letter—that it is a prohibition against women teaching or instigating ritual violence against men.⁵¹

The word Edwards mentioned, used in this verse to represent the expression "usurp authority," is "authentēō" and is a powerful word with the following meanings: "(1) one who with his own hands kills another or himself; (2) one who acts on his own authority, autocratic; (3) an absolute master; and (4) to govern, exercise dominion over one."⁵² Naturally, no woman should behave in such a manner; nor should any man.

51 Bob Edwards, "LOST IN TRANSLATION Part 2 – A Look at 1 Timothy 2:12-15," *The Junia Project*, juniaproject.com, 16 Sept. 2013, web, 18 Sept. 2013 <<http://juniaproject.com/translation-1-timothy-212/>>. Bob Edwards holds degrees in Religious Education, Social Development Studies, and Social Work.

52 "Usurp authority," *Lexicon*, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 18 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G831&t=KJV>>.

Whether one accepts the arguments of Miles, Vaughn, Crabtree, or Edwards, the passage is not universal and binding upon all women for all time, as it must be understood within its historical setting. When the plan the Father envisioned in Christ was fully realized, all separation according to race, class, or sex ended. As Dr. Katie Hays stated: "male exclusivity dishonors the God who gives gifts irrespective of gender or other outward characteristics, like race or class."⁵³

The other passage often misused to keep women quiet and under obedience is 1 Corinthians 14:33-35. This passage, along with 1 Timothy 2:9-15, is used to silence or control women, particularly within the context of an "official worship service." Verses 36-38 of 1 Corinthians 14 are also presented below as they are important to the discussion.

1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.
34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.
35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.
36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?
37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.
38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

First, one must understand what "silence" means here. The word is "sigaō" and connotes the idea of holding one's peace (Lk. 20:26; Acts 12:17, 15:13; 1 Cor. 14:30) or keeping something close to the vest, or secret (Lk. 9:36, Rom 16:25). It is always used with regard to a specific issue or circumstance and does not mean that a person may not speak at all.⁵⁴ The context in this instance is a letter Paul wrote expressing his desire that all things be done "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40) with regard to the exercise of spiritual gifts.

53 Katie Hays, PhD, "In Our Lifetime?" gal328.org., n.d., web, 7 Aug. 2013 <<http://gal328.org/resources/essays-and-articles/in-our-lifetime/>>. Katie Hays is founding pastor of Galileo Church in Mansfield, Texas, and previous co-minister at the West Islip Church of Christ, Long Island, New York.

54 "Silence," Lexicon, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 18 Sept. 2013 <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4601&t=KJV>>.

Several interpretations have been offered regarding this passage, and Margaret Mowczko has provided a good summary of these.⁵⁵ Included in her discussion of various interpretations are that, within a public worship assembly, women are to remain completely silent, they are not to be involved in idle prattle or interrupt the worship with elementary or personal questions, or they should not voice their opinions regarding the prophecies of others. In response to these views, women of the first century were inspired by God and functioned as prophetesses in the presence of men (Lk. 2:36-38, Acts 2:17, 1 Cor. 11:1-16); so whatever can be determined from the passage quoted, it cannot be that women must never speak in front of an assembly of men, either sharing their own insights or evaluating those of others. Verse 38 of the passage speaks of ignorance, so perhaps idle talk and elementary or personal questions could be involved in Paul's injunction. Especially pertinent might be the idea of being quiet when one is unlearned. Dr. Crabtree, when discussing 1 Timothy 2:9-15, brought up this issue as a valid reason why women were not to teach.

Mowczko suggested, and offered evidence, that the restriction contained in verses 34-35 may not be in the original document; she stated that its authority is therefore "dubious, and its use to silence women is questionable."⁵⁶ That is always a possibility, and another explanation is that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is a quote from the house of Chloe and not part of Paul's admonition.

Mowczko wrote:

The view that 14:34-35 is a non-Pauline quote is one of the few which offers a plausible explanation for the jarring change of tone which verses 34-35 bring into the text, and the subsequent abrupt change of topic, tone and gender in verse

55 Margaret Mowczko, "Interpretations and Applications of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35," newlife.id.au, 8 July 2011; revised 11 January 2012, web, 18 Sept. 2013 <http://newlife.id.au/equality-and-gender-issues/interpretations-applications-1-cor-14_34-35/>.

56 Mowczko, *Ibid.*

36. If this explanation is the correct one, then Paul is not silencing women in 14:34-35. Rather Paul rebukes the people who are trying to silence the women.⁵⁷

Indeed this view has some merit. It would explain Paul's "What?" and also flow well into his statement that the word of God did not come out from them (the men) or only to them—as women were also inspired.

As for verse 34 of the passage, Mowczko stated that it is ambiguous as to its meaning. The verse states that "they [women] are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." Where in the Law is this commandment recorded as many today declare that it is to be interpreted? Did the prophetess Anna not know about the passage? She stood in the temple in the presence of men and boldly spoke of the Messiah to all who were willing to listen, giving thanks in the temple and in the presence of Simeon and Joseph (Lk. 2:34-38).

Today's readers of the New Testament have not been made privy to the situation in Corinth that prompted this passage regarding abuses and misbehavior during the early church meetings. However, Paul admonished these same Corinthian people to "eat at home" (1 Cor. 11:34) when they were making a mockery of the Lord's Supper by refusing to share with one another and wait for everyone to arrive (some were even getting drunk). He was not commanding that they never eat together, nor was he saying they could not have a picnic out in their back yard or share a meal in the home of a friend or neighbor. His purpose was to stop their abuse of one another, and he wanted them to conduct themselves in a proper manner when they came together. Perhaps he was doing the same in this instance (1 Cor. 14) rather than mandating a legality concerning the role of women in the assembly.

Whatever was going on in 1 Corinthians 14, several truths are evident: (1) women in the first century AD had the gift of prophecy and used it by the authority of God in an

⁵⁷ Mowczko, *Ibid.*

assembly containing men; (2) many commands in the Bible are in relation to cultural issues or are an effort to correct abusive circumstances; (3) in Christ "there is . . . neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28); and (4) the Law of Moses was still in effect when the New Testament was being written, and the Jews did not move from one covenant to another overnight (this will be clarified later). These truths must guide any who seek to understand the Word of God today. Whether considering culture, the behavior of women in the Old and New Testaments that provides understanding of God's commands to women, or the meaning of the texts used to subject women to men, the same conclusion is reached: women in the kingdom of Christ should not be treated as second-class citizens.

The church is not always right. The subordination of women is not the only issue churches have held views on that have brought reproach upon themselves because their deeds are less righteous than behavior exhibited by those who claim no religious affiliation or even any belief in God. Several other issues (and there are many) they have been wrong about are: forced and permanent slavery, the persecution (and often murder) of anyone they consider to be heretical, suppression of civil rights, white supremacy, the burning of "witches," and the state's enforcement of Christianity on society as a whole.

Interestingly, both the Old and New Testaments sanction the practice of some form of slavery (Ex. 21:7-11, Lev. 25:44, 1 Pet. 2:18), and servants are told to be subject to their masters in the same way women are told to be in subjection to their husbands.

1 Peter 2:18 (KJV) Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward . . .
3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

Yet the church today takes a strong stance against slavery in society as a whole and an even stronger stance for the continued practice of slavery, at least for women, within the church. From a theological perspective, where is the authority to discard one of these commands and cling to the other? There is none. The only answer anyone can give is that the law of the land will not allow economic slavery today while religious slavery has not been abolished; thus one form of slavery is condemned and another form is upheld, and the church is free to subject its women to contemptible treatment.

Slaves and wives are not the only people regarding whom the New Testament speaks concerning subjection. Children are commanded to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1, Col. 3:20). Certainly the Apostle Paul was not writing laws for other people's little children. The word used for "children" in these passages is the same word employed to describe the prodigal son ("teknon,"⁵⁸ Lk. 15:11-24), who was old enough to leave home and make a living on his own—but was condemned for doing so because his father needed him at home and his culture demanded that he remain there. According to Victor Suman, a preterist preacher at the Bitragunta Church of Christ, adult obedience to parents is still a practice in Indian cultures, with parents choosing wives for their children, as Abraham did for Isaac when Isaac was the ripe old age of forty (Gen. 24:4, 25:20). As was the case with the prodigal son, an adult child in India who is not married cannot leave his parents' home without bringing shame and disgrace upon himself. "If I went without hearing their word, they would see me as a disobedient child; and other people would also disrespect me," wrote Suman.⁵⁹ Like the practice of slavery, obedience of grown

58 "Child," *Lexicon*, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 8 Sept. 2013
<<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5043&t=KJV>>.

59 Victor Suman, facebook.com, 8 Sept. 2013, web, 8 Sept. 2013; Suman's hometown is Bitragunta in the district of Nellore and the state of Andhra Pradesh, India.

children has been abandoned in first-world countries—with no good theological reason if the other practices continue. Yet, the subservience of women remains. The divine, permanent principle that ought to be gleaned from these examples is that God desires his children to be mutually submissive to one another (1 Pet. 5:5), and to protect and care for one another (Gal. 6:2).

The church is not always right! It is time to wake up to the realization that the present-day subjection of women is one of the issues about which the church has been wrong. Women today are educated and knowledgeable, often more so than their male counterparts standing in the pulpit. Like Mary (Lazarus and Martha's sister) many are seeking to understand the deep truths of God (Lk. 10:38-42). Jamey Dickey, graduate of Freed-Hardeman University and former minister for the Church of Christ, wrote the following about Mary's desire to learn at the Master's feet:

The passage in Luke indicates that Mary was sitting at his feet, and while that may sound like absolutely nothing now, back in those days that was a big no-no for a woman. She was sitting where the men should be seated, and if anything, the women should be sitting at the back. One might accuse Mary of forgetting herself, at best, if not completely thumbing her nose at tradition and culture. She was being at least somewhat presumptuous, if not outright defiant . . . This is yet another of several passages that show us that the roles of women were changing, and that Jesus was breaking with the patriarchal system and moving toward egalitarian treatment of both genders.⁶⁰

Should women like Mary be denied the right to share what they are eagerly learning? Should the Spirit in them be quenched and their right to exercise the talents God has given them rejected? Should they be turned away from God by being told to sit down and be quiet? In the first century women's whole world was restricted (and yet they still taught men and prayed and

60 Jamey Dickey, "Can Two People Be Right? A Look at Mary and Martha," Spiritual Ramblings: A former member and minister of the Church of Christ reflects on his own spiritual changes and walk, 25 Aug. 2013, web, 25 Aug. 2013 <<http://spiritualrambler.blogspot.com/2013/08/can-two-people-be-right-look-at-mary.html>>.

prophesied in public, and Jesus said Mary, who wanted to learn God's truths, had chosen the "good part," which would not be taken away from her, Lk. 10:42). Society today, generally speaking, does not restrict women in this way. Women function as corporate heads, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and judges. What would require these women to be subordinate regarding the things of God? Paul Casner, former Involvement minister for the Church of Christ in Dallas Texas, wrote:

The Gospel helped stimulate abolitionism and the embryonic women's movement in nineteenth century Europe and America—leading not only to the recognition of the humanity of African-Americans but also to the recognition of women's right to guardianship of children, higher education, and the right to vote. It is the Gospel itself that has been a fundamental fuel behind all of these movements.

In light of this, does not Christ expect more of us today than he expected of a Church just beginning its walk with Him on these issues? Would it not be a mistake to transfer the wording of a few passages dealing with guidelines for women suitable for the first century into a setting informed by 2,000 years of dialogue with the Gospel of Christ on this issue?

We found that those who are consistently placed in submissive roles because of their skin color or other traits with which they are born will inevitably be viewed as of lesser value. When society or Church assigns specific roles to people solely on the basis of the condition of their birth—be it skin color, height, weight, or sex—a value judgment is inevitably made. We have dispensed with the "separate but equal" doctrine in terms of relations between the races. It is high time we did so in terms of relations between the sexes.⁶¹

Norman Voss wrote:

We today have moved into an era where women's roles in life have changed . . . So if the home dynamics are changing culturally, will not the church dynamics also follow? Why should a woman who is an equal in the home environment relinquish that dynamic in the church environment if she is highly skilled beyond many of the men in a congregation? This is a discussion that has many ramifications and issues to be ironed out and we are in the early cultural establishment throes at this time. I know that many of us have been raised to push back against these ideas because it works for us, but the church like in days of old

61 Paul Casner, "Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath," gal328.org., n.d., web, 7 Aug. 2013 <<http://gal328.org/resources/essays-and-articles/jesus-lord-of-the-sabbath/#limitations>>. Paul Casner is a former Involvement minister at the Preston Road Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas.

will eventually reflect the culture of the times. It's not a matter of whether; it's a matter of when and how this process works itself out.⁶²

The passages presented in this chapter, which are used by those wishing to place women in a subservient role in the kingdom of God, have been shown to be misunderstood, misapplied, or open to interpretations different from the traditional view. The God of heaven loves all his children and wishes none to be passive toward him. Quoting from an article found on the Internet:

Our culture and customs in western society today are vastly different to the culture and customs of the Ancient Near East and Greco-Roman world of Old and New Testament times. Differences in culture are factors that must be considered when trying to extract biblical principles from the text for application today. Not everything that was done in the Bible has a universal, timeless, or useful application.

What is a timeless principle is that both men and women should be taking their lead from Jesus. We should be emulating his character, as well as displaying and using the fruit and gifts of his Holy Spirit in order to actively bless our families and the church, and to further God's kingdom. Moreover, we should be doing this in a broad variety of ways. We should be careful that we don't limit and stifle people or promote passivity.⁶³

God wills that all people, men and women alike, come to him in joy and freedom, offering their talents and skills without hiding in fear behind rules and regulations that no longer apply or were never commanded in the first place (Mt. 25:25-30). Obviously economics played a role in the biblical treatment of slaves, wives, and widows indeed. The church no longer provides a haven for widows indeed and no longer sanctions slavery, but for some reason demands that the letter of the law be carried out vehemently against, not for, women. This was absolutely not God's intent. His laws were for protection, not subjection.

62 Norman Voss, "Re: Is the Curse in Genesis 3 Covenantal?" message to the author, 4 Aug. 2013, e-mail. Norman Voss is a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University, and has served as a deacon or elder for the past twenty-five years with churches of Christ. Norman has written theological articles for Planet Preterist, Death Is Defeated, and other discussion forums for more than seven years.

63 "25 Biblical Roles for Biblical Women," newlife.id.au, n.d., web, 10 Sept. 2013 <<http://newlife.id.au/equality-and-gender-issues/25-biblical-roles-for-biblical-women/>>.

CHAPTER 6

THE END OF THE CURSE

Most believers in Christ understand that he fulfilled the Law of Moses and ushered in a new way of life, thereby setting all people free as he came to "proclaim liberty to the captives" and "comfort all that mourn" on the "day of vengeance of our Lord" (Is. 61:1-4; Jer. 48:46-47, 49:6, 37-39; Ezek. 16:53-63; Dan. 12; Acts 3:17-26; Col. 1:21; Heb. 9:8-10; 1 Pet. 3:21). If God's covenant with the Jews, represented by the Law of Moses (the "ministration of death," 2 Cor. 3:7), ended and Jews wishing to have a relationship with God could do so without obeying the Law, then the curse does not exist today—not for the Jews and certainly not for anyone else who was never under the Law in the first place. The Law was "added because of transgressions," and it intensified and exhibited the consequence of the death curse placed on Adam (Rom. 5:14, 20, 7:6-11; Gal. 3:10, 13, 19).

Romans 8:2 (KJV) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Today the law that brought death is dead. It is "morally, ethically, spiritually, physically, positively, absolutely, undeniably, and reliably . . . most sincerely dead."⁶⁴ Jesus prophesied about the end of the age (or world) in which he lived, which came at the end of the Law of Moses, but what most people do not recognize is that in the same breath he said that heaven and earth would pass.

Matthew 5 (BBE):17 Let there be no thought that I have come to put an end to the law or the prophets. I have not come for destruction, but to make complete.
18 Truly I say to you, Till heaven and earth come to an end, not the smallest letter or part of a letter will in any way be taken from the law, till all things are done.
19 Whoever then goes against the smallest of these laws, teaching men to do the

⁶⁴ Harold Arlen, "Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead," The Wizard of Oz, Dir. Victor Fleming, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939, film.

same, will be named least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who keeps the laws, teaching others to keep them, will be named great in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus proclaimed: (1) the Law and the Prophets would eventually be finished; (2) not the "smallest letter or part of a letter" ("one jot or one tittle," KJV) would pass from the Law until "all things" in the Law were completed—fulfilled, accomplished, done; (3) when these events occurred heaven and earth would also come to an end; and (4) until the Law ended the Jews were to continue to keep it (Acts 21:18-27).

Most people accept that the Law has been fulfilled. As Charles S. Meek wrote, "We know that Jesus ushered in the New Covenant of grace, so why would every detail of the law still be in effect?"⁶⁵ Indeed, Jesus declared that it must all be implemented, and Peter proclaimed that the first century was the time when the words of "all the prophets" would be executed, including the "restitution of all things" and the return of Jesus from the heavens (Acts 3:18-26).

The Law has no efficacy today, but most students of the Bible do not realize the implications of that fact.

1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.
57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The above passage states that the victory over death and the grave was the removal of sin (which Christ accomplished, Jn. 1:29). This is so because sin was the sting of death (sin is the reason death began). The final truth in this passage is that the strength of sin was the Law. The strength of sin, which was the sting of death, was none other than the Law of Moses. When the Law was

⁶⁵ Charles S. Meek, MBA, Christian Hope Through Fulfilled Prophecy: Is Your Church Teaching Error About the Last Days and Second Coming? (Spicewood, TX: Faith Facts Publishing, 2013), 127. Meek is the editor and principal author of FaithFacts.org, one of the oldest Christian apologetics sites on the Internet. He is a contributor to the Fulfilled Covenant Bible.

taken away, the removal of sin and the curse of death was accomplished. As stated above, the Law was the "ministration of death." Darby's translates this as "ministry of death," and Young's calls it the "ministration of the death." The Bible in Basic English says: "operation of the law, giving death."

Some say "law" in 1 Corinthians 15:56 is referring to the law of Christ and therefore death (and the curse) will cease when Christ's law is no longer binding. If true, that would be sad indeed as it would mean that the law of Christ is the strength of sin and is a ministry of death. The law referenced here is the Law of Moses. When it was fulfilled and taken out of the way, the death curse (and any other curse) ended. Young's Literal Translation of the passage above makes this clear.

1 Corinthians 15 (YLT):55 where, O Death, thy sting? where, O Hades, thy victory?"
56 and the sting of the death is the sin, and the power of the sin the law;
57 and to God — thanks, to Him who is giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;

In Chapter 2 of this thesis Isaiah 65 was considered with regard to what life would be like when the curse of Adam and Eve was removed. The Prophet Isaiah wrote in another place of the glorious new earth where the curse would be no more.

Isaiah 25 (KJV):6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.
7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.
8 He will swallow up death in victory and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.
9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

When the covering, or veil, cast over the nations was removed, death was to be swallowed up and the rebuke of God's people would be removed from "off all the earth." This would be when the Lord came with his salvation. This passage was explained by the Apostle Paul as follows:

2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

Paul clarified that the veil was the Law of Moses. When it was removed, death would be no more and the curse would be lifted. Paul referred to Isaiah 25 in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57, above, and also in the following verses.

1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

When the veil or covering, the Law of Moses, was removed, death would end.⁶⁶ Paul could be no plainer about this.

Isaiah 26 (KJV):19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

This passages was also mentioned in Chapter 2. The earth was going to "disclose her blood." Israel would be cast away from God and he would call his people by a new name.

This will be discussed in further detail; for now, the idea under consideration is that the victory over death is in Christ. It is not in some future return of Christ but rather it is a present

⁶⁶ The Law was the covering, or veil, over Israel, separating her from her husband, God. Surely this brings to mind 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and the head covering Paul discussed for the praying and prophesying woman.

reality. The only way biological death ends is that biological death is not the end—life continues after the physical body is destroyed. The death of Adam, brought on by the curse, was not biological death; therefore, the cessation of the curse was not the end of biological death.

The reason death has been abolished is that Christ "broke the spell." He is Snow White's Prince Charming who awakened her with a kiss so they could live happily ever after. The story of the redemption of mankind far surpasses all fairytales. In God's story Snow White is scooped up when the Prince comes riding in on his white horse (Rev. 19:11), and she becomes mistress of the mansion "just over the hilltop in that bright land where [she'll] never grow old."⁶⁷ But, as stated, Eve's death, unlike the death of the fairytale character Snow White, was not physical, so her resurrection (or return to life) should not be expected to be physical, or biological; it was rather relational or covenantal. (See Appendix B.)

The kingdom of God is not about flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:50). William Bell wrote:

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50). But biological flesh and blood was **at that very time** inheriting the *kingdom* (Heb 12:28). How does that work with the IBD [Individual Body at Death] view, which takes "flesh and blood" in the Corinthian passage to mean the physical body? To the contrary, not only is "flesh and blood," per Hebrews 12:28, used in the covenantal sense of receiving/inheriting/entering the kingdom of God, the saints began receiving it in advance of the parousia [Second Coming of Christ] or with a view to its arrival upon the shaking of the Old Covenant "heavens and earth"! This further identifies this transition as covenantal, spiritual, and progressively consummating the eschatological event."⁶⁸

According to Dr. Don K. Preston, the scheme of God's redemption is:

about bringing man back into a relationship with God . . . The focus was not on

67 Ira Stanphill, PhD, "Mansion Over the Hilltop," namethathymn.com, n.d., web, 31 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.namethathymn.com/hymn-lyrics-detective-forum/index.php?a=vtopic&t=3373>>.

68 William Bell, Jr., ThM, "Resurrection and the Kingdom," Fulfilled! Magazine: Proclaiming the Good News of Fulfilled Prophecy and Life in Christ, Brian L. Martin, ed. (Ione, CA: Fulfilled Communications Group, 8:2, Summer 2013): 7. Bell shares his knowledge at www.allthingsfulfilled.com.

the removal of man from earth but the restoration of fellowship between God and man . . . Revelation shows us that life in the new creation involves the new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God for the purpose of God dwelling with man (Revelation 21:10).⁶⁹

In speaking of the resurrection, the Apostle Paul explained the difference between death and life as pertains to the curse of Adam.

1 Corinthians 15 (WEB):42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.

43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is also a spiritual body.

45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However that which is spiritual isn't first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As is the one made of dust, such are those who are also made of dust; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 As we have borne the image of those made of dust, let's (1) also bear the image of the heavenly.

Paul compared the natural man, Adam, to the spiritual man, Christ. He was not discussing biological bodies because both Adam and Christ had physical bodies. Paul had something else in mind. He was speaking of the spiritual difference between Adam, represented by the Law of sin and death, and Christ, the Redeemer who takes away sin and death.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (WEB) Now the natural man doesn't receive the things of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to him, and he can't know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Paul was not saying that biological men cannot understand the things of God; he was begging his readers to render their hearts to Christ and allow God to move in their lives and transform them into the image of the Lord (Rom. 8:5-8).

⁶⁹ Don K. Preston, PhD, *We Shall Meet Him in the Air: The Wedding of the King* (Ardmore, OK: JaDon Publications, 2010), 349. Web sites owned by Dr. Preston: eschatology.org, bibleprophecy.com.

Romans 8 (KJV):5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.
6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.
7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Adam failed, as he succumbed to temptation; Christ did not fail but overcame temptation. These people had lived under the carnal legacy of Adam (in the flesh), and now it was time to cast off the natural man and become a spiritual man—to come out of death and enter life (Jn. 11:26). This transformation for the first-century Christians would be complete when the Lord came to end the Law and destroy the power of sin. At that point the old covenant, the old earth, the old Jerusalem, would be no more and the new, heavenly Jerusalem would be fully visible and recognizable in all its glory (Rom. 8:19-23).

Speaking of the new Jerusalem (the bride, Snow White), John wrote:

Revelation 21 (KJV):1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.
2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.
4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.
5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.
6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.
7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.
8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.
9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full

of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

At first glance one might think this is a literal city. But if so, what does the following mean?

Hebrews 12 (KJV):22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,
23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,
24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.
25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:
26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.
27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.
28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:
29 For our God is a consuming fire.

According to the Hebrews writer, the people to whom he wrote had already come to this city, and it was the assembly (church) of God. Something (the remaining vestiges of Judaism and the Law of Moses—yes, the entire old earth) was being removed while something (the new creation—new earth) would remain. In Chapter 1 the idea was presented that the story of creation found in Genesis 1-3 is not a literal story of the creation of the planet, and the first people ever to reside on the earth, but that it is the revelation of God's first covenant with mankind. That being true, then the "end of the world" (end of the age) cannot be the end of the planet but rather it is the end of that first covenant, with its curse, and the establishment of a new covenant where the curse would be removed. Martin and Vaughn wrote:

The destruction of creation? Yes! What Genesis 1-3 does, Revelation 21-22 undoes. AD 70 [destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans] marked the final end of the old covenant age, the old world of types and shadows. The entire old creation

has been recreated in Christ. However, the physical heavens and earth were not destroyed and recreated in AD 70. Indeed, the biblical "end" had no bearing on the physical operation of the sun, moon, stars, and planet Earth.⁷⁰

The following passage from Psalms helps to explain the true concept of the "earth" that was to vanish.

Psalm 102 (KJV): 18 This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.
19 . . . from heaven did the LORD behold the earth;
20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;
21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;
22 When the people are gathered together . . . to serve the LORD. . .
25 Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; And the heavens are the work of thy hands.
26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:
27 But thou art the same, And thy years shall have no end.
28 The children of thy servants shall continue, And their seed shall be established before thee.

In this "generation to come" (verse 18) the heavens and earth would perish; they would wax old and be changed. But the "children of thy servants" (who would be "created") would continue and their "seed" would be "established" (Ps. 102:28, Is. 65:23). As was shown in Chapter 1, the word "created" is the same word used in Genesis 1:27 to refer to the "creation" of Adam and Eve. This generation of people to come at the time of the arrival of the Messiah would be "created," just as Adam and Eve were "created." The meaning, of course, is that there would be a new, spiritual creation in Christ, as opposed to the old, physical creation of Israel. The language here cannot be referring to an end of the planet, even though it clearly says that the heavens and earth would perish, as it is obviously speaking of the coming of Christ in the first century AD when he would set the captives free (Eph. 4:8). (See Appendix C.)

⁷⁰ Martin and Vaughn, 15.

Isaiah 51:6 (KJV) Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

God's salvation would be forever, but the old heavens and earth—old covenant Israel—would wax old and vanish. This is shown to be the correct exegesis by the following two New Testament passages.

Hebrews 1:11 (KJV) They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

Hebrews 8:13 (KJV) In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

This is a direct fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Hebrews undoubtedly is referring to the Law's waxing old and passing, which means Isaiah 51:6 must be interpreted the same way. By quoting from Isaiah the writer of Hebrews explained the true meaning of Isaiah's words.

In Revelation 21, the city described is a new creation. The old creation, the old way of life—Judaism, with its thorns and thistles, the reign of a man over his wife (and certainly any perceived subservience of a woman to any man not her husband), and its death—is gone. The new creation is the bride of Christ, the "ecclesia," often translated as "church" (Mt. 25:1-13, Jn. 3:28-30, Eph. 5:27). It is the tabernacle of God (2 Cor. 6:16). It is not heaven nor is it in heaven. It comes down out of heaven to the earth. The entirety of the New Testament brings to light that the promises of the old covenant (the first heaven and earth) were coming true in a new covenant (the new heavens and earth) (Rom. 15:8, Heb. 11:13-16). According to T. Everett Denton:

The phrase THE CITY OF GOD here is the very city that their most beloved forefathers were looking forward to . . . It was an eternal/spiritual kingdom, not a temporary/physical one like that of David . . . it was "THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM" (not the earthly one) that Abraham looked forward to.⁷¹

71 T. Everett Denton, Hebrews From Flawed to Flawless FULFILLED! (Avondale, AZ, n.p., 2012), 270. Denton's web site: asitefortheLord.com.

In the book of Revelation the new city is called the new Jerusalem. Hebrews refers to it as the heavenly Jerusalem, but it is the same city. There are only two cities in the Bible called Jerusalem—the earthly and the heavenly (Gal. 4:24-26). The earthly, physical Jerusalem is the old earth with its thorns, thistles, death, and all other aspects of the curse; the new, heavenly Jerusalem is the new earth (Ps. 37:11, Mt. 5:5), where Christ abolishes death (Is. 53:4, Jn. 11:26, Tim. 1:10), satisfies all hunger and thirst (Jn. 4:10, 6:35; Rev. 21:6, 22:1, 17), wipes away all tears (Is. 53:4, Phil. 4:4), and removes the curse (1 Cor. 15:56, Gal. 3:13). The following chart might help to explain the new heaven and earth, and the new city.

<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Created</u>
old earth	new earth
what city?	new Jerusalem

If the old earth was destroyed in order to bring the new earth, what city would need to be destroyed in order for new Jerusalem to come? Only one piece of the puzzle is missing; and as easy as it is to determine what city this was, John did not leave his readers any room to guess.

Revelation 11:8 (YLT) and their dead bodies are upon the broad-place of the great city (that is called spiritually Sodom, and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified,)

The old city (the harlot who had been unfaithful to God and therefore God destroyed her) was, without a doubt, Jerusalem.

The new Jerusalem is a place where there is "no more curse" (Gal. 3:10, 13; Rev. 22:3). It is also a place with no hierarchy.

1 Corinthians 15:24 (KJV) Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

The man was not created first on this earth, and the woman was not deceived and did not fall into sin. Men and women in the new heaven and earth are equal in every way. There truly is

neither male nor female. As Jen Fishburne stated on a Facebook forum:

I think one of the purposes of redemptive history was to do away with ALL separation: Jew/Gentile, male/female, master/servant. There is no longer any us vs. them. The only disparity today is the one we create in our mind, or the one we allow in our own life.⁷²

This change did not, of course, happen overnight. Jesus told the woman at Jacob's well that the time was coming "and now is" (Jn. 4:23) that true worshipers would not worship in Jerusalem (meaning in the temple), but even Christians continued to worship there long after he spoke those words. He said that the time was coming "and now is" that the dead would hear his voice and those that heard would live (Jn. 5:25). He also said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jn. 12:31). But, back to 1 Corinthians 15:24, these were events that would come to pass at "the end," which was near and coming soon (1 Jn. 2:18). Jesus was preparing the people for their new way of life in the kingdom of God.

An important point must be made here. The new Jerusalem needs no light because God and the Lamb are its light (Rev. 21:23). Those who do not enter the city are cast into "outer darkness."

Matthew 8 (KJV):11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [See also: Jude 1:13.]

Bible scholars who refuse to accept that this passage has been fulfilled must struggle with its meaning. Was Jesus saying that those in the church (kingdom) will be cast into outer darkness? Of course not; Jesus was telling the unfaithful Jews of his day that they, who were in the kingdom at the moment, would be cast out, and the kingdom would be given to others who would "bring forth fruits" (Mt. 21:43); that is, God would destroy the disobedient Jews, as he

72 Jen Fishburne, Preterist Roundtable, facebook.com, 9 Sept. 2013, web, 9 Sept. 2013.

promised in Isaiah 65:15, and call his people by a new name. Israel (the new one, Gal. 6:16) would "blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Is. 27:6). This is not, of course, speaking of apples that are free of poison and will not put Snow White to sleep—except, of course, in a metaphorical sense: this fruit does not have a curse attached; it is life giving, not death bringing. If all of this has not come to pass, the Jews remain in possession of the kingdom today. One final point: As seen in the early chapters of Genesis, the word "light" does not refer to the beams that come to Earth from the sun; therefore, the outer darkness described above is not literal darkness.

John 1:9 (KJV) That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

1 John 2:8 (KJV) Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

1 John 2:11 (KJV) But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Although the book of Revelation is often viewed as revealing truths about events future to the present generation, that is not the case; and one simple truth will dispel this idea. Jesus told his listeners that any who came to him would never thirst again (Jn. 6:35). He told the woman at the well he could have given her living water (Jn. 4:10). But the fact is, that water he offered is in the new Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1; Adam and Eve, XI:8). If the new, heavenly Jerusalem has not come down yet, nobody has access to any living water and the world is thirsting to death—and Jesus offered water he could not provide.

Glenn L. Hill wrote:

To most Christians the book [Revelation] is a dark mystery and a source of great confusion. For preachers and prophets, it is the source of many false prophecies! However, it is called "Revelation" because it is a revealing of God's plans and

purposes for those to whom it was written in the first century. The word "revelation" means "a revealing or disclosing of something." So if the book is just mystery and darkness, then the Lord gave it the wrong name. The first verse should read something like this: "The never to be revealed secrets of Jesus Christ."⁷³

While students of the Bible in the twenty-first century might struggle to understand the prophecies of Revelation, many of these prophecies come directly from the Old Testament and therefore should have been more easily understood by the studious Jews of the first century who, arguably, knew the writings of the Prophets better than today's believers do; hence, it would have revealed rather than concealed God's words to them (and they were the ones needing to understand the book). Eric Lyons noted:

Of the 404 verses in the book of Revelation, seemingly 278 of them make some allusion to the Old Testament. That is 68.8% of the verses! And some of these verses contain two, or even three, allusions to the Old Testament. The book of Revelation does not tell whence these allusions came. However, by a careful study of the Bible, we can understand that most of them come from the prophetic books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah.⁷⁴

Because Revelation reiterates prophecies from the Old Testament (the Law of Moses), of necessity this 68.8% had to have been fulfilled before the Law of Moses ended in order to fulfill the prophecy of Jesus that not a jot or tittle would pass from the Law until all of it was fulfilled (Mt. 5:18). (Common sense would tell one that God could not end a covenant and then come back 2,000 years later and pick up on it to fulfill its terms.) This strong evidence, along with the fact that the book proclaims that the events it foretells were to come to pass shortly (Rev. 1:1; 3:11; 22:6-7, 12, 20) and John's statement that he was a "fellow-partner in the tribulation" (Rev.

73 Glenn L. Hill, *Christianity's Great Dilemma: Is Jesus Coming Again or Is He Not?* (Lexington, KY: Moonbeam Publications, 2010), 51. Hill is a retired pastor, having served for more than thirteen years as an assistant pastor and nearly twenty-eight years as a pastor of a non-denominational church.

74 Eric Lyons, MMin, "Revelation and the Old Testament," *apologeticspress.org*, n.d., web, 30 Aug 2013 <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=886>>.

1:9 YLT), supports the claim of this paper that the events Jesus foretold regarding the "end of the age" (and consequently the end of the Law and the curse) have come to pass.

Revelation 2:25 (KJV) But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

This admonition was written to living people. It was not thrown out into the air so that people sometime, many generations later, would read it and say, "We have to hold fast till Jesus comes." (People have, unfortunately, been reading the verse that way for centuries, each generation thinking it is the one to whom the sentence is written.) The recipients of John's document, the people who received the revelation, were to hold fast till Jesus came. They would be alive and could actually obey this command. And Jesus came, while they were living, to take his vengeance on those who killed both him and his apostles and prophets; he came to disclose the earth's blood. This is how the covenant with Israel (and, consequently, the Law of Moses) was prophesied to end by Isaiah and also by Jesus.

Matthew 23 (WEY):29 "Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you repair the sepulchres of the Prophets and keep in order the tombs of the righteous,
30 and your boast is, "'If we had lived in the time of our forefathers, we should not have been implicated with them in the murder of the Prophets.'

31 "So that you bear witness against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the Prophets.

32 Fill up the measure of your forefathers' guilt.

33 O serpents, O vipers' brood, how are you to escape condemnation to Gehenna?

34 "For this reason I am sending to you Prophets and wise men and Scribes. Some of them you will put to death—nay, crucify; some of them you will flog in your synagogues and chase from town to town;

35 that all the innocent blood shed upon earth may come on you, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berechiah whom you murdered between the Sanctuary and the altar.

36 I tell you in solemn truth that all these things will come upon the present generation ["this generation," KJV].

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou who murderest the Prophets and stonest those who have been sent to thee! how often have I desired to gather thy children to me, just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not come!

38 See, your house will now be left to you desolate!"

Jesus was speaking to the people of Jerusalem and warning them of their demise and desolation. As stated above, he told them that the kingdom would be taken from them and given to a nation that would "bring forth fruits" (Mt. 21:43), and that, in their lifetime (their generation), they would pay for all the innocent blood shed upon the earth. This was a prophetic judgment on Jerusalem; and it was fulfilled in AD 70 when the Romans left not one stone of the Jewish temple on another, killing more than a million Jews when General Titus and Emperor Vespasian built a trench around Jerusalem's walls, just as Jesus had prophesied (Mt. 24:2, Lk. 19:43-44). The siege took place on Passover, so Jews from all the nations were trapped because they had come to observe the feast.⁷⁵ It was the final consummation of God's covenant with natural Israel, the demise of the old heaven and earth, the end of the Law (the ministry of death), and the termination of the death curse. Revelation 20:14 states that "the death" (YLT) was cast into the lake of fire. The abusive reign of the law of sin and death over Israel was finally brought to an end. Sam Frost noted:

This was a reorganization of the cosmos. The whole world was changed. What once reigned over all the world (the Sin and the Death of Adam) was now replaced with a new reign, a new kingdom: the Grace and Righteousness... Now, this raises a question concerning Man, all men, in the age to come. Let me assert quite plainly: all men are under the rule of the Grace and Righteousness. No man is under the rule of the Death and the Sin. . . And, if "the Death" has been defeated entirely for all men, then "the Sin" that reigned "in the Death" has equally been hurled into the "lake of fire." In other words, the Sin has been removed from the cosmos along with the Death. This is not just true for believers in Christ, but true for all men, everywhere.⁷⁶

"For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:22, KJV). The days of vengeance were when the Messiah would come to set the captives free and comfort the mourning (Is. 61:1-2). God's people were captives under the Law and

75 Flavius Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, 6.9.3.

76 Sam Frost, ThM, "Observations," thereignofchrist.com, 2007, web, 28 Sept. 2013.

needed to be set free in Christ. The crumbling, obsolete Law (indeed the whole first creation) passed away. Many think it died with Christ on the cross, but Luke 21:22 and Isaiah 61:1-2 deny this. So did the Apostle Paul. He said Christians were children of the free woman (Israel from above) and the Jews living under the Law of Moses were the children of the bondwoman (physical Israel) (Gal. 4:22-31). The son (Ishmael) of the bondwoman (Hagar) and the son (Isaac) of the free woman (Sarah) grew together for a time, until Isaac was weaned (Gen. 21). To understand the analogy one must recognize that the church was an infant when Paul made this statement; the early Christians were living on milk and were not yet weaned. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, the church would be fed from heaven, this time with spiritual manna rather than physical manna (Jn. 6:58), for forty years before they could enter the promised kingdom (Mic. 7:15). It was at Isaac's weaning that trouble erupted and the bondwoman and her son were cast out. The same would be true for the casting out of old covenant Israel: when the church was mature and no longer drinking milk (complete, perfect, and fully instructed, 1 Cor. 13:9-12), God would cast out the bondwoman and her children.

To summarize this point, Jesus stated that the tares were to grow with the wheat until the time of the harvest (Mt. 13:30), but, again, he prophesied that the children of the kingdom would be cast out and the kingdom would be given to others who would "bring forth fruit" (Mt. 21:43). Paul clarified that the time of the casting out of the Jews was at the time of the weaning of the church, at the time when she would be mature (1 Cor. 13). This leaves no doubt that the end of the Mosaic Law was at the casting out of the Jews, and the destruction of the temple, all of which Jesus foretold would come in the first century. The Law was still alive until the temple was destroyed. It was on its last legs and was gasping for breath—decaying

and waxing old (Heb. 8:13)—but God had not yet given up on Israel. He was patient, not willing that any of the Jews should perish (2 Pet. 3:9) or come to everlasting shame.

Jeremiah 23:40 (WEB) and I will bring an everlasting reproach on you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

God waited as long as he could while still being faithful to Jesus' words that the end would come in the generation of people with whom he walked the earth.

Revelation 16:6 (KJV) For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

Revelation 18:24 (KJV) And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Jesus declared that Jerusalem was to pay for the blood of all who were slain on the earth, from Abel to the prophets Jesus would send (Mt. 23:34-38). If this city in Revelation was paying for all the blood of all the slain of the earth, it could not possibly be any city except Jerusalem. No other city could pay for all the blood when Jerusalem paid for that much (which was all). First, Jesus revealed who would pay for all blood. Second, if Jerusalem paid for even one death, no other city could pay for all deaths. Third, prophecy ceased and there were no prophets killed after Jerusalem paid her share.

Jesus came, as he said he would, in the first century to take vengeance on those who had killed the prophets and apostles, and all the other inspired servants that he had sent to Israel.

Matthew 16 (WEB):26 For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life?

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to everyone according to his deeds.

28 Most assuredly I tell you, there are some standing here who will in no way taste of death, until they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.

If these people were not ready and did not flee the city as Jesus warned (Mk. 13:14), they would lose their lives (Acts 3:23-25); furthermore, they would end up in Gehenna, the garbage dump

that burned perpetually (fire that was never quenched, Is. 34:10, 66:24; Jer. 7:20; Ezek. 20:47-48; Mk. 9:45) because there were too many of them for burial. Josephus recorded:

As for burying them, those that were sick themselves were not able to do it; and those that were hearty and well were deterred from doing it by the great multitude of those dead bodies, and by the uncertainty there was how soon they should die themselves; for many died as they were burying others, and many went to their coffins before that fatal hour was come.⁷⁷

This was, of course, simply the physical aspect of the ending of the death; the spiritual realities were of greater significance, not just for the ones who would experience these happenings firsthand but for the world (Ezek. 16:53-63; Jer. 48:46, 49:2, 36-39).

Ezekiel 16 (WEB):38 I will judge you, as women who break wedlock and shed blood are judged . . . 42 So will I cause my wrath toward you to rest, and . . . I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. . . 60 Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish to you an everlasting covenant. . . 63 . . . when I have forgiven you all that you have done, says the Lord Yahweh.

Israel was punished for her adultery, and for killing Christ and all the prophets and apostles; but once God was done chastising her, he forgave her for her iniquities. The truth of the matter is, once the Jews were punished and the resurrection occurred, all the people Israel killed were alive. The Apostle Paul stated that Christ's resurrection had taken care of her sin (1 Cor. 15:17). When a man turns up alive, anyone accused of murdering him is acquitted.⁷⁸

Those who would see this culmination of the restoration of God's relationship to mankind were the people who heard Jesus foretell these events. The apostle Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 15:51(KJV) Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁷⁷ Josephus, 5.12.3.

⁷⁸ Andre Rabe, "An Unexpected Twist," hearhim.net, 26 Aug. 2013, web, 23 Sept. 2013 <<http://hearthim.net/wordpress/2013/08/26/an-unexpected-twist/>>.

Paul was writing to living people, telling them (they were the recipients of his letter after all) that not all of them would die before the Lord came. Jesus said the same when he said some standing before him would not taste of death till he came, so Paul was repeating "the word of the Lord" (Mt. 16:26-28, 1 Thess. 4:15-17).

Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, wrote the following:

But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And all this prophecy of what would result from their insolence against the Christ has been clearly proved to have taken place after their plot against our Saviour. For it was not before it, but afterwards from that day to this that God turned their feasts into mourning, despoiled them of their famous mother-city, and destroyed the holy Temple therein when Titus and Vespasian were Emperors of Rome, so that they could no longer go up to keep their feasts and sacred meetings. I need not say that a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord has overtaken them all, in return for their rejection of the Word of God; since with one voice they refused Him, so He refuses them.

All authorities concur in the declaration that "when all these things should have been done" "The End" should come : that "the mystery of God should be finished as he had declared to His servants the prophets" : it should be completed : time should now be no more : the End of all things (so foretold) should be at hand, and be fully brought to pass : in these days should be fulfilled all that had been spoken of Christ (and of His church) by the prophets : or, in other words, when the gospel should have been preached in all the world for a testimony to all nations, and the power of the Holy People be scattered (abroad), then should the End come, then should all these things be finished. I need now only say, all these things have been done : the old and elementary system passed away with a great noise; all these predicted empires have actually fallen, and the new kingdom, the new heaven and earth, the new Jerusalem—all of which were to descend from God, to be formed by His power, have been realised on earth; all these things have been done in the sight of all the nations; God's holy arm has been made bare in their sight: His judgments have prevailed, and they remain for an everlasting testimony to the whole world. His kingdom has come, as it was foretold it should, and His will has, so far, been done; His purposes have been finished.⁷⁹

This is the biblical view of the "end of the world" (end of the "age"). It was in fact the end of Israel's former covenant with God. As Glenn L. Hill wrote:

⁷⁹ Samuel Lee, "On Matthew 24:21," *Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea on the Theophania or Divine Manifestation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1843), 151.

The heavens and earth destined to be burned up were the heavens and earth that were the world of Judaism and all that it entailed: the culture, the religion, the Holy City, the temple, and the national life of the Jewish people. This was the world that ended!⁸⁰

With the passing of the old Jerusalem (old earth), the new Jerusalem (new earth) could shine forth in all its splendor (Dan. 12:3; Mt. 5:14; Rev. 21:11, 24, 22:5). It stands to reason that if the glorious city in Revelation that came down out of heaven was the new Jerusalem, then the city that had just been destroyed, the darkened city that had lost its light (Jn. 11:10), was the old Jerusalem—a city steeped in harlotry, thus making her Revelation's great whore (compare Ezekiel 16 to Revelation 18).⁸¹

God sent his Son, as near kinsman, to redeem his bride (at least the virgins who were ready with their oil, Mt. 25:1-13); and he paid, as was stated earlier, the ultimate bride price—his life blood. Jesus brought the eternal promised land (Paradise regained) and offered it freely to all. In him the wolf and lamb feed together, and those in his kingdom neither "hurt nor destroy" (Is. 65:25). The strong do not rule over the weak, and men do not rule over women. The prince of darkness has been cast out; he was bound when the gospel began to be preached, and he was crushed completely when the temple fell, resulting in the futility of any effort to obey the laws of the ministry of death (Lk. 10:17-18; Jn. 12:31, 16:11; Rom. 16:20). The rule of a man over his wife was a consequence of sin; as such, and this was pointed out previously, it was bad not good. Those who want to live in a hierarchy today, by insisting on promoting the dominance of men over women (specifically within the church), are seeking darkness, not light. They are choosing death over life. They suffer under the curse of law rather than enjoying true freedom in Christ.

80 Glenn L. Hill, "Hoping Versus Having," unpublished, 2013.

81 The physical elements of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 represent the spiritual truth that God had fulfilled all promises within the covenant he had made with Israel; physical activities in the temple ceased, and the kingdom of God (and God himself) was at that point no longer associated with the temple made with hands but was instead dwelling in the hearts of human beings. Therefore, shadowy rituals were no longer required.

They are wanting to live under the prince of the powers of the air (Eph. 2:2).

Galatians 3:10 (WEB) For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse.

In Christ, in the land of the living, nobody reigns over anyone else. Christ has freed Eve from the bondage of servitude that Adam brought upon her. The old world was dissolving as the New Testament was being written.

1 John 2 (WEB):16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, isn't the Father's, but is the world's.

17 The world is passing away with its lusts, but he who does God's will remains forever.

18 Little children, these are the end times, and as you heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen. By this we know that it is the end times.

The desire Eve had for the fruit because "the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise" (lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life) (Gen. 3:6) was a part of the old world, not the new. The whole old world, with its creation order, its sin, its curse, and its wisdom and knowledge, passed away. As David Timm wrote:

Command from God was required during the progressive revelation or growth period. Once that period was finished union consciousness was revealed, and this unity is now able to be realized. Christ destroyed all the authority and things of that world, and that world itself passed away. The "wisdom" of that world was brought to nothing. It has now been revealed that God is all in all and that God is love. Love itself is sufficient.⁸²

A craving for control over another person is not present in the new order. The tree that is partaken of today is the tree of life, not the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The wolf, lamb, leopard, and lion all submit to one another in love (Is. 65:25, 1 Pet. 5:5).

Summing up, Christ has come and removed the curse of Adam (and the entire old world, or creation), re-establishing the relationship between God and humanity in a new creation. The

⁸² David Timm, [Preterist Roundtable](#), facebook.com, 18 Sept. 2013, web, 19 Sept. 2013.

new Israel of God (Gal. 6:14-16) is not under the abusive power of the sin and the death. It is impossible to be dead in Adam yet alive in Christ, and under a curse in Adam yet free in Christ (Rom. 6:11; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-49; Gal. 3:10, 13; Eph. 5:14; Col. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 22:3); that is nonsensical. Gary North wrote that "we are either disinherited children because of Adam's sin, or else we are adopted children in God's household because of Christ's death and resurrection (Jn. 1:12)."⁸³ Jesus said he was the life and that anyone who believed in him would never die (Jn. 11:26, 14:6). People cannot be new creatures, living in a new creation (new heavens and earth, heavenly Jerusalem) subject to the curses of the old creatures, living under the rules and regulations of the old heaven and earth. To think that life in Christ puts, or keeps, one under a sentence of death is incredible. If Jesus overcame death—if he "abolished death" (2 Tim. 1:10) as the Bible states—then humanity is not subject to the death of Adam; and if one is not subject to the death, he (or she) is not subject to the curse.

As stated in Chapter 2, the following events were to occur when the curse was lifted, and this chapter has shown that they have come to pass.

- (1) Resurrection
- (2) Judgment
- (3) End of the serpent/dragon
- (4) Jacob's taking root and Israel's blossoming in the earth with fruit
- (5) Iniquity of Jacob purged and the forgiveness of sins
- (6) The altar stones turned to chalkstones

The Redeemer has come! He has reconciled to God everything in both heaven and earth; he reversed the curse and removed all separation between God and man, between man and man, and between man and woman (2 Cor. 6:16; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20, 2:14). Because the curse was lifted and the Law was removed in Christ, the old creation, with its curse and order of creation, ended; mankind's relationship with God was re-established; and women were set

⁸³ North, 266.

free in Christ (Gal. 3:10, 13). Eve (Israel, woman) was redeemed, and any curse that might have placed her in subjection, either to a husband or men in her religious circles, was obliterated. Women of God now work alongside their husbands and brothers, not only without fearing a curse but also without concern for creation order (Is. 65:17, 66:22; Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:15, 4:24; Col. 3:10; Heb. 10:20; Rev. 21:1).

Snow White's sleep of death ended many years ago. Her Prince arrived and brought her back to life (Eph. 5:14). She has every right to wake up, arise, and find her rightful place among the living; and the hope for the future is that women will be allowed to take this position in full participation with their brothers without fear of persecution or condemnation (Eph. 5:14). If the curse is rescinded, who wants to rise up before the Lord of heaven and put the woman back under a curse from which the Messiah has freed her? Who wants to tell a woman who is alive in Christ that, in Christ, she is cursed and dead? Who wants to be that brazen; that foolhardy; that impudent; that ill-mannered, disrespectful, arrogant, insolent, and presumptuous? If one is wise his answer will be, "Not I." Steve Parker wrote:

Christ came to reverse the consequences of the Fall. This means that we must stop using Genesis 3:16 to legitimate male dominance and tyranny over women, even if this is legitimised by saying that it is done in love. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free! Women should not allow men to place them back under the yoke that Christ has come to remove (Gal. 5:1).⁸⁴

Christ modeled for his disciples a prayer that asked that God's will be done on the earth as it is in heaven.

Luke 11:2 (YLT) And he said to them, "When ye may pray, say ye: Our Father who art in the heavens; hallowed be Thy name: Thy reign come; Thy will come to pass, as in heaven also on earth;

The Apostle Paul taught people to seek the things above.

84 Parker, Ibid.

Colossians 3:1 (DR) Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God:

Hebrews 12:22 (BBE) states that "you have come to the mountain of Zion, to the place of the living God, to the Jerusalem which is in heaven, and to an army of angels which may not be numbered." Unless a man is of the opinion that women are subservient to men in the new Jerusalem, when he tries to please God by seeking "the things that are above," doing God's will "on earth" "as in heaven," he will not elevate himself above anyone else.

The curse has been eradicated. The first heaven and earth's ordinances no longer exist, having melted away with the fall of the Jewish temple. God's people live in a new (renovated, transformed) city on the new heaven and earth, and they are singing a new song of redemption (Rev. 5:9, 14:3). Any law of headship or subservience based on the first creation account, whether it is the order of creation or the deception of Eve (1 Tim. 2:13-14), does not exist in the new heaven and earth. Man was not created first in this heaven and earth; woman did not eat the "apple" on this heaven and earth. All things—all things—have become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

Isaiah 65:17 (WEB) For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

CHAPTER 7

THE END OF ALL AUTHORITY

If the curse is ended, as revealed in the previous chapter, and God's people operate under a new order (in a new world), where does that leave today's woman? What should be the role of women in the community of Bible believers in light of the removal of the curse, as well as in consideration of all that has been stated up to this point in this paper? Whether or not one accepts that the curse has been removed or that the creation order is no longer applicable, this chapter presents strong evidence to support women's right to full participation in the Christian community. The authority that one might have usurped in the New Testament (specifically, any authority granted to any men over women in a congregation) no longer exists in today's world; therefore, it cannot be usurped.

The following is taken from an article on the Internet:

Women and men, Jews and Gentiles have equal standing before God. They all can come freely before the throne. None will teach his [or her] brother/sister to know the Lord for the [sic] all will [be able] to know the Lord from the least to the greatest. - Jer 31:34 & Heb 8:11 - You see, in the "*construction stage*". . . Apostles & prophets spoke with authority - "*Know the Lord!*" — but now at the completion of all things no one need to proclaim such, we can all simply share the truth, pointing to Scriptures and Christ as the fulfillment - but none has the authority in the same manner as the Apostles and the appointed elders.⁸⁵

As stated in the quote above, the time was to come when no one would have to teach his brother or his neighbor to know the Lord, for all would know him. That time was when the Messiah would come and reconcile humanity to God.

Jeremiah 31:34 (KJV) And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from

⁸⁵ Virgil, "What the Victory of Christ (Preterism) means for women," planetpreterist.com, 19 Jul. 2004, web, 25 Jul. 2013 <<http://planetpreterist.com/content/what-victory-christ-preterism-means-women>>.

the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Hebrews 10 (KJV):15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

While miraculous gifts were in use and people were in need of being taught about the Messiah, inspired apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists, and teachers were necessary to get the word out to all creation (Mk. 16:15, Rom. 10:18). But those "offices" or positions of authority were to end.

1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Most students of the New Testament accept that the "more excellent way" is here and prophets and apostles no longer walk the earth, but they continue to cling to their pastors and teachers. This is partially why these people require women to be in subjection—they do not realize that a hierarchy was never the long-term intent of Jesus for his people. Paul stated clearly that all these offices, that would set one person above another, would end at the same time.

Ephesians 4 (KJV):11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The offices were to remain until the early Christians were no longer children, until they were weaned—at which time the bondwoman's son was cast out, as was shown in the last chapter. At that point, at the end of the Mosaic Law, prophecy would cease and all these offices would disappear. Elders were not to be novices (1 Tim. 3:6), or children. Once the church was grown and no longer a novice, nobody would need to be under a tutor or guide. Children need to be looked after; adults do not.

In Acts 15 the apostles, elders, and church in Jerusalem laid out an edict for the Greek community of believers. That will not be happening today. Paul sent Titus to ordain elders in every city (Tit. 1:5). That will not happen today either. In fact, one can find no record from the mind of God as to how to go about appointing elders today. In Acts 14 Paul and Barnabas, inspired men, appointed elders. Titus, also inspired and commissioned by the Apostle Paul, appointed elders. Paul gave Timothy instructions as to what type of men to choose as elders/bishops (1 Tim. 3). Paul also wrote to Timothy:

1 Timothy 4:14 (KJV) Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Where is the presbytery (elder or bishop) who can lay his hands on a young man today, imparting spiritual gifts to him so that he might have the wisdom to perform the duty of choosing and appointing elders?⁸⁶ Such a man does not exist because miraculous spiritual gifts ended, as Paul affirmed in 1 Corinthians 13, when the "perfect" came; at that point whatever God wanted to reveal to humanity had been written down, and nobody received any

86 "Presbytery," Lexicon, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 17 Aug. 2013
<<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4244&t=KJV>>.

more authority or revelation. Moses Lard (1818-1880) wrote: "The day of authority in the church is passed by; it is to be hoped, that the day of sound reason and of argument is to follow."⁸⁷

The first-century situation does not exist in the twenty-first century and, when pressed, people realize this. Regarding Paul's instructions to Titus, it is amazing how much of this short letter is rejected by Bible believers today.

Titus 1:5 (KJV) For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Right there in the first chapter is a command that, as stated above, would never be followed in the present day. If a young man ran around to various churches today trying to "set in order the things that are wanting" or even took it upon himself to appoint elders in every city, he would be driven out of town on a rail.

Titus 2:9 (KJV) Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;

Here, in the second chapter, once again the words of Paul must be rejected. Religious leaders today would never tell any person to make himself a slave to another, obeying the person and pleasing him in all things, without ever "answering again." Instead the "master" would be told to back off and the police might even be called. Finally, in chapter 3, Paul wrote:

15 (KJV) These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Rebuke with all authority? Yes, Titus had that power. He was sent by an apostle of the Lord, so he had the right to expect people wherever he went to listen and obey. The word for "authority"

⁸⁷ Moses Lard, MA, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (London: H. Fisher, R. Fisher & P. Jackson, 1834), vii.

here is "epitagē" and means "an injunction, mandate, command."⁸⁸ Nobody today, male or female, has authority like Titus did. Opening one's mouth, from a pew or the pulpit, and speaking one's opinion, view, or thoughts on a particular passage or doctrine found in the Bible is not what was going on in the first century. It is wrong to grab first-century activities and drag them through the centuries to make laws in a totally different situation.

Neither men nor women today are commissioned by an apostle to run around all over the world and "exhort with all authority." And why would they be? Does someone have new doctrine, new inspiration, new mandates or commands, new truth from the mind of God? No, the Holy Spirit guided the first-century disciples into "all truth" (Jn. 16:13). And they were warned:

Galatians 1:8 (KJV) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

God has put his word in the hearts of men and women, as quoted above from Jeremiah 31:34 and Hebrews 10:15. The offices God authorized in the first century were for a time—until the believers were no longer infants in need of milk. (What is generally taught from the pulpits today is not "know the Lord" but more often the doctrines and creeds of men.) Therefore, the issue of women's authority today is of no significance. Since no one today has power over anyone else, obviously no woman can take authority upon herself. The apostles' words were coming straight from God. An "Apostle or an Apostle appointed elder . . . could tell BOTH men & women to listen while true doctrine was being expounded."⁸⁹ Today, anyone, man or woman, may speak regarding the Word wherever or whenever the opportunity arises—but with no authority.

Some people claim that all authoritative offices still exist in the church (they say this

88 "Authority," *Lexicon*, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 25 Sept. 2013
<<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2003&t=KJV>>.

89 Virgil, *Ibid*.

while also stating that the more excellent way has arrived). These Bible students declare that, although no prophets and apostles actually live today, they continue to be present because their words are in the Bible. That is an extremely poor argument. The offices themselves were all to remain—people were to fill the positions of apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers—until a specific time; then all would be unnecessary. To claim that the passage means the offices of apostles and prophets remain only within the message these inspired men left within the pages of the Bible, but the other offices must actually be filled with living men today, is grasping at straws. Nearly every Protestant denomination admits that no one today has new knowledge but that it all must come from the Bible. If that is so, then the Bible alone contains the answers for every person in search of knowledge; no prophet, priest, pastor, or poet can come up with anything different (2 Tim. 3:16). Steve Parker observed:

Why is it that men (in particular) are so keen to argue that women should be submissive? If God has identified the tendency to rule as part of the consequences of sin, then we surely should ask ourselves whether, at the heart of the traditional interpretations of the Genesis story is a lust for power and domination. Power is seductive and easy to legitimate with religious arguments. But if Christ is our model for all of life, then we have no greater reason for an attitude of service and submission.⁹⁰

This truth does not mean that men and women will not and should not emerge to shed light on the teachings of the Bible. Some people are more intelligent, more knowledgeable, more studious, more eloquent, more outgoing, and more eager to share their thinking with others. If a group of people choose to listen to and agree with such a person's observations, and even financially reward the person sharing his (or her) thinking, nothing says this cannot be done. But everyone ought to understand that this person does not have authority from God to demand allegiance or obedience; and his opinions, beliefs, and doctrines are not necessarily superior to, nor do they carry any more weight than, that of the lowliest member of the group.

⁹⁰ Parker, *Ibid.*

Whether he stands on the pulpit, slinks by the wall, crouches under the pew, or jumps up and down at the back of the building screaming at the top of his lungs, nobody has authority today; whether the person is male or female, white or black, young or old, strong or weak, little or big, highly educated or totally without formal education, he or she has no authority.

Matthew 23 (BBE):8 But you may not be named Teacher: for one is your teacher, and you are all brothers.

9 And give no man the name of father on earth: because one is your Father, who is in heaven.

10 And you may not be named guides [instructors, DBY]: because one is your Guide, even Christ.

11 But let the greatest among you be your servant.

A wonderful line in Jim Henson's movie "Labyrinth" is the words of Sarah (played by Jennifer Connelly) to the Goblin King Jareth (David Bowie) toward the end of the movie.

When Sarah finally remembers the line from the play she has been practicing and recognizes that Jareth's authority over her is all an illusion in her own head, she is set free. Her liberating words are: "You have no power over me."⁹¹ At that point Jareth's whole kingdom shatters to pieces.

All of the positions of authority that men (apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers) held in the first century must remain or none of them remain—as they were all to end together; and since they are all done away with, that means that no authority exists today for women to usurp by speaking up, either from the pulpit or the pew, to give their understanding of the Scriptures. Women are free.

91 Labyrinth, Dir. Jim Henson, TriStar Pictures, 1986, film.

CHAPTER 8

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

A few brief words must be said about the "more excellent way" the Apostle Paul prophesied was coming when miraculous spiritual gifts ended and all authority of men ceased. What was a better way than having inspired apostles, prophets, and teachers instructing, exhorting, and reproofing Christians?

1 Corinthians 13 (WEB):8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will be done away with. Where there are various languages, they will cease.

Where there is knowledge, it will be done away with.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;

10 but when that which is complete has come, then that which is partial will be done away with.

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child.

Now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I was also fully known.

13 But now faith, hope, and love remain—these three. The greatest of these is love.

When one becomes mature in Christ, he (or she) has learned to control himself and do what is right on his own, without constantly having to be told, and without needing law to keep him in check (1 Tim. 1:9). He obeys from the heart (Eph. 6:6), and the more excellent way by which he lives is the way of love (Mt. 22:35-40; Lk. 6:31; Jn. 13:34; Rom. 13:10; 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:14; Phil. 2:3; Jas. 2:8; 1 Jn. 3:11, 14, 4:7, 8, 11, 16; 2 Jn. 1:5). Here are a few of the passages that show this, from the King James Version.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

James 2:8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

Galatians 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

The new commandment of the Lord, the royal law—love—is the quality that exhibits that people are alive in Christ; Jesus said that one has passed from death to life (that is, the death curse is null and void) if love reigns in his or her heart. He said that loving God and one's neighbor fulfills the law of God (Mt. 22:35-40).

Matthew 20 (WEB):25 But Jesus summoned them, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

26 It shall not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

27 Whoever desires to be first among you shall be your bondservant,

28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The core of the gospel is the victory God's people possess in Christ, having a corrupt or carnal nature overcome by a spiritual nature, the spirit being transformed by the renewing of one's mind, a heart of stone becoming a heart of flesh, a natural man becoming a spiritual man, law being replaced by love, walking in a loving relationship with God as opposed to being ruled by law, and recognizing one's true identity in Christ (Ezek. 11:17-20; Rom. 8:7,12:2, 13:10; 1 Cor. 2:14, 3:1-3, 15:57; 2 Cor. 6:16; Heb. 7:16, 8:10, 9:10).

The book of Hebrews expresses a contrast between the old covenant God made with the children of Israel and the new covenant he would one day make.

Jeremiah 31:33 (KJV) But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Hebrews 8:10 (KJV) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and

write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Under the Law of Moses, the will of God was not in the people's hearts; they followed a tedious written code, which they were unable to perform. God did not inhabit them, and they could not approach him. Had anyone (other than the high priest) attempted to enter into God's presence (even the high priest could enter only once a year), the person would have died (Lev. 16, Heb. 9:6). But, eventually, God destroyed the physical temple, with its separation, and came down to dwell in the human heart (Lk. 17:21, 2 Cor. 6:16, Heb. 10:19-22), once again walking with, and living among, men and women as he did with Adam and Eve in the Garden (1 Cor. 13:12, Rev. 22:4). But here, the tree of knowledge of good and evil has been brought to nought (1 Cor. 2:6), and the Garden is not God's temple—he actually dwells within the human heart. Still, as in Eden, the one desire of God is that his people walk in love.

2 Corinthians 6:16 (KJV) . . . for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Adam and Eve rejected a walk of trust and love, choosing knowledge instead (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:2, 8). God allowed them to see the error of their way and led their descendants little by little into maturity, out from under the bondage of law/sin/death and into the freedom of light and love. Love does not rule or dictate; nor does it set one person above another. That sort of behavior produces fear, or reverence, which cannot exist in the presence of love (1 John 4:18).⁹² Even fathers are told not to "irritate" their children but to "bring them up tenderly with true Christian training and advice" (Eph. 6:4, WEY). Jen Fishburne wrote:

92 Some people use Ephesians 5:33 for support of a man's rule over his wife. The passage states that a wife is to "revere" her husband. The word for "reverence" ("phobos") means fear, dread, or terror, and is the word used for "fear" with regard to how servants were to feel toward their masters (Eph. 6:5, 1 Pet.2:18). Based on 1 John 4:18, if a man receives reverence from his wife, he is not loving her perfectly, as his perfect love for her would cast out any torment-producing reverence from her heart. "Reverence," *Lexicon*, blueletterbible.org, n.d., web, 19 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5401&t=KJV>>.

Part of the reason Jesus came was to do away with all forms of separation, including the disparity between men and women. However, just as the Law steadily passed away in power during those forty years [from AD 30 to AD 70], we see gradual cultural changes being addressed during this time as well. In the New Testament we observe Jesus elevating women gradually, and Paul instructing the men to LOVE their wives, a concept that was somewhat foreign to them before that. We are not able to glimpse the full picture of how all were made equal in God's eyes because we are still transitioning in those same areas today, even though we have made some progress.⁹³

God is love, and a person who loves is born of God and knows God; God resides in those who live their lives according to the principles of love (1 Jn. 4:7-16). 1 Corinthians 13 does not begin at verse 8. The first seven verses of this beautiful passage provide a good lesson on how true love conducts itself, and they make a fitting end to this chapter.

1 Corinthians 13 (WEB):1 If I speak with the languages of men and of angels, but don't have love, I have become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.
2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but don't have love, I am nothing.
3 If I dole out all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but don't have love, it profits me nothing.
4 Love is patient and is kind; love doesn't envy. Love doesn't brag, is not proud,
5 doesn't behave itself inappropriately, doesn't seek its own way, is not provoked, takes no account of evil;
6 doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
8 Love never fails.

93 Fishburne, Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Various contentions have been tendered in this paper. These assertions are as follows:

1. The heaven and earth created in Genesis is not the planet and the celestial bodies but rather God's illumination of himself to humanity by means of the establishment of a covenant relationship with the head of a particular people.
2. The curse was not the will of God but simply a consequence God knew would happen (because of man's hard and sinful heart) that did/does not need to be enforced.
3. The curse did not play out either under the Law of Moses or within the ranks of the first-century community of believers as some teach it was intended.
4. Some of what people believe to be law regarding the relationship between men and women in the New Testament is an attempt to rectify abusive situations or may be instead based on culture, which is rightly ignored regarding other issues.
5. The Law and the Prophets (the first covenant) were fulfilled, and the old heaven and earth morphed into a new heaven and earth (new covenant), wherein is no authority based on order of creation, and no curse exists.
6. The authority some men were given in the first century was temporary, and nobody today has been authorized to exert authority over anyone else.
7. The law of love prompts all godly people not to seek their own way, but to esteem others better than themselves.

Based on the evidence presented, this study has revealed that women today are free in the eyes of God to perform every function men execute in service to God. Therefore, Bible believers must reject the rule of men over women within the Christian community.

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APPENDIX A

AN INWARD STRUGGLE

A metaphorical view of the creation of humanity, not presented in the body of this thesis for the sake of brevity and focus, is that Adam and Eve represent every individual and his/her inward struggle. The author wishes to share this analysis mainly because it helps to understand that the kingdom of God is about the human heart and mind, or the removal of a defiled conscience and putting in its place a pure one; it involves an inward transformation, a change from a stony heart to a heart of flesh (Ezek. 11:19, 36:26; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 1:19, 2:6, 15:24; Heb. 9:8-9, 14, 10:2, 22; Jas. 1:9-12; 1 Pet. 3:21).

The Apostle Paul described this inner turmoil:

Romans 7 (WEB):18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing. For desire is present with me, but I don't find it doing that which is good.
19 For the good which I desire, I don't do; but the evil which I don't desire, that I practice.
20 But if what I don't desire, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwells in me.
21 I find then the law, that, to me, while I desire to do good, evil is present.
22 For I delight in God's law after the inward man,
23 but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.
24 What a wretched man I am! Who will deliver me out of the body of this death?
25 I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord! So then with the mind, I myself serve God's law, but with the flesh, the sin's law.

Joshua Tilghman has gone so far as to say that the struggle (within the human heart) is personified by the terms "male and female" in the Genesis account. He presented his thoughts by using the idea of the id and the ego.

In the literal story, God placed Adam in the Garden. In the beginning, Adam was alone; Eve had not been separated from him. Adam was therefore whole. This is representative of the conscious and subconscious working in perfect unity and harmony, which is also reflected by the paradise (Garden of Eden) in which Adam dwelled. In this state of unity consciousness, Adam was ONE with God. As the

story continues, we learn that God placed Adam in a deep sleep (the realm of forgetfulness and consciousness fracture) and Eve was created. In this new state of being, Adam represents the waking conscious of mankind and Eve represents the subconscious. When the conscious and subconscious are no longer in unity, the state of Paradise (inner joy and peace) can no longer be maintained because the ego will take control. Thus the fall! And of course the literal story presents us with this in the form of expulsion from the Garden. As the story goes, Eve is tempted by the serpent or Satan (ego), and because the ego took over the driver's seat of man's soul, Paradise lost becomes man's reality. This is also spiritual death. And spiritual death = separation from God.

As we stated earlier, Adam represents man's waking conscious and ego, and Eve represents the subconscious. Ordinary consciousness is represented by the male aspect (Adam) because consciousness has the power to impregnate the subconscious (Eve) to produce the physical reality we experience. The subconscious, or female aspect (Eve), is the power of birthing and creating on the physical plane. This is where the concept of "Mother Earth" comes from. It has nothing to do with a literal female deity in its original understanding. It is only an explanation of consciousness, just like the story of Adam and Eve. Remember, Eve is the "mother of all living". In other words, our subconscious is the mother that births our reality. This is also why the Bible states that man will RULE over the woman after the expulsion from the Garden. This is not to be taken literally. As it now stands, your conscious self rules over the subconscious. In other words, your conscious thought (male aspect) impregnates the subconscious (female aspect) with the seed of your waking consciousness. If your conscious self dwells on negativity, your subconscious, which is the real birthing/creation powerhouse, will produce that effect for you. And negativity becomes your reality! Remember, the battle is between the ears! It's all about the mind.⁹⁴

In another article Tilghman continued to explain his thinking:

The subconscious and conscious mind as separate concepts make up consciousness fracture, which is what the fall from Paradise in the literal Adam and Eve story is all about. . . But what I didn't mention . . . is *why* in the literal story God would put us in a Garden with the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the first place. Why would God tempt us where consciousness fracture would happen? Before Eve was created in the literal story, Adam and Eve were *one*. Essentially the human condition had not been truly born yet and Adam was a spiritual being living in bliss. So why would God set up an arena for failure?

The story has nothing to do with failure. And of course God didn't tempt them. In fact, the issue of God tempting them is has nothing to do with it. The fall was

94 Joshua Tilghman, "Adam and Eve: The Story of Human Consciousness," *The Spirit of the Scripture: Uncovering the Hidden Meanings of the Bible*, spiritofthescripture.com, 29 Mar. 2012, web, 23 Sept. 2013 <<http://www.spiritofthescripture.com/id282-adam-and-eve-the-story-of-human-consciousness.html>>.

necessary! It is part of our conscious evolutionary development. Because of the fall, you now have the opportunity to become a "son" of God (achieving Christ consciousness) and enjoying this new benefit because you are aware of it, whereas before the fall you [sic] awareness was of a lesser degree. That's why experience is necessary. Experience is the reason we are here. The physical world is about experiencing life in all its diversity so that the opportunity for conscious growth is possible. . .

In the meantime please remember that someone who interprets the story of Adam and Eve correctly realizes that metaphorically they represent the "human condition," not "human history." This is the key that unlocks the mysteries of this mysterious story! This is also the key that unlocks much of the Bible! The human condition and the human mind are the two important components, and by seeing the Biblical characters and stories as literal history instead of the human condition, the real power of the Bible remains...well, a mystery!⁹⁵

According to this hypothesis, Adam and Eve represent all people as they awaken to the Christ within, comprehending that in God all "live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). A person should listen to the still, small voice of conscience and open himself (or herself) up to the voice of God that speaks within the heart. Instead of allowing the id (female) to be enslaved to the ego (male), people ought to heed the voice of true wisdom—which is often pushed aside by false information that comes into their minds to lead them astray. Humans are not evil and worthless but have the spark of God within them. Today, knowing this, the curse of darkness is lifted and all should see their genuine nature—that of oneness with God and all humanity in a loving existence. Nobody ought to feel the urge to grovel at the feet of God, smite himself upon the chest, and moan "Woe is me!" or bow down under the weight of deep, dark thoughts of unworthiness. Instead everyone can proclaim his victory in Christ, realizing that he does not have to work among thorns and thistles to be pleasing to God because God is already pleased with him. All can therefore rest their hearts on the following passages.

95 Joshua Tilghman, "Adam and Eve: The Story of Awareness Opportunity," *The Spirit of the Scripture: Uncovering the Hidden Meanings of the Bible*, spiritofthescripture.com, 19 June 2012, web, 23 Sept. 2013 <<http://www.spiritofthescripture.com/id446-adam-and-eve-the-story-of-awareness-opportunity.html#ixzz2aUT280rX>>.

Romans 5:20 (WEB) The law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.

Ecclesiastes 9:7 (WEB) Go your way—eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works.

One passage that would seem to support this belief is the following:

Matthew 22:30 (KJV) For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

With this proposal in mind (whether looking to the Apostle Paul or Tilghman), the entire focus of sin in the Bible is man's own condemning conscience (1 Tim. 3:9, 4:2; Tit. 1:15; Heb. 9:9, 14, 10:2, 22; 1 Pet. 3:21). Adam and Eve were, after all, the ones who were ashamed of their nakedness and tried to hide from God (Gen. 2:25, 3:7, 10-11; 2 Cor. 5:3; Rev. 3:17, 16:15, 17:16); so perhaps the focal point of redemption is to reveal to humans their correct nature and oneness with God, which Christ indeed came to declare (Gen. 1:27, Jn. 17:21, 1 Cor. 15:28, Eph. 1:23).⁹⁶ The wisdom of the world blinded people to their rightful image (2 Cor. 3:14, 4:4), and only through love could they come out of the darkness and begin to walk in the light (1 Jn. 2:11).

⁹⁶ Shaun Langton, "The Fall & God's Response," shaunshirleylangton.wordpress.com, 11 Sept. 2013, web, 23 Sept. 2013 <<http://shaunshirleylangton.wordpress.com/2013/09/11/the-fall-gods-response-shaun/>>.

APPENDIX B

The Resurrection from What Death?

David M. Timm

Scripture verses from the NKJV

I want to briefly examine the subject of the death of the garden and thus the resurrection from that death.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The believers were perfect or pure in consciousness (1 John 4:17-18) and so they were not hurt by the second death (the death of the death of the garden) on the day when God judged the “secrets of men” (Romans 2:16) in AD 70. The world of sin and death or corrupt mortal/temporary image of Adam, formalized in old covenant Israel with the law as a tutor, completely passed away in AD 70 (1 John 2:17, Hebrews 8:13, 1 Corinthians 7:31). This was also described in other ways such as:

Paul’s “present time” (Romans 8:18)

The glory of man falling away (1 Peter 1:24)

Perishing in their own corruption (2 Peter 2:12)

Heaven and earth passing away (Matthew 24:35)

Dominion passing away (Daniel 7:14)

“was glorious” passing away (2 Corinthians 3:11)

“old things” passing away (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Those rich in that world as being like a flower of the field that passes away (James 1:10)

The darkness passing away (1 John 2:8)

The wisdom of that age coming to nothing (1 Corinthians 2:6)

“message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Destroying “wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:19)

Becoming obsolete (Hebrews 8:13)

The creation subjected to futility in hope of its deliverance (AD 70) from that corruption (Romans 8:20-21)

End to all rule, authority, and power (1 Corinthians 15:24)

It is my belief that the death of the garden was not about physical death but rather it was the carnal mind/conscience having authority due to an unfulfilled revelation regarding the Divine Nature. This was called the “times of ignorance” (Acts 17:30) by Paul. That death was the power of the devil (Hebrews 2:14), it was the “wisdom” of the knowledge of good and evil having standing or authority. The independent potential status encouraged a fear of physical death because all it was able to see were the shadows and not the substance, so God had to communicate with that level of consciousness. In that defiled consciousness they were alienated and enemies of God in their mind by “wicked works” (Colossians 1:21). This is because the works of the law could not cleanse the conscience (Hebrews 9:9).

The resurrection of the just was to everlasting life/inherited legacy of glory, and the resurrection of the unjust was to everlasting contempt/legacy of shame. This resurrection occurred at the end of the age in AD 70 (Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43).

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

1 Peter 3:21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Here are some more verses about the death of the garden or the resurrection from it. Are these about the mind/conscience or the physical body?

Genesis 2:17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.... 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.... 10 So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

[Adam broke a law/command in the garden.]

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

Luke 9:60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;

A question that may come up quickly then would be, "What about Jesus' death?" Jesus did physically die and he left sin consciousness in the grave. But did Jesus experience the death of the garden, the defiled conscience, when the sin of the world came upon him? I believe he did while on the cross.

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

But did God actually forsake His Son? No, He did not.

Psalms 22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?... 16 For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; 17 I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. 18 They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.... 24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.

I would like to now look at a difficult passage in 1 Corinthians 15, which is a chapter that is primarily about the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

"In this life only": to what is that referring? I believe that Paul is specifically referring to that life identity in the consciousness according to Adam. If it were not then this would be talking about something completely different than the surrounding text, and that would be highly unlikely in my opinion. First, what was their hope in Christ? Their hope was that the creation would be delivered from futility (Romans 8:20), and this occurred when the resurrection of the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15) took place at the end of that age. The believers' faith was the substance (Hebrews 11:1) of the hope that the knowledge of the glory of God would be revealed in them (1 Peter 5:1, 2 Cor 4:6); the fulfilled revelation was completed in AD 70.

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

It was their hope of inheriting eternal life (Titus 1:2), the true wisdom about God which will never pass away, and abides forever. They inherited the kingdom of God/Heaven, salvation, the New Jerusalem, the New Covenant, and incorruption; it is all the same subject.

Notice in 1 Corinthians 15:18 that during the last days the believers were perfecting the legacy of the elders (Israelites and non-Israelites) of the faith who were at that time asleep.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony.... 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

So now let's go back to "in this life only" in 1 Corinthians 15:19. Where else do we see that life? We see it earlier in the book in chapter six.

1 Corinthians 6:3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?

Before we look at the surrounding context, what does this have to do with angels?

Galatians 3:19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.

The law was appointed through angels! "This life" was the old covenant age life. Fulfillment was about the life of this life, it is not about the post-mortem state. We see that Paul's "this life" in 1 Corinthians 6 is related to law by looking at its surrounding text, and we also see the connection to that world or age that was then in the process of passing away.

1 Corinthians 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! 7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another.

We also see that life spoken of by Jesus.

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

This again is about the same world that was passing away during the last days. It is the same world that the believers were then being crucified to. The old identity or soul of the unbelievers was destroyed (Matthew 10:28) due to the fulfilled revelation in AD 70 removing the authority or standing of that consciousness. They perished in their own corruption by remaining in that world until its complete demise.

Here are some additional things to ponder.

The resurrection of life was related to a legacy of glory and the resurrection of the unjust was related to a legacy of shame.

Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

The resurrection in AD 70 was about the end of the wisdom and glory of man, it was destroyed or brought to nothing. The knowledge of the glory of God was revealed in the church due to their labor of love (1 Thessalonians 1:3) and endurance to the end of that age.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Some preterists and futurists take the passages about the resurrection and believe it was or is talking about a physical rapture. Here are two common passages referenced.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

1 Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

But I wonder if many of these same students of the Bible take the following passages that are also related to the resurrection as being about the physical.

2 Corinthians 5:5 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

Revelation 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

The believers were being further clothed because their minds/conscience was being purified with the knowledge of the truth. The "times of ignorance" were ending so those who remained in the image of Adam (knowledge of good and evil) until the end were found naked and felt shame because that "wisdom" was destroyed. That "wisdom" was temporary or mortal, and so their clothing was taken away.

Proverbs 3:35 The wise shall inherit glory, But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

It is exciting to me to consider the implications of living in a world of a fulfilled revelation about God's true identity of love and thus our true identity.

Romans 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

The past end and fulfillment of all things does not need to be feared by us today. Although we cannot participate in fulfilling what has already been fulfilled and revealed, we can have a better understanding of God's love for humanity through what was revealed in Christ and in God's faithful elect.

David Timm, "The Resurrection from What Death?" A Pantelist Community, facebook.com, 22 Sept. 2013, web, 22 Sept. 2013
<<https://www.facebook.com/groups/355412356848/doc/10151700359716849/>>.

APPENDIX C

God Delivered Israel and the Other Nations from Captivity

David M. Timm

Scripture verses from the NKJV

The message of the fulfilled revelation is applicable to all humanity. God progressively disclosed this message within the limits of a specific time period and context, from Adam to AD 70 and primarily in the area that was called the known world or Roman Empire.

Jeremiah 30:3 For behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the Lord. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.'... 11 For I am with you,' says the Lord, 'to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.'... 22 'You shall be My people, And I will be your God.'... 23 Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord Goes forth with fury, A continuing whirlwind; It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. 24 The fierce anger of the Lord will not return until He has done it, And until He has performed the intents of His heart. In the latter days you will consider it.

Isaiah 2:1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

The captivity that Israel and the nations were delivered from in AD 70 was not about a restoration in terms of a physical manner or location. Throughout the Roman Empire in AD 70 the believers (Israelite and non-Israelite) did not get physically raptured and the unbelievers (Israelite and non-Israelite) did not all physically die when God made a "full end of all nations" (Jeremiah 30:11) where the Israelites were scattered.

All in sin inefficiency fell short of revealing the glory of God. The deliverance was about the revelation of the nature of clear consciousness. The believers were looking forward in faith regarding this hope, that being the deliverance of the creation into the liberty of the children of God/called out saints (Romans 8:18-25) due to the revelation of the knowledge of the glory of God in them. The remnant was not physically gathered, but rather the remnant was gathered together (Jeremiah 23:1-8) in one mind (Romans 15:6) (the mind of Christ, 1 Cor 2:16) in the

land called the New Jerusalem during the last or latter days. They received the inheritance that was promised to them.

Notice the importance of “mind” or knowledge in passages like the following:

Philippians 2:2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

2 Corinthians 3:14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

Ephesians 4:17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

Romans 7:22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

2 Timothy 2:25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

Satan deceived all the nations (Revelation 20:3) in the context of where the progressive revelation unfolded, that being in Adam. All the nations in Adam perished in AD 70, all within Israel’s sphere of influence.

Revelation 18:23b “for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived”

The wisdom and glory of man—death that originated in the garden, the carnal mindset (Romans 8:6a)—was destroyed or brought to nothing (1 Corinthians 1:18-31, 1 Peter 1:24).

Matthew 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

The resurrection in AD 70 of the just and unjust from that death, the death that was thrown into the lake of fire and destroyed, was deliverance from the authority or standing of the mindset of Adam since that mindset was then brought to nothing. The type of resurrection (just or unjust) was connected to one’s historical legacy regarding his or her role in the revelation of the truth regarding the life of this life. The unbelievers didn’t represent the truth of the knowledge of the glory of God, so their role or false identity has a legacy of shame (Proverbs 3:35b). Those who were called out and turned many to righteousness shine in their legacy of glory (Proverbs 3:35a). They abide forever (1 John 2:17b) since they represent the words of Christ which will never pass away (Matthew 24:35b).

Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

Notice how the New Covenant (Ezekiel 16:60) was specifically with Israel (Ezekiel 16:61-62) but not only Israel was brought back from captivity at the end of that age. I find these following passages very interesting. And obviously these restorations were not about physical gatherings.

Israel, Sodom, and Samaria:

Ezekiel 16:53 “When I bring back their captives, the captives of Sodom and her daughters, and the captives of Samaria and her daughters, then I will also bring back the captives of your captivity among them, 54 that you may bear your own shame and be disgraced by all that you did when you comforted them. 55 When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former state, then you and your daughters will return to your former state.... 60 “Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. 61 Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you. 62 And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, 63 that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done,” says the Lord God.”

Ammonites and Moabites:

Deuteronomy 23:3 “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord forever,

Zephaniah 2:9 Therefore, as I live,” Says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, “Surely Moab shall be like Sodom, And the people of Ammon like Gomorrah—Overrun with weeds and saltpits, And a perpetual desolation. The residue of My people shall plunder them, And the remnant of My people shall possess them.”

Jeremiah 49:2 Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will cause to be heard an alarm of war In Rabbah of the Ammonites; It shall be a desolate mound, And her villages shall be burned with fire. Then Israel shall take possession of his inheritance,” says the Lord.... 6 But afterward I will bring back The captives of the people of Ammon,” says the Lord.

Jeremiah 48:46 Woe to you, O Moab! The people of Chemosh perish; For your sons have been taken captive, And your daughters captive. 47 “Yet I will bring back the captives of Moab In the latter days,” says the Lord.

Elam:

Jeremiah 49:36 Against Elam I will bring the four winds From the four quarters of heaven, And scatter them toward all those winds; There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go. 37 For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies And before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, My fierce anger,' says the Lord; 'And I will send the sword after them Until I have consumed them. 38 I will set My throne in Elam, And will destroy from there the king and the princes,' says the Lord. 39 'But it shall come to pass in the latter days: I will bring back the captives of Elam,' says the Lord."

At the end of that age God made a full end of all the nations (Jeremiah 30:11, Isaiah 60:12) where the tribes of Israel were scattered. There never was an actual physical separation from God even after physical death. Resurrection was about the life of this life. Those who physically died before the resurrection inherited the type of legacy based on whether they died in faith or not. It was not about delivering spirits or individuals from a physical holding place. It was about holding one's identity in this life to be judged in righteousness in AD 70. The law no longer had authority over someone once the person physically died.

Romans 7:1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

The resurrection was about establishing one's historical legacy regarding the life of this life in connection with the truth of the glory of God which was completely revealed in AD 70. Even the elders who physically died in the faith had to be perfected by the saints during the last days for them to inherit the legacy of glory (Hebrews 11:40). Their hope (Hebrews 11:13) was then realized.

The "bringing back from captivity" in AD 70 of Israel and the nations was about being delivered from the authority of the carnal mindset and not about physical relocation. The truth about the Divine Nature has now been completely revealed and is able to be realized.

David Timm, "God Delivered Israel and the Nations from Captivity," A Pantelist Community, facebook.com, 22 Sept. 2013, web, 22 Sept. 2013
<<https://www.facebook.com/groups/355412356848/doc/10151700362251849/>>.