

## The Curse That Redeems

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I believe that the writings of Ellen White reveal that the ordination of women to ecclesiastical authority is an affront to the plan of redemption.

When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 484).

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided 'an help meet for him'---a helper corresponding to him---one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and *protected* by him (*Adventist Home*, p. 25, emphasis added).

Eve was created neither inferior nor superior to Adam. However, she was created as a "weaker vessel" (1 Peter 3:7) who was to be protected by Adam. Protected from what? In the Garden of Eden there were no wild animals or dangerous criminals to protect Eve from. The only danger was spiritual danger and to Adam was given the charge of spiritual headship to guide and protect Eve from harm.

The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband while occupied in their daily labor in the garden; with him she would be in less danger from temptation than if she were alone. But absorbed in her pleasing task, she unconsciously wandered from his side. On perceiving that she was alone, she felt an apprehension of danger, but dismissed her fears, deciding that she had sufficient wisdom and strength to discern evil and to withstand it. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 53).

In leaving Adam's side and rejecting that warning of apprehension, Eve usurped Adam's role of protector. She took over the important position of spiritual headship, leading Adam into spiritual apostasy.

A neglect on the part of woman to follow God's plan in her creation, an effort to reach for important positions which He has not qualified her to fill, leaves vacant the position that she could fill to acceptance. In getting out of her sphere, she loses true womanly dignity and nobility. When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal. The holy pair were to have no interest independent of each other; and yet each had an individuality in thinking and acting. *But* after Eve's sin, as she was first in the transgression, the Lord told her that Adam should rule over her. *She was to be in subjection to her husband, and this was a part of the curse.* In many cases the curse has made the lot of woman very grievous and her life a burden. The *superiority which God has given man* he has abused in many respects by exercising arbitrary power. *Infinite wisdom devised the plan of redemption*, which places the race on a second probation by giving them another trial (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 484, emphasis added).

Before the fall, the husband was not superior to his wife. Infinite wisdom devised the arrangement that to aid in mankind's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin, the husband was now to have superiority over his wife:

The husband is the head of the family, as Christ is the head of the church; and any course which the wife may pursue to lessen his influence and lead him to come down from that dignified, responsible position is displeasing to God. It is

the duty of the wife to yield her wishes and will to her husband. Both should be yielding, but the Word of God gives preference to the judgment of the husband. And it will not detract from the dignity of the wife to yield to him whom she has chosen to be her counselor, adviser, and protector. The husband should maintain his position in his family with all meekness, yet with decision (*Testimony Treasures*, pp. 307, 308).

This new position of Eve was part of the plan of redemption which infinite wisdom devised just as were the thorns and thistles:

To Adam the Lord declared: 'Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' . . . And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man's lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God's great plan of man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 59, 60).

The current push for equality of men and women for ordination to spiritual headship interferes with the plan of redemption that God has devised to recover mankind from the ruin and degradation of sin. This is a movement inspired by the enemy that is just as deceptive as was the original deception that Eve participated in. And just like Adam, many of the men in our denomination are falling for the deception.

The power that a woman exerts for weal or woe is well understood by both sides of the great controversy:

It is a terrible thing to be an instrument in the hands of Satan. Satan chooses women, for he can use them more successfully than he can men (Ellen G. White, Ms. 29, 1911, p. 13).

God also chooses women, for He too can use them more successfully than He can men:

Women may take their places in the work at this crisis, and the Lord will work through them. If they are imbued with a sense of their duty, and labor under the influence of the Spirit of God, they will have just the self-possession required for this time. The Saviour will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of His countenance, and this will give them a power which will exceed that of men. They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 117).

*BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: John and Sharon Witcombe have ministered in churches in Washington and Oregon. John began to serve as a pastor in 1994. Presently they serve in Southern Oregon. Their daughter has recently blessed them with a grandchild.*