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Timothy J. Harris

Why did Paul Mention Eve's Deception? A Critique of P. W Barnett's Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2

Dr. (now Bishop) Paul Barnett's discussion of 'Wives and Women's Ministry' in the EQ in July 1989 raises a number of important issues of interpretation and application, to which Mr. Harris, Rector of the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Helensburgh, NSW, here directs his attention.

Dr. Paul Barnett's comments in regard to the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2 have rightly been received as one of the best presentations of the conservative (in terms of women's ministry¹) understanding of that passage. For that reason, and because of the wide promotion of his views,² his work deserves a response.

I. The Social Context of 1 Timothy

We shall leave aside to later a consideration of the immediate context of 1 Timothy 2, and consider first Dr. Barnett's proposal that the passage is best understood if we postulate that the references to women's expensive dress in verse 8 imply that the presence of wealthy/educated women was the cause of tension in the church at Ephesus. It is important to note at the outset that despite Barnett's dismissal of other interpretations because they

¹ This is the sense in which 'conservative interpreters' is to be understood throughout this paper.

² Initial attention to Dr. Barnett's comments followed his speech against a motion seeking to promote women's ordination to the priesthood at the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia. The substance of this speech was printed in some detail in the Anglican newspaper, *Church Scene* (4:523, Sept. 1, 1989), and from this reprinted and distributed in the bulletin of the Anglican Church League in Sydney. Fuller documentation of his views is found in his article, 'Wives and Women's Ministry (1 Timothy 2:11-15)', *Evangelical Quarterly*, 61:3 (1989), 225-238, and it is to this latter work that we shall direct our critique.

involve 'elaborate and specific reconstructions',³ his interpretation involves no less of a reconstruction, and we must bear in mind that nowhere does Paul explicitly mention such a problem with wealthy women. It is an inference which requires substantiation.

In drawing attention to similar words concerning female attire found in 1 Peter, it is claimed that what we have is a universal and general body of instruction in circulation within the early church. This perspective needs some qualification however, for both the context and rationale for the instructions are quite different.⁴ In 1 Peter 3:2–3, the given reason is a concern that unbelieving husbands may be won to Christ by the demeanour of believing wives, a rationale which is comparable to the code of conduct enjoined in Titus 2:1–10, that is, that the gospel not be brought into disrepute.⁵ The fact that 1 Timothy 2:9 and 1 Peter 3:2–3 use some of the same words (nouns and adjectives) does not establish that they are making the same point, especially as the same words can also be paralleled in the writings of Graeco-Roman moralists.

On the basis of the observation that such dress is only relevant to wealthy women, Barnett then proceeds to provide an account of wealthy women within the early church and in Graeco-Roman culture generally, and it is here that we must contend that illegitimate use has been made of background data.

To refer to the apostle having contact with women of the 'middle and upper classes' is a surprising anachronism for an historian of antiquity to employ, for it has been clearly established that such 'class' terminologies are wholly inappropriate cate-

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⁴ A. Padgett similarly argues for a background to these verses in which wealthy women (probably recently converted and independent widows) are causing disruptions within the church at Ephesus; 'Wealthy Women at Ephesus: 1 Timothy 2:8–15 in Social Context', *Interpretation*, XLI, (1987). Padgett and Barnett differ quite markedly in their conclusions as to the wider significance of this projected scenario. Barnett plays down the *ad hoc* nature of the Pastorals, seeing them as a general encyclical of apostolic teaching similar in content to much other New Testament teaching. Padgett, in contrast, locates his reconstruction of the problems Paul is addressing more securely in the evidence gleaned elsewhere in the Pastorals as to specifics of the issues, and concludes that 1 Tim. 2:11–15 is addressed to a specific set of circumstances, and is relevant only within the context of such circumstances.

⁵ The differing rationale behind the various 'household codes' is carefully investigated by A. Padgett, 'The Pauline Rationale for Submission: Biblical Feminism and the *hina* Clauses of Titus 2:1–10', *Evangelical Quarterly*, LIX/1, (1987).

gories for understanding the complexities of the strata of Graeco-Roman society, and too often lead to unwarranted conclusions.⁶

Barnett assumes that wealth correlates with high rank within ancient society. It has been amply demonstrated that such was not necessarily the case. The issue of what criteria are appropriate to employ in understanding rank and status⁷ within antiquity is a complex one, but it is clear that wealth is not the only factor, and can indeed be a misleading indicator.⁸ Many who had wealth could be of a very different social grouping from others who held rank on other grounds (eg. family and ethnic-group position, education and knowledge, occupational prestige, political or military power).⁹ For example, someone of senatorial rank was far removed socially from a local businessman, even if their financial resources were comparable. Nor is the assumption that all wealthy people were educated anything more than a generalization.¹⁰

The relevance of all this is that such considerations significantly modify Barnett's use of data to comment on the status of women in Proconsular Asia. To argue on the basis of the evidence of some

⁶ The most stringent protest over the use of such terminology is made by R. L. Rohrbaugh, 'Methodological Considerations in the Debate over the Social Class Status of Early Christians', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LII/3; Similarly W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, (Yale, 1983), 53–55.

⁷ 'Rank' is not the same as 'status': the former denotes a formally defined position in society, the latter refers to a position of influence which does not correspond to the official pattern of social order; see E. A. Judge, *Rank and Status in the World of the Caesars and St. Paul*, (Canterbury, N. Z., 1982), 9. Judge argues that whilst Paul accepted the social ranking of his day, he repudiated the status conventions which permitted people to exploit the system to private advantage, 'Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul: Some Clues from Contemporary Documents', *Tyndale Bulletin*, 35, (1984), 12. There is an interesting corollary to this which bears thinking through. If (as Judge argues) Paul accepted the social ranking of his day, would he not (hypothetically) accept the social ranking of our day—which includes (indeed demands) equal professional and social ranking for women.

⁸ The most significant work in this regard has been that by M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, (London, 1973), who protests against economic models of analysis (especially Marxist) and notes that a variety of factors was involved leading to a 'crisscrossing of categories', pp.49–51; similarly Meeks correctly observes that stratification was multidimensional and cannot be determined by a single category, p.54.

⁹ These are some of the other factors adopted by Meeks, 54.

¹⁰ The caution of A. Cameron is applicable: 'It hardly seems plausible to regard the members of this commercially orientated group as in any sense intellectuals, and the notion that they had mostly received a Greek education seems quite unproven', 'Neither Male nor Female', *Greece and Rome*, 2nd ser, 27, (1980), 62.

15 *archiereiai*¹¹ that women in ancient society were not as restricted as is often supposed is an illegitimate generalization. Averil Cameron has warned of the dangers of assuming that the social conditions of one group of women apply to women in other situations.¹² Generally speaking, it was only the more privileged women who had any sort of independence, and their social circumstances stand in stark contrast to the general pattern of the social conditions of the vast majority.

We need to stress that wealth did not automatically ensure a position of significance in terms of either rank or status, and whilst there is evidence in the New Testament of people of wealth, there is no evidence of representatives of the very top levels of the Roman social scales—‘no landed aristocrats, no senators, equities, nor (unless Erastus might qualify) decurions’.¹³ The *archiereiai* of Proconsular Asia are really irrelevant for providing a background to 1 Timothy 2.

The problem of people with status needing to accept and sit at the feet of a teacher or elder of lesser status would not be restricted to high ranking women. That is to say, it would not necessarily be a gender issue, but a rank and status issue. Rather, Paul focused particularly on the demeanour of women.

One gets the impression from reading Barnett that Paul was being radical (counter-cultural) in calling for modesty in women’s attire. Yet Graeco-Roman society was not without its contemporary critics, and there is abundant literature indicating that ostentatious women’s dress was a common point of criticism. Of the many possible examples, we will quote from Plutarch in his essay *Advice to a Bride and Groom*:

It is not gold or precious stones or scarlet that makes her such [i.e., a woman adorned], but whatever betokens dignity, good behaviour, and modesty (26)

... and most women, if you take from them gold-embroidered shoes, bracelets, anklets, purple, and pearls, stay indoors.

... Not only the arm of the virtuous woman, but her speech as well, ought to be not for the public ... For a woman ought to do her talking through her husband ... (30–32).¹⁴

¹¹ Barnett is questionable when he describes this official as ‘the most predominant citizen of Proconsular Asia’ (227). Whilst some did preside at the annual *Koinon Asias*, this position did not carry any effective political power, and their main responsibility was quasi-religious, within the Imperial Cult.

¹² ‘Neither Male nor Female’, 61–62.

¹³ Meeks, 73.

¹⁴ LCL translation, quoted in D. M. Scholer, ‘Women’s Adornment: Some Historical and Hermeneutical Observations on the New Testament Passages’,

Such examples indicate that it was not the specifics that Paul was requiring that were novel (indeed he is markedly more moderate), but the underlying rationale that was distinctively Christian.

It is our conclusion that Barnett's reconstruction is built on an assumption that is an (to use his own words) 'elaborate and specific reconstruction'. There may be merit in it, but its status as speculation must be clearly recognized. Indeed, the passage does not even require that there were women so dressed in the Ephesian house churches.¹⁵

II. The Immediate Context of 1 Timothy 2

Dr. Barnett is keen to demonstrate that this passage is a general and universal passage concerning the public meeting of the church. In doing so, he ignores the specific grammatical indicators of the immediate context.

Syntactically, this text is closely tied to the concerns of chapter 1. The 'therefore' (*oun*) introduces a new thought, but in the context of what has just been stated. Even more significantly, the use of 'first of all' (*prōton pantōn*) clearly relates the purpose of the comments in chapter 2 to the situation outlined in chapter 1.

After the customary greeting at the start of the letter, Paul comes straight to the point of his purpose in writing: the need to fight against false teaching and unnecessary myths and genealogies (1:3–7). The position of this section clearly identifies it as Paul's central concern. Certain people had sought to propound teaching which was contrary to sound doctrine and had had disastrous consequences for the faith of some. The letter also finishes with a note of concern over godless chatter and that which is falsely called knowledge (6:20–21).

The immediate context is Paul's exhortation to 'wage the good warfare' (v.18), that is, *against the threat of this false teaching*. Chapter 2, then, by commencing with 'first of all, therefore' is explicitly to be understood within the light of Paul's stated purpose of writing and the immediate concerns of the previous sentences, that is, as instruction as to how to respond to the circumstances that have arisen as a result of the activity of false teachers. None of this is taken into account by Barnett, despite

Daughters of Sarah, 6:1, (1980), 5. Scholer also provides similar examples from Phintys, Perictione, Seneca, Musonius Rufus, Juvenal, as well as numerous Jewish examples.

¹⁵ To say that something should not be done (or worn) does not necessarily imply that it is currently being done (or worn) any more than to say 'you should not murder' implies that you are presently doing so.

the fact that it is required contextually. We may also note that an examination of references to the work of Satan/the devil/false teachers in 'deceiving' and 'leading astray' in the Pastorals demonstrates that this type of activity is in view in verse 14, an observation we shall develop more fully later.

These concerns are then reflected in the consistent theme throughout the passage: the desire for peace and the absence of trouble. Thus we may observe verse 2 'so that (*hina*) we might lead a quiet (*hēsychion*) and peaceable life' (so that people may be able to hear true teaching, verses 3–7), verse 8 that prayer should be 'without anger or quarrelling', and twice that women are to be quiet in the sense of not causing disruptions (again, as in verse 2 *hēsychiā*) in verses 11 and 12. This much is clear from the text itself.¹⁶

By contrast, Barnett draws implications which go beyond the text itself. Despite the threefold use of 'all men' (better 'all people'), the reference to 'in every place' does not explicitly apply to every element of the whole passage but to the particular instruction to which it is grammatically linked. (We wonder, if the entire passage is as universal as Barnett claims, whether he would argue that women today should not wear gold, braided hair or pearls).

III. Exegesis

We concur with Dr. Barnett in identifying a chiasmic structure in verses 11 & 12. Similarly, he is correct in noting that *hēsychiā* is characterised not by silence but by the absence of disruption. It is also true that *en pasē hypotagē* should be understood in the light of Paul's use of the verb elsewhere, but it is important to note in doing so that in the passage which most fully discusses Paul's understanding of submission (in Eph. 5), the exhortation starts in verse 21 (not verse 22) and in a context which demonstrates that a wife's submission is a reflection of the submission which all Christians are to show for each other. Contrary to what is often asserted, Paul always uses 'one another' (*allēlois*) in a fully reciprocal sense.¹⁷ Whilst Paul instructs wives to submit (= respect, serve and be receptive to), this does not abrogate a husband's responsibility to submit to his wife as a fellow Christian.

An important aspect of Barnett's interpretation is the identification of the prohibition not to teach with the prohibition of

¹⁶ See Padgett, *Wealthy Women*, 22–24.

¹⁷ See my 'The Buck Stops Where? Authority in the Early Church and Current Debate on Women's Ministry', *Interchange*, 41, (1987), 31.

holding the teaching office of the *episkopos-presbyteros*. This is not a new argument, but one which has gained increasing popularity. However, we will argue that not only is this interpretation an unnecessary one, it is also totally incongruous with the language and flow of Paul's argument.

The method Barnett employs is not logically valid (that is, the conclusion is not a necessary conclusion to the premises). In effect, he argues in the following way:

1. Paul prohibits women to teach.
2. The *episkopos-presbyteros* was a teacher.

Therefore: Paul was not prohibiting women from teaching generally but specifically referring to the office of the *episkopos-presbyteros*.

Formally, this is invalid. Furthermore, this line of interpretation is not a natural way of accounting for Paul's choice of words and the accompanying rationale. In point of fact, it is clear from 1 Tim. 5:17 that not all *presbyteroi* will be involved in preaching and teaching.

If Paul was thinking specifically of prohibiting women from being elders/overseers, then the straightforward way for him to communicate this would have been to say 'I am not permitting women to be an elder or overseer'.¹⁸ We must ask why Paul chose to use a verb and not the nouns.¹⁹ The clear explanation is that Paul had in mind primarily an *activity* rather than an office. To infer an office is not a natural way to explain Paul's choice of words.

¹⁸ Conservative interpreters have similarly asked if false teaching was on Paul's mind, why did he not say 'I am not permitting the false teachers to teach'. The explanation here is straightforward. The false teachers were no longer teaching within the Christian community in Ephesus. (On this point, see D. J. Moo, 'The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15: A Rejoinder', *Trinity Journal*, 2 NS, (1981), 217). Yet women who had accepted some of their teaching were teaching others and causing disruptions, and therefore to counter this situation, Paul gave the prohibitions in verse 11 & 12. We shall later outline the evidence that women were specially targeted by the false teachers.

¹⁹ To ask why a writer has chosen a particular word over against other alternatives is a fundamental element in discerning the meaning of a text (on lexical choice, see M. Silva, 'The Pauline Style as Lexical Choice: GINÖSKEIN and Related Verbs' in D. A. Hagner & M. J. Harris (eds.) *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce*, (Exeter, 1980), 186–187). My point is this: Barnett is claiming that Paul was not being general in his injunction (i.e. forbidding women teaching generally) but specific (forbidding women as 'official' elders/overseers). By contrast, Paul's lexical choice does not refer to a specific position but more generally to an activity.

It is worth noting that there is no unambiguous qualification in what Paul means by 'to teach' in the text itself, and it may be that in these circumstances Paul is prohibiting women from *any* teaching activity, even to other women or children. The qualifications that interpreters assume often reveal more about the exegete than the passage itself.

The conclusion that an office is the focus of Paul's deliberations is usually based on the assumption that *authentēin* (v.12) is an 'official' type of word. That this word is a major exegetical crux has long been recognized.²⁰ It is my contention that too often exegetes import assumptions about ecclesiastical authority which not only are not to be found in this word itself, but are also totally foreign to the dynamics of ministry within the early church.²¹ It should be noted that despite the work of G. W. Knight III²² and more recently L. E. Wilshire²³ (which quite correctly dismisses Knight's contention that there is only one straightforward meaning of the word), more work needs to be done on *authentēin*.

The studies to date have given too much consideration to later forms of the word despite the fact that it moved from being a general word towards becoming a technical term in ecclesiastical circles as church organization became more formalized, a sure sign of change due to semantic conservatism.²⁴ Another example of this would be that we should not appeal to the Church Fathers to understand the meaning and significance of *episkopos* in the New Testament period.

Our own study of the BAGD references for *authentēin*, together with the material in Wilshire's study has led us to the conclusion that in all of the occurrences of the verb close to the New Testament period, there is one indispensable element: that to exercise *authentēin* was 'to hold sway or use power, to be dominant'. The word never means (in itself) 'to be an official' or 'to be authorised', but could mean to have the power to be authoritative.

Dr. Barnett's conclusion that 'since *authentēin* cannot, in

²⁰ See W. L. Liefeld, 'Women and the Nature of Ministry', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 30/1, (1987), 51.

²¹ This is the main thrust of my contention in *The Buck Stops Where?*, see footnote 17.

²² 'AYTHENTEŌ' in reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2:12', *New Testament Studies*, 30, (1984), 143-57.

²³ 'The TLG Computer and further reference to AYTHENTEŌ in 1 Timothy 2:12', *New Testament Studies*, 34, (1988), 120-34.

²⁴ On semantic conservatism, see M. Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*, (Grand Rapids, 1983), 79ff.

context, mean “murder/murderer” it *must therefore* mean “authority over”²⁵ is unwarranted, given that he had already noted that Wilshire had established that the term had a multiplicity of meanings. Had Paul wanted to speak of the ordinary exercise of authority, there were simpler ways of doing it. Contrary to Barnett, we would argue that the context demands a negative notion, as structurally *authentein* stands in contrast to *hypotagē* and *hēsychiā*. Furthermore, we shall argue that the reference to Eve’s deception is meaningless if ‘official authority’ is in view.²⁶

When we come to observe the rationale given by Paul, it can be seen that it invalidates Barnett’s interpretation, for he fails to explain the flow of the apostle’s argument. The first sentence (‘for Adam was formed first, then Eve’) is difficult to understand on any reading. Alluding to 1 Corinthians 11, Barnett understands ‘for Adam was formed first, then Eve’ as a statement about headship (despite the fact that the term is not to be found in 1 Timothy 2). The idea of ‘headship’ in 1 Timothy 2 is a clear importation²⁷ and the use of 1 Corinthians 11 does not establish that husbands-wives have different roles within the church. Contrary to much popular opinion, 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 makes no distinction between appropriate roles for male or females but is only concerned with women’s demeanour as reflected in hairstyle/dress. Indeed 1 Corinthians 11:4 & 5 explicitly notes that

²⁵ 232, my italics.

²⁶ A variation of Barnett’s argument is found in G. Davies, ‘Biblical Study Paper: 1 Timothy 2.8–15’, in B. Webb (ed.), *Personhood, Sexuality and Christian Ministry*, (Sydney, 1986), 87 where he suggests that the fact that women are prohibited *authentein* over a *man* implies that women could so act over a woman. That this does not logically follow is easily demonstrated by substituting a more obviously negative word. Had Paul said ‘I am not permitting a woman to murder a man’ this does not imply that he is permitting women to murder women or men to murder anyone! The sentence makes quite good sense as a rebuttal of women (as a result of false teaching?) striving to dominate men.

²⁷ Davies, following J. B. Hurley, *Man & Woman in Biblical Perspective*, (Leicester, 1981) even finds ‘headship’ in Genesis 2 & 3, despite the absence of the term there, 90ff. The failure to use biblical terminology accurately has been a misleading feature of the debate, and has resulted in an over-emphasis on such terms which are really restricted to a limited number of passages and contexts. In fact, the term ‘headship’ is never used in the Bible, and confusion follows the fact that those on different sides of the debate understand the term in different ways. It may be best if the term ‘headship’ was dropped and other terms adopted which more helpfully reflect the different understandings.

in this context at least, men and women had exactly the same ministry: to pray and prophesy.²⁸

Dr. Barnett follows the view which maintains that the essential difference between prophecy and teaching is that the latter alone is authoritative. Thus he makes the erroneous statement that 'praying/prophesying . . . are charismatic, not 'official' activities within the *soma*.²⁹ To set 'charismatic' ministries against 'official' ministries is artificial for the New Testament does not regard these two categories as mutually exclusive or contrasting within the *sōma*.³⁰

Teaching, of course, is as much subject to the need for evaluation as prophecy. Recognition of a prophecy as authentic does not give it authority, it recognises its intrinsic authority. The source of authority is the same in both cases: from God. Both are charismatically derived (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-12). Teaching as much as prophecy is a transmission process of information which has its origin in God, and if authentic and faithful, neither is more authoritative than the other. Scripture is the valid measure of truth in both cases, being the fixed, God-appointed and inspired deposit of tradition.

Furthermore, it is too often ignored that the reference to the chronological order of creation in 1 Cor. 11:8 is not invoked to justify hierarchical patterns of authority (women have their own authority, v.10) but appropriate dress. It is inappropriate to use 1 Corinthians 11 to justify a role or 'office' distinction in 1 Timothy 2.

Whatever the phrase 'for Adam was formed first, then Eve' refers to, it cannot contradict the statement by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:11 & 12 that (introduced and emphasised as Paul's conclusion by the use of *plēn*³¹) in Christ the fact that woman was derived from man is now no more significant than the fact that man is now born of woman.

²⁸ It is quite possible that praying and prophesying are chosen as representative of all types of ministry that are to be exercised in church meetings. 1 Cor. 14:26 seems to indicate that any member (there is no gender distinction) of the body could contribute 'a psalm, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation', my emphasis.

²⁹ 233.

³⁰ See J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, (London, 1975), esp. p.280ff. See also my *The Buck Stops Where?*, and most recently, K. Giles, *Patterns of Ministry Among the First Christians*, (Melbourne, 1989), 14-19, 146-147.

³¹ According to Blass-Debrunner, *plēn* is used by Paul 'to conclude a discussion and emphasize what is essential', inferring 'only, in any case', *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, Trans. and ed. R. W. Funk, (Chicago, 1961), 234.

A more fruitful background for Paul's use of this phrase in 1 Timothy 2 is the ample evidence of Jewish and gnostic speculations about Eve,³² which included the notion that she took part in the creation of world and pre-existed Adam. Whilst it is unlikely that full-blown gnostic cosmologies were in circulation at this time, in view of the various hints about the false teaching including speculations and genealogies, it is not farfetched to see here Paul countering such erroneous teaching, particularly if it was resulting in women seeking to dominate men. Whatever the background, Paul does not explain the significance apart from the following phrase about Eve's deception.

It is this second reason that Paul puts forward which is conclusive in determining that Dr. Barnett's interpretation is inconsistent with the text. What has Eve's deception to do with women assuming a teaching office? Eve's actions can in no way be construed as being that of an official teacher, nor does it have anything to do with Adam's authority, for she merely took the fruit, ate, and gave it to Adam. She gave no instructions to him. The problem this creates for Barnett's interpretation is reflected in the fact that he sets the reference to Eve's deception to one side as gratuitous and parenthetical, and then comes to the astonishing conclusion that males are to teach because of Adam's 'primacy and *his resistance to transgression!*'³³

This then, is the real significance of Barnett's 'order in creation' exegesis: he dismisses half of Paul's rationale as an aside of no consequence because Paul wasn't really thinking about Eve (this despite women being the focus of vv.8-15!), and comes to the extraordinary conclusion that Adam's role is based on the fact that he is more resistant to sin!

It cannot be said that this is straightforward problem-free exegesis. The problem lies in the insistence of conservative commentators in seeing role distinctions (i.e. Adam as 'head' = spokesman, teacher, decision maker) in the Genesis passage when no such delineation is to be found in the text. The consequence is exegetical gymnastics to reshape the nature of the original disobedience.

The understanding of the reference to Eve's deception is a vital exegetical crux, both in understanding Paul's logic and its wider application. For this reason we shall canvas a number of approaches.

³² D. J. Moo, in his reconsideration of the significance of these verses, notes evidence of gnostic speculations and asks: 'Could it be that some of the Ephesian false teachers were arguing in a similar manner?', *Rejoinder*, 204.

³³ 234, my emphasis.

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It cannot be said that this is straightforward problem-free exegesis. The problem lies in the insistence of conservative commentators in seeing role distinctions (i.e. Adam as 'head' = spokesman, teacher, decision maker) in the Genesis passage when no such delineation is to be found in the text. The consequence is exegetical gymnastics to reshape the nature of the original disobedience.

The understanding of the reference to Eve's deception is a vital exegetical crux, both in understanding Paul's logic and its wider application. For this reason we shall canvas a number of approaches.

³² D. J. Moo, in his reconsideration of the significance of these verses, notes evidence of gnostic speculations and asks: 'Could it be that some of the Ephesian false teachers were arguing in a similar manner?', *Rejoinder*, 204.

³³ 234, my emphasis.

To justify his reading, Barnett argues for a priority in deception, that Adam was not deceived 'first, but, as it were second', although we are not told how this makes a difference in his suitability to hold the office of teaching. Yet it must be noted that this so-called priority in deception is not actually found in the text, for it doesn't say that Adam was not deceived *first*, but that he was not deceived, presumably at all.

Some have concluded that Eve's deception is typical of the nature of all women, that they are more susceptible to temptation through deception.³⁴ Echoes of this are found in Barnett's argument in the implication that Eve (= women) does not share Adam's (= men) resistance to transgression. The theological difficulties bound in such a view are well known: how could Paul elsewhere encourage women to teach other women and children if such teaching was likely to be errant?³⁵

James Hurley provides a more detailed view. He argues on the basis that as Eve was deceived she is 'virtually' excused of her part in the disobedience, and that her real error was in not deferring to Adam in all matters pertaining to religion, for she was not prepared by God to pronounce on them.³⁶ On this view, women are unable to teach for (like Eve) God has not prepared or equipped them to do so, and are therefore ineligible to give (and incapable of?) reliable religious pronouncements. That Paul is arguing that Eve was deceived and acted out of ignorance is correct. The statement that Adam was not deceived serves as a point of contrast. Adam transgressed fully conscious of his disobedience, whilst Eve accepted misinformation and transgressed out of ignorance. If verses 13 & 14 are two aspects of the one argument (the *kai* being epexegetical), then the implication would be that Eve was deceived because, being created second, her knowledge was not received first hand from God.

The fundamental flaw in Hurley's argument is in his appli-

³⁴ This view, characteristic of commentators of earlier generations, has been repeated in more recent times by D. J. Moo, '1 Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance', *Trinity Journal*, 1 NS (1980), 'Paul cites Eve's failure as exemplary and perhaps causative of the nature of women in general and that this susceptibility to deception bars them from engaging in public teaching', 70; and R. Culver, 'A Traditional View: Let Your Women Keep Silence', in B. & R. G. Clouse, (eds.) *Women in Ministry*, (Downers Grove, 1989), 36.

³⁵ It is notable that by the time of his rejoinder to criticisms by P. B. Payne, Moo had backed away from his earlier view: '... the difficulties with viewing v.14 as a statement about the nature of women are real', and moved towards a position closer to that represented by Hurley.

³⁶ 215-216, quoted apparently approvingly by Davies, 97, who concludes that women have a general 'susceptibility to take initiative in relationships', 93.

cation of the logic. What connection is there between Adam's 'preparation' and all males subsequently? Adam's position in receiving God's instructions first hand was unique—a qualification which no other human can claim,³⁷ and at this point, exegesis which seeks to establish the authoritative teaching office on the basis of Adam's preparation fails. Paul's logic will not stand the weight of universal application (that men are subsequently better prepared). Rather, the logic must set the context of wider application. The injunction only applies where there is a scenario of similar deception due to ignorance and misinformation.

The 'creational pattern' interpretation, which understands a strict hierarchy of authority resulting in a demarcation of 'roles' and 'offices' determined on gender lines has been blown of proportion. It cannot accommodate Biblical accounts of God working otherwise: if this 'headship' reading of Genesis 2 & 3 is correct (that Eve's deception and sin was in taking a role for which only males had been prepared and were eligible), then surely Deborah (Judges 4:4ff.) and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14ff.) should have been condemned on the same grounds. How, if the creational pattern of hierarchy is for 'all times' and 'all places', could God condone and work through the ministries of Deborah and Huldah (both of whom were married)?³⁸ What are the cultural equivalents of a judge/leader and Old Covenant prophet within the community of faith today?

Assuming the consistency of Scripture and of God's attitudes to males and females, we can only conclude that the creational hierarchy of authority propounded by conservative exegetes³⁹ is

³⁷ This would account for the fact that Adam is referred to again by personal name in v.14 whilst it is Eve who is referred to in more general terms as 'the woman'. Paul does not seem to be making a more general application from the example of Adam (contra Barnett who sees the whole point is in establishing from Adam that it should be a man who teaches).

³⁸ It might be said that these examples are exceptions, specially divinely authorised, and that women should not minister without corresponding special authorisation. But this will not do. There is nothing in the texts which refer to special circumstances or special authorisation because of their gender. What special circumstances are envisaged? That God was powerless to raise up a male? In Huldah's case, her ministry overlapped with both Zephaniah and Jeremiah. In any event, the point would still have to be that in some circumstances gender is no bar to women being authoritative ministers of God and that the 'all times and all places' assertion requires qualification. The hermeneutical task is to consider today's circumstances.

³⁹ This approach is followed by J. Hurley, G. Davies, J. Woodhouse in 'The Ordination of Women: Are the Arguments Biblical?', *Southern Cross*, (July, 1985) and apparently Barnett.

ill-founded. Whatever pattern is understood, it must accommodate divinely sanctioned examples such as those of Deborah and Huldah.

There is a further reason which we believe establishes that this set of instructions had a particular point of reference which determines the wider application. The use of the language of deception is a sure indicator that Paul was thinking of circumstances brought about by the activities of the false teachers.

There are a number of examples of the *apataō* word-group being applied to those who teach false doctrine.

2 Cor. 11:3	‘... as the serpent deceived (<i>exapataō</i>) Eve, your thoughts will be led astray’
Eph. 5:6	‘let no-one deceive (<i>apataō</i>) you with empty words’
Rom. 16:18	‘they deceive (<i>exapataō</i>) the hearts of the unsuspecting’
2 Thess. 2:3	‘let no-one deceive (<i>exapataō</i>) you’
2 Thess. 2:9–10	‘the coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be . . . with all wicked deception (<i>apatē</i>)’
Titus 1:10	‘for there are many, rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers (<i>phrenapatai</i>)’

There are also a number of references in the Pastorals to those who formerly believed being led astray from their initial faith:

1 Tim. 1:6	‘certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away’
1 Tim. 1:9	‘. . . certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith’
1 Tim. 4:1	‘. . . some will depart from the faith’
1 Tim. 5:15	‘. . . for some have already turn aside . . .’

Alongside these are references to the dangerous workings of the false teachers and the danger of apostasy, cast in language which relates their activity to that of Satan.

1 Tim. 1:20	[Hymenaeus and Alexander have been] ‘delivered to Satan’
1 Tim. 3:10,11	[an overseer must be such who will avoid] ‘the condemnation of the devil’ and ‘the snare of the devil’
1 Tim. 4:1	‘some will depart from the faith giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons’
1 Tim. 5:15	‘for some have turned aside after Satan’
2 Tim. 2:26	[the opponents] ‘may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will’

These references establish that the connection between 'deception/Satan's snares/false teachers' is such that 1 Timothy 2 and the reference to Eve's deception (as a result of the serpent's wiles is clearly implied) must be understood in reference to the problems caused by the false teachers. Furthermore, what we know of the teaching of the errant teachers explains why the Ephesian women were the focus of the tension.

The deception explicitly referred to in 4:1-3 concerns the prohibition of marriage, which is relevant to Paul's instruction that young widows should marry in 5:14.

That these women were causing trouble is noted in 5:13, and in particular that the trouble was caused by gossiping. The teaching of false doctrine consequently lead to distracting discussions about myths and wearisome genealogies according to 1:4 (the only genealogy referred to in 1 Timothy is Adam and Eve).

This environment of tension is further confirmed by 2 Timothy. Although it is a more urgent and personal letter, we believe that Dr. Barnett has set it aside too hastily from providing illumination on the background of 1 Timothy. For our purposes, we note some significant links. Hymenaeus⁴⁰ is still spreading destructive false teaching, and in particular a form of over-realized eschatology which featured in 1 Timothy (4:1-3).

Of particular importance is 2 Tim. 3:6-7, which bears the same characteristics as 1 Tim. 5:13-15, and notes explicitly that the false teachers targeted women with their method 'to worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women . . .'

We believe that the nature of the reference to Eve's deception in 1 Timothy 2:14 is of the same order as we find in 2 Corinthians 11:3, yet applied in this instance to women because of the peculiar circumstances in Ephesus. Rather than claiming that men are less likely to be deceived, Paul chose references from Genesis to illustrate the disastrous consequences of a woman accepting and passing on false teaching.⁴¹ The *gar* which introduces verses 13 and 14 should then be understood as illustrative

⁴⁰ It is not a common name, and must be the same Hymenaeus of 1 Tim. 1:20.

⁴¹ Cf. D. M. Scholer, '1 Timothy 2:13-14 should be understood as an explanatory rationale for verses 11-12 that uses data from Genesis 2-3 selectively to suit the needs of the argument at hand. The women who were falling prey to the false teachers in Ephesus were being deceived and were transgressing as Eve did. The rationale using Eve's deception in verse 14 is, therefore ad hoc and occasional and is no more a "timeless" comment about women than the use of the same point in 2 Corinthians 11', in '1 Timothy 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry', in A. Mickelsen (ed.), *Women, Authority and the Bible*, (Downers Grove, 1986), 211.

or explanatory, with the selection from Genesis utilised in an exemplary fashion as cautionary typology, an example of a pattern to be avoided.⁴² Yet the crucial point is this: the logic only carries in contexts where women are acting out of ignorance and being deceived.

We have nothing new to offer in regard to verse 15, except to note that we agree with Dr. Barnett that no proposal is without its difficulties. His particular proposal, that Paul is countering women who are abandoning motherhood to take the office of *episkopos*, apart from being speculative (it would be an extraordinary way for Paul to allude to it) goes no further in explaining the real difficulty of the verse, that is, what Paul means by 'will be saved'?⁴³ David Scholer is correct in noting that the most likely background for this verse is that it counters some aspect of the false teaching, especially in the light of 1 Tim. 4:3 which notes that the false teachers were forbidding marriage.⁴⁴

IV. Other Exegetical Approaches

It must be said that the section dealing with other exegetical approaches is the most disappointing part of Barnett's paper, for he either fails to consider or unfairly caricatures the other major evangelical studies which take a more positive approach to women's ministry.

Dr. Barnett states that 'the more common approach' is that which claims that Paul is merely repeating the [alleged] position of the day . . . that women were intellectually inferior', and it is against such views that he has responded. I know of no study by an evangelical scholar which makes any such interpretation.

It is the failure to interact with more substantial studies which

⁴² There is no need to be overly precise in our grammatical description of a common connective like *gar*, for in this context an illustrative or exemplary use may also function to provide the reason for the injunction. In any event, A. Padgett, *Wealthy Women*, 25 is right in arguing that the contextual relationship between vv.8-12 and vv.13-15 should control our understanding of *gar* and not vice versa. On the cautionary use of an Old Testament example, compare 1 Corinthians 10:6,11; for a fuller presentation of this approach, see Padgett, 25-26.

⁴³ The best proposal is that by G. D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary, (Peabody, Mass., 1988) who suggests: 'More likely what Paul intends is that women's salvation, from the transgressions brought about by a similar deception and ultimately for eternal life, is to be found in her being a model, godly woman, known for her good works . . .' (75).

⁴⁴ See Scholer, *1 Timothy 2*, esp. 196ff.

is more serious. In particular, the detailed and thoroughly researched papers by D. Scholer, C. Kroeger, A. Padgett and especially the important study of the polemical context by G. D. Fee, and his subsequent commentary, make major contributions to the understanding of the text under review.⁴⁵

He summarizes the view which suggests that there was a specific problem at the church at Ephesus involving false teachers who were influencing women, then dismisses it in one sentence on the grounds that 'the very diversity of opinions as to the nature of the crisis in Ephesus [indicates to?] us the improbability of this approach'.⁴⁶ Yet the fact is that in recent years various studies have been very helpful in illuminating the nature and significance of the tension resulting from the heretics activity.⁴⁷ Barnett's lack of appreciation for such background considerations is reflected in the fact that we look in vain for a reference to such works in his article.

The important clues to the fact that the false teachers targeted women are virtually dismissed on the grounds that 'First Timothy refers only once to wayward women', (despite the fact that the background scenario Barnett proposes concerning wealthy women causing social tension is nowhere clearly referred to as a problem by Paul). Yet we have argued that the evidence is much stronger than this.

V. Implications

It hardly needs stating that all the above comments, if sustained, negate most of Dr. Barnett's conclusion. We note two factors briefly.

Firstly, he introduces 'the principal teacher' and 'the senior

⁴⁵ For Padgett and Scholer, see notes 4 and 41 respectively; Kroeger, see '1 Timothy 2:12—A Classicist's View', also in A. Mickelsen (ed.) *Women, Authority and the Bible*, (Downers Grove, 1986); G. D. Fee, 'Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles, With Further Reflection on the hermeneutics of *Ad Hoc* Documents', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 28/2, (1985), which argues convincingly against the view that the Pastoral Epistles are a general 'church manual'.

⁴⁶ 236.

⁴⁷ Of the more significant studies, we note W. L. Lane, '1 Timothy iv. 1-3. An Instance of Over-realized Eschatology?', *New Testament Studies*, 11, (1965); R. J. Karris, 'The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 92, (1973); D. C. Verner, *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*, S. B. L. D. S., 71 (Chico, Calif., 1983), and the articles by Padgett and Fee in notes 4 and 45 above. Barnett notes Padgett's article but does not interact with it.

teacher', although neither position can be found in the New Testament. The argument which he made earlier, that the fact that *episkopos* is referred to twice in the Pastorals (1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7), both in the singular, implies an individual figure at the top carries no weight, for the text in no way requires it.⁴⁸ To base one's understanding of the significance of a passage on the grounds of distinctions (the role of *senior* or *principal* teacher) which cannot be established from the new Testament is unsatisfactory.

Secondly, if his interpretation of verse 15 is correct, that Paul's main concern is with women preferring full-time ministry to marriage or motherhood, where would this leave single people? 1 Cor. 7:34 regards singleness as a benefit for undistracted whole-hearted full-time ministry. If the context of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 is primarily concerned with married women, do the restrictions apply to single women?

Dr. Barnett's interpretation of 1 Timothy 2 is regarded as an example of the best conservative exegesis based on the 'profoundly creational' model. Yet we believe it fails to account for the choice of language and flow of argument in that chapter, and of the context and stated purpose of the letter. It fails to account for the reference to Eve's deception in suggesting that males, following Adam, should be the teachers because of their capacity to resist sin, a conclusion we find unacceptable.

⁴⁸ To take a modern example, to say 'If someone sets his heart on being a parish councillor, he desires a noble task' in no way implies that there will be only one such councillor. So too if one was to say 'since a parish councillor is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless . . .'