

FINAL SESSION: *MAKING SENSE OF THE BIBLE*

The Role of Women

*Jesus did not choose any women when choosing the 12 disciples

*First-century Judaism steeped in patriarchy—women clearly subordinate to men

*Morning blessing said by men: “Blessed are you, O God, King of the Universe. Who has not made me a woman.”

*I Corinthians 14:33b-35 and I Timothy 2:11-12—were women becoming a “problem” in some churches?

*Genesis 2:18—the Hebrew word for helper is ezer—signifies a strong individual coming to the aid of someone—appears 21 times in the O. T., 16 of which refer to God coming to the aid of his people.

*The Fall—Genesis 3—archetypal meant to teach us about ourselves—we are Adam and Eve.

Can we trust the Gospel accounts of Jesus?

- The four Gospels, Paul’s letters, and the other writings of the NT provide 27 first-century documents testifying that Jesus lived, preached, performed miracles, was crucified, dead, and raised from the dead.
- Each author drew upon a combination of sources for his Gospel—eyewitness accounts, the preaching and teaching of the disciples and other written sources.
- Those who became followers of Jesus Christ did so because they found the disciples’ testimony compelling.
- The birth of the church, 50 days after Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, is itself testimony that “something happened” that had a profound and life-changing effect on witnesses.
- No one can prove or disprove that the Gospels are reasonably reliable accounts of the life of Jesus—one must decide for oneself.

Troublesome passages in the Gospels—Jesus’ use of *prophetic hyperbole* (intentional exaggeration to make a point)

- Matthew 5:28-30
- Matthew 19:9 (contrast with John 4—woman at the well)
- Matthew 21:21-22
- Matthew 12:32
- John 14:6b—no one comes to the Father except by my saving grace.

Toward an honest and reverent view of Scripture

- Rather than assuming God dictated every word, embrace the understanding that the scriptures were written by human authors who were inspired by God yet wrote in the light of their own experiences, the scientific knowledge of their day—they wrote to address the needs of their community to whom they wrote.
- Biblical authors were inspired by the Spirit in the same way and to the same degree as many contemporary preachers, prophets, and ordinary Christians.
- What makes the Bible more authoritative than other writings: the proximity of the biblical writers to the events that they were recording and the fact that the church experienced God speaking through these words.
- The Holy Spirit prompts but does not dictate.
- The Spirit whispers but we don't always hear correctly.
- The Spirit's work in you does not make you inerrant or infallible.
- Interpret troubling passages or inconsistencies through the lens of Jesus Christ—the WORD of God.
- You are not judging God or dishonoring God by wrestling with the Bible—you are asking questions of the human authors.

ASK 3 QUESTIONS WHEN READING THE BIBLE:

1. What does this passage say about God?
2. What does it say about humanity?
3. What does it say about myself?