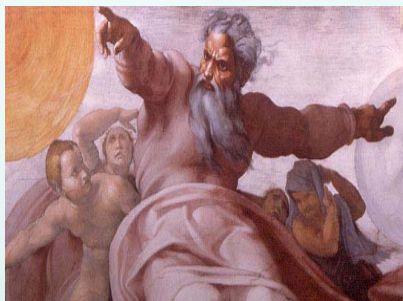


Troubling Images of God In the Old Testament





The God I Don't Understand...

- ✦ Introduction and Feedback from You
- ✦ The “Strange” Laws of the Old Testament and their Application to Christians Today
- ✦ The “Harsh” Laws of the Old Testament
- ✦ **Patriarchy, Women, Polygamy and Concubinage**
- ✦ Massacres and Ethnic Cleansing



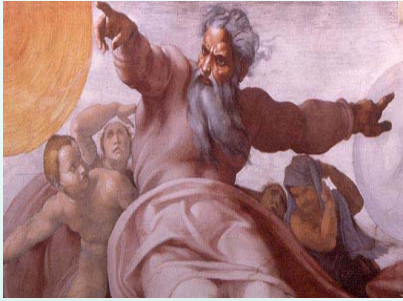
Last Week . . .

Seeking Understanding About . . .

Being stoned for gathering wood on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36)

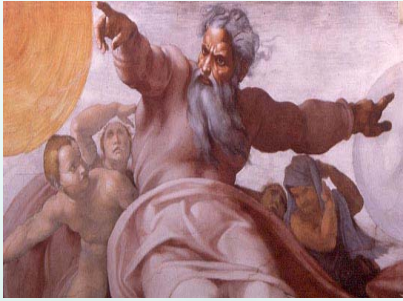
Incinerated for offering “unauthorized fire” in the Tabernacle (Leviticus 10)

Instant death for touching the Ark to keep it from falling (2 Samuel 6:1-7)



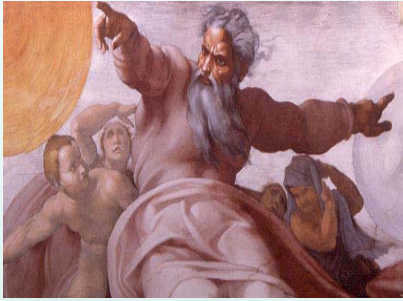
Last Week . . .

How do we deal with troubling images of God found in the Old Testament?



Last Week . . .

Are all of God's actions righteous
because God is the one acting?



Last Week . . .

Are all of God's actions righteous because God is the one acting?

Can we say that God ordering the killing of every man, woman and child is righteous simply because God is the one who is acting?



Patriarchy & Women

“If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, he shall pay her father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the young woman, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.”

Deuteronomy 22:28



Patriarchy & Women

The Garden

|

Before the Law

|

Under the Law

|

The New Covenant

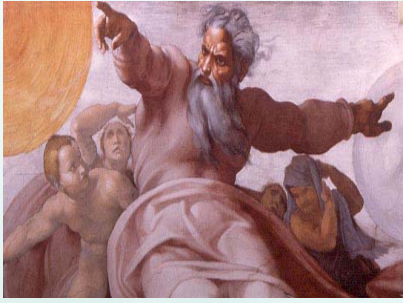
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The Restoration of All Things



Patriarchy & Women

- The Garden: All created in God's image.
- Near East: Brutal and harsh treatment of slaves.
- The Law: Limited punishment of slaves; some foreign runaway slaves given refuge.
- New Covenant: Masters to show concern for slaves; slaves part of the body of Christ; masters and slaves brothers in Christ; there is "neither slave nor free."
- Restoration: Return to the creation ideal, with all image-bearers viewed with dignity as equals, and with humanity restored.



Patriarchy & Women

Restoration

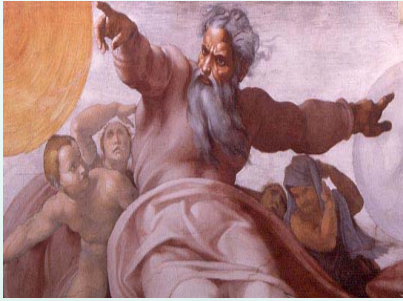
The Garden

The New Covenant

Under the Law

Before the Law

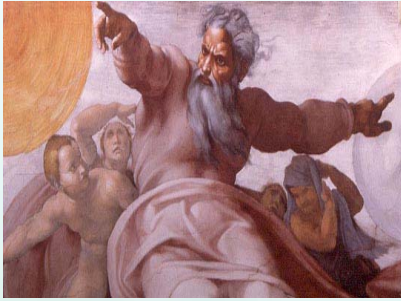
Troubling Images Part 6



Patriarchy & Women Equality

In the Beginning . . .

Genesis 2:24: “This is why a man will leave his father and mother and be united to [*cleaves unto, bonds to, clings to*] his wife, and they will become one flesh.”



Patriarchy & Women Equality

In the Beginning . . .

Genesis 2:18: “The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”

helper = ‘ezer [עֵזֶר]

Our help (‘ezer) is in the name of the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.” Psalm 124:8

Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, Who is the shield of your help (‘ezer) and the sword of your majesty! Deuteronomy 33:29

Troubling Images Part 6



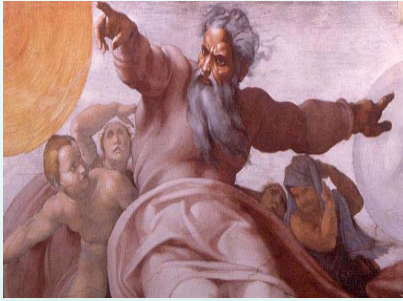
Patriarchy & Women Equality

Under the Law . . .

“Honor your father and mother...” (Exodus 20:12, 21:15, Deuteronomy 5:16, 21:18-21; 27:16; Leviticus 19:3).

The Law applied equally to men and women, and both were to observe its’ precepts;

Punishments for crimes under the Law were equal for both men and women in virtually every case; some even favored the woman over the man.



Patriarchy & Women Equality

DISCLAIMER:

Due to limited time and resources, there is no way that we can cover all of the problematic passages that people have raised regarding the treatment of women. Many of these passages, when examined more carefully, are not actually all that problematic. Some instead show a remarkable progressive attitude about women, and many are designed to reflect on the protection of women in a patriarchal society. Still others are descriptive of behavior, rather than prescriptive. To be sure, no matter how long we spent on this topic, some problematic passages would remain. Our goal here tonight is to wrestle with examples of these passages so that we can learn the tools needed to better handle these types of problems.



Patriarchy & Women

Polygamy

Distinguishing between Descriptive vs. Prescriptive

Polygamy is never authorized in scripture.

(Monogamy is never specifically commanded.)

Closest verse actually prohibits polygamy.

“You are not to marry a woman as a rival to her sister and have sexual intercourse with her during her sister’s lifetime.” Leviticus 18:18



Patriarchy & Women

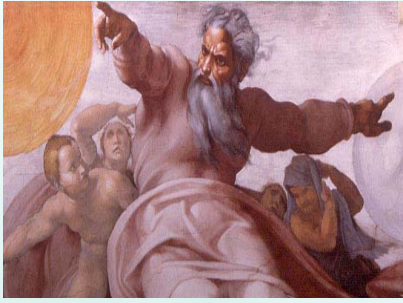
Concubinage

Distinguishing between Descriptive vs. Prescriptive

Concubines prohibited for kings

“[The king] must not acquire many wives for himself so that his heart won’t go astray. He must not acquire very large amounts of silver and gold for himself.” Deuteronomy 17:17

Concubines treated as wives (contrast: as opposed to prostitutes or sexual servants), with the rights given to wives, albeit not to the full extent of a single wife.



Patriarchy & Women

Using the “If” Case

Protective Laws After the Fact...

“If a man sells his daughter as a servant, she is not to go free as male servants do.” Exodus 21:7



Patriarchy & Women

Using the “If” Case

Protective Laws After the Fact...

“If a man sells his daughter as a servant, she is not to go free as male servants do. If she does not please the master who has selected her for himself, he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to foreigners, because he has broken faith with her. If he selects her for his son, he must grant her the rights of a daughter. If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money.” Exodus 21:7-11



Patriarchy & Women

Using the “If” Case

Protective Laws After the Fact...

“If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love, when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father’s strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.” Deuteronomy 21:15-17



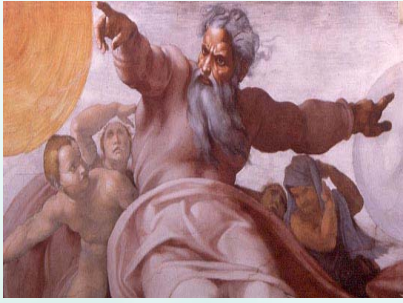
Patriarchy & Women

Using the “If” Case

Protective Laws After the Fact...

*“When you go to war against your enemies and the LORD your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, **if** you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife. Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife.*

***If** you are not pleased with her, let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.” Deuteronomy 21:10-14*



Patriarchy & Women

Using the “If” Case

Protective Laws After the Fact...

“If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, he shall pay her father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the young woman, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.”

Deuteronomy 22:28

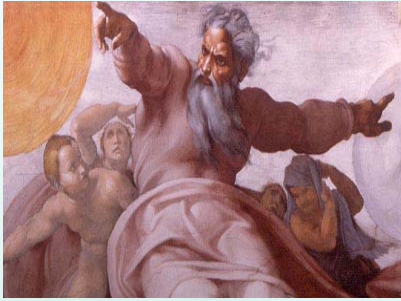


Patriarchy & Women

Tamar and Amnon

“Don’t, my brother!” she cried. “Don’t humiliate me, for such a thing should never be done in Israel. Don’t do this horrible thing! Where could I ever go with my disgrace? And you—you would be like one of the immoral men in Israel! Please, speak to the king, for he won’t keep me from you.” But he refused to listen to her, and because he was stronger than she was, he raped her.

*“After this, Amnon hated Tamar with such intensity that the hatred he hated her with was greater than the love he had loved her with. “Get out of here!” he said. “No,” she cried, “**sending me away is much worse than the great wrong you’ve already done to me!**” But he refused to listen to her. Instead, he called to the servant who waited on him: “Throw this woman out and bolt the door behind her!” 2 Samuel 13:12-17*



Patriarchy & Women

What Can We Learn?

We are far from God's original ideal . . .

. . . but we continue to strain forward towards the ideal.

God's ideal will never be established in a fallen world, but only under Christ's reign when all things are restored.

To be sure, problematic passages regarding women remain.

We should be very careful to understand the context and the language that is being used before assuming the worst.

We should maintain a humble posture and avoid making extreme judgments about the realities of life in a distant time and culture.



INTERACTIVE



Participate, ask questions, talk back...

What if we listened to what everyone had to say — and discovered that God can speak through us all? After all, we all learn better when we talk things out, hear different points of view, and give room for the Spirit to speak through our deliberation.

[Read more](#)

THOUGHTFUL



Test everything, hold on to what is good...

Many hours of research are dedicated to prepare each one of our series. We explore the scriptures, the breadth of Christian scholarship, contemporary authors, and consider a wide range of sources outside of our faith.

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FAITHFUL



Set apart Christ as Lord...

We all have questions. But we learn together in a way that tackles the deepest part of our doubts while making sure that our purpose is clear: to always know the reason for the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, and to be prepared to share that answer with everyone who asks us about that hope.

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