

1 Timothy 2:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

Analysis

For Adam was first formed, then Eve. Paul grounds his prohibition of women teaching or exercising authority over men (v. 12) in creation order, not cultural accommodation. "For" (gar, γάρ) introduces the theological rationale. "Adam was first formed" (Adam gar prōtos eplasthē, Ἄδαμ γὰρ πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη) appeals to Genesis 2:7, where God formed man first from dust. "Then Eve" (eita Heua, εἰτα Εὕα) refers to Genesis 2:21-22, where God created woman from man's rib as his helper.

The chronological priority—Adam first, then Eve—establishes a creation pattern that Paul applies to church order. This isn't about superiority (both bear God's image equally, Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28) but about function and role. Just as Christ submits to the Father in the Trinity without being inferior (1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:28), so women can submit to male leadership without being of lesser value or dignity.

By grounding gender roles in pre-fall creation, Paul demonstrates these aren't results of sin's curse that redemption eliminates but God's original design that redemption restores. The order established at creation—man formed first as leader, woman formed from man as helper—provides the pattern for church leadership. This transcultural theological principle applies to all churches in all times, not merely first-century cultural accommodation.

Historical Context

Paul's appeal to creation order appears also in 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, where he similarly grounds gender role distinctions in the Genesis narrative. This interpretive method—finding normative patterns in creation accounts—was common in Jewish and early Christian theology. What God ordained in creation before the fall reflects His permanent design for humanity, not merely temporary arrangements.

Some argue that New Testament liberty eliminates all gender distinctions, citing Galatians 3:28. However, Paul himself wrote both Galatians 3:28 and 1 Timothy 2:12-13. The reconciliation: in Christ, men and women equally receive salvation, spiritual gifts, and covenant membership (Galatians 3:28), yet functional distinctions in church leadership remain based on creation order. Equality of worth doesn't require identity of role.

The creation narrative provided early Christians with theological foundation for ethics and church practice. Just as Jesus appealed to Genesis to establish marriage's permanent nature (Matthew 19:4-6), Paul appeals to Genesis to establish church order. This demonstrates Scripture's internal consistency—New Testament authors read Old Testament narratives as revealing God's normative designs, not merely describing historical particulars.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish between cultural accommodations in Scripture that may change and creational ordinances that remain normative?
2. In what ways can complementarian churches demonstrate that role distinctions don't imply value hierarchy?
3. How does understanding that God's design predates the fall affect how you view gender, marriage, and sexuality?

Interlinear Text

Αδὰμ γὰρ πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη εἶτα Εὔα
Adam **For** **first** **formed** **then** **Eve**
G76 G1063 G4413 G4111 G1534 G2096

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 2:18 (Parallel theme): And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Genesis 2:22 (Parallel theme): And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Genesis 2:7 (Parallel theme): And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Genesis 1:27 (Parallel theme): So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.