
The Story of Sex in Scripture

By

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Preface

This book is about sexuality in the fullest sense. It contains a story with characters, a plot, and a point. However, the characters are not merely individual men and women; they are, rather, masculinity and femininity themselves, both cosmic and earthly, divine and human, good and evil.

This story follows the plot of Scripture. The overture is taken from Genesis where the key characters and themes are introduced. The development comes from the Old Testament, the climax from the Gospels, and the conclusion from John's Apocalypse. Each chapter begins with a "story" presentation of key historical events. The "backdrop" section which follows examines crucial doctrines and controversies pertinent to the topics of each chapter.

Sexuality counts for much more than mere personal morality—how you "identify" sexually, who you sleep with, and what reproductive decisions you make. Rather, one's sexual framework determines the nature of one's God, one's view of ultimate meaning and purpose, and the nature of salvation, if any is needed.

The Bible provides what the world does not have: an authoritative and credible revelation of the origin and destiny of masculinity and femininity. As we understand God's framework for sexuality we will understand ourselves better. More importantly, we

will understand God and His purposes better as well. This small volume is offered as a primer toward this end.

❖ Important Terms

In the story and backdrops of this book, you may encounter unfamiliar terms, or terms which have special meanings in the controversy in the Church concerning the nature and relationships of the sexes. When we use these terms, we mean the ideas explained below.

Patriarchy: This term names a familial, social, political, and ecclesiastical ordering of human relationships in which “fathers rule.” In other words, the responsibility for leadership, protection, provision, and governance is laid on the shoulders of men, particularly familial heads. This pattern of human relationships is pervasive in the Bible, and those who embrace or reject patriarchy acknowledge this. They disagree sharply about whether Biblical patriarchy is good or evil. The authors of this book confess that patriarchy is God’s very good and original design for human relationships.

Feminism: The social and political theory that men and women are interchangeable and that no gender-based difference in role, privilege, or responsibility should be recognized or sustained by the state or society.

Complementarianism: This term names a body of doctrines and practices which holds that men are by God’s creation and mandate responsible to lead the human race with the help, nurture, and counsel of women. The sexes are equal insofar as

they equally bear the image of God. They are also equal in their respective spiritual worth. Yet, they are distinct in sexual nature and roles. Though marred by the sins of both men and women, the patriarchal and complementary relationship of the sexes is restored, not abolished, by the redemptive work of Christ.

Egalitarianism: This is a movement of religious feminists in the Church; the body of doctrines and practices which holds that men and women are not only equal in essence and spiritual worth, but that they are also interchangeable in function and roles. Egalitarians advocate female headship (ordination of women as pastors, elders, bishops), “mutual submission,” and partnership without headship in marriage and ministry. Egalitarians view patriarchy as an antiquity to outgrow or as an evil to be overturned. Passages in the Scripture which support or endorse patriarchy are dismissed as “culturally relative” or are reinterpreted to have meanings unknown in previous centuries of the Church.

Sex: From what has already been said here, it should be obvious that we use the term “sex” to name things far more diverse than what happens conjugally in a bedroom. In modern discourse, the word sex has been evacuated of all meaning except the animal and exclusively biological senses of the term. We refuse to follow this course.

In the discussion that follows, sex will frequently refer to topics, concepts, and relationship that are social and familial. Discussions of husbands, wives, sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters are discussions that turn on the broader sense of sex. Discussions of divorce, remarriage, and celibacy are discussions

of sex. All discussions relating to the differences and interactions of men and women, whether good or evil – all these are discussions of sex.

What may be new for some readers is our contention that sex in its broadest meaning for humans derives from a fundamentally cosmic relationship – the relationship between the Creator and the created. Consequently, “earthly sex” in its widest sense derives from “cosmic sex.” And while speaking in these terms may startle, this is the way the Bible speaks of sex from Genesis to Revelation, as readers will see in the short chapters of this book. Christians generally, and evangelical Protestant Christians in particular, have either avoided or ignored this dimension of Biblical revelation to their hurt. This short story of sex in scripture seeks to remedy this mistake.

In this revision of this book, we gratefully acknowledge Joel Bundt for his providing discussion questions for each chapter, developed from hundreds of hours of his diligent teaching the ideas surveyed in this work as they are contained in more thorough curricula *Five Aspects of Man* and *Five Aspects of Masculinity for Young Men*.

We are also thankful for the skill and experience of graphic designer and book compositor Joel Pulido, whose labors enhanced the overall layout of the book and greatly improved its readability.

The Beginning of the Story of Sex

The story of sex does not start in the beginning. It starts before the beginning with God. Before creation and time, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit lived in eternity together. There were no goddesses, or women, or anything feminine back then because femininity had not been created yet. The night before Jesus died, He mentions some of what went on “before the foundation of the world.” He said that He and the Father shared love and glory (John 17:24). Jesus’ dying comes much later in the story, of course. The point here is that the beginning of sexuality is found in the three masculine persons of the Trinity. God is not an “It,” and God is not a He/She. He does not have masculine and feminine sides. God is He, and all the persons of the Trinity are He. All sexuality begins with the divine and personal masculinity of God.

God decided to create the universe for His own good pleasure. He did not create the world because He was lonely or because He needed something. He created it because He wanted to. The best way to explain the creation and to understand what history accomplishes is to understand cosmic sexuality. The story of sex is worth learning because of all the frameworks for understanding Biblical history, it is arguably the best and most complete.

The important thing at this point in the story is to understand that creation is the beginning of the feminine. For a start, let's describe femininity this way: the feminine comes from the masculine, but it is not the masculine. Its purpose is to return to the masculine to share love and glory. Actually the feminine is created to share many more things with the masculine including fellowship, labor, productivity, unity, fruitfulness, and abiding. But, in order to get started, we can shorten this list to "love and glory."

God relates to His universe the way an artist relates to his art. Creation comes from God, it shows us God's greatness, but the creation is not God. Just because an artist draws a yellow daisy, does not mean that he is a yellow daisy. A Rembrandt painting shows us something of Rembrandt, but if you destroy the painting, you do not destroy Rembrandt. You could destroy the whole universe and the Trinity would go right on. As is said in church, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be."

When God called the world into existence, He made something like Himself which is not the same as Himself. His plan is for the creation to respond to Him because it comes from Him and is made for Him. According to Scripture, creation is not God nor is it absorbed into God. The purpose of creation is to return to God for a union in which those united remain distinct and yet are truly one. This is the very first part of the story of sex. Sexuality at the cosmic level is about the masculine God and His feminine creation.

The next important event in the story of sex occurs when God makes man and woman on the earth. God first makes Adam

– male, masculine, and formed directly from the ground. Then God takes Adam to a specific part of the earth, the garden of Eden, and gives him a job – to cultivate and keep the garden. God models speaking and planting for Adam, tells him what to do and what not to do, specifies his wages to be all the food in the garden except for one tree, and gives him a task to get started – naming the animals. To put it in royal terms, God is the king and Adam is his viceroy. In modern business terms, God is the boss and owner of the business, and Adam is His area manager.

God delegates to Adam the naming of the animals. Adam’s authority for this task is real. “And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name” (Gen. 2:19b). In naming the animals, Adam learns something about himself. The other animals have mates, but Adam has no one like him. He is alone. God’s plan for the creation of a helper for Adam is dramatically different from all the creatures He has made thus far. Every creature made on earth thus far, including the animals and Adam, has been made directly from the ground.

Woman is different. Only woman is a two-step project. God puts Adam to sleep, opens up his side, takes out flesh and bone, and then closes Adam back up. Then God takes the flesh and bone that He gets from Adam and builds the first female human body. God gives woman life and brings her to the man who names her Woman. Much later in the story, God will reveal a great mystery about why man and woman were made this way. For now, we can observe the following contrasts between man and woman.

Man

made from the earth

brought to the earth

charged to work the earth

Woman

made from the man

brought to the man

married to the man to help him

As we clearly see, woman fits our earlier description of the feminine. The creation comes from God, is not God, but is made to come back to God to live in love and glory. In the same way woman is made from man, is not man, but is made to return to him for love and glory. They share many other things such as fellowship, unity, fruitfulness, and abiding.

Here we need to be very clear about two ideas, or we will not get the story of sex straight. At the end of the sixth day of creation, after God made man and woman and then married them to one another, He tells us something very important about their fundamental nature:

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

Genesis 1 tells us that both man and woman are created in the image of God. One of the best ways to understand the image of God is this: the outline of a human being is the same as the “outline of God.” Our human attributes are small models or replicas of His divine attributes. Said another way, our characteristics are like His characteristics, except ours are very tiny. Here are a few examples.

God is sovereign. He makes all the final decisions about everything. We are not sovereign, but we do make real decisions. We have responsibility for how we rule our lives.

God knows everything. We do not know everything, but we know some things. Besides that, we have memory, imagination, and logic.

God is just and righteous. In fact, He is the basis of understanding all that is right and wrong. We are not the foundation of right and wrong, but we have conscience, an inner sense of morality and justice.

God is love and the source of all love. We are not the source of love, but we are capable of receiving and giving love. We have true personality.

To summarize, God is the infinite thinking, choosing, moral, loving person. We men and women are also thinking, choosing, moral persons capable of love. This is why we are said to be in God's image. The image of God does not have to do with being male or female. The image of God has to do with being a real person with a mind, a will, a conscience, and an immortal soul. Men's consciences are not more human than women's. Women's minds or wills are not stronger or better than men's, and so forth. One is not more in the image of God than the other; one is not more human than the other. This is the foundation of equality laid for man and woman in scripture.

Equality is something Americans emphasize a lot, most often in the sense of sameness. God does not put much emphasis on this kind of equality. He makes almost nothing the same as anything

else, neither snowflakes nor archangels. But, there is another way we can talk about the equality of man and woman, not in the sense of sameness, but in the sense of price. When God gets around to paying for man and woman, they cost the same. But that comes later.

Here are two ideas foundational to the story of sex. Man and woman are the same; and, they are different. They are both fully and equally in the image of God, but they are created in different ways for different roles.

God gives man and woman a big job. They are supposed to create human culture and spread it over the whole planet. This founding commission is often called the World Mandate, or the Dominion Mandate, or some call it the Cultural Mandate.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen. 1:28)

Clearly man and woman will do this by cooperating biologically. The way man and woman are created to produce babies is a miracle of engineering and cooperation. Man and woman are created to be complementary (unlike but working together) not only in their reproductive processes, but also in their minds, roles, emotions, and overall tendencies. Only together can man and woman build human civilization. Both must rule, subdue, and multiply; but, they do this by playing different positions on the team. Man leads by working the earth to provide for and to defend the human family. Woman helps by giving life and building a home in the territory the man has gained. The married couple is

the fundamental builder of human civilization, and its fundamental unit is the family and the home they build.

Adam is Eve's head (leader) because she comes from him and is created to help him. More than that, Adam is the first head of the whole human race because he is the father of all human beings. Today many think that to say the man is the leader in marriage and the head of the family is a horrible lie which leads to the cruel oppression of women and children. That idea comes from the hypothetical "Story of Sex According to Feminism and the Goddess". This is not that book.

In scripture, the headship of man is not horrible. Actually it is the very key to understanding how anybody ever is saved after everything gets cursed. For now, let's simply say that male headship and patriarchy (which means the rule of fathers in families, clans, nations, churches, etc.) is not exemplified by tyrants ordering women and children around. According to God, male headship means that God holds men responsible for providing, protecting, and leading their families. In the next chapter, we will see the first world-class example of this principle in action.

What follows is for those who want to look more closely, to dig deeper, and to wrestle with challenging ideas. We call these sections "Backdrop" because they delve into important matters that shape and illumine the story of sex but are not exactly "storylike."

BACKDROP TO CHAPTER ONE

Discussions about the masculinity of God as the Bible portrays Him can get complicated. So, before digging into the details, let's look at a broad overview of this issue.

❖ An Outline of Evidence for Why God Is Masculine

- I. How We Know God is Masculine
 - A. He is always called "He" in the Bible. He is never called "She."
 - B. God identifies Himself in masculine roles and offices.
 - C. Jesus is male and masculine.
 - D. Jesus unites many "polarities" in Himself, but never masculinity and femininity.
 - E. The masculinity of God and Christ have always been confessed by Jews or Christians in history.

- II. Objections to the Masculinity of God
 - A. God is compared to a woman.
 - B. God is a genderless spirit.
 - C. The Bible shows a patriarchal bias.
 - D. When men are compared to women ...

- III. Why God's Masculinity Matters
 - A. The Bible reveals a masculine God. If He is not masculine then the Bible is wrong.
 - B. The Bible reveals a male and masculine Jesus.
 - C. The real issue is the trustworthiness of the Bible.

The outline above summarizes the main points of debate about the gender of God in our day. The discussion below follows this outline.

❖ **The Main Idea: God Is Masculine**

The idea that God is masculine is the most important and foundational idea in the whole story of sex. Jews and Christians have believed in the masculinity of God for millennia, but today a huge controversy has arisen. Are the goddess worshipers right when they insist that God is “she?” Is God “beyond gender” or “androgynous” as more and more modern Christians think?

Historically, Christians have always thought about God in masculine terms because the Bible shows us a masculine God. The answer is really that simple. Here is an overview of the evidence for the masculinity of God.

❖ **God is Always Called "He" and Never "She"**

From Genesis to Revelation, God is He. Nowhere is God she. Nowhere in the Bible is God referred to as “The Eternal It” or anything similar to this idea. When we speak of individual personalities, the grammatical gender is the same as sex, and we should not be surprised at this. Humans come in two and only two types: male and female.

This feature of language – which you learned in grade school – is that pronouns (“he,” “she,” “it,” and their other forms) agree in gender with what they refer to. When we read “He hit the ball,” we

know that a male hit the ball. Similarly, “She caught the ball” tells us immediately that a female caught the ball.

So the first evidence for the masculinity of God is the Bible’s exclusive use of masculine pronouns for Him. Jesus even bends the rules of Greek grammar in John 16:13 in order to avoid calling the Holy Spirit an “it.” When speaking of the Holy Spirit (“spirit” is grammatically neuter in Greek), Jesus uses the masculine personal pronoun: “He will guide you into all truth,” Jesus says.

❖ **God is Masculine in Roles and Offices**

In addition to the universal use of masculine pronouns for God, the Bible overwhelms us with descriptions of God’s words and works drawn from masculine models and images, offices and roles, most of them drawn from the family, government, and the military.

God is Father, Son, Judge of all the earth, Lord of Armies. Christ is the First Born Brother, Bridegroom, Husband, King of kings, Lord of lords, the Prophet, and the great High Priest. An exhaustive list of masculine references to God would number in the scores of hundreds. We can hardly turn a page of the Old or New Testaments without finding dozens of masculine references to God. The Psalms are littered with them. Jesus’ teaching about God is almost exclusively on God the **Father**. Against this diverse spectrum of masculine roles, offices, and images, is it any wonder that Christians read their Bibles and find that it presents us with a thoroughly masculine deity?

❖ Jesus is Male and Masculine

“Male” signifies biological sex. Maleness arises from specific biological and physiological characteristics. However, maleness is not a matter of mere genital design; an animal’s sexual maleness arises from a host of hormonal, physiological, and chromosomal characteristics.

What, then, about Jesus? First of all, He is male. Luke the physician preserves not only the angel’s prediction that Mary would conceive a male in her womb (Luke 1:31ff), he records the datum that Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day after His birth (Luke 2:21).

“Masculinity,” on the other hand, is a social, psychological, and spiritual concept. So is femininity. This does not, however, erase a fundamental conviction of all human societies – male humans ought to be masculine and female humans out to be feminine – no matter how the cultural particulars are worked out. Social roles, manners, customs, and fashions of dress ordinarily function to highlight and augment the biological gender of either sex and, particularly, to *exaggerate* the distinctions between the sexes.

Jesus’ roles, manners, and customs are all conventionally and unambiguously masculine. We know next to nothing about Jesus’ dress or grooming; but, they too must have been ordinarily masculine, unlike the feminized portrait of Him displayed in so many Sunday school rooms today. Had they been otherwise, the Scribes and Pharisees – eager to spotlight the slightest unseemliness in His life – would surely have noted any hint of sexual ambiguity in Jesus. They slandered Jesus as a bastard (John 8:19, 41), as a half-breed, and claimed he was demon-possessed (John

8:48, 52). He was accused as a law-breaker (Luke 6:2), as a glutton, drunkard, and carouser (Matt. 11:19), and as a blasphemer (Mark 7:2). Never do we read that Jesus' enemies accused Him of effeminacy. In view of their eagerness to lodge any complaint against Jesus which would stick, their silence on Jesus' "femininity" is significant.

Consequently, maleness and masculinity – a creaturely complex of biological, social, psychological, and spiritual characteristics – were united with the masculine God in the person of Jesus the Messiah.

❖ The Boundary God Never Crosses

According to Scripture's prophecies and history, a feminine Messiah is impossible. In both Old and New Testaments, the Messiah unites within Himself a number of polarities never before brought together in one man. For example, Christ is both baby and ancient of days, both Master and Servant, King and Servant, Priest and sacrifice, Judge and the one judged for the sin of the world. He is both the Prophet and the Word, both Shepherd and the Lamb of God. He is both divine and human.

Over against these polarities which are united in Christ, we note the Bible's steadfast refusal to unite masculinity and femininity in the person of Jesus. Christ is a son, but never a daughter. Christ is a brother, never a sister. Christ is a bridegroom, never a bride. Christ is a husband, never a wife. Christ is a king, never a queen.

But, what about Galatians 3:27-29?

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. [28] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [29] And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:27-29)

The union that Galatians 3:28 speaks of is irrelevant for this discussion, because Paul says nothing here about Christ *integrating* the polarities mentioned in the passage. Rather, Paul claims that neither ethnicity (“Jew nor Greek”), civic status (“slave nor free”), or sex (“male nor female”) have any impact on God’s promise to Abraham. Included within the body of Christ, therefore, are both Jews and Greeks, slaves and free citizens, males and females! As both men and women are “in Adam,” so both men and women are in Christ and thus heirs of God’s promise to Abraham which is fulfilled in Christ.

The fact that all males and females are in Adam (a solitary male) does not make Adam to be anything other than an individual solitary human male. The fact that all redeemed human males and females are in Christ, the Second Adam, does not make His humanity to be any different from the First Adam’s.

The polarity of gender does not vanish in the person of Christ. Instead, it is *amplified and magnified* throughout salvation history until sexual polarity reaches a climactic glorification in the marriage supper of the Lamb where Christ is the Bridegroom and the Church is His bride and wife (Rev. 21:2, 9-10, 22:17). Christ’s lack of “integration” with the feminine is not an insult to femininity. Rather He achieves a different kind of union, the wedding of the divine masculine and the created feminine.

❖ The Consistent Belief of the Faithful

In view of the extensive detail by which the Bible presents us with a powerfully masculine God, it is no surprise that God's masculinity is the consistent belief of Old and New Testament saints over the centuries in which the Bible was written and in the centuries of the Church since the days of the Apostles. Their reason for this conviction is twofold.

First of all, "the Bible tells me so" explains why faithful believers have consistently held to a belief in a masculine God for thousands of years. This is how the Bible portrays God, and so that is how faithful Christians have related to Him. For some modern-thinking people, this is a reason to reject God's masculinity. For they suppose that this is simply part of a pre-modern (and, therefore, false) view of God which our enlightened age must throw off in the interests of justice and to gain a hearing with a culture which rejects old patriarchal concepts.

But, this objection raises yet another aspect of the Church's faithfulness to God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself, more than any other personality in the Bible, is the most insistent that God is The Father – not "a father" but The Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This portrayal of God is found as well in the Old Testament, but it is greatly emphasized in Jesus' teaching. Jesus' disciples were faithful to "teach all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt 28:18), and so we are not surprised to find Paul writing something like this in Ephesians:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, [15] from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named...(Eph. 3:14-15)

Paul's sense here is this: the original Father is God. Any and all other fatherhood is a creaturely copy of His Fatherhood. To speak of God as Father is not to apply human concepts to the Godhead. Rather, we humans have fathers whose fatherhood is modeled on the shape and nature of God's Fatherhood.

So, the persistence of this belief in God's masculinity is exactly what one would expect if it is part of Jesus' teaching, committed to His Church through His Apostles. An abiding belief in God's masculinity is what one would expect from the ministry of the Spirit of Christ, as He has guided not only the Apostles, but the fathers of the Church after them.

❖ **But, but, but ... !**

As you may have already heard, there are several objections that some people put up against the Bible's evidence that God is masculine. Let's look at each of them in turn.

“... **God is compared to a woman.**” Most of these verses (and, they are very few) include a comparison of God to a man, right alongside the comparison of God to a woman. Deuteronomy 32:18 is a typical example:

*You [Israel] deserted the Rock, who fathered you;
you forgot the God who gave you birth.*

Notice how both the father and the mother are set before us as a picture of something true about God? And, what is that “something?” God's *gender* has nothing to do with this statement in the Song of Moses. This verse is part of an indictment in the Song of Moses which sets forth the filial duty that Israel has toward

Yahweh. God's actual gender is irrelevant to the subject of this section of Scripture. If it were, we would need to deduce that God is both masculine and feminine, some sort of cosmic hermaphrodite, or else utterly androgynous.

The same use of male and female can be seen in Psalm 123:2 –

*As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he shows us his mercy.*

Some argue that God is compared to a mistress here. But, the comparison is between “our eyes” as they look toward God and the eyes of menservants and maidservants as they look toward their masters and mistresses respectively. Notice that there is a clear gender marker for God in the last phrase: “...till **he** shows us **his** mercy.”

“ ... **God is a genderless spirit.**” This objection makes sense only if we ignore all the evidence already set forth in the Bible: all the times that God is referred to as “He” and all the times He is portrayed as a masculine personality. Angels, of course, are also spirits, but they are universally referred to as “he.”

This objection seems weighty because creatures with bodies have a biological sex. Since God has no body (i.e. “spirit” must mean that there is no body), then God (who is a spirit) cannot have a sex. But, there is a kind of sex which has nothing to do with bodies. In fact, that's what we usually mean by the word “masculine.” *A woman can be masculine.* A man may be feminine. Masculinity and femininity are not determined by biology. They are a complex of qualities, traits, dispositions, roles, and behaviors that are

typical of males and females respectively. But, you do not have to be biologically male to be masculine. Angels are masculine, even though they are understood to be spirits (Heb. 1:7). God is masculine, but before the incarnation, nothing about God had anything to do with biological sex. After the incarnation, it is another matter, but we will examine the implications of that in a later chapter.

“... **the Bible shows a patriarchal bias.**” The idea behind this objection goes like this: "the cultures of the Old and New Testaments were very pro-male and anti-female. So, the Biblical writers reflect this in how they write about God. Either the Biblical writers didn't know any better, or if they knew better, they didn't make an issue of it, so that their audience would receive their message. God is presented as masculine, because that's how the original readers of the Bible needed to hear about God."

This objection, however, is almost comically out of touch with history and the Bible. The cultures that were contemporary with the Old and New Testament writers had no problem with female deities at all. They were full of female deities! Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome – they worshiped as many feminine goddesses as they worshiped masculine gods. In fact, the religion of the Jews, and the faith of Christians after them, cut straight across all these cultures by insisting that God was masculine alone, that He was not feminine, nor did He have any goddess girlfriends, or wives, or concubines, like all the other masculine gods of the Ancient Near East.

When the Bible shows us a masculine God, it is not indulging a backward, sexist audience. Instead, it is boldly challenging the cultures in which the Bible was written, cultures that are quite happy with feminine deities.

When men are compared to women ... The handful of verses which compare God to a woman diminish in significance when we notice the verses that compare human males to women. For example, in Numbers 11:12, Moses complains to God about the nation Israel, using these words,

“Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant?”

Was Moses trying to tell God – or to tell us – that Moses, the male, is actually female? The notion is preposterous.

Paul speaks the same way about himself in Galatians in 4:19 – “My dear children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you ...”. Paul likens himself to a mother in childbirth, and compares the Galatians to pregnant women, who are attempting to form Christ within their own wombs! This is certainly strange language. But, whatever Paul means, it is incredible to suppose that he is telling us that he is actually female, and that the Galatians are all females too!

The Bible compares God to many things. He is compared to a mother bear (Hosea 13:8), and He is compared to a mother eagle (Deuteronomy 32:11). Does this mean that God has brown fur and claws? Does this mean that God has wings or a beak? Does this mean that God is feminine? These comparisons mean none of these things. The point of the comparisons have nothing to do with God’s form or His gender. It is the fierceness of the mother bear’s searching for her cubs that the comparison is highlighting. It is the attentiveness in a mother eagle’s care for her eaglets that the comparison is highlighting.

❖ Why God's Masculinity Matters

No one seriously denies that the Bible's portrait of God is thoroughly, enthusiastically masculine. So, the question about the gender of God comes down to this: Is the Bible's portrait revealing? Or, is it deceiving? Does the Bible show us something true about God when it shows us a masculine God, or does it hide what He is really like behind a masculine mask?

The Judeo-Christian faith is a historical revelation of the true God. This revelation occurred as God spoke directly to or through the Prophets and the Apostles. Their words were God's words, and they were written down to form what we know today as the Bible. Most importantly, God revealed Himself in tangible form when He entered history as the son of Mary. Jesus of Nazareth is God in the flesh, fully human male and fully divine. He remains fully human male and fully divine today.

If a masculine spiritual deity is a scandal to modern sensibilities, Jesus is a greater scandal! He is not merely masculine, He is male! He was born of the Virgin Mary, He grew up in Nazareth as the son of Joseph, and He ministered in Israel 2,000 years ago. He was crucified because He claimed to be God. Afterwards, He proved His claim by rising from the grave three days after His execution. The resurrection accounts, the teaching in the Book of Hebrews about Jesus as our great High Priest, and John's encounter with Jesus on Patmos – all these show us that Jesus is *still* a masculine male. If God is actually a genderless spirit, the Bible is wrong, so very wrong as to earn our distrust and rejection. Christians who claim that God is feminine stand above the Bible

and judge it to be mistaken. But, why should we believe they are right and the Bible is wrong?

The Christian faith loudly insists – in the Bible and down through the centuries – that what we truly know about God comes from His own revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ and in the holy scripture. This testimony is vast, clear, and compelling. No one can question God’s masculinity without simultaneously rejecting the truthfulness and sufficiency of God’s self-revelation in the Old and New Testaments and in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Discussion Questions

1. A variety of reasons have been offered by men to explain God's motivation for Creation.
 - (a) What reasons have you been taught or encountered to explain why God created anything at all?
 - (b) How do these reasons compare with the reason offered early in this chapter?
 - (c) How does our conception of God's reason for creating affect our understanding of Him and our view of creation?
2. Have you ever viewed Biblical history as the story of sex? If you have not, what difficulties do you encounter in framing Biblical history within such a context?
3. A great deal of significance is given in the Biblical account of the creation of man and the creation of woman. Significant numbers of Christians have adopted either an evolutionary view of origins or a theistic-evolutionary view of origins.
 - (a) How would such views alter the exposition of Genesis that you read in the chapter above?

- (b) How would you communicate the ideas in this chapter with someone holding to such a view of origins?
4. How would you explain “image of God” to a child ...
- (a) aged 8 to 12?
 - (b) aged 13 to 15?
 - (c) aged 16 to 18?
 - (d) or to another adult?
5. What are the main arguments presented by those who teach that God is ...
- (a) Neuter?
 - (b) Female?
 - (c) Both male and female?
 - (d) What is your conviction on this issue and how do you defend it?
6. Is it a serious issue at all? In other words, do you believe God's masculinity matters?
- (a) Does it seem to matter to others in your church?
 - (b) Does it matter to your denomination?
 - (c) What ways may be effective in communicating this conviction with those who...
 - may not care?
 - disagree with the conviction that God is masculine?
7. "The idea that God is masculine is the most important and foundational idea in the whole story of sex."
- Why is the church, in the view of so many men, the domain of the feminine?
8. Does our culture embrace femininity as superior to masculinity in religion or in the church? If so, in what ways?

9. "Man leads by working the earth to provide for and to defend the human family. Women helps by giving life and building a home in the territory man has gained."

How does this look in modern society where many men and women go out to work each day perhaps even to similar factory jobs.

10. What influences in our culture, ("secular" or "church") stand in contradiction to the truth that God is masculine?
11. How do you respond to the statement "the original Father is God, any and all fatherhood is a creaturely copy of God's Fatherhood"?