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GENESIS 1-3 AND THE MALE/FEMALE ROLE RELATIONSHIP

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An examination of certain considerations in Genesis 1-3 contributes to a proper view of a hierarchical distinction between male and female. Genesis 1 primarily emphasizes the relationship of spiritual equality. Genesis 2 focuses upon the positional distinction in the area of function. Contrary to the feminist position, several indications reveal that a hierarchical relationship exists prior to the fall of mankind. The New Testament consistently upholds this same relationship between male and female. Genesis 3 indicates that the sexes reversed their respective roles with their fall into sin. An aspect of the curse that is subsequently placed upon the woman is Genesis 3:16b, which indicates that sin affected the hierarchical relationship, but did not disannul it. The "desire" of the woman provides a reminder to all women that the subordinate role still remains as her correct posture. As a consequence of sin, man will often abuse his headship, exercising his "rule" harshly over the woman. Together, the first 3 chapters of Genesis consistently argue for a continuing hierarchical order between male and female.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most important subjects of our day is that of the role of women. Our society is in the midst of a sexual revolution. Increasing confusion has developed about our identities as men and women. A diminishing influence of the Judeo-Christian heritage, the rise of the feminist movement, and pressure for the Equal Rights Amendment have called into question traditional understandings of sexual roles. This has created great uncertainty in our contemporary situation both inside and outside of the church about what it means

to be a man or a woman.¹ As John Davis observes, "The proper roles of men and women in marriage and family, in the church, and in the wider society are the subject of an ongoing debate that has touched us all."²

Under the guise of the term "evangelical," many current writers are advocating positions that are acceptable to the women's liberation movement. Individuals such as Paul Jewett,³ Virginia Mollenkott,⁴ Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty,⁵ Don Williams,⁶ and Patricia Gundry⁷ have suggested similar arguments in support of egalitarianism. This understanding of Scripture provides a very real threat to the traditional hierarchical view of male and female.

There is a great need for a proper understanding of the respective roles God has established for man and woman. This study will examine certain considerations in Genesis 1-3 which contribute to an understanding of a hierarchical distinction between male and female.

FEMINIST CLAIMS AND THE CREATION ACCOUNT

No one denies that the apostle Paul used the creation account to support his claims for a subordinate position of the woman. In both 1 Cor 11:9 and 1 Tim 2:13, Paul specifically appeals to the fact that Adam was created before Eve.

Rather than accept this as a divinely inspired commentary on the creation order, Paul's teaching about women is viewed as a result of cultural conditioning and providing no application for the 20th century. According to the "evangelical" feminists, there is no role distinction.

Herein lies the heart of the issue. The feminist advocates have taken the liberty to reconstruct the creation account of Genesis in order to argue for complete egalitarianism. Fellowship and equality are said to be the main purposes for God's creation of the male and female (Gen 1:26-30). Any suggestion of subordination prior to the

¹John J. Davis, "Some Reflections On Galatians 3:28, Sexual Roles, and Biblical Hermeneutics," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 19 (1976) 201.

²Ibid.

³Paul K. Jewett, *Man As Male And Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

⁴Virginia R. Mollenkott, "Evangelicalism: A Feminist Perspective," *USQR* 32 (1970) 532-42; "The Woman's Movement Challenges The Church," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 2 (1974) 298-310; *Women, Men and the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977).

⁵Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be* (Waco: Word, 1974).

⁶Don Williams, *The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church* (Glendale: G/L Publications, 1977).

⁷Patricia Gundry, *Woman Be Free!* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977).

fall is disregarded. For this reason, any hierarchy of relationships in Genesis 2 (Gen 2:15-24) is de-emphasized. Not until the perfect relationship of Genesis 1 was shattered in chapter 3 is there any suggestion of subjection. When subjection did come about, it was only a temporary measure that ceased with redemption. The work of Christ again provided the basis for complete egalitarianism.

Individuals such as Jewett and Mollenkott have de-emphasized Genesis 2 in order to establish positional equality from chapter 1 as the standard for both chapters. The account of Genesis 1 is much more general and does not explain any hierarchical relationship that may exist between male and female. Thus, it could allow for complete equality between the sexes. Mollenkott states:

I suggest that if religious leaders want to maintain any credibility with the younger members in their congregations, they had better shift their emphasis from the "Adam first, then Eve" creation story of Genesis Two to the simultaneous creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis One.⁸

It appears that Mollenkott assumes a contradiction between Genesis 1 and 2 which allows her to disregard the latter.

Jewett also holds to this view by his designation of a "partnership model," instead of the hierarchical arrangement in Genesis 2.⁹ In this account, man and woman are understood to relate to each other as functional equals whose differences are mutually complementary in all spheres of life and human endeavor.¹⁰ This does not parallel Genesis 2, however, unless the essential meaning of this latter chapter is altered. Jewett accomplishes this by understanding the central theme of chapter 2 to be that the woman's creation from man "is to distinguish her from the animals by implying her essential likeness" to the man.¹¹ Genesis 3, in turn, reveals the first mention of the woman's subordination to man as a punishment of the fall.¹² While these alterations result in what seems to be a fairly consistent interpretation of the three chapters, they do not adequately consider what is being stated. When the creation accounts are allowed to speak for themselves, a positional distinction becomes quite clear.

⁸Mollenkott, "The Woman's Movement Challenges The Church," 307; Jewett ("Mary and the Male/Female Relationship," *Christian Century* 90 [1973] 1255) states much the same idea: "I have come to reject this whole approach as contrary to the fundamental thrust of Scripture. The first creation narrative contains no hint of female subordination, and the second, which speaks of the creation of the woman from the man, does not say what it has traditionally been interpreted to mean. . . ."

⁹Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, 14.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*, 126.

¹²*Ibid.*, 22, 114.

GENESIS 1:26-28

The emphasis of Genesis 1 is altogether different from that of Genesis 2. A chronological method is employed to express the creative events as they develop—day one, day two, etc. Mankind is first mentioned in the account of the sixth day; “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness’” (Gen 1:26). The creation of man and woman was distinct from all that was created prior to them. As the crown of creation, they were to exercise supremacy over the cosmos. On a scale of ascending order, God created the highest of all his handiwork last.¹³

Genesis 1 gives only a general statement of the details surrounding the creation of male and female. Both are described as though created simultaneously (Gen 1:26). In addition, God gave both of them the commands to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule” over the earth (Gen 1:28). In these verses, two relationships are addressed: the ontological or spiritual realm as man relates to his Creator, and the economic or functional realm regarding his specific duties upon earth.

There is also no elaboration of the functional relationship of the male and female in this account. Some have thus concluded that both male and female share equally in position with regard to the commands of responsibility. Two areas of function are evident, however. 1) Being fruitful, multiplying, and filling the earth include responsibilities toward each other. 2) Subduing and ruling over the earth emphasize obligations with regard to the created universe. It is not clear from this account whether or not each was given equal status to exercise their responsibility. There is nothing to suggest hierarchical relationship, but there is also nothing to deny it. These details remain incomplete without the further revelation given in Genesis 2.

Spiritual equality

The thrust of the creation account of male and female in Genesis 1 appears to be that they were made in the image (עִצְמוֹתַי) and likeness (דְמוּתִי) of God (Gen 1:26-27). These terms are best regarded as essentially synonymous.¹⁴ There is no distinction made between the male and female in this regard. For this reason, the use of the word “man” (אָדָם) is significant in these two verses.¹⁵ אָדָם is here being

¹³Clarence J. Vos, *Women in Old Testament Worship* (Delft: Judels and Brinkman, 1968) 17; John Murray (*Collected Writings of John Murray* [Edinburgh: Banner Of Truth Trust, 1977], 2.5) states, “That man’s creation is the last in the series, we may regard as correlative with this lordship.”

¹⁴Davis, *Paradise to Prison* (Winona Lake: BMH, 1975) 81.

¹⁵The use of אָדָם is important in determining the spiritual relationship between God and mankind and in distinguishing between the positional roles of man and

used corporately and generically of the human pair, or species.¹⁶ As Jewett points out, "man" in this instance is "dual"¹⁷ ("male," זָכָר, and "female," נְקִיבָה, "created he them"). Both the male and the female comprise mankind, and in this respect they are of corresponding value before God (cf. Gen 5:1-2; 9:6; Matt 19:4).

The image of God

The image has to do with the ontological or spiritual qualities, namely, the communicable attributes that man and woman reflect from God. This is best understood as a moral, not a physical, likeness. The image of God is usually understood to include the will or freedom of choice, self-consciousness, self-transcendence, self-determination, rationality, moral discernment for good and evil, righteousness, holiness, and worship.¹⁸ Basically, it is that which makes men "persons."

The statements of Gen 1:26-27 assert that the woman is an equal participant with the man in respect to the image of God. The NT continues to uphold this doctrine of the equality of the image.¹⁹ The Apostle Peter indicates that a woman must be granted "honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life" (1 Pet 3:7).

Thus far, the feminists, by an argument from silence, may be correct in supporting complete positional equality. However, this equality can only be certain to exist in the spiritual realm. There is simply no information in this chapter regarding the functional relationship of man and woman. The feminists argue that the spiritual equality presented here is proof against a distinction in role relationships. They fail to recognize, however, that spiritual equality does not prohibit a distinctiveness in role relationships.

woman. אָדָם is used in the first chapters of Genesis in three ways. (1) It is used generically to refer to man as a race, species, as mankind or humankind. In this way, אָדָם with or without the article refers to both male (זָכָר) and female (נְקִיבָה) (cf. Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-2 and 9:6). (2) It is a) used to refer to the individual man (אִישׁ), as in Gen 2:5, 7, 8, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25; 3:9, 20; or b) to designate both the individual man and woman (man, אִישׁ and woman, אִשָּׁה), as in Gen 3:22-24. The article is used in every case except 2:5, 20. This is used when denoting the functional realm. (3) אָדָם is also used to designate the proper name, "Adam." This occurs in Gen 2:20; 3:17, 21; 4:25. This usage is always without the article.

¹⁶G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1888), 2. 19-20.

¹⁷Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, 39.

¹⁸Charles L. Feinberg, "The Image Of God," *BSac* 129 (1972) 246; see also Gordon H. Clark, "The Image Of God In Man," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 12 (1969) 215-22; Murray, *Collected Writings*, 2. 3-13, 34-36. Murray also includes the body as part of the image.

¹⁹1 Cor 11:7; Gal 3:28; Col 3:10; Eph 4:24; James 3:9.

GENESIS 2:15-24

Further expansion of the events of the sixth day is revealed in Genesis 2. The new revelation given in this chapter focuses mainly on the functional aspect of man and woman, rather than the image. The account relates the duties and relationships God commanded the first man and woman to maintain toward each other and creation. Man was commanded to cultivate and keep the garden (2:15). Various stipulations about the eating of the fruit were given (2:16-17). He also named the animals, which helped to convey to him that he had no one like himself to help him in his tasks (2:18-20). The woman was created sometime after this on the same day (2:21-22). The man subsequently named his wife "woman" as a derivative of himself.

It seems apparent from the development of man's purpose that a hierarchical relationship does exist in man's functional realm. The account assumes this rather than states it directly. Still, however, the evangelical feminists refuse to allow for anything but complete egalitarianism.

Evangelical feminist claims

Feminists have a unified opposition to interpreting Genesis 2 as teaching subordination. Gundry reflects upon this passage, stating that

The fact that Adam is spoken of in Genesis 2 as having been created first, . . . does not argue for his being superior in authority. . . . God created living things in an ascending order of complexity. If order of creation means anything, it would have to mean Eve was superior because she was last.²⁰

In similar fashion, Jewett makes three fundamental claims about this chapter. First, he claims that to assume any type of hierarchy of man over woman also means that the male is superior to the female.²¹ Second, the superiority over the animals and not the woman's inferiority (in function) to the man is the basic thought of the context.²² She is shown, by this fact, to be in the same likeness as Adam. Third, the fact that the woman was created after man demonstrates, if anything, that "woman is superior to the man."²³ His reasoning is that man's creation is the highest event in all the work of

²⁰Gundry, *Woman Be Free!*, 23; also p. 61, "No indication of man's position of authority appears until after the fall."

²¹Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, 14.

²²*Ibid.*, 126.

²³*Ibid.*, 126-27.

creation. He is superior to all that proceeded. The woman came after the man and thus, she is even higher in importance than he. He goes on to say that, "If men do not find this conclusion palatable let them ask themselves why women should stomach the rabbinic conclusion that the woman is inferior because created after man."²⁴

Virginia Mollenkott interprets the creation account to provide for positional equality by the "rang technique."²⁵ She tries to demonstrate that the objective of chapter 2 is the same as that of chapter 1; mankind is the masterpiece of creation. By the "rang technique" she means that chapter 1 discloses man as the zenith of creation by a chronological fashion (Gen 1:26-27). Chapter 2 also demonstrates man to be the zenith of creation by placing his creation "in the most emphatic positions: the first (Gen 2:5, 7) and final (Gen 2:22)."²⁶

She proceeds to emphasize the stress of chapter 2 as an equality in "relationship." Adam instantly recognizes Eve as different from the animals and exactly like himself. The development of chapter 2 provides no basis for hierarchy whatsoever. Mollenkott is correct insofar that both accounts emphasize that man is the zenith of creation. However, her use of the "rang technique" in chapter 2 fails to address certain indications that support a hierarchical relationship.

All three of these writers are guilty of neglecting contextual evidence within Genesis 2 itself. Chapters 1 and 2 make use of the important Semitic historiographical principle known as recapitulation. Genesis 1 gives a short statement summarizing the entire creation of man. The second chapter follows with a more detailed and circumstantial account dealing with matters of special importance.²⁷ While Genesis 2 harmonizes with Genesis 1, it must not be expected to report the events identically. Moses stipulates the concept of equality of image in chapter 1 but presumes it in chapter 2. He proceeds to emphasize the function of man, and in his expansion he *assumes* a hierarchical relationship.

Gundry and Jewett have suggested that because the woman is created last in Genesis 2 she may be positionally superior to the man.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Mollenkott, "Evangelicalism: A Feminist Perspective," 99-100.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1964) 118. "There is, however, an element of recapitulation involved, for the creation of the human race is related all over again (cf. Gen 2:7 and 1:26, 27). But this technique of recapitulation was widely practiced in ancient Semitic literature. . . . To the author of Genesis 1, 2, the human race was obviously the crowning or climactic product of creation, and it was only to be expected that he would devote a more extensive treatment to Adam after he had placed him in his historical setting (the sixth day of creation)."

Chronologically, it may be granted that there is an ascending order in chapter 1, with mankind as the zenith of creation. However, it is conjecture to argue that this ascending order extends into the events within each particular day. To assume that the events of the sixth day, which culminate in the creation of the woman, are chronologically ascending in importance cannot be substantiated.²⁸

Role distinctions

There are several internal factors in Genesis 2 which suggest a hierarchical relationship in which the woman, by virtue of her place in creation and the God-ordained structure of events, is in a position of subordination. Hierarchy is not directly stated but is implied by many duties and obligations that the man exercises. It is a *non sequitur* to conclude, as Jewett has, that for the woman to be subordinate would be to make her inferior in value, ability, or as a human being. The man's headship over woman is solely a position of rank. The man owes this authoritative preeminence to God's appointment rather than to personal achievement.²⁹ There are several indications which point definitely and consistently to a role distinction.

Signs of headship

First, v 7 stipulates that man was created prior to the woman. Second, the man was designated as "Adam" (Gen 2:20 אָדָם), which was also the term used to describe the entire race.³⁰ That the man was given this name and not the woman suggests that he occupies the position as head of the relationship. Third, the events of the narrative reveal that Adam was invested with his position of leadership, responsibility, and authority prior to the creation of Eve (Gen 2:15). He was commanded to "cultivate" and "keep" the garden. He was also restricted from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Fourth, Adam immediately began to exercise his authority by naming the animals (Gen 2:10).³¹ Motyer notes that, "To give a name

²⁸See E. J. Young, *In The Beginning* (Edinburgh: Banner Of Truth Trust, 1976) 70.

²⁹Emma T. Healy, *Woman: According To Saint Bonaventure* (New York: George, 1955) 14.

³⁰Man is designated such by several different words. He is called אָדָם—"mankind," זָכָר—"the male," אִישׁ—"the man," אָדָם—"Adam," and אִישׁ—"man."

³¹Ps 8:5-9 also substantiates the claims of man's investiture of leadership (cf. Heb 2:6-8). While man (אִישׁ, Ps 8:5) most likely refers to mankind (Gen 1:26), v 7 supports fully the leadership that man was given in Genesis 2. Adam was assigned or caused (שִׁלַּח) to rule over the works, flocks, cattle, birds, and fish. David could very well have in view man's positional leadership given and exercised prior to the woman's creation.

is the prerogative of a superior, as when Adam exercised his dominion over the animals. . . ."³²

Fifth, Adam's leadership role is designated by his need of a helper (Gen 2:18, 20—עֹזֵר). The expression used to describe the type of person Adam needed is "a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18, 20—עֹזֵר כְּנַגְדּוֹ). The particular usage of עֹזֵר, "helper,"³³ in this chapter has generated considerable debate. Sixteen out of the twenty-one usages³⁴ in the Old Testament refer to God as a superior helper assisting the needs of man. The remaining three refer to men helping other men.³⁵ In each of the latter instances, man's help is ineffectual. It is unlikely that the helper referred to here (Gen 2:18, 20) is "corresponding to" or "suitable to" Adam in nature and ability.

The term "helper" is generally agreed to be a designation of position. With this in mind, Scanzoni and Hardesty have suggested that the "helper" referred to is a superior, just as God is a superior helper to man.³⁶ However, this suggestion neglects the context of the passage. The kind of helper proposed in Genesis 2 is not a divine helper but a human helper. Another suggestion is that the woman helper is equal in rank with man.³⁷ In arguing for this view, Vos takes כְּנַגְדּוֹ to mean "counterpart" or "corresponding to" in position.³⁸ However, in view of other contextual indications suggesting positional superiority of the man, it cannot be argued consistently that "corresponding to" refers to a complete equality of position.

The most consistent and harmonious answer is found when the helper proposed for man is understood as positionally subordinate in function to man. Until this time, all of man's help was superior. However, man had a specific need for a human helper. The divine helper supplied this need by designing for him a subordinate human

³²J. A. Motyer, "Name," *The New Bible Dictionary* (ed. J. D. Douglas et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 862.

³³BDB, 740.

³⁴See Gen 2:18, 20; Exod 18:4; Deut 33:7, 26, 29; Pss 20:3; 33:20; 70:6; 89:20; 115:9, 10, 11; 121:1, 2; 124:8; 146:4; Isa 30:5; Ezek 12:14; Dan 11:34; Hos 13:9.

³⁵BDB, 617.

³⁶Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be*, 26; George W. Knight III (*The New Testament Teaching On The Role Relationship Of Men And Women* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977] 43) refutes Scanzoni and Hardesty: "This argument cannot be valid. Cannot a word, however, have a different nuance when applied to God than it does when applied to humans?"

³⁷Katharine E. Sakenfeld, "The Bible and Woman: Bane or Blessing?" *TToday* 32 (1975) 224-25; Vos, *Woman In Old Testament Worship*, 16; Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, 124-25.

³⁸Vos, *Woman in Old Testament Worship*, 16.

helper who would aid him in obeying the commands.³⁹ This woman, who was to be voluntarily submissive to man in function, would “correspond to” or be “suitable to him” spiritually, physically, mentally, and in ability.⁴⁰

Sixth, man’s headship is unveiled when he names his wife “woman” (אִשָּׁה—Gen 2:23).⁴¹ Prior to this point man gave names to all the birds and cattle. Now the dominion that God gave to Adam comes to expression again as he exercises authority in designating his helper’s name. In conjunction with this name, Adam also titles his wife אִמָּה in Gen 3:20, and specifies her function as “the mother of all living.” These actions give further evidence of his authority.

Some, such as Cassuto, do not identify any parallel between these texts (Gen 2:23; 3:20), but view Gen 3:20 as the beginning of headship.⁴² Coming just after the post-fall decree in 3:16, “and he shall rule over thee,” it evidences man’s first act of rule over his wife. However, it seems more likely that the authority exercised here is not a new act, but parallels the same type of authority exerted by Adam when he named her “woman.”

Seventh, man’s leadership is demonstrated by the fact that he is to leave his mother and father and cleave to his new wife (Gen 2:24). These acts are read by some as a point of weakness and inferiority on the part of the man.⁴³ To read this as the man’s weakness, however, is

³⁹Although it is not mentioned in the account, it is obvious that the woman’s physical makeup is different from that of a man. God gave her a physical constitution that is inherent to her role as a helper and a complement to the man.

⁴⁰Submission must not be confused with inferiority. As a helper, Eve was equal to Adam in capability and value but appointed to a subordinant *position* by God. She was to voluntarily place her abilities under the man. Martha E. Rehn (“Did Paul Require Women to Wear Veils in the Church? An Exegetical Study of I Corinthians 11:2-16” [M.A. Thesis, Capital Bible Seminary, 1978] 55) states, “Eve was, nevertheless, created to meet Adam’s needs and to assist him in his life and purpose. Her capabilities are not a factor in her subordinant role to man. It is by virtue of the fact she was added to his life that she must be submissive—because she was created to assist and be a companion to him.”

⁴¹Six different words are used to refer to the woman in the first three chapters; אָדָם—“mankind,” נִקְבָּה—“female,” עֲזָרָה—“helper,” אִשָּׁה—“woman,” אִמָּה—“Eve,” and נֶגְוָה—“counterpart to.”

⁴²U. Cassuto (*A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* [2 Vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961], I. 170) states, “To me it seems that the elucidation is to be sought in the fact that the giving of a name, . . . was considered an indication of lordship. Since the Lord God decreed that he [the husband] *should rule over her* he assigns a name to her as a token of his rulership.”

⁴³Vos, *Women in Old Testament Worship*, 18, n. 25 states, “. . . it is the man who cleaves (*dābaq*) to the woman and usually with regard to persons the lesser cleaves to the greater (Deut 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; Josh 22:5; 23:8; Ruth 1:14; 2 Sam 20:2; 2 Kings 18:6).”

to overlook the major significance of the verse. This is not Adam's declaration but God's pronouncement (Matt 19:4-5) instituting the first marriage. The proper emphasis of leaving and cleaving is not headship as much as it is to demonstrate the complete identification of one personality with the other in a community of interests and pursuits. This new unity of Adam with his wife is to be closer than it would be with a father and mother. It is important to notice that God addresses *the man* and not the woman to accomplish this activity (Eph 5:21). He is placing the responsibility primarily upon Adam (and his male descendants) as he has done thus far with other commands. Rather than a sign of weakness this appears to be a sign of leadership on Adam's part.

The final indication of the headship of the man is found in Gen 3:9, 11. The Lord addresses and receives a response from the man, who is the spokesman for the relationship. This factor suggests strongly, if not conclusively, that the man was the head of the relationship.⁴⁴

The importance of Genesis 2 must not be underestimated. Revealed to man are the keys of creation order. A thorough analysis of its contents argues for a hierarchical relationship between the man and the woman.

THE NEW TESTAMENT AND CREATION ORDER

On several significant occasions, the NT recognizes or refers directly to Gen 2:18ff as supporting a role distinction between the male and female. First, Paul asserts that man is the head (*κεφαλή*) over the woman in 1 Cor 11:3. The meaning of "head" in v 3 is indicative of man's "rank"⁴⁵ over the woman rather than "source" or "origin."⁴⁶ His statement is not ascribing a deficiency in intellect or ability of the woman, but is designating her to a subordinate position in function.

Paul substantiates his comments in a relationship more basic than the creation account, namely, the economic aspect of the

⁴⁴Gen 3:17 could as well be used as a proof of Adam's headship. Adam is condemned for listening and following the voice of his wife to commit an act he knew was wrong. In doing so, he inverted the role of leadership that was initially established for him to fulfill.

⁴⁵BAG, 431; Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1897), 2. 761-62; see the following: Deut 28:13, 44; 32:42; Judg 10:18; 11:8, 9, 11; 2 Sam 22:44; 1 Kings 8:1; 21:12; 2 Kings 2:3, 5; 1 Chron 23:24; Pss 18:43; 110:6; Isa 7:8, 9; Jer 31:7; Lam 1:5; Dan 2:38; Hab 3:13.

⁴⁶F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (New Century Bible; Greenwood: Attic, 1971) 103; Colin Brown, "Head," *NIDNTT* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 2. 160.

Trinity. The Son is God as the Father is God ontologically (John 5:18-23; 10:30; 20:20). However, economically (in function) the Son's redemptive work involved a volitionally subordinate position or rank (1 Cor 15:28; John 4:24; 5:18-19).

Further support is derived from the creation account itself. "Man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake; but woman for the man's sake" (1 Cor 11:8, 9; cf. 1 Tim 2:13). The time and purpose of the woman's creation is significant in Genesis 2. She was created as a co-laborer to share in the mandates of creation. From the very first, however, she was to participate as a subordinate in rank.

At the same time that Paul establishes a role relationship, he is careful to include a caution, lest men pervert their designated leadership into spiritual superiority and functional snobbery (1 Cor 11:11). Spiritually, man and woman remain equal before God (cf. Gen 1:26-27). The Apostle may also have in mind the role distinctions manifested in various functions between the sexes. A woman can and often does assist men in advice, counsel, and guidance in the home, church, and society. However, she is never to take on the role of a leader over men. "In the Lord" she will retain her subordinate role as she shares in these responsibilities.

A man must remember that he is not independent of the woman just because he is superior in rank (1 Cor 11:12). He needs her help even to gain existence in this life. Thus, God has established a mutual dependency to coincide with the headship that man continues to exercise over the woman.⁴⁷

Second, the apostle makes use of the term "to be subject" (ὑποτάσσω) to describe the relationship of the female to the male both in and outside the context of marriage (1 Cor 14:34-35; Eph 5:21, 22, 24; Col 3:18; 1 Tim 2:11-14; Titus 2:5). The term "to be subject" from the verb τάσσω, has a background in military usage, namely, that soldiers were appointed or placed in positions under others. Ὑποτάσσω carries the meaning "to place under," "to affix under" or "to subordinate oneself to the control of another."⁴⁸ However, this word in no way implies that the subordinate is an inferior, except in position. A woman may be superior to a man in ability, personality and even spirituality, but because of the divine order of creation, she recognizes the superior rank of the man and "ranks herself under man."⁴⁹ This principle is to demonstrate itself

⁴⁷Contra Williams, *The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church*, 67-68; Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be*, 28-31.

⁴⁸Gerhard Delling, "τάσσω, ὑποτάσσω," *TDNT* 8 (1972) 39.

⁴⁹James L. Boyer, *For a World Like Ours: Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Winona Lake: BMH, 1971) 104.

both in the marriage relationship, and/or outside of marriage to various extents. In all of these texts, Paul alludes in principle, if not in actuality, to the creation account to substantiate his claims.

A final support for a role distinction is expressed in 1 Pet 3:1, 5-7. Concurring with Paul, Peter uses the term "submission" to describe the position of a wife toward her husband. While he does not refer to creation, he does use the example of Sarah's relationship to Abraham. It is fairly certain that her relationship to Abraham stems from the divine order of creation in Gen 2:18-24. Furthermore, while Peter discloses the wife as the "weaker vessel" in rank, he also maintains that she is spiritually an equal ("fellow-heir of the grace of life," 1 Pet 3:7).

A significant contrast sheds light upon the role relationship of Abraham and Sarah and that of Adam and Eve. In Gen 3:17, Adam is condemned by God for "listening to" or "obeying" the voice of his wife (שָׁמַעַתְּ לְקוֹלִי). In Gen 21:12, Abraham is told to "listen to" or "obey" (שָׁמַעַתְּ בְּקוֹלֶיהָ) the voice of Sarah. Peter indicates that Sarah was submissive to her husband, calling him "lord." The use of the verb "obey" to condemn and condone the same activity poses an apparent contradiction. This contrast is explained when the total picture is examined.

Two different conditions are presented in these contexts. It is suggested that Eve received her knowledge of the command not to eat of the fruit through the instruction of her husband.⁵⁰ Eve's encouragement to her husband to partake of the fruit was an act of insubordination. Furthermore, when Adam chose to eat of the fruit, he ignored his leadership role and followed his wife's sinful promptings. God's condemnation of Adam for obeying his wife is justified. It should not be concluded from this passage that men must reject the voice of their wives in all situations.

Gen 21:12 provides a blueprint for the correct role relationship between husband and wife. Abraham was distressed at the thought of expelling Hagar and Ishmael.⁵¹ Sarah realized the full implications of not expelling them, however, and thus encouraged her husband along these lines. When Abraham's mind would not be changed, God corrected him by telling him to listen to the voice of his wife. The key is found in that once Abraham was corrected by the Lord, he took the initiative to exert leadership (v 14). Unlike Adam, he did not ignore his role as head of the relationship and follow a course of

⁵⁰The account in Gen 2:16-17 indicates that man was given the prohibitions prior to the creation of Eve.

⁵¹See Harold G. Stigers, *A Commentary on Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 184-85.

cognizant error prompted by his wife. Sarah can thus be viewed by Peter as a woman who "obeyed her husband, calling him lord," yet provided advice in a submissive role.

From these examples, it is rather obvious that the NT supports a role distinction between the male and female, a distinction which originates before the fall. On certain occasions, the concept is applied to the husband and wife relationship; on other occasions, Paul refers generally to the male and female. In both cases, however, a role relationship exists to differing extents in which the woman is instructed to be submissive in function to the male.

GENESIS 3

A final claim of the feminists is that subordination for the woman began as a result of the fall.⁵² Yet, examination of the text has demonstrated that subordination was established prior to the fall. The events of chapter 3 follow immediately after and are predicated upon the events of chapter 2. They reveal that man and his new helper reversed their hierarchical positions in their act of sin. The outcome was that the effect of sin corrupted the relationship between man's headship and woman's subordination, but did not change it.

Woman's part in the fall

The woman was an active participant in the fall. Her initial sin began when she continued to listen to the serpent, who was intentionally deceptive by his communication. During the course of the conversation the woman was deceived (Gen 3:13). It was at this point that her appetites gave birth to the first sin.

The deception of the woman is of major significance for Paul's NT teaching. In 2 Cor 11:3, Paul warns the Corinthian believers "lest as the serpent deceived (ἐξηπάτησεν) Eve by his craftiness" they would be deceived also. The use of ἐξ is added to ἀπατάω for intensity, i.e., Eve was completely deceived. Paul is stressing that Eve was led to believe something that was not true. She was doctrinally beguiled into hostility toward God and sensual desire for the unknown.⁵³ This same deception could happen to both men and women at Corinth.

Paul also uses the term in 1 Tim 2:14, where he states, "It was not Adam who was deceived but the woman being quite deceived, fell

⁵²Gundry, *Woman Be Free!* 61; see also liberal support for this, Phyllis Trible, "Woman In The OT," *IDPSup* (1976) 965; John Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC; New York: Scribner's, 1917) 82.

⁵³Albrecht Oepke, "ἀπατάω, ἐξαπατάω," *TDNT* I (1964) 384.

into transgression."⁵⁴ This statement is made as a supporting argument for the limitations given to women with regard to positions of leadership in the church. In contrast to Paul's appeal in 1 Corinthians, the deception described in 1 Timothy could only happen to women.

The apostle may have had more than one idea in mind by this mention of the woman's deception in 1 Tim 2:14. He may be suggesting that a woman's emotional faculties are different than man's in such a way that she is more apt to be led into a course of *unintentional* error,⁵⁵ and/or he may be using this verse as an argument for what her deception precipitated, namely, a usurpation of her role as a helper.

In either case, Gen 3:1-7 indicates that Eve allowed herself to listen to the serpent. In the course of this, she was deceived and subsequently sinned. She then introduced her husband to sin, who willfully ignored his headship and partook of the fruit. Eve's sin was disobedience to God, which expressed itself, in part, by a self-assumed position of leadership above her husband.

Man's part in the fall

The woman is often viewed as forcing, driving, or compelling her husband to eat. It is true that Adam participated in the sin because of his wife's offer (Gen 3:6); however, he was not forced to eat the fruit. The account does not reveal whether Adam was present, passively listening to the serpent, or if he was away at the time. V 17 declares that he "listened to" or "obeyed"⁵⁶ the voice of his wife prior to eating the fruit, which may indicate that he was not there initially. In either circumstance, v 17 is the key; Adam freely chose to obey the voice of his wife. This sin actually began at the point when he failed to exercise his position of leadership over his wife.⁵⁷ While Adam was not deceived, his action was equally as wicked as Eve's. Not until he sinned was the entire human race plunged into sin (Rom 5:19; 1 Cor 15:22). The sin of the first human beings was a direct violation of

⁵⁴Using a contrast, Paul states that Adam was οὐκ ἠπατήθη (was not deceived—a simplex usage) while Eve ἐξαπατηθεῖσα (was completely deceived—intense usage).

⁵⁵John A. Bengel, *Gnomon Of The New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1859), 4. 254.

⁵⁶BDB, 1034: אָזַע with the אָ as in Gen 3:17 is a common idiom for "to obey."

⁵⁷Young (*Genesis 3* [London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966] 130-31) takes Adam's forfeiture of position a step further. Not only did Adam place himself in a subordinate position under the woman, but "he listened to her when she was deceived by the serpent. Hence, Adam had abandoned his place of superiority over the creatures."

God's command, which expressed itself, in part, by a complete inversion of the roles. This was a total distortion of the pattern established in Genesis 1 and 2.

Some background to Genesis 3:16

Another verse showing a positional differentiation between man and woman is Gen 3:16, "Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Most liberals and evangelical feminists interpret this pronouncement as the beginning of female subordination. Conservatives generally prefer to assume that subjection was intensified to the point of servitude at this point.⁵⁸

Gen 3:16 cannot be treated in a vacuum. Much of the preceding context deals with the headship of the man. The first section of this chapter demonstrates a reversal of the roles. This will have some bearing on the meaning of v 16. It should also be noted that this verse comes in the middle of the curse section. This pronouncement is basically divided into 4 areas: the curse upon the serpent (3:14-15), the woman (3:16), the man (3:17-19), and the creation (3:17b). The curse placed certain alterations upon individuals, animals, and nature.

Biologically, woman became the recipient of increased pain in childbirth; the snake began to crawl on his belly; all individuals became participants in physical death; nature received agricultural and other changes (Rom 8:22); and man had to compete against nature by toil and sweat.

Spiritually, man and woman became depraved and alienated from God, shattering the perfect harmony that existed at the beginning of their marriage. In some fashion, sin impinged upon the hierarchical relationship as well. It is not evident from any passage after Gen 3:16 that the pronouncement made here canceled or changed the hierarchical arrangement (cf. 1 Cor 11:3-10; 14:34; 1 Tim 2:13-14). In light of this background, a thorough examination of this verse provides for its proper understanding.

Much controversy has surrounded the meaning of "desire" in v 16. "Desire" (הַשׁוֹקָה) from the verbal root (שׁוֹק) may be derived from the Arabic root *šāqa*.⁵⁹ Traditionally, *šāqa* has had the meaning of "to please, delight, longing, craving, desire, arouse, yearn or desire ardently."⁶⁰ From this Arabic derivation, scholars usually understand

⁵⁸Vos, *Women In Old Testament Worship*, 30-31; John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Five Books of Moses Called Genesis* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1843; reprinted; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 1. 172.

⁵⁹BDB, 1003.

⁶⁰Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Ithaca: Spoken Language Services, 1971) 493.

the "desire" to contribute positively to her husband's rule. On the other hand, "desire" may have come from the Arabic root *sāqa*,⁶¹ which means "to drive, urge on, herd, impel as one would a prisoner or control cattle."⁶² It envisions harsh, forcible and negative treatment upon the receiver. If this is the meaning, then the "desire" of the woman will not contribute to the rule of her husband.

A further complication exists with the Hebrew root (שוק), because there are no examples in verbal form found anywhere in Scripture. It has been hypothetically drawn by the lexicons from the Arabic possibilities. Outside of Gen 3:16, there are only two other usages of the noun שוקה in the OT (Gen 4:7; Cant 7:10). Thus, the usage of the word must be established by the context in which it is found.

Canticles 7:11. "Desire" in Cant 7:11 (תשוקתו) is expressed by the bride toward her spouse. The "desire" is primarily a physical one,⁶³ or possibly a desire that is all-encompassing (sexual, mental, and emotional). The context surrounding this word argues against it being derived from the Arabic root *sāqa* in the sense of "a forcible, driving, urging or impelling desire." The meaning here is "a more gentle, passionate, yearning that contributes positively to the mate." Thus, it corresponds with the traditional root, *šāqa*.

Genesis 4:7. The narrative of Gen 4:7 depicts Cain in the midst of a struggle with sin. The Lord said regarding his sin, "Sin is lying at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." The desire of sin will overcome him if he does not master it.⁶⁴

The possibilities for the root of "desire" could be related to either *šāqa* or *sāqa*. The traditional meaning of "desire," from the root *šāqa*, would indicate that sin's desire for Cain is "a passionate, longing, craving appetite for ownership." The emphasis of this root is "a desire to *possess*." This harmonizes with its meaning in *Canticles*, only here it is "a desire for evil."

On the other hand, if the "desire of sin" is connected to the root *sāqa*, its meaning is "to drive or impel" Cain into subjection by force. The emphasis of this root is in the idea of "*compulsion*." Yet the idea of a forceful, compulsive desire does not seem to be evident in the

⁶¹BDB, 1003; KB, 597.

⁶²Wehr, *Dictionary*, 443.

⁶³S. Craig Glickman, *A Song For Lovers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1976) 86-87.

⁶⁴"Master" is the word תמשל; literally, "you should rule." In this instance, the imperfect of "rule" is best understood to express "obligation"; also the modal idea of "potential, of taking place, or not taking place in the future" is in view. GKC, 330.

narrative. Rather, the traditional meaning of "desire" in the sense of "a yearning or craving for possession" seems to be predominant.⁶⁵

Genesis 3:16. Three worthy views have been offered to explain the meaning of the woman's desire in Gen 3:16. First, following the traditional root for "desire," the word is understood as "a passionate sexual desire that becomes so strong in the woman that she will never rid herself of the pain of childbearing."⁶⁶

Second, some have understood "desire" to represent "a deep, natural attraction which a woman will have for her husband."⁶⁷ This yearning is to fulfill certain psychological and protective needs which she does not possess herself. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that this "desire will be so strong that it will border on disease."⁶⁸ While these two views of the meaning of "desire" cannot be readily denied, it is questionable that the desire ought to be limited to such narrow senses as sexual or psychological needs in view of the preceding context.

A third view argued by Susan Foh tries to draw a linguistic parallel between Gen 3:16 and 4:7, affiliating both instances of the word "desire" with the Arabic root *sāqa*.⁶⁹ Eve's desire was to forcibly drive or urge her husband in the same way sin was trying to forcibly drive Cain.⁷⁰ The meaning of "rule" is changed from a future indicative to the modal aspect of the prefix conjugation. Instead of "the husband shall rule," it is "he should rule," indicating potential rather than certainty. The whole statement thus reads, "Your desire shall be to control your husband but he must rule over you if he can." Making these changes, Gen 3:16 is made parallel to Gen 4:7, "Its (sin's) desire shall be to control you but you must rule over it if you can." Thus, these words in v 16 mark the beginning of the antithetical

⁶⁵The phrase, "sin is lying at your door" has been interpreted, "sin is crouching at your door." The word פָּצַח, "to lie down, lie, stretch out," is often used of animals (cf. Gen 29:2; Exod 23:5; Num 22:27; Isa 11:6; 27:10). In Gen 29:14 it is used of a crouching lion. Many have thus understood sin to be "crouching at Cain's door desiring to pounce upon him." This imagery of the lion is not substantiated by the context. However, if this symbolism is used, it upholds the traditional meaning of "desire." A lion's desire is for possession rather than compulsion.

⁶⁶Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments* (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1854), 1. 51.

⁶⁷H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1942), 2. 173; Davis, *Paradise To Prison*, 94; Vos, *Women In Old Testament Worship*, 24-25; David B. Nicholas, *What's a Woman To Do . . . in the Church?* (Scottsdale: Good Life, 1979) 16-20.

⁶⁸C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch* (reprinted; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 1. 103.

⁶⁹Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire?" *WTJ* 37 (1975) 376-83.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 381-82.

battle between the sexes. The woman's "desire"⁷¹ will work against her husband. As a result of the fall, man no longer rules easily; he must fight for his headship.

There are major difficulties with this view. The basic defect of this proposal is that it assumes certain conclusions about the passage at the expense of the context. This argument is predicated upon the assertion that exactly what happened in the fall became God's continuing pronouncement upon man. However, examination of the context already has established that Eve did not forcibly urge her husband, which this interpretation requires. On the other hand, neither did Adam try to rule over her. He listened to her and then made his own choice to participate with her in sin (Gen 3:17).

Also arguing against Foh's suggestion is the fact that it reads a *possible* rendering of Gen 4:7 back into 3:16, just because the phrases are almost identical in the Hebrew. This provides a good grammatical parallel, but not a contextual one.

A final major deficiency in this view is that it fails to provide for a consistent usage of הָרָצוֹן. Cant 7:11 will not permit the meaning of a forcible desire.

A suggested solution to Genesis 3:16. The exact meaning of Gen 3:16b continues to perplex scholars. It is not possible to come to any kind of a definite conclusion. The best that can be provided is an alternative solution.

A suggested solution to Gen 3:16b is found in assessing the pronouncement made to the woman as a curse, which has its major emphasis in the "rule" of the man. The sense of "rule"⁷² in this context is negative, predicting the type of abuse that man will vent

⁷¹The LXX rendering of הָרָצוֹן as ἀποστρόφη in Gen 3:16 and 4:7 cannot be used as a positive support for this view. Instances do demonstrate that ἀποστρόφη can be rendered: (1) a positive sense of "turning, turning back, refuge, bend in a direction toward"; this would be derived from the Arabic root *sāqa*; (2) it may also be a negative sense of "turning away from" as a derivative of the root *sāqa*. The LXX rendering of Gen 3:16 is, "Your desire is toward your husband," (πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα σου ἢ ἀποστροφή σου). In Gen 4:7 (πρὸς σε ἢ ἀποστροφή αὐτοῦ), the LXX translators interpreted this as a reference to Abel's "desire, toward his brother." In both instances, the preposition πρὸς with the accusative expresses "direction toward." Πρὸς may only carry the meaning "against" when it follows a verb of disputing or hostility, which is not the case in these instances; see George B. Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957) 717. The LXX translators would most likely have used ἄντι if they meant Gen 3:16 and 4:7 to mean "desire that resists or works against."

⁷²The word "rule" (מָשַׁל) was already seen to have reference to man's headship over creation (Ps 8:2-7). Now, for the first time, this word is found in the text of Genesis.

upon his wife. He will carry his headship to domination because of his depraved nature. While this aspect of the curse primarily refers to the husband and wife, it can also refer to men and women outside of the context of marriage where role relationships exist.

Almost every husband, or even most men in general, who have exercised leadership over women have used their position to domineer at one point or another. Paul continually reminds men not to "rule" over their wives in this negative fashion (Eph 5:25-30; Col 3:19; cf. 1 Pet 3:7-9; see also an inference concerning all men in 1 Cor 11:11-12 as to how they should treat women). If a man is controlled by the Spirit, he may to some extent rise above the downward drag of his depravity and thus nullify the effects of this aspect of the curse.

It is even more difficult to make a dogmatic statement concerning the woman's desire. It appears that this statement must be taken in conjunction with the rule of man in order to be part of the curse. Yet this statement must not be viewed, as it has by many, to suggest that "all women willingly or unwillingly shall subject all their desires to their husbands."⁷³ Nor is there any evidence to support the view that woman is here placed under subjection for the first time. It is also doubtful whether Foh's suggestion is compatible. Women often do battle against their husbands, but this does not serve the intent of Gen 3:16.

The term "desire" is best related to the traditional root, *šāqa*. It refers to "the woman's longing or yearning that she may have about the affairs of life." In the course of the fall, she failed to subordinate this desire under her husband. With this in view, the phrase, "your desire is to your husband," is best regarded as a statement of fact, reminding the first woman that the subordinate principle still remains in effect. However, it is not a pronouncement that all women will submit all their desires to their husbands. Their sin nature precludes that they will do this.

Women, for the most part, have continued to perpetuate the subordinate relationship established prior to the fall to different extents. In almost every case, however, they have experienced a varying degree of harsh rule from men. The statement regarding the woman's desire is not a curse in and of itself, but it becomes one when it is treated in relation to the man's sinful rule.

⁷³Young, *Genesis 3*, 127-28; Calvin (*Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, 1. 172) states, "'Thy desire shall be unto 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.'" See also Foh, "What Is The Woman's Desire?" 379.

Women, by virtue of their sin nature, resist the leadership of men by rejecting the harsh rule pronounced in the curse, or, often, any positive rule as well. In either case, the NT confirms that such women are subordinate (1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:34-35; Eph 5:22-23; Col 3:18; 1 Tim 2:11-14; 1 Pet 3:1-7). Depending upon the temperament of the man, as well as the amount of a woman's insubordination, she may receive more or less harsh treatment. The rule of man may not actually seem like a curse to those women who refuse subordination altogether, for they are not in a position to receive it. However, they potentially remain under this curse.

The consistency of this view over other views is found in several factors. It provides a unified explanation of קִרְבָּן throughout the OT. It also upholds the hierarchical relationship established prior to the fall. At the same time, it acknowledges the effects of sin that tend to distort and corrupt this role relationship. This view also brings the meaning of Paul's commands concerning the woman's subjection and the man's leadership to full expression.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this article has been to examine the key themes of creation order for their contributions to role relationship. The evangelical feminists who promote egalitarianism emphasize Genesis 1 as the main account describing the positional relationship between the sexes.

First, it was noted that Genesis 1 is a general, chronological account of the events in creation. It introduces the reader to two realms, the spiritual and the functional. The main emphasis is placed upon the spiritual realm in which man and woman correspond in every respect. Both share equally in the image of God.

On the other hand, Genesis 2 shifts the emphasis. When the details of the sixth day are unfolded, they reveal a definite positional distinction between man and woman. The feminists refuse to believe this and have provided several explanations to dilute a role distinction. However, many indications argue for the headship of the man. This chapter is also the backbone for the NT's emphasis upon role differentiation in the church, home, and society. Paul uses this pre-Fall principle to support post-Fall subordination.

Moreover, Genesis 3 does not disregard a positional distinction between the male and female. The events of the fall relate, among other considerations, that there was a sinful disregard for the headship established in the previous chapter.

The specific meaning of Gen 3:16b becomes vital to understanding the role relationship. Several views were observed, and a suggested possibility was then presented. Gen 3:16 pronounces a curse

upon the woman, with emphasis upon the abusive rule that man will exercise. The "desire" mentioned provides a reminder to the woman that the subordinate role still continues for her and is the correct position for women in every age. In and of itself, this is not a curse to women. However, it becomes a curse in conjunction with the man's sinful rule. When women do submit themselves under men, it will become hard, at times, because of the man's misuse of rulership. Not all women have placed themselves in a subordinate position to men, but the statement was not meant to express this. In almost every case, women who have subordinated themselves to men have experienced harsh rule in varying degrees. Gen 3:16 continues to uphold the creation account wherein God established the hierarchical relationship. Together, the first three chapters of Genesis consistently indicate that God's order for man and woman has never changed.