

1 Timothy 2:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Analysis

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Paul adds a second theological rationale from the fall narrative (Genesis 3). "Adam was not deceived" (Adam ouk ēpatēthē, Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη) indicates he sinned with eyes open, knowing he violated God's command. "But the woman being deceived" (gynē exapatētheisa, γυνὴ ἐξαπατηθεῖσα) shows Eve was genuinely fooled by the serpent's lies. She "was in the transgression" (en parabasei gegonen, ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν)—fell into violation of God's command through deception.

Paul's point isn't that women are more gullible than men (a misreading that Scripture elsewhere contradicts). Rather, he observes that when the serpent attacked God's word and order, he approached Eve rather than Adam. The one not given primary teaching/leadership responsibility was deceived; the one given that responsibility sinned willfully. This pattern—subversion of created order leading to disaster—establishes why maintaining proper order in church leadership matters.

Additionally, this may address the specific situation in Ephesus where false teachers had deceived women (2 Timothy 3:6-7), who were then spreading error. The solution isn't that women can never teach (they can, within proper boundaries), but that the authoritative teaching office protecting the church from doctrinal error should be held by qualified men called to that responsibility.

Historical Context

Jewish interpretation of Genesis 3 often emphasized Eve's deception while noting Adam's knowing disobedience. Paul doesn't innovate but draws on established understanding. However, he avoids misogynistic conclusions common in some Jewish and pagan sources that portrayed women as inherently inferior. His point is narrower: the fall narrative provides a cautionary pattern about consequences when created order is subverted.

The Genesis account shows both Adam and Eve sinned but differently—Eve was deceived; Adam chose rebellion knowing full well God's command. Both are guilty (Romans 5:12-19 attributes sin's entry to Adam as covenant head), but the manner differs. This supports Paul's instruction: because Eve was deceived first when approached by the deceiver, the teaching office particularly responsible for guarding truth should be held by men.

Early church fathers variously interpreted this passage, some reading it more restrictively than Paul intended. The text doesn't say women are more deceivable than men or that women can never teach. It establishes that the authoritative teaching/governing office in the church should be held by qualified men, based on both creation order and the pattern seen in the fall.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How have you seen negative consequences when God's created order in gender, sexuality, or authority is subverted?

2. In what ways can your church cultivate theological discernment in all members while maintaining biblical leadership structures?
3. How seriously do you view the responsibility of those called to teach and guard the church from doctrinal error?

Interlinear Text

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|------------|-------------|------------|-----------------------|-------|------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| καὶ | Ἀδὰμ | οὐκ | ἀπατηθεῖσα | ἡ | δὲ | γυνή | ἀπατηθεῖσα |
| And | Adam | not | being deceived | G3588 | but | the woman | being deceived |
| G2532 | G76 | G3756 | G538 | | G1161 | G1135 | G538 |

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|------------|
| ἐν | παραβάσει | γέγονεν· |
| in | the transgression | was |
| G1722 | G3847 | G1096 |

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 11:3 (Parallel theme): But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Genesis 3:6 (Parallel theme): And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.