

Apostle Paul is NOT a Male Chauvinist!

The writing of the Apostle Paul in Scripture is frequently very deep and rather hard to understand. There are those who think applying a historical grid to Paul's writings clarify them. They might say, "Paul spoke to a culture where women were chattel". Personally, I believe that God's Word speaks powerfully across every culture in every time. And I don't believe that God would make HIS Word inaccessible to everyone except scholars who can study and understand "historical context". God's Word is accessible even to common people, not by "man's wisdom... they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:13-14). God's Word is "alive and active sharper than any double edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12; see also Romans 15:4, James 1:21). Even Paul's contemporary and fellow Apostle- Peter- said he was hard to understand (2 Peter 3:15-16). In Paul's writings, there's a lot more there than first meets the eye (ie the truth is **veiled**).

Using only Scripture- taken as God-breathed and inerrant (in its original autographs), I present a way of understanding Paul which removes the charge of "chauvinism" against him. First, I will dig into Scriptures where Paul's metaphors are defined. Then I apply that grid of proven Biblical Pauline metaphors to two passages Paul wrote which have traditionally been interpreted and applied in ways which are demeaning to women.

Paul's metaphors:

In Ephesians 5 where Paul speaks of "marriage" and "the husband wife relationship", he clearly states that he is speaking of Christ and the church. (Eph 5:22-32). Christ being the "husband"/"Man" and the church being the "wife"/"woman".

Our walk with Christ should bring us to a place where "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal 3:28. Gender, status, race are FLESH-ly distinctions which count for nothing in the spiritual dimension. As long as we regard the flesh [race, status, gender], we are "yet carnal"

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas [there is] among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 1 Cor 3:3

Paul identifies a symptom of carnality: "are ye not yet carnal, and walk as men?" The "men" there is the Greek *anthropos* which would be better translated "people" as it includes male and female people. Mature, spiritual people should be walking as Christ, "and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil 3:2-7)

In Gal 3:28, Col 3:9-11 the division into male/female, slave/free, etc is symptomatic of an unrenewed, unregenerate perspective. Here Paul speaks of our fleshly body as a "seed" or "grain": 1 Cor 15:36-38 We each have a fleshly body, a seed, a grain. How do we sow? If we sow to the flesh, we will from the flesh reap destruction, but if to the spirit we will reap everlasting life Gal. 6:7-8. In 1 Cor 15:42-50 Paul speaks of transformation, of the "natural body" and the "spiritual body", of "bearing the image of the heavenly". I don't think he is just speaking of natural death here. I think he is speaking of death to self and the formation of Christ within. See verses (Rom 8:29, Rom 6:4-6, Gal 2:20, Gal 5:24-25, Phil 3:10-15, 2 Corinthians 4:11).

In 2 Cor 11:2-3 Paul uses Eve as a figure of the church. While this is addressed to the Corinthians, I believe it is also addressed to you and I whether male or female.

Paul uses Child Birth as a metaphor for the formation of Christ (Gal 4:19). Note that Paul speaks of himself as the one in the travail here, so these “pangs of childbirth” are not limited to flesh and blood women only. Paul’s use of Child Birth echos Jesus use of the metaphor (“proverb”)- see Jesus’ words to His (male) disciples in John 16:16-25

A man is one who has grown up- not in terms of flesh/physical maturity, but in terms of spiritual maturity. No longer “babes” (Romans 2:20, 1 Corinthians 3:1), one who has reached maturity/ given up childish ways (1 Cor 13:11-12), crucified the flesh (Gal 2:20), been renewed in the mind (Eph 4:23), put on Christ, become a “new creation” (2 Cor 5:16-17), been born from above/born of the spirit (John 3:6)

Ephesians 4:13-15 (King James Version)
13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:
*14That we henceforth be **no more children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*
15But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Paul speaks of Jesus as “the last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45)

A Reading of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 through the grid of Paul’s metaphors.

Let the unrenewed learn in quietness with all subjection.

The unrenewed, I do not permit to teach or have authority over the mature, but to be in quietness.

For Adam (Jesus) was formed first, then Eve (the church/you and I whether male or female).

And Adam (Jesus) was not deceived, but Eve (you and I whether male or female) having been deceived, into transgression came,

and she (you and I whether male or female) will be saved through the child-bearing (the formation of Christ within) if they remain in faith, and love, and sanctification, with sobriety. (Read “they” as the union with the second Adam, so if Eve/church/you and I remain united with CHRIST “in faith, and love...”, she/Eve/church/you and I will be SAVED)

1 Corinthians 11 through the grid of Paul’s metaphors.

1 Cor 11: 2Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

3But 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.

4Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man.

9Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

10For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

11Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

13Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

Paul starts out by speaking of the “ordinances” or “traditions” he has delivered to them. Wouldn’t his use of metaphors be part of that? I think so.

My theory is that when Paul says the following in 1 Cor 11:

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God **but the woman is the glory of the man**

we should read that with an immediate **RED FLAG** since we are ALL supposed to be “renewed in knowledge after the image of our creator” and we are not supposed to “exchange the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made to look like corruptible man [or woman]”.

This jumped out at me as I was re-reading the larger context of the 1 Corinthians passages:

“But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by **revelation**, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?” 1 Corinthians 14

I did a word study on the veiling of 1 Corinthians 11 and 2 Cor 3. To veil is *kalypto*.

To pull down the veil is *katakalypto* (renditions of which occur repeatedly in 1 Cor 11).

To lift up the veil is *anakalypto*- a conjugation of which occurs in

2 Cor 3:18 “And we, who with **unveiled** faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

To separate/remove the veil is *apokalypto*- revelation.

Following this “veil” thread of Paul’s was enlightening! Could the Apostle Paul be speaking metaphorically in 1 Cor 11 where woman and man are metaphors for phases of our Christian walk or phases of glorification? In other words: “woman” was me in the place when my sight was “veiled”, when I was not seeing things very clearly, and when I was looking at human authority for guidance and affirmation. “man” is me when that veil is lifted off and I can look directly at Christ for guidance “with unveiled face”. “man” is me when I am further along in the process of having “put on Christ” (Rom 13:14), and being “conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom 8:29).