

Hierarchy and the Biblical Worldview

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After decades of discussion, the evangelical debate over the roles of women and men in church and at home shows no sign of resolution. Both sides affirm the final authority of Scripture but arrive at very different conclusions. It is as if each side is looking at the Bible through a different set of lenses. Here I will examine the interpretive lens that leads to a male-female hierarchical reading of biblical texts. I aim to show how theological patriarchy can be said to ground female subordination in a view of the creation order that bears relation to ancient Greek philosophy, and, as such, is incompatible with the biblical doctrine of creation. Therefore, the hierarchical structure of family and church supported by complementarianism replicates an unbiblical worldview that distorts God's intention for church, home, and society.¹

The Greek Roots of Hierarchy in the West

The ancient Greeks observed that the world is composed of a wide diversity of individual things grouped together into larger categories. What makes aspen, elm, or pine trees all *trees* when they are individually distinct? Greek philosopher Plato (428/423–348/347 BC) reasoned that there must be a universal principle, such as “treeness,” that unifies all particular trees. These principles are abstract ideas that represent the “true essence” of individual things. Hence, the *idea* of a thing is its most perfect reality, not the individual tree growing in your front yard. Plato traced each category to a higher and more abstract level of unity until he concluded that ultimate reality itself is the pure idea of perfection, absolute goodness, or the One. In this we can see the suggestion that ideas and the particular things that represent them may be organized into a hierarchy stretching from the perfection of the abstract One down to the imperfect world of the Many.

Plato's most famous student, Aristotle (384–322 BC), also had an incipient notion of hierarchy in his discussion of the relation between the various species of animals as well as the relationships among human beings. He argued that it is just and proper for some people to be slaves, because nature has made particular persons to be ruled and others to be rulers. He wrote, “The male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind.”² For Aristotle, maleness is fullness; it is knowledge; it is that which is rational, active, and commands. The female nature represents deprivation, opinion, the emotional, the passive, and is created to obey.³

The seeds of hierarchy planted by Plato and Aristotle eventually came into full bloom in Plato's most famous interpreters in antiquity, Plotinus (AD 204/5–270) and Proclus (AD 412–485). Plotinus, in the *Enneads*,⁴ and Proclus, in his *Elements of Theology*,⁵ each developed the hierarchy of Being⁶ into complete cosmologies that unified all creation. This became known as the Great Chain of Being.

Plotinus taught that the original reality was the One, an absolute state of perfection and unity with no distinctions. Out of this absolute state of unity, diversity descends in a series of emanations. Like the rays of the sun, the emanations shine downward as a magnificent chain. They unite all things on a scale of existence down to the lowest specks of dust. The first emanation from the One is Mind. From Mind follows Soul. Soul, in turn, produces matter and unites with it to form living creatures, the highest of which is humankind. The rest are arranged in descending order of rationality, followed by the plant world and, finally, non-living matter. Even the stones are arranged in a hierarchy, since gold is more noble than lead, which is in turn higher than mere dirt. Everything has its due place in the hierarchy of the created order.⁷

Though hierarchicalism had gained inroads into the church through such figures as Gregory of Nyssa,⁸ Augustine,⁹ and others, Proclus sought in Plotinus a means of combatting the growing marginalization of pagan Greek religion by Christianity. He understood the hierarchical cosmology of Plotinus to be incompatible with the worldview of Christianity and wanted to use it against Christian teaching. He was, no doubt, correct in this assessment, but that did not prevent the Neo-Platonic metaphysics of hierarchy from being gradually adopted by Christian theology, especially in the Greek-speaking east.

Proclus's *Elements of Theology* was transmitted to the Latin West by a translation from Arabic of an Islamic adaptation titled *The Book of Causes*,¹⁰ and through the highly influential works of Dionysius the Areopagite. The latter was dubbed Pseudo-Dionysius, as he was clearly not the disciple of Paul from Acts 17 whose name he adopted. Pseudo-Dionysius created a syncretism of Neo-Platonic and Christian concepts, forging a hierarchical cosmology that became the framework for subsequent theological and philosophical speculation.

In Pseudo-Dionysius, the One becomes fully identified with the God of Christianity. Written between AD 485 and 528, his books *The Celestial Hierarchy* and *The Ecclesial Hierarchy* described the Great Chain of Being in elaborate detail.¹¹ In the spiritual realm, the Chain stretches from God through a hierarchy of angels arranged in three triads. First are the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones, who are above the Dominations, Virtues, and Powers, ranking above the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Spirit meets matter in humanity, which in turn rules over the hierarchy of animals, plants, and inanimate things. In each of these classes, every individual has a designated place in the hierarchy, subordinate to those above it and superior to those below. Any attempt to step outside one's divinely appointed place in the hierarchy upsets the very order of creation.

The Victory of Hierarchy in Medieval Theology

Among the many medieval thinkers probably influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius, Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274) was the

most influential. Although Aquinas is well known for his use of Aristotle, contemporary scholars note that it was *Neo-Platonic Aristotelianism* that he inherited.¹² Indeed, his teacher, Albert the Great (AD 1196–1280), is notable for his synthesis of Neo-Platonism with the philosophy of Aristotle.¹³ Aquinas gained his knowledge of Plato through sources including Augustine, *The Book of Causes*, Dionysius, and Proclus, in which hierarchy was fully developed.

Thus, it is no surprise to discover that Aquinas viewed the structure of creation as a hierarchy of Being.¹⁴ Etienne Gilson commented, “It is easy to see the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius on the mind of St. Thomas.” Dionysius, says Gilson, “leaves the conviction that it is impossible not to consider the universe as a hierarchy; but he leaves the task of filling this hierarchy to St. Thomas. . . .”¹⁵ For Aquinas, each individual on the ladder of Being was inferior in its participation in the qualities of the thing on the next level above. To be lower on the hierarchy was to be inferior in Being and further from God.¹⁶ The hierarchy of Being extends from God through numerous ranks of angels, humans in various social positions, and the lower animals. While the hierarchy is, in a sense, a ladder to God, it is proper for each creature to remain in its assigned place in the created order.¹⁷

By the time of Aquinas, the Neo-Platonic idea of hierarchy was well along the path of being completely embedded in the structure of medieval Christendom, both in the church and in the social structure of the feudal kingdoms that arose after the breakup of the Roman Empire. The idea of the Great Chain of Being provided an all-encompassing worldview to justify and sustain this social reality.

The Hierarchical Scheme of Medieval Feudal Society¹⁸

The Great Chain of Being

Supernatural	Earthly		
	Church	State	Family
God	Pope	King	Husband
Angels	Archbishops	Dukes	Wife
People	Bishops	Earls, etc.	Children
Animals	Priests	Knights	Servants/ Slaves
lion			
	Laity	Serfs	
dog			
		Slaves ¹⁸	
Plants			
Inanimate Objects			
gold			
dirt			

It is impossible to read classic literature in Western history without seeing references to the philosophy of the Great Chain of Being. E. M. W. Tillyard discusses the concept in detail in *The Elizabethan*

World Picture, a book designed to give students of Shakespeare the background needed to understand his works. He observes:

The chain stretched from the foot of God’s throne to the meanest of inanimate objects. Every speck of creation was a link in the chain, and every link except those at the two extremities was simultaneously bigger and smaller than another: there could be no gap.²⁰

As a typical example, Tillyard quotes an influential work from the 1400s on natural law:

In this order angel is set over angel, rank upon rank in the kingdom of heaven; man is set over man, beast over beast, bird over bird, and fish over fish, on the earth, in the air, and in the sea: so that there is no worm that crawls upon the ground, no bird that flies on high, no fish that swims in the depths, which the chain of this order does not bind in most harmonious concord.²¹

Each individual thing in the Chain of Being, no matter how lowly, has a function necessary for the well-being of the whole. Things run smoothly when each link stays in its proper place, fulfilling its divinely mandated function. In this way, although things higher on the chain have greater degrees of nobility and a higher participation in Soul or the spiritual, all things have equal value and dignity. They are each equally necessary to maintain the proper balance and function of creation, and the failure of any link in the chain to do the work proper to its nature upsets the order of creation with disastrous results.²²

In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, the catastrophe of rebelling against one’s place on the Chain of Being comes into full view. First, Lucifer attempts to break the Chain by overthrowing God and taking his place. Later, the authority structure of God over man, man over woman, mankind over the animals is ruptured when Eve attempts to ascend to the level of God, ironically by submitting to the direction of the serpent. She eats the forbidden fruit and gives it to her husband. He acquiesces to her leadership by accepting it. Through this sequence of ruptures in the Chain of Being, evil with all its woes enters the creation.²³

Evangelicals and the Chain of Being

Arthur Lovejoy showed in his classic study, *The Great Chain of Being*, that by the time of the Protestant Reformation, the idea of hierarchy so permeated European culture that it was simply taken for granted.²⁴ It never occurred to the Reformers to question it. Hierarchy was practically the air they breathed.

In this setting, John Calvin (1509–1564) wrote that Paul forbids a woman to teach because she “by nature (that is, by the ordinary law of God) is formed to obey.” He uses the language of the Chain of Being to assert that women “must keep within their own rank,” clearly below the rank of men.²⁵ He situates women firmly within the Chain of Being. Man is preeminent over woman, who is “inferior in rank,” since she was created for man. This echoes how Neo-Platonism describes the emanation of lower elements from the higher. Woman must be inferior and subject to man because she “derives her origin from the man” and the thing produced must always be subject to the thing that causes it.²⁶

This is not to say that Calvin was consciously applying Pseudo-Dionysius in his exegesis. It is simply to recognize that the idea of the Chain of Being was so completely pervasive that everything, including Scripture, was viewed through its lens. While they succeeded in rejecting the authority of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, Calvin and the other reformers did not question the hierarchies of the political and social order. Women remained firmly in their place below men on the Great Chain of Being.

The Chain of Being's influence over evangelicals continued down through the centuries as evidenced by their use of it to justify the brutal enslavement of Africans. This extended into early Anglo-America and was used against the abolitionists' egalitarian readings of Scripture.²⁷ Historian Winthrop Jordon notes that belief in the Chain of Being was pervasive in America during the 1700s.²⁸ It was a convenient tool for classifying Africans below Europeans, just above the apes, though not without creating tension in the minds of Christians, who could not avoid seeing that Africans are humans, not animals. Evangelical slaveholders resolved this tension by affirming both the spiritual equality of Africans and their functional subordination to whites.²⁹ The parallels between this and the complementarian insistence that women and men are equal in value while women are functionally subordinate is no mere coincidence.

Contemporary evangelicals no longer defend slavery, but the Great Chain of Being persists in its influence, particularly in contemporary defenses of male authority over women. Perhaps there is no clearer statement than that of Elisabeth Elliot, who grounded male authority over women in what she viewed as

a glorious hierarchical order of graduated splendor, beginning with the Trinity, descending through seraphim, cherubim, archangels, angels, men, and all lesser creatures, a mighty universal dance, choreographed for the perfection and fulfillment of each participant.³⁰

The inclusion of this in one of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood's principal collections of essays would appear to be endorsement. The remaining question is to determine if this is truly biblical.

The Great Chain of Being and the Bible

The idea of the Great Chain of Being is not unique to the West. It is so common in world history that anthropologist Louis Dumont dubbed humanity *Homo Hierarchicus*.³¹ To discover if the Bible teaches that the Chain of Being accurately describes the creation order, we will compare the biblical creation account with the worldview of ancient Egypt.

Ancient Egyptians saw the original Being as "the Primordial Abyss of waters (which) was everywhere, stretching endlessly in all directions. . . . all was dark and formless."³² The waters, called Nu or Nun, are "the basic matter of the universe" from which consciousness came into being.³³ "This Nun, however, was not so much a primary substance or form of matter, but rather a mythic symbol of the abstract reality of the full potential of being."³⁴

Before the beginning of creation, there was only an infinite dark, watery, chaotic sea. There was nothing above or below the sea—the sea was all there was. Immersed in the sea, Atum (or Re or Amun or Ptah), the creator god and source of everything, brought himself into existence by separating himself from the waters.³⁵ The gods evolved from this impersonal, original One, manifesting as a descending hierarchy of beings, and creating a hierarchy of the various classes of humans.³⁶

Recent scholarship has argued that the long-observed similarities between Genesis 1 and Egyptian mythology are not simply borrowed ideas, as earlier critical scholarship assumed. Instead, it recognizes that the biblical creation account serves as a polemic against ancient Egyptian cosmology.³⁷ This polemic is apparent in that Genesis 1 opens by flipping the Egyptian creation account on its head. Egyptian mythology declares impersonal, chaotic Being to be ultimate, with consciousness and the gods arising from it and subject to it. In contrast, Genesis reveals that the infinite, personal, self-contained God came first. Divinity did not rise from the primordial waters as in the Egyptian view, but rather God spoke the primordial waters into existence from nothing. The idea of a hierarchical Chain of Being linking nature to God is decisively ruptured by Genesis 1:1.

The worship of heavenly bodies was a significant part of ancient Egyptian religion, since it identified the sun, moon, stars, and planets with the hierarchy of gods. As elements of the hierarchy of Being superior to humankind, they had power over human destiny, provoking fear. The writer of Genesis, however, shows no such fear. He reveals that the sun, moon, and stars did not emanate from uncreated Being as the Egyptian astrologers believed. They were created as distinct entities for the purpose of serving the needs of humankind. Hence, they have no power over us.

The Hebrew account of the creation, function, and limitation of the luminaries is another unequivocal indicator that in Genesis 1 there is a direct and conscious anti-myth polemic. The form in which this Hebrew creation account has come down to us portrays the creatureliness and the limitations of the heavenly luminaries as is consonant with the worldview of Genesis 1 and its understanding of reality.³⁸ Genesis 1 inverts the order in which the luminaries were created in Egyptian mythology, breaking the hierarchy of divine Being implied therein.³⁹

Likewise, the creation of animals and plants does not depict the fashioning of a hierarchy linked by degrees of participation in the Being of the One. Instead, God creates each group distinctly after its own kind. There is discontinuity between each of the kinds. Each reproduces within the limits of the kinds in which they were created. The text does not indicate that they are linked on a scale of existence. Not only is there no link between kinds, but the creation of the simpler forms of life first reverses the order of emanation of the animals from the One in ancient mythology.

The first hint of hierarchy in the biblical creation story does not appear until God gives humanity the mandate for dominion over the creation (Gen 1:26–30). Here, the hierarchy is God over humans (male and female) and humans—male and female alike—over the rest of creation. Unlike the Chain of Being, there is no continuity of Being linking these three categories. God is distinct in his Being from

humans, just as humans, who bear the divine image, are distinct from the rest of the creation. Likewise, there are no hierarchies indicated within the three categories of the divine, the human, and the rest of creation. The divine Being is personal and One, not a hierarchy of finite gods as in Egyptian polytheism. Humans are created both male and female, with no hint of priority or authority given to one gender or the other. Both are equal recipients of the command to have dominion over the earth (Gen 1:28).

It is worth noting what the text of Genesis 1 does *not* say. While silence is not proof, when an obvious opening exists for making a claim critical to an argument, we may assume that its absence is not simply an oversight. We would expect the notion of a hierarchy of Being to be introduced here if it were relevant, yet we see nothing of the kind. This is significant because wherever it appears, the Great Chain of Being is the central, unifying motif that provides structure, coherence, and order to a worldview. If creation were truly structured in a hierarchy of Being, then Genesis 1 would be the most obvious place to say so. Instead we see just the opposite: namely, the consistent disruption of hierarchies.

Many have argued that there is a hierarchy between male and female humans in the text of Genesis 2. But why, after ruling out hierarchies in nature, would the writer suddenly revert to hierarchical thinking in the next chapter? That makes no sense. Nevertheless, we need to comment briefly on common arguments in favor of such a hierarchy.

Complementarians have argued that the creation of the man first and the woman second indicates a hierarchical relationship requiring female submission to male authority.⁴⁰ The man was created first, they say, and for this reason enjoys priority as the leader over the woman. However, we have seen that the order in which the animals were created does not support hierarchy. If it did, then, by the same logic the animals should have authority over humans. What we do find in the OT are examples of first-born children being given less priority than their younger siblings.⁴¹ Apparently, chronological order is not necessarily relevant for establishing authority in the Bible.

Complementarians have also reasoned that since the woman was created to be the man's helper in Genesis 2, she must function as an assistant under his direction and supervision.⁴² The problem here is that the Hebrew word for helper, *ezer*, does not have the same connotation as the English word "helper." The Hebrew word is used principally to describe a superior party who comes to the rescue of someone in need. In other passages, the word is used to refer to God when he acts as the "helper." If anything, taking *ezer* literally would invert the traditional male-female hierarchy. At the very least it erases hierarchy as an option in Genesis 2.⁴³ Rather than being an assistant, the woman was created as "a strength/power equivalent to him, equally able to carry out the creation mandate assigned to humanity."⁴⁴

Thus, we see that the biblical account of creation is a rebuttal to the hierarchical worldview. A hierarchical Chain of Being is simply incompatible with the creation order as established by God in which man and woman share dominion equally. Against this background, female subordination first enters the world as a result of the fall (Gen

3:16). Male-female hierarchy appears here for the first time, not as the God-ordained order of creation, but as a devastating aspect of sin. It turns the creation order upside down, wrecking the proper mutual relationship between man and woman. Ever since the fall, hierarchicalism has been a distorted lens that the fallen mind uses to view the world. It eradicates the Creator-creature distinction by placing God at the top of a hierarchy of Being merging with the created realm, thus giving license to the rebellious human quest to ascend to godhood. It alienates humankind from creation, making its dominion one of environmental exploitation and destruction, rather than stewardship and godly development. It creates power hierarchies of race, caste, class, and gender that issue forth in oppression and abuse.

Conclusion

In light of the incompatibility of the Great Chain of Being with a biblical worldview, I conclude that hierarchy is not a viable rubric for interpreting Scripture. A consistently biblical hermeneutic must be a worldview hermeneutic. Difficult and disputed texts such as 1 Cor 11:2–16, 1 Tim 2:11–15, and Eph 5:21–33 simply cannot mean something that contradicts the most basic presuppositions of the biblical worldview as established from Genesis to Revelation. On the contrary, a correct interpretation of these texts will support and reinforce the biblical worldview. Since the Bible takes a hierarchical interpretation of creation off the table in its opening chapters, it cannot be what the inspired writers of Scripture intended for us to understand.

Our study shows that, rather than being derived from the Bible, hierarchicalism is the fruit of a non-Christian worldview reflecting pagan Greek philosophy. Over time, it entered the church and became a distorted lens for reading the Bible in such a way as to mandate the practice of female subordination, contrary to its egalitarian intent. Reading the Bible without the influence of unbiblical, Neo-Platonic presuppositions frees us to see that the disputed passages actually *subvert* hierarchies in human relationships and point us back to the egalitarianism of the original creation order. May we take this to heart and banish human-made hierarchies from disturbing the order and freedom of all members of the body of Christ.

Notes

This article is an enlarged version of the presentation "The Worldview of the Bible vs. the Worldview of Hierarchy," delivered at the CBE conference in São Paulo, Brazil, 2023.

1. My thesis here is not original; I am building and expanding upon two previous articles: Letha Scanzoni, "The Great Chain of Being and the Chain of Command," *The Reformed Journal* 26/8 (Oct 1976) 14–16; Robert K. McGregor Wright, "Hierarchicalism Unbiblical," *Journal of Biblical Equality* 3 (June 1991) 57–66.
2. Aristotle, "Politics" 1.1, in *Aristotle: The Complete Works* (Pandora's Box) Kindle Location 820.
3. Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution 750 B.C.–A.D. 1250*, 2nd ed. (Eerdmans, 1997) ch. 2.
4. Plotinus, *The Enneads*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge University Press, 2018).
5. Proclus, *The Elements of Theology: A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary*, 2nd ed., ed. E. R. Dodds (Clarendon, 1992).

6. I am using “Being” with a capital B to represent the Greek concept of existence itself. It embraces all that is, including God and the universe. It is synonymous with ultimate reality. Applied to God, I use the capital B to denote God as ultimate Being, distinct from the creation, which is “being” with a lowercase b.
7. cf. Dominic J. O’Meara, “The Hierarchical Ordering of Reality in Plotinus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge University Press, 1996); D. E. Cuscombe, “Hierarchy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. S. McGrade (Cambridge University Press, 2003).
8. Dmitry Birjukov, “Hierarchies of Beings in the Patristic Thought: Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius the Areopagite,” in *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, ed. Mikonja Knežević (Sebastian, 2015) 71–88.
9. Lia Formigari, “Chain of Being,” in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Philip P. Weiner (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973) 1:326.
10. *Book of Causes: Liber de causis*, English and Latin Edition, trans. Dennis J. Brand (Marquette University Press, 1984).
11. Both may be found in Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite*, trans. John Parker, vol. 2 (James Parker and Co., 1899).
12. Wayne J. Hankey, “Aquinas, Plato, and Neoplatonism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford University Press, 2012) 56.
13. Markus Führer, “Albert the Great,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Summer 2022), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2022/entries/albert-great/>.
14. I use a capital B here because, even though Aquinas affirmed the Creator-creature distinction, his use of the Greek notion of Being in general obscured it.
15. Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (B. Herder Book Co., 1924) 274–75.
16. Gilson, *Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 196.
17. Gilson, *Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 154–57, 272.
18. Table adapted from Bruce R. Magee, “The Three Estates and Their Potential Vices,” in *Course Notes for English 201* (Louisiana State University, 2008), https://latech.edu/~bmagee/201/intro2_medieval/estates&chain_of_being_notes.htm.
19. On medieval slavery, see *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: Volume 2, AD 500–AD 1420*, new ed., ed. C. Perry, D. Eltis, S. L. Engerman, and D. Richardson (Cambridge University Press, 2021). Burnard, in his review, remarks, “Slavery was unproblematic because it fitted well into hierarchical assumptions, especially in regard to understandings of the place of women and children in society.” Trevor Burnard, “A Global History of Slavery in the Medieval Millennium,” in *Slavery & Abolition* 43/4 (2022), 819–26, https://web.archive.org/web/20210422143616/http://www2.latech.edu/~bmagee/201/intro2_medieval/estates&chain_of_being_notes.htm
20. E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (Taylor and Francis) Kindle Location 26.
21. Sir John Fortescue, *Works*, ed. Lord Clermont (London, 1869) 1:322, cited in Tillyard, *Elizabethan World Picture*, 27.
22. Tillyard, *Elizabethan World Picture*, 93–94.
23. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *English Minor Poems; Paradise Lost; Samson Agonistes; Areopagitica*, ed. Mortimer J. Adler and Philip W. Goetz, 2nd ed., vol. 29, Great Books of the Western World (Encyclopædia Britannica; Robert P. Gwinn, 1990) Books IX and X; Bruce R. Magee, “Milton,” *Course Notes for English 201* (Louisiana State University, 2008), https://latech.edu/~bmagee/201/milton/paradise_notes.htm.
24. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Harvard University Press, 1976).
25. John Calvin. *Commentary on 1 Timothy*, 2:12.
26. John Calvin. *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, 11:8.
27. Scanzoni, “Great Chain of Being,” 16.
28. Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2012) 483.
29. Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man’s Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States*, Kindle Locations 1153–82.
30. Elisabeth Elliot, “The Essence of Femininity: A Personal Perspective,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Crossway, 2006) 394. Numerous writers in this collection of essays ground subordination in the nature of femininity, consistent with Chain of Being thinking. Further evidence of Chain of Being influence on complementarians may be found in the essays of McGregor Wright and Scanzoni.
31. Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1981).
32. R. T. Rundle Clark, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt* (Thames and Hudson, 1991) 35.
33. Rundle Clark, *Myth and Symbol*, 36.
34. Vincent Arie Tobin, *Theological Principles of Egyptian Religion* (Peter Lang, 1989) 60.
35. Johnny V. Miller and John M. Soden, *In the Beginning . . . We Misunderstood: Interpreting Genesis 1 in Its Original Context* (Kregel, 2012) 78.
36. Robert A. Armour, *Gods and Myths of Ancient Egypt* (American University in Cairo Press, 1986) 18, 20; Janice Kamrin, *The Cosmos of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan* (Kegan Paul International, 1999) 7.
37. Brian N. Peterson, “Egyptian Influence on the Creation Language in Genesis 2,” *BibSac* 174/695 (2017) 289–90; John D. Currid, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Crossway, 2013) 36ff.; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, chs. 1–17, *NICOT* (Eerdmans, 1990).
38. Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” *EvQ* XLVI/2 (April–June 1974) 89.
39. Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 128.
40. See, for example, Bruce A. Ware, “Male and Female Complementarity and the Image of God,” in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem, Foundations for the Family Series (Crossway, 2002) 82.
41. Mary L. Conway, “Gender in Creation and Fall: Genesis 1–3,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Biblical, Theological, Cultural, & Practical Perspectives*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Cynthia Long Westfall, and Christa L. McKirland, 3rd ed. (IVP Academic, 2021) 42.
42. Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1–3,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, 101–2.
43. “As to the source of the help, this word is generally used to designate divine aid, particularly in Psalms (Cf. Ps 121:1, 2) where it includes both material and spiritual assistance.” Carl Schultz, “1598 פִּתּוֹן,” *TWOT* 661.
44. Conway, “Gender in Creation and Fall,” 42.



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