

PAUL'S KINGDOM PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN

Enter Kingdom

Long time ago, God called Israel to, “**Be holy, because I am holy**” (Lev 19:2). God does not overload his people with orders that they cannot keep. He only says those things to them that are easy to follow, easy to obey. Peter in his letter to the *ekklesia*, in 1 Pet 1:16, cites the very same command. Jesus, the Bridegroom desires his woman, the *ekklesia*, to be like him — holy. He is the new Adam and the *ekklesia* is to become his Eve, co-governing, co-ruling with him over the whole world. Submitted to him, she rises up to a position of incredible beauty and authority that only he can give her.

But as long as she rejects that submission to Jesus, she is stuck. And as long as she also refuses to submit in marriage, she is stuck, twice. What does a stuck person do? Try to escape. But this escape is rebellion. We have read the history of Israel, God's extremely difficult woman. If a woman rebels, it means that rebellion is the only way she sees open to her, the only way she can grab and usurp what God did not give her through the proper channels, whether God likes it or not.

The same is true for husbands and all men in general. If they do not submit to Jesus as their King, and if they reject his leadership, they become modern day Sauls, replacements for a position they cannot fill. They usurp the leadership position of Jesus, become religious dictators and lose their true God-given authority, because they have fallen out of God's order. If they do not repent by returning to God's order, they become obsessed and overwhelmed with leadership, control, running the show, and commanding strategies and budgets. Many have seen that bumper sticker in the form of a fish that adorns some cars. It usually says ‘I am a Christian!’ There is a saying *that the fish always stinks from the head*. Would you be very interested to hear what such a religious fish has to say about women in leadership, women in church, women's ordination or women's roles in general?

I guess not. But it is a fact of history that the religious Church has done all that. It has decreed rules and regulations that go far beyond what Jesus or Paul, for that matter, have ever said about women, not in favor of women, but to their disadvantage, to say the least. The religious Church has become the number one instrument not to release woman into ministry for Jesus and their role in his Kingdom. The main reason for this is that the religious Church is not the Kingdom it thinks it is; far from it. A group of people that enjoy to be saved, but reject Jesus to be their acting King, is nothing else than a headless cult, typically run by religious men that have replaced Jesus as their leader and set themselves up in patriarchal hierarchies. Such religious organizations have rejected the Laws of Christ — the constitution of the Kingdom of God, — and replaced it with myriads of man-made rules, laws, statutes and by-laws. Such a Church (my husband Wolfgang Simson in his book *The Starfish Manifesto* calls it CAWKI, church-as-we-know-it, in striking contrast to *ekklesia* as God wants it) is not the solution, it has become part of the problem. The result of this setup was that women in the history of Christianity have been suppressed, trapped and jailed in a very similar way to other religions. Men have built platforms for themselves, but not for the women. Especially not for women

who are submitted to the authority of their King; they are a deadly threat to unsubmitted men and their unsubmitted church. And so, many such women, especially prophetesses and evangelists, have been kicked out of CAWKI. Others have simply run away from such man-made structures and built platforms for themselves. This is one of the reasons why so many women became missionaries abroad and often did amazing things for God there, while at home they were not even allowed to officially cast out a single demon.

However, it is a new day. Jesus, preached the Kingdom, but what came was the Church. I believe that Jesus is reversing this development in our time. He is calling all that have ears to hear back to order, — his order, the Kingdom. And that means that CAWKI will be slowly but steadily replaced by what Jesus really came to build — his Kingdom. In the days before the end, Jesus prophesied, **“the Gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole world as a testimony to all people groups, and then the end shall come”** (Mt 24:14). This Gospel of the Kingdom is also a call back to God’s order. It is one thing to call people to repent *from* something; but God is calling us also to repent *towards* something. This something is the Kingdom and its orders and laws.

Is Paul a woman-hater?

This brings us to an interesting point in our journey, because the Kingdom is a totally different position from which to see things. It offers radically new views than the classical Church position. While many books have been written on women in Church, few, if any, have been written on women in the Kingdom. In most Christian books written about Paul and women, Paul is depicted as a *difficult* man writing *difficult* verses. Many have come to see Paul as a misogynist, a woman-hater, someone who is happy that he is not married and likes to make life for women plain complicated. There is a particular passage in Paul’s letter to Timothy that has been the cause of endless arguments about women. Some used these verses to clobber women over the head, some others spend years to research and write books to prove that God’s word does not say what it says, but that it means the exact opposite. I believe that from a Kingdom perspective, you will be surprised to find a completely new understanding of what Paul was actually saying.

Let us first look at this passage the way it is usually translated. Because this passage, in the hands of a religious Church, has been the reason killer slogans have been created like

I suffer not a woman to teach men, ever, anywhere
Women should be silent in the church
Serious ministry is only for men
Women should remain in the kitchen, have children, go to church, otherwise be mute

The passage in the King James Version reads, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety” (1 Ti 2:9-15).

This translation was dictated and informed by a classical churchy background, where “church” was something we *do*, not something that we *are*. Church was seen not as a way of life, but a series of religious meetings orchestrated by professional clergy to serve the needs of regular customers called laity and temporary visitors. Such meetings were full of readings, sermons, talks, rites and liturgies that are essentially a Christian version of Jewish synagogue services. They were not modeled after the actual life of Jesus and the fascinating blueprint of Acts 2 and 4, where the followers of Christ were sharing all of life, 24/7, materially and spiritually. Add to this that Jewish worship and its complex religious industry is male dominated. This historical background has influenced Christianity far more than most people know; including the way Bibles have been translated and understood. Such a church-based Bible translation obviously assumes that Paul was “a man of the church.” But that would be very wrong. Paul was not a man of the church, he was a man of the Kingdom (Rom 14:17, Col 4:11). Paul came to call people not just to faith, but to the *obedience* of the faith (Rom 1:5, 16:26); that was his message. The *ekklesia* is a small part of the Kingdom, but not the Kingdom itself. Paul was not a member of some clergy dressed in a liturgical clothes with raised fingers on a pulpit telling all women to shut up while he goes on to preach for hours. Let us read the same text now in a fresh translation that follows the Greek original but retains the Kingdom meaning. Now we need to have some Greek lessons here. (I thank my husband for his help with the Greek language).

1 Tim 2:9-15 says, “I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls and expensive clothes. For women who **claim the fear of God** should make themselves attractive by the good things they do. A woman should **be a disciple in compliance with the law** and properly submitted. I do not let women teach (like apostles) or **boss men**, but **be compliant**. Because Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was totally deceived, and **this is how violation happened**. But women will be saved **throughout** childbearing if they remain in faith, love and the fear of God with modesty.”

You will find some significant differences. First, the Greek word *theosebeia* is not really *godliness*, it means the **fear of God**. This fear of God, (the attitude of reverence, awe and deep respect towards God) results in submission to God, and his order. Paul is saying that women who fear God handle their beauty in a different way than the world, which was the subject of the last chapter.

Instead of saying women should learn in silence, it is a whole different thing to *be a disciple in compliance with the law*. The Greek word *mantano* is the same word where our word *disciple* comes from. Discipleship in the world of Paul is not learning of some Bible verses by heart and memorizing doctrine; it is following the life pattern of the master, Jesus.

The word *hesychia* traditionally translated *silence* actually means meek harmony with an existing order, compliance with the law, or even constitutional behavior. This is also the conclusion of the excellent book *I suffer not a Woman* (written by Richard and Catherine Clark Kroeger), a full study on the passage. Paul is not telling women to shut up and never talk at all; he is saying that they should be — like men as well — disciples that are submitted to the Law of Christ, to his divine order. That is entirely consistent with his entire line of argument. Paul says in 1 Cor 9:21, **“I am under Christ’s law.”** This body of law consists of the 75 commandments in total, that Christ has given to those that want to be under his Kingship, as mentioned before. Paul is saying that women should be the disciples of their Lord, and do that within the law of liberty, the constitution of Jesus Christ, so that they are not wild, unidentified flying objects that no one knows where they come from and where they go. Rather they are functioning within a legal, proper framework, submitted to the protocol that God has established.

When Paul says I do not allow a woman to teach (in Greek, *didaskein*), we need to remember there are two kinds of teaching in the New Testament. The most crucial one is the apostolic teaching (*didache*, the verb is *didaskein*). This is the first, most important, foundation-laying kind of teaching the New Testament knows, and it is *exclusively done by apostles*. The very first thing mentioned in Acts 2:42-47 that the early followers of Christ did was **to expose themselves to the didache (teaching) of the apostles**. This apostolic teaching has a quality of firstness, it is the ground breaking and foundation-laying labor, which is a part of the special and considerable task of apostles (see 1 Cor 3:10,11, 12:28, Eph 2:20).

The context of our text goes on to say that Paul does not allow women to boss men, a unique Greek word (*autenthein*) that means to take initiative, domineer, to wrongly usurp authority over someone, and it particularly means here to take over a position of firstness or headship. The Bible is very clear that headship is male; a woman taking a position of headship would mean a breach of divine protocol. Paul underlines again that he is not talking about woman being silent or express themselves; the issue at hand is *firstness*. Paul defends the creational order from being turned upside down. He explains the reason for his statement like this — **Because Adam was formed first (in Greek, *protos*)**. This is the same expression that Paul uses when he says, **“In the ekklesia, God has placed first (*protos*) apostles, second prophets, third teachers”** (1 Cor 12:28).

There is a second kind of teaching the New Testament knows as instructing or explaining, which is exactly the kind of teaching (in Greek, *ektithemi*; *nouthen*) that Priscilla and Aquila did to Apollos **when they explained to him the way of God in more detail** (Acts 18:26). The specific teachers (in Greek, *didascalos*) mentioned in the New Testament (Rom 12:7, 1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11) are described as being clearly different from the apostles. Originally, teachers were those who simply read the Bible texts to those who could not read nor write, and answer some questions that those readers might have had. They did not have an apostolic, foundational role. In their order of appearance at the construction site called *ekklesia* they are mentioned third, not first or second. Their teaching is reading and explaining, not the foundation-laying task of apostles and prophets. Again, this is not a hierarchical ranking, but it has to do with their order of appearance in the sense of a

chronological order when Jesus, the Apostle, builds his *ekklesia*. Just like Jesus was an apostle (Heb 3:1) and did all the ground work, apostles and prophets appear first on a building site, lay the foundation (Eph 2:20), and then, and only then, do others come into this work and build on top of the apostolic & prophetic foundation. Starting to build a house with the roof first is not a good architectural strategy! It is a great mistake of Christianity to have ignored this Kingdom building principle, and wherever teachers (theologians), pastors or evangelists have done a work cut out solely for apostles and prophets, the results have been falling short of Kingdom standards.

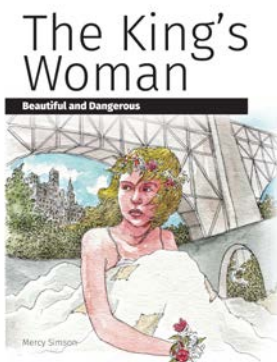
There is a last issue in our passage at hand that is important to note. It shows again what this message of Paul is all about. It says that through Eve's total deception by satan, **violation** happened. Violation means a violation of protocol, a breaking of the law. This is not just about the personal sin of Adam and Eve, but through them the whole legal contract of mankind with God was broken. This is so severe that only by returning back to the new contract, the new covenant, the order of the Kingdom, will mankind be saved.

Again, the issue is far bigger than ordering women to hush during somber church services while a male preacher is droning on. The issue is that both men and women return to their order in the Kingdom and remain in it. And part of that order is the headship of man, whose head is Christ, whose head is God. Anyone who submits to God and to Christ as King out of love and obedience will accept that order. For someone who does not make that step of submission, no amount of words and arguments will ever help. Only a new revelation of the incredible passion and love of our heavenly lover may reach our wounded souls and open us up for him and his plans.

This is **Chapter 27** from the book **The King's Woman – Beautiful and Dangerous**

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