

# Genesis 3:16 – The Pronouncement on Eve

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April 2008

## INTRODUCTION:

The story of the fall is of critical importance for both Judaism and Christianity. There is perhaps no Biblical story that is theologically more significant. Our understanding of the origin of humanity, our relationship to God, the cosmos, other creatures, and to one another as male and female as well as our understanding of the human condition are all derived from this one narrative. Within that narrative, the pronouncements made by God on the woman and the man have traditionally been seen as sentences by the divine judge imposed as a result of a judicial inquiry that takes place directly after the eating of the forbidden fruit. These pronouncements take the form of curses pronounced on the serpent and on the ground and declarative judgments on the woman and the man. The question that has always presented itself is to what extent are these pronouncements prescriptive and punitive (as in a jail sentence) or descriptive (as in a prophetic pronouncement of a new state of affairs). The question probed by this study is to examine how the pronouncement made to the woman in Genesis 3:16 has been interpreted historically and by the church today and to examine what God has intended to communicate to ancient Israel and to the people of God throughout the ages. My approach will be to survey the range of interpretive stances that have been adopted over the year looking both at the *sensus literalis* of the text and the contextual framework of the verse within the larger context of the story of the fall and to within the church today. The purpose is to determine the meaning and significance of the verse for God's people throughout the ages.

Given the controversy regarding male female relationships in the church today, there is probably no issue that is more emotionally charged. The extent to which roles, functions and positions are fully interchangeable within the church and the family is one that has polarized the Christian community. Our assumptive stance on the question of reciprocity of roles within the family, the church and society, significantly effects our interpretation of this verse. John Bartkowski<sup>1</sup> describes the tendency of interpreters to approach the Biblical text with "biases" and "prejudices" which are conditioned by their social, historical and cultural location. He also calls attention to the "Hermeneutical Circle" (see also Gadamer 1982: Jeanrond 1991, Warnke) which is a circular Hermeneutical strategy to ascribe coherent meaning to a text. This cycle describes the

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<sup>1</sup> Bartkowski, "Beyond Biblical Literalism and Inerrancy." 262

tendency we all have to comprehend the details of a text in view of our understanding of the whole of scripture, while recognizing that our understanding of the whole is based upon our interpretation of the various parts.

Perhaps there is no text that is more subject to these issues than Gen. 3:16. In surveying the vast breadth of interpretations of this verse, one becomes aware of the extent to which prejudices, presuppositions, and assumptive stances on the nature of male-female relationships come into play in interpreting the text. It seems that everyone with a strongly held position on the egalitarian complementarian spectrum uses this verse to not only promote his or her position, but also to lend credibility to that position. In this myriad of interpretations, can we every free ourselves from our own biases and understand what God meant to communicate here?

We will start by analyzing textual and linguistic issues that arise from the text and then look at contextual issues that arise from the verse as it is found within the story.

### **The Text:**

עַל־כֵּן־יְבַרְכֶנּוּ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּטֶנְתְּךָ וְאֶת־יְלִדְיֶיךָ וְאַתְּ תִּשְׁמָרְנִי וְאֵת־אֲדָמְתִּי וְהוּלָלְךָ וְהוּלְלִי וְהוּלְלֵנוּ וְהוּלְלֵנוּ וְהוּלְלֵנוּ וְהוּלְלֵנוּ  
Genesis 3:16

<sup>LXT</sup> **Genesis 3:16** kai. th| gunaiki. ei pen pl hqunwn pl hqunw/ taj lupaj sou kai. ton stenagmon sou en lupaij texh| tekna kai. proj ton andra sou h apostrof|, sou kai. autoj sou kurieusei

### **Common English Translations**

<sup>ASV</sup> **Genesis 3:16** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Genesis 3:16** To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

<sup>GNV</sup> **Genesis 3:16** Vnto the woman he said, I will greatly increase thy sorowes, and thy conceptions. In sorowe shalt thou bring foorth children, and thy desire shalbe subject to thine husband, and he shall rule ouer thee.

<sup>JPS</sup> **Genesis 3:16** Unto the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy travail; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.'

<sup>KJV</sup> **Genesis 3:16** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. {to thy...: or, subject to thy husband}

**LXE Genesis 3:16** {03:17} And to the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pains and thy groanings; in pain thou shalt bring forth children, and thy <1> submission shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. {1) Gr. turning}

**NAB Genesis 3:16** To the woman he said: "I will intensify the pangs of your childbearing; in pain shall you bring forth children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall be your master."

**NAS Genesis 3:16** To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain <sup>1</sup>in childbirth, In pain you shall <sup>a</sup>bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And <sup>b</sup>he shall rule over you."

**NAU Genesis 3:16** To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain <sup>1</sup>in childbirth, In pain you will <sup>a</sup>bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And <sup>b</sup>he will rule over you."

**NIV Genesis 3:16** To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

**NJB Genesis 3:16** To the woman he said: I shall give you intense pain in childbearing, you will give birth to your children in pain. Your yearning will be for your husband, and he will dominate you.

**NKJ Genesis 3:16** To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire *shall be* for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

**NLT Genesis 3:16** Then he said to the woman, "You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband, <sup>1</sup> he will be your master."

**NRS Genesis 3:16** To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

**RSV Genesis 3:16** To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

**YLT Genesis 3:16** Unto the woman He said, 'Multiplying I multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow dost thou bear children, and toward thy husband *is* thy desire, and he doth rule over thee.'

## Translation and Interpretive Issues

In studying this verse there are three issues that must be addressed. The first two are primarily lexical centering around *'issabon* (pain) and *teshuquah* "desire" and the third is primarily interpretive focused on the meaning of *mashal* "rule". These issues are readily seen in the variations in the English translations.

## ***Pain ('Issabon)***

The more common interpretation of “pains and conceptions” is as a hendiadys (two words used for one idea<sup>2</sup>) and is translated “pains in childbirth” or “pangs of childbirth”. The difficulty in this translation is that the Hebrew word often translated childbirth more precisely has to do with conception<sup>3</sup>. In addition *'issabon* occurs only two other times in the Old Testament (Gen. 3:17, 5:29). In both cases, it has the connotation of toil and struggle. Walton notes that nouns from the same root (*'essb* II, *'oseb* II and *'ass<sup>o</sup>bet*) refer to “pain, agony, hardship, worry, nuisance and anxiety”.<sup>4</sup> As a hendiadys the phrase is more appropriately “toils and conceptions”. Walton points out that this would be more likely a merism (two endpoints referencing everything in between) and so would refer to the whole task of raising children from conception to adolescence.

Carol Meyers<sup>5</sup> rejects the assumption of a hendiadys and translates *'issabon* (pains) as “toil” or “labour”. Her rationale is that *'issabon* occurs only three times in Old Testament, here verse 17 “and 5:29, in each case the context means toil in the context of the work of our hands, that is agrarian work to produce food. The fact that conception and the early period of pregnancy is not normally painful lends support to her hypothesis. She also points out that the second line of Gen, 3:16 stands parallel to the first. Thus, *'eseb* in the second line continues the idea of toil in the first. Meyers does not confine the idea of toil just with physical work, but also with the whole psychological stress of raising children and having to provide food and sustenance. Hence she chooses the word “travail”. Her translation is thus rendered

"I will greatly increase your toil and your pregnancies. (Along) with travail shall you beget children"<sup>6</sup>

It would seem that the more common translation “pains in childbirth” has weaker lexical support, even though this view by far the most common historically (see Chart # 1 and Appendix 1). This view would interpret the punitive aspect of the sentence as an intense

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<sup>2</sup> Example “law and order” in English

<sup>3</sup> Walton, *Genesis*. v. 3:16

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:16

<sup>5</sup> Meyers and ebrary, Inc, *Discovering Eve Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. 106

<sup>6</sup> ebrary, Inc, *Eve's Children the Biblical Stories Retold and Interpreted in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, 108

multiplication (Hebrew infinitive absolute) of pains *in childbirth*. Those commentators who take this view also bring into question the extent to which pain in childbirth would have been part of the state of innocence. Most, (Augustine<sup>7</sup>, Chrysostom<sup>8</sup>, Calvin<sup>9</sup>, Luther<sup>10</sup>) hold that there would have been no pain attributed with conception before the fall. Hence the imposition of pain in childbearing is a punishment that is designed to remind woman of the consequences of sin, each time she gives birth. Others, like Rabbi Jacob<sup>11</sup> hold that some pain in childbearing would have been inevitable and that the sentence results in an intensification causing the woman's "glory" in childbirth to be now tainted with "pain and sorrows"<sup>12</sup>.

Walton takes a middle ground, identifying the "toils" as having more to do with the overall anxiety that a woman will experience in conceiving, giving birth and caring for a family. He agrees with Myers' lexical interpretation of *'issabon* but does not apply it strictly to agrarian tasks: His interpretation is:

"I will greatly increase the anguish you will experience in the birth process, from the anxiety surrounding conception to the strenuous work of giving birth"<sup>13</sup>

Given the evidence, I would propose that the most likely *sensus literalis* of the first pronouncement is a sentence upon the woman and her female descendants to greatly increased labour, stress *and* anxiety, not only in childbirth, but also in all the totality of raising children from conception, through birth and including the hard work of providing for and caring for children. What was to be her "glory" as mother of all living is now tainted with hard work, sorrow, pain and anxiety. Certainly, this would involve toil in agrarian tasks, but *that* sentence is pronounced upon Adam, who as representative of the human race, bears it not only on behalf of himself, but also shares it with the woman. Here it is more likely that the focus of this pronouncement is on the woman and her role as child bearer, mother and provider for children.

The woman here is also representative of all women, yet given the fact that not all women marry, and not all women bear children, the pronouncement is general in scope and relates to women's most common role in life. In an agrarian society, even women

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<sup>7</sup> Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence*, 62

<sup>8</sup> *Genesis 1-11*, 92

<sup>9</sup> Calvin, *Commentaries*, Vol. 1, 171

<sup>10</sup> Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 1, 200

<sup>11</sup> Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible Genesis*, 29

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Walton, *Genesis*, 3:16

who were not married nor had born children, shared in the societal task of raising them and providing for the community.

For a comparison of the interpretive meanings and a summary of positions of *'issabon* see Figure # 1.

### ***Desire (tesuquah)***

The linguistic aspect of the pronouncement “yet your desire will be for your husband” RSV, is relatively straightforward. The conjunction *waw* is sometimes rendered “and” or “but” and indicates the pairing of lines 3 and 4. The word rendered “husband” is *'is*, a gender specific word that indicates the woman’s partner in the context of the one flesh union that is required to produce children, that is “her husband”.

There has been much written, especially in the past decades, about the meaning of “desire” which is described by Meyers as a “strong and carthy”<sup>14</sup> word. A traditional rendering is “desire” or “urge” and there is much debate about the nuances of the word. *Tesuquah* occurs only three times in the Old Testament, here, in Gen. 4:7 speaking of sin, “it’s desire is for you” ESV and in Song 7:10[11] “I am my beloved’s and his desire is for me” ESV. As two thirds of the lexical evidence suggests the desire of a wife for her husband in the context of sexual intimacy, it is most often interpreted as sexual desire in the broad sense of desire for intimacy, sexual union and companionship. As Chart # 2 shows, the preponderance of commentators take this position. The exact nuance within this meaning does range from companionship, intimacy, through to sexual, then carnal, then intense, clingy, psychological yearning.

Augustine, whose view of the *imago dei*, did not include the female body, but only her soul<sup>15</sup>, saw the origin of lust, as a driving sexual force, only as a result of the fall. He interprets this in conjunction with concupiscence entering mankind’s experience.

Gini Andrews takes a more psychological view, stressing clingy dependence:

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<sup>14</sup> Meyers and Ebrary, Inc, *Discovering Eve Ancient Israelite Women in Context*, 110

<sup>15</sup> Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence*, 29

I'm wondering if this intense, clinging, psychological dependence on man which is part of us as women, is not something that we should face as part of our fallenness...."<sup>16</sup>

The translators of the LXX used the word ἀποστρέφω, (turning back) to express desire. They obviously agreed that despite the pains of child rearing, the woman would “turn back” to her husband.

So we see that most commentators throughout history assume the word means “strong urge or desire for”. The exact nuance they give it depends primarily on the extent to which they see sexual passion as a consequence of the fall.

Calvin, on the other hand, has an interesting take on the word. He sees the second punishment, after pain in childbirth, as *subjection* in the form of the woman losing her autonomy. Calvin writes:

For this form of speech, “Thy desire shall be for thy husband”, is of the same force as if he had said that she should not be free and at her own command, but subject to the authority of her husband and dependent upon his will: or as if he had said, “Thou shalt desire nothing but what thy husband wishes”. As it is declared afterwards, “Unto Thee shall be his desire (Gen. 4:7). Thus the woman, who had previously exceeded her proper bounds, is forced back into her own position. She had indeed, previously been subject to her husband, but that was a liberal and gentle subjection; now, however, she is cast into servitude.<sup>17</sup>

It would appear that Calvin sees the woman's desire itself now being bent towards her husband and his wishes. One wonders how many women he actually knew well.

Susan Foh<sup>18</sup> has proposed that *tesuquah* should be interpreted as “desire to control”. She dismisses the sexual connotation because of Gen. 4:7 where sin is crouching, desiring Cain. Thus she uses one third of the lexical data to dismiss another third which occurs in Cant. 7:10, where the sexual connotation is unmistakable. Her rationale is based on G.R. Driver, (“Notes and Studies” *JTS* 47, 1946) who equates the *saqa* root with its Arabic counterpart which need not have sexual connotations, but means “to urge or drive on”.<sup>19</sup> Her position had been embraced by many commentators of late although most like Wenham<sup>20</sup> conclude that the data is inconclusive. Her position is intriguing as it offers as its correlative link between the use of *tesuquah* in 3:17 and 4:7. In 4:7, sin is

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<sup>16</sup> Foh, *Women and the Word of God*, 68.

<sup>17</sup> Calvin, *Commentaries*, Vol. 1, 172

<sup>18</sup> Foh, “What is the woman's desire..”

<sup>19</sup> Foh, *Women and the Word of God*, 67.

<sup>20</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 3:16



“the croucher” desiring to master Cain. Hence her “desire to control” meaning has a unique sense. In addition, it is tempting to embrace a psychological lesson in this verse and use it to explain the tendency that women have to control their husbands. However, it is worth noting that to have one’s own way with one’s fellow is a general tendency that every human being has to some extent. We all want our own way. The desire to control others is not limited to women controlling men, but is a general consequence of sin in relationships. Irvin Busenitz<sup>21</sup> concurs, pointing out that such a pronouncement would entail more of a punishment for the husband who would now have to fend off his wife’s attempted manipulations. He also points out that each pronouncement has one punishment and a descriptive statement. Thus the woman’s punishment is the toil in childbearing and the desire clause is merely a descriptive statement. In addition, to say that the “desire for intimacy” nuance does not fit Gen 4:7 is an overstatement. Sin can be seen to be seeking intimacy, that is “to know” Cain and acquaint him with its way.

Adrien Bledstein proposes that *tesuquah* means “attractiveness”<sup>22</sup>. His article is subtitled “Or did a woman write Genesis?” He posits that YHWH “acknowledges the woman’s charm and warns her of the danger of being attractive”. He bases this on his translation of Gen. 4:7 which is “At an entry of sin you stretch out. It is attractive to you and you can rule over it.” Based on this he concludes that there is no curse in this pronouncement opening up the possibility that the author of Genesis was a woman. The only difficulty with this view is that it is virtually unsupported among serious scholars and translators.

Given the lexical evidence, it is evident that two thirds of the lexical data supports the traditional interpretation of *tesuquah* as desire for intimacy. This nuance can also fit the use in Gen. 4:7, and so should not be rejected. It is also unlikely that the original community to whom the story was told, would have been expecting a meaning other than intimacy, given the subject of childbearing and conceptions in the first lines of the verse.

A complete chart of interpretive nuances is shown in Figure 2.

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<sup>21</sup> Busenitz, “Woman's Desire for Man,” 207

<sup>22</sup> Bledstein, “Was Eve Cursed?.” 45

## ***Rule (mashal)***

There is little serious debate about the meaning of *mashal*. Most agree that the word means “rule” as in the political sense of monarch ruling over his people. All of the commentators researched took this meaning except for John Schmidt<sup>23</sup> whose lexical analysis concludes that, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that there is nothing in this word that implies domination. He suggests two other possible meanings, one is “he will mock you”. The other is “he will be like you”. Schmidt prefers the latter and argues that this fits the context of mutual attraction to one another. Given that Schmidt stands alone in his hypothesis, it will not be considered.

Robert Vasholtz<sup>24</sup> proposes that it is the woman’s *desire* that will rule over her. He simply claims that the antecedent of “he” is not the “husband” but the woman’s desire. While one word is masculine and the other feminine, Vasholtz points out that “it is not uncommon for *masculine* pronouns, and particularly this one, to have a feminine antecedent”.<sup>25</sup> While this explanation may be linguistically possible, I could find no other commentator or translator agrees with him.

The traditional interpretation of this phrase is that the husband will “rule over” his wife. The question that then arises is as to the nature of this “rule”. Is this rule is an intensification of a already existing subordination, a newly instituted subordination, or no subordination at all, but rather a protective benevolent rule? Much of this discussion depends on ones interpretation of the nature the husband wife relationship in the Edenic state of innocence. Also at issue is the extent to which the sentence *prescribes* or *describes* the husband’s rule in nature of the relationship. We shall turn our attention to this shortly.

Figure # 3 summarizes the stance of the commentators surveyed on the nature of the husband’s rule.

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<sup>23</sup> Schmitt, “Like Eve, Like Adam,” 15

<sup>24</sup> Vasholz, “He (?) Will Rule Over You” 51

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

**Figure # 1. What is “the greatly multiplied pain”? (*‘issabon*)**

Translation	Interpretation	View held by
"I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children' RSV	No labour pain in state of innocence Fall brings about pain in child bearing & child raising	Augustine Luther Calvin Blocher Foh Ogden Grudem Ortlund
	Some pain in child bearing was always present Sentence results in intensification Woman's "glory" in procreation is now tainted by pain & sorrows	Jacob (Rabbi)
	Anxiety and stress in childbearing	Walton
"I will greatly increase your toil and your pregnancies, Along with travail shall you beget children" (Meyers)	Sentence results in female "contribution to society" being intensified in two directions:  1. Woman's enlarged role in agrarian tasks of society 2. An increased procreative role with stresses in parenthood	Meyers Van Rutten

**Figure # 2 What is “the woman’s desire”? (*tesuquah*)**

Nuance	Interpretation	View held by
Desire (surrender of own)	Desire what your husband wishes (i.e. loss of autonomy)	Calvin Young
Desire for husband	Desire for intimacy & companionship	Luther Busenitz Wenham Davidson Russouw Ogden Hershon (Rabbi) Grudem Piper
Urge, Drive	Sexual (Broad Sense)	Blocher Meyers Wenham Neusner (Rabbi)
Desires own slavery	Woman desires her own slavery and becomes a seductress	Gunkel
	Intense longing, Clinging, Psychological Dependence	Andrews
Desire to have children	Longing to conceive and bear children	Walton
Desire to Control	Desire to control, master and manipulate husband	Foh Evans Waltke Vogels Ortlund
Desire is attractiveness	Woman is powerfully attractive to her man, yet he can rule over her Punishment of the woman is her attractiveness, yet rule by husband	Bledstein

**Figure # 3. What is the nature of “the husband’s rule””? (*masha*)**

<b>Presupposition of the Edenic State</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>View held by</b>
Male headship and authority is part of creation	Headship becomes harsh & exploitative “lording over”	Augustine Calvin Ogden Jacob (Rabbi)
	Headship & rule reaffirmed intensified for the woman’s punishment, protection and as a pre-empt consideration	Grudem Piper Ortlund
Egalitarian Partnership Corrupted by fall	Husband’s “benevolent” rule is consequence	Luther (but redemption does not reverse this prescription) Chrysostom Walton Davidson Van Wolde
	Husband’s rule is exploitative “lording over”	Bledstein Blocher
	Rule has nothing to do with husband, but it is the woman’s desire that will rule over her, and so procreation will not be inhibited	Vasholtz
Egalitarian Partnership No change due to fall	Husband is not to rule – rather “He will be like you” (having such a desire) OR He will mock you (deemed unlikely)	Schmidt

## Contextual Considerations

### Structure and Function of the Story

Walsh's<sup>26</sup> division of the story into seven scenes forming a V shape helps to visualize the structure of the story. Each scene is identified by its dramatic players and by changes in literary form. (see Figure #4) It is clear that scene four is the central turning point of the story. From the moment that Adam and Eve eat of the forbidden fruit, everything changes. It is also the definitive pivot point of whole the human story. From this structural analysis, it is evident that scenes two and six are in juxtaposition, and contrast the relationships between God, man, woman, creatures, the snake and the creation itself, before and after the fall.

Tina Russouw<sup>27</sup> analyzes Walsh's structural juxtaposition and notes the network of relationships between the man and the woman, the human being and the earth. She also looks at Van Wolde's<sup>28</sup> identification of phonetic, morphemic and lexemic similarities in phrases and word pairs to highlight this network of relationships. She writes:

The human being is dependent on the earth, for it is his beginning and end and meanwhile, it is his food supply. As a male, he is also dependent on the woman for she is the one who bears new life. The woman as a human being is dependent on the man's management, care and protection. The earth is dependent on the human being (man and woman) and their tilling in order to bring forth plants and produce vegetation. There is thus a mutual dependence between the man and the woman, the human being and the earth, and between these two groups. The relation between the human being and the earth takes priority, for it forms the framework of the relation between the man and the woman.<sup>29</sup>

Certainly the pronouncements upon the serpent, the woman and Adam, are poignant with implications for these relationships. Certainly one who hears the story would be in awe of the new reality of interdependence and mutual struggle that now characterizes the human condition. It would be seen as a "family history" of the beginning of the human race and specifically the Hebrew community's place in it. It would also have become an etiology for the way that things are, in the context of explaining the relationship between God, man, husband, wife, animals, and the existence of evil and sin. One can scarcely imagine something more fundamental to the nature of human

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<sup>26</sup> Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*.

<sup>27</sup> Russouw, "I Will Greatly Increase Your Toil and Your Pregnancies'," 159

<sup>28</sup> Wolde, *Stories of the Beginning*, 25-27

<sup>29</sup> Russouw, "I Will Greatly Increase Your Toil and Your Pregnancies'," 159

being and existence than this story. One can imagine, families sitting around a campfire at night, after a day of incredibly hard work, with the father telling once again the story of the fall into sin. The themes of that story would be unmistakable and would be forever etched on the minds of the next generation. Themes such as the preexistence of YHWH, the creation being “very good”, God’s intimate hands-on creation of man, in his own image, the “not good” ness of being alone, the address of God, the commandment, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the tree of life, the fall into sin, the pronouncements on the serpent, the woman and the man, the expulsion from the garden, all of these would create a sense of identity and understanding of who they were and how they got to be here. In addition, the contrast between the goodness God, and of the original creation over against the current human state and the contrast in relationships before and after the fall is beautifully explained in this story. One can summarize these relationships as follows:

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Before the fall</b>	<b>After the Fall</b>
God - humanity	openness & intimacy	fear & hiding
humanity - self	naked & not ashamed	covered and self conscious
man-woman	headship (?) – partnership	headship becomes “rule”
humanity - ground	productive	cursed (requires toil)
humanity - serpent	one of creatures	cursed & enmity

We see the five fold harmony that existed between God, man, the self, woman, the ground (nature) and the serpent is become a five fold disharmony with a unique distortion in each role and relationship. Yet a fragile interdependence is now instituted which characterizes the human condition. Yet despite the changes, the Yahwist, portrays God as preservative of the basic elements of creation with mankind still at the helm. However, the consequences of the first sin will have a pronounced effect on each of these relationships.

In order to properly analyze the meaning of the pronouncement upon the woman, we must first gain some insight into the state of the pre-fall relationships. How did the early community see these? How has the church seen them in light of the fullness of the canon? To those questions, we now turn.

## Figure # 4. Literary Structure of the Story (Walsh)

### Scene 1 - narrative

**Genesis 2:4-17** These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. <sup>5</sup>When no bush of the field<sup>2</sup> was yet in the land<sup>3</sup> and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up- for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, <sup>6</sup>and a mist<sup>4</sup> was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground- <sup>7</sup>then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. <sup>10</sup>A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup>And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. <sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat<sup>1</sup> of it you shall surely die."

### Scene 2 - narrative

YHWH, man, woman, animals

Relationships among creatures

**Genesis 2:18 - 3:1** <sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for<sup>1</sup> him." <sup>19</sup>So out of the ground the LORD God formed<sup>1</sup> every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam<sup>1</sup> there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made<sup>1</sup> into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup>Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."<sup>1</sup> <sup>24</sup>Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup>And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

### Scene 3 - dialogue - the snake- woman

Eating from the tree - three statements

**Genesis 3:1-5** <sup>1</sup>ESV **Genesis 3:1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You<sup>1</sup> shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" <sup>2</sup>And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup>but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" <sup>4</sup>But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup>For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

### Scene 4 - woman & husband - eating from the tree

**Genesis 3:6-8** <sup>6</sup>So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,<sup>1</sup> she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. <sup>8</sup>And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

### Scene 7 - narrative

**Genesis 3:22 - 4:1** <sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever-" <sup>23</sup>therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup>He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

### Scene 6 - monologue

YHWH, man, woman, snake

Relationships among creatures

**Genesis 3:14-19** <sup>14</sup>The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup>I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring<sup>1</sup> and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." <sup>16</sup>To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for<sup>1</sup> your husband, and he shall rule over you." <sup>17</sup>And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup>thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

### Scene 5 - dialogue - YHWH man

woman - eating from tree - three Q & A

**Genesis 3:9-13** <sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"<sup>1</sup> <sup>10</sup>And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." <sup>11</sup>He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup>The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."



## State of Innocence Relationship between Adam & Eve

The story is clearly about the transition from the original Edenic state and the new state after the rebellion. In this story we have creation of the man, woman and creatures and a description of the relationships between God, the man, the woman, the creatures, the serpent and the ground of creation. In the previous narrative, we already have the statement that God created man “in His own image, in the Image of God he created him, male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27, ESV). Yet in the second narrative, the man is the initial and central character, and the crisis comes when God pronounces “:It is not good for the man to be alone” In stark contrast to the “...and God saw that it was good” statements in chapter 1, this statement jolts the reader into attention. Blocher comments “Scripture could not better underline the degree to which solitude contradicts the calling of humanity”<sup>30</sup> . In contrast to the first account where “male and female he created them”, we now see a timeline and order in the creation of the sexes. Man is created first, is given a job, a commandment, and then the pronouncement is made about solitude being “not good”. God deliberates and creates woman. The man has no part in the creation of the woman, rather he is put to sleep. The woman is derived from him and he recognizes in her his complement.

Over the centuries, the preponderance of commentators have espoused that Genesis proves God’s intention for a hierarchical relationship of the sexes where woman is subordinate to man. Augustine and Aquinas<sup>31</sup> believed that the *imago dei* resided in the soul of both man and woman but uniquely in the “vir” (male body). In that sense the woman’s body “femina” did not participate in the *imago dei*. Chrysostom<sup>32</sup>, likewise believed that woman was not fully created in God’s image as the man was, but that she was created equal in honour, not subservient, yet under the authority of her husband. Luther, remarkably sees the Edenic relationship as a partnership, and writes:

“If Eve had not sinned she would not have been subjected to the rule of her husband and she herself would have been a partner in the rule which is now entirely the concern of males”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Blocher, *In the Beginning*, P. 96

<sup>31</sup> Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence*.

<sup>32</sup> Clark, *Women in the Early Church*.

Many recent commentators have challenged the traditional interpretation of Genesis 2. Phyllis Tribe<sup>34</sup> argues that that name Adam is not a proper name but refers to all of mankind, both male and female. Hence both sexes received the assignment and commands in Gen 2:15-16. She then describes the creation of Eve as the “culmination of creation”. This radical departure from the essential nature of the narrative surely does violence to the text itself. How can Adam be described as being put to sleep as Eve is created from his rib if Adam means both male and female? Some of her arguments are picked up by others and can be classified under a number of issues.

## Issues

Mary Evans<sup>35</sup> outlines four main arguments that emerge that have been used to teach subordination:”

1. Woman is created after the man and is therefore secondary to him
2. Woman is taken ‘from the man’ and is therefore secondary to him.
3. Woman is named by the man and is therefore subordinate to him.
4. Woman is created to be a ‘helper’ for man and as such is subordinate to him.”<sup>36</sup>

Wayne Grudem<sup>37</sup> adds four others:

1. God named the human race “man” not “woman”
2. The serpent came to Eve first attempting to reverse roles
3. God spoke to Adam first after the fall, emphasizing “his” primary accountability
4. Adam not Eve represents the human race (1 Cor 15:22, Rom. 5:15)

## Order

Does the fact that Adam was created first imply that he is the head of the union?.

Evans argues that temporal priority means nothing, and that if it did, the animals would be superior to man. I agree that absolute temporal priority in a narrative is not, in and of itself, significant but one cannot dismiss the flow of the narrative in determining implications. Adam is created first, is put in the garden to keep it, is given the commandment concerning the tree. The God announces that it is not good for man to be alone. As search for a helper for Adam is embarked on and Adam is given the task of naming the animals. He is put then to sleep so that God can create the woman and *then* she comes on the scene as the helper fit for *him*. Wayne Grudem point's out that “no such two stage procedure is mentioned for any of the animals that God made, but

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<sup>34</sup> Tribe, Phyllis *Depatriarchalizing the Biblical Interpretation*

<sup>35</sup> Evans, Mary *Women in the Bible* P. 14

<sup>36</sup> Evans, *Women in the Bible* P. 16

<sup>37</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*.

here it has a special purpose”<sup>38</sup> The pattern is consistent with the theme of primogeniture, whereby the firstborn of a family has leadership or headship in the family for that generation. The two stage creation process is consistent with the idea that God has unique roles for the male and female in the area of headship and as helper.

Blocher goes further and suggests that the theme of order is vital and alludes to the Apostle Paul’s teaching.

“The God of the second tablet is no more a God of disorder than the God of the first tablet. The face to face partnership of man and woman is not a mere reciprocity, equally readable from right to left and left to right. The apostle Paul drew from the narrative the lesson that man is the head of the woman (1Cor 11:3) .....We must not give in, through sheer pressure, to the temptation to conceal this fact: this is the teaching of holy scripture, whether or not our age likes it.”<sup>39</sup>

## Derivation

In the narrative the woman is created from the man’s rib and hence owing her existence in some way to the man. This derivation in itself does not imply subordination, but together with the order of creation and the stated purpose for which woman was created does indicate that the woman was created for the man and not the man for the woman. The Apostle Paul refers to this when he gives his discourse in 1 Cor. 11:7b-9 on man being

“in the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man”

Blocher asserts that “That argument is not a dubious one, and it gives meaning to the order of creation.”<sup>40</sup> It becomes clear that an order governs the relationship of the sexes, yet this order neither implies superiority nor subordination but does primacy in God’s intended order and role for the man. While each person is in himself or herself equally accountable to God, there is a sense in which the male in a family unit, represents that unit to God and represents the authority of God to the family unit.

## Naming

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 461

<sup>39</sup> Blocher P. 103

<sup>40</sup> Blocher P. 104

In the narrative, Adam names all the animals. Grudem<sup>41</sup> argues that the right to name someone of something, implies a position of authority over the thing named. A parent has no right to name someone else's children, but can name their own. Phyllis Tribble<sup>42</sup> concedes that naming is an act of authority, but argues that Gen. 2: 23 is not an instance of naming (in the Hebrew) and that it cannot be used to justify male authority. Ramsay<sup>43</sup>, in commenting on her argument claims that her conclusion is correct but for the wrong reasons. Ramsay points out that Gen 2:23 is actually an instance of name-giving, but that name giving does not always imply authority over the person or thing named. He points out that often a name is given at the point of relinquishing control over something (as in Jacob's naming of a well as he gives it over to someone else (Gen 26:17-21). Ramsay concludes that name giving rather indicates the quality of *discernment* of the name giver toward what is named. This approach seems to sit well and fits Adam's cry of recognition toward the woman in Gen. 2: 23. In any case, naming, coupled with primogeniture does lends support to Adam's headship role.

## Helper

Tribble concedes that the English translation "helper" suggests an assistant, subordinate, an inferior but insists that the Hebrew 'ezer' does not imply inferior rank and that the second 'kengdo' 'corresponding to him' implies equal rank. David Clines<sup>44</sup> in commenting on Tribble's widely accepted view concludes:

"I conclude, from reviewing all the occurrences in the Hebrew Bible, is that though superiors may help inferiors, strong may help weak, gods may help humans, in the act of helping they are being 'inferior'. That is to say, they are subjecting themselves to a secondary, subordinate position. Their help may be necessary or crucial, but they are *assisting* some task that is already somebody else's responsibility. They are not actually *doing* the task themselves for there is different language for that."<sup>45</sup>

The idea of helper gives a connotation of one who assists in a task that is not their prime responsibility. In that sense, it is the male's primary responsibility to fill the earth, subdue it, rule over the animals and have dominion. These commands are given before woman comes on the scene. Adam's search through the animal world for a suitable helper confirms this. However, the man is not complete, and one might be hard pressed to imagine how he could "fill the earth" alone. However, at this point we have

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 462

<sup>42</sup> Tribble, Phyllis, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*

<sup>43</sup> Ramsay, George W. *Is Name Giving an Act of Dominion in Genesis 2:23 and Elsewhere* P. 26

<sup>44</sup> Clines, David J.A. *What does Eve Do To Help* P. 30

<sup>45</sup> *ibid* P. 31

been let in on the ending for we have been told already “male and female he created them”. The woman is coming, and the story of her creation delineates her role. Clines concludes that procreation is the primary way in which Eve helps Adam.

“From this viewpoint , the Lord says that ‘it is not good that the man should be alone’, not because Adam is lonely or has no lively intellectual conversation when he comes in from the garden at nights but because he will have no chance at all of filling the earth so long as there is only one of him”<sup>46</sup>

We must conclude that the Genesis 2 narrative, confers on the man the primary responsibility for carrying out the prescribed tasks. However, it is not good for man to be alone, and so the creation of Eve as a helper “for him” confirms the man’s headship in the relationship. It also confirms the differentiation in roles.

### **Headship and Authority**

Despite the modern insistence on reading interchangeability of genders into every narrative, one must twist this narrative significantly in order to come to a place where one sees the man and woman as wholly interchangeable without any distinction in headship, authority and role. On the contrary, early redactors almost exclusively, came to the conclusion that Adam’s role was headship and the woman’s was as helper and companion. Luther, who concludes that if Eve has not sinned, she would have shared in a partnership with Adam<sup>47</sup>, also states in commenting on Gen. 2:16 that “the household government is also set up when Eve is added to Adam as his companion.... *and the government of the home is also assigned to Adam in paradise.*” (italics mine)<sup>48</sup>

This does not imply inequality nor subordination, for the text clearly implies that both are “male and female” equally “man. (Gen. 1:27). However, they are not the same.<sup>49</sup> Sameness, would imply total reciprocity of role and function and authority. But, we do not see that here. Blocher<sup>50</sup> points out : “In the relationship of the sexes, the privilege of authority, which represents God, rests on the side of the male.” Blocher continues to make a vital point:

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<sup>46</sup> ibid P. 35

<sup>47</sup> Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 1, 203

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, 104

<sup>49</sup> Bonnie Miler-McLemore, chapter 6, *Does Christianity Teach Male Headship?*, 52

<sup>50</sup> Blocher, *In the Beginning*

“...There is a kind of subtle balance. In all earthly relationships, the man represents God more obviously than does the woman: in active transcendency, in keeping an objective distance, in leadership and in work. But we realize at once that it is the woman who best represents humanity in its relationship with God: in the face to face-to-face relationship with the Lord, every human being, male or female, must accept a feminine position, existing from him and for him, receiving and bearing the seed of his word, receiving and bearing the name he gives.”<sup>51</sup>

C.S. Lewis articulated this same theme in his essay *Priestesses in the Church?*<sup>52</sup> :

“I am crushingly aware how inadequate most of us (men) are, in our actual and historical individualities to fill the place prepared for us. But it is an old saying in the army that you salute the uniform and not the wearer. Only one wearing the masculine uniform can (provisionally, and till the *parousia*) represent the Lord to the Church: for we are all, corporately and individually, feminine to Him.”

John Piper also concurs:

“ When the Bible teaches that men and women fulfill different roles in relation to each other, charging man with a unique leadership role, it bases this differentiation, not on temporary cultural norms but on the permanent facts of creation. (see. 1 Cor. 11:3, Eph. 5:21-23, 1 Tim. 2:11-14)”<sup>53</sup>

We must admit that throughout the ages, it has universally held that, in the family and in the governance of God’s people<sup>54</sup>, positional authority and headship has been given to the male. This does not imply superiority or subordination, for those in authority are often fully aware of the immense burden they carry. Our Lord’s wrestling in Gethsemane with the task that he was given illustrates the incredible burden of authority. While Jesus said “the Father is in me and I am in the Father”(John 10:38), yet there was no question as to who had the authority. So it is with husband and wife. Both are one flesh, yet the male has the position of headship. As the apostle Paul wrote:

“ Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and that the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” (I Cor. 11:3)

Clearly this implies positional authority. Evans, Scanozi and Hardesty<sup>55</sup> argue that this headship does not imply authority but conveys the meaning of life-giving source as in Col 2:19 where Christ is the head “from whom the whole body...growths with a growth that is from God”.<sup>56</sup> However, this use of “head” cannot apply to Paul’s description of husband as head of the wife. Is it not a stretch to see the husband be seen as being the life-giving source of his wife, apart from providing her with food? But then if the wife were to provide her husband with food, has she then become *his* life giving source?

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<sup>51</sup> Blocher P. 104

<sup>52</sup> C.S. Lewis *God in the Dock* P. 93.

<sup>53</sup> *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 35

<sup>54</sup> This is a major issue, which depends upon the interpretation of verse such as 1 Tim 2:12, which is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>55</sup> Scanzoni, Letha & Hardesty, Nancy, *All we’re Meant To Be* P. 31

<sup>56</sup> Evans, P.65

I think it important to keep in mind the metaphor that is being used. The head is a part of the body. The head is the seat of four of the five senses. It is the information-gathering organ. It is also the information processing organ and the decision-making organ. In the ancient world, as today, everyone would have understood that while a person can live and function without a hand, a leg or an arm, no one can function without a head. To say that someone is the head of a union, implies that they have the primary and authoritative role. Surely then, this language must mean positional authority. Is there any question that Christ is in positional authority over his bride, the church? So in the same way is the husband to his wife. Paul also instructs wives to submit to their husbands *as to the Lord*:

“Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church, his body of which He is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy.....(Ephesians 5: 21-26)

Admittedly these verse are prefaced by an admonition to submit one to another, but this raises the issue of “some” meaning “some to others” or “everyone to everyone”. In the passage above, one thing is clear: wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord. So also husbands are to mirror Christ’s self-giving as an act of love for the sake of their wives.

## **The Fall and Divine Pronouncements**

Certainly, one’s stance on the nature on the state of innocence relationship between the Adam and Eve, will dictate how one sees the divine pronouncements. Davidson<sup>57</sup> has outlined six major views that have been advanced for the interpretation of this pronouncement. These views assume only two positions on the nature of the pre-fall relationship. The first is hierarchical, subordination/submission of woman to male supremacy/leadership. The second is full egalitarian with no subordination/ submission of woman to male supremacy/leadership. Unfortunately, Davidson’s analysis polarizes the typical approach to gender issues in Genesis 2 and 3. What he does not show is a middle view between these extremes which has been posed by John Piper, Wayne Grudem and others.<sup>58</sup> This view is the complementarian view that regards the initial Edenic state of the relationship as one of full equality and complementarity of relationships and roles yet acknowledging male headship. The Hierarchical

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<sup>57</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*.

<sup>58</sup> *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*.

(subordination/submission) language that is used to polarize the discussion does not adequately express this view. Relying on all the traditional arguments that show that the man has primacy in terms of headship and authority, the complementarian position does not imply a subordinate status for the woman, but a unique status. It asserts that men and women are created equal but not the same. In terms of God ordained function and role, each has a unique place. Male headship, in the Edenic state does not imply “rule” but does imply primacy in representing the human race before God and giving headship and primary responsibility to Adam for the divine commands which he received directly. Eve’s role is to be his suitable “helper”.

Grudem and Piper point to the Trinity as an analogous relationship. Each person of the Trinity is full God, fully equal, yet with different roles. Scripture portrays the Father as the head of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3) as the husband is the head of the wife. Arguments regarding the meaning of *hē kefalē* have centered on the distinction between “first in rank” (positional authority) and “life giving source”. There is little doubt in scripture that Christ saw himself as subordinate to the Father, yet fully equal. He did not see equality with God as something to be grasped (Phil 2:12) but rather humbled himself in obedience to the Father.



## ***The Nature of the Consequential Pronouncements:***

There is little question that both scenes five and six in Walsh's V shaped structure occur in the context of a judicial inquiry and the pronouncement of a sentence. In this context, we must differentiate between the spontaneous effects of the fall and the pronouncements that are made upon each of the perpetrations.

Their intent to become like God's is now contrasted with the poverty of their own resources. Prior to the fall, they had an uninhibited nakedness and a perfectly transparent demeanor. That is now replaced with a self-conscious nakedness and an awareness of their own vulnerability. Prior to the fall, they were unconcerned with God's omniscience, as they had nothing to hide. Now, their fall into sin and the consequential sense of guilt cause them to hide from God. A newfound disharmony with self is a consequence of their eyes being opened. Blocher<sup>59</sup> points out that the hiding is a desire to escape the judgment that they know instinctively is coming. In addition the covering testified to an attempt to cover their sexuality, which bespeaks of their failure to become gods.

The divine pronouncements on each of the perpetrators are announced in succession. Each contains a personal consequence and a relational consequence. I propose that three characteristics of each are discernable. These are punitive, preservative and pre-emptive. God's concern here is not just punishment, but also a divinely ordained state of affairs that will preserve and protect His people until redemption is engineered. These characteristic each have a specific function within the community of faith in communicating the nature of the situation in which they now find themselves.

### **Punitive**

The punitive element in each pronouncement functions as a constant reminder of the price and consequence of sin. Here sin must be seen as more than just disobedience of God's moral law, but is fundamentally breach of trust in the goodness and character of

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<sup>59</sup> Blocher, *In the Beginning* p. 176

God. Sin is a violation of that ultimate relationship with God that each person is called to.

For both the man and the woman, one punitive aspect is the curse on the ground. While this is pronounced in Adam's sentence, there is no mistaking that Eve too, will share in the painful toil that will now be necessary to grow food. Meyers<sup>60</sup> and Van Rutten take the meaning of *'issabon* to be primarily toils related to agrarian tasks and so the primary aspect of the woman's punishment is not added pain in childbearing, but stress related to providing for a family and in parenthood. Most take the "toils" to be related to the childbearing and child raising. In this case the toil, anxiety and stress of raising a family is the woman's primary punishment. What would have been her glory is now tainted with toil, painful labour and anxiety.

The traditional interpretation of *'issabon* is pains of childbirth, which is the most common English translation, but lexically, has the least support. If one takes this interpretation, then the degree of the punitive element depends on whether one subscribes to the view that there would have been no labour pain in the pre-fall state. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Foh, Ogden and Grudem hold this view. Others like Jacob, hold that there would always have been some pain in childbearing, for pain is a part of living in a physical world, and that the sentence is an intensification. "Multiplying, I will multiply..." In any case, labor pain is woman's prescribed lot to remind God's people of a consequence of rebellion.

The extent to which the woman's desire is punitive depends upon the interpretation that one takes. Certainly loss of autonomy is punitive. (Calvin, Young) Gunkel's hypothesis of a woman desiring her own slavery would certainly be punitive. In addition, any view that sees the woman's desire as a clinging psychological dependence (Andrews) would be punitive. Foh's hypothesis of a woman possessing desire to control her husband has a punitive aspect to it as it brings conflict into every marriage. Bledstein's view that desire is attractiveness has a punitive element in that it makes the woman the object of aggressive male behavior.

The most likely interpretation of the woman's desire is desire for intimacy, companionship, which would include a sexual component. This is best supported by the

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<sup>60</sup> Meyers and ebrary, Inc, *Discovering Eve Ancient Israelite Women in Context*.

lexical evidence. This interpretation is also held by most conservative scholars including Luther. While Foh's hypothesis of "desire to control" is appealing and novel, it negates the use of *teshuquah* in Cant. 7:10 and makes the pronouncement on the woman a punishment inflicted on the husband. It is unlikely that this is the correct interpretation.

The punitive element in the woman's desire for her husband is in what it might supplant. The woman prior to the fall was free to pursue any number of desires, to which desires the serpent appealed. A woman's desire for her husband will now supplants other desires and hence this has a pre-emptive and a preservative element. Woman's freedom to pursue any desire is blunted by her desire for her husband. Her desire for her husband will endure that children are born and that the human race continues.

The final consequence is the husband's "rule". Here the assumption concerning the pre Edenic situation is crucial in determining the punitive aspect of the sentence. I have concluded that the husband's headship was part of the created order. In this I am in good company (Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Grudem, Piper, Jacob). However, there is much variation of the interpretation of the husband's "rule". The most common historical connotation of "rule" is "lording over". The husband may now subject his wife to his own will. The extent to which this is punitive depends on the ruthlessness of the husband. This would be highly punitive as it now subjects the woman to an earthly master who can be domineering and harsh. Certainly this plays out in many societies.

However, I do not conclude that the husband's rule is punitive. Graham Ogden<sup>61</sup> points out that within the Old Testament, rulers, whether judges, kings or priests were expected to demonstrate concern, compassion and care for those whom the ruled. However, because sin has now entered all relationships, the husband has the ability and power to deal harshly with his wife, but he need not do so. The extent to which a wife will suffer under her husband's rule depends on the extent of his reflecting the love and compassion of YHWH.

Vasholtz takes the view that it is the desire that will rule over and not the husband. Thus, the punitive aspect is that the woman will be driven by her desire for her husband.

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<sup>61</sup> Ogden, "A fresh look at the "curses" of Gen 3," 136

Schmidt interprets this as “he will be like you”, which appears to have no punitive element, other than mutual desire for each other. These are both minority views and unlikely to be intended.

## **Preservative**

Each of the divine pronouncements has a preservative component which testifies to the love and mercy of God. First, the woman will not abrogate her child bearing role and will continue to produce offspring. Even though child bearing and labour will be painful, it will continue. Likewise, the man, while he will have to work the land and deal with thorns and thistles, will still be able to produce bread. The human race will continue.

Secondly, the woman’s desire for her husband guarantees that despite the pain of child bearing and child rearing, she will still seek intimacy with her husband. This is a divine mercy for both the man and the woman and is clearly preservative. Adam confirms this as he names his wife Eve as the mother of all living. (3:30).

In light of the consequence of disharmony that now exists in relationships, the husband’s “rule” is a preservative consequence because it guarantees the family unit will continue to function, through the appointment of the husband’s authority and ability to “rule” his wife. The absence of his ability “to rule” may have well created an untenable social battlefield within the family unit itself. His rule, brings a measure stability.

## **Preemptive**

The final aspect of the consequential pronouncements is preemptive. This aspect is similar to the preservative aspect, but carries the added edge of preventing a recurrence of repetition of the blatant rebellion. Both the man and the woman will now be preoccupied with the rigors of food production and child rearing. In the Edenic state, they were able to devote much time to reflecting and considering all sorts of things. Now, the woman will be preoccupied with child rearing. While this is not totally preemptive, it does have a preemptive aspect to it. Likewise, here “desire” will not longer be free to roam in all directions, but she will have a predisposition toward her husband. Likewise, his rule will act as a restraining influence on the woman. In the same way, the sentence on Adam binds him more closely to toil and to the earth. Will

this restraint be enough. Given the events of Genesis 6 and the wickedness leading to the deluge, apparently not. The new conditions post flood which include the reduced lifespan of man are highly preemptive and bear credibility to this as an divine aspect of the pronouncements.

In considering the sentence that is passed on the woman and the man, we have seen that this is in the form of a judicial sentencing. In passing this sentence, the YHWH, judge includes both a punitive, preservative and preemptive component which can be clearly seen in each aspect of the sentencing.

## **Conclusion**

If we conclude that the pre-fall state of the male female relationship was one of full partnership and equality, yet differentiation of function (woman a helper to man) and male headship, then one question remains. Given that the fall has distorted these relationships, how does redemption in Christ restore these relationships? In the complementarian model, the answer is simple. It is a full restoration to the pre-fall state, which is full partnership and equality, differentiation of role, and continued male headship. In fact this is exactly what we see in Paul's letters as to the relationships between husband and wife and the role of women in the church. This is not subordination or suppression of women, as some have charged but a return to God's design in relationship and role. This does not imply that woman cannot hold leadership roles or headship roles in other organizations. They can. Nor does it suggest that when men abrogate or refuse to discharge their headship, that women are not to assume it. For this we have ample examples in scripture, that God can and does use women in leadership. (Deborah in Judges 4, Abigail in 1 Sam. 25)

If a consequence of the fall is pain in childbearing and toil in child-raising, should we try to relieve it? Absolutely. In the same way that we relieve the labour of farming with machinery, we should use all of our God given faculties to relieve pain, labour and suffering. Should, we then also relieve the "rule" of the husband? Insofar as the

husband's rule is oppressive, and harsh, yes. We should never be content with wife beaters, and emotional or psychological or physical abuse of any sort, nor should we shrug it off as woman's due lot. These things are clearly evil. However, I do not see the husband's rule as punitive. The woman's punishment has to do with pains and toil in child bearing. The husband's rule is primarily preservative and preemptive as I have shown. It can be punitive, if the husband is sinful, and indeed in most societies, this is indeed the case, but our mandate as the people of God is to campaign against such oppression. But this does not mean denouncing the husband's headship or reversing roles as feminists would seek to do. The solution is to replace oppression and subjection by love, compassion and mercy and to seek to establish God honouring relationships in families where the wife submits herself to her husband "as to the Lord" and the husband loves his wife "as Christ loved the church".

## APPENDIX - TABLE OF INTERPRETATIONS OF GEN. 3:16

Source	Interpretation	Comment
Augustine Aquinas	<p>Humans are union of soul and body                      Imago Dei resides in the soul and the vir (male body)                      Woman' soul is in the Imago Dei but not her body - femina (1 Cor. 11:7)                      Male seed transmits original sin. Woman is receptor                      Pain is the result of acquiring mortality through the fall                      There would have been no pain in giving birth prior to fall. Now multiplied greatly.                      Woman was created subordinate in perfect state                      Punishment on Eve was an intensification (the twist of slavery)                      Desire is sexual desire (concupiscence)</p>	<p>Woman subordinate in Eden due to being taken from man &amp; due to role as helper.                      Woman's procreative role through lust &amp; in pain only after the fall. (original plan was to be impregnation subject to the will (no lust) &amp; no pain in childbirth)</p> <p>Woman must not teach or exert authority over man</p>
Chrysostom	<p>Woman created equal in honour and not subservient, yet under the authority of the man</p> <p>Subordination is punishment due to the fall, yet a blessing</p>	<p>Yet woman not in image of God, as man is</p> <p>Woman must not teach or exert authority over man</p>
Luther	<p>Sentence is a punishment for original sin                      On the woman is imposed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distress in her function as a childbearer and child rearer</li> <li>2. Obedience to her husband was imposed – he now rules over her – she is compelled to obey him by God's command</li> </ol> <p>Luther writes "If Eve had not sinned she would not have been subjected to the rule of her husband and she herself would have been a partner in the rule which is now entirely the concern of males"<sup>62</sup></p>	<p>Luther sees pre fall situation as a partnership – yet does not see redemption as reversing this prescription</p>

Calvin	Punishment = Pains and Subjection Pains= childbirth only mentioned “She shall not be free and at her own command but subject to her husband's authority and dependent upon his will, as if he had said “Thou shalt desire nothing but what thy husband wishes”	Punishment is for exceeding her bounds... what was before a liberal and gentle submission is now servitude
Busenitz	Lexical & etymological arguments are inconclusive Contextual analysis <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. each judgment only one punishment</li> <li>2. punishment has no relation to offense</li> <li>3. punishment centers around propagation</li> <li>4. the man should not bear the brunt of woman's punishment</li> <li>5. punishment pronouncement followed by explanatory statement</li> </ol> “desire” is the desire for continued intimacy despite the pain of childbirth. Desire to control not a consequence of this but a consequence of general sin  “Desire” in Cant. 7:10 is not obscure but clearly the desire of a man for a woman. Both Gen 3:16 and Cant. 7:10 are literal whereas Gen. 4:7 is figurative and does not fit. Context speaks of procreation and continuation of life & not desire to dominate  - disagrees with Foh	Good argument from context and interpretive principles.  Main punishment for woman is pain of childbirth. But that will not interfere with the woman's desire for intimacy with her husband.  Desire to Control issue is a result of sin in general and not part of the punishment of the woman
Foh	Common translations of desire (teshuqah) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. sexual desire</li> <li>2. desire that makes her the willing slave of man (immense, clinging, psychological dependence &amp; yearning)</li> <li>3. woman will desire only what her husband desires (Calvin)</li> </ol> Foh's: desire = desire to possess or control her husband who will respond by ruling over her	Reference Young who mentions this, but does not account for it. need to follow footnote 22, Young p. 126-7
Evans	Agrees with Foh <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. explains parallel 3:16 &amp; 4:7</li> <li>2. explains why husbands do not always rule</li> </ol>	Need the book to follow footnote 38 p. 20 reference to Luther



	<p>&amp; why wives do not always desire husbands</p> <p>3. explains conflict due to sin</p>	
Waltke	Agrees with Foh	Article attached to Foh article
Davidson	<p>Identifies 6 Man-Woman relationship models based on Gen. 1-3. Concludes that pre-fall was a fully egalitarian relationship, post fall a prescription of subjection/submission with a redemptive grace driven voluntary return to mutual egalitarianism post Christ.</p> <p>Desire = desire for intimacy, a divine blessing in midst of judgment</p> <p>Judicial pronouncement: "Measure for measure; you influenced your husband and caused him to do what you wished; henceforth, you and your female descendents will be subservient to your husbands"</p>	<p>Egalitarian assumptions ignore the evidence for distinction in roles pre fall. Then postulates a return to egalitarian mutual submission in New Testament era.</p>
Meyers	<p>"I will greatly multiply your toil and your pregnancies (Along) with travail shall you beget children For to your man is your desire And he shall predominate over you"</p> <p>Desire = desire for sexual intimacy Prescriptive to overcome natural aversion to pregnancy because of pain &amp; high death rate</p>	
Walsh	<p>V shaped concentric parallelism of Genesis 2-3 makes Gen 3:6-8 the pivot Man's superiority is explicitly stated in the woman's punishment (also visible in the act of naming Gen 3:20) Her relationship as matching helper is deprived of ultimate fulfillment.</p>	
Van Wolde	<p>Network of mutual interdependencies between man &amp; woman, human being &amp; the earth. Man &amp; woman have different roles &amp; functions but are interdependent Both will be requires to till the earth Woman will be dependent on man for protection, will have a unique functions and duties</p>	

Russouw	<p>Synthesizes Meyer &amp; Walsh &amp; Van Wolde in describing the new order that will result due to the prescriptive punishment, an order of mutual dependency and uniqueness in role.</p> <p>Desire = desire for intimacy</p>	<p>Interesting that she identifies the uniqueness and interdependency of roles – per complementarian position.</p>
Ogden	<p>3:16 – not a curse formula but prescriptive sentence</p> <p>Pains in childbearing Desire = desire for intimacy Rule = benevolent rule Reflects Hebrew social norms – mutuality and interdependence with care &amp; protection &amp; loving response</p>	
Grudem	<p>Male has positional authority by virtue of creation (8 reasons) Sentence does not bring about a reversal of roles but a distortion. Man's natural authority is tainted by sin to domination Redemption provides for a restoration of original state</p>	
Vogels	<p>Sees Genesis 3 as a “myth” designed to describe the difference between the “disharmony” we see around us due to sin vs. the “harmony” that we all yearn for. 3:16b “On the one hand you have a desire to dominate your husband but he, on the other hand, is capable of dominating you.”</p> <p>Contextually, the three punishments result in three power struggles</p> <p>Results of sin: Mutual complementarity replaced by alienation Mutuality &amp; equality become control and distortion</p>	<p>Agrees with Foh as to meaning of desire, but sees it as descriptive not prescriptive</p>
Evans	<p>Agrees with Foh</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. explains parallel 3:16 &amp; 4:7</li> <li>2. explains why husbands do not always rule &amp; why wives do not always desire husbands</li> </ol>	<p>Need the book to follow footnote 38 p. 20 reference to Luther</p>

	3. explains conflict due to sin	
Waltke	Agrees with Foh	Article attached to Foh article
Andrews	Woman will have an intense longing and psychological dependence	
Jacob (Rabbi)	There is no change in woman's pain or status due to disobedience. Gen 3:16 is not a pronouncement of punishment on the woman but rather an acknowledgement that the pain that she will suffer in childbirth and her subordination to her husband is in the created order and is enough for her to bear. Her punishment will be to share the toils of her husband.	"It is an idle dream that woman created to bear children, should have no discomfort, as vain as the dream of eternal youth or paradise: it would not agree with the realism and sobriety of the Bible"
Hershon (Rabbi)	Woman has much to endure from her husband, yet she does not dislike him and still desires to be married more than he does, although she might escape pain by remaining single.	
Neusner (Rabbi)	There are 4 sorts of lusts: (urging desires) 1. Lust of a woman is only for her husband. (3:16) 2. Lust of the evil impulse is only for Cain and his fellows (Gen. 4:7) 3. Lust of the rain is only for the earth (Ps. 65:10) 4. Lust of the Holy One is only for Israel (Song 7:11) Another Rabbinical Explanation: A woman on her birth stool says she will never again have sex with her husband, but: "You will return to your lust... for your husband"	Lust appears to be an urging, compelling desire and not a desire to control.
Vasholz	Antecedent of "that" is not the husband but "desire" "You desire will be for your husband and that will rule over you" The desire for your husband will not interfere with procreation but it will rule over you and mitigate the punishment	Vasholtz is in the minority in his translation of this verse
Bledstein	Desire should be translated desirable, attractive i.e. "You are powerfully attractive to your man, yet he can rule over you" Also treats 4:7 by transposing one letter from end of "sin" to beginning of "laying	Opening premise: the writer of the Pentateuch was "J" (Yahwist) who could have been a woman. Would a woman have pronounced a curse on women as traditional

	<p>down” to come up with          “At an entry of sin you stretch out, , it is attractive to you, yet you can rule over it”          hence the punishment of woman is being attractive so that she will be subject to violence and sexual exploitation.</p>	<p>readings of Gen 3:16?</p>

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