



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Timothy 2:13-15; Genesis 3:14-24

"Pauline Thoughts on the Role of Women in the Church - II"          TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the assurance of the protecting hand of our great God over the saints. We praise Thee that in the midst of the stresses of life we can be sure that there is nothing that happens to us by accident. We thank Thee for the way in which Thou hast delivered the city from the tornado. We ask Thy blessing upon the few that were hurt. We pray, O God, that Thou wilt minister to them. And we thank Thee for the privilege of turning to the Scriptures. And we pray that tonight as we consider again a portion from Paul's letter to young Timothy that the Spirit may teach us and guide us and lead us into the truth. We commit this hour to Thee. We ask Thy blessing upon each one present. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight is the second and final of our studies in "Pauline Thoughts on the Role of Women in the Church." And for the Scripture reading tonight I want to turn to a passage in the Book of Genesis, and then we'll turn and read three verses from 1 Timothy chapter 2, which will conclude our exposition of that second chapter. Genesis chapter 3, and beginning at verse 14, the reason that I am reading this passage is that it is obvious from the study of 1 Timothy chapter 2 that the apostle's discussion in that particular section is built upon this portion of the Old Testament. I'm sure that you will

notice these things as we expound the text in 1 Timothy chapter 2. In the preceding verse where you have read,

"The LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat (deceived me). And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Let's turn over now to 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 13 through verse 15. These are the final verses of 1 Timothy chapter 2, in which the apostle deals with the subject of women in the church. Now he has just said in the context, you will remember, "I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." I'm sure the readers must have been clamoring for reasons for this. Perhaps not so much as we in the 20th century, but nevertheless they must have been interested. And the apostle now gives the reasons, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she

shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety," Pauline thoughts on the role of women in the church. It has been called the "Battle of the Sexes" and the "Suicide of the Sexes" and it has been characterized, as I mentioned last week, by angry rhetoric, marches, ritual roastings of the male chauvinist pig. The issues have been equal pay and equal rights under the law. I would presume that probably all of us in this auditorium are willing to grant that those are genuine issues, and that so far as we are concerned we hope that the women do gain their rights.

This issues, however, and this discussion has spilled over into the life of the local church and particularly over the controversy over equal rights and functions in the church. Now, I'm sure that you might wonder, is the controversy in the church the result of the study of Scripture, or is it the result of the activities of the vociferous women who have been involved in this particular controversy. Just this past week I re-read an editorial which I had put aside and which I had forgotten, but I had put aside for use as an illustration if I ever spoke on this topic; last November, 1975, an editor of the *Reform Journal*, a journal that is highly respected and an evangelical journal, speaks about the question of women's liberation. He says, "There are many Christians who seem to think that the woman's issue can be disposed of quite easily. The whole question has arisen, they argue, because of a secular cultural development called Women's Liberation, without which no one would have thought to ask the reformed community to reexamine its position on the admission of women to Ecclesiastical offices. The real question on this view is whether the Christian community will allow itself to be intimidated by the world. Those of us who support the ordination of women," the editor goes on to say, "would do well to admit that much of this analysis is correct. We cannot honestly argue that we came to our position by reading Saint Paul's Epistles to Timothy and to the Church at Corinth. It seems very unlikely that we would be calling for a change in the church's traditional position if the Women's Liberation phenomenon had not appeared."

I find that a very interesting thing, and of course, I acknowledge very freely that it is possible for the Women's Liberation movement, or any other movement for that reason, to cause us to re-study the Scripture on a particular point and to lead us or bring us to the place where we see things that we have not seen before. Now, that is perfectly legitimate, but this issue is an issue that is spoken upon in Scripture in a number of places. And it is a very strange thing that a Christian leader and editor of a respected periodical would admit that he had not really studied the Scripture on the question of women's rights in the church until the Women's Liberation movement spurred him to the study of the word of God. It is true therefore, that in many cases, the discussion and controversy that has spilled over into the church has been caused, not by the study of the Scriptures, but by agitation from without.

Last time in our studies we tried to point out that we must keep the guidelines before us in the discussion and the guidelines which I accept, and I would imagine that ninety-eight percent of you in the audience also accept are these. First, the authority of holy Scripture, if we do not accept the authority of holy Scripture, then to discuss it from the standpoint of the Bible is irrelevant. We should discuss it from the standpoint of sociology or something like that. But we do accept the authority of the word of God, and therefore, this is one of the important guidelines for us. The other guideline is the tradition of the church.

Now, I'm sure that there are many evangelicals who do not respond too wildly to being subject in any way to the tradition of the church. And let me hasten to say I do not suggest by this that we are to be in submission to the tradition of the church just because it is the tradition of the church. We can only be in submission to the teaching of holy Scripture. But after all, we must interpret the Bible. And the Christian church has been interpreting the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for nineteen hundred years, at least, therefore if the Holy Spirit has been engaging in his teaching ministry, and surely we all grant that, then we should listen to the teaching that he has given other Godly men

down through the centuries, and we should pay some attention to it. Occasionally we may want to differ with the tradition, but ordinarily we would assume that the Holy Spirit has been doing a fairly good job of teaching down through the years, and therefore we would expect that all the truth does not rest with us in 1976.

The facts are I think we all will agree that the great body of truth to which we hold has been the teaching of the Holy Spirit down through the centuries. And in the 20th century we have not added a great deal of new information to the body of truth, which is held by true believers. Therefore, we say that we pay attention to the tradition. We pay attention to the way the church has read holy Scripture down through the nineteen hundred years. But we pay primary attention to the teaching of the word of God. Now, I mention that because it has been the universal tradition of the Christian church down through the years that so far as rights in the church are concerned, the rights to Ecclesiastical function in the church have been the rights of men rather than women. But after all, as I say, the important thing is what do the Scriptures say? We will not flee behind such new devices as time conditioned culture or rabbinical views of the Apostle Paul. We will not say that this interpretation of Scripture was a cultural phenomenon of the Apostle Paul and since that was nineteen hundred years ago we do not have to follow the cultural teaching of the Apostle Paul. We will seek to discover exactly what Scripture says about it.

I do believe that if we were to accept these guidelines of the teaching of Scripture and the teaching of the church. The issue is not a great scriptural issue. In verses 8 through 12, in our last study, we looked at these matters. First, we paid a little bit of attention to the apostle's injunction in the 8th verse that men should pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. We laid a little stress upon the fact that the word for men there is the word that distinguishes a man from a female, a woman. And so he is referring to the males, that they should pray in every place. Now, when we said in every place we meant in every place where the church meets. Because in chapter

3, verse 14 he will say, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." And there he tells us that in chapters 1, 2, and 3 he has been writing information and instruction in order that we might, through that instruction know how we ought to behave ourselves in the church of the living God. Therefore the praying referred to in verse 8 of chapter 2 is prayer by men within the local church.

Then in verses 9 and 10 he says something about the women. He said that they should be characterized by modest apparel. And that they should be particularly characterized by good works. And I sought in order to show that the women are not neglected in the work of the Lord, that there is a vast area of responsibility and opportunity and privilege in Christian service for the female sex. And good works are to characterize them. Then finally we looked briefly at the question of the woman and teaching in verses 11 and 12. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." And we saw from the study of this that so far as Paul was concerned he was plainly stating, as far as we can tell from this text, that the woman was not to teach in the meetings of the church, nor was she to usurp authority over the man, which would seem to exclude her from the office of elder and deacon. The question of the relationship of the office of deaconess will taken up when we begin to look at the third chapter, because it comes before us in the latter part of that chapter.

But there in 1 Timothy 2 the apostle seems to say very plainly that the women are not eligible for the function of eldership in the local church. Now, I hasten to say it is not because the woman is inferior. It is not because she does not have within herself, probably, the capacities to carry out such an office. It is simply that God has assigned certain places to men, and he has assigned certain places to women. Equal worth does not demand similar function. Functions may differ and among people who are of the

same worth. This is most beautifully illustrated and most clearly illustrated in the relationship of the Lord Jesus to the Father. The Lord Jesus was assigned a function by the trinity in the work of mediation to be dependent upon the Father. And yet he was absolutely equal with the Father, very God of very God. And yet himself subordinate for a time to carry out the work of redemption. So subordination, submission is not a confession of inferiority. Now, I didn't have to tell the women that, because you already know you're not inferior to us. And in fact, you feel rather confident that if the question came down to a real test of who is superior and who is inferior, you know that you would stand up very well in that kind of a judgment. We are talking simply about function, not about worth.

Now, today we are going to look at three reasons for the woman's quiet subjection in the church. The apostle is, in these three verses, to give us three reasons and the first of them we can call in verse 13, a reason that pertains to the woman's origin. He states, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Now he has just said that he does not permit the woman to usurp authority over the man. The New International Version reads simply "to have authority over the man." The function of teaching connotes a sense of authority. When I teach you that does not necessarily mean that I am your judge, although on the Bible lesson for last Sunday on the Believers Bible Bulletin I did have a quotation at the top that you were to be very kind in judging the preacher, because he is your judge, and to remember that he is an earthen vessel and God should be permitted to take something out of an earthen vessel. But the sense of teaching does have a disposition of authority about. And so the apostle states then, the woman is not to teach, she is not to usurp authority over the man, and the first reason is her priority in creation and the fountain of her existence as derived from the man.

Now there are some interpreters who say the apostle bases the superiority in function, or the place of teaching in function to the man for the reason that man was created first. I don't really think that priority in creation is the sole basis of this distinction

that the Lord has made. Lying back of this is the origin of the woman. And remember, in chapter 2 of the Book of Genesis the woman is derived from the man. In other words, she has her origin out of the man. So it is not simply priority of creation, but it is the manner in which the woman was created that is also important. She, by the very fact that she is taken from the man, is therefore to have a dependent place. That is her origin and is to be reflected in her history and her function. So the woman's origin as the apostle expresses it here in verse 13 is the first reason for the subordination of the woman and for her prohibition for teaching and usurping authority over the man. As you can tell from the reading of the Scripture the background for the reading of the apostle's thoughts is the Book of Genesis, Genesis chapter 2, verse 18 through verse 25 where we read of the origin of the woman, and Genesis chapter 3, verse 14 through verse 19 where we read of the judgment upon the woman and the things that transpire as a result of her sin.

In chapter 2, verse 18 Moses had written,

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; (This is not the creation of the woman.) and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

I guess this is where we get the expression that the woman may be a sidekick of the man. [Laughter] Now, the point of this passage is simply that the woman is taken

from the man, and because she is taken from the man and a part of him, the argument is that her origin suggests her dependence.

Now, the apostle gives us in another passage in the New Testament a further exposition of this. And I want you to turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 8, 9, and 10 for a further expansion of it. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 he has stated in verse 3, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." That's the basis of what I said a moment ago that the subordination of Jesus Christ, the dependence of the Lord Jesus upon the Father is the pattern of the dependence of the woman upon the man. Then in the 8th verse the apostle says, "For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." So the apostle states there the essential reason that he has stated in 1 Timothy. The woman is taken out of the man, which suggests dependence, and further, she is created for the man. Now, he will also point out that man is now through the woman. And that only illustrates the fact that there is a complementarity that must exist between the man and the woman if we are to be truly happy and in the place of God's relationship. But 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 8 through 15 are important for the understanding of this.

Coming back to our passage in 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 13, when the apostle states then, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve," he's not speaking simply about priority of creation as if because he was created first, he is to be the head. And since Eve is created second she is to be in subjection. But back of this first and second lies her origin from the side of man, dependent upon him. Now this is it seems to me, extremely important, if we are to understand the biblical teaching concerning the women. It is not out of the ordinary at all for men to say, who are students of the Bible, these are simply cultural time conditioned teachings, and we are not responsible for following them today. Professor William Barclay, a well known Bible teacher, Professor of New Testament for

some years at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, he probably has been more widely read than any other biblical teacher in Great Britain. And his books are read by many, many preachers all over the United States. Professor Barclay has said concerning this particular chapter in his comments on 1 Timothy that what we read here are "mere temporary regulations. They pertain to the apostle's time; they do not pertain to any other time."

Then also, he says that if we are to find the apostle's permanent view we must turn to Galatians chapter 3, and verse 28. There we have the apostle's permanent view. Now, he doesn't tell us why Galatians 3 is his permanent view and why 1 Timothy chapter 2 is his temporary view, but nevertheless this is what he affirms. And this viewpoint is very, very popular and common today. We read in verse 28 of Galatians chapter 3, "Neither is there Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Now, does not that tell us that there is no difference now between the woman and the man in the church of Jesus Christ? If, as he says, there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female in Jesus Christ, how then can we say from the standpoint of Scripture that offices or functions in the church such as the function of elder and deacon are to be withheld from the women.

How can we do that in the light of Galatians chapter 3, and verse 28? Well now, if you will notice in verse 28 of Galatians chapter 3 the apostle says, "For ye are all one in Christ Jesus." He does not say "Ye are all one in the church." "You are one in Christ Jesus." Furthermore he says that in this relationship there is neither male nor female. I'm sure that we would not be so radical as to suggest that by virtue of the agitations of women's liberation they have been able to wipe out all of the sexual distinctions that exist by our creation. There are still males and females, and we cannot get away from it. You see, the text here does not have anything to do with one's function in a local church. It has to do with one's spiritual relationship in Christ Jesus. Now in Christ Jesus there is no difference. Once a person has become, through the work of the Holy Spirit, regenerated

and comes to faith in Christ and receives justification and forgiveness of sins, he is a new creature. And whether he is male or female, he has come to be in Christ. And in spiritual privilege there is no distinction in Jesus Christ. Males, females, we have the same spiritual privileges in the Lord Jesus. We have the same spiritual blessings. We are all priests of God. We all have the forgiveness of sins. We all have been justified and all of the other blessings. Dr. Chafer used to say, thirty-three things happened the moment we believe in Jesus Christ. Bob Theme says there are thirty-four. Dr. Chafer says he counted twice. I'll go with the man who counted twice this time. [Laughter] Sorry Bob.

But nevertheless a number of things happen the moment we believe in the Lord Jesus and they happen to all of us, male or female. We are all one in Jesus Christ, but to be one in the church is another matter. To be one in the family is another matter. And to be one in the state is also another matter. You see, what Paul is speaking about is priority in function, not superiority in being or superiority in position. Later on, if I have time I want to say a further word about culture and the cultural interpretation of the Bible. Ultimately, as I suggested last time, the cultural interpretation of Scripture leads inevitably to disagreement with the teaching of the apostles. Inevitably it does, sooner or later that is what will happen, and I gave you one good illustration in the fact that now Professor Paul Jewett, who follows a cultural interpretation, has suggested that what the apostle says here comes from rabbinical sources and is reflective of his rabbinical views and therefore we cannot accept the teaching of Paul in 1 Timothy chapter 2. He is not the first of evangelical men to make claims such as that. That's the first reason for the woman's subjection and silence in the church.

Now we know that women don't have to silent outside the church. They let us know that constantly. [Laughter] So this is purely in the official meeting of the church, and even then I occasionally notice one of them punching her husband during the meeting. [Laughter] The apostle doesn't say anything about that ladies. I guess that's all right. Now the 14th verse gives us the second reason and that has to do with the

woman's deception. Now, I know I'm treading on toes here, and I want you to know ladies, in spite of the fact that I am smiling, that it really pains me to speak about this, because I do not like, I really do not like to tell the women they do not have certain rights. Now, I'm sure you think "Dr. Johnson is really loving this and he's really laying it on now." I really don't like to do this. I would rather teach some other subject, because I know that someone may misunderstand. He says, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived came to be" I translate that, because that's the meaning of the Greek text, "came to be in the transgression."

Now notice here that the facts upon which the apostle makes his decision that the woman is to be silent and not to teach are not cultural facts. They are, number one, the creation. That's not a cultural fact. As a matter of fact, there were thousands of years between the creation and the words of the apostle. But he bases his reasoning upon the creation, and he bases his reasoning upon what happened in the Garden of Eden. Now, the culture had changed considerably since that time, but his reason for this is based upon those fundamental facts of the Book of Genesis. So if we say that this subjection is based upon cultural factors, we are saying the creation itself is cultural, and it's not. The fact of creation and the fact of the entrance of sin into the world in the Book of Genesis is the basis for Paul's judgment that the woman should keep silent in the meetings of the church and should not teach or usurp authority over the men. This is not a cultural reason.

Now let's look at the statements a little more carefully. He says, "And Adam was not deceived." Isn't that a striking thing? Actually Genesis doesn't say that Adam was not deceived. Genesis says the woman was deceived. She admitted it. She said "The serpent beguiled me." That's the meaning of the Hebrew word that is used there, deception. He beguiled me. Now there is a sense in which all sin is deception, but evidently Adam's sin is different from Eve's. Incidentally, some interpreters have suggested that what we should put in here the adverb "first." "And Adam was not deceived first." But that is an addition not substantiated by the text.

There are three ways we could take this statement, "Adam was not deceived." We could say Eve was deceived more than Adam, but there is no reason for that in the context. Or we could take it secondly as Eve was deceived directly, Adam indirectly, Eve was deceived by the serpent. And then Adam was deceived by Eve or through the means of Eve, and it has been said that this is what the apostle means, because the order of judgment supports this. He first judges Satan and then he judges the woman who was directly deceived, and then the man who was indirectly deceived. I rather think he built up to a climax himself. I think he starts with Satan who has least responsibility in the human scene, then Eve, and then Adam who is the covenant head of the human race. And he is the critical person, and when he sins the race fall. As a matter of fact, when Eve sinned nothing happened. If you read the Genesis account, nothing happened when she sinned. But when Adam sinned, as I've said to you before, all hell broke loose. And you read the Genesis account and you will see that everything hinged finally upon the sin of Adam, the reason being that he was the covenantal head. When Eve sinned the race had not fallen. The race fell when Adam sinned, and if Eve sinned Adam could have appealed to God and said, "Lord, the help meet's not very helpful." [Laughter] And a new help meet might have been attained. But there evidently was some relationship between these two, which people call love.

Now, there are people who say that in marriage love is not necessary. I still am old fashioned enough to think that that is a desirable thing to have, and I would rather love my wife before I marry her, than take a chance on marriage and thinking that if I marry her I will learn to love her. I just feel that way. Now, if I could get a word from heaven that was objective, "You should marry her, you will learn to love her" I'll be willing to believe that, but I just like to love first, before I marry. And evidently Eve and Adam had a good relationship, because when Eve sinned she didn't find it difficult to appeal to the man and he responded. Incidentally, that interpretation that Eve was deceived directly and Adam indirectly is opposed, it seems to me, by the plain statement,

"Adam was not deceived." So I think we have to say, "Adam was not deceived and let it stand with that." Therefore this text must mean it seems to me, this third possibility. Adam sinned with his eyes wide open. He knew exactly what he was doing, and nevertheless he did it. In other words, his sin was willful sin.

Now, as I say, you can call willful sin deception in a sense. A man is foolish if he thinks he can get away with willful sin, of course, it's amazing Christians even attempt that. That is a form of deception, I presume. When a Christian thinks that he can sin and get away with it, that is a form of deception, but that's not the kind of deception referred to here. He sinned willfully with his eyes wide open. "Eve," Bengall, the old German commentator said, "Eve persuaded him." Probably true, "and in the persuasion she tried to rule him, as a result of this, God judges her by confirming the fact that she must obey him." Adam is the more culpable, since he was the covenant head, and when Adam sinned knowing that he was the covenant head, he brought down the race with him. And that's why Adam's sin was more culpable in my opinion, this is not stated in Scripture, I should warn you. In my opinion his sin was more culpable than Eve's because he was the covenant head. Being the covenant head by virtue of the covenant relationships established in Genesis 2, so that he was the head and when he sinned we read in the New Testament, sin entered into the world. "For by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, because all sinned" in Adam. So that it is through Adam that the sin enters the human race.

Well what does that, to the apostle's mind, suggest? Well, since Eve was deceived and Adam was not deceived, Eve is much more likely to be led astray by deceiving people or language. Therefore the teaching office should be reserved for the man. At this point most Bible students point to the fact, in fact one well known Bible student, at one time, I think, a bishop in the Anglican church, commented that this is a "universally known fact that women are more easily deceived than men." Now, we do not, of course, affirm that that is true of every woman. There are some women who are excellent

students of holy Scripture and have a well developed sense of discernment and perception in spiritual things. And there are some men who do not have much discernment at all. They can be easily led astray. Generally speaking, however, the apostle seems to affirm by this that it is characteristic of the woman as a woman, to be more easily led astray. But this is of the group, and the apostle bases his injunction that she should not teach partly on that.

I say it's usually the statement that Bible teachers make at this point that you can look around and see that. For example, what about Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy [Laughter] who is responsible for Christian science, or what about Ellen G. White and the Seventh Day Adventists, and so on? And there have been many women who have been responsible for heretical movements to arise on the fringes of the Christian faith. But if the woman had a chance to reply in our church, she probably could name just as many men who have led astray Christians as women, for there have been many of them. The Mormon church, for example, was not originated by a woman, and you can name many others. The Jehovah's witnesses were not originated by a women. Russellism is a name derived from a man and not a woman. So perhaps there is something of this, but it is not true of all women.

Now, when we turn to the Bible we have some beautiful illustrations of some women who were excellent teachers of the word. Do you remember the incident in Acts chapter 18, when Apollos began to preach the word? Apollos was a very gifted man, but he only knew few things about the truth. He was a disciple of John the Baptist, and he knew a few of the things that concern the teaching of the Baptist. We read in verse 24 of Acts chapter 18, "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord." That's an expression used of John the Baptist. "He spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." So he was a student a disciple of John the Baptist. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, and there were there a

couple. Their names were Aquila and Priscilla. They were very prominent people in the early church. They, later on, have a church in their home in the city of Rome. And the apostle when he wrote to the church at Rome greets Aquila and Priscilla and the church that met in their house. So they were dedicated Christians.

Well they listened to this man, Apollos, and he spoke with great authority and with great ability being an eloquent man and mighty in the Old Testament teaching. But evidently he was lacking in the teaching of the New Testament and particularly of the fulfillment of the Old Testament things in the coming of Christ. And so, I can just imagine that what happened was that in the meetings of the church I can see Priscilla now punching Aquila on the side, and saying, "Why don't we have Apollos over to the house for dinner today, and perhaps we can get in a word that might be a help to him, because it's obvious that he doesn't know all the truth that he should." And so we read, "And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Now, the woman did part of that exposition, too. And incidentally if you will look at this in the Greek text, my Authorized Version here has the order Aquila and Priscilla, but the Greek text at this point in verse 26 reads that Priscilla and Aquila took him to themselves and taught him the way of the Lord more accurately. So the implication from that, it's only an implication, is that she took the lead. And I'm willing to agree that when they got in the house she did more of the talking than Aquila [Laughter]. I will not debate that at all. So I am willing to believe that she probably did take the lead. And part of the effectiveness of this man Apollos was because Priscilla who was instructed in the word of God taught him more perfectly the things of the Lord. The apostle says nothing about that in 1 Timothy chapter 2. He talks about teaching in the church. So ladies the field is open outside the church. Go ahead and pick on some of these fellows that don't understand the doctrines of the sovereignty of God like they ought to and instruct them in the great doctrines of the faith. Do it, I need your help. So do it.

So the apostle says Adam was not deceived. Now in the Greek text there is a little bit of stress, I'm sorry ladies, but there's a little bit of stress on the deception of the woman, because the word that is used, translated deceived the second time in verse 14, is the intensive word and is a word that means in this context "utterly deceived." The man was not deceived, but the woman being utterly deceived, completely fooled by Satan, has come to be in the transgression. So her weakness here is referred to. She was utterly deceived and her weakness also affected others, and because of that the apostle argues she should be in a place of subjection so far as the teaching is concerned.

In the New Testament we have other references to this, I want you to turn with me if you will to 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 34. When the apostle, in this chapter, is speaking about the place of the women, he states in the 34th verse, "Let your women," this is 1 Corinthians 14, verse 34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law." Now notice that statement, "as also saith the Law." The apostle says the woman should keep silence in the churches, and the reason she should is because this is not only teaching of the apostles, but it is taught in the Law. Now, where is it taught in the Law, well the only place that it is taught in the Law is Genesis chapter 2 and 3. These are the teachings that the apostle sees as coming from the Law of Moses. And incidentally, that destroys again the idea that the apostle was giving a cultural regulation. He says that it is founded upon the teaching of the Law. And the Book of Genesis, again I repeat, is a book that has to do with conditions thousands of years before the time of the New Testament.

One other passage we might look at is 2 Corinthians chapter 11, and verse 3. This teaching of the apostles is not an isolated teaching. And he states in verse 3 of 2 Corinthians chapter 11, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Notice, the serpent beguiled Eve through his craftiness.

Well now, let's now come to the final verse, for we only have about seven or eight more minutes, and we want to finish here. The apostle, in verse 15 gives the third reason, and the third reason is that the woman role is not the role of public teacher. Her role is the role of motherhood. The preceding might have left the impression that the woman lies under God's permanent displeasure. Isn't God taking away from the woman something that she ought to have? God is not really good to women; he allows the men to teach and not the women. Well, the apostle, I'm sure, felt that this is rather definite and strong language that he has been using, and so he introduces a kind of softening correction if it might be called correction, or modification. Notwithstanding, the Greek text has the simple little *de*, which means "but or now." "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety." Not by preaching but by accepting her God-given role is the path of salvation for the women.

Well now, this text, as you probably know, has been given different interpretations. At least three primary interpretations have been given of verse 15. "She shall be saved in childbearing," what does that mean? Some have understood this to mean that spiritual salvation shall come to the woman through the childbearing, the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. They point to the fact that the word childbearing in verse 15, in the original text, has an article before it, and it can be rendered, "She shall be saved through the child bearing." Now what is "the childbearing?" Why, surely the child bearing of all the centuries is the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, and so the childbearing would be the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, the coming of the Messiah, and implied in that all of the ministry of Christ. And so, is not Paul saying, so they say, nevertheless the woman shall be saved through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus who was born of the virgin Mary. Well we have to admit that's a possible interpretation. Further, it maintains a fairly close connection with Genesis chapter 3, and the apostle is arguing on the base of Genesis chapter 3 because in verse 15, remember, of Genesis 3, we have the first preaching of the gospel in which the Lord says to the woman, and to Satan, and Adam

that the seed of the woman shall crush the head of the serpent. So the reference to the seed of the woman in the context might be thought to suggest the incarnation to the Apostle Paul and so we could take this then to mean she shall be saved through the childbearing of the Lord Jesus.

Now, that's possible, we have to grant it's possible. But I would only say this by way of Scripture. There is probably no more obscure way to say that we will be saved through the redemptive work of Christ than this. "She should be saved through the childbearing." So I must admit that while some excellent students have taken that interpretation, it is not convincing to me. A second interpretation, it seems to me, is much more likely. The second interpretation takes the word saved not as a reference to spiritual salvation from the penalty of sin, but deliverance from the pain and danger of childbirth. Because in the context of Genesis chapter 3, remember, it is stated that one of the judgments upon the woman is "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow in thy conception. In sorrow shall thou bring forth children. And thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." So in the Genesis account it is stated that the woman shall have birth pangs when children are born.

So could not the apostle then be saying here that she shall be preserved physically through the danger of childbirth, through childbearing? Well, that makes excellent sense. It ties in very well with Genesis chapter 3, and verse 16. This then would be a general promise, not of course addressed to every woman, but a general promise that a woman through child bearing would ordinarily be preserved. That would not, of course, mean that there should not be deaths by childbirth, but women would ordinarily be preserved through childbirth. I say it makes very good sense. There is only one thing about it that troubles me, and that is that we give the word saved here in verse 15 the sense of physical preservation, whereas we've already had it twice in the Epistle in chapter 1, verse 15 we read, "This is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptance, that Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." And there is seems plainly to mean spiritual salvation from the penalty of sin.

And then in chapter 2, verse 4, in the very chapter we are studying we read, "Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." And again, it does not mean physical preservation there, but spiritual salvation from the penalty of sin. So while this interpretation is a possible interpretation, it labors under the difficulty of giving saved a different meaning than that which it has in the immediate context. And that, of course, is always a bad thing to do in interpretation. Sometimes it's necessary, the context demands it. But the context may not demand it here.

A final interpretation is that this has to do with spiritual salvation through the acceptance of her appointed role of motherhood in faith. Now the meaning then would be that she should be saved spiritually through childbearing in the sense that this is the expression of her faith in God, who gave the Redeemer, who is the only Savior, but she manifests her true faith in the Lord and in his redemptive program, by obediently taking her place in the role of mother and carrying out that responsibility before God. In other words, the passage then would be looking at this matter from the standpoint of man. It would be looking at our salvation from the standpoint of the necessary effects of true faith in the Lord Jesus. Remember the Bible teaches that everyone who exercises true faith must bring forth evidence of it in good works. "Faith without works is dead," James says. Any kind of affirmation of faith that does not result in good works, we don't have to see them incidentally, but they have to be there, is not genuine faith. Everybody who is born physically manifests itself by life, usually by a shout or cry, wailing, weeping, rebellion, all children are born rebellious. Doctors tell us one of the reasons is they are born in the light. They ought to be born in the darkness, and if they were born in the darkness that would bring us into existence in such a way that we wouldn't be so mean as we are now. This is now actually a theory that doctors are propounding, and so if we could have birth

“Pauline Thoughts on the Role of Women in the Church, part II” by S. Lewis Johnson  
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

in completely dark rooms, children would be born without weeping, rebellion, and crying, and we'd all be pleasant, docile, beautifully adjusted people...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**