

1 **Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors? Old Testament Considerations**

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7 **Introduction**

8 This paper builds upon the hermeneutical principles generally accepted by Seventh-day
9 Adventists, as set forth in the 1986 “Methods of Bible Study” statement voted by the Annual Council, and
10 as synthesized in the chapter “Biblical Interpretation” in the *Handbook of SDA Theology*.¹ Insights for
11 this summary position paper have been gleaned over the last 30 years, from my first assigned paper
12 dealing with the subject, “The Role of Women in the Old Testament” (BRICOM, 1982), through several
13 journal articles on the subject, on 25 years later to the 2007 publication of *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in*
14 *the Old Testament* (844 pages),² and to the present in my continued wrestling with how best to account
15 for all the data in the Old Testament (hereafter (OT) dealing with the relation between men and women
16 and the place of women in ministry. This paper first looks at the material in Gen 1-3, and then moves to
17 the OT witness on the role of women outside of Eden, both in the home and in the covenant community.
18 Finally, consideration is given to OT statements pointing forward to the eschatological future with the
19 coming of the Messiah. In harmony with sound hermeneutical principles, while maintain a strong belief in
20 the unity of Testaments, I do not use my pre-conceived understandings of NT passages which allude to
21 OT passages as a grid into which those OT passages must be forced. Rather, I seek to allow the meaning
22 of OT passages to emerge from their immediate context, and then compare this meaning with later OT
23 and NT parallel passages. I have found that the interpretations of OT passages in this paper fully
24 harmonize with an informed and careful examination of parallel NT passages (the latter will be set forth
25 in the paper by Teresa Reeve).

26
27 **I. Genesis 1-3: The Foundational Data Regarding Man-Woman Relationships**

28 A consensus within biblical scholarship has emerged in recent decades concerning the
29 foundational nature of Gen 1-3 in the interpretation of Scripture: “whether one is evangelical or liberal, it
30 is clear that Genesis 1–3 is the interpretive foundation of all Scripture.”³ This is especially true with
31 regard to the understanding of human nature and the relationship between man and woman: “Canonically,
32 the understanding of human nature expressed or implied in the laws, wisdom literature, narratives,
33 prophetic texts, and other genres of the Hebrew Scriptures may be viewed as commentary on the creation
34 texts. . . . The Bible’s first statement concerning humankind remains the normative statement that governs
35 all others.”⁴ “In the opening chapters of Genesis the triangular relationship of God/man/woman is set in

1 place to explain and inform subsequent narrative and legislation as it unfolds. The reader has the
2 necessary framework to read the codes and recognise proper and improper behaviour.”⁵

3 In the modern discussion over whether women should be ordained as pastors, the foundational
4 passage for both those who affirm and those who oppose women’s ordination is Gen 1-3. Those who
5 affirm women’s ordination (often called “egalitarians”⁶) find in the Genesis creation accounts a statement
6 of full equality without hierarchy of man and woman, set forth as the divinely ordained creation order.
7 They see the rest of Scripture calling us back toward that creation ideal, and allowing for women to fill
8 any position of authority to which God calls and gifts them. Those who oppose the ordination of women
9 (often called “hierarchicalists” or “complementarians”⁷ or “subordinationists”) also go to Gen 1-2, where
10 they find support for their view that male headship, both in the home and in the church, is a divinely
11 ordained creation ordinance. They see this reaffirmed in Gen 3 and the rest of Scripture, and thus they
12 assert that women cannot assume the role of authoritative headship in the church. What is often common
13 to *both* groups is a similar view of authority—as top-down (“chain-of-command”) hierarchy. Opponents
14 argue that such hierarchical leadership in the church is a male prerogative; proponents urge that women
15 should have equal rights to those hierarchical leadership offices. What is the truth regarding these
16 matters? Let us go to the opening pages of Scripture to discover what constitutes God’s creation order for
17 the relationship between men and women.

18 19 **II. Genesis 1: Gender Relationships of Male and Female in the Image of God**

20 In Gen 1:26–28 “the high point and goal has been reached toward which all of God’s
21 creativity from v. 1 on was directed.”⁸ Here in lofty grandeur is portrayed the creation of
22 humankind (*ha’adam*):

23 (26) Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness; and let
24 them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over
25 the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the
26 earth.” (27) So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he
27 created him; male and female he created them. (28) And God blessed them, and God
28 said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have
29 dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living
30 thing that moves upon the earth.

31 32 **A. The Meaning of the Image of God and Male-Female Relationships**

33 In a separate study, I have examined in detail what it means for humanity to be made in the image
34 of God.⁹ Based upon the clues in the text itself, one may identify three major ways in which humans
35 constitute the image of God: (1) resemblance (structural constitution); (2) relationship (personal

1 fellowship); and (3) representation (function). All three of these aspects of the *imago Dei* reveal a full
2 equality without hierarchy between man and woman.

3 First, humans are made in God’s “image” in terms of *resemblance* or structural constitution (i.e.,
4 in form and character). The Hebrew words *tselem* “image” and *demut* “likeness”, although possessing
5 overlapping semantic ranges, in the juxtaposition of v. 26 appear to emphasize the concrete and abstract
6 aspects of the human being, respectively.¹⁰ Ilona Rashkow summarizes the implications of this
7 juxtaposition: “God says that his intention is to make Adam both in ‘in our image’ (that is, physically
8 similar, whatever that may mean), and in ‘in our likeness’ (having the same abstract characteristics).”¹¹
9 Ellen White is thus on the mark when she writes: “Man was to bear God’s image both in outward
10 resemblance and in character” (PP 45). Again, she states: “In the beginning, man was created in the
11 likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature” (GC 644-5).¹² It is important to note that
12 Gen 1:27 presents the equal pairing of male *and* female in parallel with “humankind” (*ha’adam*). Both
13 male and female are made in God’s image, according to His likeness. While indeed the terms “male” and
14 “female” connote sexual (biological) differences, there is no hint of leadership¹³/submission roles between
15 male and female in this passage. Both are explicitly presented as “equally immediate to the Creator and
16 His act.”¹⁴

17 Second, humans are created in God’s image in terms of *relationship*. It is hardly coincidental that
18 only once in the creation account of Genesis—only in Gen 1:26—does God speak of the divinity in the
19 plural: “Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness.” There have been many attempts to account for
20 this use of the plural, but the explanation that appears most consonant with both the immediate context
21 and the analogy of Scripture identifies this usage as a “plural of fullness,”¹⁵ also termed a “plural of
22 fellowship or community within the Godhead.”¹⁶ This plural “supposes that there is within the divine
23 Being the distinction of personalities” and expresses “an intra-divine deliberation among ‘persons’ within
24 the divine Being.”¹⁷ It is crucial to recognize that in describing the divine interrelationships (“let Us”)
25 which form an analogy with human relationships (“male and female”), the narrator gives no indication of
26 a hierarchy in the Godhead, no reference to the asymmetrical submission of one Person (the Son) to the
27 Other (the Father). In describing the interrelationship among the members of the Godhead, the emphasis
28 in this text is upon the deliberation and fellowship of Equals. If there is any submission implied, it is a
29 *mutual submission* of Equals as the members of the Godhead discuss and deliberate together concerning
30 the creation of humankind. The divine “Let Us” implies that One is not commanding, and Another
31 obeying; all are equaling engaged in the deliberation. Such equality without any top-down hierarchy, by
32 analogy, is thus emphasized with regard to the *mutual* submission in human (male-female, husband and
33 wife) relationships, who are made relationally in the image of God.

1 Third, humans are made in God’s image in terms of *representation* or function. “Just as powerful
2 earthly kings, to indicate their claim to dominion, erect an image of themselves in the provinces of their
3 empire where they do not personally appear, so man is placed upon earth in God’s image as God’s
4 sovereign emblem. He is really only God’s representative, summoned to maintain and enforce God’s
5 claim to dominion over the earth.”¹⁸ Whereas human rulers were not able to be in every place at one
6 time, and thus felt the need to erect an image representing themselves, the Godhead is omnipresent (Ps
7 139, etc.), needing no representative to take their place when they were not present. Yet, in an act of self-
8 denying submission, the Godhead entrusts the responsibility of dominion over the earth to humankind.
9 Thus there is submission in the Godhead, but it is submission of the full Godhead (the “Us”) who together
10 entrusted Their prerogative of dominion to humans They had made (Gen 1:26, 28)—humans whom the
11 Godhead, in Their infinite foreknowledge, knew would rise up in rebellion against Them and eventually
12 cost the death of the Son of God, God being ripped from God at Calvary. The submission of the Godhead
13 is also displayed in Their giving freedom of choice to human beings, thus limiting Their own sovereignty.
14 This is implied in the *imago Dei* of Gen 1:26-28, and also further indicated in the presence of the tree of
15 life and tree of knowledge and good and evil in the Garden (Gen 2:9).

16 According to the biblical text (Gen 1:28), humans are to be the creative shapers of the new
17 creation, to “fill the earth and *subdue* [*kabash*] it”—not by exploitation, but by “shaping the creation into
18 a higher order of beauty and usefulness.”¹⁹ They are also to be “co-managers” of God’s creation (Gen
19 1:28): they are to “rule” [*radah*] over the animal kingdom, again not by exploitation, but by judiciously
20 representing God’s sovereignty in the earth.²⁰ They are not slaves to do the menial work of the gods, as in
21 the ancient Near Eastern stories,²¹ but co-regents, the king and queen of their earthly dominion! Neither is
22 the designation “image of God” reserved for the ruling monarch, as in Egyptian and Mesopotamian
23 sources; all humans are in God’s image, His representatives on the earth.²²

24 It is again crucial to note that according to Gen 1:27-28, both the man and woman are equally
25 blessed. Both are to share alike in the responsibility of procreation, to “fill the earth.” Both are to subdue
26 the earth. Both are given the same co-managerial dominion over God’s non-human creation. As Rebecca
27 Groothuis states it, “both have been commanded equally and without distinction to take dominion, not
28 one over the other, but both together over the rest of God’s creation for the glory of the Creator.”²³ There
29 is no mention in this passage of any differentiation in the male and female’s authority to rule.

30 **B. Male Leadership Role in the Beginning?**

31 Proponents of male leadership as a creation ordinance generally concede what they term an
32 “ontological”²⁴ equality (i.e., in personal and spiritual value before God) between the genders in Gen 1,
33 but a functional leadership role for the male is often seen as implied in Gen 1:26, where God identifies
34 male and female as *’adam* “man.” So Raymond Ortlund writes: “God cuts right across the grain of our

1 peculiar sensitivities when He names the human race, both man and woman, ‘man.’ . . . God’s naming of
2 the race ‘man’ whispers male headship. . . .”²⁵ What Ortlund and others who employ this argument fail to
3 recognize is that the word *’adam never* means “man” (in the sense or implication of male gender) in
4 Scripture! The problem is a modern language translation issue, not an aspect of the Hebrew text. The
5 word *’adam* is a generic term meaning “human person” or “humanity.”²⁶ Aside from Gen 1–3, where it
6 refers to the first human person, this term is *never* in the whole Hebrew Bible used to designate a “man”
7 in the sense of male (as opposed to female). The use of *’adam* does not whisper male headship as a
8 creation ordinance.

9 According to Gen 1, male and female are regarded wholistically, as equal without hierarchy. The
10 full equality of man and woman—in resemblance/constitution, in relationship, and in
11 representation/function—is unhesitatingly proclaimed in the first chapter of the Bible, and is evaluated by
12 God Himself as “very good” (Gen 1:31)! In short, both man and woman participate equally, and without
13 hierarchy, in the image of God, just as the Godhead in Gen 1 is functioning in a relationship of equality
14 without hierarchy among the Persons comprising that Godhead.

15

16 **III. Genesis 2: Gender Relationships according to the Divine Creation Order**

17 The one major question which has dominated the scholarly discussion of man-woman relations in
18 Gen 2 concerns the status of the sexes relative to each other that is set forth as a divine creation ordinance.
19 The “traditional” view—held by the vast majority of Christian commentators and theologians before the
20 twentieth century—has held that according to Gen 2 woman was created by nature inferior to man, and
21 thus women as a class or even race are not competent and must be excluded from leadership or from
22 exercising authority in the home, church, or society.²⁷ Many recent proponents of male leadership as a
23 creation ordinance now acknowledge that Gen 1 emphasizes equality on the personal and spiritual level,
24 but at the same time maintain that Gen 2 emphasizes a male leadership and female submission role on the
25 functional or societal level.²⁸ Does Gen 2 affirm a fully egalitarian view of the relationship between the
26 sexes, or does it support a hierarchical ranking in which man is in some way in leadership over the
27 woman at creation?

28 **A. Gender Hierarchy (Male “Headship”) as a Creation Ordinance? Evaluation of Arguments**

29 The main arguments from the narrative in Gen 2 used by Adventist (and other conservative)
30 hierarchicalists to prove a “creation order” of hierarchical gender ranking may be summarized as follows:
31 (1) man is created first and woman last (vv. 7, 22) and the first is head/leader and the last is subordinate;
32 (2) man, not woman, is spoken to by God and does the speaking (vv. 16–17, 23); (3) woman is formed for
33 the sake of man—to be his “helpmate” or assistant to cure man’s loneliness (vv. 18–20); (4) woman
34 comes out of man (vv. 21–22) which implies a derivative and subordinate position or role; (5) woman is

1 created from man's rib (vv. 21–22) which indicates her dependence upon him for life; and (6) the man
2 names the woman (v. 23) which indicates his authority or leadership over her. Do these points really
3 substantiate a hierarchical relationship between the sexes? Let us look at each point in turn.

4 **The order of creation.** First, because man is created first and then woman, it has been
5 asserted that “by this the priority and superiority of the man, and the dependence of the woman
6 upon the man, are established as an ordinance of divine creation.”²⁹ Adventist (and other
7 conservative) hierarchicalists today generally avoid the word “superiority” for man but argue
8 instead for male leadership from this order of creation. But a careful examination of the literary
9 structure of Gen 2 reveals that such a conclusion of hierarchy does not follow from the fact of
10 man's prior creation. Hebrew literature often makes use of an *inclusio* device (also called an
11 “envelope structure” or “ring construction”) in which the points of central concern to a unit are
12 placed at the beginning and end of the unit.³⁰ This is the case in Gen 2. The entire account is cast
13 in the form of an *inclusio* in which the creation of man at the beginning of the narrative and the
14 creation of woman at the end of the narrative correspond to each other in importance.³¹ The
15 narrator underscores their equality of importance by employing precisely the same number of
16 words (in Hebrew) for the description of the creation of the man as for the creation of woman! As
17 Trevor Dennis puts it, “the writer has counted his words and been careful to match the lengths of
18 his descriptions exactly.”³²

19 As with the first creation account in Gen 1, the movement in sequence in Gen 2 is from
20 incompleteness to completeness. In Gen 2 woman is created as the climax, the culmination of the
21 story, and as Adam's full equal.³³ Mary Corona summarizes the narrative progression:

22
23 The movement of the story beautifully progresses from the utter loneliness of Adam, through the
24 presence of useful living creatures that only accentuate the loneliness by their incapacity to be his
25 companions, to the ecstasy of delight in discovering the companionship of an equal [Gen 2:23
26 cited].³⁴

27
28 I have found no evidence in Gen 1-2 that the law of the primogeniture (“firstborn”) is operative at
29 creation. The paper by Carl Cosaert on 1 Timothy 2 also demonstrates that Paul is not referring to the
30 priority of creation (Adam as “firstborn”) to substantiate male headship as part of the creation order.³⁵
31 Mention of “firstborn” and “birthright” and related terms in Scripture are only employed to describe
32 conditions after the Fall (e.g., Gen 4:4; 10:15; 25:31-36). Even after the Fall, the law of the firstborn was
33 not a hard-and-fast rule. In fact, in the case of the patriarchal covenant line in Genesis, it is regularly the
34 second-born (or sometimes an even later-born), not the first-born, who inherits the birthright: Abraham,
35 Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and Ephraim. In the New Testament, Jesus Himself is not the firstborn in His human
36 family (He had older half-brothers through the line of Joseph), and when the term “firstborn” is employed

1 of Jesus, it does not refer to His chronological order of “birth”, but to His “pre-eminence” (that is the
2 meaning of the Greek *prōtotokos* in Rom 8:29; Col 1:15, 18; Rev 1:5).

3 This does not deny that (at least) Adam was the one-time “head of the human family” (Ellen
4 White, 6T 236), “the father and representative of the whole human family” (Ellen White, PP 48). Adam’s
5 representative headship of the entire human race is based upon the biblical principle of corporate
6 solidarity, the individual(s) representing the many.³⁶ Adam bears the Hebrew name *’adam*, which is also
7 the name meaning “Humankind” (Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-2). Only Adam in OT salvation history is given this
8 personal name. The fluid use of the term [*ha*] *’adam* in Gen 1-5 to refer both to an individual “human”
9 and to “humanity” indicates that Adam the individual is to be viewed in corporate solidarity with the
10 *’adam* which is humanity as a whole. (This is the theological truth recognized by Paul in Romans 5:12-
11 21.)

12 With reference to Adam as the “head of the entire human race,” at first glance it may seem
13 apparent that he exercised this representative role alone. However, the biblical text also makes clear that
14 God named both the first man and the first woman “Adam” (*’adam*, Gen 5:2). Eve also was given a
15 representative role in solidarity with the entire human race, as “Mother of all living” (Gen 3:20). The
16 spiritual followers of God are traced through *her* “seed” and *not*, as might be expected, through Adam’s
17 (Gen 3:15, contrary to usual reference to a man’s “seed” elsewhere in Scripture). So it is very possible
18 that God intended from the start that both Adam and Eve serve as representative heads, mother and father,
19 of the entire human race. Thus both would have joined the “sons of God” in the heavenly council instead
20 of Satan, representing this earth (Job 1-2). As a parallel to this usage, Ellen White states that “Adam was
21 crowned king in Eden, and to him was given dominion over every living thing that God had created”
22 (1SDABC 1082), although it is evident from the biblical text that Eve equally exercised this dominion
23 (Gen 1:26, 28; cf. PP 50). Likewise, although Ellen White mentions Adam as “head of the human
24 family,” she does not thereby necessarily exclude Eve, his “equal partner” and “second self” in that
25 representative role.

26 Regardless of whether Adam served in this headship alone or along with Eve, what is important
27 to our issue in this paper is that this was a *one-time, representative (non- hierarchical, or better, inverse-*
28 *hierarchical servant) headship*, and involved headship of the entire human race, including both men and
29 women. Non-hierarchical (or inverse-hierarchical) representative headship may be illustrated in United
30 States politics, where congressmen in the House of Representatives serve to *represent* their constituency,
31 but by no means are in hierarchical authority over them. This *one-time representative (not hierarchical)*
32 headship of the “first Adam” (1 Cor 15:54) was not passed on from generation to generation. Intended to
33 be a one-time representative headship, it was usurped by Satan (who became the “prince of this world,”
34 John 12:31) and was restored by the “last Adam” (1 Cor 15:54). Hence there is no indication here of

1 female subordination to male headship; rather, what was intended was the entire human race (“humanity,”
2 male and female) being represented by the Father (and Mother) of the human race.

3 **Man’s priority of speech.** A second argument concerns the man’s priority in speaking and being
4 spoken to in the narrative. It has been claimed that the man’s leadership over his wife before the Fall is
5 revealed in that God addresses the man, and not the woman, and also in that the man does the speaking in
6 the narrative of Gen 2, not the woman. However, such a claim fails to take into account the movement of
7 the narrative from incompleteness to completeness and climax as has been pointed out above. As part of
8 the process of bringing the man to realize his “hunger for wholeness,”³⁷ that he is alone and like the other
9 creatures needs a partner, God indeed speaks to him, warning him not to eat of the forbidden tree. As soon
10 as God created a human being such information was crucial for that being to avoid transgression, and in
11 order to be a free moral agent with the power of choice. But the divine impartation of such knowledge to
12 the man before the woman was created does not thereby reveal the leadership of the man over his
13 partner.³⁸ Likewise, only the man speaking (not the woman) in Gen 2 does not reveal his pre-Fall
14 leadership over the woman any more than only Eve speaking (and not Adam) outside the Garden (Gen 4)
15 reveals Eve’s leadership over Adam after the Fall.

16 If there had been an intention to emphasize *male* headship in Gen 2, the narrator would have
17 regularly employed the term *'ish* “man,” which indicates the male gender, and not *ha'adam* “the human,”
18 a term which never in the Hebrew Bible implies a male (as opposed to female). Throughout this narrative
19 (except for the two verses 23-24 which use the gender-explicit terms *'ish* “man” and *'ishah* “woman”
20 when specifically describing marriage) the term *ha'adam* “the human” (or *'adam* with the preposition *le*
21 in v. 19b) is consistently used, emphasizing the human’s relationship with God and solidarity with all
22 humanity, and not a male headship over the woman.

23 **The purpose of woman’s creation.** If a hierarchy of the sexes is not implied in the *order* of their
24 creation or *priority* of speech, is such indicated by the *purpose* of woman’s creation, as is suggested in a
25 third major argument for the hierarchical interpretation? Gen 2:18 records the Lord’s deliberation: “It is
26 not good that the man should be alone; I will make him *'ezer kenegdo*” (KJV—“a help meet for him”;
27 RSV—“a helper fit for him”; NASB—“a helper suitable to him”). The Hebrew words *'ezer kenegdo* have
28 often been taken to imply the inferiority or subordinate status of woman. For example, John Calvin
29 understood from this phrase that woman was a “kind of appendage” and a “lesser helpmeet” for man.³⁹
30 More recently, Clines argues that the Hebrew word *'ezer* refers to someone in a subordinate position.⁴⁰ But
31 this is not the meaning conveyed by the Hebrew!

32 The masculine noun *'ezer* is usually translated as “help” or “helper” in English. However, this is a
33 misleading translation because the English word “helper” tends to suggest one who is an assistant, a
34 subordinate, an inferior, whereas the Hebrew *'ezer* carries no such connotation. In fact, of the nineteen

1 occurrences of *'ezer* in the Hebrew Bible outside of Gen 2, sixteen employ *'ezer* to describe a
2 *superordinate*—God himself as the “Helper” of Israel.⁴¹ The other three occurrences outside Gen 2 denote
3 military allies.⁴² Never does the word refer to a subordinate helper. As elsewhere in the OT, in Gen 2 the
4 word *'ezer* is a relational term, describing a beneficial relationship, but in itself does not specify position
5 or rank.⁴³ The specific position intended must be gleaned from the immediate context. In the context of
6 Gen 2, with God bringing the parade of animals (all apparently with mates) but Adam finding no fitting
7 companion, the “help” intended is clearly “real companionship that can be given only by an equal.”⁴⁴ This
8 “help” or benefaction is indeed “for the man” (v. 18) in the sense that she “would bring benefit to
9 Adam,”⁴⁵ but this does not imply a hierarchy of roles. The benefit brought to the man is that at last he has
10 an egalitarian partner.

11 Genesis 2:18 and 20, confirm this equality of ranking with the expression which adjoins *'ezer*,
12 namely *kenegdo*. The word *neged* conveys the idea of “in front of,” “opposite,” or “counterpart,” and a
13 literal translation of *kenegdo* is thus “like his counterpart.” Used with *'ezer* this prepositional phrase
14 indicates no less than equality without hierarchy: Eve is Adam’s “benefactor/helper,” one who in position
15 and status is, as recognized by the standard Hebrew lexicon, “*corresponding to him, i.e., equal and*
16 *adequate to himself.*”⁴⁶ Eve is “a power equal to man,”⁴⁷ she is Adam’s “soul-mate,”⁴⁸ his equal partner,
17 in nature, relationship, and function. The phrase *'ezer kenegdo* in no way implies a male leadership or
18 female submission as part of the creation order, but instead affirms the full equality of man and woman.

19 **Woman’s existence derived from man.** As a fourth alleged indication in Gen 2 of male
20 leadership and female submission, it has been argued that since woman came out of man, since she was
21 formed from man, therefore she has a derivative existence, a dependent and subordinate status. That her
22 existence was in some way “derived” from Adam cannot be denied. But derivation does not imply
23 subordination! The text indicates this in several ways. Note, for example, that Adam also was “derived”—
24 from the ground (v. 7) but certainly one is not to conclude that the ground was his head or leader!⁴⁹
25 Furthermore, as the first woman was derived from man, every subsequent man comes from woman, so
26 there is an expression of integration, not subordination, indicated here (see Gen 3:20).

27 Again, woman is *not* Adam’s rib. It was the raw material, not woman herself, that was taken out
28 of man, just as the raw material of man was “taken” (Gen 3:19, 23) out of the ground.⁵⁰ Samuel Terrien
29 rightly points out that woman “is not simply molded of clay, as man was, but she is architecturally ‘built’
30 (2:33).” The verb *banah* “to build,” used in the creation account only with regard to the formation of Eve,
31 “suggests an aesthetic intent and connotes also the idea of reliability and permanence.”⁵¹ To clinch the
32 point, the text explicitly indicates that the man was asleep while God created woman. Man had no active
33 part in the creation of woman that might allow him to claim to be her head.⁵²

1 **Woman created from man’s rib.** A fifth argument used to support the hierarchical view of the
2 sexes concerns the woman’s creation from Adam’s rib. But the very symbolism of the rib points to
3 equality and not hierarchy. The word *tsela* ‘ can mean either “side” or “rib.” Since *tsela* ‘ occurs in the
4 plural in v. 21 and God is said to take “one of” them, the reference in this verse is probably to a rib from
5 Adam’s side. By “building” Eve from one of Adam’s ribs from his side, God appears to be indicating the
6 “mutual relationship,”⁵³ the “singleness of life”⁵⁴ in which man and woman are joined. The rib “means
7 solidarity and equality.”⁵⁵ Created from Adam’s “side [rib],” Eve was formed to stand by his side as an
8 equal. Peter Lombard was not off the mark when he said: “Eve was not taken from the feet of Adam to be
9 his slave, nor from his head to be his ruler, but from his side to be his beloved partner.”⁵⁶ This
10 interpretation appears to be further confirmed by the man’s poetic exclamation when he sees the woman
11 for the first time (v. 23): “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh!” The phrase “bone of my
12 bones and flesh of my flesh” indicates that the person described is as close as one’s own body. It denotes
13 physical oneness and “a commonality of concern, loyalty and responsibility.”⁵⁷ The expression certainly
14 does not lead to the notion of woman’s subordination or submission to man, but rather implies full
15 equality without hierarchy, in constitution, relationship, and function. Ellen White well captures the
16 meaning when she writes:

17 Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control
18 him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an
19 equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh,
20 she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist
21 in this relation. “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.”
22 Ephesians 5:29. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his
23 wife; and they shall be one.” (PP 46.)
24

25 Some have taken Ellen White’s statement that the Eve was “to be loved and protected by him
26 [Adam]” as indicating male hierarchical headship, but protection here implies greater physical strength,
27 not hierarchy! A government leader’s body guards are protectors, but that does not make the leader
28 subordinate to them. The context of Gen 2 is not one of hierarchy but of symmetrical equality.

29 **Woman named by man.** The last major argument used to support a hierarchical view of the
30 sexes in Gen 2 is that in man’s naming of woman (v. 23) is implied man’s authority over her, as his
31 naming the animals implied his authority over the animals.⁵⁸ This conclusion is predicated upon the
32 commonly-repeated thesis that assigning names in Scripture signifies authority over the one named, but
33 this widely-held scholarly assumption has been recently effectively challenged, with examples from
34 numerous Scriptural passages.⁵⁹ George Ramsey shows from the OT data of naming that “if the act of
35 naming signifies anything about the name-giver, it is the quality of *discernment*” and not the exercise of
36 authority or control. Even if the man did name the woman in Gen 2:23 (which I argue below is unlikely),
37 “the exclamation in Gen 2:23 is a cry of discovery, of recognition [cf. Jacob’s cry in Gen 28:16–17, prior

1 to bestowing the name Bethel], rather than a prescription of what this creature built from his rib shall be.
2 An essence which God had already fashioned is recognized by the man and celebrated in the naming.”⁶⁰
3 The preceding poetic lines of Adam’s speech confirm that exercise of leadership authority is not intended
4 here: “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” This clause, as already noted, clearly
5 connotes mutuality and equality, not subordination.⁶¹ The second part of Gen 2:23 also confirms this
6 interpretation: the arrangement in Hebrew is chiasmic (symmetrical parallelism), with the words for
7 “woman” and “man” placed in parallel in the center,⁶² “suggesting a corresponding and equal relationship
8 to one another.”⁶³

9 With regard to the naming the animals, the man is not exercising his authority over them, but
10 classifying them.⁶⁴ This can be seen in the immediate context of man’s being “alone” and this being “not
11 good” (v. 18), evidencing that God’s bringing of the animals to the man for him to name further implies
12 that the man is entering into a delightful companionship with the animals, only to ultimately discover that
13 such companionship is inadequate to satisfy his quest for complete reciprocity and mutuality.⁶⁵

14 Furthermore, it appears most probable that Adam does *not* name the woman before the Fall at all.
15 The designation *'ishah* occurs in the narrative *before* Adam ever meets her (Gen 2:22). She is already
16 called “woman” by the narrator even before the man sees her. Jacques Doukhan has shown that Gen 2:23
17 contains a pairing of “divine passives,” indicating that the designation of “woman” comes *from God*, not
18 man. Just as in the past, woman “was taken out of man” *by God*, an action with which the man had
19 nothing to do (he had been put into a “deep sleep”), so in the future she “shall be called woman,” a
20 designation originating in God and not man. Doukhan also indicates how the literary structure of the
21 Genesis creation story confirms this interpretation.⁶⁶

22 There is no indication in the text that the wordplay in v. 23 between *'ish* (man) and *'ishah* (wo-
23 man), and the explanation of the woman being taken out of man, are given to buttress a hierarchical
24 ranking of the sexes; rather, in context, they are best understood to underscore man’s joyous recognition
25 of his second self.⁶⁷ In fact, the word *'ish* (man) first appears in this verse; the man becomes aware of his
26 own identity as he discerns the identity of *'ishah* (wo-man). In his ecstatic poetic utterance the man is not
27 determining who the woman is—any more than he is determining who he himself is—but rather
28 delighting in his recognition of what God has done. He is saying yes to God in recognizing his own
29 sexual nature and welcoming woman as the equal counterpart to his sexuality.⁶⁸ After the Fall Adam *did*
30 give his wife a name (Eve), but even then it is more probable that he is discerning what she already was
31 by the promise of God, “mother of all living” (Gen 3:20), and not exercising authority over her.⁶⁹

32 In short, none of the arguments advanced from Gen 2 to support a hierarchical relationship
33 between the sexes can stand the test of close scrutiny. In light of the foregoing discussion, I concur with a
34 host of other commentators and scholarly studies in their conclusion that Gen 2, like Gen 1, contains no

1 statement of dominance, subordination, or leadership/submission in the relationship of the sexes.⁷⁰ Rather,
2 these very arguments affirm the opposite of what is claimed by those who oppose ordination of women.
3 The man and woman before the Fall are presented as fully equal in rank, with no hint of a hierarchy of
4 nature or relationship or function, no leadership/submission ranking between husband and wife. Gilbert
5 Bilezikian has summarized well:

6 Conspicuously absent in Genesis 1–2 is any reference to divine prescriptions for man to
7 exercise authority over woman. Due to the importance of its implications, had such an
8 authority structure been part of the creation design, it would have received clear
9 definition along with the two other authority mandates [God’s sovereignty over humans,
10 and human’s dominion over all the earth]. The total absence of such a commission
11 indicates that it was not a part of God’s intent. Only God was in authority over Adam and
12 Eve. Neither of them had the right to usurp divine prerogatives by assuming authority
13 over each other. Any teaching that inserts an authority structure between Adam and Eve
14 in God’s creation design is to be firmly rejected since it is not founded on the biblical
15 text.⁷¹

16
17 This affirmation of the full equality and mutuality of man and woman in the Gen 2 account of
18 creation is all the more striking when seen in contrast with the other ancient Near Eastern creation
19 accounts which contain no separate narration of the creation of woman. The Genesis creation narratives
20 not only give a detailed account of origins, but at the same time appear to serve as a direct polemic
21 against the mythological creation stories of the ancient Near East.⁷² By its special, lengthy, separate
22 account of the creation of woman in Gen 2, the Bible is unique in ancient Near Eastern literature with its
23 high valuation of woman on an equal par with man.

24 **B. Different Roles for Man and Woman in Creation?**

25 Those who oppose women’s ordination insist that Gen 2 (like Gen 1) depicts different roles for
26 men and women. It is true that the terms “male” and “female” imply biological differences, and an
27 affirmation of the egalitarian relationship of Adam and Eve does not deny their complementarity.⁷³ They
28 were to have no interests independent of each other, and yet each had an individuality in thinking and
29 acting. They were bone of each other’s bone, flesh of each other’s flesh, equal in being and rank, and at
30 the same time they were individuals with differences. As Tribble points out, “oneness does not level life to
31 sameness; it allows for distinctions without opposition or hierarchy.”⁷⁴

32 Some have called attention to the different modes of creation between the man and women—the
33 man’s creation out of the ground, and the woman’s creation out of man—and suggest this may be
34 intimately related to unique differences between the sexes. It is proposed that a man tends to have “an
35 immediate relationship to the world of things” while “the woman is primarily directed to the world of
36 persons.”⁷⁵ However, the divine mandate in Gen 1–2 for both male and female to join in the work of
37 procreation, subduing, having dominion, and tending the garden (Gen 1:28; 2:15), reveals that the sexes
38 are not one-dimensional; both genders are directed to the world of things and the world of relationships.

1 While biological gender differences are acknowledged in Gen 1-2, other differences between the
2 genders are not described. The emphasis of the stories is on a shared equality of nature and status and
3 responsibility. Since the biblical text in Gen 1–2 differentiates between the sexes (male and female) but
4 does not specify certain behaviors that belong exclusively to the male, and others that are exclusively the
5 domain of the female, it seems inappropriate to go beyond the biblical evidence to insist that certain
6 gender-specific “roles” such as “male headship” and “female submission” are part of the creation order.

7 While the text of Gen 1–2 implies complementarity between the sexes, it presents no
8 stereotypical roles that constitute the “essence” of manhood and womanhood respectively. Both genders
9 without differentiation are made in the image of God; both are given the command to be fruitful and
10 multiply; both are commanded to fill the earth and subdue it; both are commanded to have dominion over
11 all the other creatures (Gen 1:27–28). They are equal partners corresponding to each other, with full
12 reciprocity and mutuality, and without hierarchy (Gen 2:18). Any attempt to distill the essence of the
13 “roles” of man and woman respectively from the opening chapters of Genesis is going beyond the
14 revelation of the text.⁷⁶ Complementary wholeness without hierarchy is the portrait of man-woman
15 relationships in Gen 1–2.

16 In fact, the very use of the term “role” by gender hierarchicalists/subordinationists to describe a
17 permanent subordination of women to men is highly problematic. The French word *role* had its origins in
18 regard to the part that an actor played on the theater stage. In the 1930s the word “role” became a key
19 term in the secular humanistic discipline of functional sociology (“role theory”). It was only in the mid-
20 1970s that the term “role” was combined with a new understanding of creation orders, and introduced into
21 the ordination debate by George Knight III, in his book *The New Testament Teaching on the Role*
22 *Relationship of Women and Men.*⁷⁷ Knight, and the many who have since followed his lead, attempt to
23 distinguish between gender equality in person and role differentiation in function. Whereas earlier
24 opponents of women’s ordination simply assumed that women are inferior to men and thus are
25 subordinate to male headship, the new argumentation since the Knight’s book redefines women’s
26 subordinate status based upon role differentiation.

27 Kevin Giles provides an incisive critique of this new kind of argumentation. He points out
28 “Nowhere does the Bible suggest that women and men are simply *acting out* their maleness or femaleness
29 or that apart from procreation there are some tasks given only to men and others only to women. . . . In
30 our very being we *are* differentiated: we are not merely functionally differentiated.”⁷⁸ Giles affirms that
31 “The recently popularized usage of terminology and ideas drawn from the theater and humanistic
32 sociology actually contradicts divine revelation. . . .When conservative evangelicals interpret biblical
33 teaching on women and men in terms of role differentiation, we have to recognize that they are reading

1 into the text something that is not there and that is never mentioned prior to the 1960s. To use their own
2 terminology, they are not being ‘biblical.’”⁷⁹

3 Giles also shows how the use of the term “role” by recent opponents of women’s ordination is not
4 only unbiblical, but also logically flawed. The term “role” by its very definition refers to something
5 transient and secondary, not something part of a person’s essential nature or being. In the theater the
6 actor plays a “role” but is not essentially and permanently the character whose role he takes in the
7 performance. Again, an officer and a private in the army have different roles, based upon training and
8 competence to lead. It is possible for the private to become an officer and for the officer to be demoted.
9 The officer’s leadership role is “not intrinsically connected with who he is. His role is not an essential
10 feature of his personhood.”⁸⁰ By contrast, in the modern debate over women’s ordination, Giles points
11 out that according to subordinationists, “because a woman is a woman, and for no other reason, she is
12 locked into a *permanent* subordinate role, no matter what her abilities or training might be. Who she is
13 determines what she can do; her sexual identity determines her role. The private can assume higher
14 responsibilities, but a woman can never become a leader in the church and can never assume equal
15 responsibility with her husband in the home, simply because she is a woman.”⁸¹

16 Perhaps without realizing it, those who use this argument based upon “role differentiation” have
17 actually recast the term “role” in essential terms; roles are not just functions, but are part of the very
18 essence of the person. “Introducing the sociological term *role* in this argument for the *permanent*
19 *functional* subordination of women does not negate the fact that women because they are women, and for
20 no other reason, are subordinated. . . .Cleverly worded phraseology cannot avoid this fact. If a woman’s
21 role is not essential to her nature or being, then it can change. If it cannot change because it is basic to her
22 nature or being as a woman, then it is not just a role she performs.”⁸² Paul Petersen states the matter
23 concisely: “from the point of semantics, when anyone speaks about an eternal role, it is no longer a role,
24 but describes the very essence and being. . . .Per definition a role cannot be permanent or eternal.”⁸³

25 If “role” is no longer a temporary, secondary feature of being a woman or man, but involves a
26 permanent subordination of women to men because of their very personhood, then “role” is not the
27 appropriate word to describe this situation. It may be a nice-sounding term, but it is misleading, since, as
28 Giles points out, for gender subordinationists “The issue is not *gender roles* but essential *gender*
29 *relations*. God has set men over women because they are women. The word *role* only has the effect of
30 obfuscating this fact.”⁸⁴

31 What those who oppose women’s ordination call “role differentiation” is actually a permanent,
32 hereditary social division based solely upon gender. The dictionary term which best fits this description
33 is “caste.” On the basis of subordinationists’ interpretation of Gen 1-2, viewed through the lens of their
34 assumed understanding of 1 Timothy 2, “half the human race is subordinated to the other half.”

1 According to this interpretation, “in creation God instituted an *unchanging social order* that gives men
2 the leading role in the home and excludes women from leading . . . in church.”⁸⁵ This is nothing less than
3 a caste system in which there is permanent subordination of the female gender to the male gender.
4 Against this and all other caste systems Ellen White’s words apply: “No distinction on account of
5 nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one
6 family by creation, and all are one through redemption.” (COL 386). “Caste is hateful to God. He ignores
7 everything of this character.” (CC 291)

8 Evangelical subordinationists often support the permanent subordination of women to men by
9 analogy to the Trinity, in which they argue there is found the subordination of the Son to the Father.
10 Many Adventists have taken over this evangelical analogy between man-woman relationships and the
11 Trinity in their opposition to women’s ordination. But what they apparently have failed to recognize is
12 that the analogy only works if one takes the common evangelical position on the Trinity, i.e., that it
13 involves the *eternal subordination* of the Son. The analogy is then straightforward: just as the Son was
14 *eternally* subordinated to the Father, so women are *permanently* (from creation) subordinated to men in
15 the home and in the church. Ironically, Adventists who use this argument of analogy to the Trinity do not
16 normally accept that the Son was *eternally* subordinate to the Father, but see Him as only *economically*
17 subordinate in the context of solving the sin problem (in the Incarnation),⁸⁶ since they realize that the idea
18 of eternal subordination is not biblical and ultimately undermines the doctrine of the Trinity. Nonetheless
19 they seek to retain the analogy, when in actuality the analogy without the *eternal* subordination of the Son
20 undercuts the very argument they are trying to make. Logically, if Christ’s subordination to the Father is
21 only temporary (in the context of the sin problem) and is changeable, then by analogy the subordination
22 of women to men is only temporary (in the context of the Fall), and is changeable.

23 Those who oppose women’s ordination often support the hierarchical interpretation of gender
24 relations in Gen 1-2 by referring to the “order” in heaven in which there is hierarchy even before sin
25 entered the universe: there were the “commanding angels” (Ellen White, GC 646) and others who
26 followed the commands (PP 37). According to this argument, if such hierarchy is appropriate in heaven
27 before sin, why should it not be appropriate in Eden between Adam and Eve before the Fall? In response
28 to this argument, I affirm that Scripture does indeed recognize hierarchy on earth before the Fall: Adam
29 and Eve, as co-equal vicegerents of God, were made “a little lower than God [LXX, angels]” (Ps 8:5); and
30 they both had dominion over the rest of the animal kingdom, who were “lower orders of being” (PP 45).
31 (However, as I will argue later/below, this was actually an “inverse hierarchy,” one of servanthood.) But
32 this hierarchy from angels to humans to the lower orders of animals, did not involve a hierarchy among
33 human beings themselves.

1 This is not to deny that if humans had not sinned, and the human family had expanded into a
2 developed society, there would no doubt have been representatives chosen for various positions of
3 responsibility, in parallel to the ordered society of the angels. But such “ordering” of society would not
4 have been based upon a “caste” system, in which persons, simply by virtue of their gender, without regard
5 for their aptitude and training, were stratified into different levels of society in which women were
6 subordinated to men.

7 We do not have much information in inspired sources regarding the “order” among the angels in
8 heaven before the Fall, but the evidence available leads to the conclusion that such heavenly order is
9 based, not upon a permanent and hereditary “caste” system, but rather, angels were chosen for their
10 various duties because of their particular aptitude and skill for the tasks assigned, and those positions of
11 responsibility could change over time. See, for example, the description of the qualities such as wisdom
12 and musical talent that fitted Lucifer for his post of covering cherub and choir leader (Ezek 28:12-14; 1SP
13 28). Moreover, Lucifer was specifically installed in this position and was removed from it when he
14 sinned (Ezek 28:14, 16), and his position was replaced by Gabriel who then became “next in rank to the
15 Son of God” (DA 232).

16 While order among humans, involving certain persons in representative positions of
17 responsibility, would probably have developed eventually had the first pair not experienced the Fall, order
18 did not necessarily involve hierarchy (or inverted hierarchy) in the beginning. Egalitarian marriages
19 today testify to the possibility of an ordered marriage relationship without hierarchical structures (I am
20 experiencing such a relationship!) And such egalitarian gender relationship is that which is described in
21 Gen 1-2 as part of the creation order. Some argue that “every ship must have a captain” and in parallel
22 therefore the couple in Eden had to have one “in charge.” But the first family was not a ship! Even
23 today, many business firms pride themselves in being established and run by senior partners who are fully
24 equal, with no hierarchy between them. (My uncle ran such a successful CPA business in full partnership
25 with another accountant.) According to Gen 1-2, such was the full partnership of equals without
26 hierarchy in the Garden of Eden before the Fall.

27 **C. Mutual Submission of Husband and Wife from the Beginning**

28 With regard to marriage, the complementarity established by God involves a *mutual* submission
29 involving both husband and wife as the divine ideal both before and after the Fall. This is apparent from
30 Gen 2:24: “therefore [‘*al-ken*], a man leaves [‘*azab*] his father and his mother and cleaves [*dabaq*] to his
31 wife, and they become one flesh [*basar ekhad*].”⁸⁷ The introductory “therefore” [‘*al-ken*] indicates that
32 the relationship of Adam and Eve is upheld as the pattern for all future human sexual relationships, and
33 not just an etiological insertion to explain the common legal custom at the time of Moses. Robert Lawton
34 insightfully points out, as I will expand further below, that it was *not* the normal custom in OT patriarchy

1 for the man to leave his father and mother, but rather for the woman to leave. Therefore, the Hebrew
2 imperfect verb in this context is best taken not as a frequentative imperfect “he [typically] leaves” but as a
3 potential imperfect “he *should* leave.” The verse thus expresses “a description of divine intention rather
4 than of habitually observed fact.”⁸⁸ What is particularly striking in v. 24 is that it is the *man* who is to
5 “leave” (*‘azab*). It was a matter of course in the patriarchal society at the time Gen 2 was penned that the
6 wife left her mother and father. But for the husband to “leave” was revolutionary!⁸⁹ In effect, the force of
7 this statement is that both are to leave—to cut loose from those ties that would encroach upon the
8 independence and freedom of the relationship.

9 Likewise, it is the *man* who is called upon to “cleave, cling” (*dabaq*) to his wife. This Hebrew
10 term implies a strong voluntary attachment involving affectionate loyalty, and is often used in the OT to
11 describe Israel’s “cleaving/clinging” to the Lord.⁹⁰ It was expected in a patriarchal society that the
12 woman would have such attachment to her husband, and hence the force of this statement is that *both* man
13 and woman are to “cleave” or “cling” to each other. Reciprocal “clinging” implies a mutual submission
14 without hierarchy—a self-sacrificing love where the husband identifies himself with his wife so as to
15 provide for her needs, and vice versa (as Paul recognizes in his citation and elaboration of the verse in
16 Eph 5:21-31). Finally, in the context of the marriage covenant, the husband and wife are become “one
17 flesh” (*basar ekhad*). This expression, like the “leaving” and “cleaving” in Gen 2:24, implies a mutual
18 submission. It indicates a oneness and intimacy in the total relationship of the whole person of the
19 husband to the whole person of the wife, a harmony and union with each other in all things.

20 This mutual submission of husband and wife parallels what we have seen above regarding the
21 Godhead—a mutual submission of Equals as They deliberated together regarding creation of humankind
22 (Gen 1:28), and in submission together as They entrusted Their dominion over this earth into the hands of
23 humanity. Mutual submission in the symmetrical (non-hierarchical) relationship of Adam and Eve before
24 the Fall leaves no room for an asymmetrical (hierarchical) “servant leadership” on the part of the man
25 over the woman as a creation ordinance.⁹¹

26 **D. Man and Woman as Priests in the pre-Fall Eden Sanctuary**

27 Genesis 2 not only portrays Adam and Eve as equal partners in mutual submission in their
28 marriage relationship; the narrative also indicates that both of them served as priests officiating in the pre-
29 Fall sanctuary worship services in the presence of Yahweh. According to Gen 2:15, the first couple were
30 to “tend” [*‘abad*] and “keep” [*shamar*] the garden. These terms literally mean to “serve” and “guard”
31 respectively, and imply more than that Adam and Eve were entrusted with a responsible stewardship of
32 serving and protecting their environment. There is abundant textual evidence that links Gen 1-2 with the
33 biblical sanctuaries mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, indicating that the pre-Fall garden of Eden is to be
34 regarded as the original sanctuary on earth, a copy of the original heavenly sanctuary, and in parallel with

1 the later Mosaic sanctuary and Israelite temples. The evidence for this conclusion has been documented
 2 by scores of biblical scholars.⁹² Note the following table for a few examples of the more than thirty
 3 textual parallels that have been recognized:

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Table 1: Intertextual Parallels between Earthly Eden and Other Biblical Sanctuaries

Intertextual Parallels	The Earthly Garden of Eden Sanctuary	Other Biblical Sanctuaries
1. “Eden.”	“Garden of Eden” (Gen 2:8, 10, 15),	“Eden, the Garden of God,” identified with the heavenly sanctuary (Ezek. 28:13)
2. Orientation	Eastward (Gen 2:8)	Eastward (Exod 27:13–16; 36:20–30; 38:13–18; 1 Kgs 7:21; Ezek 47:1).
3. Divine “planting.”	“Planting” (<i>nata</i> ’) of the garden (Gen 2:8)	“Planting” (<i>nata</i> ’) at the place of His sanctuary (Exod 15:17; cf. 1 Chr 17:9)
4. “In the midst.”	Tree of life “in the midst” (<i>betok</i>) of the garden (Gen 2:9)	the living presence of God “in the midst” (<i>betok</i>) of His people in the sanctuary (Exod 25:8)
5. God “walking around.” (only two times in Scripture)	God “walking around” (<i>Hithpael</i> of <i>halak</i>) in the garden (Gen 3:8)	God “walking around” (<i>Hithpael</i> of <i>halak</i>) in the midst of the camp of Israel (Deut 23:14 [Heb. 15]).
6. Flowing river.	River flowing from the central location in the Garden (Gen 2:10)	River flowing from the sanctuary shown to Ezekiel (Ezek 47:1–12) and from the throne of God as shown to John (Rev 22:1).
7. Precious metals	Bdellium, and onyx, and gold (Gen 2:12)	Bdellium (Num 11:7), onyx (Exod 25:7, 28:9, 20; 35:9, 27; 39:6, 13); and gold throughout (Exod 25:9, etc.).
8. Three spheres of ascending holiness.	The earth, the garden, and the midst of the garden.	The court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place
9. Series of verbal parallels.	“Saw [<i>ra’ah</i>] . . . made [<i>’asah</i>] . . . finished [<i>kalah</i>]. . . blessed [<i>qadash</i>]” (Gen 1:31; 2:1; 2:2; 2:3)	“Saw [<i>ra’ah</i>]. . . made [<i>’asah</i>] . . . finished [<i>kalah</i>] . . . blessed [<i>qadash</i>]” (Exod 39:43; 39:32; 40:33; 39:43)
10. Six + Sabbath.	Creation in six days (each introduced by the clause “And God said”), followed by the seventh day Sabbath (Gen 1:3—2:3)	Instructions for construction of the tabernacle (Exod 25–31) in divided into six sections (introduced by the phrase “The Lord said to Moses”), followed by the seventh section dealing with the Sabbath.

11. Portrayals of the natural world.	Plants and animals of creation week.	Lilies and other flowers, palm trees, oxen, lions of the Solomonic temple (1 Kgs 6:29, 32, 35; 7:26, 29, 36), artistic portrayals representative of the return to the lost Garden, the earth's original sanctuary.
12. "Light" of the menorah.	The term for "light" (Heb <i>ma'or</i> , "lamp") used to describe the sun and moon in Gen 1:14-16; they are "lamps" of the Eden sanctuary.	This term is found elsewhere in the Pentateuch <i>only</i> for the light of the menorah in the Holy Place of the sanctuary (Exod 25:6; 35:14; 39:27, etc.).

1 The suffusion of sanctuary language in Gen 1–2 leads inescapably to the conclusion that the
2 Garden of Eden is to be regarded as the original sanctuary on this earth. In light of this sanctuary context,
3 the paired use of the two terms *'abad* and *shamar* to describe the work of Adam and Eve in the Eden
4 garden is extremely significant. These two words, when used together elsewhere in the OT in the setting
5 of the sanctuary, function as a technical expression for the service of the priests and Levites in the
6 sanctuary (see Num 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:3-7). (A modern parallel to understand how OT "intertextuality"
7 works would be the typing into "Google Search" the three key words "serve" and "guard" and
8 "sanctuary," and being led directly to the work of priests and Levites as the only place where these term
9 intersect.) Thus, the use of this paired terminology in the setting of the Eden Garden sanctuary clearly
10 implies a sacerdotal function for the first couple in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve are portrayed as
11 creative co-participants, spiritual intimates, yes, priests, in the sacred worship service of the Eden
12 sanctuary! This is in harmony with the original (pre-sin) worship function of the heavenly sanctuary
13 ("Eden, the Garden of God," Ezek 28:13), where Lucifer, adorned with the same stones as the High Priest
14 in the later earthly sanctuary, apparently served a similar priestly function as worship leader (Ezek 28:13-
15 14). And it is also in harmony with the heavenly sanctuary's return to its primary worship function after
16 the windup of the Great Controversy, with the redeemed serving as priests in that Temple (Rev 5:10;
17 7:15; 20:6; 21:3).⁹³

18 Note also that the work of the priest in the OT earthly sanctuary after sin involved the functions
19 of leader in the worship service (Num 18:7; cf. Num 6:23-27), teacher (Deut 33:10), and judge or
20 decision-maker (Deut 19:16), fully appropriate to a pre-Fall context. The OT priest was also an offerer of
21 sacrifices (Lev 1-7). Before sin, there were of course no bloody sacrifices or intercession because of sin,
22 but offering "sacrifices of praise" (Heb 13:15), along with other functions of a priest, was certainly
23 appropriate. Furthermore, even the role of priest as mediator was appropriate in a context before sin. A
24 mediator's function is not just in connection with solving the sin problem. A mediator is a "go-between."
25 According to John 1:1-3, "in the beginning" at creation Christ was the "Word." A word is that which
26 "goes-between" someone's mouth and another person's ear so that there can be communication between

1 the two parties. In a separate study of Prov 8:22-31 and other OT passages, I have shown that from the
2 beginning of creation Christ served as the “Angel [Messenger] of the Lord,” the “Go-between” or
3 Mediator between an infinite God and finite creatures.⁹⁴ Ellen White may be referring to this larger role of
4 Christ’s mediation when she writes: “Christ is mediating in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds
5 is also preserved by His mediatorial work.” (MYP 254). Adam and Eve likewise were mediators, “go-
6 between,” representing God to the creatures over which they had dominion. Ellen White writes: “He
7 [Adam] was placed, as God’s representative, over the lower orders of being. They cannot understand or
8 acknowledge the sovereignty of God, yet they were made capable of loving and serving man.” (PP 45.)

9 From the very beginning, before the Fall, woman, as well as man, is welcomed into the priestly
10 function in the Eden sanctuary, to be a leader in worship and to serve in other priestly functions alongside
11 her male counterpart.

12 **E. The Nature of Human Dominion/Authority: Inverted Hierarchy**

13 It is not enough to recognize that Adam and Eve functioned as priests in the Eden Sanctuary
14 before the Fall. We must also inquire as to the nature and status of their priestly work. Did this pre-Fall
15 priesthood give them authoritative leadership status? In order to answer this question, we must revisit the
16 dominion of humans over the earth assigned to them in Gen 1:26. Reading this passage from the
17 standpoint of our modern concepts of authority in the context of fallen humanity, we might be tempted to
18 see this “dominion” or rulership as one of hierarchical power/authority on the part of humans to subject
19 the rest of creation according to their will and wishes. However, the dominion given in Gen 1:26 is
20 further defined in Gen 2:15, where God challenges our post-Fall concepts of rulership hierarchy. God
21 puts the human in the Garden to *‘abad* and to *shamar* the Garden. These words literally mean “to serve”
22 and “to guard.” Although the term *‘abad* in other creation passages (Gen 2:5 and 3:23) has the primary
23 meaning of “to till/work [the soil]” (with the addition of the word “ground”), in 2:15 (without the use of
24 “ground”) it is probable that the connotation of “serving” is especially present. As Victor Hamilton
25 writes: “The word we have translated as *dress* is *‘abad*, the normal Hebrew verb meaning ‘to serve.’ So
26 again the note is sounded that man is placed in the garden as servant. He is there not to be served but to
27 serve.”⁹⁵ To state it differently, “Man is to function as the servant leader in the inverse hierarchy.”⁹⁶

28 The inverted hierarchy of humans in their servant leadership over the earth also applies—with
29 even greater force—to the kind of spiritual leadership envisaged for Adam and Eve in their role as priests
30 in the Eden sanctuary. The Eden priesthood is a role of *‘abad*—servanthood! Adam and Eve were not to
31 exercise the hierarchical authority of “chain of command,” but to display an inverted hierarchy of
32 servanthood. Such a model of servant leadership—involving both man and woman—is the model set
33 forth from the beginning as God’s ideal in the setting of public worship. As we have pointed out above,
34 this servant pattern of submission is already modeled by the Godhead in the creation.

IV. Genesis 3: Man-Woman Relationships after the Fall

When God comes to the Garden after Adam and Eve sinned, he initiates an encounter that constitutes nothing less than a “legal process,” an investigative trial judgment conducted by God.”⁹⁷ God begins the legal proceedings with an interrogation of the “defendants,” and the defensive and accusatory responses by Adam and Eve (vv. 9–14) indicate the rupture in inter-human (husband-wife) and divine-human relationships that has occurred as a result of sin. Following the legal interrogation and establishment of guilt, God pronounces the sentence in the form of curses (over the serpent and the ground, vv. 14, 17) and judgments (for the man and the woman, vv. 16–19).

The judgment pronounced upon the woman is of particular concern in this paper (v. 16):

- (a) I will greatly multiply your pain [*itsabon*, hard labor] in childbearing;
- (b) in pain [*itsabon*, hard labor] you shall bring forth your children;
- (c) yet your desire [*teshuqah*] shall be for your husband,
- (d) and he shall rule [*mashal*] over you.

The meaning of the last two enigmatic lines (v. 16c and d) of the divine sentence is crucial for a proper understanding of the nature of God’s provision for man-woman relationships after the Fall.

A. Gen 3:16: Divine Judgment and the Relationship between Adam and Eve: Major Views

Six major views have been advanced for the interpretation of this passage. The first, and perhaps the most common, position maintains that the submission⁹⁸ of woman to man is a creation ordinance, God’s ideal from the beginning (Gen 1–2). This position holds that part of the Fall consisted in the violation of this ordinance, with Eve seeking to get out from under Adam’s leadership and Adam failing to restrain her (Gen 3). As a result of sin, Gen 3:16 is a predictive *description* of the continued distortion of God’s original design with the man’s exploitive subjugation of woman and/or woman’s desire to control the man (or her “diseased” desire to submit to his exploitations).⁹⁹

The second major interpretation also understands the hierarchical gender relationship (submission of woman to the leadership of man) as a creation ordinance (Gen 1–2), and agrees that at the Fall this creation ordinance was violated (Gen 3). But according to this second view, Gen 3:16 is as a divine *prescription* that the man must “rule”—i.e., exercise his “godly headship”—to restrain the woman’s desire, i.e., her urge get out from under his leadership and control/manipulate him.¹⁰⁰

The third major interpretation also views the hierarchical relationship between the sexes as a creation ordinance, and agrees that at the Fall this ordinance was somehow violated. But this third view sees in Gen 3:16 not a distortion but a *divine reaffirmation* of the submission of woman to the leadership of man, provided as a blessing and comfort to the woman in her difficulties as a mother.¹⁰¹

1 The fourth major view contends that the subordination or subjection of woman to man did not
 2 exist before the Fall; the mention of such a subordination/subjection in Gen 3:16 is only a *description of*
 3 *the evil consequences of sin*—the usurpation of authority by the man and/or the woman’s desire to rule or
 4 be ruled. These evil consequences are not a prescription of God’s will for man-woman relationships after
 5 sin, and are to be removed by the Gospel.¹⁰²

6 The fifth major position concurs with the fourth view that God’s original design was for an
 7 egalitarian relationship between the sexes (Gen 1–2), and the Fall brought a rupture in their relationships.
 8 But in the fifth view, Gen 3:16 is to be understood as *prescriptive* and not just descriptive: this verse
 9 presents the husband’s leadership and the wife’s (voluntary) submission as God’s normative pattern for
 10 the marriage relationship after the Fall.¹⁰³

11 The final (sixth) view agrees with views four and five that God’s original plan was an egalitarian
 12 gender relationship. It also agrees with the view three that Gen3:16c–d is a blessing and not a curse, but
 13 differs in denying that subordination/subjection of woman to man is a creation ordinance. This position
 14 argues, by various means of translation and interpretation, that even in Gen 3 *no gender hierarchy*
 15 *(leadership/submission) is either prescribed or described*.¹⁰⁴

16 The various major interpretations of Gen 3:16 in its larger context may be summarized in the
 17 following chart:

18 **Chart 2: Man-Woman Relationships in the Beginning (Gen 1–3)—Major Views**

Creation (Gen 1–2)	Fall (Gen 3)	Divine Pronouncement Concerning Eve (Gen 3:16)
1. Hierarchical (submission of woman to male leadership)	Violation of male-female hierarchy and/or ruptured relationships	<i>Description</i> of the perversion of hierarchical relationships (woman seeks to control man and/or man exploitively subjugates woman)
2. Hierarchical (submission of woman to male leadership)	Violation of male-female hierarchy and/or ruptured relationships	<i>Prediction</i> that woman would desire to get out from under man’s authority, and <i>prescription</i> that man must exercise his “godly headship” to restrain her urge to control him.
3. Hierarchical (Submission of woman to male leadership)	Violation of male-female hierarchy and/or ruptured relationships	<i>Reaffirmation</i> of original hierarchical roles as a continued divine blessing, or a statement of continued subjugation of woman by man

4. Egalitarian (Full equality with no submission of woman to male leadership)	Ruptured relationship between the sexes	<i>Predictive description</i> of the consequences of sin—man usurps authority over the woman—which “curse” is to be removed by the Gospel with return to egalitarianism
5. Egalitarian (Full equality with no submission of woman to male leadership)	Ruptured relationship between the sexes	<i>Permanent prescription</i> of divine will in order to preserve harmony in the home after sin: wife’s submission to her husband’s leadership
6. Egalitarian (Full equality with no submission of woman to male leadership)	Egalitarian relationship continues	<i>Blessing</i> of equality (no hierarchy of leadership/submission) in the midst of a sinful world and its challenges

1

2 **B. The Meaning of Gen 3:16: Evaluation of Views and Evidence in the Text**

3 In assessing the true intent of Gen 3:16, I must immediately call into question the first three
4 interpretations which proceed from the assumption that a gender hierarchy existed before the Fall (views
5 one, two and three). My analysis of Gen 1–2 has led to the conclusion that no such submission of woman
6 to man’s leadership was present in the beginning.

7 Nor is there any indication of male leadership over the woman, and female submission to the man
8 in the account of the Temptation and Fall (Gen 3:1–7). The temptation of the woman by the serpent is
9 presented in vv. 1–6. In this passage the woman’s response to the serpent reveals her to be intelligent,
10 perceptive, informed, and articulate, contrary to frequent assertions in the past that she was feeble-
11 minded, weak, and naive.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the temptation to which both Adam and Eve yielded was the
12 temptation to become like God—to exercise moral autonomy in acting against the express command of
13 God. God specifically states what the sin of both of them was— not the violation of a man/woman
14 leadership/submission principle, but eating from the tree from which he commanded them not to eat
15 (3:11). As Hess aptly puts it, “The challenge of the snake is not directed against the man’s authority. It is
16 against God’s authority.”¹⁰⁶ While the passage may well allow for the interpretation that Eve wandered
17 from Adam’s immediate presence, lingered at the forbidden tree, and later offered the fruit to her
18 husband,¹⁰⁷ there is no warrant in this text for maintaining that their sin consisted of the woman getting
19 out from under the authoritative leadership of her husband, or of her husband failing to exercise his
20 “godly headship” to restrain her. Marrs rightly concludes: “the woman’s sin in 3:1–7 has nothing to do
21 with usurping the man’s authority; rather, it involves exalting herself above the Creator to determine for
22 herself right and wrong.”

1 Marris also correctly points out that God’s statement to the man in 3:17 (“Because you have
2 listened to the voice of your wife”) does not imply that the man had failed to control his wife or had
3 abdicated his leadership role. Rather, it is simply “an acknowledgment of the man’s decision to follow his
4 wife’s direction rather than God’s command.”¹⁰⁸ The sin of Adam was not in “listening to” or “obeying”
5 his wife *per se*, but in “obeying” his wife *rather than* or *in opposition to* God’s explicit command not to
6 eat of the fruit. Of course, this is not to deny that there is “strength in numbers” in withstanding
7 temptation, and Eve made herself more vulnerable to the serpent’s attack by separating from her husband.
8 But such fortification against temptation by partners standing together is just as applicable in a totally
9 egalitarian relationship (which I see here before the Fall) as in a hierarchical one (which I do not find in
10 the narrative before Gen 3:16).

11 Many Adventist opponents of women’s ordination have used the following quotation from Ellen
12 White to attempt to prove that Eve’s sin consisted in seeking to get out from under the authority of her
13 husband. In the context of interpreting Gen 3, Ellen White writes:

14 Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband's side in her Eden home; but, like restless modern
15 Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than that which God had
16 assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it. A similar
17 result will be reached by all who are unwilling to take up cheerfully their life duties in accordance
18 with God's plan. In their efforts to reach positions for which He has not fitted them, many are
19 leaving vacant the place where they might be a blessing. In their desire for a higher sphere, many
20 have sacrificed true womanly dignity and nobility of character, and have left undone the very
21 work that Heaven appointed them. (PP 59).
22

23 A careful examination of the immediate context of this passage makes clear that the “higher
24 sphere” which Eve hoped to enter was to be *like God*, not to get out from under her husband’s headship.
25 The sphere which God had assigned her was to be an equal partner “by her husband’s side,” not to be in
26 submission to her husband’s male headship: this is made clear in the previous paragraph (PP 58): “In the
27 creation God had made her the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God--in harmony with His
28 great law of love--they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord,
29 and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the
30 one or the other.” The asymmetrical submission of one to the other came only after the Fall! Likewise,
31 Ellen White’s reference to “restless modern Eves” is not describing their attempts to usurp male headship
32 in the home or church, but rather describes any attempt on their part to “reach positions for which He has
33 not fitted them.” This principle applies equally to men as to women, as one aspires to a position that
34 he/she does not have the necessary preparation for filling, or abandons other work God has given him/her
35 to do in attempts to advance in career or status.

36 Neither does the argument have persuasive power that after the Fall God approached and
37 addressed the man first because the man was in a position of leadership over his wife.¹⁰⁹ God questions

1 the man first for a number of reasons that are apparent in the text: (1) A primary reason no doubt is that
2 the man was created first and the first one to have received the command not to eat from the fruit of the
3 forbidden tree (2:17), and since he had been the one directly and personally warned, it was natural for him
4 to be the one God would approach first. But such choice in no way implies pre-Fall male leadership over
5 his wife. This is clear because, (2) the man clearly is not approached by God on behalf of his wife, but
6 solely on his own behalf, since the personal pronoun of God's question in v. 9 is singular, not plural:
7 "Where are you [singular]?" (3) In the dialogue between God and the man, the man does not function as
8 the woman's overseer; in answer to God's questioning he explains only his own behavior, not that of the
9 woman, and instead of being her spokesperson, he is her accuser. (4) The woman is summoned to give
10 her own testimony concerning her behavior, and answers directly on behalf of herself. (5) The
11 interrogation of vv. 9–13 proceeds in chiastic (reverse) order from that in which the characters in the
12 narrative are introduced in vv. 1–8, with God in the center of the structure (this is in harmony with an
13 overarching chiastic structure of the entire chapter,¹¹⁰ and with another reversal of order in vv. 14–19).
14 (6) In this legal trial investigation, God must examine the witnesses one by one to demonstrate their
15 individual guilt; the man blames the woman, who then naturally in turn is put on the witness stand for
16 divine interrogation. (7) The answers of both man and woman, with their blame of others (the woman and
17 the snake respectively), reveals that "sin's breakdown of the creation order was not an abdication of
18 divinely instituted hierarchy but the loss of loving harmony between the man and the woman."¹¹¹ Paul
19 Borgman states it well, "That no sort of one-way submission could be part of the Ideal Marriage is
20 underscored by what is lost."¹¹² I conclude that those espousing views 1–3 who argue for implications of
21 hierarchy from Gen 3:1–13 are reading into the text what does not exist in the chapter, just as they have
22 done for Gen 1–2.

23 I also find that view four (that Gen 3:16 is only descriptive, and not in any way intended by God)
24 is unsatisfactory, despite its popularity, because it fails to take seriously the judgment/punishment context
25 of the passage, and the nature of this judgment/punishment as indicated by the text. As I have already
26 noted, Gen 3:16 comes in a legal trial setting, a "legal process," a "trial punishment by God,"¹¹³ and v. 16
27 is thus not just a predictive description but a divine sentence involving a new element introduced by God.

28 Thus the basic thrust of view five seems correct, even though for reasons described below, I avoid
29 using the term "prescriptive." The divine origin of the judgment upon Eve is underscored by the Hebrew
30 grammar of God's first words in the legal sentencing (Gen 3:16): "I will greatly multiply [*harbâ 'arbeh*,
31 literally, 'multiplying I will multiply,'] . . ." The use of the first person singular "I" refers to the Lord
32 Himself who is pronouncing the judgment, while the Hebrew infinitive absolute followed by the finite
33 verb implies "the absolute certainty of the action."¹¹⁴ God is not merely *informing* the woman of her fate;
34 he is actually pronouncing the juridical sentence introducing the state of affairs announced in Gen 3:16. In

1 the context of the other judgments/punishments of Gen 3, and the use of the generic name for “man” and
2 “woman,” it is clear that the biblical writer intended to indicate that this judgment was not just applicable
3 to the first man and woman, but was to extend beyond to the human race outside the Garden.¹¹⁵

4 It also seems clear that according to Gen 3:16c–d a *change* is instituted in the gender relationships
5 after the Fall. God is not simply re-iterating or reaffirming a relationship that had already existed in the
6 beginning. The intent of v. 16a is unmistakable: “I will greatly multiply your ‘*itsabon* [pain, anguish,
7 (hard) labor].” There was no pain/anguish/hard labor prior to sin. This is announcing a change in
8 conditions, and sets the tone for the parallel changes prescribed in the remainder of the verse.¹¹⁶ This
9 conclusion is confirmed by the judgments/curses upon the serpent and the man—both announcing radical
10 changes from the previous Edenic conditions.

11 Some suggest that the changes inherent in the judgments after the Fall are only quantitative, and
12 not qualitative, and actually parallel pre-existing conditions before the Fall. According to this argument,
13 (1) woman already had the capacity to give birth before the Fall; this is only now rendered painful; (2) the
14 man already labored in agriculture; it now becomes hard labor; and (3) in the same way, male headship
15 was already in place before the Fall, but now only is especially emphasized. But such argument fails to
16 take into account the actual parallels/contrasts, and totally overlooks the fourth ultimate judgment—of
17 death as a result of sin. The true contrasts move from complete absence of conditions before the Fall to
18 their presence after the Fall: (1 and 2) from no pain or hard labor (of both man and woman) to pain and
19 hard labor; (3) from no hierarchy (no male headship) to hierarchy in man-woman relationships; and (4)
20 from no death to the inevitability of death.

21 The changes in Gen 3:16c–d definitely involve the subjection/submission of the wife to the
22 husband. The force of the last line (v. 16d) is unavoidable: “he [your husband]¹¹⁷ shall rule over you.” The
23 verb *mashal* in this form in v. 16d definitely means “to rule” (and not “to be like” or “to be irresistible” as
24 some have suggested) and definitely implies submission/subjection.¹¹⁸ At the same time, the verb *mashal*
25 “rule” employed in Gen 3:16 is not the same verb used to describe humankind’s rulership over the
26 animals in Gen 1:26, 28. In the latter passages, the verb is *radah* “to tread down, have dominion over,”
27 not *mashal*. In the Genesis accounts a careful distinction is maintained between humankind’s dominion
28 over the animals and the husband’s “rule” over his wife. Furthermore, although the verb *mashal* does
29 consistently indicate submission, subjection, or dominion in Scripture, “the idea of tyrannous exercise of
30 power does not lie in the verb.”¹¹⁹ In fact, there is a number of passages where *mashal* is used with the
31 connotation of servant-leadership, to “comfort, protect, care for, love.”¹²⁰ In later usages of *mashal* in
32 Scriptural narratives (e.g., the time of Gideon), the people of Israel are eager to have someone to “rule”
33 (*mashal*) over them (Judg 8:22), and the term *mashal* describes the rulership of Yahweh and the future
34 Messiah.¹²¹ Thus *mashal* is predominantly a concept of blessing, not curse.

1 The semantic range of the verb *mashal* thus makes it possible to understand the divine sentence in
2 v. 16 as involving not only punishment but promised blessing, just as the sentence pronounced upon the
3 serpent and man included an implied blessing in the curse/judgment.¹²² As Cassuto puts it, “The decrees
4 pronounced by the Lord God mentioned here are not exclusively *punishments*; they are also, and chiefly,
5 *measures taken for the good of the human species* in its new situation.”¹²³ This also fits the pattern of Gen
6 1–11 as a whole where each sequence involving divine judgment was also mitigated by grace.¹²⁴

7 That the element of grace/blessing is especially emphasized in this verse appears to be confirmed
8 by recognizing the same synonymous parallelism between v. 16c and v. 16d as occurs between v. 16a and
9 v. 16b.¹²⁵ The divine sentence upon Eve concerning her husband’s servant-leadership is shown to be a
10 blessing by its placement in synonymous parallelism with Eve’s “desire” for her husband. The meaning of
11 the Hebrew word *teshuqah* is “strong desire, yearning,”¹²⁶ and not, has been suggested, “attractive,
12 desirable”¹²⁷ nor “turning [away].”¹²⁸ This term appears only three times in Scripture, and its precise
13 connotation in Gen 3:16 is illuminated by its only other occurrence in a context of man-woman
14 relationship, i.e., Song 7:11 (English v. 10). In this verse, the Shulamite bride joyfully exclaims, “I am my
15 beloved’s, and his *desire* [*teshuqah*] is for me.” As will be argued below, this passage is in all probability
16 written as an intertextual commentary on Gen 3:16. Along the lines of this usage of *teshuqah* in the Song
17 of Songs to indicate a wholesome sexual desire, a desire for intimacy, the term appears to be employed in
18 Gen 3:16c to indicate a blessing accompanying the divine judgment.¹²⁹ A divinely-ordained, intimate
19 (sexual) yearning of wife for husband will serve as a blessing to sustain the union that has been threatened
20 in the ruptured relations resulting from sin.¹³⁰ As Belleville puts it, “The wife’s desire is as God
21 intended—a desire to become ‘one flesh’ with her husband (Gen. 2:24).”

22 Thus, an essential feature of the sixth view of Gen 3:16 (the aspect of divine blessing) also seem
23 to be valid. If Gen 3:16d is seen to be in synonymous parallelism with v. 16c (as v. 16a is with v. 16b),
24 then the emphasis upon promised blessing as well as judgment should also apply to man’s relationship
25 with his wife. The husband’s servant-leadership in the home, even though it grows out of the results of
26 sin, may be regarded as a divine blessing in preserving the harmony and union of the relationship. As is
27 implied in the semantic range of *mashal*, this is to be a servant-leadership of protection, care, and love. In
28 the modern idiom, the husband is to lovingly “take care of” his wife.

29 Gen 3:16c and d together also seem to be a combined blessing that relates to the first part of the
30 verse (v. 16a and b). The conjunction *waw* linking the first two lines of this verse with the last two lines
31 should probably be translated as “yet,” as in some of the modern versions.¹³¹ God pronounces that even
32 though the woman would have difficult “labor” in childbearing—an ordeal that would seem naturally to
33 discourage her from continuing to have relations with her husband—“yet,” God assures her, “your desire
34 shall be for your husband,” and his loving servant-leadership will take care of you even through the

1 roughest times. He will be your “strong umbrella” of protection and care.¹³² The ruptured relationship
2 between husband and wife, indicated in the spirit of blaming by both man and woman immediately after
3 the Fall (Gen 3:12, 13), is to be replaced by reconciliation and mutual love, with the wife resting in her
4 husband’s protective care.

5 At the same time, the synonymous parallelism between v. 16*ab* and v. 16*cd*, as well as the
6 parallelism with vv. 17–19, also reveal that it is not inappropriate for humankind to seek to roll back the
7 curses/judgments and get back as much as possible to God’s original plan. Few would question the
8 appropriateness of taking advantage of advances in obstetrics to relieve unnecessary pain and hard labor
9 during delivery, or of accepting agricultural and technological advances to relieve unnecessary hard labor
10 in farming, or by scientific and medical advances to delay the process of death. In the same way, it is not
11 inappropriate to return as much as is possible to God’s original plan for total egalitarianism (“one flesh,”
12 Gen 2:24) in marriage, while at the same time retaining the validity of the husband servant-leadership
13 principle as it is necessary in a sinful world to preserve harmony in the home. Thus it is appropriate,
14 indeed important, to speak of a divine remedial¹³³ or redemptive¹³⁴ provision, rather than “prescription”
15 (which may to some imply a permanent divine ideal) in these verses. As husbands and wives learn more
16 and more to live in harmony through the infusion of divine grace, there is less and less need to resort to
17 the voluntary submission of the wife to the husband in order to maintain harmony and unity in the home,
18 and a gradual return to egalitarian relationship as before the Fall. As will become apparent later in this
19 study, such movement back toward the egalitarian marriage of pre-Fall Eden is the canonical thrust of the
20 Old Testament.

21 Thus I suggest a seventh interpretation of Gen 3:16, that combines elements of views five and six
22 above. Like view five, there is a *qualified divine sentence announcing the voluntary submission of the*
23 *wife to her husband’s servant-leadership*¹³⁵ *as a result of sin*. This involves, however, not so much a
24 judgment as a *promised blessing* (as suggested in view six) *of divine grace designed to have a*
25 *remedial/redemptive function leading back as much as possible to the original plan of harmony and union*
26 *between equal partners without hierarchy*.

27 Three final points may be underscored with regard to the practical application of this passage
28 today. First, as already alluded to above, although in Gen 3 the husband is assigned the role of “first
29 among equals”¹³⁶ to preserve harmony and union in the marriage partnership, yet this does not contradict
30 the original divine ideal of Gen 1:26–28, that both man and woman are equally called to accountable
31 dominion, sociability and fruitfulness. Nor does it nullify the summary statement of Gen 2:24 regarding
32 the nature of the relationship between husband and wife. Gen 2:24 is clearly written in such a way as to
33 indicate its basis in the pre-Fall ideal (“For this reason,” i.e., what has been described before) and its
34 applicability to the post-Fall conditions. God’s ideal for the nature of sexual relationship after the Fall is

1 still the same as it was for Adam and his equal partner [‘*ezer kenegdo*] in the beginning—to “become one
2 flesh” in non-hierarchical (symmetrical) mutual submission. The divine judgment/blessing in Gen 3:16 is
3 to facilitate the achievement of the original divine design within the context of a sinful world.¹³⁷ The
4 context of Gen 3:16 reveals that it is entirely appropriate for marriage partners to seek to return as much
5 as possible to non-hierarchical egalitarianism in the marriage relationship.

6 Second, the functional behaviors attached to Adam and Eve in the divine judgments of Gen 3
7 correspond to what will be their respective primary concerns in a sinful environment, but do not lock
8 husband and wife into pre-determined, or mutually-exclusive, roles. Even as the divine judgments in Gen
9 3 were given separately to Adam and Eve, and dealt with the aspect of life with which they would have
10 primary concerns, at the same time the judgments of both overlapped with and included each other. Their
11 concerns were not to be mutually exclusive. The divine judgments state what will be true with regard to
12 Eve’s primary concern (childbearing), and what will be true with regard to Adam’s primary concern (food
13 production), but the judgment nowhere limits or pre-determines that these concerns must remain
14 exclusively (or even primarily) the woman’s and the man’s respectively. The context of Gen 3:16 reveals
15 the appropriateness of husbands and wives seeking to return as much as possible to pre-Fall
16 egalitarianism, including equally-shared functions of dominion (work) and fruitfulness (procreation) as
17 described in Gen 1:26–28.¹³⁸

18 Third, the relationship of subjection/submission between Adam and Eve prescribed in v. 16 is not
19 presented as applicable to man-woman role relationships in general. The context of Gen 3:16 is
20 specifically that of marriage: a *wife’s* desire (*teshuqah*) for her own husband and the *husband’s* “rule”
21 (*mashal*) over his own wife. This text describes a *marriage* setting, not a general family or societal or
22 worship setting, and thus the submission of wife to husband prescribed here cannot be broadened into a
23 general mandate subordinating women to men (whether in society or in the church). The *mashal-*
24 *teshuqah* remedial provisions of Gen 3:16 are specifically linked to the woman’s relationship to her own
25 husband, and to the husband’s relationship to his own wife. Because of the poetic parallelism in Gen 3:16
26 between the husband’s “rule” and the wife’s “desire,” if one attempts to broaden the husband’s *mashal*
27 role prescribed in this passage (v. 16*d*) so as to refer to men’s “rule” of women in general (both home and
28 the wider society), then to be faithful to the poetic parallelism it would be necessary to broaden the
29 *teshuqah* of the wife (v. 16*c*) for her husband to include the (sexual) desire of women for men in general,
30 not just their own husband! The latter broadening is obviously not the intent of the passage, and therefore
31 the former cannot be either. Thus, any suggestion of extending the specific marriage-specific provision of
32 Gen 3:16 beyond the husband-wife relationship to become a divinely-prescribed mandate for the
33 leadership of men over women in general is not warranted by the text. As will be shown in the remainder
34 of this paper, the rest of the Old Testament is consistent with this position, upholding the

1 remedial/redemptive *mashal-teshuqah* divine provision for husband and wife as beneficial to preserve the
2 marriage relationship (and ultimately return it to the egalitarian ideal), but not extending *mashal-teshuqah*
3 relationship beyond the marital relationship, and not barring women from roles of servant leadership
4 within the covenant community at large.

5 I find it encouraging to note that Ellen White adopts the basic interpretation I have summarized
6 above:

7 And the Lord said, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." In
8 the creation God had made her the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God--
9 in harmony with His great law of love--they would ever have been in harmony with each
10 other; but sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony
11 preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in
12 transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion,
13 contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was
14 now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles joined in the law of God
15 been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin,
16 would have proved a blessing to them; but man's abuse of the supremacy thus given him
17 has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden. (PP 58-
18 69.)

19
20 When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor
21 superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal. The holy pair were to
22 have no interest independent of each other; and yet each had an individuality in thinking
23 and acting. But after Eve's sin, as she was first in the transgression, the Lord told her that
24 Adam should rule over her. She was to be in subjection to her husband, and this was a
25 part of the curse. In many cases the curse has made the lot of woman very grievous and
26 her life a burden. The superiority which God has given man he has abused in many
27 respects by exercising arbitrary power. Infinite wisdom devised the plan of redemption,
28 which places the race on a second probation by giving them another trial. (3T 484.)

29
30 Ellen White emphasizes the same points as emerge from the biblical text: (1) Before the Fall
31 Adam and Eve were equal "in all things," without hierarchical role distinctions. (2) The hierarchical
32 relationship with asymmetrical "submission on the part of one" came only *after the Fall*. (Note that this is
33 in direct contradiction to the traditional interpretation of 1 Tim 2:12, which sees Gen 3:16 as merely
34 reaffirming the hierarchical headship of Gen 1-2.) (3) The hierarchical relationship was a remedial
35 provision, given by God to Adam and Eve so that "their union could be maintained and their harmony
36 preserved." (4) This remedial arrangement was limited to the marriage relation: Eve "was placed in
37 subjection *to her husband*." Ellen White never broadens this to men-women relations in general in the
38 church. (5) The subjection of the wife to her husband "was part of the curse;" and the "plan of
39 redemption" gave the race an opportunity to reverse the curse and return to the original plan for marriage
40 whenever possible.

41 Ellen White also gives us clear indication as to the reasons why it was Eve who was placed in
42 subjection to her husband, and not the other way around. She says nothing about "male headship" before

1 the Fall; in fact she denies this by pointing to Eve as “in all things” the equal of Adam. Rather, she gives
2 three reasons for Eve’s submission to Adam and not vice versa: (1) “Eve had been the first in
3 transgression;” (2) “she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the
4 divine direction;” and (3) “it was by her solicitation that Adam sinned.” Based upon these three criteria, it
5 would seem reasonable to assume that if *Adam* had been first in transgression, if *he* had fallen into
6 temptation by separating from his companion, and if it was by *his* solicitation that Eve sinned, then,
7 Adam would have been placed in subjection to his wife, and not the other way around.

8 These conclusions regarding gender relations in Gen 1–3 have significant implications for the
9 current Adventist and wider Christian debate over the role of women in the home and in the church.
10 Major concerns of both “egalitarians” and “hierarchicalists” in the modern debate are upheld, and at the
11 same time both groups are challenged to take another look at the biblical evidence. With the
12 “egalitarians” (and against “hierarchicalists”) it can be affirmed that Gen 1–2 presents God’s divine ideal
13 for men and women at creation to be one of equality both in nature and function, with no leadership of the
14 male and no submission of the female to that male leadership. With “hierarchicalists” (and against
15 “egalitarians”) it can be affirmed that God’s provision for harmony and unity *after the Fall* does include
16 the wife’s submission to the servant-leadership of her husband. Against the “hierarchical” position,
17 however, the evidence in Gen 3:16 already points to the implication that the male servant-leadership
18 principle is limited to the relationship between husband and wife. Also against the “hierarchical” position,
19 the evidence of this text points toward a provision which is *qualified by grace*, a temporary,
20 remedial/redemptive provision representing God’s less-than-the-original-ideal for husbands and wives.
21 This implicitly involves a divine redemptive call and enabling power to return as much as possible to the
22 pre-Fall egalitarianism in the marriage relationship, without denying the validity of the servant-leadership
23 principle as it may be needed in a sinful world to preserve unity and harmony in the home. Also against
24 the “hierarchical” position, Gen 1-3 should not be seen as barring women from accepting whatever roles
25 of servant leadership in the believing community (church) or society at large to which they may be called
26 and gifted by the Spirit.

27 Finally, as pointed out above, often common to *both* egalitarians and hierarchicalists is a similar
28 view of authoritative leadership in the church—as a “chain-of-command” top-down hierarchy.
29 Opponents of women’s ordination argue that such authoritative leadership in the church is a male
30 prerogative; proponents urge that women should also have the right to such authoritative leadership
31 offices. Against *both* hierarchicalism and egalitarianism, I find that the biblical data in Gen 1-3 presents a
32 surprising third alternative, of inverted hierarchy, in which servanthood and submission on the part of
33 leaders—following the servanthood/submission example of the Godhead Themselves—takes the place of
34 top-down “chain-of-command” leadership. Seventh-day Adventists, with their unique understanding of

1 the issues in the Great Controversy, in which Satan has accused God of not being willing to exercise
2 humility and self-denial,¹³⁹ have a unique opportunity to lift up the divine model of self-denying
3 servanthood before the world. It is hoped that these conclusions, by moving beyond both hierarchialism
4 and egalitarianism to a biblical “third alternative,” may assist in breaking the impasse in the current
5 discussion within Adventism as well as the wider evangelical world.

8 **C. Adam and Eve as Priests of the Eden Sanctuary after the Fall**

9 Already in Genesis 3, strong evidence is given that the temporary, remedial/redemptive provision
10 for husband-leadership in the home did not bar Old Testament women from leadership positions, even
11 priestly office, in the setting of public worship.

12 Adam’s nakedness described in Gen 3:10 obviously refers to more than physical nudity, for
13 Adam depicts himself as still naked even though already covered with fig leaves. The nakedness of Gen 3
14 seems to include a sense of “being unmasked,”¹⁴⁰ a consciousness of guilt, a nakedness of soul. Likewise,
15 God’s clothing of Adam and Eve with skins appears to represent more than a concern for physical
16 covering, more than a demonstration of the “modesty appropriate in a sinful world,”¹⁴¹ though these are
17 no doubt included. The skins from slain animals may be seen to intimate the beginning of the sacrificial
18 system and the awareness of a substitutionary atonement, because of which humans need no longer feel
19 unmasked or ashamed.¹⁴²

20 Moreover, there is strong inter-textual evidence that the clothing of Adam and Eve by God has
21 another significance beyond the aspects suggested above. In connection with our discussion of Gen 2
22 above, we referred to the abundant inter-textual parallels between Gen 1-2 and other biblical sanctuaries
23 showing that the Garden of Eden is to be considered the original sanctuary on earth already before the
24 Fall. The parallels are even more direct and striking for after the Fall, indicating that Gateway to the
25 Garden of Eden is a sanctuary, the precursor to the later biblical sanctuaries. After Adam and Eve are
26 expelled, in their sinful state they are no longer able to meet with God face to face in the Garden’s Holy
27 of Holies. But at the *eastern* entrance to the Garden (Gen 3:24; cf. the *eastern* entrance to the later
28 sanctuaries), now appear cherubim—the beings associated with the ark in the Most Holy Place of the
29 Mosaic sanctuary (Exod 25:18–22). These cherubim, with a flaming sword, are “placed” (Hebrew
30 *shakan*), the same specific Hebrew verb for God’s “dwelling” (*shakan*) among his people (Exod 25:8),
31 and also the same root as for the “sanctuary” (*mishkan*) and the *Shekinah* glory, the visible presence of
32 God in the sanctuary.¹⁴³ In light of this sanctuary language of Gen 3, it is significant to note one more
33 linkage between Eden and the Mosaic sanctuary rituals. Before Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the
34 garden, God “clothed” (*labash, hip’il*) them with “tunics/coats” (*kotnot, pl. of ketonet*), Gen 3:21. As one

1 today enters several key words into an internet search engine to find the point of intersection of these
2 terms, the connection between “sanctuary” and “clothed” and “tunics” leads to one, and only one,
3 convergence of ideas. In a sanctuary setting, the terms *labash* (“clothe”) and *kotnot* (“tunic/coat”) are
4 only found together in describing the clothing (*labash, hip ‘il*) of the priests—Aaron and his sons (Lev
5 8:7, 13; Num 20:28; cf. Exod 28:4; 29:5; 40:14). Robert Oden has demonstrated that this phraseology in
6 Gen 3:21—the combination of “clothing” (*labash, hip ‘il* [causative]) with “tunics/coats” (*kotnot*, pl. of
7 *ketonet*)¹⁴⁴ describes a divine conferral of status upon Adam and Eve.¹⁴⁵ Jacques Doukhan draws out the
8 implication of the divine ceremony in light of its canonical intertextual parallels: “The rare occasions
9 where God clothes humans in the OT always concerned the dressing of priests. . . . Adam and Eve were,
10 indeed, dressed as priests.”¹⁴⁶ The unmistakable and consistent linkage within the Hebrew Bible of this
11 pair of terms—“to clothe” (*labash, hip ‘il*) and “tunics/coats” (*kotnot*)—with the clothing of Israel’s
12 priests, viewed in the larger setting of the Garden of Eden as a sanctuary, clearly points to Adam and
13 Eve’s inauguration as priests in the post-Fall world. By highlighting God’s clothing of Adam and Eve
14 with the skins of sacrificial animals (instead of the fine linen of the later priests), the final canonical form
15 of the text further emphasizes the divine confirmation that Adam and Eve are to be identified as priests,
16 for the skin of the sacrificial animals belonged exclusively to the priests in the Mosaic cultus (Lev 7:8).
17 As Doukhan summarizes, “By bestowing on Adam and Eve the skin of the sin offering, a gift strictly
18 reserved to priests, the Genesis story implicitly recognizes Eve as priest alongside Adam.”¹⁴⁷ At the very
19 beginning of the portrayal of man-woman relations after the Fall, the narrative indicates that women are
20 not barred from serving in a priestly capacity alongside their male counterparts. The far-reaching
21 implications of this conclusion regarding the divinely-ordained priestly status of woman as well as man
22 after the Fall will become more evident as we look at the proceed through the Old Testament and beyond.

23

24

V. The Pattern for Husband-Wife Relations Outside of Eden

25

A. Servant Leadership of the Husband/Father in OT Families

26

Patriarchy. There is little question that in ancient Israel (and throughout the ancient Near East) a
27 patriarchal structuring of society was the accepted norm, and the father was the “titular head of the
28 ancient Israelite family.”¹⁴⁸ The family, not the individual, was the basic unit of society in ancient Israel.
29 In familial/marital situations the father assumed legal responsibility for the household. His formal
30 leadership and legal authority are evidenced in such concerns as family inheritance and ownership of
31 property, contracting marriages for the children, and over-all responsibility in speaking for his family.¹⁴⁹
32 (Compare our modern use of the term “head of household,” which has some of the same legal
33 implications as in biblical times.)

1 The institution of patriarchy (“rule by the father”) was wisely arranged by God in his
2 condescension to the human fallen condition, as a temporary remedial and redemptive measure to
3 bring about unity and harmony and integrity in the home in the midst of a sinful world.
4 Patriarchy, as intended by God, was not evil in itself, but rather one of those God-ordained
5 remedial provisions instituted after the Fall, but not the ultimate divine ideal.¹⁵⁰ The very term
6 “patriarchy” (“rule of the father”), or the OT phrase “father’s house” (*bet ’ab*), emphasizes the
7 role of the *father* to his children, not the *husband* to his wife. As we will observe below in
8 concrete examples throughout OT history, the “patriarchy” of OT times consisted in the *father’s*
9 authority over his children, not his authority over his wife. Furthermore, this was *not* male
10 authority over women, but the authority of one patriarchal figure over all of his descendants, male
11 and female. As will also become apparent below, it is fully compatible with this patriarchal
12 model of leadership to have a *matriarch* functioning in an egalitarian relationship with her
13 husband, the patriarch, and the married children of the patriarch and their spouses likewise
14 functioning in an egalitarian marriage.

15 **Examples of the husband’s servant leadership.** What we have just said about
16 patriarchy does not deny the remedial measure of the husband’s servant leadership in the home
17 and the wife’s respect for her husband, as provided in Gen 3:16. In the narrative of the life of
18 Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:12), Sarah refers to her husband as “my lord” (*adoni*), and elsewhere
19 in Scripture the word *ba’al* (“lord”—both as a verb and a noun) is used to identify the
20 husband.¹⁵¹ However, the meaning of these terms must not be pressed too far, for they often may
21 simply denote polite respect. As I concluded with regard to a husband’s “rule” over his wife in
22 Gen 3:16, the description of husband as “lord” seems to emphasize his position as the “titular
23 head” of the family and not his domination or hierarchical authority over the wife in marriage.¹⁵²
24 The husband has authority to accomplish his task of representing the family, not authority over
25 his wife. This becomes evident in the next section of this paper as Sarah and Abraham and other
26 couples in the OT demonstrate a very egalitarian marriage.

27 The attendant servant leadership and/or legal responsibility and protection given by God as a
28 remedial provision to the husband in Gen 3:16 seems implied in the Mosaic legislation concerning wives
29 who were “under their husbands” in Num 5:19–20: “if you have not gone astray to uncleanness while
30 *under your husband [takhat ’išēk]. . . .* But if you [the wife] have gone astray, though you are *under your*
31 *husband [takhat ’ishek] . . .*” Verse 29 summarizes, “This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, *under her*
32 *husband [takhat ’ishah]*, goes astray and defiles herself.” These verses do not spell out exactly how the
33 wife is “under” her husband, but in context it seems best to supply the expression “under [the legal
34 protection of]” or “under [the legal responsibility of].” In light of the OT evidence that follows in the next

1 section of this paper, which reveals many examples of essentially egalitarian husband-wife relations, to
2 supply the unqualified term “authority”— “under [the authority of]”—as in many English versions, is too
3 strong.

4 **B. Return to the Edenic Ideal of Egalitarian Marriages**

5 Although Gen 3:16 provided a remedial measure of husband (servant) leadership to preserve
6 harmony and unity in the home, the ideal of egalitarian marriages set forth in Gen 2:24 was still the
7 ultimate divine plan for marriage. The OT provides many examples of marriages in which the husband
8 and wife have moved (or are moving) back toward that egalitarian ideal.

9 **Egalitarian marriages of OT husbands and wives.** It came as a surprise to me in my research—
10 actually, building upon the research of my wife!—to discover that the Hebrew patriarchs mentioned in
11 Scripture from the OT “patriarchal” period were regularly portrayed as married to a powerful *matriarch*
12 and their marital relationships were described as functionally non-hierarchical and egalitarian.¹⁵³ From
13 among the twenty-nine named women mentioned in Genesis, let us look more closely here at a couple of
14 examples. First, details of Sarah’s life in the Genesis narratives reveal the high valuation of this matriarch,
15 as she and her husband are portrayed as equal partners.¹⁵⁴ Consider the following: (1) when Sarah and
16 Abraham approach Egypt during a famine, Abraham does not command her to agree to his planned
17 deception, but begs her, with an almost apologetic plea, to say she is his sister (Gen 12:13). (2) God
18 protects Sarah from harm at Pharaoh’s court and again in the household of Abimelech, and returns her to
19 her husband (Gen 12:10–20; 20:1–8). (3) Abraham cohabits with Hagar because Sarah wants him to, and
20 expels Hagar again at Sarah’s insistence (Gen 16:1–4; 21:8–21). (4) God defends Sarah in her demand
21 that Hagar be sent away, telling Abraham “Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice!” (Gen
22 21:12) (5) Sarah is regarded as just as critical to the divine covenant as Abraham himself, with God’s
23 continued insistence (at least after the birth of Ishmael) that it is *Sarah’s* seed that will fulfill the covenant
24 promise (Gen 17:18–19; 21:12).

25 (6) Sarah’s name is changed (from Sarai) just as Abraham (from Abram), with the accompanying
26 promise that “she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her” (Gen 17:16). (7) The
27 literary structure of Gen 17 emphasizes the significance of Sarah by placing her in the middle of the
28 passage concerning circumcision, thus showing that the covenant blessings and promises apply to her—
29 and to women—just as surely as to Abraham and his male descendants.¹⁵⁵ (8) Abraham and Sarah share
30 in the meal preparations when offering hospitality to the three strangers (Gen 18:6–8), showing that there
31 is no distinct division of labor by gender. (9) Sarah is the only matriarch with her age indicated when she
32 dies, as is always seen with the patriarchs (Gen 23:1). (10) Her death and burial at Mamre receives
33 extended attention textually: in the sparse historical style characteristic of the Genesis narrator, it is surely

1 remarkable that an entire chapter is devoted to this event (Gen 23), with no more details given of the last
2 forty-eight years of Abraham's life after Sarah's death.

3 Sarah the matriarch is no wallflower! Janice Nunnally-Cox summarizes how Sarah and Abraham
4 are presented as equal partners:

5 She appears to say what she wants, when she wants, and Abraham at times responds in
6 almost meek obedience. He does not command her; she commands him, yet there seems
7 to be an affectionate bond between them. Abraham does not abandon Sarah during her
8 barrenness, nor does he gain other wives while she lives, as far as we know. The two
9 have grown up together and grown old together, and when Sarah dies, Abraham can do
10 nothing but weep. Sarah is a matriarch of the first order: respected by rulers and husband
11 alike, a spirited woman and bold companion.¹⁵⁶

12
13 To cite a second example, that of Rebekah, note the following:¹⁵⁷ (1) although she is described as
14 physically beautiful (Gen 24:16) Rebekah is not appreciated solely for her outward appearance. (2) Her
15 independence and trust and hospitality parallels that of Abraham: like him she was willing to take the risk
16 of leaving her family and travel to a strange land; like him she showed eagerness to perform her
17 hospitable acts.¹⁵⁸ Most impressive in the Rebekah narratives is the noticeable correspondence of key
18 terms with the Abraham narratives. "It is she [Rebecca], not Isaac, who follows in Abraham's footsteps,
19 leaving the familiar for the unknown. It is she, not Isaac, who receives the blessing given to Abraham
20 (22:17). 'May your offspring possess the gates of their enemies!' (24:60)."¹⁵⁹ (3) The Genesis
21 genealogical record highlights the prominence of Rebekah by listing only her as the one begotten by
22 Bethuel (Gen 22:23), although later the narrative includes her brother Laban (Gen 24:29). The unusual
23 placement of this genealogy immediately after the account of the testing of Abraham with his son Isaac
24 (22:1–19) emphasizes the importance of Rebekah.

25 (4) In Gen 24, when Abraham directs Eleazar to find a wife for Isaac, he declares that "if the
26 woman is not willing to come with you, then you will be free from this oath of mine" (24:8). Contrary to
27 those who claim that the woman under the patriarchal system had no voice in who she would marry, here
28 "Abraham assumes the woman will have the final say in the matter."¹⁶⁰ Ultimately it is Rebekah herself
29 that chooses to go with Eleazar. In fact, in the lengthy narrative of Gen 24, her determination to travel
30 with Eleazar is spoken directly by her in the dialogue and not just reported by the narrator (24:58), and
31 Rebekah's answer is saved by the narrator for the very climax of the narrative. (5) Upon Eleazar's arrival,
32 Rebekah arranges for his hospitality herself. Eleazar asks for a place in her "father's house," but Rebekah
33 arranges with her "mother's house" (v. 28). Her father says hardly a word throughout this entire narrative.
34 Rebekah's father determines nothing, as might be "expected" in an oppressive patriarchy.

35 (6) After Rebekah marries Isaac and becomes pregnant, in apparent agony she is anxious enough
36 "to inquire of the LORD" (paralleling the great prophets of the OT); and she does this herself (Gen
37 25:22), receiving a direct oracle from the Lord. Highly significant also is the formula used to announce

1 Rebekah’s delivery: “And her days were fulfilled that she should give birth” (Gen 25:24). This formula is
2 used of only three biblical women: Elizabeth and Mary in the NT and Rebekah of the OT. (7) Later, when
3 Esau marries two Hittite women, the text informs us that this was a “grief of mind to Isaac *and Rebekah.*”
4 (26:35, emphasis added). This inclusion of Rebekah’s distress regarding Esau’s marriage to pagan women
5 reveals that Rebekah was just as concerned about the covenant line as was Isaac. (8) Finally, the biblical
6 narrator in many ways accents the role of Rebekah the matriarch far beyond that of her husband Isaac, the
7 patriarch. Teubal summarizes:

8 If the narration of events following the death and burial of Sarah was truly patriarchal, it would
9 deal with the life and exploits of the male heir, Isaac. Instead, once again the accent is on the role
10 of a woman. Rebekah. About Isaac, her husband, we are told little relating to the establishment of
11 the religious faith. He is a placid, sedentary man whose life is colored and influenced by the
12 presence of his outstanding wife. Apart from the incident of the Akadah (The Binding of Isaac in
13 which Abraham is commanded to sacrifice his son), we know nothing of the boyhood or youth of
14 the supposed hero. ‘His’ story begins with a detailed account of Rebekah’s betrothal. . . . Rebekah
15 is vividly depicted in Genesis. . . . Rebekah’s strength, beauty, and suffering have not been
16 dimmed.¹⁶¹

17
18 Examples could be multiplied in the marriage relationship of other Genesis matriarchs and
19 patriarchs, and in Israelite homes depicted throughout the history of the nation.¹⁶² The embodiment of (or
20 move toward) the pre-Fall ideal of an egalitarian marriage is revealed in the descriptions of the day-to-
21 day relationships between husbands and wives throughout the OT, in which the “ancient Israelite wife
22 was loved and listened to by her husband, and treated by him as an equal . . .”¹⁶³ “The ancient Israelite
23 woman wielded power in the home at least equal to that exercised by the husband . . . ; she participated
24 freely and as an equal in decisions involving the life of her husband or her family.”¹⁶⁴

25 **Egalitarian respect for men/husbands and women/wives in Pentateuchal laws.** The various
26 laws dealing with major cultic, ethical, and moral prohibitions and infractions are fully egalitarian. The
27 Decalogue is clearly intended to apply to both men and women, using the gender-inclusive second
28 masculine singular “you” to apply to both men and women. (If the masculine “you” were not gender-
29 inclusive, then such commands as “You shall not steal” would only prohibit men and not women from
30 stealing.) The judgments of the chapters following the Decalogue (the so-called Covenant Code) which
31 apply the “Ten Words” to specific cases make explicit that both male and female are included (Exod 21:
32 15, 17, 20, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32), and this appears to set the standard for later legal material where
33 gender inclusiveness is to be implied although masculine terminology is used.¹⁶⁵ With reference to ritual
34 impurity legislation, the Hebrew Bible presents “a system that is rather even-handed in its treatment of
35 gender.”¹⁶⁶ Aside from the menstrual uncleanness that applies only to women, the other major sources of
36 ritual impurity are clearly gender-blind.”¹⁶⁷ Pentateuchal legislation that seems to give women/wives a
37 subordinate status or place their sexuality under the “possession” of the male leader of the household

1 should actually be viewed as setting forth the obligation of the husband/father to protect his
2 wife/daughter's sexuality and personhood and thereby the integrity of the family structure. These
3 are laws that are designed to protect women, not oppress them. I have set forth the evidence for
4 this conclusion with regard to each of these laws elsewhere.¹⁶⁸

5 As an example, the tenth commandment (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21) is often cited to
6 demonstrate how a wife was considered as man's "chattel," but in actuality, the wife is not here
7 listed as property but as the first-named member of the household.¹⁶⁹ That the wife was not
8 considered as "chattel" or on the level of a slave is confirmed by the fact that an Israelite could
9 sell slaves (Exod 21:2–11; Deut 15:12–18) but never his wife, even if she was acquired as a
10 captive in war (Deut 21:14).

11 As another example, some have argued that the woman was the "property" of the husband
12 because at the time of the marriage, the bridegroom gave the father of the bride the "brideprice" or
13 "dowry"—thus implying that the husband "bought" his wife much as he bought other property. However,
14 the term *mohar* (used only three times in the OT, Gen 34:12; Exod 22:17; and 1 Sam 18:25), often
15 translated "brideprice," is more accurately translated as "marriage present,"¹⁷⁰ probably represents the
16 compensation to the father for the work the daughter would otherwise have contributed to her family,¹⁷¹
17 and probably ultimately belonged to the wife and not the father.¹⁷²

18 In contrast to elsewhere in the ancient Near East, where vicarious punishment was carried out
19 (i.e., a man was punished for a crime by having to give up his wife or daughter, or ox or slave) indicating
20 that indeed wives and daughters were viewed as property of men, in biblical law no such vicarious
21 punishment is prescribed.¹⁷³ Likewise, in contrast to other ancient Near Eastern laws, where a husband is
22 permitted to "whip his wife, pluck out her hair, mutilate her ears, or strike her, with impunity,"¹⁷⁴ no such
23 permission is given to the husband in biblical law to punish his wife in any way.

24 Far from being regarded as "chattel," according to the fifth commandment of the Decalogue and
25 repeated commands throughout the Pentateuchal codes, the wife/mother was to be given equal honor as
26 the father within the family circle (Exod 20:12; 21:15, 17; Lev 20:9; Deut 21:18–21; 27:16).¹⁷⁵ There is
27 "no discrimination in favor of father and against mother. The mother's authority over the son is as great in
28 the law codes as is that of the father."¹⁷⁶ The same penalty is imposed upon the son for striking or cursing
29 his father or his mother (Exod 21:15, 17). In fact, amid a Near Eastern milieu in which the mother was
30 often controlled by the son, Lev 19:3 surprisingly places the mother *first* instead of the father in the
31 command: "Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father." This reversal from normal order
32 clearly emphasizes the woman's right to equal filial respect along with her husband. Likewise, the fourth
33 commandment of the Decalogue implicitly places the husband and wife on a par with each other: in Exod

1 20:10 the masculine “*you shall not*” clearly includes the wife, since she is not mentioned in the list of the
2 household dependants that follows.¹⁷⁷

3 When one looks at the empirical evidence of family life as it emerges from the OT narratives and
4 laws, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the wife was treated by her husband in an egalitarian
5 manner, that the wife exercised an equal power in the home, and participated equally in the family
6 decisions. The “functional non-hierarchy” in ancient Israel makes any question of exact legal or jurial
7 equality a moot point.¹⁷⁸

8 **Husband and Wife in Proverbs.** In the book of Proverbs, the position of woman is regarded as
9 one of importance and respect. The wife is placed upon an equal footing with the husband in numerous
10 passages: both have equal authority in the training of children (1:8, 9; 6:20; 23:25); the mother is entitled
11 to the same honor as the father (19:21; 20:20; 23:22; 30:17). A lofty view of the true dignity and value of
12 woman in her own right seems implied in the personification/hypostasization of wisdom as a great lady in
13 Prov 1–9.¹⁷⁹ The wife is particularly singled out for praise and honor in Prov 12:4: “An excellent wife
14 [*‘eshet khayil*, lit. ‘woman of power/strength/might’] is the crown of her husband.” This high valuation
15 becomes concretized in the paean of praise to the *eshet khayil* in Prov 31.¹⁸⁰ Here in an intricately and
16 elegantly crafted acrostic and chiasmic¹⁸¹ form a portrait is provided of the *‘eshet khayil*—the “mighty
17 woman of valor”—¹⁸² who is “far more precious than jewels” (v. 10), a woman of individuality and
18 independence, valued for her own sake and not just as the property of her husband. She is, to be sure, a
19 loyal and devoted wife: her husband has implicit trust in her and she meets his needs (vv. 11–12). She is a
20 model homemaker: a thrifty shopper (vv. 3–14), superior seamstress (vv. 12, 13, 21–22, 24), gourmet
21 cook (v. 15), able administrator of domestic affairs (v. 15*b*), and successful in parenting (v. 28).
22 Furthermore, she is a capable business woman: knowledgeable in real estate and agriculture (v. 16); an
23 enterprising and farsighted entrepreneur (vv. 18, 24, 25). She takes good care of herself: she is a paragon
24 of physical fitness (v. 17). She dresses becomingly with attention to beauty, quality and economy (vv. 13,
25 21–22). She has a high reputation in the community for her liberal philanthropy (v. 20), her noble dignity
26 (v. 25), her wisdom, tact, and kindness (v. 26). It is no surprise that (vv. 28–29)

27 Her children rise up and call her blessed;
28 her husband also, and he praises her:
29 “Many women have done excellently,
30 but you surpass them all.”
31

32 A wife of valor possesses more than physical charm and beauty: she is to be praised ultimately because
33 she is “a woman who fears the Lord” (v. 30).¹⁸³ Therefore, concludes the book (v. 31),

34 Give her the work of her hands,
35 and let her works praise her in the gates.
36

1 Many have recognized that this *summa summarum* of a wife's virtues encompasses all the
2 positive characterization of woman in the book of Proverbs, and at the same time this valiant woman
3 serves as an embodiment of all the wisdom values of the book, "the epitome of all the Lady Wisdom
4 teaches. . . . Throughout the Book of Proverbs women are neither ignored nor treated as inferior to men;
5 in fact the climactic conclusion found in 31:10–31 elevates womanhood to a position of supreme
6 honor."¹⁸⁴ That this woman is elevated to such honor is further indicated by the literary genre of the
7 poem, which, as Wolters incisively analyzes, is reminiscent of Israel's hymnic form (utilizing, e.g.,
8 overall hymnic structure, the grammatically unique "hymnic participle," and the theme of
9 incomparability), and forms a part of Hebrew "heroic literature" (utilizing various military terms and
10 themes from the tradition of Hebrew heroic poetry; cf. Judg 5 and 2 Sam 1).¹⁸⁵ Thus, here is a "heroic
11 hymn" in praise of a valiant woman!¹⁸⁶

12 Claudia Camp also states correctly that this depiction at the end of Proverbs provides a literary
13 model for women "as creative, authoritative individuals, very much in league with men for the well-being
14 of the world in which they lived (though not, primarily, for its perpetuation through reproduction), but not
15 defined by or dependent on them."¹⁸⁷ The woman of Prov 31 stands as "a role model for all Israel for all
16 time."¹⁸⁸

17 **Husband and Wife as Egalitarian Partners in the Song of Songs.** This section of the
18 paper may seem inordinately long in proportion to the rest of paper. But I am convinced that the
19 evidence from the Song of Songs is even more crucial than that found in NT passages such as 1
20 Timothy 2, and hence must be included here in detail. In the Song of Solomon we have the OT
21 inspired commentary on Gen 1-3, providing insight as to the nature of the relationship which God
22 envisaged between a husband and wife. This book, written by Solomon in the early years of his
23 reign during the some twenty years of his monogamous marriage to "the Shulamit,"¹⁸⁹ shows that
24 even after the Fall it is possible to return to the fully egalitarian (non-hierarchical) marriage
25 relationship as before the Fall.

26 In the Song of Songs we come full circle in the OT back to the Garden of Eden. Several
27 recent studies have penetratingly analyzed and conclusively demonstrated the intimate
28 relationship between the early chapters of Genesis and the Song of Songs.¹⁹⁰ In the "symphony of
29 love," begun in Eden but gone awry after the Fall, the Song constitutes "love's lyrics
30 redeemed."¹⁹¹ Phyllis Tribble summarizes how the Song of Songs "by variations and reversals
31 creatively actualizes major motifs and themes" of the Eden narrative:

32 Female and male are born to mutuality and love. They are naked without shame; they are equal
33 without duplication. They live in gardens where nature joins in celebrating their oneness. Animals
34 remind these couples of their shared superiority in creation as well as their affinity and
35 responsibility for lesser creatures. Fruits pleasing to the eye and tongue are theirs to enjoy. Living

1 waters replenish their gardens. Both couples are involved in naming; both couples work . . .
2 whatever else it may be, Canticles is a commentary on Gen. 2–3. Paradise Lost is Paradise
3 Regained.¹⁹²
4

5 The Song of Songs is a return to Eden, but the lovers in the Song are not to be equated in every
6 way with the pre-Fall couple in the Garden. The poetry of this book reveals the existence of a world of sin
7 and its baleful results: there are the angry brothers (1:6); the wet winter (2:11); the “little foxes that spoil
8 the vineyards” (2:15); the anxiety of absence from one’s beloved (3:1–4; 5:6–8; 6:1); the cruelty and
9 brutality of the watchman (5:7); and the powerful presence of death (8:6). Yet the lovers in the Song are
10 able to triumph over the threats to their love. In parallel with Gen 2:24, the Song depicts the ideal of
11 “woman and man in mutual harmony after the fall.”¹⁹³ As becomes apparent from the evidence that
12 follows, “What is extraordinary in the Song is precisely the absence of structural and systemic hierarchy,
13 sovereignty, authority, control, superiority, submission, in the relation of the lovers.”¹⁹⁴

14 The Song of Songs highlights egalitarianism, mutuality, and reciprocity between the lovers. The
15 Song “reflects an image of woman and female–male relations that is extremely positive and
16 egalitarian.”¹⁹⁵ “Nowhere in the OT is the equality of the sexes . . . as real as in the Song.”¹⁹⁶ “Nowhere in
17 ancient literature can such rapturous mutuality be paralleled.”¹⁹⁷ The keynote of egalitarianism is struck in
18 Song 2:16: “My beloved is mine and I am his.” The same refrain recurs in 6:3: “I am my beloved’s, and
19 my beloved is mine.” And a *third* time in 7:11 [ET 10]: “I am my beloved’s, and his desire is toward me.”
20 Scholars have not failed to point out the implication of this thrice-repeated refrain: “love-eros is mutual; it
21 puts the two partners on a perfectly equal footing . . .”¹⁹⁸ “The present verse [7:11] speaks of a
22 relationship of mutuality, expressed in a formula of reciprocal love like that in 2:16, 6:3. In the Song, sex
23 is free of notions of control, dominion, hierarchy.”¹⁹⁹

24 This egalitarianism/mutuality/reciprocity is revealed throughout the Song in a number of ways.
25 Several recent studies have pointed to various literary techniques in the Song that highlight the gender
26 mutuality between the lovers.²⁰⁰ Perhaps most obvious is the frequent use of echoing, in which the words
27 or actions of the one lover are repeated or patterned on the other’s.²⁰¹ Especially significant are the
28 mutuality of actions and statements in reversal of stereotypical gender conceptions which usually place
29 the woman in a passive-receptive and dependent role and the man taking the independent initiative. So,
30 for example, the woman, like the man, is portrayed as a person of capability, independence, and self-
31 reliance. She, like the man, is gainfully employed—(1:6, 7; cf. 6:11). Even after the marriage—at the
32 conclusion of the Song—she continues to display her business acumen and retain her self-reliance: like
33 Solomon, she owns a vineyard, and is not totally dependent upon her husband for sustenance (8:11–12).
34 Both the lovers see each other as having eyes like doves (4:1; 5:12); both are proud and tall like trees

1 (5:15; 7:8); both describe parts of the other’s body as rounded and crafted like art works (5:14, 15a; 7:2b,
2 3a [English vv. 1b, 2a]).

3 Again, the woman is just as active in the love-making as the man. She brings him to the love-
4 chamber (3:4) just as he brings her (1:4; 2:4). She sexually arouses him (8:5) just as he has aroused her
5 (2:3,4; 5:2–5). She uses reciprocal expressions of endearment and praise for him as he does for her (e.g.,
6 “my companion” (5:2, 16, etc.), “behold, you are beautiful” (1:15, 16). Both use similar language to
7 praise the beauty of the other (e.g., eyes like doves [1:15; 4:1; 5:12], “beautiful and comely” [1:16; 7:17],
8 lips dripping honey/myrrh [4:11; 5:13], and the whole matching sections with extended praise of one
9 another’s beauty [4:1–16; 6:4–10; 7:1–9]). She invites him to come with her into the fields (7:12–14
10 [English vv. 11–13]) just as he invites her (2:10–14). In the Song, “where the lovers take turns inviting
11 each other, desire is entirely reciprocal. Both are described in images that suggest tenderness (lilies/lotus
12 flowers, doves, gazelles) as well as strength and stateliness (pillars, towers). In this book of the Bible, the
13 woman is certainly the equal of the man.”²⁰²

14 Daniel Grossberg’s assessment of the reciprocity and mutuality of roles between man and woman
15 is not an overstatement:

16 In all of Canticles there is hardly a thought, idea or deed that is not attributed to *both* the male and
17 the female. Almost all expressions (spoken both inwardly, outwardly, and acted) are shared by
18 the two lovers in the Song of Songs. . . . Sexism and gender stereotyping, so prevalent in ancient
19 (and modern) literature is totally lacking in Canticles. Instead, undifferentiated, shared roles and
20 positions are the rule. Harmony, not domination, is the hallmark of the Song of Songs. . . . In
21 Canticles, neither one of the couples is subordinate; neither is minor. The Song revolves around
22 them both equally. They are costars sharing the spotlight.²⁰³

23
24 David Dorsey’s literary structural analysis of the Song demonstrates how each of its seven
25 sections reinforces and enhances the theme of reciprocity/mutuality, by means of various structuring
26 devices, including alternation of speeches, initiations, and invitations, and the numerous matchings of
27 reciprocal expressions of love. He concludes:

28 These structuring techniques underscore the point that the two lovers are equally in love,
29 equally adore one another, and are equally ready to initiate, to suggest, to invite. The
30 ideal conveyed by the author’s structure (as well as by the contents of the speeches) is an
31 egalitarianism and mutuality in romantic love that is virtually unparalleled in ancient
32 Near Eastern literature. In a world that was strongly patriarchal, where love lyrics often
33 portrayed the man as a “bull” and the woman as something less than his equal, the Song
34 of Songs represents a surprisingly high view of woman and a remarkable vision of the
35 ideal of equality and delightful reciprocity in the marriage relationship.²⁰⁴

36
37 Indeed, apparently to accentuate this mutuality and equality in dramatic reversal of gender
38 stereotypes prevailing at that time, the woman is actually given the predominant role in the Song.²⁰⁵
39 Landy aptly calls “the dominance and initiative of the Beloved [the woman] the most astonishing
40 characteristic of the Song.”²⁰⁶ The Song of Songs begins and closes with the woman speaking (1:2–4a;

1 8:14). The image of the garden, representing the woman, falls at the midpoint of the Song, emphasizing
2 her predominance.²⁰⁷ Woman carries almost twice the amount of dialogue as the man.²⁰⁸ A number of the
3 man's lines are actually quotations of him made by the woman (2:10–14; 5:2), while the man never
4 quotes the woman's words. It is the woman who interrelates with the other major and minor protagonists
5 in the Song. The woman initiates most of the meetings with her lover. In these rendezvous, she repeatedly
6 takes the initiative.²⁰⁹ The woman's invitations to love are more forceful and outspoken than the man's
7 (4:16; 7:13 [English v. 12]; 8:2). Most of the first person verbs have reference to the woman; she is the
8 only one who uses the emphatic "I" ['ani] (twelve times); and the significant introspective term "soul,
9 self" [nepesh] is applied only to her (seven times).²¹⁰ Only she makes dramatic, self-assured statements
10 about her beauty and character: "I am dark and²¹¹ I am beautiful!" (1:5); "I am the [glorious, beautiful²¹²]
11 rose of Sharon, the [singular, special²¹³] lily of the valleys" (2:1); "I am a wall, and my breasts are
12 towers" (8:10). Only she commands the elements: "Awake, north wind! And come, O south! Blow upon
13 my garden" (4:16). The Shulamite is the one who pronounces the great wisdom sayings about love (8:6–
14 7; cf. 2:7; 3:5; 8:4). "She is assertive, taking the initiative in this relationship. She is undaunted, risking
15 misunderstanding and censure as she pursues her love. She is responsible, being accountable for her
16 actions. She is protective, shielding her lover and the love they share from the prying eyes of others."²¹⁴

17 The woman is also described with imagery that is normally connected with the male. Carol
18 Meyers has shown how "the Song as a whole presents a significant corpus of images and terms derived
19 from the military—and hence the male—world" and how "without exception these terms are applied to
20 the female." She concludes from this: "Since military language is derived from an aspect of ancient life
21 almost exclusively associated with men, its use in the Song in reference to the woman constitutes and
22 unexpected reversal of conventional imagery or of stereotypical gender association."²¹⁵ Again, Meyers
23 examines the use of animal imagery in the Song, and notes that while some animals (like the dove and the
24 gazelle) depict the character of both the male and the female, the wild beasts—lion and leopard—with
25 their wild habitations is associated exclusively with the female (4:8). She notes: "Nothing would be
26 further from a domestic association for a female. Nor does the wildness, danger, might, strength,
27 aggressiveness, and other dramatic features of these predators fit any stereotypical female qualities."²¹⁶
28 Combining both military and faunal imagery, the woman is also compared to a "filly among Pharaoh's
29 chariots" (1:9). This connotes a powerful military ploy: "The female horse set loose among the stallions
30 of the chariotry does violence to the military effectiveness of the charioteers. The female has a power of
31 her own that can offset the mighty forces of a trained army."²¹⁷ Again, the military "terror of
32 awesomeness" is twice linked with the woman in the Song: she is "awesome as [an army] with banners"
33 (6:4, 10).

1 What is more, the woman in the Song possesses not only awesome power, but *power over the*
2 *man*. She ravishes [Heb. *labab* in the *pi'el*] his heart with one look of her eyes (4:9). Her eyes *overcome*
3 *or overwhelm* him—elicit his fear [Heb. *rahab* in the *hip'il*] (6:5). Amazingly, the king—one of the most
4 powerful humans on earth—is *held captive/bound/imprisoned* [Heb. *'asur*] by the tresses of her hair (7:6
5 [English v. 5]). Clearly “the reversal of conventional gender typing is again evident.”²¹⁸

6 Moving beyond the predominance of the female lover herself, one can recognize throughout the
7 Song that a “gynocentric mode”²¹⁹ prevails. The third set of voices is the “daughters of Jerusalem,” which
8 play no small role in the movement of the Song.²²⁰ The mother of the woman or man is mentioned seven
9 times in the Song,²²¹ but never the father. The king is crowned by his mother for his wedding (3:11).²²²
10 Furthermore, the Song twice mentions the “mother’s house” (3:4; 8:2), never the masculine equivalent.
11 This is very significant, even startling, in view of the importance of the term “father’s house” elsewhere
12 in Scripture.

13 The emphasis upon the woman—and women—in the Song does not imply the superiority or
14 dominance of woman over man. Rather, in light of prevailing stereotypical biases that placed women in a
15 subservient or subordinate role, the Song sets right the stereotypical gender imbalance by highlighting the
16 woman’s powers. At the same time the Song pictures the woman desiring the man to draw her away after
17 him (1:4). She is pictured leaning upon, and resting under the protecting shadow of, her lover. So Song
18 2:3: “Like an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his
19 shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.” Francis Landry has not failed to catch the
20 intent of the imagery: “The apple-tree symbolizes the lover, the male sexual function in the poem; erect
21 and delectable, it is a powerful erotic metaphor. It provides the nourishment and shelter, traditional male
22 roles—the protective lover, man the provider.”²²³ Song of Songs 8:5a seems to continue the male-
23 protector motif: “Who is that coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?” But notice that
24 the rest of this verse re-introduces the “apple tree” metaphor, and this time it is the *woman* who awakens
25 the man under the apple tree. Thus juxtaposed in two lines are the images of female
26 initiative/independence and male protection. Certainly the author wished this balanced perspective to be
27 held together.²²⁴ This description of the man as protector is an echo of the egalitarianism in Eden before
28 the Fall, where Eve was to stand by Adam’s side “as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.” (PP 46)

29 By highlighting both the woman’s initiative/power and the protecting, providing role of the man,
30 the Song paints a balanced portrait of full mutuality and egalitarianism, captured by the refrain already
31 quoted from the woman: “My beloved is mine and I am his” (2:16; cf. 6:3; 7:11 [English v. 10]). Meyers
32 summarizes this balance: “The Song has a preponderance of females, but that situation does not obtain at
33 the cost of a sustained sense of gender mutuality. Neither male nor female is set in an advantageous
34 position with respect to the other. . . . In the erotic world of human emotion, there is no subordination of

1 female to the male.”²²⁵ S. S. Ndogo and H. Viviers concur: “although feminist scholars insist that the
2 female ‘voice’ is very conspicuous in the Song, the male voice is also constantly ‘there’ and equally
3 strong. Thus, the Song does not celebrate the supremacy of either gender, but praises mutuality and
4 equality.”²²⁶

5 A number of modern studies have pointed out that the Song of Songs constitutes a reversal of the
6 divine judgment set forth in Gen 3:16, and a return to Eden before the Fall (Gen 1–2) with regard to the
7 love relationship between husband and wife.²²⁷ Such a reversal seems implicit in the Song’s echo of
8 Eden’s “desire” (*teshuqah*)—a term found only in Gen 3:16 and Song 7:11 [English v. 10] with reference
9 to sexual desire between man and woman. In Song 7:11 [English v. 10], the third of the woman’s three
10 explicit affirmations of mutuality with her lover (along with 2:16 and 6:3 already cited above), the
11 Shulamite says: “I am my beloved’s, and his desire (*teshuqah*) is for me.” Whereas the judgment of God
12 in Gen 3:16 stated that the woman’s desire (*teshuqah*) would be for her husband, and he would “rule”
13 (*mashal*) over her (in the sense of servant leadership), now the Song describes a reversal—the man’s
14 desire (*teshuqah*) is for his lover. However, contrary to the feminist readings that see here a movement
15 away from a distorted use of male power (which is their [misguided] interpretation of Gen 3:16), I find a
16 re-affirmation of the divine ideal of full equality (“one-fleshness”) between husband and wife set forth in
17 Gen 2:24 without necessarily denying the validity of Gen 3:16. Song of Songs does not nullify the
18 provision of Gen 3:16 whereby the servant leadership of the husband may be necessary to preserve the
19 harmony in the home. But the Song reveals that after the Fall it is still possible for man and woman to
20 experience that mutual, reciprocal love wherein headship/submission is transcended and the egalitarian
21 ideal of Gen 2:24 is completely realized.²²⁸

22 We have indeed returned to Eden. This return to full reciprocity is encapsulated in the names of
23 the lovers. Just as in pre-Fall Eden the husband and wife were called *’iš* and *’iššâ* (Gen 2:23)—names
24 linked together by sound and (folk) etymology, so in the return to Eden the names of the lovers once
25 again intertwine—*sholomoh* (Solomon) and *shulammit* (Shulamite/Shulamit = Solomoness).²²⁹ The
26 reciprocation between Solomon and the Solomoness displays the equivalent of the *’ezer kenegdo*
27 “counterpart, complement” of Gen 2:18. The lovers in the Song return to Eden as egalitarian, mutual,
28 reciprocal partners.

29

30 VI. The Pattern for Male-Female Relationships in the Covenant Community

31 Despite the prevailing patriarchal society of OT times, in the OT we find numerous women in
32 public ministry, including leadership roles in the covenant community, in harmony with the pattern set in
33 Gen 1-3. I cite some of these examples in the sections that follow.

34 A. Women and the Priesthood: God’s Original Plan and Subsequent Condescension

1 Perhaps the most-often-cited OT evidence for “male headship” in the OT covenant community is
2 the fact that the Israelite priesthood was confined only to men. For many Adventist (and other Christian)
3 gender hierarchicalists/subordinationists this is a crucial indication that women were (and still should be)
4 barred from having a leadership role over men in the covenant community (the church).

5 But the Bible gives a different picture of the divine will regarding the priesthood. God’s original
6 purpose for the priesthood on earth included both male and female! As I have already argued above, Gen
7 1-3 gives the surprising picture that both Adam and Eve had the same role as the Levites and priests of the
8 Mosaic tabernacle in the original Eden sanctuary (Gen 2:15; cf. Num 3:7, 8, 38; 18:2–7), and that God
9 himself clothed both Adam and Eve as priests (Gen 3:21) after the Fall.

10 It may come as a further surprise for many to learn that this arrangement for both male and
11 female priests continued to be God’s ideal at the time of the Exodus when the Mosaic tabernacle was to
12 be erected.

13 God’s original plan for Israel was that *all* Israel be a “kingdom of priests” (Exod 19:6). This does
14 not simply refer to a corporate function of the nation of Israel offering salvation to the surrounding
15 nations, as frequently claimed. In a penetrating study of Exod 19, John Sailhamer has shown that it was
16 God’s original purpose for all Israel to be individual priests, and this was indicated in God’s call for all
17 the people, men and women, to come up on the mountain as priests to meet God on Sinai.²³⁰ Although
18 many modern translations translate Exod 19:13b as a call on the third day for Israel to come only “to the
19 mountain” (NIV) or to “the foot of the mountain” (NLT) or “near the mountain” (NKJV), the Hebrew is
20 precise: after three days of sanctification (Exod 19:11-13a) God is calling all Israel to “go up [Heb. *alah*]
21 on the mountain” (so the NRSV and NJPS). Angel Rodriguez has shown that there were three spheres of
22 holiness in connection with Mt. Sinai, corresponding to the three spheres of holiness in the sanctuary that
23 was later constructed: (1) the plain in front of the mountain where the people camped (Exod 19:2),
24 equivalent to the courtyard; (2) the level place part way up the mountain where the priests and the 70
25 elders later met with God (Exod 24:10), equivalent to the Holy Place; and (3) the top of the mountain
26 where Moses alone went (Exod 24:15-18), equivalent to the Most Holy Place.²³¹ According to God’s
27 original plan, all the people of Israel—including men and women— were to come up on Mt. Sinai, to the
28 place on the mountain equivalent to the Holy Place in the later sanctuary, where only the priests could
29 enter.²³²

30 It was only after the people refused to come up on the mountain because of their
31 fearfulness and lack of faith (Exod 19:16; Deut 5:5), and after their subsequent sin in the worship
32 of the golden calf (Exod 32), that God introduced the specialized priesthood into the sanctuary
33 equation. In this alternate plan for the priesthood, most men were also excluded—all non-
34 Israelites and within Israel all except for one family in one tribe in Israel.

1 In God’s alternate plan condescending to human failure, why did he choose men and not women?
2 Some have suggested that a woman was restricted from the priesthood in Israel because of her regular
3 (monthly) ritual uncleanness that would have prevented her from serving in the sanctuary for up to one
4 fourth of her adult life. Others suggest that the amount of upper body strength required to lift the
5 sacrificed carcasses, or serve as military “guards” of the sanctuary,²³³ would have made it very difficult
6 for women to serve in the professional capacity as priests.²³⁴ Still another suggestion is that “Since
7 women’s place in society is determined by their place within the family, women are not normally free to
8 operate for extended periods outside the home.”²³⁵ Still others consider the typological connection, with
9 God appointing a male priesthood to point to the coming of Jesus, who in His humanity was male. While
10 these and other rationale may have contributed to the exclusion of women from the specialized priesthood
11 in Israel, they do not seem to constitute the main reason.

12 The male-only priesthood in Israel was in stark contrast to the other ancient Near Eastern cultures
13 where the cultic personnel included priestesses. Surely Otwell is correct when he observes: “Since other
14 peoples in the ancient Near East worshiped in cults which used priestesses, their absence in the Yahwism
15 of ancient Israel must have been deliberate.”²³⁶ Yahweh’s institution of a male priesthood in Israel was
16 made in the immediate aftermath of the worship of the golden calf linked to the Egyptian/Canaanite
17 fertility cults. In this context, the choice of men only seems to have constituted a strong polemic against
18 the religions of surrounding nations to which Israel succumbed at the foot of Sinai, religions which
19 involved goddess worship and fertility-cult rituals. A primary function of the priestesses in the ancient
20 Near East during the last half of the second millennium and the first millennium, was to serve as a “wife
21 of the god,” and such a function for a woman in the religion of Yahweh was out of the question.²³⁷ The
22 exclusion of women in the specialized Israelite priesthood helped to prevent syncretistic contamination of
23 Israel’s sanctuary services with the introduction of the divinization of sex and sexual immorality that was
24 so deeply imbedded in Canaanite Baal/Asherah worship.

25 Thus, the restriction of the priesthood to males from the house of Aaron in no way reveals a
26 denigration of women’s status, and likewise in no way implies that women are barred from leadership
27 (teaching/administrative) roles in the covenant community. In fact, on the basis of Deut 33:8–10, Jacques
28 Doukhan points to three essential duties of the Levitical priesthood: (1) didactic and administrative
29 leadership functions (judging, teaching); (2) prophetic functions (oracular techniques especially with the
30 Urim and Thummim to determine the future or will of the Lord); and (3) cultic functions. He then goes on
31 to show that two of the three functions of the priest, the prophetic and the (teaching/administrative)
32 leadership, were allowed of women (witness the OT women who functioned as prophet, teacher, and
33 judge).²³⁸ As I pointed out above, it was only the cultic function that was barred to women, probably

1 because of the polemical concerns directed against the ancient Near Eastern priestesses' involvement in
2 the divinization of sex.²³⁹

3 Yet in the New Testament the Gospel restores God's original plan. Not a few male priests, but
4 once more the "priesthood of *all* believers" (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6), as it was in the beginning.

5 **B. The Old Testament Concept of Leadership/Authority**

6 In a separate (forthcoming) study I have surveyed the OT concept of leadership/authority.²⁴⁰ Here
7 I summarize some of my findings.

8 The OT refers to numerous different positions of leadership/authority, utilizing some thirty
9 different Hebrew nouns,²⁴¹ and five major verbs.²⁴² These terms are primarily used to *identify* various
10 kinds of leadership, or to indicate the general *function* of such leadership. But one additional concept
11 (involving a number of specific Hebrew or Aramaic terms) specifically goes beyond mere identification
12 and function, and serves to *characterize* the nature of godly leadership articulated in the Old Testament.
13 This concept is servanthood. No other Hebrew concept covers the whole range of Old Testament leaders,
14 whether civil (such as the judge or king), cultic (such as the priest), military (such as the commander), or
15 religious (such as the prophet). Whatever their specific task of leadership, before anything else they were
16 to consider themselves as servants.

17 The language of servanthood is pervasive throughout the Hebrew Bible. There are some sixteen
18 different Hebrew/Aramaic terms for "servanthood" in the Hebrew Bible, involving an astonishing 1500
19 different occurrences.²⁴³ While it is true that the language of "servanthood" does not automatically
20 translate over into servant leadership (sometimes servant language actually becomes used by individuals
21 as a term of power), we find that in the OT this servant language is used in particular to characterize the
22 faithful leaders of God's people.

23 Two OT individuals were most frequently called God's servant: Moses and David. Moses is called
24 "My servant" (e.g., Num. 12:7-8), "the servant of the Lord" (e.g. Deut. 34:5; Josh. 1:1); language of
25 servanthood is employed of him over thirty times in the OT. David is referred to repeatedly by God as
26 "My servant" (e.g., 2 Sam. 3:18; 1 Kgs. 11:13), and by the inspired biblical writer as "servant of the
27 Lord" (Ps. 18:1); language of servanthood is used for David nearly sixty times in the OT.

28 It is instructive to note that when Joshua is first introduced in the narrative of the Pentateuch, he
29 functions as Moses' "minister" (*mesharet*), a term that denotes the elevated status of those who are
30 disciples of elect men of God.²⁴⁴ In Josh. 1:1, after Moses' death, Moses is referred to as "[menial]
31 servant [*'ebed*] of the Lord," while Joshua is still referred to as Moses' "[prime] minister" (*mesharet*).
32 However, by the time of Joshua's death, Joshua is also called the Lord's "[menial] servant" (*'ebed*).
33 Joshua came to embody the principles of servant leadership embodied by Moses.

1 Other OT figures were also called God’s servant (“My [God’s] Servant” or “His/Your [God’s]
2 Servant”).²⁴⁵ Still other OT individuals (figuratively) described themselves as “servant,” or as ones who
3 “served.”²⁴⁶ Individuals and groups “served” or “ministered” at the sanctuary/temple, beginning with
4 Adam and Eve at the Eden sanctuary.²⁴⁷ Other groups are metaphorically called “servants” or in situations
5 portrayed as “serving.”²⁴⁸

6 Finally, a number of biblical verses speak of the coming Messiah as God’s Servant: the Messianic
7 Servant as Branch (Zech. 3:8) and as the Suffering Servant (Isa. 42:1, 19; 49:5–7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11).

8 The language of “servant[hood]” is used to describe some thirty-five named individual leaders and
9 a total of over sixty different individuals or groups of people in the OT, spanning the entire scope of
10 biblical history and including the full range of leaders in OT times: patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,
11 Joseph and his brothers, Job), prophets (Isaiah, Elijah, Elisha, Ahijah, Jonah, Daniel), priests (Adam and
12 Eve, plus all the Aaronic priests and Levites who were to “serve”), judges (Samuel), kings (David,
13 Solomon, Hezekiah, Nebuchadnezzar), various civil leaders (Ziba, Eliakim, Shadrach, Meshach,
14 Abednego, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah), military figures (Caleb and Joshua, Uriah the Hittite), and many
15 unnamed individuals who filled various offices and occupations and situations of service.

16 It is noteworthy how many women are noted as providing leadership, using explicit language of
17 servanthood. They include such figures as Eve, Ruth, Hannah, Abigail, Bathsheba, the wise woman of
18 Tekoa, and the wise woman of the city of Abel, in addition to those numerous unnamed women who
19 served at the sanctuary or in other capacities. When females such as the wise woman of Tekoa and of the
20 city of Abel spoke, they spoke with a voice of authority, and men listened. These OT women who are
21 referred to by “servant” terminology, were recognized for their influential and far-reaching leadership in
22 ancient Israel.²⁴⁹

23 Based on the usage and context of servant terminology in the OT, fundamental insights regarding
24 servant leadership have emerged from my study, which may be summarized in the following points.

25 **1. Old Testament Scripture contrasts two different forms of leadership: power**
26 **(authoritarian, top-down, hierarchical) leadership and servant (bottom-up, inverse-hierarchical)**
27 **leadership.** The contrast between power leadership and servant leadership is dramatically illustrated in
28 the counsel of elder and younger statesmen to young King Rehoboam as he takes office. The elder
29 statesmen counsel the king to adopt a leadership style characterized by the attitude of service (1 Kgs.
30 12:7): “If you will be a servant to this people today, and will serve them and grant them their petition, and
31 speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.” But the theory of the younger
32 counselors “is that servant leadership will not work.”²⁵⁰ They counsel the king to exercise power
33 leadership (1 Kgs. 12:10–11): “Thus you shall say to this people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father
34 made our yoke heavy, now you make *it* lighter for us’—But you shall speak to them: ‘My little *finger* is

1 thicker than my father's loins! Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke;
2 my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions!” Unfortunately, King
3 Rehoboam chose power leadership over servant leadership, as is evidenced by his response to the people,
4 following the advice of the young men (1 Kgs. 12:13-14): “The king answered the people harshly. . .
5 saying, ‘My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with
6 whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.’” The results of this choice of power leadership are all too
7 evident in the consequent breakup of the United Monarchy (1 Kgs. against God (see 1 Kgs. 12:21–33).

8 The contrast between two forms of leadership finds its ultimate basis in two contrasting root
9 attitudes, as set forth in the book of Proverbs. Underlying servant leadership is the root attitude of a
10 “servant’s heart,” whereas power leadership imbibes the root attitude of pride and a haughty spirit (Prov.
11 11:2; 16:18; 29:23). It should be noted that those called of God, who were supposed to be functioning as
12 servants of the Lord, who provided leadership in the OT community, did not always or necessarily
13 evidence true servant leadership

14 **2. Servant leaders are those characterized by service to God and to others, possessing a**
15 **servant’s heart, and they need not be in a position or office of responsibility to exercise their**
16 **leadership.** Perhaps the most remarkable and greatest concentration of servant language in a single
17 passage is used of Abigail in 1 Samuel 25. In this narrative we find a beautiful example of servant
18 leadership as Abigail, wife of Nabal, speaks words of tact and wisdom to David:

19 She fell at his feet and said, “On me alone, my lord, be the blame; And please let your maidservant
20 [’amah] speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant [’amah]. . . . Now let this gift
21 which your maidservant [shipchah] has brought to my lord be given to the young men who
22 accompany my lord. Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant [’amah]; for the LORD
23 will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the
24 LORD; and evil will not be found in you all your days. . . . When the LORD deals well with my
25 lord, then remember your maidservant [’amah]. . . .” Then David said to Abigail, “Blessed be the
26 LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me” . . . Then David sent a proposal to Abigail,
27 to take her as his wife. When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her,
28 “David has sent us to you to take you as his wife.” She arose and bowed with her face to the
29 ground and said, “Behold, your maidservant [’amah] is a maid [shipchah] to wash the feet of my
30 lord’s servants [’ebed]” (1 Sam. 25:24, 27–28, 31–32, 39–41).²⁵¹

31
32 Abigail influenced David through her spirit of servanthood. She did not merely direct or order. Instead
33 she exercised persuasion, exerting influence in a spirit of humility, and thus was providing leadership
34 characterized as servant leadership.

35 **3. There is a stark contrast between the [forced] service of the world and the [voluntary]**
36 **service of God.** In the context of Israel’s Exodus from Egypt, the same Hebrew root *’bd* is used for
37 Israelites serving (*’abad*) as slaves (*’ebed*) to Pharaoh in Egypt, and their serving (*’abad*) as servants
38 (*’ebed*) of God after being delivered from Egyptian bondage. In the first case it was servitude (slavery)

1 and in the second instance it was voluntary service. Later in Israel’s history, God teaches this same lesson
2 to His people, by allowing them to be attacked and subjugated by Egypt under Pharaoh Shishak and his
3 army. God explicitly spells out the point He wants Israel to learn: “But they [the Israelites] will become
4 his [Pharaoh Shishak’s] slaves, so that they may learn the difference between My service and the service
5 of the kingdoms of the countries” (2 Chr. 12:8). The way of service to God is one of liberty, the way of
6 service to the kingdoms of foreign nations is bondage.

7 **4. Service is ultimately done to the Lord, but necessarily also involves serving the covenant**
8 **community.** On one hand we find clear indication in Scripture that the full-time workers for God were
9 ultimately serving Him. Regarding the Levites, Moses writes: “At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of
10 Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord, to serve [*sharat*] Him, and to
11 bless in His name until this day” (Deut. 10:8; cf. Deut. 17:2; 18:5, 7; 1 Chr. 15:2; 23:13; 2 Chr. 13:10;
12 29:11). On the other hand, Moses makes very clear to the Levites that they are serving the congregation:
13 “the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to
14 Himself, to do the service [*‘abodah*] of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to
15 minister to [*sharat*, ‘serve’ NKJV, NRSV, NJPS] them” (Num. 16:9).

16 In later Israelite history, King Josiah summarizes this two-directional focus of service, as he
17 addresses the Levites: “Now serve [*‘abad*] the LORD your God and his people Israel” (2 Chr. 35:3).
18 Ezekiel juxtaposes this same duo-directional service: “Yet they [the Levites] shall be ministers [*sharat*,
19 ‘serve’ NIV, ‘servants’ NJB] in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering
20 [*sharat*, ‘serving’ NIV] in the house; they shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the
21 people, and they shall stand before them to minister to [*sharat*, ‘serve’ NIV, NRSV, NJPS] them” (Ezek.
22 44:11).

23 **5. Service is a gift from God.** God instructs Aaron the high priest and the other priests: “But you
24 and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the
25 veil; and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service [*‘avodat*
26 *mattanah*, lit. ‘service of gift’]” (Num. 18:7). Several modern versions emphasize this point by translating
27 this latter clause: “I give your priesthood as a gift” (ESV, NIV, NRSV, etc.). The ministry of servant
28 leadership is a precious gift from God Himself.

29 **6. Servant leadership calls for a whole-hearted, willing-spirited, personal relationship with**
30 **God.** God evaluates the service of His servant Caleb: “But my servant Caleb, because he has had a
31 different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants
32 shall take possession of it” (Num. 14:24). David was called “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14)
33 because of his whole-hearted commitment to divine service, despite his times of failure to live up to the
34 divine ideal. David gave wise advice to his son Solomon about the kind of servanthood God desires: “As

1 for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve him with a whole heart and a willing
2 mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him,
3 He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever” (1 Chr. 28:9).

4 **7. The call and career of the servant leader is marked by humility and total dependence upon**
5 **God, not self.** Hear the self-appraisal of Moses, the servant of God: “Please, Lord, I have never been
6 eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of
7 speech and slow of tongue” (Exod. 4:10). God’s own evaluation of Moses coincides with His servant’s
8 self-testimony: “Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the
9 earth” (Num. 12:3). Solomon displayed this quality of humility as he took up the task of leadership over
10 the people of Israel, as evidenced in his prayer: “Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant
11 king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not how to go out or come in. Your
12 servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be
13 numbered or counted. So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, to discern
14 between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” (1 Kgs. 3:7–9).

15 Nowhere in scripture is the terminology of “servant” (*‘ebed*) so concentrated in a large section of
16 scripture as in the repeated references to “servant” in Isaiah 41–66 (a total of 31 occurrences). The
17 individual Suffering Servant in Isaiah 42–53 is the Representative Israelite, the promised Messiah. The
18 context and content of the four individual Servant Songs (42:1–9; 49:1–13; 50:4–11; and 52:13–53:12)
19 clearly show the Servant to be the coming Messiah.²⁵² The NT witnesses regard these individual Songs as
20 fulfilled in Jesus (Matt. 8:17; 12:18–21; Mark 10:45; Luke 2:32; 4:16–30; 22:37). The Messiah is the
21 Servant Leader *par excellence*. Strikingly, the NT also recognizes that the life of the Messianic Servant
22 provides a model of servant leadership for Christian leaders (see citations in Acts 13:47; 26:18; Rom.
23 15:21; 2 Cor. 6:2; Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16).²⁵³ Profound principles for today’s leaders emerge from
24 Scripture’s unparalleled concentration of servant language in the Isaianic Servant Songs.²⁵⁴ It was
25 amazing for me to find how the attitudes, attributes, and actions of the Messianic Servant consistently
26 exemplify the bottom-up, inverted hierarchy established in Eden, and run counter to the top-down,
27 “chain-of-command” hierarchy so often today equated with biblical authority.

28 29 **C. Examples of OT Women in Public Ministry**

30 **Miriam.** The daughter of Jochebed exhibits intelligence, diplomacy, and courage to speak to the
31 Egyptian princess, cleverly suggesting a “nurse” for the baby in the basket (Exod 2:1–10). Miriam may
32 not have ever married; the OT includes no record of a husband or names of any children for her as it does
33 for Moses and Aaron. Once the exodus from Egypt commences the focus of attention among most

1 commentators centers on the lives of her two brothers, Moses and Aaron. Any regard ever granted Miriam
2 concentrates on her errors. Thus this amazing woman’s position during the exodus has been
3 underestimated.

4 However, recent studies have begun to recognize the high profile and valuation of Miriam in
5 Scripture.²⁵⁵ In the book of Exodus the figure of Miriam is utilized by the narrator to bracket the exodus
6 event: she appears at the bank of the Nile as the exodus account begins, and at the end of the story, on the
7 bank of the Red Sea, she reappears (Exod 2:1–10; 15:20–21)! Thus “the story of salvation of Israel
8 delivered from Egyptian bondage begins and ends with Miriam. . . . Miriam’s story brackets the salvation
9 of the Lord! Israel’s salvation from Egypt begins when Miriam saves Moses and it ends when Miriam
10 sings her song.”²⁵⁶

11 Miriam is presented as a prophet (Exod 15:20), only the second person in the Pentateuch so
12 designated thus far in its canonical form. At the crossing of the Red Sea one finds her in a dual role as
13 prophetess and musician at the side of her two brothers. The “Song of Moses” and the “Song of Miriam,”
14 are juxtaposed in Exod 15— Moses’ song starting with a first person jussive “I will sing to Yahweh” (v.
15 1), and Miriam’s song commencing with a second person plural imperative “Sing to Yahweh” (v. 21).
16 This juxtapositioning and specific use of verbal forms implies that “the song of Moses was meant to be a
17 response to the invocation by the Song of Miriam.”²⁵⁷ Furthermore, such juxtaposition of songs indicates
18 that “the prophet Miriam is included along with her fellow musicians, implying the concept of
19 togetherness in the setting of the chorus of both genders and all statuses.”²⁵⁸ What is more, the antiphonal
20 rendition of “The Song of Miriam” (Exod 15:20-21) led by this inspired musician is reserved by the
21 narrator to constitute the grand climax of the whole exodus story (Exod 1-14).²⁵⁹ Or stated differently,
22 “the subtle emphasis on the importance of the roles of women in the fate of Moses . . . , and thereby the
23 whole people of Israel, culminates in the duet of Moses and Miriam, where the reader is invited to
24 remember and acknowledge the audacious roles of women, particularly Miriam.”²⁶⁰ Miriam’s aesthetic
25 performance as singer-dancer-percussionist has significant implications for her prominence, prestige, and
26 power in Israel.²⁶¹

27 Most of the passages in the Pentateuch which mention Miriam by name represent her as a
28 leader.²⁶² Moreover, God himself insists through Micah (6:4) that she, along with her brothers, was
29 *divinely commissioned* as a leader of Israel: “For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
30 I redeemed you from the house of bondage; And *I sent before you* Moses, Aaron, *and Miriam.*”

31 Furthermore, the biblical record of Miriam’s death (Num 20:1) highlights her prominence in the
32 estimation of the narrator: most other named figures in the wilderness community disappear without
33 mention. It is certainly not accidental that her death and the death of her two brothers coincide with the
34 last three stops in the wilderness wandering.

1 Scripture also includes an indicative genealogical mention of her. First Chronicles 5:29 (ET 6:3)
2 lists Miriam as a child (*ben*, lit. “son”) of Amram. The fact that Miriam is mentioned among Amram’s
3 children (lit. “sons”) in an entire chapter of fathers and male offspring surely confirms her prominence,
4 implicitly underscoring her parallel status in religious leadership along with her two brothers.

5 **Deborah.** Deborah is set on center stage to reveal the high valuation of women by the narrator
6 (and divine Author) in the book of Judges.²⁶³ It cannot be overemphasized that the *only* judge described in
7 any detail without mentioning serious character flaws (or pointing up how their life “went sour”) was a
8 woman!²⁶⁴ And “the only judge who combines all forms of leadership possible—religious, military,
9 juridical, and poetical—is a woman!”²⁶⁵ That woman, Deborah, is introduced as “the woman/wife of
10 Lapidoth” (Heb. *’eshet lappidot*), which, instead of referring to her husband’s name, perhaps should be
11 translated “woman of torches/lightning” or “spirited woman.”²⁶⁶ Male commentators of the past have
12 often had a hard time with Deborah! Some have refused to recognize her as a true judge, suggesting
13 Barak was the real judge; others focus on the battle as the real subject of the narrative and ignore
14 Deborah’s leadership as a woman; still others argue that she is only an exception, chosen by God as judge
15 because he could not find a fit man available!²⁶⁷ Feminist interpreters of the Deborah narrative have also
16 largely missed the mark, often seeing this as a text of empowerment for women and subversion of
17 patriarchal oppression.²⁶⁸ Most critical scholars see the narrative of Judg 4 in contradiction with the
18 ancient poem of Judg 5, and posit different redactional sources separated by a long interval of time.²⁶⁹
19 Some conservative (including Adventist) writers who think the Bible forbids women from occupying
20 leadership positions involving men make an effort to show that Deborah deferred to men: she was “not an
21 abrasive or pushy woman” but rather “gave the man [Barak] the opportunity to take the honor of leading
22 the nation to victory all for himself, but was not afraid or hesitant to help him in the leadership role when
23 asked to do so”²⁷⁰

24 In contrast to all these misreadings, I find the text straightforward, with the poetry highlighting
25 and amplifying the narrative. In both narrative and poetry, Deborah is unequivocally presented as one of
26 the most powerful woman leaders in the Bible. She is the recognized political leader of the nation, “one of
27 Israel’s chief executive officers.”²⁷¹ She is the military leader on an equal footing with the male general
28 Barak.²⁷² In fact, “the plot of Judges 4 signals the conceptuality of Deborah’s predominant status and
29 superior role in comparison with Barak. . . . Deborah is the initiator and Barak the reluctant follower.
30 Deborah is the strategist and Barak the executor. Against this background the story develops with the
31 subtle implication that the real heroic honor goes to the women, Deborah and Jael, as opposed to the men,
32 Barak and Sisera.”²⁷³

33 In the narrative of Judg 4 and the song that follows in Judg 5, “the reader finds an unusual and
34 unexpected concept of the status of women, one that ironically surpasses that of men.”²⁷⁴ At the same

1 time, there is compositional evidence in the narrative and accompanying poem of “teamwork and
2 mutuality” between Deborah and Barak: “both leaders reveal their willingness to be open to and
3 cooperate with each other. Together they build a team with mutual respect, communication, and
4 correction. The only peculiarity is that in spite of the reciprocal relationship, Barak remains a
5 follower.”²⁷⁵ Thus the texts ultimately imply “the concept of balance toward equality by means of the
6 radical paradigm shift and role reversal between Deborah and Barak on the one hand, and through
7 compositional effort to mention the two names together on the other.”²⁷⁶

8 Deborah is a judge of the same stature as all the other judges in the book of Judges, one to whom
9 men as well as women turned for legal counsel and divine instruction.²⁷⁷ She is a prophetess, providing
10 spiritual leadership in Israel. Contrary to a common modern claim, the role of prophet(ess) in Scripture
11 entails leadership of men just as surely as the role of a teacher. Some seek to make a distinction between
12 the prophet—who is only a messenger of God, and has unusual authority only because of being a prophet,
13 with no leadership authority on his/her own to do more than deliver the prophetic message—and the
14 teacher, who has an office of leadership authority to explain or apply the message.²⁷⁸ But the prophetic
15 witness throughout Scripture, including the narrative of Deborah, belies this false distinction, showing
16 that if anything, the prophet has *more* authoritative leadership—including the authority to explain and
17 apply the divine message—than the teacher.²⁷⁹

18 A nineteenth-century activist for woman’s suffrage provided an apt summary analogy of
19 Deborah’s status when she noted that Deborah “appears to have been much the same as that of President
20 of the United States with the additional functions of the judicial and religious offices of the nation. Hence
21 this woman was President, Supreme Judge, and Right Reverend in the theocratic Republic of Israel.”²⁸⁰

22 There is no indication in the Judges text that such female leadership of men as well as women in
23 the covenant community was looked upon as opposed to the divine will for women. “Deborah performs in
24 this authoritative capacity normally and in all its complexity.”²⁸¹ There is intertextual evidence that
25 Deborah as “judge” was in fact an “elder” of Israel.²⁸² She calls herself a “mother in Israel” (Judg 5:7),
26 which seems equivalent to the “father” imagery used as a “leadership title” in Israel (1 Sam 10:12; 2 Kgs
27 2:12).²⁸³ Her role of “mother” is “not the soft, gentle, nurturing qualities that are often associated with
28 maternity. Abruptly, we are pushed to associate mother and military commander.”²⁸⁴

29 This juxtaposition of “woman of spirit” with “mother in Israel” is the same that appears in Prov
30 31 with the description of the *’eshet hkayil* “woman of strength/valor,” utilizing the term *khayil* “strength,
31 might” that usually occurs in the depiction of military warriors.²⁸⁵ In the public arena Deborah acts in
32 relative independence of her husband (if she had one), son, or other male kinfolk. The Song of Deborah
33 “celebrates the women who do not wait for sexual violence, capture, or death, women who do not wait to
34 be acted upon, but who take action themselves.” At the same time Deborah “does not stand over against

1 the patriarchy.²⁸⁶ This story is not about “*female* power directed against patriarchal oppression”²⁸⁷ as so
2 many have suggested. Patriarchy, according to the biblical ideal, is *not* oppressive of women: while
3 providing the husband’s protection of his wife in the home sphere, it does not prohibit women from
4 assuming positions involving leadership of men in the public arena. Such examples of female community
5 leadership are not numerous in the OT, since women’s counsel, inspiration and leadership were focused
6 upon the raising of her children in biblical times. Nonetheless, the leadership roles of women like
7 Deborah in the covenant community, clearly accepted by society and given the blessing of God, reveal
8 that such are not opposed to biblical patriarchy nor the divine will.

9 **Women preachers during the time of David.** Psalm 68:11—a verse unexplainably ignored in
10 major treatments of women in the OT—embraces a most powerful affirmation of women as proclaimers
11 of the word of the Lord: “The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those who proclaimed it”!
12 The thrust of this verse is largely overlooked perhaps because the feminine gender of “company” is
13 obscured in most modern translations. However, the NASB catches the import of the Hebrew: “The Lord
14 gives the command; the women who proclaim the *good* tidings are a great host”! Here is a portrait of
15 women preacher-evangelists—a great host of them! And there is no hint of them being in their “proper
16 subordinate position” under the leadership of men.

17 **Exclusion of women leaders with the rise of the Monarchy under Solomon.** Carol Meyers has
18 set forth evidence suggesting that during the rise of the monarchy there entered both a systematic abuse of
19 patriarchy and the exploitation of women.²⁸⁸ God had warned of the dire consequences to the nation
20 should Israel insist on having a king (1 Sam 8). The king and his court—and not the patriarchal system—
21 would become absolute in its control over the lives of the populace (vv. 11–18). God’s prediction came
22 true. With its “centralized mechanism for redistributing resources and for establishing a strong military
23 presence” came a high price: it meant a “hierarchical structure” with “a complete break with the social,
24 political principles on which tribal society is based.”²⁸⁹ It meant that “the locus of power moved from the
25 family household, with its gender parity, to a public world of male control.”²⁹⁰

26 This shift from patriarchy to state control is portrayed in the bureaucratic re-structuring of the
27 kingdom carried out by Solomon accompanied by a demographic shift from rural areas to the cities (1
28 Kgs 9–10; 2 Chr 8–9). The wealthy wives of the urban bureaucrats no doubt led lives of leisure and
29 boredom but lost the former parity with men in the maze of bureaucracies and political hierarchies; they
30 are probably among the referents of the negative comments against women in the Prophets and Wisdom
31 literature (especially Proverbs). There also developed a strong contrast between the upper and lower
32 classes, with the inequalities that accompany such a situation. In the rural areas the egalitarian ideals were
33 probably maintained for some time, although the restructuring of trade into a market economy and the

1 burden of taxation and indenture certainly affected the patriarchal households there as well, especially by
2 the 8th–7th cent. B.C.E. (see, e.g. Isa 1:17, 23; Mic 2:9).

3 The radical sociological shift which may be observed with the rise of Israel’s monarchy is
4 highlighted by an intertextual reference that seems to further confirm our suggestion made above
5 regarding the interpretation of the word *mashal* (“to rule”) in Gen 3:16. There I proposed that it was
6 God’s intention for the *mashal* relationship be confined to the family setting, with the husband exercising
7 servant leadership as necessary to preserve the unity and harmony of the home, and that there is no
8 justification in the text for the *mashal* role of husband with regard to his wife to be extended to men in
9 general in the public sphere. I find it significant that during the time of the Judges the people requested
10 that Gideon *mashal* (“rule”) over them, and Gideon refused, stating emphatically: “I will not rule [*māšal*]
11 over you, nor shall my son rule [*mashal*] over you; the Lord shall rule [*mashal*] over you” (Judg 8:23).
12 Even more significant, the first time Scripture utilizes the term *mashal* to describe someone in Israel
13 ruling in the public sphere comes with the rise of the monarchy, in connection with the reign of Solomon:
14 “So Solomon reigned [*mashal*] over all the kingdoms, from the River to the Land of the Philistines, as far
15 as the border of Egypt” (1 Kgs 5:1).²⁹¹ It does not seem to be mere coincidence that the first extension of
16 the *mashal* role from the husband in the family to the public arena of the covenant community is found
17 with the rise of the monarchy and Solomon’s political shift from patriarchy to state control. This
18 intertextual linkage with Gen 3:16 seems to indicate that although God condescended to work with the
19 institution of the monarchy, at the same time such extension of the *mashal* role to the public arena was not
20 His will for Israel. In such extension of the role of *mashal* to men in the wider covenant community,
21 women inevitably suffered.

22 Despite the systematic abuse of patriarchy and the exploitation of women resulting from the
23 establishment of the monarchy, women as a class were never deemed inferior in the Hebrew Bible, even
24 during the time of the monarchy and beyond. The OT writers maintained the Edenic ideal and despite the
25 moral degradation of society the biblical narrators continued to portray the dignity and value of
26 womanhood, both by the narrative clues in the texts and by the employment of strong female imagery.
27 Despite the monarchal setting in which male dominated, nonetheless women still occasionally appear in
28 leadership roles—especially in the capacity of prophetesses and wisdom figures—implying a continuing
29 “intrinsic acknowledgment of female worth and even authority.”²⁹²

30 **Wise women.** Women of wisdom recorded by the biblical narrator during the early period of the
31 monarchy include samples from various parts of the land and beyond. The woman of Tekoah in the south
32 (2 Sam 14:2–20), is specifically referred to by the narrator (v. 2) as a “wise woman” (*‘ishah khakmah*),²⁹³
33 and in her speech to David displays a perceptive understanding of the nature of justice and mercy and a
34 grasp of exquisite literary techniques.²⁹⁴ Note also that she speaks with a voice of authority, and men

1 listen!²⁹⁵ The wise woman of Abel in the far north of Israel (2 Sam 20:14–22) likewise speaks with an
2 authoritative voice, utilizing poetic speech (proverb), and men listen and obey!²⁹⁶ Her attributes include
3 “sagacity, faithfulness, a commanding presence, and readily acknowledged influence with peers.”²⁹⁷ Note
4 that the wise woman calls herself “a mother in Israel” (v. 19), perhaps modeling her role of deliverer at
5 this juncture with that of Deborah who used the same title. The Queen of Sheba, who visits Solomon from
6 Southern Arabia (1 Kgs 10:1–13; cf. 2 Chr 9:1), is a “spectacularly colorful woman” who “travels freely
7 and interacts with Solomon as an equal;”²⁹⁸ she has been described as “Woman Wisdom, cast in narrative
8 form.”²⁹⁹

9 During the period of the monarchy the “great/notable”³⁰⁰ woman of Shunem (2 Kgs 4:8–37; 8:1–
10 6), is presented as a woman of wealth and self-reliance.³⁰¹ Claudia Camp reaches for superlatives in her
11 characterization of the Shunammite: “The portrayal of this unnamed woman is one of the most
12 remarkable in the Bible. Both independent and maternal, powerful and pious, she brings to mind a
13 number of other female characters, yet surpassed them all.”³⁰² Camp emphasizes this woman’s verbal skills
14 and competence, and her initiative and self-reliance (in contrast to her husband)—“a self-sufficiency and
15 an authority independent of motherhood.”³⁰³ Several studies argue that in the perspective of the narrator,
16 this great women in some respects even overshadows the prophet Elisha with whom she interacts.³⁰⁴

17 **Huldah.** Narratives from the time of the monarchy also spotlight one woman of special divine
18 calling, Huldah the prophetess (2 Kgs 22:14–20). Against those who argue that God never calls women to
19 an office which involves the authoritative teaching of men, note that when King Josiah commanded the
20 priest and scribe to “Go, inquire of the Lord” (v. 13) regarding the discovery of the Book of the Law, they
21 went to Huldah the female prophet for divine counsel, when the male prophets such as Jeremiah could
22 have been consulted. A woman was chosen to authenticate that the scroll found in the temple was
23 authoritative Scripture! According to 2 Kgs 22:14, Huldah lived in Jerusalem in the *mišneh*, which most
24 versions translate as the “Second Quarter,” but the NJPS (Jewish translation) transliterates as “Mishneh”
25 and the KJV translates as “college.” This latter translation may actually represent the best one, inasmuch
26 as some scholars have suggested that this term has reference to an academy perhaps even headed up by
27 Huldah. This was apparently the view of early Judaism, who held Huldah in such high regard that the
28 gates at the southern entrance of the Temple were named after her.³⁰⁵

29 Despite the few examples of notable women (mostly) in private life during the monarchy which
30 have been surveyed, as pointed out above the institution of the monarchy, especially after its
31 bureaucratization during the reign of Solomon, spelled the historical demise of any prominent place for
32 (non-royal) women in public life. As Frymer-Kensky summarizes,

33 None of Israel’s bureaucracies—the palace, the army, the law courts, even the ‘Sages’—
34 had any room for women. Once the state was consolidated, women had no role in the
35 pyramid of power; they were not leaders outside the domestic sphere. They could still be

1 wise, but they were no longer Wise Women. From the standpoint of political power, the
2 days before the state were the good old days to women. Once the state was established,
3 they could exercise considerable family power as wives and mothers—but only queens
4 had an impact on the destiny of the nation.³⁰⁶

5
6 **Esther.** The story of Esther indicates the estimate of human worth God places upon woman, and
7 the qualities of leadership demonstrated by a woman.³⁰⁷ In the providence of God (although the name God
8 never appears in the book) Esther was indeed “come to the kingdom for such a time as this” (Esth 4:14)—
9 to be a savior of the Jews from the death decree of Haman under King Xerxes. Although Esther was of
10 worth in the king’s eyes because of her physical charm, yet according to the story, the ultimate value of
11 her personhood was in her inner beauty—the character qualities of loyalty, courage, and obedience to
12 God. The character of Esther is a model for life in a severe crisis. Michael Fox summarizes the author’s
13 shaping of the heroine Esther:

14 He respects Esther as a woman of courage and intelligence who does not abandon her dignity
15 even when facing an enemy and struggling to influence the erratic will of a despotic husband.
16 Moreover, the author depicts a successful relationship of power-sharing between male and
17 female, in which both attain prestige and influence in the community. In the pivotal scene in ch.
18 4, man and woman each give each other mutual obedience. What is more, the book takes as its
19 hero a woman whose importance to the Jewish people does not lie in childbearing; there are only
20 a handful of such cases in the Bible.³⁰⁸

21
22 Similarly, Sidnie Ann White concludes that “[Esther’s] conduct throughout the story has been a
23 masterpiece of feminine skill. From beginning to end, she does not make a misstep. . . . She is a model for
24 the successful conduct of life in the often uncertain world of the Diaspora.”³⁰⁹

25 Not only is Esther a model character; she is also a woman of influence and leadership. Starting
26 out as a docile figure, “her personality grows in the course of the biblical story, as she moves from
27 obeying to commanding. It is she who commands the fast, develops a plan and implements it. Ultimately
28 she institutes the festival of Purim. Esther takes charge.”³¹⁰ Esther’s influence as a woman is also revealed
29 by an emphasis upon her wisdom: the narrator makes use of intricate intertextual linkages between Esther
30 and the Joseph narrative to present Esther as a wisdom heroine.³¹¹ And finally, according to the epilogue
31 of the book (9:16–32, esp. v. 32), Esther is “the one with the authority to codify and authenticate for later
32 generations the celebratory practices begun by the Jewish populace at large.”³¹²

33 **Women leaders in the time of Ezra-Nehemiah.** Tamara Eskenazi presents important evidence
34 (from the Elephantine papyri and Ezra-Nehemiah) that after the Babylonian exile with the dissolution of
35 the monarchy there was a trend back toward gender parity and women in leadership on the part of the
36 postexilic Jews.³¹³ Eskenazi shows how women in the 5th cent. B.C.E. Jewish community in Elephantine
37 were able to divorce their husbands, buy and sell, inherit property even when there are sons, and even rise
38 from slavery to an official temple role. Ezra-Nehemiah provides hints of a trend in this direction of gender

1 parity and women of prominence in the contemporaneous community of Jerusalem: the probable mention
2 of a female scribe (Ezra 2:55; Neh 7:57), a clan which appropriated the mother's and not the father's
3 family name (Ezra 2:61; Neh 7:63), female as well as male singers (Ezra 2:65; Neh 7:67), descendants of
4 a possible famed princess Shelomith (Ezra 8:10; 1 Chr 3:19); women as well as men who repaired the
5 walls of city (Neh 3:12), and a woman prophetess Noadiah (Neh 6:14).

6 In summary of this subsection, we may conclude that the pattern of Gen 1-3 is continued in the
7 remainder of the OT: the husband servant-leadership model in the home is not broadened in order to bar
8 women from positions of servant leadership in the covenant community. Despite a largely patriarchal
9 society in OT times, and even despite the rise of the hierarchical structures of the monarchy, one finds
10 numerous examples of women in public ministry, including positions involving leadership in the
11 covenant community.

12 During OT times, there were eight major different kinds or positions of leadership according to
13 God's ideal: (1) priests; (2) prophets; (3) elders; (4) judges; (5) military leader; (6) sages; (7)
14 musicians/worship leaders; and (8) preachers/proclaimers of the Word. (I am omitting the position of
15 monarchy/kingship, inasmuch as this was not God's original plan; He warned of the dire results of
16 choosing a king, Deut 17:14-20; 1 Sam 8-9.) It is important to notice that all eight of these positions of
17 leadership were open to, and filled by, women, during some period of OT history! Women were (1)
18 priests (Eve, and all Israelite women according to God's original plan in Exod 19), (2) prophets (Miriam,
19 Deborah, Huldah, Noadiah), (3) elders (Deborah, and possibly some of the seventy elders), (4) judges
20 (Deborah), (5) military leader (Deborah), (6) sages (the wise woman of Tekoah and of Abel, and Abigail),
21 (7) musicians (Miriam and the musicians in the time of Ezra-Nehemiah), and (8) preachers (the great host
22 of preachers in Psalm 68:11). The only position of leadership not open to women was that of monarch, an
23 office which was not according to God's original will for Israel, and concerning which He warned would
24 bring about an oppressive/hierarchical style of leadership. But note that in settings where a woman could
25 be monarch, the wise foreign Queen of Sheba and the Jewish Queen Esther of Persia modeled sterling
26 servant leadership.

27 There is no separation of the prophet, fulfilling a "non-headship" role, as opposed to or
28 different from other positions of leadership where "headship" is apparent, as opponents of
29 women's ordination often claim. All of the eight major positions of leadership in the OT
30 approved by God were characterized by an inverse-hierarchical servant leadership style, and
31 functioned (in God's original purpose) on the basis of Spirit-gifting. As women were called and
32 gifted by the Spirit for these positions of leadership, they were recognized and accepted by the
33 covenant community. At the same time the remedial provisions of patriarchy and male-dominated
34 positions of leadership, and the hierarchical structures of the monarchy, prevented women from

1 entering all the positions for which they might have been qualified, called, and Spirit-gifted. Thus the
2 records of OT history indicate only a partial and imperfect return to God’s original ideal for women in
3 leadership.

4 5 **VII. Male-Female Relationships in the Eschatological Future**

6 The OT prophets announce that in the eschatological Day of the Lord, in connection with the
7 coming of the Messiah, there will be radical changes in the status quo. The patriarchal society, and other
8 remedial provisions of OT times, will give way to a new social order which returns to the divine ideal for
9 male-female relationships as in Eden before the Fall. Several startling predictions jolt us in this direction.

10 11 **A. Jeremiah 31:22**

12 Jeremiah makes an enigmatic but incredible statement about the eschatological Day of the Lord: “For the
13 Lord has created a new thing in the earth—a woman shall encompass a man”! (Jer 31:22) The last clause
14 literally reads: “female [*neqebah*] surrounds [Poel impf. of *sabab*] (strong) man/warrior [*geber*].” The
15 noun *neqebah* “female,” which is the generic term for all females used in Gen 1:27, is here “an inclusive
16 and concluding referent” which “encompasses poetically all the specific female images of the poem . . .
17 and it is other than all these images, for it is Yahweh’s creation of a new thing in the land.”³¹⁴ Kathleen
18 M. O’Connor summarizes the possible interpretations and the profound implications:

19 Perhaps it refers to future sexual relationships in which women will be active agents in
20 the procreation of a restored people. Perhaps it speaks of a society at peace so that
21 women will be capable of protecting warriors. Or perhaps it anticipates role reversals of a
22 different sort. What is clear is that the surprising new role of women symbolizes a
23 changed order of relationships in a reconstituted and joyous society.³¹⁵

24
25 Does this passage, by its terminological allusions to the creation narrative in Gen 1 (e.g., the use
26 of key terms *neqebah* “female,” *bara’* “create,” and *erets* “earth”, Gen 1:1, 27), perhaps envision the
27 reversal of the “curse” of Gen 3:16 regarding the husband’s “rule” over his wife, and announce the full
28 return to the pre-Fall Edenic model in which there are no hierarchical relationships, and in which the
29 female again takes a fully egalitarian position involving a reciprocal “encircling” the male with active
30 protection and care, both in the home and in the covenant community (church)?³¹⁶

31 Does the passage envision the reversal of other remedial gender structures of society, put into
32 place by God as less-than-ideal provisions for a fallen humanity, such as patriarchy, and male-dominated
33 positions of leadership, and a return to full reciprocity of public ministry, as in Eden when both Adam and
34 Eve were officiating priests in the Garden Sanctuary?

35 36 **B. Isaiah 61:6; 66:18-21**

1 Isaiah 61 is a powerful portrait of the coming Messiah, announcing His salvific mission. The first
2 four verses were chosen by Jesus to announce His public ministry (Luke 4:16-22). In verse 6, Isaiah
3 announces to the people of Zion (v. 3) that in the Messianic Kingdom, “you shall be named the Priests of
4 the Lord.” Here is the unmistakable and incredible announcement of “the hitherto unrealized ideal of
5 Exodus 19:6.”³¹⁷ God’s plan for the eschatological future included not just a few male priests, but all
6 Israel, male and female, as “priests of the Lord.”

7 But there is more. In the closing chapter of his book, Isaiah describes the eschatological gathering
8 of all nations (Isa 66:18) at the time when God makes “the new heavens and the new earth” (v. 22).
9 God’s glory will be revealed among the Gentiles (v. 19), and Gentiles will come to Jerusalem, to God’s
10 holy mountain (v. 20). Then comes the “shocker.” God announces: “And I will also take some of them
11 [Gentiles] for priests and Levites.” No longer will the priesthood be limited to a single family of a single
12 tribe of Israel. The priesthood will include Gentiles. And there is no indication that all of these Gentiles
13 will be male. There is an inclusiveness that extends the priesthood far beyond the sons of Aaron, and far
14 beyond all the people of Israel as “priests of the Lord” (Isa 61:6) Both Isa 61:6 and 66:18-21 “are
15 anticipatory of the ‘priesthood of all believers’ in the New Testament.”³¹⁸ The NT announces the
16 fulfillment of these prophecies, in reestablishing the “priesthood of all believers”, in which all the people
17 of God, male and female, are considered “priests to our God” (Rev 5:10; cf. 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 20:6).

18

19 **C. Joel 2:28-29 (Hebrew Bible, 3:1-2)**

20 In the context of the eschatological Day of the Lord (Joel 2:11-27), God gives an amazing
21 promise regarding His repentant people:

22 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons
23 and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young
24 men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out
25 my Spirit. (Joel 2:28-29 ESV [Hebrew Bible, 3:1-2])
26

27 This prophecy harks back to the incident of the Spirit resting upon the seventy elders of Israel,
28 when they all prophesied as a sign of their having received the gift of the Spirit (Num 11:24-30). At that
29 time, two of the seventy elders were not personally present, but also received the gift of the Spirit. When
30 Joshua, jealous for Moses’ reputation, expressed his dismay at this development, Moses replied: “Are
31 you zealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put
32 His Spirit on them!” (v. 29). It seems that Joel envisioned the future outpouring of the Spirit as the
33 fulfillment of Moses’ prayer.³¹⁹

34 Joel was not predicting that all Israel in the future would necessarily have the full-time role of a
35 prophet, any more than the seventy elders at the time of Moses became full-time prophets. They received

1 an initial signal evidence of their spiritual gift of leadership when “the Spirit [*ha-ruakh*] rested upon them,
2 that they prophesied, although they never did *so* again” (Num 11:25). The same was true when at
3 Pentecost Peter announced the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy: all those in the upper room had the Spirit
4 rest on them, and an initial signal evidence of the Spirit’s outpouring was given: “And they were all filled
5 with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).
6 The fact that Joel particularly has in mind the Spirit-gifting of the OT elders (Numbers 11) may indicate
7 the special fulfillment application of this prophecy to the Spirit-gifting of the elders in NT times. In such
8 case, there is no dichotomy between the gifts of the Spirit and the office of elder for which believers (both
9 men and women) are to be Spirit-gifted. Sharply distinguishing between and separating gifts and office is
10 artificial and non-biblical.

11 Likewise, the reference to sons/daughters prophesying, young men seeing visions, and old men
12 dreaming dreams, does not limit those gifts only to the segment of society to which they are attributed in
13 the poetic passage. “The meaning of this rhetorical individualizing, is simply that their sons, daughters,
14 old persons, and youths, would receive the Spirit of God with all its gifts.”³²⁰

15 The primary emphasis in this passage is upon the universal inclusiveness and democratizing of
16 the gift of the Spirit: no one will be excluded on the basis of gender, age, or social status.

17 The major characteristic of the outpouring of the Spirit is its universality. All the people of God
18 receive the Spirit. The text specifically erases the major social distinctions of the ancient world:
19 gender, age, and economic status. In an era in which men (not women), the old (not the young),
20 and the landowners (not slaves) ruled society, Joel explicitly rejected all such distinctions as
21 criteria for receiving the Holy Spirit. For Paul the fulfillment of this text is that in Christ there is
22 neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, and neither slave nor free (Gal 3:28).³²¹

23
24 In v. 30 (Hebrew 3:2), as in the previous verse, special emphasis is placed upon women as well as
25 men: “It is perhaps noteworthy that Joel, in extending the promise of the Spirit to slaves, again asserts that
26 both males and females will receive the gift. It is as though he wanted to insure that there be no possibility
27 that a segment of society has been excluded.”³²²

28 The reference to “all flesh” (*kol basar*) in v. 28 (Hebrew 3:1) refers primarily to the covenant
29 nation (cf. the reference to “*your* sons and *your* daughters. . . , *your* old men. . . *your* young men”),
30 meaning that within the nation limits of gender, age, and status are abolished. But note that the reference
31 to “male and female servants” (v. 29 [Hebrew 3:2]) does not have contain possessive pronoun “your” and
32 may well have included non-Jews. In fact, in this entire passage “we must not restrict the expression ‘all
33 flesh’ to the members of the covenant nation, as most of the commentators have done. . . since it cannot
34 be proved that the specification in vers. 2 and 3 [English, 2:28] is intended to exhaust the idea of ‘all
35 flesh.’”³²³ The climax of this passage, Joel 2:32 (Hebrew, 3:5), clearly includes believers from all nations
36 within its purview, as recognized by the apostle Paul (Rom 10:13).

1 The radical character of this prophecy is highlighted by Raymond Dillard:

2
3 It is important that the modern reader not miss the radical character of what Joel
4 announces. In the world of ancient Israel, the free, older Jewish male stood at the top of
5 the social structure: most of Israel's prophets had belonged to this group. Joel envisages a
6 sociological overhaul: the distinctions between old and young ("your old men. . . your
7 young men"), slave and free ("slaves and slave girls"), and male and female ("your sons
8 and daughters," "slaves [masc.] and slave girls") are swept aside. This statement from
9 Joel must be contrasted with the ancient daybreak prayer of the Jewish male: "I thank you
10 God that I was not born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman."³²⁴

11
12 Hans Wolff speaks of this prophesied outpouring of the Spirit as introducing "an element of
13 social revolution." He refers specifically to the Spirit gifting of male and female slaves. Not a single case
14 appears in the OT where a slave receives the gift of prophecy. But "In the coming age they shall be
15 incorporated fully into the community of the free, by being deigned worthy of the highest distinction
16 along with all the rest. . . . Yahweh by his power wants to establish life in full community among those
17 who are rootless and feeble. . . .Before the wealth of such an outpouring, all distinctions of sex and age
18 recede completely, indeed even the contrasts of social position. Such is the future towards which Israel
19 moves."³²⁵

20 The portrait is one of inverted hierarchy. "The new people of God no longer recognize
21 privileged individuals."³²⁶ The Messianic Age will introduce the quality of servant leadership
22 that God had intended from the beginning, and the Messiah himself will rule as the Servant/Slave
23 of the Lord (Isa 42-53)! All His followers will experience that inverted hierarchy where power
24 and privilege and position give way to servanthood. Such is the experience that Jesus and the NT
25 apostles and prophets announced was to be fulfilled in the NT covenant community!

26 **Conclusions**

27 The following major conclusions have emerged from our look at the OT materials:

- 28 1. Genesis 1-3 is foundational for understanding God's original and ideal plan for man-woman
29 relationships.
- 30
31 2. Before the Fall Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, equal "in all things,"
32 including constitution, relationship, and function, without hierarchical gender role distinctions,
33 but rather displaying mutual submission to one another. Male headship was not part of the
34 creation order.
- 35
36 3. Adam and Eve's relationship before the Fall modeled the mutual submission of the Godhead
37 in Their intra-divine deliberation among Equals to create humans.
- 38

- 1 4. The nature of human dominion/authority over the animals before the Fall was one of “inverted
2 hierarchy,” or servant leadership, modeling the Godhead’s submission in entrusting His
3 authority over the earth to humans, and in giving humans freedom of choice.
4
- 5 5. The hierarchical relationship with asymmetrical submission on the part of Eve to Adam came
6 only *after the Fall*. (This is in direct contradiction to the hierarchicalist interpretation of 1 Tim
7 2:12, which views Gen 3:16 as reaffirming the pre-Fall hierarchical headship of Gen 1-2.)
8
- 9 6. This hierarchical relationship depicted in Gen 3:16 was a temporary remedial/redemptive
10 measure, provided by God to Adam and Eve and succeeding generations so that union could
11 be maintained and harmony preserved in their marriages.
12
- 13 7. The hierarchical remedial arrangement of Gen 3:16 was limited to the marriage (husband-
14 wife) relation, and not extended to general men-women relationships in the church.
15
- 16 8. The subjection of the wife to her husband was part of the divine judgment/curse; and the
17 “plan of redemption” gives the race an opportunity and encouragement to reverse the “curse”
18 and return to the original egalitarian plan for marriage whenever possible.
19
- 20 9. Throughout the OT the Gen 3:16 pattern for husband-wife relations with the husband as
21 servant leader in the home is not rejected, but in practice among God’s people there is a trend
22 (with many bumps along the way) toward gender parity in the marriage as in Eden before the
23 Fall, as set forth in Gen 2:24.
24
- 25 10. The Song of Songs is the pivotal OT inspired commentary on Gen 1-2. This book highlights
26 the divine call to return as far as possible to the original plan for egalitarian marriage, as in
27 Eden, showing that such egalitarian relationship can be truly experienced after the Fall,
28 through the divine empowering from “the Flame of Yahweh.”
29
- 30 11. Adam and Eve were assigned by God the role of priesthood both before and after the Fall,
31 without any hint of hierarchy of one over the other, thus implying that servant leadership is
32 equally available to both men and women in the church.
33
- 34 12. The OT witness regarding male-female relations in the covenant community indicates that
35 despite the patriarchal culture and divine condescension to the hardness of human hearts, the

1 way back to the Edenic ideal for equality in gender relations was upheld in that all the various
2 kinds or positions of leadership according to God's ideal were open to, and filled by, women:
3 (1) priest, (2) prophet, (3) elder, (4) judge, (5) military leader, (6) sage, (7) musician/worship
4 leader, and (8) preacher/proclaimer of the Word. Only the position of monarch was not open
5 to women in Israel, but this was the one position not part of God's original plan, and
6 concerning which He warned would bring about an oppressive, hierarchical style of
7 leadership. Outside of Israel, however, women such as the Queen of Sheba and Esther ably
8 filled the royal role.

9
10 13. The "return to Eden" movement in Scripture regarding gender relations is parallel to many
11 other remedial provisions given by God for the hardness of human hearts in OT times, such as
12 laws concerning clean and unclean foods, divorce, and slavery. The divine design of
13 vegetarianism, permanence in marriage, and racial equality, given at the original creation, is
14 the ultimate norm, with subsequent laws/practices prescribed or affirmed or tolerated by God
15 as part of his redemptive program leading humanity back toward the Edenic paradigm. This
16 "back to the beginning" principle, affirmed by Jesus Himself (Matt 19:8), does not allow
17 culture to drive the church to unbiblical positions, but simply puts back into place what was
18 God's will from the beginning. This is in radical contrast to homosexual practice, which was
19 already rejected as part of the divine plan in Eden [Gen 2:24], and was condemned univocally
20 throughout the entire OT and NT witness, with no "back to the beginning" principle in
21 operation.

22
23 14. The OT points forward to the eschatological future, when in the context of the coming of the
24 Messiah, there will be radical changes in the status quo. The patriarchal society, and other
25 remedial provisions of OT times, will give way to a new social order which returns to the
26 divine ideal for male-female relationships as in Eden before the Fall. The "curse" of Gen 3:16
27 will be totally reversed; all will become priests, including women and Gentiles; the Spirit will
28 gift "all flesh", and limits of gender, age, and status will be abolished. All God's followers
29 will experience the inverted hierarchy where power and privilege and position give way to
30 servanthood.

31
32 The NT announces and describes the initial realization of this inspired OT vision of
33 social revolution "back to the beginning" with the coming of Jesus and during the time of
34 the NT church. Will the Seventh-day Adventist Church in these last days allow God to

1 complete this upside-down revolution in our midst by recognizing and affirming, yes,
2 ordaining, all those—including women—gifted by the Spirit for positions of leadership?

¹ Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (ed. Raoul Dederen; Commentary Reference Series, vol. 12; Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000), 58-104. The key to abbreviations used in the endnotes of this paper may be found in *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (ed. Patrick H. Alexander et al; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002). Standard abbreviations of Ellen White’s writings are employed throughout, and these references to Adventist primary sources are placed along with biblical references in the main body of the text.

² Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007).

³ John Rankin, “Power and Gender at the Divinity School,” in *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Thinking Christians*, ed. Kelly Monroe (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 203.

⁴ Phyllis A. Bird, “Bone of My Bone and Flesh of My Flesh,” *ThTo* 50 (1994): 525, 527. As pointed out in the Introduction, evidence for this growing consensus is found, e.g., in the monograph edited by William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr., *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), which documents the “tectonic shift . . . nothing short of a paradigm shift from a once-exclusive stress upon the mighty interventions of God in history to God’s formative and sustaining ways in creation” (Editors’ Preface, xi.). See also Jesus M. Arambarri, “Gen 1,1–2,4a: Ein Prolog und ein Programm für Israel,” in *Gottes Wege suchend. Beiträge zum Verständnis der Bibel und Ihrer Botschaft (Festschrift für Rudolf Mosis zum 70. Geburtstag)* (ed. Franz Sedlmeier; Würzburg: Echter, 2003), 65–86.

⁵ Deborah F. Sawyer, *God, Gender and the Bible* [Biblical Limits; London: Routledge, 2002], 29.

⁶ Represented in Christian evangelicalism esp. by the organization Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE), founded in 1987. A comprehensive presentation of this position is given by Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004); see also dozens of individually-authored books reviewed in chronological order in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 58–75. Seventh-day Adventist publication supporting this view include, e.g., Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca F. Brillhart, eds., *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women* (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995); and Nancy Vyhmeister, ed., *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998).

⁷ Represented in Christian evangelicalism by the organization Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), also founded in 1987. Its rationale, goals, and affirmations are found in the *Danvers Statement*, drawn up by some twenty-four Council members (including e.g., James Borland, W. Robert Gundry, Wayne Grudem, Mary Kassian, George W. Knight, III, Raymond C. Ortlund, and John Piper); this statement was finalized in Danvers, Mass., in Dec 1987, made public in November 1988, and published in *Christianity Today* January 13, 1989. A comprehensive presentation of this position is given by John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991); Wayne Grudem, ed., *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2002); Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: : An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2004); and Robert L. Saucy and Judith K. TenElshof, eds., *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective* (Chicago: Moody, 2001). Seventh-day Adventist publications supporting this view include, e.g., C. Raymond Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg: Biblical Authority, Biblical Intepretation, and the Ordination of Women in Ministry* (Wakefield, MI: Adventists Affirm and Pointer Publications, 1994); and Mercedes H. Dyer, ed., *Prove all Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000). In the discussion that follows I intentionally focus upon evangelicals who hold these positions, and generally avoid citing Adventist authors. In doing so, I wish to emphasize that I am concerned about issues, not individuals. I do not wish to appear as attacking my brothers and sisters in the SDA church with whose views I disagree.

⁸ Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (trans., John H. Marks; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 57. Similarly, Marsha M. Wilfong, “Human Creation in Canonical Context: Genesis 1:26–31 and Beyond,” in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 47, argues that “humankind is, in fact the lynchpin that holds creation together.” Bruce A. Ware, “Male and Female Complementarity and the Image of God,” in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood* (ed. Wayne A. Grudem; Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2002), 72, points to seven key internal textual indicators that the creation of “man” (his translation of *ha’adam* which I would prefer to translate “humankind”) was “the pinnacle of God’s creative work”: (1) only after He creates “man” does God say creation is “very good” (Gen 1:31); (2) the creation of “man” is introduced differently than all other creation with the personal divine deliberative statement “Let Us . . .” (1:26); (3) the one God uses the plural “Us” as He creates (singular) “man” who is plural (“male and female”); (4) the phrase “image of God” is used three times in the creation narrative (1:26–27) and only with reference to the creation of “man”; (5) the special term *bar’a* “create” is used three times (1:27) with reference to the creation of “man”; (6) “man” (as male and female) is given rulership over the other created beings on earth (1:26, 28), indicating “man’s” higher authority and priority; and (7) only the creation of “man” as male and female is expanded and further developed in the creation account of Gen 2.

⁹ See Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Anthropology and the Old Testament” (Third International Bible Conference, Jerusalem, Israel, June 16, 2012), 2-17, available upon request from davidson@andrews.edu.

¹⁰ For a recognition that *tselem* emphasizes more something concrete and *demut* something abstract, see, e.g., Porteous, “Image of God,” 684–5; and von Rad, *Genesis*, 57–58. W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (CHANE 15; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), 117–176 (summarized in 165–6), gives reasons for rejecting various other suggestions regarding *tselem* and *demut*: that the two terms are used indiscriminately and interchangeably; that they do not describe two different sorts of relationship; that “likeness” simply reinforces the first term “image,” or is used to “mitigate, weaken, attenuate, or limit the force of the first (‘image’)”; that either term lacks specific semantic content by itself; that the two terms are essentially synonymous.

¹¹ Ilona N. Rashkow, *Taboo or Not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 61.

¹² Notice that when Ellen White mentions “image” she speaks first of the “outward resemblance,” and when she uses the term “likeness” she refers first to “character,” without excluding the other aspects in either term. See also her paraphrase of this resemblance as “moral faculties” and “physical powers”: after citing Gen 1:26, 27, she writes, “The Lord created man’s moral faculties and his physical powers. All was a sinless transcript of Himself.” YI July 20, 1899 (3 SM 133).

¹³ I use the term “leadership” rather than “headship” throughout this paper, since the meaning of the term “head” (esp. as found in the Pauline writings) has become a matter of dispute and confusion in the current debate over gender status in Scripture. Further support for this use of terms is found esp. from Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, “Introduction,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (eds. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004), 15–16 (and the entire book).

¹⁴ Helmut Thielicke, *The Ethics of Sex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 7.

¹⁵ Gerhard Hasel, “The Meaning of ‘Let Us’ in Gen 1:26,” *AUSS* 13 (1975): 58–66; the quotation is from p. 64.

¹⁶ Jiří Moskala, “Toward Trinitarian Thinking in the Hebrew Scriptures,” *JATS* 21 (2010): 258; see his critique of the various other views, 249–259.

¹⁷ Hasel, “The Meaning of ‘Let Us,’” 65.

¹⁸ Von Rad, *Genesis*, 60.

¹⁹ Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman, III, *Intimate Allies: Rediscovering God’s Design for Marriage and Becoming Soul Mates for Life* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1995), 80. For a sensitive discussion of the implications of this principle of creative shaping for the marriage relationship, see *ibid.*, 73–125.

²⁰ See Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961–1964), 1:58, for a paraphrase of Gen 1:29–30: “You are permitted to make use of the living creatures and their service, you are allowed to exercise power over them so that they may promote your subsistence; but you may not treat the life-force within them contemptuously and slay them in order to eat their flesh; your proper diet shall be vegetable food.”

²¹ See, e.g., Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 41–42, for further discussion of this point, comparing the biblical creation narrative with the *Enuma elish* and the Atrahasis Epic.

²² See Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 135; and Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 26–27, 206–212.

²³ Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *The Feminist Bogeywoman: Questions and Answers about Evangelical Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 27. Cf. Edward Noort, “The Creation of Man and Woman in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Traditions,” in *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuis; Themes in Biblical Narrative 3; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 9: “Gen 1:27 aims at the credo that the separation in male and female belongs to creation from the beginning. There is no priority. Neither male or female have a dominant position here.”

²⁴ In this paper we generally avoid the use of the terminology “ontology” or “ontological,” both because there is confusion in modern discussion over the precise meaning of this terminology, and also (more importantly) because this terminology does not seem to satisfactorily correlate with the intention of the biblical writer in the Old Testament.

²⁵ Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1–3,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991), 97–98. Cf. Ware, “Male and Female Complementarity,” 84: “we should resist the movement today in Bible translation that would customarily render instances of ‘adam’ with the fully non-gender-specific term ‘human being.’ . . . This misses the God-intended implication conveyed by the masculine generic ‘man,’ viz., that woman possesses her common human nature only through the prior nature of the man.” So also Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 34–36.

²⁶ See *DCH* 1:123–129, which defines ‘adam’ as “human being, humanity, people, individual person, humans,” but avoids the term “man” except for reference to the first human, Adam. Cf. the discussion and bibliography in Victor P. Hamilton, “‘adam,’” *NIDOTTE* 1:262–266; and Walter Vogels, “Man and Woman: Their Dignity, Mutuality and Fidelity in Marriage: A Biblical Perspective (Gen 1–3),” *BiBh* 23 (1997): 216–218.

²⁷ See esp. Kevin Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002), 145–155, for numerous examples throughout church history illustrating this dominant “traditional” view since shortly after NT times, including citations from such figures as Tertullian, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, (the early) Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, William Gouge and Robert Bolton (Puritans), Matthew Henry, Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, Charles Hodge, and Adam Clarke. See also John A. Phillips, *Eve: The History of an Idea* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), *passim*; and Kristen E. Kvam, et al., eds., *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1999), *passim*.

²⁸ This view, making a clear distinction between Gen 1 and 2, was popular among “first wave” feminists of the late 19th cent.: see, e.g., Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman’s Bible* (New York: European Publishing Co., 1895, 1898; repr., Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 20–21. It is also a common view among contemporary liberal feminists, who regard Gen 1 as egalitarian and Gen 2 as hierarchical: e.g., Anne Gardner, “Genesis 2:4b–3: A Mythological Paradigm of Sexual Equality or of the Religious History of Pre-Exilic Israel?” *SJT* 43 (1990): 1–18. Many conservative hierarchicalists/subordinationists also emphasize the difference between what they term “ontological” equality in Gen 1 and “functional” hierarchy in Gen 2. See, e.g., Ronald B. Allen and Beverly Allen, *Liberated Traditionalism: Men and Women in Balance* (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah, 1985), 89–117; Mary A. Kassian, *Women, Creation and the Fall* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1990), 13–20; Susan T. Foh, “A Male Leadership View: The Head of the Woman is the Man,” in *Women in Ministry: Four Views* (ed. Bonnidel Clouse and Robert G. Clouse; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1989), 72–73; George W. Knight, III, “The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Male and Female with Special Attention to the Teaching/Ruling Functions in the Church,” *JETS* 18 (1975): 83–84; idem, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women: New Testament Teaching* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 7–9; Richard N. Longenecker, “Authority, Hierarchy, and Leadership Patterns in the Bible,” in *Women, Authority and the Bible* (ed. Alvera Mickelsen; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1986), 66–67; and Aubrey Malphurs, *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: Understanding Masculinity and Femininity from God’s Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996), 21–62.

²⁹ Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch: Three Volumes in One*, trans. James Martin; vol. 1 of *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* (repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 3:89.

³⁰ For discussion of this construction, see esp. James Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 9–10; cf. Mitchel Dahood, *Psalms* (3 vols.; AB 16–17A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965–1970), 1:5; and Phillis Trible, “Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation,” *JAAR* 41 (1973): 36.

³¹ Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” 9.

³² Trevor Dennis, *Sarah Laughed: Women’s Voices in the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 13. Genesis 2:7 and 2:21b–22 contain 16 Hebrew words describing the creation of man and woman respectively.

³³ This is recognized already by John L. McKenzie, “The Literary Characteristics of Genesis 2–3,” *TS* 15 (1954): 559: “the creation of woman is the climax toward which the whole preceding narrative tends. . . . The narrative treats woman as an equal and a partner of man. This feature does not appear in any ancient Near Eastern story.”

³⁴ Mary Corona, “Woman in Creation Story,” *Jeev* 21 (1991): 98–99. That reference to man first and then to woman does not thereby imply a patriarchal understanding of male leadership over woman is further supported by comparison with the account of the first marriage in the Akkadian parallel account, the Atrahasis Epic (extant copy from 17th century B.C.E.). While it is generally recognized that in the patriarchal society of ancient Mesopotamia the subservience of the wife to the husband exceeded that of ancient Israel. See esp. Sophie Lafont, *Femmes, droit et justice dans l’antiquité orientale: Contributions à l’étude du droit pénal au Proche-Orient ancien* (OBO 165; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), passim. It is instructive that in the description of the first marriage, and elsewhere throughout the Epic where both genders are mentioned, it is the woman who is mentioned first, and the man second! See Bernard F. Batto, “The Institution of Marriage in Genesis 2 and in Atrahasis,” *CBQ* 62 (2000): 627. Richard Hess draws the important conclusion: “This indicates that the *sequence* of man’s and woman’s creation has no significance for implications of the society’s view of or assumptions regarding hierarchy” (Richard S. Hess, “Equality with and without Innocence: Genesis 1–3,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* [ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004], 85–86).

³⁵ Carl P. Cosaert, “Paul, Women, and the Ephesian Church: And Examination of 1 Timothy 2:8–15,” paper for the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Baltimore, MD, July 22–24, 2013.

³⁶ See Richard M. Davidson, “Corporate Solidarity in the Old Testament” (unpublished paper, revised December 2004), available upon request from davidson@andrews.edu.

³⁷ This is the phrase coined by Sakae Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1980), 19.

³⁸ Cf. Joy Elasky Fleming, *Man and Woman in Biblical Unity: Theology from Genesis 2–3* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Christians for Biblical Equality, 1993), 6: “Clearly the man needed to know the rules of the game during the interval before the woman’s arrival. . . . This need not imply any superiority on his part; only that he needed to hear the command as soon as he was present in Eden.”

³⁹ John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 217–218.

⁴⁰ David J. A. Clines, “What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Irredeemably Androcentric Orientations in Genesis 1–3,” in *What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament* (ed. David J. A. Clines; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), Clines, “What Does Eve Do to Help?” 25–48.

⁴¹ Exodus 18:4; Deut 33:7, 26, 29; Pss 20:3 [English v. 2]; 33:20; 70:6 [English v. 5]; 89:20 [English v. 19]; 115:9, 10, 11; 121:1, 2; 124:8; 146:5; Hos 13:9.

⁴² Isaiah 30:5; Ezek 12:14; Dan 11:34.

⁴³ In a provocative article, R. David Freedman argues that the Hebrew word ‘*ezer*’ etymologically derives from the merger of two Semitic roots, ‘*zr*,’ “to save, rescue” and ‘*g_zr*’ “to be strong,” and in Gen 2 has reference to the latter: woman is created, like the man, “a power (or strength) superior to the animals” (“Woman, A Power Equal to Man,” *BAR* 9, no. 1 [January/February 1983]: 56–58).

⁴⁴ Corona, “Woman in Creation Story,” 99.

⁴⁵ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 118.

⁴⁶ BDB, 617. So also Noort, “The Creation of Man and Woman,” 12–13, who examines the phrase ‘ezer kenegdo and concludes that it “means here mutual stimulation, helping each other as equals” (13).

⁴⁷ Freedman, “A Power Equal to Man,” 56–58. Freedman notes that in later Mishnaic Hebrew *keneged* clearly means “equal,” and in light of various lines of Biblical philological evidence he forcefully argues that the phrase ‘ezer kenegdo here should be translated “a power equal to him.”

⁴⁸ Cassuto, *Genesis*, 1:128.

⁴⁹ Cf. Judy L. Brown, *Women Ministers according to Scripture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Christians for Biblical Equality, 1996), 19: “If Adam is better than Eve by virtue of supplying a bone, then the ground is better than Adam by virtue of supplying the dust. The dust and bone were simply raw materials in the hands of the true source of life, the one from whom both Adam and Eve were given their existence.”

⁵⁰ Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 101.

⁵¹ Samuel Terrien, “Toward a Biblical Theology of Womanhood,” in *Male and Female: Christian Approaches to Sexuality* (ed. Ruth T. Barnhouse and Urban T. Holmes, III; New York: Seabury, 1976), 18; cf. idem, *Till the Heart Sings: A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 12: “the use of the verb ‘to build’ for the woman implies an intellectual and aesthetic appreciation of her body, the equilibrium of her forms, and the volumes and proportions of her figure.”

⁵² Paul’s argument that “man is not from woman, but woman from man” (1 Cor 11:8) does not contradict the interpretation set forth here. See the study by Teresa Reeve.

⁵³ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), 230.

⁵⁴ Raymond F. Collins, “The Bible and Sexuality,” *BTB* 7 (1977): 153. It may be that the Sumerian language retains the memory of the close relationship between “rib” and “life,” for the same Sumerian sign *ti* signifies both “life” and “rib.” See Samuel N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), 146. This is not to say, however, that the detail of the rib in Gen 2 has its origin in Sumerian mythology. The story of creation in Gen 2 and the Sumerian myth in which the pun between “lady of the rib” and “lady who makes live” appears (“Enki and Ninhursag: A Paradise Myth,” translated by S. N. Kramer [*ANET*, 37–41]), has virtually nothing in common.

⁵⁵ Trible, “Depatriarchalizing,” 37. Cf. Mary Phil Korsak, “Hebrew Word Patterns Retained in English in Genesis 2:4b–3:24,” *ACEBT* 15 (1996): 16: “‘Side’ expresses man/woman equality.”

⁵⁶ Quoted in Stuart B. Babbage, *Christianity and Sex* (Chicago: InterVarsity, 1963), 10. A similar statement is attributed to other writers as well, including the earlier church fathers.

⁵⁷ Walter Brueggemann, “Of the Same Flesh and Bone (Gen 2:23a),” *CBQ* 32 (1970): 540. For biblical examples of this usage, see esp. Gen 29:14; Judg 9:2–3; 2 Sam 5:1; 19:13; cf. Job 2:5; and Ps 102:5. Samuel Terrien, *Till the Heart Sings: A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 13, points out that these texts refer to “a psychic bond of covenant loyalty.”

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Thomas R. Schreiner, “Women in Ministry,” in *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (ed. James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 206–209.

⁵⁹ Biblical examples usually cited in support of the oriental view of naming as the demonstration of one’s exercise of a sovereign right over a person, include such passages as 2 Kgs 23:34; 24:17; Dan 1:7. Cf. R. Abba, “Name,” *IDB* 3:502. This thesis has been challenged in a penetrating article by George W. Ramsey, “Is Name-Giving an Act of Domination in Genesis 2:23 and Elsewhere?” *CBQ* 50 (1988): 24–35. Ramsey examines the major texts where it is claimed that bestowal of a name indicates control or authority over the person named, and shows that “instead of thinking of name-giving as a *determiner* of an entity’s essence, the Hebrews regarded naming as commonly *determined by* circumstances. The naming *results from* events which have occurred” (34, emphasis his). For example, the non-Israelite kings’ change of individual’s names cannot be normative for Hebrew thinking (and these do not have the typical naming formula/terminology). Very significant is the fact that Hagar names God (Gen 16:13) using the typical naming formula! Certainly this does not imply her control/domination over divinity! Again, in Gen 26:17–21 Isaac names the wells even as he relinquishes authority over them. In Gen 2, when the man names the animals, here again “it is more appropriate to understand this as an act of his *discerning* something about these creatures—an essence which had already been established by God” (*ibid.*, 34–35). For a similar assessment of the evidence, see also Rick R. Marrs, “In the Beginning: Male and Female (Gen 1–3),” in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity* (ed. Carroll D. Osburn; 2 vols.; Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1995), 2:17–18; and Carol A. Newsom, “Common Ground: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 2–3,” in *The Earth Story in Genesis* (ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 66.

⁶⁰ Ramsey, “Name-Giving,” 34 (emphasis his). For further discussion, see *ibid.*, 32–34.

⁶¹ The same point is re-affirmed in Gen 3, where this equality/mutuality is described as recently broken. Mary Leith observes that “By reversing the negatives in God’s curse of Adam and Eve, we come to the lost positives of the Garden—and the world as God meant it to be. . . . Reading backwards [from Gen 3:16], we can detect the earlier mutuality between the man and woman, a harmonious relationship expressed by Genesis 2:23. . . . The harmony of the relationship is evident even without the philological argument that the Hebrew words designating Eve as Adam’s ‘helper as his partner’ (Genesis 2:18) does not imply subordination” (Mary Joan Winn Leith, “Back to the Garden,” *BR* 18, no. 2 [April 2002]: 10, 46).

⁶² J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis* (2d ed; Biblical Seminar 12; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 37.

⁶³ Hess, “Equality with and without Innocence,” 88.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 87.

⁶⁵ Paul Borgman, *Genesis: The Story We Haven't Heard* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001), 26.

⁶⁶ Jacques B. Doukhan, *The Literary Structure of the Genesis Creation Story* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 5; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1978), 47, points to “the use of the passive (*niphal*, *pual*) which conveys the idea of an intervention from outside, hence God, who is still the only ‘other’ (for the biblical usage of the passive as referring to God, see Lev 13:7; Luke 5:20).” For further discussion of the divine passive in the Scripture, see Hans K. La Rondelle, *Perfection and Perfectionism: A Dogmatic-Ethical Study of Biblical Perfection and Phenomenal Perfectionism* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University, 1975), 127–128; and Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (trans., D. M. G. Stalker; 2 vols.; New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 1:247–248, 261–262. For other lines of evidence disaffirming man’s authoritative naming of woman in Gen 2:23 in contrast to his authoritative naming of the animals in Gen 2:19–20, see esp. Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 99–100; Gerhard Hasel, “Equality from the Start: Woman in the Creation Story,” *Spectrum* 7 (1975): 23–24; and Fleming, *Man and Woman*, 14–15.

⁶⁷ There is not general consensus among scholars as to the etymology of these words. The suggestion by some etymologists that *’ish* (man) has the root idea of “strength” and *’ishah* (wo-man) the idea of “weaker” sex could imply that the man was to be the protector-provider for the woman, but this does not connote leadership on the part of the man and submission on the part of the woman. Witness the famous and important people with stronger bodyguards that are protectors but certainly do not possess authority or leadership over the VIPs. Clearly, the intention of the Genesis account by linking this word-pair by (popular but inspired) etymology is to emphasize the mutual communion and commonality of the man and woman.

⁶⁸ See Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Creation* (trans. J. W. Edwards et al.; 4 bks.; vol. 3 of *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), 2:291; Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 100.

⁶⁹ See Ramsey, “Name-Giving,” 35, n. 38, who points out that in Gen 3:20 the narrator makes clear that Adam is not trying to determine Eve’s destiny (i.e., exercise authority over her), or he would have said “She will be the mother of all living.” Instead the narrator reports again what Adam discerns already to be true: “she was [*haytah*] the mother of all living.”

⁷⁰ I have collected over fifty major scholarly studies which come to this conclusion. A sample of the more important analyses of Gen 2 (as well as of Gen 1 and of the various hierarchicalist/subordinationist arguments for male leadership and female subordination) include: Phyllis A. Bird, “Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image in the Genesis Creation Texts” in *Image of God and Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition* (ed. Kari Elisabeth Børresen; Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1991), 11–31; idem, “Bone of My Bone and Flesh of My Flesh,” 521–533; Linda L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 96–103; Gilbert G. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says About a Woman’s Place in Church and Family* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 21–37; Brown, *Women Ministers according to Scripture*, 17–34; Corona, “Woman in Creation Story,” 95–106; Dennis, *Sarah Laughed*, 8–18; Fleming, *Man and Woman*, 3–17; Mary J. Evans, *Woman in the Bible: An Overview of All the Crucial Passages on Women’s Roles* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1984), 11–17; Stanley Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995), 160–165; Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 121–139; Mary Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ: The Use and Abuse of the Bible in the Debate about Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 84–117; Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, *Equal to Serve: Women and Men in the Church and Home* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1987), 152–183; (the later) Luther, *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1–5*, 138, 200–203; Marrs, “In the Beginning,” 11–12, 18–22, 31–32; Alvera Mickelsen, “An Egalitarian View: There is Neither Male nor Female in Christ,” in *Women in Ministry: Four Views* (ed. Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1989), 181–187; John H. Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed: The Status of Women in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 15–18; Ramsey, “Name-Giving,” 24–35; Alberto Soggin, “The Equality of Humankind From the Perspective of the Creations Stories in Genesis 1:26–30 and 2:9, 15, 18–24,” *JNSL* 23 (1997): 21–33; Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville, Tenn.: Nelson, 1985), 20–29; Lee Anna Starr, *The Bible Status of Woman* (New York: Revell, 1926; repr., New York: Garland, 1987), 17–26; Leonard Swidler, *Biblical Affirmations of Women* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), 75–78; Terrien, *Till the Heart Sings*, 7–17; Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 72–105; idem, “Depatriarchalizing,” 35–40; Ruth A. Tucker, *Women in the Maze: Questions and Answers on Biblical Equality* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992), 33–42; Vogels, “Man and Woman,” 205–227; idem, “It Is Not Good that the ‘Mensch’ Should Be Alone; I Will Make Him/Her a Helper Fit for Him/Her,” *EgT* 9 (1978): 9–35; and Erich Zenger, “Die Erschaffung des Menschen als Mann und Frau: Eine Lesehilfe für die sogenannte Paradies- und Sündenfallgeschichte Gen 2,4b–3,24,” *BK* 58 (2003): 14.

⁷¹ Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 41.

⁷² For an overview, see esp. Gerhard Hasel, “The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” *EvQ* 46 (1974): 81–102; cf. Cassuto, *Genesis*, 1:7–177, passim; and Noort, “The Creation of Man and Woman,” 8–10.

⁷³ Some may find this juxtaposition of terms, “egalitarian complementarity” to be an oxymoron. But I am unwilling to surrender the word “complementarian” to those who use it to describe male leadership and female submission roles as a creation ordinance. What I understand as the biblical view of egalitarian husband-wife role relations is also just as “complementarian”—recognizing differences between the sexes in general and between individual marriage partners, without positing a creation leadership/submission role relationship between man and woman. I find most useful the definition of complementarity provided by Hyun Chul Paul Kim (“Gender Complementarity in the Hebrew Bible,” “Gender Complementarity in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Reading the Hebrew Bible for a New Millennium: Form, Concept and Theological Perspective*, vol. 1, *Theological and Hermeneutical Studies* [ed. Wonil Kim et al.; Studies in Antiquity and Christianity; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International,

2000), 268: “The term ‘complementarity’ . . . implies an idea of the relationship of two distinct parties who share mutual needs, interdependence, and respect. This term is to be distinguished from the connotation of a hierarchical relationship of two parties where one is subordinate to the other. Rather, it is used to include the ideas of mutuality, balance, and equality, while maintaining the uniqueness and distinctiveness of each party rather than homogeneity.” For recent further support and elaboration of the terminology of “complementarity without hierarchy,” see esp. Pierce and Groothuis, “Introduction,” 16–17 (and the entire book *Discovering Biblical Equality*). For a popularized elaboration of this concept, see, e.g., H. Dale Burke, *Different by Design: God’s Master Plan for Harmony between Men and Women in Marriage* (Chicago: Moody, 2000), 19–51.

⁷⁴ Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 110.

⁷⁵ Werner Neuer, *Man and Woman in Christian Perspective* (trans. Gordon J. Wenham; Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991), 70.

⁷⁶ Contra a main focus of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, represented esp. by Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*; Piper and Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*; and Saucy and TenElshof, eds., *Women and Men in Ministry*. For a critique (both from Scripture and the social sciences) of the attempt to establish fixed roles for men and women from Gen 1–2 and the rest of Scripture, see esp., Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *Gender and Grace: Love, Work & Parenting in a Changing World* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1990); and idem, *My Brother’s Keeper: What the Social Sciences Do (and Don’t) Tell Us About Masculinity* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002). What can be stated with certainty is that in these opening chapters of the Bible there is no gender status differentiation that gives the man the leadership authority over woman.

⁷⁷ George W. Knight, III, *The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977).

⁷⁸ Giles, *Trinity and Subordinationism*, 180.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Paul B. Petersen, “Trinitarian Equality and ‘Eternal Subordination of the Son’: A Revival of an Anti-Trinitarian Heresy?” Unpublished paper, May, 2013, 10-11.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 190-1.

⁸⁶ Some have tried to stretch this subordination back to the time when Christ took up his role of mediating between infinity and finitude at creation, based in part upon my study of Prov 8:30-31: “Proverbs 8 and the Place of Christ in the Trinity,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 33–54. However, in that article I make clear that the mediatorial role of the pre-Incarnate Christ was not one of being subordinate to the Father. This is made evident, e.g., when Christ appears to humans as the “Angel of the Lord” throughout the OT; He does not announce Himself as being sent by the Father, but speaks fully on His own authority. Even though the pre-incarnate Christ seems to have taken the form (not the nature) of angel in order to reveal the “Immanuel principle” of “God with us,” that is, the immanence of the Godhead, while the one we call the Father represented the transcendence, and the Spirit represented the omnipresence, of the Godhead, all three Persons of the Godhead remained fully equal, none being subordinated to another.

⁸⁷ The majority of biblical commentators throughout the centuries have taken this verse as referring to the institution of marriage. Notable exceptions to this traditional view include Hermann Gunkel, in his ground-breaking form-critical commentary on Genesis, *Genesis* (HKAT 1, no. 1; 3d ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1910), 13, 41, who saw Gen 2:24 as an aetiology, explaining the mutual sexual attraction of the male and female as the longing of the two, who had originally been one (androgynous), to become one again. Another exception is Westermann, *Genesis*, 1:232, who argues that Gen 2:18–24 is referring to “personal community between man and woman in the broadest sense” and “is not concerned with the foundation of any sort of institution, but with the primeval event” and thus “is not talking about marriage as an institution for the begetting of descendants, but of the community of man and woman as such.” A recent study by Batto, “The Institution of Marriage in Genesis 2 and in *Atrahasis*,” 621–631, argues forcefully that “This debate over the question whether the author of Gen 2:18–25 inventions the institution of marriage or not can now be settled in the affirmative on the basis of comparative evidence, hitherto overlooked, from the Mesopotamian myth of *Atrahasis*” (623). Batto reviews the now-widely-recognized evidence that while there are significant differences between the Gen 2 account and the *Atrahasis* Epic, nonetheless the basic structural flow of the two accounts are in parallel. He then shows how in the structurally parallel equivalent to Gen 2:18–24 in the *Atrahasis* Epic, there is reference to “regulations for humankind” specifically focusing upon the institution of marriage. Thus, Batto, concludes, the narrator of Gen 2:18–24, surely intended v. 24 as the equivalent of “regulations for humankind” in *Atrahasis*, “that is, as a universal law regulating the normative behavior of the sexes within a community of marriage” (629); and as in *Atrahasis*, the Gen 2 narrator is “positing that the institution of marriage is grounded in the very design of creation itself” (631).

⁸⁸ Robert B. Lawton, “Genesis 2:24: Trite or Tragic?” *JBL* 105 (1986): 98. See *ibid.*, 97-98, for additional evidence supporting this conclusion. See also Sawyer, *God, Gender and the Bible*, 24: “The first couple provide the blueprint for normative citizenship in the theocracy proposed in the Bible’s first story.” Cf. Marrs, “In the Beginning,” 22.

⁸⁹ Terrien, *Till the Heart Sings*, 14–15, rightly points out that “in the ancient Near East and most other cultures, patriarchal lineage prevailed in such a way that the primary bond of solidarity was the duty of a man toward his ancestors in

general and to his progenitors in particular. To honor one's father and mother was the most sacred obligation of social responsibility (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16). By dramatic contrast," Terrien continues, the author of Gen 2 "scandalously upsets, even shockingly reverses, this deep-rooted principle of tribal morality. Against the cultures of his environment," the Hebrew author "declares unambiguously that man's first loyalty is to his woman."

⁹⁰ See, e.g., Deut 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; Josh 22:5; 23:8; 2 Sam 20:3; 2 Kgs 18:6.

⁹¹ I express indebtedness to one of my graduate students, Kenneth Bergland, for his suggested use of the terms "symmetrical" and "asymmetrical" and "inverse hierarchy" in this context, and for his helpful insights into the mutual submission implied in such terms as "cleave" in Gen 2:24. See his unpublished paper, "Rereading Gender in Eden with the Language of Fallen Humanity," April 28, 2013.

⁹² For a summary of some seventeen lines of intertextual evidence for this conclusion, see Richard M. Davidson, "Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium," *JATS* 11, nos. 1 & 2 (Spring–Autumn 2000): 108–111; for a longer list of thirty lines of biblical evidence, see idem, *Song for the Sanctuary: SDA Textbook* (Silver Spring, MD: SDA Biblical Research Institute, forthcoming), chap. 6. (draft copy available upon request from davidson@andrews.edu. See also Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (London: SPCK, 1991), 68–103; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (NSBT 17; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004), 66–80; Meridith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (South Hampton, Mass.: Gordon–Conwell Theological Seminary, 1989), 31–32, 54–56; Eric Bolger, "The Compositional Role of the Eden Narrative in the Pentateuch" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1993); William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning* (Homebush, New South Wales: Lancer, 1985), 35–76; Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken, 1979), 12–13; Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), 142–145; S. Dean McBride Jr., "Divine Protocol: Genesis 1:1–2:3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch," in *God Who Creates* (ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2000), 11–15; Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism* (ed. Donald W. Parry; Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret, 1994), 126–151; Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (CBET 25; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2000), 111–138; and Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1986): 19–25; repr. in *"I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood": Ancient Near Eastern, Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11* (eds., Richard S. Hess and David T. Tsumara; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399–404.

⁹³ For discussion of the pre-sin function of the heavenly sanctuary as a place of praise/worship, and its return to that primary function when the Great Controversy is over, see R. Davidson, *Song for the Sanctuary*, chap. 5.

⁹⁴ See Davidson, "Proverbs 8 and the Place of Christ in the Trinity," 33–54.

⁹⁵ Hamilton, *Genesis*, 171.

⁹⁶ Humans before the Fall were also given the role of "guarding" the Garden (presumably in light of the fact that Satan the fallen heavenly cherub was lurking in the Garden), but after the Fall they lose this role, and it is transferred to the "guardian cherubim" at the Gate of the Garden (Gen 3:24).

⁹⁷ Claus Westermann, *Creation* (London: SPCK, 1974), 96. So also, Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (IBC 1; Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 49: "The scene [Gen 3:8–24] becomes a trial." Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 117, likewise comments on this scene: "God becomes the prosecutor in a court of law." Cf. Marrs, "In the Beginning," 27–28, who describes Gen 3:8–13 as a "trial" and "verdict" followed by a "judgment" in Gen 3:14–19; and Malphurs, *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 99, who summarizes the scene of vv. 14–19 thus: "God as the prosecuting attorney probed the two defendants who reluctantly admitted some guilt but shifted the blame to others. Now God moves from the role of prosecutor to judge and pronounces final judgment."

⁹⁸ One could divide this view (and some of the others that follow) into two sub-categories, consisting of a liberal-critical version and conservative-evangelical version of the position. Liberal-critical scholars tend to use the terms "supremacy" and "subordination" to describe the relative status of Adam and Eve respectively, arguing that in the understanding of the narrator there existed a divinely-ordained *ontological hierarchy* between the sexes. Most conservative evangelicals who hold this view, on the other hand, argue for an equality of ontological status between Adam and Eve at creation, but propose that the text presents a divinely-ordained *functional hierarchy* (their preferred term is "complementarian" relationship) consisting of the roles of male leadership (or "headship," as many hierarchical complementarians prefer) and female submission respectively. For the purpose of this paper I focus mainly on the Adventist debate, which largely follows the contours of the conservative-evangelical debate, and use the terms "leadership" and "submission". For discussion of the liberal-critical views, see my fuller treatment of this subject in *Flame of Yahweh*, 60–80.

⁹⁹ In this view, the *waw* in *wehu'* is coordinative ("and") and the *qal* impf. of *mashal* (*yimshol*) is a descriptive future ("he shall rule over you"). Supporting this position, John Calvin, for instance, sees woman's position before the fall as "liberal and gentle subjection"; after the fall she is "cast into servitude"; nonetheless she still desires what her husband desires (*Commentary on Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.], 1:172). The Keil and Delitzsch commentary similarly presents the original position of man-woman as rule/subordination rooted in mutual esteem and love, but argues that after sin the woman has "a desire bordering on disease" and the husband exercises "despotic rule" over his wife (*The Pentateuch*, 1:103). H. C. Leupold, in his *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1942), 172, describes a morbid yearning on the part of the woman after the fall that often "takes a perverted form, even to the point of nymphomania." John Skinner speaks of the woman's "desire which makes her the willing slave of the man" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* [2d ed.; ICC 1; Edinburgh:

T&T Clark, 1930], 82). See also Ronald B. Allen and Beverly Allen, *Liberated Traditionalism: Men and Women in Balance* (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah, 1985), 117–128; Thomas Finley, “The Relationship of Woman and Man in the Old Testament,” in *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective* (ed. Robert L. Saucy and Judith K. TenElshof; Chicago: Moody, 2001), 58–61; Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2004), 37–40, 108–110; Mary A. Kassian, *Woman, Creation and the Fall* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1990), 21–30; Malphurs, *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 63–112; Robert Saucy, “The Negative Case Against the Ordination of Women,” in *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology: Papers from the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society* (ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Stanley N. Gundry; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 280; Michael F. Stitzinger, “Genesis 1–3 and the Male/Female Role Relationship,” *GTJ 2* (1981): 38–43; and Clarence J. Vos, *Woman in Old Testament Worship* (Amsterdam: Judels and Brinkman, 1968), 19–27.

¹⁰⁰ In this interpretation, the *waw* in *wehu*’ is adversative (“but”) and the *qal* impf. of *mashal* (*yimshol*) is prescriptive (“he must rule over you”). This view is argued most fully by Susan T. Foh, “What is the Woman’s Desire?” *WTJ 37* (1975): 376–383 (cf. *idem*, *Women and the Word of God* [Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979], 68–69). A similar position is taken by, e.g., Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs: Biblical Perspectives, 1987), 79–84; Collins, “What Happened to Adam and Eve?” 36–39; and James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 218–219. Cf. Walter Vogels, “The Power Struggle between Man and Woman (Gen 3,16b),” *Bib 77* (1996): 197–209, who likewise pictures Gen 4:7 as a negative experience—sin as a wild animal crouching in wait for his prey—though he interprets it as descriptive and not prescriptive like Foh and others. For a critique of Foh’s view, see esp. Stitzinger, “Genesis 1–3 and the Male/Female Role Relationship,” 23–44.

¹⁰¹ Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in the Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Books, 1980), 35. Clark does not rule out this as a possibility, but he more strongly favors view one. This third interpretation was also the view of Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.92.1, 2 (see *Man Made to God’s Image* [1a. 90–102] [vol. 13 of *St Thomas Aquinas Summa theologiae: Latin Text, English Translation, Introduction, Notes, Appendices & Glossary*; trans. Edmond Hill; 60 vols.; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964], 34–41), who maintained that already before the fall there existed a subordination of the woman (*subjectio oeconomica vel civilis*) which was for the woman’s advantage and well-being (*ad . . . utilitatem et bonum*), and this was reaffirmed after the fall. (For full discussion of Aquinas’ view of the nature and role of woman, see esp. Kari Elisabeth Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence: The Nature and Role of Woman in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas* [trans. Charles H. Talbot; Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981], *passim*). Similarly, Ambrose, *De Paradiso*, 72, in *St. Ambrose: Hexameron, Paradise, and Cain and Abel* (trans. John J. Savage; vol. 42 of *The Fathers of the Church*, ed. Roy J. Deferran; New York: Fathers of the Church, 1961), 350: “Servitude, therefore, of this sort is a gift of God. Wherefore, compliance with this servitude is to be reckoned among blessings.” See also Irvin A. Busenitz, “Woman’s Desire for Man: Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered,” *GTJ 7* (1986): 203–212 (who concurs in general with this view, but does not agree that the woman’s sin consisted in getting out from under the leadership of her husband).

¹⁰² Of the dozens of major studies propounding this position, see esp., Belleville, *Women Leaders in the Church*, 96–108; Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 39–58; Brown, *Women Ministers according to Scripture*, 35–61; Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 17–21; Fleming, *Man and Woman*, 19–42; Grenz, *Women in the Church*, 165–169; Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 138–144; Patricia Gundry, *Woman Be Free! The Clear Message of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 60–63; Fritz Guy, “The Disappearance of Paradise,” in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women* (ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart; Langley Park, Md.: Team Press, 1995), 137–153; Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ*, 102–117; Hess, “Equality with and without Innocence,” 79–95; Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 29–42; Starr, *The Bible Status of Woman*, 27–53; Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Human Sexuality*, 105–139; Tucker, *Women in the Maze*, 43–54; and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *Gender and Grace: Love, Work and Parenting in a Changing World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1990), 42–51.

¹⁰³ This position is supported, e.g., by the later Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1–5* (trans. George V. Schick; vol. 1 of *Luther’s Works*; ed. Jaroslav Pelikan; St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 137–138, 202–203: “If Eve had persisted in the truth, she would not only not have been subjected to the rule of her husband, but she herself would also have been a partner in the rule which is now entirely the concern of males” (203); “The wife was made subject to the man by the Law which was given after sin” (138); “Eve has been placed under the power of her husband, she who previously was very free and, as the sharer of all the gifts of God, was no respect inferior to her husband. This punishment, too, springs from original sin” (202). For further discussion of the views of the early and later Luther, see esp. Mickey Leland Mattox, “Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs”: *Martin Luther’s Interpretation of the Women of Genesis in the Enarrations in Genesis, 1535–45* (SMRT 92; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), 29–33, 67–108. Other more recent proponents of this position include Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1975), 93–94; and Theodor C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (2d ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 399.

¹⁰⁴ E.g., Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed*, 18, 197–198; John J. Schmitt, “Like Eve, Like Adam: *mšl* in Gen 3:16,” *Bib 72* (1991): 1–22; Kowalski Wojciech, “Female Subjection to Man: Is It a Consequence of the Fall?” *African Ecclesial Review 35* (1993): 274–287. An alternate suggestion is made by Robert I. Vasholz, “‘He (?) Will Rule Over You’: A Thought on Genesis 3:16,” *Presb 20* (1994): 51–52, who contends that the masculine pronoun *hu*’ should be translated “that” and not “he,” referring not to her husband but to the “desire” of the woman (her capacity for affection) that will rule or prevail over her anticipation of suffering. This suggestion is critiqued below.

¹⁰⁵ Tribble perhaps exaggerates when she elaborates: “Theologian, ethicist, hermeneut, rabbi, she speaks with clarity and authority” (*God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 110). But her main point is on the mark. And she may well be right when she

points out that Eve's addition of the phrase "nor shall you touch it," shows her hermeneutical ability to "build a fence around the Torah," like the later rabbinic exegetes, in order to insure obedience to it (ibid.).

¹⁰⁶ Hess, "Equality with and without Innocence," 89.

¹⁰⁷ I prefer this interpretation instead of seeing Eve as the talkative initiator and Adam as the silent bystander (contra Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 110–113). The Hebrew clause in Gen 3:6 "she also gave to her husband *with her* [*'immah*]" does not imply that Adam was right by her side at the tree; note the clarification for this preposition in Adam's reply to God (Gen 3:12): "The woman whom You gave to be with me [*'immadi*]"—showing that it refers to their partnership, and not to their proximity of location at any one given time. This interpretation seems to be implied in the last half of 3:12: "she gave me of the tree, and I ate." If Adam had been present and listened to the whole conversation between Eve and the serpent, it seems he would have implicated the serpent as well as the woman in his defense. Similarly, the woman's testimony in 3:13 ("The serpent deceived me") would also seem to have applied to Adam as well (he also would have been deceived) if he had been personally present at the tree next to Eve. See also Ellen White, PP 56.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 34, n. 90.

¹⁰⁹ Contra, e.g., Ortlund, "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship," 107–108; Schreiner, "Women in Ministry," 209. I do not deny the possibility that Adam was approached first because he was "father" and "representative head" of the whole human race, as discussed above. But I also pointed out above that Eve was "mother" and also likely "co-representative head" of the whole human race. In any case, Adam's representative (non-hierarchical) headship would not consist of a hierarchical relationship with regard to his wife.

¹¹⁰ Afolarin Ojewole, "The Seed in Genesis 3:15: An Exegetical and Intertextual Study" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2002), 98.

¹¹¹ Hess, "Equality with and without Innocence," 89–90. For the gist of the arguments in this paragraph, I am particularly indebted to Hess (ibid.) and Brown, *Women Ministers*, 45–46.

¹¹² Borgman, *Genesis*, 27. What is lost, Borgman continues, is clarified in v. 16: "The wife, now, must submit to the ruling husband. This is part of the 'curse.'" The interpretation of this verse is explored below.

¹¹³ Westermann, *Creation*, 96.

¹¹⁴ See the discussion in Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 99.

¹¹⁵ Beverly J. Stratton, *Out of Eden: Reading, Rhetoric, and Ideology in Genesis 2–3* (JSOTSup 208; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 208, has aptly observed: "the generic names 'man' and 'woman' used throughout the text suggest that the punishment in 3:16 applies to all women. The narrator tells the story as if this verse describes God's current, if not original, intent for women as a group."

¹¹⁶ Many scholars recognize only one punishment each for the serpent, woman, and man, and hence the parallelism in Gen 3:16*ab* is often taken as the punishment (increased pain/labor in childbirth), and 3:16*cd* taken as description, not penal prescription, of conditions after sin. (See, e.g., Busenitz, "Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered," 206–208.) However, it seems clear that the man receives more than one punishment (although they are all interrelated): pain/hard labor in agricultural pursuits (vv. 17*b*, 19*a*); having to deal with thorns and thistles, and a switch to eating of the herbs of the field (v. 18); and eventual return to dust in death (v. 19*b*). Likewise, the woman receives a multiple, but interrelated, sentence: increased hard labor in childbearing, and a new role of voluntary submission to the servant leadership of her husband. Moreover, while the first part of the divine judgment upon Eve and Adam arguably deals with those roles that will be their primary concern (the woman's childbearing and the man's providing for the family's physical needs), yet both of the judgments end in punishments that broaden to include both male and female. Both Adam and Eve will return to the dust in death; and both Adam and Eve experience a change in role relationships from egalitarian to leadership/submission. For further argumentation in favor of more than one punishment in each of the curse/judgments, see Jerome T. Walsh, "Genesis 2:4b–3:24: A Synchronic Approach," *JBL* 96 (1977): 168–169 (Walsh argues for two punishments for each party, one involving an essential life function and the other a relationship, with the two punishments mutually involved in each).

¹¹⁷ Contra Vasholz, "He (?) Will Rule Over You," 51, the masculine pronoun *hu'* has as its antecedent the masculine *'ishek* "your husband" and not the feminine *teshuqatek* "your desire." It is the husband who will "rule" and not the woman's desire. Although Vasholz correctly points out some exceptions in Genesis to the general rule that the masculine pronoun agrees in gender with its antecedent, in this verse there is a natural masculine noun ("your husband") immediately preceding the masculine pronoun, and it strains one's credulity to suggest that the general rule of gender agreement is broken in this case. The strongest parallel suggested by Vasholz, Gen 4:7, collapses under the explanation provided by Joachim Azevedo (summarized below), since this latter verse does not violate the rule of gender agreement.

¹¹⁸ Recent attempts by some scholars (see view six above) to translate *mashal* as "to be like" instead of "to rule" face insurmountable lexical/grammatical/contextual obstacles. It is true that (following BDB nomenclature) the root *mashal'* in the *nip'al* stem does signify "to be like, similar," but in Gen 3:16 the root *mashal* is in the *qal*. Both *mashal'* "to use a proverb" and *mashal'''* "to rule" occur in the *qal*, but the context of Gen 3:16 seems to clearly preclude the idea of "use a proverb" (*mashal''*). That *mashal'''* "to rule" is intended in this passage is confirmed by the use of the accompanying preposition *be*, the normal proposition following *mashal'''* (cf. BDB, 605), and other Hebrew words of ruling, governing, restraining (*malak*, *radah*, *shalat*, *'asar*, etc), and never used with *mahal'* or *mashal''*. Arguments based largely on the meaning of ancient Near Eastern cognates should not be allowed to override the biblical context, grammar, syntax, and usage. Suggestions of the retrojection of the meaning "to rule" back into the fall narrative by later redaction, under the influence of an Egyptian cognate, although appealing,

unfortunately rest on speculation without textual support. Likewise, Dennis' suggested translation of "to be irresistible" is not defensible as a meaning for *mashal* (*Sarah Laughed*, 25), in light of comparative lexical evidence.

¹¹⁹ Skinner, *Genesis*, 53.

¹²⁰ See, e.g., 2 Sam 23:3; Prov 17:2; Isa 40:10; 63:19; Zech 6:13. See Robert D. Culver, "*mashal* III, rule, have dominion, reign," *TWOT* 1:534: "*mashal* usually receives the translation 'to rule,' but the precise nature of the rule is as various as the real situations in which the action or state so designated occur." Specific examples follow to support this statement. Note, e.g., that the first usage of *mashal* in Scripture is in reference to the two great lights created by God (Gen 1:16)—they were to "dominate" (*Tanach*; New Jewish Version) the day and night. For further discussion of *mashal* in the positive sense here in Gen 3:16 as well as elsewhere in the OT, see Othmar Keel, "Die Stellung der Frau in der Erzählung von Schöpfung und Sündenfall," *Orientierung* 39 (1975): 75.

¹²¹ See, e.g., Judg 8:23; Isa 40:10; Mic 5:1; Zech 6:13; 9:10.

¹²² Hurley (*Man and Woman*, 216–219) has perceptively recognized how in each of the divine judgments in this chapter there is a blessing as well as a curse. Many from conservative Christian traditions (include SDAs) maintain that amid the curse upon the serpent appears a veiled blessing in the *Protoevangelium* (first Gospel promise) of Gen 3:15: "the warfare between Satan and the woman's seed comes to its climax in the death of Christ" (Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 217; cf. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978], 35–37, and Ojewole, "The Seed in Genesis 3:15," *passim*, for biblical evidence in favor of this traditional interpretation in contrast to the modern critical tendency to see here only an aetiological reference.) Likewise, in the curse of the ground and the "toil" that is the punishment of Adam, there is at the same time a blessing in that God promises the ground will continue to yield its fruit and man will still be able to eat of it. Furthermore, the term *ba'bur* employed in v. 17 probably means "for the sake of" (KJV) and not "because of" (RSV) inasmuch as the meaning of "because" is already expressed by *ki* earlier in the verse. The ground is cursed "for his [Adam's] sake"—that is, the curse is for Adam's benefit. Though it did result from Adam's sin, it also is to be regarded as a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. According to the biblical text, it was a part of God's great plan for man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin.

¹²³ Cassuto, *Genesis*, 1:163.

¹²⁴ Clines, *Theme of the Pentateuch*, 63–64.

¹²⁵ Otwell, *Sarah Laughed*, 18, cogently argues that the normal structure of Hebrew parallelism is followed here in that Gen 3:16a and b are in parallel and 3:16c and d are likewise in parallel. As the first two parallel members of this verse duplicate content with regard to childbearing, so "we may expect . . . that 'he shall rule over you' parallels 'your desire shall be for your husband.'" Otwell's argument is strengthened by the use of the conjunctive *waw* which serves to unite v. 16a–b with c–d, and is best translated by "yet" (RSV).

¹²⁶ See BDB, 1003; Victor P. Hamilton, "*teshuqah*," *TWOT* 2:913; David Talley, "*teshuqah*," *NIDOTTE* 4:341–342.

¹²⁷ Adrien Janis Bledstein, "Was Eve Cursed? (Or Did a Woman Write Genesis?)" *BRev* 9, no. 1 (February 1993): 42–45, who (mis)translates the noun "desire" (*teshuqah*) as an adjective "desirable," based upon a conjectural emendation of the MT, which I find unconvincing.

¹²⁸ Contra earlier (first wave) feminist arguments, represented by, e.g., Katherine C. Bushnell, *God's Word to Women* (London: Women's Correspondence Bible Class, 1912; repr., Mossville, Ill.: God's Word to Women Publishers, 1990), lessons 16–19 (no pages), who followed the translation of most ancient versions (LXX, Theodotian, Syriac Peshitta, Samaritan Pentateuch, Old Latin, Sahidic, Bohairic, Coptic, Ethiopic). Cf. Starr, *The Bible Status of Women*, 28–29. It seems clear that these ancient versions are reading *teshubah* ("turning") instead of *teshuqah* in these passages. There is no good reason to abandon the MT for a misunderstanding of the Hebrew text on the part of the ancient versions. For further discussion, see Roland Bergmeier, "Zur Septuagintaübersetzung von Gen 3:16," *ZAW* 79 (1967): 77–79; Cassuto, *Genesis*, 1:166; Hamilton, *Genesis*, 201; Talley, *NIDOTTE* 4:341–342.

¹²⁹ Busenitz ("Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered," 208–212) gives strong reasons why Song 7:11 [10 ET], and not Gen 4:7 (where the other occurrence of *teshuqah* appears) should be the prevailing passage in providing illumination for the sense of *teshuqah* in Gen 3:16. One must recognize an entirely different context between Gen 3:16 and 4:7, and acknowledge the obscurity of meaning of the latter passage. Busenitz summarizes (211): "To grant Gen 4:7 in its obscurity a determinative role in the interpretation of Gen 3:16 without permitting the clarity of Cant 7:10 [11 ET] to permeate the exegetical process is to abandon hermeneutical discernment and propriety." J. M. Sprinkle concurs: "The 'desire' (*teshuqah*) a woman has for her husband (Gen 3:16) is probably sexual attraction or urge (as in Song 7:10 [MT 7:11] that leads her to marry despite its consequences of painful labor and male domination (pace Foh, 376–83, who interprets as 'woman's desire to dominate' her husband based on the use of *teshuqah* in Gen 4:7))" (Joe M. Sprinkle, "Sexuality, Sexual Ethics" (*Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* [ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003], 742). See also Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church*, 106; and Fleming, *Man and Woman in Biblical Unity*, 40.

At the same time, contrary to the claims of those who see a negative connotation of *teshuqah* in Gen 4:7, a penetrating article by Joachim Azevedo, "At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen 4:7," *BN* 100 (1999): 45–59, argues for an interpretation of this passage in which the use of *teshuqah* is positive, thus in basic harmony with its usage in Gen 3:16, (although the sexual connotation is not found in the "desire" of Gen 4:7 as in the other two passages where it refers specifically to man-woman relationships). Azevedo points out the serious linguistic problems in the traditional translation/interpretation, and argues that the minority view in the history of interpretation is to be preferred—God here is alluding to the positive prerogatives of Cain's birthright which he would be in no danger of losing if his conduct were such as it should be. The antecedent of the

masculine suffixed pronouns in *teshuqtô* “his desire” and *timshol-bo* “you shall rule over him” is not *khatta’t* (usually translated “sin”) which is feminine, but Abel (the nearest male antecedent nominative, and the one to whom Cain’s anger is directed in previous verses, probably because he had lost his firstborn status by his non-compliance with the prescribed ritual, as pointed out by Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* [WBC 1; Waco, Tex.: Word, 1987], 102). Furthermore, the word *khatta’t* in this context of ritual sacrifice, should be translated as “sin-offering” or better, “purification-offering,” and not “sin” (as implicit in the LXX translation, and as Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 3; Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1991], 253, points out with regard to the word in a similar, inter-textually related, context in Leviticus). The masculine participle *robets* “lying down, resting, reposing” provides further evidence of a sacrificial context here, pointing to the male gender of the required male sacrificial animal for the purification-offering, as in Lev 4:4, 23. The expression *lappetakh* “at the gate/door” again gives a cultic sacrificial context, referring to the cherubim-guarded door/gate of Paradise, where sinful humans were to bring their sacrifices, paralleling the numerous uses of *petakh* in the Torah describing the door of the Tabernacle. Gathering together the various strands of his exegesis, Azevedo, 59, provides the following contextual translation of Gen 4:7b: “a purification-offering [a male sacrificial animal] lies down at the door [of the Garden], and to you will be his [Abel’s] desire and you will rule [again as the firstborn] over him [your brother].” This interpretation, supported by numerous lines of evidence adduced by Azevedo from grammar, syntax, context, ancient versions (LXX), cognate languages, literary structure, discourse analysis, and ancient Near Eastern parallels, seems plausible, and is consistent with the positive interpretation of *teshuqah* in Gen 3:16 and Song 7:11 (English v. 10).

¹³⁰ It is not possible on the basis of word study alone (as per the cautions of James Barr and others) to determine exactly what is the scope of “yearning” of wife for husband that is implied here. Along the lines of the usage in the Song of Songs (which actually constitutes a commentary on the Genesis passage; see ch. 13 below), depicting Solomon’s desire for the Shulamite, *teshuqah* no doubt includes a sexual desire (see, e.g., Sprinkle, “Sexuality,” 742). In addition, along the lines of Gen 4:7 (which is grammatically parallel with Gen 3:16), with Abel’s “desire” for his elder (first-born) brother Cain, it may involve a sense of dependance and respect. It theoretically could also involve a maternal desire or instinct for children that a relationship with her husband could fulfill, although, as I point out below, the text emphasizes that her desire will be for *her husband*, not for children. The point I am making here is that *teshuqah* in Gen 3:16 most probably has a positive and not negative connotation, just as in Song 7:11 (10 ET) (and perhaps also as in Gen 4:7, the only other occurrences of this term in the Hebrew Bible).

¹³¹ See, e.g., NASB and RSV/NRSV.

¹³² Note that the woman’s “desire” is for her husband, not for children, as some would interpret this verse.

¹³³ I find useful the terminology of “remedial hierarchy” utilized by Gilbert Bilezikian with regard to a temporary mode of local church structure for new church plants “as they attempt to establish their corporate identity under the guidance of directive leadership” (*Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 181. But in Gen 3:16 I see God prescribing this “remedial hierarchy” for the home situation to facilitate harmony and unity, while all the time aiming toward the pre-fall Edenic ideal of egalitarianism.

¹³⁴ The hermeneutic model of “redemptive- movement” has found its most articulate defender in William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001); idem, “A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic: The Slavery Analogy,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004), 382–400. In his book *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, Webb seeks to develop intrascriptural criteria of permanence in his cultural analysis of various biblical laws and practices. Many of his insights are helpful, but I find his weakest point is in failing to recognize the absolute and primary criterion of permanence to be the norms established by God at creation; he lists his “basis in the original creation” criteria as nos. 6 and 7 of his 18 proposed criteria, and labels these criteria as only “moderately persuasive.” On this point of weakness, I am in agreement with the critique of Wayne Grudem, “Should We Move Beyond the New Testament to a Better Ethic? An Analysis of William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*,” *JETS* 47 (2004): 315–316, who shows that the culturally relative items Webb claims to find in the creation narrative (like Adam and Eve, all people should pursue farming as their occupation, should use only ground transportation, should practice primogeniture, and should never remain single) are in fact not taught as normative in Gen 1–2. I find Grudem correct in his assessment of Webb’s criteria dealing with creation: “Webb fails to show that there are culturally relative components in the pre-fall garden of Eden” (ibid., 326, italics his). In my view, more promising than Webb’s numerous, complex (and sometimes problematic) criteria of transcultural permanence, is a hermeneutic of cultural analysis that recognizes the divine design at the original creation as the ultimate norm, with all subsequent laws/practices prescribed or affirmed by God constituting part of his redemptive program leading humanity back toward the Edenic paradigm. This “creation-fall-redemption” hermeneutic is being developed by Alexandru Breja; see his “A Biblical Approach to Transcultural Analysis” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, Ga., November 2003) and “The Meaning and Theological Implications of *chuuqim lo tobim* (‘laws that were not good’) in Ezekiel 20:25” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Antonio, Tex., November 2004).

¹³⁵ I intentionally utilize the term “servant-leadership” rather than “headship” in framing this seventh position, because the term “headship” has become semantically loaded to imply the element of “authority over” which I do not find in the biblical mandate of Gen 3:16.

¹³⁶ Gerhard F. Hasel, “Equality from the Start: Woman in the Creation Story,” *Spectrum* 17, no. 2 (1975): 26.

¹³⁷ While chair of a department at my Seminary, I saw God’s leadership appointment in Gen 3:16 somewhat like my role as department chair. In all committees—at least those constituted after the fall—there needs to be a facilitator (the committee

“chair”), and in a committee of equal numbers there must be some way to break a deadlocked tie vote. So God has designated the husband as facilitator and “tie-breaker” to maintain union and preserve harmony of their home “committee of two.” The chair (at least in my OT Department) has no power to control the department members; he is the first among equals with the unenviable task of doing the “busy work” to facilitate the smooth performance of the department. So the husband as “first among equals” in the home, as Gen 3:16 seems to imply, “gets” to be “first”: first to say “I’m sorry,” first to offer to take out the garbage and do other disagreeable jobs, first to take responsibility if something goes wrong! As Allender and Longman III put it (*Intimate Allies*, 165, 192): “the husband is to be the first to bleed on behalf of the person whom he has been called to protect: his wife. . . . To be the head is to lead by sacrificing first for those who we are called to serve.” At the same time, just as a committee works best by consensus and it may rarely or never be necessary for the committee chair to break a tie vote as the members serve together in a harmonious union (I write now as a former department chair who had the privilege of working with such departmental members!), so the husband leadership may rarely need to be exercised (in the sense of “tie-breaking” or the wife’s submission).

¹³⁸ Throughout the OT, it is apparent in the description of male-female relationships that there are equally shared roles of work done by both men and women, such as serving as shepherds, cooking (cf. Jacob, Esau, and Abraham preparing food), etc. For development of this crucial point from both Gen 1–3 and beyond and from the social sciences, see esp. Van Leeuwen, *Gender & Grace*, and idem, *My Brother’s Keeper*, passim.

¹³⁹ See, e.g., Ellen White, 4SP 322; 7SDABC 475, 974; 1 SM 341.

¹⁴⁰ Westermann, *Creation*, 95.

¹⁴¹ Stuart B. Babbage, *Sex and Sanity: A Christian View of Sexual Morality* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965).

¹⁴² See, e.g., Schaeffer, *Genesis*, 105–106. Many Seventh-day Adventists and other conservative Christians see here a typological reference to spiritual covering (the robe of righteousness) provided by the death of the coming Substitute, the Messianic Lamb of God.

¹⁴³ For further discussion of this evidence, see R. Davidson, “Cosmic Metanarrative,” 108–111, and idem, *Song for the Sanctuary*, chap. 6.

¹⁴⁴ Note that the significant intertextual linkage is made with the convergence of *both* of these terms in a single context, not just their isolated occurrence separately.

¹⁴⁵ Robert A. Oden, Jr., *The Bible Without Theology: The Theological Tradition and Alternatives to It* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 92–105 (this is his ch. 3, entitled “Grace or Status? Yahweh’s Clothing of the First Humans”). Oden examines the use of the two key Hebrew words “to clothe” (*labash, hip ‘il*) and “tunic/coat” (*ketonet*), both in Scripture and in the ancient Near Eastern literature, and shows how these terms are regularly employed in contexts of status marking. See, e.g., Isa 22:21, where God marks the status of Eliakim by clothing him.

¹⁴⁶ Jacques B. Doukhan, “Women Priests in Israel: A Case for Their Absence,” in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (ed. Nancy Vyhmeister; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1998), 36. An awareness of the nature of the hermeneutical principles of intertextuality in Scripture is needed to be fully sensitive to this identification.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁴⁸ Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed*, 72. Cf. Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Yahweh the Patriarch: Ancient Images of God and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1996), passim; and Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Woman and History 1; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), passim.

¹⁴⁹ See the discussion of these areas of concern in Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 33–42. Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed*, 32–37, 143–146, shows that in each of these areas the whole family is involved, though the father as functioning leader of the family had formal responsibility.

¹⁵⁰ See Ellen White’s evaluation of patriarchy: “In early times the father was the ruler and priest of his own family, and he exercised authority over his children, even after they had families of their own. His descendants were taught to look up to him as their head, in both religious and secular matters. This patriarchal system of government Abraham endeavored to perpetuate, as it tended to preserve the knowledge of God. It was necessary to bind the members of the household together, in order to build up a barrier against the idolatry that had become so widespread and so deep-seated. Abraham sought by every means in his power to guard the inmates of his encampment against mingling with the heathen and witnessing their idolatrous practices, for he knew that familiarity with evil would insensibly corrupt the principles. The greatest care was exercised to shut out every form of false religion and to impress the mind with the majesty and glory of the living God as the true object of worship.

It was a wise arrangement, which God Himself had made, to cut off His people, so far as possible, from connection with the heathen, making them a people dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations. He had separated Abraham from his idolatrous kindred, that the patriarch might train and educate his family apart from the seductive influences which would have surrounded them in Mesopotamia, and that the true faith might be preserved in its purity by his descendants from generation to generation.” (PP 141–142).

¹⁵¹ As a verb: Gen 20:3; Deut 21:13; 22:22; 24:1; Isa 54:1, 5; 62:4–5; Jer 3:15; 31:32. As a noun, Gen 20:3; Exod 21:3, 22; Deut 22:24; 24:4; 2 Sam 11:26; Joel 1:8; Prov 12:4; 31:11, 23, 28; Esth 1:17, 20.

¹⁵² See esp. the discussion in Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed*, 78, 145.

¹⁵³ For the full range of evidence, see especially Jo Ann Davidson, “Genesis Matriarchs Engage Feminism,” *AUSS* 40, no. 2 (2002): 169–178; and R. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 226–235.

¹⁵⁴ For insightful studies on Sarah, see esp., Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroines: Women’s Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 70–74; Mark E. Biddle, “The ‘Endangered Ancestress’ and Blessing for the Nations,” *JBL* 109 (1990): 599–611; Adrien Janis Bledstein, “The Trials of Sarah,” *Judaism* 30 (1981): 411–

417; Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, *Far More Precious Than Jewels* (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1991), 85–131; Dennis, *Sarah Laughed*, 34–61; J. Cheryl Exum, “Who’s Afraid of ‘The Endangered Ancestress?’” in *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (ed. J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 91–113; Sharon Pace Jeansonne, *The Women of Genesis: From Sarah to Potiphar’s Wife* (SCB 4; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 14–30; Jacques Nicole and Marie-Claire Nicole, “Sara, soeur et femme d’Abraham,” *ZAW* 112 (2000): 5–23; Janice Nunnally-Cox, *Foremothers: Women of the Bible* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 5–9; Sakenfeld, *Just Wives?*, 7–25; Savina J. Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess: The First Matriarch of Genesis* (Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 1984); Phyllis Trible, “Genesis 22: The Sacrifice of Sarah,” in *Not in Heaven: Coherence and Complexity in Biblical Narrative* (ed. Jason P. Rosenblatt and Joseph C. Sitterson; Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1991), 170–191; Jack W. Vancil, “Sarah—Her Life and Legacy,” in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity* (ed. Carroll D. Osburn; 2 vols.; Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1995), 2:37–68.

¹⁵⁵See Mary J. Evans, “The Invisibility of Women: An Investigation of a Possible Blind Spot for Biblical Commentaries,” *CBRFJ* 122 (1990): 37–38, for this analysis.

¹⁵⁶Nunnally-Cox, *Foremothers*, 9.

¹⁵⁷See esp., Christine Garside Allen, “Who Was Rebekah? ‘On Me Be the Curse, My Son,’” in *Beyond Androcentricism: New Essays on Women and Religion* (ed. Rita M. Gross; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 183–216; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 51–54; Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 5–23; Jeansonne, *Women of Genesis*, 53–70; Donald B. Sharp, “The Courting of Rebecca: A Yahwist Portrait of the Ideal ‘Bride-To-Be,’” *IBS* 22 (January 2000): 26–37; Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1987), 136–152; Lieve Teugels, “‘A Strong Woman Who Can Find?’ A Study of Characterization in Genesis 24 with Some Perspectives on the General Presentation of Isaac and Rebekah in the Genesis Narrative,” *JSOT* 63 (1994): 89–104; Mary Donovan Turner, “Rebekah: Ancestor of Faith,” *LTQ* 20, no. 2 (April, 1985): 42–49; cf. Mishael Maswari Caspi and Rachel S. Havrelock, *Women on the Biblical Road: Ruth, Naomi, and the Female Journey* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1996), 38.

¹⁵⁸Frymer-Kensky (*Reading the Women of the Bible*, 13–14) summarizes: “Rivka is the counterpart to both Abraham and Sarah. Like Sarah, she is the instrument of the promise, the agent through whom Isaac will become the father of a nation. She is also a second Abraham, who, like him, voluntarily chooses to leave Mesopotamia for Canaan. Her ‘I will go’ answers the four times the issue of going has been raised in the story (vv. 4, 7, 38, and 40) and echoes God’s command to Abraham to ‘Go!’ in Gen. 12:1. . . . Rivka is very much like Abraham. They are both models of hospitality, and the narrator of her story highlights her similarity to him by describing her actions toward the emissary in the same language that describes Abraham’s actions toward his angel visitors (Gen. 18:1–8).”

¹⁵⁹Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise: the Subject of the Bible’s First Story* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 73. For analysis of the verbal correspondences between the Rebekah and Abraham narrative, see James G. Williams, *Women Recounted: Narrative Thinking and the God of Israel* (Bible and Literature Series 6; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982), 44. Cf. Turner, “Rebekah,” 43–44.

¹⁶⁰Jeansonne, *Women of Genesis*, 57.

¹⁶¹Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess*, xv.

¹⁶²See, e.g., Jo Ann Davidson, “Women in Scripture,” in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (ed. Nancy Vyhmeister; Berrien Springs, MI.: Andrews University Press, 1998), 157–172; and R. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 223–242.

¹⁶³Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1961), 40.

¹⁶⁴Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed*, 111–112.

¹⁶⁵On gender inclusiveness in legal terminology in the Torah, see esp., Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* (trans. Allan W. Mahnke; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 249–252. Numbers 6:2–21 and Deut 29:18–20 make this clear by using both masculine and feminine grammatical forms in the introductory verse and then only masculine in the verses that follow, while definitely implying both genders throughout.

¹⁶⁶Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: University Press, 2000), 39.

¹⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 39. Klawans summarizes the evidence with regard to ritual impurity (*ibid.*, 40): “In the final analysis, one cannot build a very strong case in defense of the argument that the biblical ritual impurity laws were legislated for the purpose of subjugating women.” *Ibid.*, 39. Klawans summarizes the evidence with regard to ritual impurity (*ibid.*, 40): “In the final analysis, one cannot build a very strong case in defense of the argument that the biblical ritual impurity laws were legislated for the purpose of subjugating women.”

¹⁶⁸For discussion of Pentateuchal legislation that purportedly treats women/wives as inferior, see R. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 244–253.

¹⁶⁹Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed*, 76. The parallel in Deut 5:21 makes the distinction unmistakable by placing the wife in a separate clause.

¹⁷⁰De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 26–27; cf. Emmerson, “Women in Ancient Israel,” 382–383.

¹⁷¹See Carol Meyers, “The Roots of Restriction: Women in Early Israel,” *BA* 41 (1978): 98.

¹⁷²De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 26–27. De Vaux argues that the father was entitled to the interest accruing to the “wedding present” but the capital itself reverted back to the daughter when her father died, or earlier if her husband died. Hence Leah and Rachel refer to it as “our money” (Gen 31:15).

¹⁷³ See, e.g., the critique of vicarious punishment in ancient Babylonia by Elisabeth Meier Tetlow, *Women, Crime, and Punishment in Ancient Law and Society*, vol. 1., *The Ancient Near East* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 71: “Vicarious punishment was tolerated in a society that regarded men as full persons and citizens and relegated wives and daughters to the category of the property of men.” For instances of vicarious punishment in the ANE, see, e.g., “Laws of Hammurabi,” translated by Martha Roth, § 209–210 (*COS* 2.131:348; cf. *ANET*, 175): “If an *awīlu* strikes a woman of the *awīlu*-class and thereby causes her to miscarry her fetus, he shall weigh and deliver 10 shekels of silver for her fetus. If that woman should die, they shall kill his daughter.” A similar example is in the Middle Assyrian Laws, where an assailant who beats up another woman is punished by having his own wife beaten up to the same extent (“The Middle Assyrian Laws [Tablet A],” translated by Martha Roth, §50 [*COS* 2.132:359; cf. *ANET*, 184]. Again in the MAL, the wife of a rapist could be gang raped as punishment for her husband’s crime (MAL A §55 [*COS* 2.132:359; cf. *ANET*, 185]; for this and related laws, see my ch. 12).

¹⁷⁴ MAL §59 (*COS* 2.132:360; cf. *ANET*, 185): “In addition to the punishments for [a man’s wife] that are [written] on the tablet, a man may [whip] his wife, pluck out her hair, mutilate her ears, or strike her, with impunity.”

¹⁷⁵ See Bird, “Images of Women in the Old Testament,” 55: “The ancient command to honor one’s parents . . . recognizes the female as the equal to the male in her role as mother.”

¹⁷⁶ Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed*, 100.

¹⁷⁷ Tikva Frymer-Kensky, “Deuteronomy,” in *The Woman’s Bible Commentary* (ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; London: SPCK, and Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 54, points out that the omission of the wife cannot mean she is to continue working, because the inclusion of daughter and maidservant in the fourth commandment indicates that the women stop from work. Rather, “the omission of a phrase ‘and your wife’ shows that the ‘you’ that the law addresses includes both women and men, each treated as a separate moral agent.”

¹⁷⁸ Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 44–45.

¹⁷⁹ For discussion of these passages (in light of ancient Near Eastern backgrounds), see esp. Gerlinde Baumann, “A Figure with Many Facets: The Literary and Theological Functions of Personified Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9,” in *Wisdom and Psalms* (ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine; FCB, 2/2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 44–78; Claudia V. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Bible and Literature Series 11; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985); idem, “Woman Wisdom as Root Metaphor: A Theological Consideration,” in *The Listening Heart: Essays in Wisdom and the Psalms in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm.* (ed. Kenneth G. Hoglund et al.; JSOTSup 58; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 45–76; Fontaine, *Smooth Words*, 88–149; Terrien, *Till the Heart Sings*, 90–99; and Christine Elizabeth Yoder, *Wisdom as a Woman of Substance: A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31* (BZAW 304; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001). Cf. Job 28 for a similar personification of Wisdom by Job.

¹⁸⁰ For theological studies of this passage, see esp. Ignatius G. P. Gous, “Proverbs 31:10–31—The A to Z of Woman Wisdom,” *O TE* 9, no. 1 (1996): 35–51; Tom R. Hawkins, “The Wife of Noble Character in Proverbs 31:10–31,” *BSac* 153, no. 1 (January–March 1996): 12–23; Steven R. Key, “A Virtuous Woman,” in *Far Above Rubies: Today’s Virtuous Woman* (ed. Herman Hanko; Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1992), 3–15; Jack P. Lewis, “The Capable Wife (Prov 31:10–31),” in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity* (ed. Carroll D. Osburn; 2 vols.; Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1995), 2:125–154; Thomas P. McCreesh, “Wisdom as Wife: Proverbs 31:10–31,” *RB* 92, no. 1 (1985): 25–46; Dorothee Metlitzki, “‘A Woman of Virtue’: A Note on *eshet hayil*,” *Orim* 1 (1986): 23–26; Yoder, *Wisdom as a Woman of Substance*; Albert M. Wolters, “Nature and Grace in the Interpretation of Proverbs 31:10–31,” *CTJ* 19, no. 1 (April 1984): 153–166; and idem, *The Song of the Valiant Woman: Studies in the Interpretation of Proverbs 31:10–31* (Waynesboro, Ga.: Paternoster, 2001).

¹⁸¹ See McCreesh, “Proverbs 31:10–31,” 31–36; M. H. Lichtenstien, “Chiasm and Symmetry in Proverbs 31,” *CBQ* 44 (1982): 202–211; Bruce K. Waltke, “The Role of the ‘Valiant Wife’ in the Marketplace,” *Cruix* 35, no. 3 (September 1999): 25–29.

¹⁸² Wolters, among many others, argues convincingly that the term ‘*eshet khayil*’ in this context should probably be understood as the female counterpart of the ‘*eshet gibbor*’ (the title given to “mighty men of valor” in the time of David), and should be translated as “mighty woman of valor” (*The Song of the Valiant Woman*, 9).

¹⁸³ Wolters insightfully argues that “the Song of the Valiant Woman constitutes a critique of the literature in praise of women which was prevalent in the ancient Near East. As a distinct tradition, this literature was overwhelmingly preoccupied with the physical charms of women from an erotic point of view—in a word, with their sex appeal. Against the ideal of feminine perfection reflected in this widespread erotic poetry, which was cultivated in the context of royal courts and harems, the acrostic poem glorifies the active good works of a woman in the ordinary affairs of family, community and business life—good works which for all their earthliness are rooted in the fear of the Lord” (*The Song of the Valiant Woman*, 13). Wolters (*ibid.*, 15–29) also shows how the element of grace (“fear of the Lord”) has been interpreted in this passage with regard to the mundane (“secular”) activities of the woman, and how the four main theological world-views of the relationship of nature and grace have affected the overall interpretation. I heartily identify with Wolters’ fourth category of “grace *restoring* nature,” and thus concur that the woman’s fear of the Lord “is integral to the poem as a whole. Religion is not restricted to v. 30, but pervades the whole. . . . Here the woman’s household activities are seen, not as something opposed to, or even distinct from, her fear of the Lord, but rather as its *external manifestation*” (*ibid.*, 24–25).

¹⁸⁴ Hawkins, “Proverbs 31:10–31,” 19.

¹⁸⁵ Wolters, *The Song of the Valiant Woman*, 4–14.

¹⁸⁶ At the same time, Waltke (“The Role of the ‘Valiant Wife,’” 30–31) underscores the hermeneutical importance of recognizing that the valiant wife of Prov 31 “is an idealized real woman who incarnates wisdom” and not just “a personification

of ‘Woman Wisdom’ . . . [She is] a real wife . . . [who] incarnates wisdom’s ideals, without removing her from the historical realm” (30)

¹⁸⁷ Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*, 83.

¹⁸⁸ Waltke, “The Role of the ‘Valiant Wife,’” 31.

¹⁸⁹ For evidence of Solomnic authorship, the unity of the Song of Songs, Solomon’s 20+ years of monogamous marriage, and his writing of the Song during this period, see R. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 556-569.

¹⁹⁰ See Nicholas Ayo, *Sacred Marriage: The Wisdom of the Song of Songs* (illustrated by Meinrad Craighead; New York: Continuum, 1997), 37–53; Francis Landy, “The Song of Songs and the Garden of Eden,” *JBL* 98 (1979): 513–528; idem, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), esp. ch. 4, “Two Versions of Paradise” (183–265); William E. Phipps, *Genesis and Gender: Biblical Myths of Sexuality and Their Cultural Impact* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 90–95; Trible, “Depatriarchalizing,” 42–47; and idem, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 145–165.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 144.

¹⁹² Idem, “Depatriarchalizing,” 47.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 48.

¹⁹⁴ Alicia Ostriker, “A Holy of Holies: The Song of Songs as Countertext,” in *The Song of Songs* (FCB 2/6; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 49–50.

¹⁹⁵ Swidler, *Affirmations of Women*, 92.

¹⁹⁶ Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 32.

¹⁹⁷ Phipps, *Genesis and Gender*, 94 (see *ibid.*, 94–95, for a rich discussion of the equality/mutuality theme in the Song). See also David M. Carr, *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 134: “This bond, however is not one of the male claiming power over his wife’s reproduction. Instead, this is a mutual passion between a man and a woman who are as equal as they can be in their social context.”

¹⁹⁸ André LaCocque, *Romance She Wrote: A Hermeneutical Essay on Song of Songs* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1998), 37.

¹⁹⁹ Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Random House, 1995), 207.

²⁰⁰ See, e.g., David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 199–213; and Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin, 1985), 318–321; and Carol Meyers, “Gender Imagery in the Song of Songs,” *HAR* 10 (1986): 209–223.

²⁰¹ A partial list of gender parallel or “echoing” passages includes: 1:2–3 = 4:10b; 1:4 = 3:4; 1:4 and 3:11 and 7:6 = 7:1–2; 1:10 = 1:16; 1:10 = 5:13; 1:12–14 = 4:13 and 3:6 and 4:6; 1:14 = 7:9–10 [English vv. 8–9]; 1:14 = 1:14 = 5:12; 1:15 = 1:16 and 7:7 [English v. 6]; 1:15 and 4:1 = 5:12; 1:16 = 7:7 [English v. 6]; 2:2 = 5:13; 2:2 = 2:3; 2:3 = 7:9 [English v. 8]; 2:4 = 8:2; 2:8 = 4:8; 2:9, 17 and 8:14 = 4:5–6 and 7:4 [English v. 3]; 2:10, 13 = 7:12 [English v. 11]; 2:12–13 = 7:13 [English v. 12]; 2:14 = 5:12; 2:14 = 5:15; 2:16 and 6:3 = 4:5; 4:3 = 5:13; 4:11 = 5:11 = 6:5; 4:11 = 5:13; 5:14 = 7:3 [English v. 2]; 5:16 = 7:10 [English v. 9]. Note also the longer echoing *wafs* (praise descriptions): 3:6–11 and 4:9–16 = 4:1–16 and 6:4–10. M. Timothea Elliott, *The Literary Unity of the Canticle* (European University Studies 23/371; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), 246–251, calls this technique “mirroring dynamic,” and presents some twenty examples in the Song, including some not listed above which involve single-term descriptive metaphors applied to both the lover and the beloved.

²⁰² Bloch and Bloch, *Song of Songs*, 4.

²⁰³ Daniel Grossberg, “Two Kinds of Sexual Relations in the Hebrew Bible,” *HS* 34 (1994): 12, 15. See Ayo, *Sacred Marriage*, 40, for a similar assessment.

²⁰⁴ Dorsey, *Literary Structure of the OT*, 213 (see his discussion in 200–213).

²⁰⁵ For further discussion of this point, see Bloch and Bloch, *Song of Songs*, 4–6; LaCocque, *Romance She Wrote*, 39–53; Meyers, “Gender Imagery,” 209–221; and Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 144–165.

²⁰⁶ Francis Landy, “The Songs of Songs,” in *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (ed. Robert Alter and K. Kermodé; Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1987), 317.

²⁰⁷ Jill M. Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron: The Imagery of the Song of Songs* (JSOTSup 203; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 109, elaborates: “the image of the garden, developed over a number of verses (4:12–5:1), falls at the midpoint of the Song. The position of the image not only emphasizes the predominance of the woman, who throughout the Song plays the major part, but also echoes structurally the relationship of the woman to the world beyond, in the eyes of her beloved one; the natural world and the abundance of life visible there is recreated in her, for she, to him, is the personification of its beauty.”

²⁰⁸ The count may vary depending upon the interpretation of the sometimes ambiguous first-person statements and unmarked sections. Athalya Brenner, in her book *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 44–50, analyzes in detail the distribution of male and female voices in the Song, and concludes that the female voice(s) account(s) for approximately 53% of the text, while the male voice(s) account(s) for only 34%. G. Lloyd Carr (“The Love Poetry Genre in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East: Another Look at Inspiration,” *JETS* 25 [1982]: 494) counts lines: out of 227 lines, 114 are for the girl, 54 for the lover, 31 of mixed dialogue, and 28 lines by a third party. My own count comes to 74 verses or parts of verses where the woman speaks and only 38 where the man speaks, giving the woman about twice as many lines as the man. (I include in the woman’s speeches her citations of the man [2:10–14; 5:2] and 3:7–11 [following the arguments of Bloch and Bloch, *Song of Songs*, 161–2].) Carr (*ibid.*) cautions that these statistics must not be made

to prove too much, inasmuch as the same two-to-one ratio of female to male speeches also occurs in the ancient Near Eastern love poems of Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, the preponderance of the woman's speech throughout the Song is much more than elsewhere in the ancient Near East if one eliminates the four lengthy *waxfs* (descriptions and praise of the physical beauty of the man and woman: 4:1–15; 5:10–16; 6:4–9; 7:1–9): the woman still has 61 verses or parts of verses of dialogue, while the man only has seven verses, a ratio of over eight-to-one!

²⁰⁹ She *invites* the man: “draw me after you! . . . let's run!” (1:4). She *commands* the man (using the imperative): “Turn! Be like a gazelle . . . !” (2:17); “Make haste/flee! . . . be like a gazelle . . . !” (8:14). She *grasps* the man, and will not let him go (2:15). She *leads* the man to her mother's house and love-chamber (3:4; 8:2). She *gives* the man her love (7:13 [English v. 12]). She sexually *awakens* the man under the apple tree (8:5).

²¹⁰ The occurrences of *'ani* are 1:5, 6; 2:1, 5, 16; 5:2, 5, 6, 8; 6:3; 7:11 [English v. 10]; 8:10. The term *nepesh* is found in 1:7; 3:1, 2, 3, 4; 5:6; 6:12. See Grace I. Emmerson, “The Song of Songs: Mystification, Ambiguity and Humour,” in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder* (ed. Stanley E. Porter et al.; New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 101–102.

²¹¹ The Hebrew conjunction *waw* can be translated either “and” or “but.” In this case, the meaning comes out essentially the same. She is saying in effect, “I am dark from the sun, and/but whatever you may think about it, I think it is beautiful!”

²¹² Most commentaries wrongly interpret this line as having a tone of self-depreciation. But in my view Bloch and Bloch (*Song of Songs*, 148–149) rightly point out that the very two flowers mentioned in Song 2:1, “rose” [*khabsatset*] and “lily” [*shoshannah*] are the ones mentioned in the prophecies of Israel's restoration to her former glory (Isa 35:1–2; Hos 14:6–8), and the mention of Sharon probably links with “the majesty of Carmel and Sharon” in Isa 35:2. The Blochs conclude: “Seen in this light, 2:1 is an expression of a young woman's proud awareness of her blossoming beauty. The Shulamite is not presenting herself—either modestly or coyly—as a common ordinary flower of the field (‘I am a mere flower of the plain,’ as Ginsburg and others would have it). Quite the contrary, she is identifying herself with the *khabsatset* and *shoshannah*, two flowers that are the very epitome of blossoming in the symbolism of the Bible.

²¹³ The use of the *-at* ending of *shoshannah* in this verse (contrasted with the masculine plural in other occurrences in the Song) denotes “singularity.” See Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 105: “Single components of a collective unit often appear with *-at* suffix: such a form is called a *nomen unitatis* or singulative.” Waltke and O'Connor give *shoshannah* as an example of this phenomenon. The woman is a singular, special lily out of all the others in the valleys.

²¹⁴ Dianne Bergant, *Song of Songs: The Love Poetry of Scripture* (Spiritual Commentaries; Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1998), 158.

²¹⁵ Meyers, “Gender Imagery,” 215. The imagery of military architecture (discussed in Meyers, *ibid.*, 212–215) include the military tower, armory, and shields (4:4); the military tower, outpost “tower of Lebanon,” pools of Heshbon (probably for military purposes), and defensive gate of Bath Rabbim (all in 7:5 [English v. 4]); and the towers and wall with “battlements” or “buttresses” or “turrets” (again in a military context, 8:9, 10).

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 216.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 217. This military ploy, and the fact that Egyptian chariots were drawn by stallions, and not mares, is discussed in detail, with illustrations from ancient Near Eastern literature, esp. by Marvin Pope, *Song of Songs* (AB 7C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977), 336–341.

²¹⁸ Meyers, “Gender Imagery,” 218. This is not to imply that the woman possesses magical powers or that she literally domineers over the man. This is the language of metaphor, not magic or manipulation.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ The daughters of Jerusalem/Zion sing, or are addressed, numerous times in the Song: 1:4, 5, 11; 2:7; 3:5, 10, 11; 5:8, 9, 16; 6:1, 8–9; 8:4. By contrast, the brothers are only alluded to—and with the term “my mother's sons,” not “brothers”—in 1:6, and perhaps (but far from certain) have lines in 2:15 and 8:8–9. For discussion of the significance of the daughters of Jerusalem in the structure, content, and flow of the Song, see esp., Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron*, 43–48.

²²¹ Song 1:6; 3:4, 11; 6:9; 8:1, 2, 5.

²²² If the groom in the Song is Solomon, as I have argued, then the mother is the famous Bathsheba, known for her great beauty (2 Sam 11:2).

²²³ Landy, “Song of Songs and Garden of Eden,” 526.

²²⁴ Some have claimed that this verse does not refer to an apple tree, but some other kind of fruit tree (such as apricot or even citrus), because it is claimed that the edible apple was not known in ancient Israel. But for evidence of the antiquity of the apple tree, and arguments of the probable existence of edible apples in the time of Israel, see, e.g., Garrett, “Song of Songs,” 149–150.

²²⁵ Meyers, “Gender Imagery,” 220. Meyers limits this arena of gender mutuality in Scripture only to the situation of domestic, non-public, love. However, my study of the theology of sexuality in the OT has convinced me that God's ultimate ideal throughout OT history has been an egalitarian one for the sexes, although the husband was given the responsibility of servant headship when necessary to preserve harmony in the home.

²²⁶ S. S. Ndoga and H. Viviers, “Is the Woman in the Song of Songs Really Free?” *HTS* 56 (2000): 1286. See their supporting arguments in the remainder of the article, 1286–1307.

²²⁷ Bloch and Bloch (*Song of Songs*, 207) write: “Song 7:11 reads almost like a deliberate reversal of Gen. 3:16, turning it upside down by making the woman the object of desire.” Cf. Trible, “Depatriarchalizing,” 46; idem, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 159–160.

²²⁸ My thinking has developed considerably on the question of egalitarianism since my earlier published treatments of the theology of human sexuality in the Song: Richard M. Davidson, “Theology of Sexuality in the Song of Songs: Return to Eden,” *AUSS* 27 (1989):8–10; cf. idem, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 271–272. I still consider the divine judgment of Gen 3:16 to be a divinely-given remedial-redemptive provision applicable in situations where it is necessary to maintain harmony in the home. But I find the Song of Songs, like the Gen 1–3 accounts, showing us that God’s ideal is still the pre-Fall egalitarianism without hierarchy of Gen 2:24, and that egalitarianism, mutuality, and reciprocity can be experienced by lovers even in a sinful environment.

²²⁹ Many suggestions have been made for the derivation and meaning of *shulammit* (Song 7:1 [6:13]). For the options in interpretation, see Bloch and Bloch, *Song of Songs*, 197–198; Fox, *Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 157–158; Murphy, *Song of Songs*, 181; and Pope, *Song of Songs*, 596–600). I find the least problematic solution (without resorting to emendations or Ishtar mythology) is to take the word as the feminine equivalent of Solomon, or at least a name/title related etymologically (or by folk etymology) to Solomon. See the support for this connection of *shulammit* to Solomon in H. H. Rowley, “The Meaning of the ‘the Shulamite,’” *AJSL* 56 (1939): 84–91, summarized (with additional support from an Ugaritic parallel) in Pope, *Song of Songs*, 596–597. In my estimation, Delitzsch (*Song of Songs*, 3:120) correctly concludes that the poet purposely used this name “to assimilate her name to that of Solomon.” I take the article before the word as the equivalent of the vocative particle, “O Shulamite” (see Joüon, 137–138; GKC §126e, note [e]; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 600), and the article also seems to point to a specific woman as *the* Solomoness (implying that she was his one and only wife at this time). It is difficult to know whether the term is to be taken as a personal name (Shulamite or Shulamit) or as an epithet (the Solomoness). As Pope (*Song of Songs*, 600) points out, “The distinction between proper name and epithet is not easy to maintain, since proper names often develop from epithets. The article may be applied to an epithet on the way to becoming a proper noun, or a proper noun with the article may be regarded as an epithet in cases like the Lebanon, the Nile, the Jordan, the Baal, the Christ, etc.” Even if the name also denotes “completeness/perfection” (as suggested by various commentators, e.g., Pope, *Song of Songs*, 599–600), it seems clear that in the Song there is intended a paronomasia between this name and Solomon.

²³⁰ John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 51–59.

²³¹ Angel Rodríguez, “Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” *AUSS* 24, no. 2 (1986): 131–137.

²³² See further discussion and evidence in R. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 251–253.

²³³ See Roy Gane, *God’s Faulty Heroes* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1996), 50, who interprets Num 3:38 and 18:7 as indicating that “priests had a kind of military function as guards of the sanctuary,” and suggests this as at least a partial rationale for God’s setting up of an all-male priesthood.

²³⁴ For a summary of these and other suggested rationales, see Mary Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ: The Use and Abuse of the Bible in the Debate about Women in the Church* (London: SPCK, 1987), 60–79. Other proposed reasons include the alleged lower social status of women (than men) in Israel, which would have meant they lacked the authority and prestige to be priests. But, Hennie J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), *passim*, demonstrates that Israelite women had no lower social status than in neighboring Ugarit and other ancient Near Eastern societies, where there were female priests. Another suggested reason is that woman’s role as mothers, requiring time at home to rear their children, would have little time beyond their child care and household tasks. But, again, the upper-class women in Israel as well as elsewhere in the ancient Near East had servants who performed these tasks, and thus at least for this class of women the maternal restrictions do not apply.

²³⁵ Phyllis Bird, “The Place of Women in the Israelite Cultus,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. Patrick D. Miller Jr. et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 406. The exception would be women without families (widows, virgins, or women separated from family by a vow) (*ibid.*, 407).

²³⁶ Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed*, 155.

²³⁷ Marsman (*Women in Ugarit and Israel*, 544–545) shows that while in Egypt and Mesopotamia numerous women were functioning in the role of priestess in the third and first half of the second millennium B.C.E., by the middle of the second millennium women to a large extent had disappeared from the priesthood, and during the period matching the period of Israelite history only women of high birth remained active in cultic functions as priestesses. These women “had a kind of marital relationship with the main deity. They were a wife of the god, whether the interpretation of this function was sexual or not, that is, whether their ‘sacred’ marriage was a carnally or a symbolically performed rite” (*ibid.*, 545).

²³⁸ Doukhan, “Women Priests in Israel,” 30–33.

²³⁹ Doukhan offers another rationale beyond the polemic concerns against the fertility cults; he suggests that it “may well reflect a Hebrew attitude toward women, who were, from Eve on, traditionally associated with the giving of life. [fn. 33: See Gen 3:20]. And since the woman stands for life, she should be exempt from the act of sacrificing that stands for death. . . . Because of her physiological nature as a provider of life, the woman could not be involved in the cultic act of taking life implied in the ritual of sacrifice” (“Women Priests in Israel,” 33–34). For Doukhan this is the most decisive factor in preventing women from becoming priests. The priests were typological pointers to the Messiah who was to come as the true Priest, and women could not function in that typological role—not because of something they lacked, but because of something positive they

possessed, i.e., “the sign of life and promise” that was incongruent with the slaughter of sacrifices (ibid., 38). Doukhan points to the occasions in the Garden of Eden and in the redeemed community (Rev 1:6; 5:10) when both men and women are priests, and notes that “These contexts are both free from the threat of ancient Near Eastern cults and from the ceremonial slaughter of sacrifices” (ibid., 39). As intriguing as this hypothesis is, its Achilles heel is that there is no prohibition against women slaughtering the animal sacrifices in the OT legislation (Doukhan’s assertion that no actual sacrifice by a woman is recorded is an argument from silence, and may actually find exception in 1 Sam 1:25), and the setting of God’s conferral of the priestly role upon both Adam and Eve in Eden occurs not only in a pre-fall setting before sin (Gen 2:15) but also after the fall (Gen 3:21), in a context not free from the ceremonial slaughter of sacrifices.

²⁴⁰Richard M. Davidson, “Leadership Language in the Old Testament,” in *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*, ed. Skip Bell (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, forthcoming), 1-20.

²⁴¹The full range of nouns includes the following (with Hebrew expressions and number of occurrences in the Hebrew Bible in parentheses): “lord/master” (*’adon*, 334 times [hereafter “x”]); “[ram], ruler/mighty one” (*’ayil* I, 7x with this meaning); “tribal chief” (*’allup*, 60x); “noble” (*’atsil* II, only in Exod. 24:11); “mistress, queen mother” (*gebirah/geberet*, 15x); “elder” (*zaqen*, ca. 127x with the meaning of an office of leadership); “free, noble one” who exercises some kind of authority and leadership (*chor*, 13x); “prince, ruler, leader” (*nagid*, 44x); “leader, chief, prince” (*nasi*’, ca. 131x); “judge” (both the verb *shaphat* and the substantivised participle *shophet*, ca. 228x); “king/reign” (noun *melek* “king” and verb *malak* “reign,” ca. 2891x); priest (noun *kohen* “priest” and denominative piel verb *kihen* “to act as priest,” ca. 773x); prophet/prophesy (*nabi*’ “prophet,” ca. 317x, *nb*’ “prophesy,” ca. 115x); “eunuch, court official” (*saris*, 45x); “(Philistine) prince, ruler” (*seren* II, 18x); “[he-goat], leader” (*’attud*, ca. 6x with reference to human leaders); “administrator, steward, overseer” (*soken*, 3x); “provincial governor” (*pekhhah*, 38x); “appointed official [civil, military, or cultic]” (*paqid*, 13x; cf. *pequddah* “oversight,” 5x with this meaning); “[military] commander, leader [in general]” (*qatsin*, 12x); “head, leader, chief” (*ro’sh*, ca. 37x with meaning of leader); “[non-Israelite] captain, chief, commander” (*rab* II, ca. 50x); “rule/ruler” (verb *razan* “ruler” 6x, substantivised participle *rozen* II “ruler, dignitary” only in Prov. 14:28); “official, chieftain, leader, prince” (*sar*, ca. 421x; cf. *sarah* I, “woman of rank, princess,” 5x + the name “Sarah,” 39x); “[high-ranking] noble” (*shoa*’, only in Job 34:20 and Isa. 32:5); and “ruler” (*shallit*, 3x).

²⁴²Examples of Hebrew verbs for leadership include the following: “[marry], rule over, [own]” (*b’l* I, 16x); “[dispute, reason together, prove, reprove,] judge, rule” (*yakkh*, Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3); “make subservient, subdue” (*kabash*, 15x); “rule, govern” (*marshal* II, ca. 69x); “supervise, direct” (*natsach*, ca. 64x); “[repeal,] subdue” (*radad*, 3x); “rule, govern” (*radah* I, ca. 24 x); “rule, direct, superintend” (*sarrar*, 6x); and “gain power, have power, lord it over” (*shalat*, 6x).

²⁴³Eight terms and the majority of occurrences are from the Hebrew root *’bd*: (1) *’abad* “to serve” (289 occurrences [hereafter “x”]); (2) *’ebed* “servant, slave” (805x); (3) *’abudah* “service, servile (customary, ordinary, heavy, laborious) work, worship” (145x); (4) *’abed* (Aram.) “servant, slave, subordinate” (7x); (5) *’abudah* “service (of household servants as a body), workforce” (3x); (6) *’abdut* “servitude, forced labor” (3x); (7) *ma’abad* “deed, act” (2x); and (8) *’abad* “work, labor” (1x). Other terms denoting some kind of servanthood include the following: (9) *’amah* “female servant/slave, maidservant” (56x); (10) *natin* “temple servant” (16x); (11) *netin* (Aram.) “temple servant” (1x); (12) *pelakh* (Aram.) “to pay reverence to, serve (deity)” (10x); (13) *tsaba*’ “to wage war, be on duty, serve (at the tabernacle)” (4x); (14) *shipkhah* “handmaid, female servant/slave” (63x); (15) *sharat* “to wait on, be an attendant, serve, minister (unforced)” (97x); and (16) *sharet* “minister, attendant” (2x).

²⁴⁴TDOT 15:505.

²⁴⁵Abraham: “My servant” (Gen. 26:24); Jacob: “My servant” (Ezek. 28:25); Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: “Your servants” (Exod. 32:13); Job: “My servant” (Job 1:1; 2:3; 42:7–8); Caleb: “My servant (Num. 14:24); Joshua: “Moses’ minister” (Josh. 1:1); “Servant of the Lord” (Josh. 24:29; Judg. 2:8); the prophets: “My servants” (2 Kgs. 17:13 plus 16 times); Isaiah: “My servant” (Isa 20:3); Elijah: “His servant” (2 Kings 9:36; 10:1); Jonah: “His servant” (2 Kgs. 14:25); Ahijah: “His servant” (1 Kgs. 14:18, 29); Eliakim: “My servant” (Isa. 22:20); Nebuchadnezzar: “My servant” (Jer. 25:9; 27:6; 43:10); Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: “Servants of the Most High God” (Dan. 3:26, 28); Daniel: “servant of the living God” (Dan. 6:20 [Heb. 21], Aram.); Zerubbabel: “My servant” (Hag. 2:23); the people of Israel: “My servants” (Lev. 25:42; Isa. 43:10; plus over 20 more times).

²⁴⁶Lot (servant to strangers-angels: Gen. 19:2); Joseph (served the prison officials: Gen. 39:4; 40:4); brothers of Joseph (servants of Joseph: Gen. 42:10); Ruth: “your [Boaz’s] servant” (Ruth 3:9); Hannah: “your [Eli’s] servant” (1 Sam. 1:16); Samuel: “Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears” (1 Sam. 3:9–10); Abigail: alternation of *’amah* and *shipchah* (1 Sam. 25: 24, 25, 27–28, 31, 41); Ziba (servant of the house of Saul: 2 Sam. 9:2); Mephibosheth (servant of David: 2 Sam. 9:6, 8); wise woman of Tekoah: *’amah* (2 Sam. 11:15, 16), *shipkhah* (2 Sam. 14:12, 15, 19); Uriah the Hittite (David’s servant: 2 Sam. 11:21–24); wise woman of the city of Abel (Joab’s [maid]servant: 2 Sam. 20:17); Bathsheba (David’s [maid]servant: 1 Kgs. 1:13, 17); Solomon (God’s servant: 1 Kgs. 8:28–30; 2 Chr. 6:19–21); Elisha (who served Elijah: 1 Kgs. 19:21; 2 Kgs. 4:43; 6:15); Hezekiah (began “service” in the house of the Lord: 2 Chr. 31:21); Nehemiah (Yahweh’s servant: Neh. 1:11).

²⁴⁷Gen. 2:15 uses the same paired Hebrew words—*’abad* and *shamar*—for the work of Adam and Eve as for the priests’ and Levites’ service in the Mosaic sanctuary (Num. 3:7, 8; 18:3–7). For some seventeen lines of evidence that the Garden of Eden is to be regarded as the original sanctuary on earth, with additional bibliography, see Richard M. Davidson, “Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium.” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 11, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Autumn 2000): 108–111; and idem, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 47–48. Other individuals and groups serving in the sanctuary/temple include: priests (Num. 18:7; 1 Chr. 24:3, 19; Ezek. 44:14; Ezra 8:20; plus many more references); Levites (Num. 3:7–8 [and dozens of times in succeeding chapters]; 16:9; 1 Chr. 6:33; 9:13, 19, etc.); “to celebrate and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel” [1 Chr. 16:4 NASB]; gatekeepers (1 Chr. 26:1; 35:15); musicians (1

Chr. 6:17, 32; 25:1, 6); other temple servants who assisted the Levites (1 Chr. 9:2; Ezra 2:38, 43, 70, 77; 8:20; Neh. 3:31; 7:46, 60, 72; 10:28–29; 11:3, 21).

²⁴⁸Forced (*corvée*) labor by the people for the king (Solomon): 1 Kgs. 12:4; 2 Chr. 10:4; political “servants” (=vassal nations): 2 Kgs. 24:1; 25:24; 1 Chr. 18:2, 6, 13; 2 Chr. 12:8; soldiers as “servants”: 2 Kgs. 24:10, 11; 25:8; 1 Chr. 20:8; royal personal attendants: 2 Sam. 13:17–18; 1 Kgs. 1:4; 10:5; 2 Chr. 22:8; Esth. 1:10; 2:2; 6:3; Ps. 101:6; political officials: 1 Chr. 27:1; 28:1; 2 Chr. 17:19; Prov. 29:12; agricultural workers in the service of the king: 1 Chr. 27:26; foreign vassal nations who were to “serve” the king who was suzerain over them (1 Kgs. 4:21; Pss. 18:43; 72:11); captive Israelites who would serve their captors in Babylon: Jer. 25:11; 27:6–8; 40:9; Israelites after returning from captivity who were still virtual slaves of a foreign power (Persia): Neh. 9:36.

²⁴⁹For discussion of the many women leaders in scripture, including those whose names are not accompanied by explicit “servant” terminology, see R. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 213–295.

²⁵⁰Paul R. House, Paul R. *1, 2 Kings*, The New American Commentary, 8 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 182.

²⁵¹See the penetrating description of Abigail’s servant leadership, as penned by Ellen White: “Abigail addressed David with as much reverence as though speaking to a crowned monarch. . . . With kind words she sought to soothe his irritated feelings, and she pleaded with him in behalf of her husband. With nothing of ostentation or pride, but full of the wisdom and love of God, Abigail revealed the strength of her devotion to her household; and she made it plain to David that the unkind course of her husband was in no wise premeditated against him as a personal affront, but was simply the outburst of an unhappy and selfish nature. . . . The piety of Abigail, like the fragrance of a flower, breathed out all unconsciously in face and word and action. The Spirit of the Son of God was abiding in her soul. Her speech, seasoned with grace, and full of kindness and peace, shed a heavenly influence. . . . Abigail was a wise reprover and counselor.” Ellen G. White, *The Story of the Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1958), 667–668.

²⁵²For evidence supporting the Messianic interpretation of these Servant Songs, see esp. C. Kaiser, “The Identity and Mission of the ‘Servant of the Lord,’” in *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology*, ed. Walter Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 87–107; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 289–458; and Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 3 vols.; New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 3:108–359.

²⁵³For analysis of the NT use of the Servant Songs, see esp. Walter Darrell Bock and Mitch Glaser, eds. *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), chaps. 4–6.

²⁵⁴See Davidson, “Leadership Language,” 13–16, for summary of these insights.

²⁵⁵See, e.g. Rita J. Burns, *Has the Lord Indeed Spoken Only Through Moses?: A Study of the Biblical Portrait of Miriam* (SBLDS 84; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); Phyllis Silverman Kramer, “Miriam,” in *Exodus–Deuteronomy* (ed. Athalya Brenner; FCBSS 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994, repr. 2001), 104–133; and Phyllis Trible, “Bringing Miriam Out of the Shadows,” *BRev* 5 (February 1989): 14–25, 34.

²⁵⁶Robert Van Kooten, “The Song of Miriam,” *Kerux* 16, no. 3 (2001): 38.

²⁵⁷Hyun Chul Paul Kim, “Gender Complementarity in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Reading the Hebrew Bible for a New Millennium: Form, Concept, and Theological Perspective* (ed. Wonil Kim et al.; vol. 1 of *Theological and Hermeneutical Studies*; Studies in Antiquity and Christianity; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 273.

²⁵⁸Ibid. Kim continues: “Likewise, in the correlation between cohortative and imperative verb forms the reader finds an authorial sketch of the interaction between the two parts of the choir, as if sopranos and altos sing the invitation hymn while tenors and basses echo with the responsive arias, and vice versa. In the corresponding interaction there is a concept of unity and mutuality between Moses and Miriam, between the men and women of Israel. . . . In that unity, though Moses assumes a more prominent role, the two songs imply the concept of complementarity of Moses and Miriam, not only brother and sister, but also coleaders and copartners” (ibid., 274, 276). It should be noted that by “complementarity” Kim “implies an idea of the relationship of two distinct parties who share mutual needs, interdependence, and respect. This term is to be distinguished from the connotation of a hierarchical relationship of two parties where one is subordinate to the other. Rather, it is used to include the ideas of mutuality, balance, and equality, while maintaining the uniqueness and distinctiveness of each party rather than homogeneity” (ibid., 268). I heartily concur with this definition of complementarity, in contrast to how it is frequently used in evangelical circles to denote hierarchical roles between women and men.

²⁵⁹For examinations of Miriam’s Song, see, e.g., Bernhard W. Anderson, “The Song of Miriam Poetically and Theologically Considered,” in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (ed. Elaine R. Follis; JSOTSup 40; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 285–302; J. Gerald Janzen, “Song of Moses, Song of Miriam: Who is Seconding Whom?” *CBQ* 54, no. 2 (April 1992): 211–220; Gail R. O’Day, “Singing Woman’s Song: A Hermeneutic of Liberation,” *CurTM* 12, no. 4 (August 1985): 203–204; and Van Kooten, “The Song of Miriam,” 35–41. The arguments of some of these authors that Miriam’s Song is primary and Moses’ Song is secondary are based upon source-critical assumptions that are outside the pale of my final-form approach toward the text, but nonetheless these articles rightly maintain the significant position of the Song at the climax of the exodus story.

²⁶⁰Kim, “Gender Complementarity,” 274.

²⁶¹See Meyers, “Miriam the Musician,” 207–230, for examination of the biblical and extra-biblical evidence.

²⁶² Exod 15:20, 21; Num 12:1, 4, 5, 10, 10, 15, 15; Num 20:1; 26:59; Deut 24:9.

²⁶³ See esp., Charme E. Robarts, “Deborah—Judge, Prophetess, Military Leader, and Mother in Israel,” in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity* (ed. Carroll D. Osburn; 2 vols.; Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 2:69–86.

²⁶⁴ Robarts (“Deborah,” 76) rightly observes: “Among the major judges, she escapes unscathed as a spiritual leader.” See also Daniel I. Block, “Why Deborah’s Different,” *BR* 17, no. 3 (June 2001): 40, who makes this same point: “Not only was she the sole woman in this man’s world, with exception of Othniel she was also the only ‘judge’ with a stainless personal reputation.”

²⁶⁵ Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 209.

²⁶⁶ Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 46, points out that this “is a strange-sounding name for a man and, moreover, does not have the standard patronymic ‘son of.’” The Hebrew word *lappid* literally means “torch” or “lightning” and here (Judg 4:4) in the feminine plural may be a description of the character quality of the woman, much like the phrase *’eshet khayil* “woman of strength/valor” in Prov 31:10. This is the view of a number of scholars. See, e.g., Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 208–209; Dana Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, “Controlling Perspectives: Women, Men, and the Authority of Violence in Judges 4–5,” *JAAR* 63, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 391; and the NEB note “fiery woman.” Weighty evidence for preferring this interpretation (instead of taking this as the name of her husband) is set forth by Klaas Spronk, “Deborah, a Prophetess: The Meaning and Background of Judges 4:4–5,” in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist* (ed. Johannes C. DeMoor; OtSt 45; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 239–240. While I favor the interpretation that the term *lappidot* is used symbolically/metaphorically (to refer to Deborah’s character as a “woman of spirit”), I do not rule out the possibility that this word constitutes the name of her husband. But if married, Deborah does not receive her status in the narrative by virtue of her husband; he is heard of no more in the story; and furthermore, this passage then reveals that it was perfectly appropriate for the woman Deborah to perform her leadership role as a wife without violating any “headship” principle of her husband.

²⁶⁷ For a survey of modern commentaries that downplay the role of Deborah in the narrative, see, e.g., Rachel C. Rasmussen, “Deborah the Woman Warrior,” in *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women’s Lives in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Mieke Bal; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 79–83; Jo Ann Hackett, “In the Days of Jael: Reclaiming the History of Women in Ancient Israel,” in *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality* (ed. Clarissa W. Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan, and Margaret R. Miles; Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 27–28; and Gale A. Yee, “By the Hand of a Woman: The Metaphor of the Woman Warrior in Judges 4,” *Semeia* 61 (1993): 110, 117–121. Cf. Herbert Wolf, “Judges,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 3:404: “her prominence implies a lack of qualified and willing men.”

²⁶⁸ Others suggest a scenario arising out of a socially dysfunctional society with Deborah a liminal figure (neither male nor female as customarily defined) on the margins of society (Yee, “By the Hand of a Woman,” 99–126); still others deplore a story attempting to justify violence (Fewell and Gunn, “Controlling Perspectives,” 389–410). For a convenient survey of these and other major feminist views, see esp. Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes*, 115–119.

²⁶⁹ For summary of these redaction-critical reconstructions, see esp. Stephen W. Hanselman, “Narrative Theory, Ideology, and Transformation in Judges 4,” in *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women’s Lives in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Mieke Bal; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 104–105.

²⁷⁰ Julia Staton, *What the Bible Says About Women* (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1980), 264. See also Sara Buswell, *The Challenge of Old Testament Women: I* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 120.

²⁷¹ Hackett, “In the Days of Jael,” 22.

²⁷² Although, as Gane rightly observes, she was not a military general, for a very practical reason: “Generals were combat soldiers who led their armies into battles. Physical size and upper body strength, the main natural advantages possessed by males, were essential for effectiveness in ancient combat. Therefore, women were not used as soldiers and, consequently, they could not be military commanders” (*God’s Faulty Heroes*, 50). Frymer-Kensky points out that “Like Moses, Deborah is not a battle commander. Her role is to inspire, predict, and celebrate in song. Her weapon is the word, and her very name is an anagram of ‘she spoke’ (*dibberah*)” (*Reading the Women of the Bible*, 49).

²⁷³ Kim, “Gender Complementarity,” 277. Kim (*ibid.*) also shows evidence for this conclusion in the narrative’s contrast between the courage of Deborah and the cowardice of Barak. For recognition and elaboration of this same emphasis upon woman’s leadership in these chapters, cf. Robert Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 40–43; and Mark A. Vincent, “The Song of Deborah: A Structural and Literary Consideration,” *JSOT* 91 (2000): 64–65.

²⁷⁴ Kim, “Gender Complementarity,” 277.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 277–278. See *ibid.*, 278–280 for discussion of the compositional balance of the two names. As another evidence of this compositional complementarity, note the phrase “woman of lightning” used of Deborah (Judg 4:4), paralleled with Barak, whose name means “lightning” (see the discussion of this above).

²⁷⁶ Kim, “Gender Complementarity,” 280.

²⁷⁷ Contra e.g., Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2004), 135, who mistakenly seeks to make a distinction between the use of the word “judge” with regard to Deborah and its usage with the other (male) judges. Deborah, Grudem claims (*ibid.*), never “ruled over God’s people or taught them publicly or led them militarily.” But such attempt to circumscribe Deborah’s “judging” to the private sphere with no public leadership over men simply does not square with the full context of the narrative and subsequent poem. Furthermore, the very claim that a woman’s “settling of private disputes” is not exercising leadership over a man, but

public teaching constitutes such (inappropriate) leadership, is in my understanding a false distinction, resulting in endless casuistic lists of appropriate and inappropriate activities for women today, reminiscent of the Pharisaical hair-splitting lists of appropriate and inappropriate Sabbath observance in Jesus' day (see *ibid.*, 84–101).

²⁷⁸ E.g., Grudem (*ibid.*), 137.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Grudem fails to satisfactorily answer his own question: “Why then could women prophesy but not teach the people? We may not be able to understand all the reasons, but it is clear that the two roles were distinct, and that God allowed women to be prophets but not teachers” (*ibid.*). Such clear distinction of roles is not found in Scripture!

²⁸⁰ W. Kennedy Brown, *Gunethics or the Ethical Status of Woman* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1887), 36, cited in Yee, “By the Hand of a Woman,” 119.

²⁸¹ Yee, “By the Hand of a Woman,” 110.

²⁸² Deuteronomy 1, which melds together Exod 18 (the appointment of judges) with Num 11 (the appointment of the 70 elders) seems to imply that the two chapters are referring to the same office.

²⁸³ Hackett, “In the Days of Jael,” 28.

²⁸⁴ Fewell and Gunn, “Controlling Perspectives,” 402.

²⁸⁵ See the many occurrences of this usage as “valiant warrior” in the book of Judges alone: Judg 3:29; 6:12; 11:1; 18:2; 20:44, 46.

²⁸⁶ Fewell and Gunn, “Controlling Perspectives,” 403, 307.

²⁸⁷ Hanselman, “Judges 4,” 105 (italics his).

²⁸⁸ Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 189–196. Cf. LaCocque, *The Feminine Unconventional*, 4.

²⁸⁹ A. D. H. Mayes, *Judges* (OTG 8; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 90.

²⁹⁰ Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 190. Cf. Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, xvii–xviii: “When there is no centralized power, when political action takes place in the household or village, then women can rise to public prominence. . . . When a strong government is established, a pyramid of power extends from the top down through the various hierarchies and bureaucracies. At such a time, women in Israel were frozen out of the positions of power, and relegated to the private domain.”

²⁹¹ The term *mashal* is also used by David in his inspired “last words,” reporting what God instructed him, that “He who rules [*mashal*] over men must be just, ruling [*mashal*] in the fear of God” (2 Sam 23:3). But this term *mashal* is not employed by the narrator to describe the reigns of either Saul or David.

²⁹² Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 196.

²⁹³ Several feminist interpreters of this story question whether this woman was really wise, or only shrewd, since she is seen to play into the hands of patriarchy (see Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes*, 153–155, for summary of views), but such a question ignores the perspective of the final form of the text, and the direct statement of the narrator. It is true that, according to the narrator and the woman's own testimony, Joab “put the words in her mouth” (2 Sam 14:3; cf. v. 19), but this does not detract from the wisdom of the woman and her ability to communicate the message to David.

²⁹⁴ See discussion of the profound understanding of the nature of justice and mercy displayed in her speech (esp. v. 9) by Roy Gane, *Altar Call* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Diadem, 1999), 232–237. For extended treatment of the proverb/parable (*mashal*) given by the wise woman Tekoa to David, with its many intertextual allusions esp. to the book of Genesis, see Larry L. Lyke, *King David with the Wise Woman of Tekoa: The Resonance of Tradition in Parabolic Narrative* (JSOT Supp. 255; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), although I do not subscribe to his post-modern emphasis on multiple readings.

²⁹⁵ See Claudia V. Camp, “The Wise Women of 2 Samuel: A Role Model for Women in Early Israel?” *CBQ* 43 (1981): 17–20, for the elaboration of this point. See also Brenner, *The Israelite Woman*, 34–35; and Patricia K. Willey, “The Importunate Woman of Tekoa and How She Got Her Way,” in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Bible* (ed. Dana Nolan Fewell; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 115–131.

²⁹⁶ See discussion in Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes*, 156; Camp, “The Wise Women of 2 Samuel,” 14–29; and Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 58–61.

²⁹⁷ Camp, “Wise Women of 2 Samuel,” 26. Camp (*ibid.*) draws implications for the relative status of women with men: “In the early years of Israel, with its egalitarian principles and desperate need for able minds as well as bodies, such qualities might have placed women not uncommonly in positions of authority in the village-tribal setting.”

²⁹⁸ Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes*, 163–164. On the background of the Queen of Sheba, see Harold M. Parker Jr., “Solomon and the Queen of Sheba,” *The Iliff Review* 24 (1967): 17–23.

²⁹⁹ Claudia V. Camp, “1 and 2 Kings,” *The Woman's Bible Commentary* (ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; London: SPCK Press, 1992), 102 (a fitting title, although I disagree with her denial of the historical basis of the narrative and with her suggestion that there is an “erotic subtext”).

³⁰⁰ The narrator uses the term *gedolah* “great, notable, wealthy” (2 Kgs 4:8). See also discussion in Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes*, 173–174.

³⁰¹ Frymer-Kensky (*Reading the Women of the Bible*, 64–73) pieces together the biblical clues that lead her to a plausible conclusion that this woman, like the daughters of Zelophehad, probably inherited land and lived among her own kin: “owning her own land, she is not dependent upon men for her livelihood” (72). Thus (*ibid.*) “The Shunammite may be an example of how women act when the economic constraints of patriarchy are removed.”

³⁰² Camp, “1 and 2 Kings,” 106.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 106–108 (citation 107).

³⁰⁴ See esp. Burke O. Long, “The Shunammite Woman: In the Shadow of the Prophet?” *Bible Review* 7 (1991): 12–19, 42; Mark Roncace, “Elisha and the Woman of Shunem: 2 Kings 4:8–37 and 8:1–6 Read in Conjunction,” *JSOT* 91 (2000): 109–127 (and further bibliography listed on 109–110, n. 2); Mary E. Shields, “Subverting a Man of God, Elevating a Woman: Role and Power Reversals in 2 Kings 4,” *JSOT* 58 (1993): 59–69; Jopie Siebert-Hommers, “The Widow of Zarephath and the Great Woman of Shunem: A Comparative Analysis of Two Stories,” in *Samuel and Kings* (ed. Athalya Brenner; FCB 2/7; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 98–114; and Uriel Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives* (trans. Lenn J. Schramm; Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1997), 227–262.

³⁰⁵ For further discussion and characterization of Huldah, see Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes*, 174–175; Phipps, *Assertive Biblical Women*, 83–92; and Arlene Swidler, “In Search of Huldah,” *TBT* 98 (1978): 1780–1785.

³⁰⁶ Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible*, 63.

³⁰⁷ For studies dealing with the characterization of Esther (and Vashti), see esp. Mieke Bal, “Lots of Writing,” *Semeia* 54 (1991): 77–102; Timothy K. Beal, *The Book of Hiding: Gender, Ethnicity, Annihilation, and Esther* (London: Routledge, 1997); Berquist, *Reclaiming Her Story*, 154–166; Michael Beckett, *Gospel in Esther* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster, 2002); Adele Berlin, *Esther: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (The JPS Bible Commentary; Philadelphia, Pa.: Jewish Publication Society, 2001), liv–lix; idem, “Reclaiming Esther: From Sex Object to Sage,” *JBQ* 26, no. 1 (January–March 1998): 3–10; Klara Butting, “Esther: A New Interpretation of the Joseph Story in the Fight against Anti-Semitism and Sexism,” in *Ruth and Esther* (ed. Athalya Brenner; FCB, 2/3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 239–248; Claudia V. Camp, “The Three Faces of Esther: Traditional Woman, Royal Diplomat, Authenticator of Tradition,” *Academy: Journal of Lutherans in Professions* 38 (1982): 20–25; Linda Day, *Three Faces of a Queen: Characterization in the Books of Esther* (JSOTSup 186; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); John F. Craghan, “Esther: A Fully Liberated Woman,” *TBT* 24, no. 1 (January 1986): 6–11; Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991); Lee W. Humphreys, “A Life-style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel,” *JBL* 93 (1973): 211–223; LaCocque, *The Feminine Unconventional*, 49–83; Larry Lichtenwalter, *Behind the Seen: God’s Hand in Esther’s Life . . . and Yours* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 2001); Susan Niditch, “Short Stories: The Book of Esther and the Theme of Women as A Civilizing Force,” in *Old Testament Interpretation Past, Present, and Future: Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker* (ed. James Luther Mays et al.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 195–209; idem, *Underdogs and Tricksters: A Prelude to Biblical Folklore* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 126–145; Sakenfeld, *Just Wives?* 49–67; Sidnie Ann White, “Esther: A Feminine Model for Jewish Diaspora,” in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. Peggy L. Day; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 161–177; idem (now Sidnie White Crawford), “Esther and Judith: Contrasts in Character,” in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research* (ed. Sidnie White Crawford and Leonard J. Greenspoon; London: T & T Clark, 2003), 61–76.

³⁰⁸ Fox, *Esther*, 210. Fox (205–211) refutes the feminist critiques of Esther Fuchs, A. L. Laffey, and others who see in this book only a “stereotypical woman in a man’s world” in “full compliance with patriarchy.” In this section I highlight the positive valuation of the woman Esther, although I do not wish to give the impression that she is without character faults. In the next chapter, as I discuss her exogamous marriage to Ahasuerus, Esther’s compromise of biblical principles will be made clear.

³⁰⁹ White, “Esther: A Feminine Model,” 173; cf. idem “Esther and Judith,” 61–76. For a Christian perspective of Esther as an exemplar of God’s servant, see Beckett, *Gospel in Esther*, passim.

³¹⁰ Bronner, “Esther Revisited,” 194; cf. idem, “Reclaiming Esther,” 3–10. For further demonstration of Esther’s role as authoritative, liberating leader, see esp. Berlin, *Esther*, liv–lvii; Craghan, “Esther,” 6–11; Gitay, “Esther and the Queen’s Throne,” 73–93; Sakenfeld, *Just Wives?* 49–67; and Wyler, “Esther,” 111–135.

³¹¹ For the intertextual linkages and implications, see esp. Butting, “Esther,” 239–248; and Niditch, “Esther,” 26–46.

³¹² Camp, “Female Voice, Written Word,” 106 (see the discussion, 105–107).

³¹³ Tamara C. Eskenazi, “Out from the Shadows: Biblical Women in the Postexilic Era,” *JSOT* 54 (1992): 25–43. Cf. Joan E. Cook, “Women in Ezra and Nehemiah,” *TBT* 37 (1999): 212–216, who also points out “egalitarian roles” (216) of the women mentioned in Ezra-Nehemiah.

³¹⁴ Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 48, 50.

³¹⁵ Kathleen M. O’Connor, “Jeremiah,” in *The Woman’s Bible Commentary* (ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe; London: SPCK, 1992), 176. Cf. the summary of interpretations by Bauer, *Gender in the Book of Jeremiah*, 138–145

³¹⁶ See Deborah F. Sawyer, “Gender-Play and Sacred Text: A Scene from Jeremiah,” *JSOT* 83 (1999): 99–111, who points out the many intertextual linkages between this section of Jeremiah and Gen 1–3, and moves in the direction of my suggestion (albeit with a postmodern deconstructionist approach which I reject). See also William L. Holladay, “Jeremiah XXXI 22b Reconsidered: ‘The Woman Encompasses the Man,’” *VT* 16 (1966): 236–239.

³¹⁷ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 502. For evidence that this passage refers to the Messiah, see *ibid.*, 489–505.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ For discussion of key intertextual parallels between Joel 2 and Num 11, see especially Raymond B. Dillard, “Joel,” in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas E. McComiskey (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 294–295.

³²⁰ C. F. Keil, “Joel,” in *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, vol. 10 (2 vols. in one); *The Minor Prophets*, by C. F. Keil (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 1:211.

³²¹ Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, The American Commentary, 19a (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 369.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ Keil, “Joel,” 211.

³²⁴ Dillard, "Joel," 295.

³²⁵ Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 67.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*