



Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths... and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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CAN WOMEN BE PASTORS?

Jason Patrick Hilburn

The submissive role of women has been decreed by God since the Garden of Eden for all cultures and generations! The Scriptures Paul wrote were the commandments of the Lord Himself.

It is becoming more and more common to hear of women preaching with authority over men and calling themselves "pastors." Is this authorized by God? It is understood this can be a sensitive subject, especially because of modern culture. No disrespect is intended toward women at all, but the honest child of God will seek to know God's will on this topic. Those who truly love God will allow Him to transform our minds, instead of allowing our minds to be conformed to the ways of this world (Rom. 12:1-2; cf. 10:17).

Before discussing whether women can be pastors, the word "pastor" should be defined. Most in the religious world misunderstand the word "pastor," as if it simply means a preacher or evangelist, but there is a great deal of difference between *pastors* and *evangelists*. Pastors and evangelists are listed separately in Ephesians 4:11, because they are two separate roles in the church. Evangelists mostly focus on evangelism and preaching (2 Tim. 4:2-5), but pastors actually have authority over an entire congregation.

The word "pastors" literally means "shepherds." They are also called elders (Acts 20:17), overseers (Acts 20:28), and bishops (Phil. 1:1). Also read 1 Timothy 3, 5, Titus 1, 1 Peter 5, and Hebrews 13.

They rule over the local congregation (with whom they worship) in matters of expediency, such as deciding when to assemble, how to use the money given (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 5:17; cf. Heb. 13:7, 17). There was always a plurality of pastors in each congregation (Acts 14:23; 20:17; James 5:14). They must meet strict qualifications (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5). There is no example of a woman being a pastor in the Bible because God expressed very plainly that pastors/elders/bishops must be men (1 Tim. 3:1-7)!

In fact, God has consistently shown that men are to be the leaders in the Lord's church. Jesus was/is a man (1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus only chose men to be His twelve apostles (Matt. 10:1-4; 1 Cor. 9:5). The inspired writers of the Bible were men. The "Jerusalem council" was comprised of men (Acts 15). Elders/pastors overseeing a congregation must be men (1 Tim. 3:2). Those serving in the office of deacons must be men (1 Tim. 3:11-12). And, those preaching/teaching with authority over men must be men (1 Tim. 2:11-12).

If one simply reads 1 Timothy chapters 2 and 3, he will see very clearly what God desires regarding the roles of men and women in the church. Notice a few words from 1 Timothy 2: ***"I will therefore that***

men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 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 Tim. 2:8-15; cf. Titus 2:3-5; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:37).

The word translated as "silence" in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 regarding women means "quietness" and comes from a root that literally means "to keep one's seat" (Strong's Greek Lexicon). The woman should not "stand up" to speak with authority over men, as if she will be their instructor. Paul says the woman should not teach over the man, because: 1) God made man first; and 2) Eve was the one deceived in the garden (and was thus given a

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Women Pastors...



Editorial...

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM #3 (DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE)

Garland M. Robinson

It seems that almost everybody today is trying desperately to find a way around Scriptures they don't like. They want to discover what else God might say. Because they don't love the truth, they'll find what they're looking for — so they think!

Men from Moab were sent to bribe Balaam to curse the children of Israel. He wanted to do it but God had forbidden him (Num. 22; cf. 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11). Instead of accepting the will of God, he kept looking to see if God would say something more than he had already said. He was desperate to find a way to do what he wanted to do. Through the centuries, men have sought to go around God's word. It is no different today.

Tragically, many in the brotherhood are like Balaam. They want to see what more they can find in God's word that might allow them to do what they want to do. The best way to describe this is to simply say "they don't love the Truth." They're not satisfied with the Truth. They want to find more! They're searching to find what "they think" is a loophole!

God gives his will in his perfect book on the subject of DIVORCE and REMARRIAGE. Matthew 5:32 and 19:9: "*But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*" "...Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." This is God's rule. It makes clear that marriage is one man for one woman for life, with but one exception for divorce and remarriage. If one of the parties in the marriage

union commits "fornication," the innocent party can put away the guilty party and be free to marry another provided the one he/she marries is also free to marry. But for many, God's clear and simple order on divorce and remarriage is not enough, they think it's too hard. They seek to find what more the Lord might say. They make up all kinds of excuses for divorce and remarriage and drive full steam ahead to do what they want to do — just like Balaam. Consequently, they fill the church with adulterers.

Many think they have found another cause for divorce and remarriage (other than fornication) in 1 Corinthians 7:15, "*But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases....*"

It is supposed that "desertion" of one in the marriage union allows the other to get a divorce and marry again. In the first place, if that is the case, then "except" in Matthew 19:9 and "saving for the cause of" in Matthew 5:32 does not mean "except" and "saving for the cause of." "Except" and "saving for the cause of" excludes and eliminates any cause other than "fornication." There is no "other" — there is nothing more.

The word "except" is used dozens of times in the Scriptures. In John 3:3-5 Jesus made it clear there was only one way to enter the kingdom. He told Nicodemus, "...**Except** a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). If "except" doesn't mean "except"

then there are other ways one can enter the kingdom in addition to being born of water (baptism) and of the Spirit. Many think they have found that to be the case in the doctrine of "faith only" (Rom. 5:1; Acts 16:31). They don't want to believe what the Lord told Nicodemus (that's too exclusive, they say), so they manufacture another way — just "believe in Jesus and accept Him as your personal savior."

They think they have found another exception to being "born of water" in Romans 10:13, "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" They rally around the thought that all one has to do is just verbally call-out the name of Jesus and you're instantly saved. Their point is that no one has to obey what the Lord says, just verbally say the words "Lord save me...I accept you into my heart."

Saul of Tarsus was instructed to call upon the name of the Lord when he was told to be baptized in order to wash his sins away. Acts 22:16, "*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*"

Calling on the name of the Lord is DOING what the Lord commands, not SAYING specific words. Jesus clearly said, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matt. 7:21). The point is then illustrated in verses 22 and 23. "*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*"

On the day of judgment MANY will claim they were saved but will find out they were not saved! Will this be you? Remember, Jesus said multitudes worship God in VAIN. "*This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matt. 15:8-9).

The Bible is consistent. It does not contradict itself. What it says in one passage always coincides and complements what it says in other passages.

The interpretation and application made by many in some passages causes the Bible to contradict itself. On the other hand, we are advised to “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Tim. 2:15). But, so many won’t give diligence to study ALL the Scriptures. They make up their mind as to what they are going to find in the Bible and when it conflicts with their belief they will dismiss it and explain it away. That’s not the way we should treat God’s precious Word which is able to save our souls (James 1:21).

First Corinthians 7:15 does not allow desertion as a cause for one to divorce and marry again with God’s approval. But, none the less, they focus upon the phrase “*A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases.*” Their interpretation is that since my unbelieving spouse has deserted me, I’m not under the marriage bond any more, I’m free to marry again. However, if they were careful enough to study, they would find the word “bondage” (*douloo*, 1 Cor. 7:15) does not apply to the marriage bond. It applies to the bondage experienced in “service.” It is the bondage of servitude, subserviency — to make a slave of, to enslave, bring into (be under) bondage. For example, the Greek word for “bondage” is used in Romans 6 where it is translated *servants* — “servants of righteousness” (v.18) and “servants to God” (v.22). The Greek word for “bondage” (and its root, *doulos*) is used more than 100 times in the New Testament but is NEVER used in reference to marriage. Here’s the point, a Christian married to a non-Christian is not so bound (enslaved) to their unbelieving spouse that the Christian should (can) forsake the Lord in order the keep the marriage intact.

The word used in reference to the marriage bond is found a few verses later in 1 Corinthians 7:27, “*Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed.*” Here the word ‘bound’ is *deo* — “to bind, be in bonds, knit, tie.” A few more verses down, in verse 39, the word is used again in regards to the marriage bond. “*The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth....*” This is exactly what we read in Mark 10:9, “*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put*

asunder” (cf. Matt. 19:6).

No one has the right to divorce and marry again, “except it be for fornication” (Matt. 19:9). Why keep searching for more? Fornication is the only exception given. The Holy Spirit could have used the Greek word for the marriage bond in 1 Corinthians 7:15 if he was talking about the marriage bond, but he did not. He used a different word — a word that is not connected to the marriage bond.

Further, the word “bound” in 1 Corinthians 7:15 is in the “perfect tense.” “The perfect tense in Greek is used to describe a completed action which produces results which are still in effect to the present.” With this definition in mind, if it is the case that “bound” in verse 15 means the marriage bond, then the result would be that a married couple are not presently bound in marriage nor have they ever been bound in marriage. No one believes that! It follows the axiom, “that which proves too much proves nothing.” If, upon being deserted, the deserted one is no longer bound in marriage, then the effect of the perfect tense means the two were never bound in marriage. That can’t be because God sanctions marriage and declares it is for life! “*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*” (Mark 10:9).

If a couple living together as husband and wife are not presently bound in marriage, they are living in fornication — a sin for which cause one cannot go to heaven without repenting of it! Only in the marriage bond can a couple live together as husband and wife and meet with God’s approval. There is no other way. This is a very serious and grave warning for countless numbers of people who are living together and are not married. Today’s culture allows it without impunity, but it’s not so with God. God only knows of the number of couples living in fornication, not marriage. Repent! before it’s too late. The body is not for fornication (1 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 5:3; 1 Thess. 4:3; Jude 1:7; Rev. 2:21). Living together without a God-ordained marriage is fornication.

I might also add that just because a couple has a marriage certificate does not mean their marriage is right in God’s eyes. A marriage where one (or both) has been divorced without having put away their spouse for fornication is an adulterous marriage.

Both are living in fornication/adultery (Matt. 19:9).

Divorce is not under consideration in 1 Corinthians 7:15. What is being discussed is a situation where a Christian is married to a non-Christian. The question is asked, should the Christian leave the non-Christian mate? God’s answer is No (vs.12-13). But, what if the unbelieving spouse leaves (deserts) the Christian. God’s answer is let him/her leave, “*A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases.*” The believer is not so bound/enslaved to the deserting spouse that he/she must forsake the Lord in order to keep the marriage together. The Christian spouse is not so bound now, now has he/she ever been so bound.

The Lord and his kingdom comes first above all other matters (Matt. 6:33). There is literally nothing in this world more important than obeying God and staying faithful to Him. As sacred as marriage is (both are to work very hard to keep the marriage together), marriage is not more important than being right with God. Nothing in this world is worth losing your soul — even marriage and family. In Matthew 19:10-12, the Lord says some people cannot get married. “*...There are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.*” “*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me*” (Matt. 10:37).

When we obey the Gospel we must leave ALL that is in the world behind — everything unholy and sinful — everything that would prevent us from living a holy life and going to heaven. Even marriage is not worth losing your soul!

Don’t be like Balaam and keep looking for what more God might say. Just be thankful that God knows what is best for us and has given his best to us in His all inspired Word, the holy Bible. By God’s divine power he has “*...given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*” (2 Peter 1:3).

COVENANT OR CULTURE? #2 (WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE CHURCH)

Gary McDade

***Can a woman speak in the assembly of the church? No, it is not permitted.
What part of that is not understood? It is because they have rejected the
Scriptures on the subject. They have rejected the covenant.
They have chosen not to live by the covenant.***

The re-evaluation of women's role in the worship of the church now being made across the country is yielding a conclusion that is not in harmony with the Scriptures but blends in with today's cultural norms. The trend is widespread. Some churches of Christ — the denominations have already done this and welcomed it — will have women preachers or women teaching over men and women in roles that typically have been held by men and will say our culture is different from the first century, therefore statements within the covenant to the contrary of prevailing culture are outdated, inapplicable, and irrelevant. Bear in mind this point, and it should be made strongly. In Hebrews 9:15 it says, "*And for this cause He [Jesus Christ] is the mediator of [that is the one who gives or provides, the one who perpetuates] the New Testament, that by means of death [in other words He died to make this testament valid or in force], for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*" This testament is connected with eternal inheritance based upon the death of Jesus Christ. In His death Jesus shed his blood. He Himself said in Matthew 26:28, "*For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" This is a blood-sealed covenant or testament. It came to us today by way of the death of Christ through which we have the promise of eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 9:16 continues, "*For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*" A testament is in force after men are dead, and a point of emphasis is that the testament is now in force. Notice

that it is in *place*, it is in *power*, it is in *force* after men are dead, otherwise it is no strength at all while the testator liveth. Then the apostle goes on to talk about the Old Testament was given with the blood of animals that cannot take away sin. In dramatic contrast, the New Testament was given with the blood of Christ, but is it in force or not? It is in force. How do we know that we have the hope of eternal life? Because the New Testament is in force. But, now these people come along, and they want the women to be able to preach. They say, "Well, we have a different culture, and so we don't have to go by this covenant. It doesn't apply to us today."

Folks, that's the same problem ancient Israel had. That's why they are no longer God's chosen people. Look at Matthew 21:33-44. Jesus told the Jews of His day that because they rejected Him and as a result of their rejection He will reject them as a people, and He did. That rejection had very serious and major consequences; in fact, the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70 shows the consequences that the Jewish nation suffered for crucifying the Son of God. That nation was taken out of the way. Remember that their temple was destroyed. The way Israel has regained its status as a nation has been through political and military prowess. It has not been as a result of any obligation from God toward them that they might be saved, but rather the Lord put the Gospel in place. Today, both Jews and Gentiles can be saved — "*And so all Israel shall be saved*" (Rom. 11:26). How Paul? Only by the power of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). So, we must know and be convinced that today we are under a new covenant, and we do not have the leeway or the option to change

that covenant or step aside from what is written in that covenant because of culture. My brethren have made this mistake; they are emphasizing culture over the covenant, and this covenant has teaching about where women are to be serving today.

Now, let's go into that a little bit more and think about how we are to serve God today under His new covenant. In 1 Corinthians 14:34, it is the easiest thing in the world to show whether or not a woman can get up in the assembly of the church and preach. Paul writes about it here; he says, "*Let your women keep silence in the churches.*" Now, it does not mean absolute silence because women are allowed to sing in the assembly (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). In singing there is a 'teaching element' that is allowed for men and women are to teach and admonish "*one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.*" It is an oversight today for those women who have such a desire to be teaching in public not to put more emphasis on congregational singing. Congregational singing is the avenue through which all the worshipers are allowed to express themselves with an element of teaching in praise to God and in edification of the brethren by "*speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.*" Note that the word "silence" here does not mean absolute silence because the women are permitted to sing and to teach thereby. Keep that in mind. Also, they are not permitted to speak.

Alright, we are trying to answer the question what does our covenant today, the new covenant, say on this subject? Can a woman speak in the assembly of the church? No, it is not permitted. What part of that is not understood? That is why today when people begin to try to talk to our

brethren and to the people in the denominations who use women in the pulpit, that is why they will not talk about it. It is because they have already rejected the Scriptures on the subject. They have rejected the covenant. They have chosen not to go by the covenant; if you go by the covenant, women are not permitted to speak in the assembly. Right here in 1 Corinthians 14:34 women are commanded to *“be under obedience as also sayeth the law.”*

The first twenty-five hundred years of history is known as “the father ruled age.” The next fifteen hundred years is known as “the Mosaic age,” for men and women who lived then were to follow the law of Moses. Where were women at that point? They were under obedience. Today, women are under obedience to Christ. Second Corinthians 10:5 reads, *“Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”* Men and women

are under obedience today under the new covenant. Those people who are not willing to be under obedience to the new covenant are looking to culture saying, “We can have more people,” “We can satisfy the people,” “We’ve got to just go along with the culture.”

The same mistake is being made in regard to the new covenant that Israel made in regard to the old covenant. A point of emphasis here is that breaking the covenant occurs when you go against what it says. You are breaking it. Now, they believe it is allowable since cultures change. We are going to answer that argument in part three next month, but first let’s get verse 35 of 1 Corinthians 14, *“If they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”* What part of that is hard to understand? None of it. Why is it a challenge? Because the real challenge

comes back in chapter eleven verse three when Paul said, *“I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”* That’s God’s order in 1 Corinthians 14 where we read in verse 40, *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”* What is God doing about this right now? God is looking to see if we are going to respect His order. That is what He is doing, for today where you have women preaching, they are not respecting His order. Where you have women teaching over men, they are not respecting God’s order.

Part 2 of 3

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AGREE TO DISAGREE

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With the vast number of so-called religious faiths in existence in modern day history, it has become necessary for various religious leaders to arrive at some standard whereby religious groups can coexist in some sort of civility. In an attempt to address this dilemma, a group of representative religious leaders have championed a medium approach that tends to allay tensions among the many member organizations. It seems they have decided to *agree to disagree*.

The term *agree to disagree* or *agreeing to disagree*, is a phrase in English referring to the resolution of a conflict whereby all parties tolerate, but do not accept, the opposing position. It generally occurs when all sides recognize that further conflict would be unnecessary, ineffective or otherwise undesirable. And, while that may provide some relief of tensions regarding differences in various religious groups, it does nothing to arrive at unity among those involved. In the end, each group continues to do as they have done in days gone by. How does all this affect the brotherhood of churches of Christ today?

The Lord’s church, as we view it, also has its share of differences when

it comes to worship activity. It has been argued that each congregation is solely responsible for its own worship. However, it must be remembered that the Lord’s church is composed of individual congregations of Christians around the world and that unity is of utmost importance. What is it the writer of Ephesians has to say? *“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”* (Eph. 4:3-6).

I recently purchased a copy of *Churches Of Christ In The United States* (compiled by Carl Royster and published by 21st Century Christian, 2809 12th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37204). Inside the front cover is a list of some twenty “qualifiers” (my word) which sets one congregation apart from some other. Further, some five of those relate to the Lord’s Supper alone. The obvious result is that there exists numerous ways in which various so-called church of Christ congregations have chosen to “worship” God. With that in mind, it would appear our brotherhood has adopted the “Agree

to Disagree” philosophy of the sectarian world, especially since someone has seen fit to document as much.

When in travel status, it is no longer possible to just “drop in” to a congregation along the wayside and expect to worship in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24) as one might desire. Some are known as “one cuppers.” Some have one loaf. Some have mechanical instruments. Some have women in leadership roles. Some offer communion on alternate days. And the list goes on and on. Remember those twenty “qualifiers” referred to above?

One might ask “What would Jesus have to say?” if He were to visit so-called churches of Christ today as He did and is recorded in chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Revelation? Might He say, *“I have somewhat against thee, repent or I will....”*

We need to give more earnest heed to what Jesus had to say in John 12:48, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”* When will we start? Time is running out!

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WHEN THE GREAT FLOOD CAME (FIVE FACTS TO FATHOM)

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The Lord God told Noah He was going to bring floodwaters on the earth (Gen. 6:17). Just as God had said it would, the flood came (Gen. 7:10). The flood eventually came to an end, but it was a destructive deluge like none other in history.

When the great flood came, **it was an act of divine justice.** The flood was not “a natural disaster.” No, it was not “Mother Nature” at work. The waters of the flood came from the fountains of the great deep, as well as the rain which fell (Gen. 7:12).

Mankind’s corruption was the reason for the flood (Gen. 6:5,13), and God is the one who sent it. Jehovah said, “Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh...” (Gen. 6:17). The Bible says that the righteous God “...spared not the old world...bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:5). The flood was a punishment from God for man’s wicked behavior.

What happened to the world during the flood? The world was condemned (Heb. 11:7), the world was destroyed (Gen. 6:13,17), and the world’s humans drowned (Gen. 7:21-23). How unforgettable!

The scope of the flood: was it limited/local or universal? When the great flood came, **the whole world was affected by it.** “Who cares?” Well, if the Bible gives proof one way or the other, we must to accept it, support it, and defend it.

The evidence clearly shows it was a world-wide deluge. The Bible declares that the floodwaters covered “...all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven...” (Gen. 7:18-19). It also is written that outside the ark, “all” breathing things died (Gen. 7:21-23).

The fact there was even a need for the ark would indicate it was not a local disaster. Had it been a flood which was limited in its geographic scope, Noah and his family simply could have walked to higher ground to “wait out the storm.” The ark was needed because there was no place to go to escape the waters of the flood.

Remember this as well: God said the rainbow serves as a sign of His covenant with mankind that “...the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh” (Gen. 9:15). Rainbows seen throughout the planet remind mankind of God’s promise, but also of the universal flood that was.

The flood affected the earth’s *population*, reducing it to eight (1 Peter 3:20). It affected the earth’s *terrain*, as different layers of fossils are topsy-turvy. It affected the earth’s *climate*. After the flood ended and Noah’s family exited the ark, it was like a new beginning for the human race.

When the great flood came, **God’s grace/mercy was on display.** Noah himself found grace in the Lord’s eyes as he walked with Him (Gen. 6:8-9). Noah’s family received God’s mercy, being spared inside the ark from the death brought about by the floodwaters (Gen. 6:18; 7:1,7). Noah’s offspring also were the recipients of God’s favor. The main purpose of the ark was to preserve the seed of the coming Redeemer (1 Peter 1:18-20). In order for Jehovah to fulfill His promise, He had to keep mankind in existence. The ark accomplished that.

Prior to the flood, Noah was serving as a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). While the ark was being built, God’s longsuffering was manifested (1 Peter 3:20). The Lord provided provisions for man’s safety inside an ark (Gen. 7:23). The flood showed God’s justice and severity, but do not miss the truth that His kindness was demonstrated during that general time period, too.

To whom were grace and physical deliverance demonstrated in the days of Noah? To the righteous, those located in the God-appointed place of safety (Gen. 7:1). In the same way, under the new covenant, God’s grace and spiritual salvation are extended to mankind in the place which He has appointed: in the Christ — in His church (Eph. 1:3,7).

When the great flood came, **the majority of people were not in the only place of safety.** Salvation

from physical death was available inside the ark (Gen. 7:23; 1 Peter 3:20). How many other God-arranged places of safety existed during the flood? Zero. Does that sound narrow-minded? It was God’s plan, period, and it was not open to negotiation. What about today? God has a singular location for mankind’s spiritual safety: in His Son’s Kingdom — church (Col. 1:13-14). Men might dislike it, discount it, and debate it, but that will never change God’s plan.

The fact that the overwhelming majority of the earth’s inhabitants lost their lives during the flood reminds us that the behavior of the majority does not always please God. Rather than making our choices based on what we see “everybody else” doing, we need to find out what God desires for our lives. Here is another reminder: God wants everyone to come into His place of safety, but He does not want the righteous to compromise with the ungodly.

When the great flood came, **people were carrying on their normal activities**, apparently oblivious to the coming danger (Matt. 24:37-39). When it comes to the world’s end and judgment, a lot of folks will be like that, too. We need to be ready at all times!

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As The Flood Came, The End Of The World Will Come. The judgment day is coming. The certainty of it is guaranteed by the Lord himself. We don’t know when it will be. There are no signs given in the Scriptures that signal the nearing of that last great day. But that doesn’t keep men from looking for signs. Almost every terrible event that comes along has been suggested that it may be the end of world. However, Jesus said, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. ... Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:42,44).

Women Pastors...

(Continued from page 25)

submissive role, Gen. 3:16).

After Paul addresses the role of women, he continues into the next chapter explaining that bishops/pastors/elders and deacons must be men (1 Tim. 3:1-13). Paul also wrote similar words to the Corinthians: **“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church”** (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

Please notice that in both 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14, Paul makes it clear that the submissive role of women is not simply something related to the culture of the first century A.D. In 1 Timothy 2:13-15, Paul goes all the way back to Adam and Eve, and in 1 Corinthians 14 he teaches that this is a longstanding principle from “the law” — the Old Testament Scriptures (cf. Gen. 3:16; Num. 30:3-14). In other words, the submissive role of women has been decreed by God since the Garden of Eden for all cultures and generations! Passages like these are so plain that one would have to have a lot of help to misunderstand them. Let the reader also remember that Paul was an apostle, an ambassador of Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures Paul wrote were the commandments of the Lord Himself (1 Cor. 14:37; cf. John 17:8; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Satan is the one who tempted Eve to go beyond what God authorized. Let women beware that Satan is still tempting them to go beyond their God-given role today! May all women look to the example of Jesus, who stayed within His submissive role to God, even though He could have used His power to do otherwise (Matt. 4:1-10; 26:53; 1 Cor. 11:3; Heb. 4:15).

Satan has always twisted God’s Word to accomplish his goals (Gen. 3; Matt. 4). The devil still has people who serve him, even appearing to be ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:13-15). The only way to know if they are speaking Truth or error is by comparing their words to God’s Word (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:15-

18). So, are there people today twisting Scriptures, attempting to justify women preaching to mixed assemblies of men and women? Of course, just as they will twist passages about salvation, marriage, worship, and many other subjects — attempting to justify whatever they want (2 Thess. 2:12; 2 Peter 3:15-18).

Many misuse Galatians 3:28 where Paul wrote, *“there is neither male nor female.”* That context is about people being saved, whether men or women, Jews or Gentiles, bondservants or free (cf. 3:26-29). It has absolutely nothing to do with the role of women in the church. In the parallel passage of Colossians 3:11, Paul goes on to say that wives must submit to their husbands (Col. 3:18; cf. 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1). Why would women need to submit if the phrase “there is neither male nor female” means there are no more distinctions between the roles of men and women? Obviously, the submissive role required of women has not changed. The commandments of 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 are not going anywhere, and Galatians 3:28 has been ripped out of context to try to justify something that is against God’s will. By the way, when something is against God’s will, there is another word for that, it’s called “sin.” And, *“the wages of sin is death”* (1 John 3:4; Rom. 6:23).

There is no doubt there are women who honestly believe they are serving God in the role of a “pastor” or of a preacher. They may say things like, “God would not have called me to do this without a good reason.” However, God does not call people to violate His Word. Saul of Tarsus was doing all kinds of things contrary to God’s will, even though he thought he was serving God faithfully in his zeal (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11; cf. John 16:2). We can sometimes convince ourselves we are doing what is right, but ultimately God’s Word must be the criterion for determining right from wrong — not our own hearts or experiences. *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Prov. 14:12; cf. 12:15; 16:25; 28:26; 30:12; Jer. 10:23; 16:12; 17:9; Rom. 10:1-3; James 1:22).

Much more could be said, and more objections could be answered, but those who truly want to obey God

will not support such a blatant deviation from the authority of God’s Word (Rom. 16:17; Eph. 5:11; 2 John 10-11).

Women can do many wonderful things in the Lord’s church, in the home, and elsewhere, but they are not authorized to be pastors or preachers. They will only be saved if they remain in their submissive role as the Scriptures clearly explain in 1 Timothy 2:9-15.

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The Truth About Spiritual Fools. In an ever-changing world that is destined to be annihilated when Jesus returns, the unchanging Jehovah is the only constant. It is the pinnacle of spiritual folly to reject the truth that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. As depicted in Psalm 14, such foolishness has several alarming characteristics and consequences. Consider the hideous portrait of a fool that David paints on the canvas of Scripture:

1) A spiritual fool is morally corrupt in his character. He is abominable at heart. The fool has said in his heart, "*There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works; there is none who does good*" (v.1).

2) A spiritual fool is misguided in his pursuits. He is carnal in his desires. "*The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek God*" (v.2).

3) A spiritual fool is rotten in his soul. He is an evil doer. "*They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one*" (v.3).

4) A spiritual fool is bankrupt in his head. He has no genuine knowledge. "*Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call on the*

Lord?" (v.4). — John Chowning, 1625 Bilbrey Park Dr., Cookeville, TN 38501

In answer to a question: the STRAIGHT of it is: the word CHURCH in the Bible is used two main ways: Matt. 16:18, when Jesus said "I will build my church" he is referring to the church to which that all who obey the Gospel would be added (Acts 2:47). When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he was referring to a local congregation who are members of the church Jesus built. When Paul said "the churches of Christ salute you," he was referring to all of the local congregations. NOT one person is a member of the Lord's church who has not obeyed the Gospel (Acts 2:41-42,47; Matt. 7:13-14). Obeying the Gospel consists of *Hearing* the Gospel, *Believing* in Jesus as God's only begotten son, *Repenting* of a sinful life, *Confessing* what you believe in your heart (that Jesus is the Christ), and being *Baptized* for the remission of sins (Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Luke 13:3,5; Matt. 10:33-34; Acts 2:38; Rev. 22:18-19). NOT one person who has ADDED to or TAKEN away from God's word, has been added to the Lord's church. The last account I had, there were 35,000 "churches" in the world that DO NOT claim to be the church of Christ. The Lord's church IS NOT A PART of ALL "churches" (Matt. 15:13). The Lord's church was established in the 1st century. The first denomination was not established until the 6th century, which is too young to be the Lord's church. All others churches were established after that — way too late to be the Lord's church. The Bible says "let God be true and every man a liar" (Rom.3-4). — Martin Decker

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