

# Sound Doctrine and New Creation: Paul's Parabolic Use of Genesis 2–3

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In a recent essay on the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, Matthew W. Bates acknowledges four resources that “seek to serve as a one-stop launching point for students, pastors, and scholars approaching this technical area of inquiry.”<sup>1</sup> One such one-stop launching point is G.K. Beale’s *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, which Bates calls a “valuable how-to manual for those doing detailed scholarly research.”<sup>2</sup> Bates says that along with the three other resources, Beale’s *Handbook* is “indispensable for those seeking orientation” to the field of OT in the NT studies.<sup>3</sup>

G.K. Beale’s project seems to spring in part from a concern regarding scholarly study of NT use of the OT: “Sometimes scholars make many interesting observations about OT passages cited in the NT, but too often they do not comment on how the NT author is actually interpreting the OT text such as answering, Does he indicate fulfillment? Or does he draw an analogy? If so, how?”<sup>4</sup> Beale challenges biblical scholars (and by implication, church leaders and preachers) to think carefully about the ways NT authors use OT texts.

Beale attempts to categorize the main ways NT authors perform this. He offers categories such as “direct fulfillment of prophecy, typology, analogy, an abiding authority, and a different textual form than the Hebrew.”<sup>5</sup>

However, Beale readily admits limitations to his framework, conceding “[t]he categories discussed will not be an exhaustive list since there is always the possibility of finding new uses.”<sup>6</sup>

Building on Beale’s framework, this paper aims to suggest one such new category: a parabolic use of the OT. This paper will then explore this parabolic use of the OT in three

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<sup>1</sup> Bates, “The Old Testament in the New Testament,” Pages 83–102 in *The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, edited by Scot McKnight and Nijay Gupta (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019) 85. Bates begins his essay surveying the recent field with the sentence, “It is intimidating.” This author sympathizes.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 86. The other three resources suggested are G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson’s *Commentary on the NT Use of the Old Testament*, Ben Witherington III’s “Old and New” series including *Torah Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics*, and Steve Moyise’s series of studies including *Jesus and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, and *Paul and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*.

<sup>4</sup> G.K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), Kindle edition, ch 4.1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 4, “Conclusion.”

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 4.1.

Pauline texts: Romans 16:17–20; 2 Corinthians 11:1–15; 1 Timothy 2:12–15, although the final text will merit the longest treatment. In each of these three texts, the Genesis 2–3 narrative appears as a parable for local churches who are threatened by false teaching.<sup>7</sup> The Apostle Paul uses the first creation story to instruct churches about the importance of sound doctrine in their new creation situations.<sup>8</sup> To conclude, this paper will offer implications for the study of Scripture and the life of the church.

### *Parabolic Use of the OT*

The terms “parable” and “parabolic” are potentially unclear since there is significant disagreement about what constitutes a parable proper.<sup>9</sup> For the purposes of this paper, I will define a parabolic use of Scripture in terms of both form and function.<sup>10</sup> In terms of form, a parabolic use of the OT is an extended analogy that follows key plot points of an OT narrative. In terms of function, a parabolic use of the OT is meant to illuminate a situation and elicit an immediate response.

Three categories of uses of the OT overlap with a parabolic use, and it seems necessary to differentiate between them. Those three categories are an analogical/illustrative use, a typological use, and figural exegesis.

While Beale’s category of an analogical or illustrative use of the OT overlaps with the form of a parabolic use of scripture, the two categories have distinctly different functions. Beale understands the aim of an analogical or illustrative use to be to “emphasize a gnomic, broad, or universal principle.”<sup>11</sup> A parabolic use aims to illuminate a specific situation and point to a specific response. Further, a parabolic use differs from a typological use in that with the former, there is no implicit or indirect necessity for a second event/text to escalate or fulfill the first.

Having made these two distinctions, a parabolic use would seem most similar to a kind of figural exegesis.<sup>12</sup> Here again, a parabolic use differs mainly in function rather than form. A

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<sup>7</sup> Throughout this paper, the phrases “Genesis 2–3,” “Genesis 2–3 narrative,” “first creation narrative,” and “creation-fall narrative” are used interchangeably. Further, when I say that Genesis 2–3 narrative appears as a parable, I am not making a statement about how Paul viewed the historical authenticity or value of the narrative.

<sup>8</sup> In this paper I assume that the Apostle Paul is the author of the undisputed as well as the disputed epistles.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., two of the most comprehensive recent works on the parables: Craig Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012); Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018); also the review of Snodgrass’s second edition by Amy-Jill Levine, “Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus” *Theological Studies* 80 no 1 (Mar 2019) 218–219.

<sup>10</sup> In considering both function as well as form, I am borrowing Amy-Jill Levine’s insight that when it comes to parables, “We might be better off thinking less about what they ‘mean’ and more about what they can ‘do[.]’” from *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi* (New York: HarperOne, 2014) 4. Beale also categorizes the uses of OT Scripture according to function in his *Handbook*.

<sup>11</sup> *Handbook*, ch. 4, “To Indicate an Analogical or Illustrative Use of the Old Testament.”

<sup>12</sup> For examples of figurative exegesis, see, e.g., Richard B. Hays, “Figural Exegesis and the Retrospective Re-cognition of Israel’s Story” *BBR* Vol. 29, No. 1 (2019) 32–48. There Hays quotes a “classic definition of figural reading” from Erich Auerbach, the first sentence of which reads: “Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first” (34). A parabolic use of Genesis 2–3 in the NT certainly “involves” the first

parabolic use of the OT takes elements of a figural reading of Scripture and applies them to a specific situation, always intending to elicit a certain response from a localized audience.

To summarize terms so far, a “parabolic use of the OT” differs from an analogical use of the OT, a typological use, and figural exegesis. A parabolic use of the OT refers to *a) an extended NT analogy that alludes to key plot points of an OT narrative b) in order to illuminate a situation and elicit an immediate response*. The following chart supplies a visual framework for this definition:

Parabolic Use of the OT	
Form	Function
An extended analogy in the NT that alludes to key plot points of an OT narrative...	...in order to illuminate a situation and elicit an immediate response.

In the remainder of this paper, we will explore Romans 16:17–20; 2 Corinthians 11:1–15; and 1 Timothy 2:11–15, and apply the category defined above.

### ***Romans 16:17–20***

In Romans 16, Paul optimistically appropriates the creation-fall narrative in a parabolic way.

After commending Phoebe and greeting many of the Christians in Rome, Paul turns to offer a brotherly appeal. In verse 17, he warns the Romans to watch out for “those who cause dissensions and offenses, in opposition to the teaching that you have learned; avoid them” (NRSV).

Many commentators recognize an allusion to Genesis 3:15 in Romans 16:20.<sup>13</sup> Seifrid is the commentator with a maximalist view, seeing at least two additional allusions to Genesis 3 in these verses.<sup>14</sup>

The description of these false teachers in verse 18b evoke the description of the serpent in Genesis 3. These false teachers attempt to “deceive” (ἐξαπατάω; cf. ἡπάτησέν in Gen 3:13 LXX) by “smooth talk and flattery[.]”

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events. The situations in Romans 16; 2 Corinthians 11; and 1 Timothy 2 do not “fulfill” Genesis 2–3, at least in the sense of intentional prophetic fulfillment.

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer S.J., *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 33. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008) 747; Robert H. Mounce, *Romans: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (NAC Vol. 27. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995) 279–280; Andrew B. Spurgeon, *Romans: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary* (Asia Bible Commentary Series. Carlisle, UK: Langham Publishing, 2020) “16:17–20 Warning Against False Teachers” EPUB; Craig Keener, *Romans* (NCCS. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009) 190. But see C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC Ro 2. London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004) 803; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 932–933 for a more ambivalent perspective on the presence of an allusion to Genesis 3:15.

<sup>14</sup> Seifrid, “Romans,” 692. However, a case could be made for an allusion involving verse 18a as well as 18b, 19, and 20. In verse 18a, these false teachers serve “their own belly” (τῇ ἐαυτῶν κοιλίᾳ). This is possibly a reference to the eating practices of a perceived group of opponents and is similar to Paul’s statement in Philippians 3:19. On another level, however, in context of allusions to Genesis 3, the reference to the opponents’ κοιλία may echo the judgment on the serpent in Genesis 3:14 LXX.

Despite the potential danger from false teachers, Paul is confident in the Roman Christians' track record of obedience. Further, Paul is confident they will have the proper relationship both to "good" and "evil" (Rom 16:19; cf. Gen 2:17; 3:5, 22). Paul's climactic allusion to Genesis 2–3 comes in Romans 16:20: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (cf. Gen 3:15). Paul associates the Roman Christians with Eve and her offspring. As Seifrid remarks, "Implicitly, then, the gospel reopens the gates of paradise and brings fallen human beings back to Eden itself. The corruption of the gospel is equivalent to the fall."<sup>15</sup> Further, Paul envisions God's final victory over Satan happening through the churches who hold fast to unity around the apostolic teaching.<sup>16</sup>

Romans 16:17–20	
Form	Function
Three allusions to plot points from Genesis 2–3: (1) Teachers who "deceive" (v. 18b; Gen 3:13 LXX) (2) People who are "wise in what is good" but "[innocent] in what is evil" (v. 19; Gen 2:17; 3:5, 22) (3) People who will "crush Satan" underfoot (v. 20; Gen 3:15)	<i>Illuminate the potential situation:</i> False teachers who will stir up divisions "...in opposition to the teaching that you have learned[.]" (v. 17a)  <i>Elicit an immediate response:</i> "keep an eye on [them]...avoid them" (v. 17b)

## 2 Corinthians 11:1–15

Paul deploys the Genesis 2–3 narrative as a cautionary parable for the Corinthian churches. This use of Genesis 2–3 is especially intriguing because Paul alludes to traditions associated with Genesis 2–3 as well as the OT narrative itself.

In the context of the letter of 2 Corinthians, Paul worries that in his absence the minds of the Corinthians "will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor 11:3b). Paul further expounds his worry in 2 Corinthians 11:4: "if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you [put up with it] readily enough."

Paul is concerned that the Corinthians will give way to false teachers who appear as "super-apostles" (v. 5) but whose message is contrary to the gospel, the Holy Spirit, and true person of Jesus. As with Romans 16:17–20, Paul's concern is with false teachers and false teaching. And as with Romans 16:17–20, Paul turns to the familiar creation-fall narrative to illuminate the Corinthian church's situation.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 692.

<sup>16</sup> For the view that Romans 16:20 signifies God's final, eschatological victory over Satan, see Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 932–933.

Paul compares the Corinthian situation to when “the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning” (2 Cor 11:3a). There is likely a double allusion to the OT in 2 Corinthians 11:3a. First, Paul derives the serpent’s “cunning” (πανουργία) from the statement that the “serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made” (Gen 3:1).<sup>17</sup> Second, there is the verbal allusion to Genesis 3:13 LXX with the word “deceived” (ἐξηπάτησεν) in 2 Corinthians 11:3.

The “super-apostles” are not what they seem. Paul exposes them as “false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ” (2 Cor 11:13). This latter part is no surprise to Paul, since “Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). This statement about Satan taking the guise of an angel of light alludes to a tradition like the one in the apocryphal *Life of Adam and Eve* 9:1 in Latin (“Satan grew angry and transfigured himself into the brilliance of an angel and went off to the Tigris River to Eve”);<sup>18</sup> or 17:1–2a in Greek (“And instantly *the snake* hung himself from the *walls* of paradise. And when the angels of God ascended to worship, then Satan appeared in the form of an angel...”)<sup>19</sup>

Paul assures the Corinthians that judgment waits for these false teachers: “Their end will match their deeds” (2 Cor 11:15). In the meantime, Paul reasserts his apostolic authority in the letter (2 Cor 10–13) and sends Titus and others as his personal representatives (2 Cor 8:16–24). Paul asks the Corinthians to put up with “a little foolishness” for the sake of them seeing his ministry and message in a more objective light.

For Paul, his ministry is fueled by the sufficiency of Christ in and through Paul’s weaknesses (2 Cor 1:3–11; 4:7–12; 12:7–10). As for Paul’s message and the message of those with him, Paul claims “we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor 4:5). The way Paul ministers—leaning into his own weakness and the power of Christ’s sufficiency—is part of what authenticates his message (2 Cor 4:13–15; 12:11–21). This authenticity is what is missing from the ministry of the super-apostle opponents of the apostle.

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<sup>17</sup> Witherington notes that both Aquila and Theodotion translations of Genesis “use the same Greek word for cunning to describe the serpent that Paul uses here.” Ben Witherington III, *Torah Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics*, ch. 2, “The Appeal to the Fall: 2 Corinthians 11, 1 Timothy 2, and Romans 8.” Significantly, Paul had characterized his own method and manner of ministry as a refusal “to practice cunning” in 2 Corinthians 4:2. Paul later connects cunning (πανουργος) and deceit (δολω) when he exposes perceived rumors about his ministry, in 2 Corinthians 12:16).

<sup>18</sup> Translation from <https://www.marquette.edu/maqom/Latin%20Life%20of%20Adam%20and%20Eve.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> From Magdalena Díaz Araujo, “The Sins of the First Woman: Eve Traditions in Second Temple Literature with Special Regard to the Life of Adam and Eve,” translated by Marie-Theres Wacker, pages 91–112 in *Early Jewish Writings* (Edited by Eileen Schuller and Marie-Theres Wacker. The Bible and Women. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017) 103. Emphasis original. See also John R. Levison, “The Exoneration of Eve in the Apocalypse of Moses 15–30” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* Vol. XX no. 2 (1989) 137.

2 Corinthians 11:1–15	
Form	Function
Three allusions to plot points from Gen 2–3 and related traditions:	<i>Illuminate a potential situation:</i> Paul’s cunning super-apostle opponents are on the verge of proclaiming a different Jesus, spirit, and gospel, and the church of Corinth is on the verge of putting up with it (v. 4)
(1) The “cunning” of the serpent (2 Cor 11:3; Gen 3:1)	
(2) The serpent “deceived Eve” (2 Cor 11:3; Gen 3:13)	<i>Elicit an immediate response:</i> “[B]ear with me in a little foolishness” (v. 1). That is, discover the authenticity of Paul’s ministry and message in the “weakness” that points to Christ’s sufficiency
(2) “Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14; cf. <i>Life of Adam and Eve</i> 9.1; 17:1–2a)	

### 1 Timothy 2:11–15<sup>20</sup>

This text is the most controversial text of the three. And the stakes are the highest for this text because of its potential impact for the topic of women leading in church ministry. Therefore, we will spend the most time in this text.

Here in 1 Timothy 2:11–15, the Apostle Paul once again uses Genesis 2–3 as a parabolic warning against false teaching. This time the setting is Ephesus, and Timothy is the primary recipient of the warning. Spencer’s reconstruction of the Ephesian problem behind 1 Timothy 2:11–15 is worth quoting in full:

Paul was aware that this woman (or these women) was (were) teaching a body of heretical beliefs to others, teaching it to them in an authoritative way, submitted to unorthodox teachers. The woman in Ephesus was reminiscent of the woman in Eden. Eve had in her time been deceived into believing certain "unorthodox" teachings. If she touched the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil she would become like Elohim (God) yet she would not die. She authoritatively taught this to Adam. Unfortunately, he learned. Both ate of this fruit. The story of our Earth is the disastrous aftermath of their actions, enslavement to sin and death.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> We are limiting the pericope to end at the final verse of 1 Timothy 2 for the purposes of this paper. However, if Paul intends for his final allusion in 1 Timothy 2:15 to evoke the “proto-evangelion” of Genesis 3:15, this strengthens the possibility that the first line of 1 Timothy 3:1, “The saying is sure” (πιστὸς ὁ λόγος), applies to the gospel allusion that comes before rather than the elder qualifications that come afterward in 1 Timothy 3:1b and following. This possibility is clearly outside the scope of this current paper but could be a fruitful project.

<sup>21</sup> Spencer, “Eve at Ephesus,” 219. This reconstruction is suggested partly by Paul’s initial concern that Timothy instruct heterodox (or even heretical) teachers (1 Tim 1:3–7; 6:3–5) and by Paul’s concerns with the younger widows who go around “saying what they should not say” (1 Tim 5:13). Turning the page to 2 Timothy, Paul reinforces the above reconstruction of Ephesus as he continues to speak of specific heretics by name (2:17–19) and warn against false teachers in the last days who will “make their way into households and captivate silly women, overwhelmed by their sins and swayed by all kinds of desires, who are always being instructed and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth” (3:6–7).

The first two allusions to plot points from Genesis 2–3 are clear in verses 13–14. First, Paul says that Adam was “formed” (ἐπλάσθη) before Eve in 1 Timothy 2:13, which is a clear allusion to Genesis 2:7–8: “the LORD God formed [ἔπλασεν] man from the dust of the ground...And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed [ἔπλασεν].”

Second, in verse 14, Paul says that Adam was not deceived (ἠπατήθη).<sup>22</sup> Rather, “the woman” was deceived (ἐξαπατηθεῖσα) and as a result, she became a transgressor. This is a clear allusion to Genesis 3:13 where Eve confesses to God, “The serpent deceived [ἠπάτησέν] me, and I ate.”

The third allusion to Genesis 2–3 is, unfortunately, not as widely recognized.<sup>23</sup> In verse 15 Paul says “she will be saved through childbearing,” which in context is an allusion to Genesis 3:15 and God’s promise to multiply Eve’s “pangs in childbearing.” Through God’s provision, there would be an offspring who would crush the head of the serpent. Eve’s deception is not the end of the story. That is the hope that Paul holds out for the Ephesian women who had strayed from sound teaching.<sup>24</sup> In this way, Paul’s allusions to the creation-fall narrative in 1 Timothy 2:13–15 carry a cohesive narrative shape, and operate as a caution as well as instruction.

1 Timothy 2:11–15	
Form	Function
Three allusions to plot points from Genesis 2–3:	<i>Illuminate a situation:</i> Several women in Ephesus had been deceived by false teachers and had become the network for propagating false teaching (1 Tim 5:9–15; cf. 2 Tim 3:6–7)
(1) Adam “formed” before Eve (1 Tim 2:13; Gen 2:7–8)	
(2) Adam was not deceived; Eve is deceived and sins: “the serpent [deceived] me, and I ate.” (1 Tim 2:14; Gen 3:13)	<i>Elicit an immediate response:</i> These women are to learn sound doctrine with quietness (v. 11–12) so that they may return and remain in “faith and love and holiness, with modesty” (v. 15b) <sup>25</sup>
(3) God gives the means to salvation after deception (1 Tim 2:15; Gen 3:15–16)	

<sup>22</sup> This does not mean Paul holds Adam guiltless in the garden of course (cf. Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:22). It simply means that the nature of Adam’s sin in the garden is not as readily connected to the serpent’s deception.

<sup>23</sup> But see Philip H. Towner, “1–2 Timothy and Titus,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007) 894–898.

<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Andrew B. Spurgeon, “1 Timothy 2:13–15: Paul’s Retelling of Genesis 2:4–4:1” 554, concludes that “Paul retold the story of creation, fall, and *restoration* in a succinct form.” (Emphasis original.) However, Spurgeon sees Paul referring to Adam and Eve (i.e., husbands and wives) with the plural “they” in 1 Timothy 3:15b.

<sup>25</sup> Spencer, “Eve at Ephesus,” 220: “The deception of Eve led to transgression. But if the women at Ephesus were properly instructed the fruit for both the student and her teacher would be salvation, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control.”

The alternative to seeing Paul use Genesis 2–3 in a parabolic way<sup>26</sup> seems to be to atomize Paul’s uses in 2 Timothy 2:13–15 and interpret them ultimately as principles or warnings about the nature of men and women, and the relationship between them. This principle approach has been well-worn throughout history, and it seems to be currently held by those most interested in preserving a hierarchical or complementarian order to the church and home. For instance, Thomas R. Schreiner posits concerning 1 Timothy 2:13 that “when Paul read Genesis 2, he concluded that the order in which God created Adam and Eve signaled an important difference in the role of men and women. Thus, he inferred from the order of creation in Genesis 2 that women should not teach or exercise authority over men.”<sup>27</sup> This principle of a “order” at creation drives the rest of Schreiner’s interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:14–15 and how he interprets Paul’s allusions.

Accordingly, Schreiner posits regarding 1 Timothy 2:14 that the allusion is a warning. Paul’s intent was to show that “In approaching Eve, then, the Serpent subverted the pattern of male leadership and interacted only with the woman.”<sup>28</sup> Schreiner concludes, “the appeal to Genesis 3 reminds readers of what happens when humans undermine God’s ordained pattern.”<sup>29</sup>

Schreiner faces interpretive difficulties when it comes to Paul’s allusion in 1 Timothy 2:15, but finally concludes at the end of his essay, “Women, Paul reminds his readers, will experience eschatological salvation by adhering to their proper role, which is exemplified in giving birth to children.”<sup>30</sup>

As if this breathtaking statement from Schreiner delineating the means of salvation for women was not enough, Schreiner quickly clarifies that, “Of course, adhering to one’s proper role is insufficient for salvation; women must also practice other Christian virtues in order to be saved.”<sup>31</sup> Schreiner’s principle-driven interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:13–15 is summarized next to a parabolic view in the following chart:

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<sup>26</sup> Or as an “illustration,” as Andrew Spurgeon, “Paul’s Retelling of Genesis 2–3” 556, calls it.

<sup>27</sup> “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15” in *Women in the Church: An Interpretation & Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15* (Third Edition. Edited by Andreas J. Köstenberger & Thomas R. Schreiner. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016) 201. Incidentally, Schreiner outright dismisses the illustrative reading of 2 Timothy 2:13–15 by egalitarian Alan Padgett, “Wealthy Women at Ephesus: 1 Timothy 2:8–15 in Social Context,” *Interpretation* 41 no. 1 (Jan 1987) 19–31, as “reminiscent of Philo’s allegories on the Old Testament” and claims that Padgett’s illustrative view, while a “creative” interpretation, “does not qualify as plausible exegesis.” (Schreiner similarly dismisses Andrew B. Spurgeon’s project in a footnote.)

<sup>28</sup> “An Interpretation,” 215. Note that even Schreiner is interpreting the Genesis 2–3 reference analogically here, even though he does not acknowledge it. In Schreiner’s view, Adam stands for any “male” who is in a (presumably appropriate) leadership role. Schreiner, “An Interpretation,” 220, also seems to slip into reading verse 15 in a typological sense, claiming that “the implied subject [of v. 15b] refers to the Christian women of Ephesus and by extension to all Christian women everywhere.”

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



OT Target	NT Allusion	Principle View	Parable View
Adam formed (ἐπλασεν) before Eve (Gen 2:7–8).	“Adam was formed [ἐπλάσθη] first, then Eve.” (v. 13)	“[T]he order in which God created Adam and Eve signal[s] an important difference in the role of men and women.” <sup>32</sup>	Authorized men in the Ephesian congregation first received Paul’s doctrine with the charge to pass it on (c.f. Acts 20:17-38)
Eve is deceived and sins: “the serpent [deceived] me, and I ate.” (Gen 3:13)	“and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.” (v. 14)	Eve’s being deceived and transgressing serves as an example of what happens when male leadership is abdicated or subverted.	Many women in Ephesus had been deceived by false teaching and had probably become the network for propagating it.
God’s judgment on Eve involves painful childbearing, but it is also God’s provision for salvation (Gen 3:15–16).	“Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” (v. 15)	Paul indicates the way out of deception for Christian women is to accept their uniquely feminine responsibilities (exemplified by childbearing) while continuing in the virtues of the faith.	Paul indicates the way out of deception and toward salvation for the Ephesian women is to refocus on sound teaching and Christian character.

Schreiner’s view and principle-driven views of 1 Timothy 2:13–15 like his may hold currency in circles invested in preserving a hierarchical or complementarian order of authority in congregations and homes. However, the principle view seems to suffer from a fatal flaw: an almost constant moving of the goalposts. Those who view Paul alluding to a principle or a “creation order” have varied across the decades and centuries over what specifically that principle or order is.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Schreiner, “An Interpretation,” 201.

<sup>33</sup> See especially Appendix B in William J. Webb’s unfortunately titled book *Slaves, Women, & Homosexuals* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 263–268. Webb catalogues the nuances of the principles discerned across the centuries for the allusion in 1 Timothy 2:14.

For example, John Chrysostom comments on 1 Timothy 2:14, “For the [female] sex is *naturally somewhat talkative*: and for this reason he restrains them on all sides.”<sup>34</sup>

In his comments on 1 Timothy 2:13, Martin Luther sees not just a creation order, but a gendered authority and value system resulting from that order: “God himself has so ordained that man be created first—first in time and first in authority... Whatever occurs first is called the most preferable. *Because of God’s work, Adam is approved as superior to Eve, because he had the right of primogeniture.*”<sup>35</sup> Similarly, John Calvin goes so far as to remark on 1 Timothy 2:13 that “Moses shows that the woman was created afterwards, in order that she might be a kind of appendage to the man; and that she was joined to the man on the express condition, that she should be at hand to render obedience to him.”<sup>36</sup>

The principle view then seems to undermine its credibility by shifting its principles over time. This gradual shift has been at the expense of women, who have had to fight against the notion that they are nothing more than an “appendage” to a man, created and ordered to “render obedience to him.” If a parabolic view of Paul’s use of Genesis 2–3 in 1 Timothy 2 is correct, then Paul is re-casting an ancient story that has the power to set both women and men free in the local congregation and in the home.

## Conclusion

This paper has argued for a new category of the NT use of the OT. That is the category of a “parabolic use” of the OT. A parabolic use of the OT is defined both by form and by function; it is an extended NT analogy that alludes to key plot points of an OT narrative in order to illuminate a situation and elicit an immediate response. Romans 16:17–20; 2 Corinthians 11:1–15; and 1 Timothy 2:12–15 offer examples of Paul deploying the Genesis 2–3 narrative in a parabolic way. Each of the three texts involves a situation with false teachers and false teaching. And Paul prescribes an immediate response in each of the texts.

The 1 Timothy 2 text holds the highest stakes in the discussion, as it has a major impact on the topic of women leading ministry in the congregation. The 2 Corinthians 11 text holds potential for further inquiry as Paul seems to be alluding not only to the biblical narrative of Genesis 2–3, but to traditions (such as found in *The Life of Adam and Eve*) associated with that creation-fall narrative. Romans 16:17–20 offers followers of Jesus the most hopeful end to the story in that “The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet.”

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<sup>34</sup> “Homilies on Timothy (Homilies 8–9),” in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1<sup>st</sup> series, ed. Phillip Schaff (1886–1890; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 13:435. Qtd. in William J. Webb, *Slaves*, 263.

<sup>35</sup> “Lectures on 1 Timothy,” in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 28, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (St. Louis: Concordia, 1973) 278. Qtd. in Webb, *Slaves*, 258. (Emphasis from Webb.)

<sup>36</sup> “The First Epistle to Timothy,” in *Calvin’s Commentaries* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 21:68–69. Qtd. in Webb, 258. Clearly Calvin takes this much further than Schreiner (and many complementarians) ever would. However, this is simply evidence of the difficulty of taking the allusions to Genesis 2–3 in 1 Timothy 2 to uncover some kind of universal principle regarding the nature and role of men and women.