

## DO WE BLAME EVE AND SARAH?

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I have to state at the very beginning of this article that I am not sexist. Those who know me are aware of my stand for women's rights. I also have to say that many of my articles have been prompted by questions put to me by children in my class and I do feel that they deserve answers. It is up to each individual to come to their own conclusions.

It has been said that the two greatest problems to affect the world may be the result of grave mistakes made by women.

In Genesis 3, the woman said to the serpent that God had said that the tree in the midst of the garden must not be touched and the fruit of it must not be eaten or you will die. The serpent said, "No, you won't!" The serpent was crafty. He was shaking her confidence in God. Note too that Eve did not quote God's words exactly but added to them. She should have said No to the serpent.

Eve looked at the tree which was pleasant to the eyes and picked the fruit and ate it and she gave some to her husband and he ate it. The devil works with the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Adam and Eve now realised that they were naked and that had not worried them before, but it did now. They were now degraded, enslaved by Satan, powerless, conscience-smitten and frightened.

The Lord walked in the garden and the man said that the woman that God had given to him made him to eat of the tree and God punished the woman and women ever since have had the sorrows of child bearing. God also rebuked Adam for listening to his wife and obeying her and, as a consequence, the ground was now cursed. However, before sin entered the world God had told Adam in Genesis 2.15 to dress the garden, that is to say to till the garden.

However, we should be thankful to God for the provisions of the ground and the harvest.

Sin brings shame. To most people being exposed naked to someone else is still a dreadful shame.

The woman was the first to sin. Adam's sin was in hearkening to his wife.

Throughout the Bible nakedness or being inadequately dressed is a sin and a shame. What is clear that the result of sin was nakedness which introduced independence and privacy for the sexes. The difference between man and woman now caused them to be independent and to protect and hide their sexuality

(See article on Woman's Dress on this site)

All the sin and trouble in the world has been laid at the feet of the first woman, Eve. That has been said but it has also been said that this story is a mere parable and what Adam and Eve did is called original sin which explains genocide, war, cruelty, exploitation and abuse. What Adam and Eve did was to lead to the growth of sin with Cain and Abel, the increase of sin (Genesis 6) uninhibited intimacy between the sexes and the power struggle which led to the Flood and Noah, and then, the arrogance of man in building the tower of Babel to reach into the heavens (Genesis 11) rather than a new beginning.

Men today still want to build skyscrapers. They still possess this arrogance.

In Genesis 16, Abram's wife Sarah could not have children and blamed God for that. She told her husband to go have intercourse with her Egyptian maid, Hagar, and, like Adam, Abram hearkened to the voice of his wife and obeyed her. But Abram had already made his servant Eliezer of Damascus his heir. Earlier, when he and Sarah went into Egypt Abram passed his wife off as his sister because

she was beautiful. Sarah was taken into Pharaoh's house and Abram was showered with goods as the famine they had escaped from was not in Egypt.

Hagar gave birth to Ishmael but not before Sarah dealt badly with her because she was expecting a child and Sarah was barren as well as being jealous, envious and bitter.

Abram was not a Jew but a Hebrew. Jews were descendants of Judah who was a son of Jacob (Genesis 29.35) Nevertheless, as we read in Matthew 1, Abram was an ancestor of Jacob, David and Joseph, who was espoused to the Virgin Mary.

Ishmael is the father of the Arabs, the father of a great nation (Genesis 17.20). He mocked at the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21.9) and probably wanted him dead. Ishmael was born as a result of bigamy. Isaac was born of the real marriage between Abram, now called Abraham, and Sarah.

There has been trouble between the Jews, or Israelis, and the Arabs ever since. Is it right to lay all these troubles at the feet of one woman, Sarah?

She called her husband Lord which endorses the fact that God gave Adam the headship and authority. Man has to take the responsibility for the actions of his wife. Adam was deemed responsible as was Abraham and so it is not equitable to blame Eve or Sarah.

Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (Romans 5, 12)

There are still women who rule their husbands and dictate to them and you find this in churches and groups of Christians. In 1 Timothy 2.12 we read that women are not to teach or usurp authority over a man and it goes on to say that Adam was not deceived but the woman was.

To use common parlance both Adam and Abram were hen-pecked. It is a word that means to be dominated by one's wife sometimes by consistent nagging resulting in men listening to and obeying the dictates of their wives.

People will object to this, particularly the feminists and those who refuse to believe the book of Genesis. This is another reason why the Garden of Eden story is ridiculed and rejected.

It also raises the subject of sexism which is usually said to be men making women out to be inferior. This I totally reject. However, some women can be sexist towards men and little is said about this. If one states a fact why should a charge of sexism be raised? Champion male athletes are faster than champion women athletes is just one example. As I write this, the record time for the 100 metres for men is 9.5 seconds and for women it is 10.49 seconds.

But to return to Eve, Romans 5,12 states that by one man sin entered into the world as did death because of sin and that man that brought sin into the world is Adam. 1 Corinthians 15, 21 compares the actions of Adam and the actions of Christ. Adam brought sin and death into the world; Christ brought about the resurrection from the dead. In Adam all die; in Christ shall all be made alive whether it is to eternal salvation or not.

Man was made first and created in the image of God, that is to say in the moral image. He was made a moral being and knew about right and wrong. It is therefore said that he was responsible for the actions of his wife. He did not stop her from sinning. Eve was wrong and, indeed, the first to sin but through a woman came the remedy for sin in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sin separates us from God. The work of Christ can bring us back to God. Adam made the mistake of listening to his wife and obeying her and not heeding Divine instructions.

No motivation is given as to why Eve gave the fruit to Adam which may suggest that Adam was willing to take it.

Because of Sarah and Hagar we have the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews, the conflict between Judaism and Islam and the conflict between Arabs and Christians. While the majority of Arabs are honourable, there are some who are Muslim extremists and terrorists.

Is it Sarah's fault? Is it Hagar's fault? Or is it Abram's fault?

Is the fault because Abram hearkened to his wife and obeyed her? Abram and Sarah were devious and deceitful when they went down into Egypt. Not only that. Remember that in Genesis 15, God had promised Abram an heir, even though he had made Eliezer his heir in his impatience, but Sarah also became impatient and took matters into her own hands.

(See article on The Palestinian Question on this site)

Abram and Sarah had lost their confidence in God and become impatient. Sarah was saying that the Lord had failed her.

One should refer to Proverbs 31 to read of the qualities of women and a wife. One should remember their faithfulness when the Lord was crucified and the godly women in the book of Acts and the epistles.

We should be glad and thank God for the many brave and true Cristina women throughout the centuries.

It is so easy for us to be impatient. I have been impatient and made mistakes as a consequence.

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