Chapter 1

Patriarchy Is Biblical

The Bible not only assumes patriarchy; it teaches it. Because we live in such a perverted and twisted day, this truth has become controversial and, therefore, exponentially more important. If we don't get this right, we lose everything—the family, the church, and the nation. A strong marriage in Jesus Christ must begin with a strong, patriarchal foundation. A strong church that claims to follow Jesus Christ must hold patriarchy as a rock-solid conviction. A strong nation will be patriarchal from top to bottom, bringing peace and, more importantly, greater glory to God.

The view espoused here is not very popular (yet), but it will be one day, when men take the Word of God seriously and when women willingly submit to good, godly men. The Bible is overwhelmingly patriarchal in its assumptions and in its overt teachings from Genesis to Revelation. To put it simply, patriarchy means that fathers are called by God to rule (it combines two Greek words: "father" and "rule"). There is surely a reason God did not call men *patri-doulos* ("father" and "servant/slave"). It's not that father's don't serve their families, nor that they don't make sacrifices for them. It's that their main function is to rule their families, churches, and nations. If they don't rule well, then they won't serve well. If they

don't rule well, then they will essentially be slaves to every cultural whim that arises or to their wives' sometimes troublesome desires.

In our day, one quick look at the prevailing culture tells us that we have jettisoned truth long ago, since we allow wickedness to run rampant. All we do is complain, yet we take no action. If ever there were a time for godly men to rise up and rule, it is now. I don't know you, the reader, but I would be willing to bet that you cringed more than a little bit when I wrote that men need to "rule." This tells us just how effeminate we have become. We instinctually recoil at the idea of "rule." But the Scriptures teach this unequivocally and unapologetically. In fact, Genesis 3:16 says the husband is to "rule" over his wife in the same way that Cain should have "ruled" over his sin in Genesis 4:7.

Abraham was called "the patriarch" (Heb. 7:4), and Jacob was the father of "the twelve patriarchs" (Acts 7:8–9). David is referred to as "the patriarch" (Acts 2:29). God's promises were given to "the patriarchs" (Rom. 15:8). It is the simple biblical truth that the man is the head of his family. He is the authority. He provides for his family, and he protects his family. He not only *should* lead, but he *does* lead—either he leads his family well, or he leads his family poorly. Nothing about this father-rule implies harshness or oppression. Indeed, patriarchy is not the invention of men; it is the design of God. We know that what God has ordained is good for us, so we should all willingly submit to what He teaches us. If we do not, then we are in rebellion. It is really that simple.

Consider the sweeping patriarchal teachings right in the first few chapters of the Bible. God named mankind after the male, not the female ("he blessed them and named them Man [*adam*] when they were created" [Gen. 5:2]). God warned Adam about the consequences of disobedience before Eve was even created; this shows that Adam had rule over his wife (Gen. 2:17). God put Adam in charge of the garden to "work it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). Therefore, men are supposed to provide for their families ("work"; see also 1 Tim. 5:8) and protect their families ("keep" or "guard," as in Gen-

esis 3:24). Just as the cherubim guarded the garden with a flaming sword (Gen. 3:24), so should Adam have guarded/kept his wife safe from the Serpent. In fact, it appears that the cherubim had to do this precisely because Adam did not. Adam probably should have killed the Serpent when he had the chance. The Serpent infiltrated Adam's garden, but he failed to guard his wife (note that Adam was "with her" when she fell into sin [Gen. 3:1, 6]). Adam sinned because he listened to the voice of his wife and ate of the tree (Gen. 3:17). This does not imply that men should never listen to their wives; rather, it demonstrates that if a man disobeys God as a result of listening to her, then he has sinned. The failure is more his than it is hers, since he is her head. He should have guarded and protected her. Moreover, Adam was the one who named Eve, which further demonstrates his headship and rule over her (Gen. 3:20). Far from being a mere "tiebreaker" in marital decision-making, the man is clearly called to lead his wife and to be the authority in his home.

All of the priests in the Old Testament were men. Priests were tasked with teaching the people and their families (2 Kings 17:27; 2 Chron. 15:3; Mic. 3:11; Hos. 4:4–6; Mal. 2:7). All of the Old Testament elders were men—as were the New Testament elders. All of the kings were (obviously) men. With the exception of Deborah, female rulers in Scripture were wicked, murderous usurpers (for example, Athaliah in 2 Kings 11:1–20 and 2 Chron. 22:10–23:15 and Jezebel in 2 Kings 9:7). All of the apostles were men, and these were not only teachers but also leaders. If male apostleship were simply a cultural issue, Jesus could have easily chosen women if He wished to, since He consistently overturned societal norms. And yet He didn't.

What About Deborah?

All of the judges in the Old Testament were men, with the exception of Deborah. Since Deborah has become the poster child for

feminists and egalitarians, we should speak a little about her. Deborah was not "raised up" by the Lord as other judges were (Judg. 3:9, 15). God *commanded* Barak to lead the people into battle ("Has not the LORD, the God of Israel, *commanded* you" [Judg. 4:6]), yet he lacked the courage to do so unless Deborah would go with him ("If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go." [Judg. 4:8]). The fact that Deborah got involved was not a commendation for women to lead; rather, it was a sign of shame for the cowardly men of Israel, just like Jael was ("The LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" [Judg. 4:9; see also Judg. 4:21–22; 5:24–27]). Similar words are used elsewhere to ridicule men who refuse to lead ("Women rule over them" [Isa. 3:12]; "The Egyptians will be like women" [Isa. 19:16]; "…they may become women!" [Jer. 50:37]; "The warriors of Babylon have ceased fighting…they have become women" [Jer. 51:30]).

Interestingly, though Barak is commended by God, Deborah is not (Heb. 11:32), presumably because Deborah should not have been in the role of leader in the first place, yet she was forced into it. The other reason she is not commended is because she didn't actually go into battle like Barak did (Judg. 4:14–16). Deborah provided moral support to a weak man, but she was not a warrior wielding a sword in her hand. She was apparently a woman of God who served as a judge when a man rebelled against the Lord and abdicated his God-ordained leadership role. She is certainly not a model of female leadership, as feminists and egalitarians like to claim. Deborah reminds me of a female friend of mine who was an "elder" in her church. I knew her well, so I asked her one day why she took this position, since it seemed contrary to her otherwise conservative theology. I'll never forget her response: "I don't want to be an elder, and I should not be an elder, but no man will step up and lead in my church, so I basically don't have any choice." Her name was not Deborah, but it could have been. She eventually left that church.

Numbers 30

Numbers 30 is an often neglected text in discussions of patriarchy. If a man makes a vow to the Lord, he is bound to this vow (30:2). But if a woman makes a vow to the Lord while living in her father's house (unmarried women all lived with their families, no matter their age), this vow is handled differently. In this case, if her father opposes the vow, his authority over her nullifies her vow—and, significantly, "the LORD will forgive her" (30:5). This is yet more evidence for the father's rule of his household (remember: "patriarchy" literally means father-rule).

Likewise, even once a woman is married, her husband has the same function that her father formerly did, and if the husband opposes her vow, it is nullified due to the husband's authority over her—and again, "the LORD will forgive her" (30:8). So, both fathers and husbands were given the right to override any vows that their daughters/wives made, and they both essentially function as priests for these women when they sin.

Thus, there are only two options here: (1) These were all just cultural practices, and they no longer apply, or (2) God designed men to lead and rule, and this includes their own daughters and wives. Notice how the "cultural" view attempts to mute and rewrite Scripture to the liking of our modern ears (just like allowing women to be "pastors"). On the other hand, the second view demonstrates that patriarchy is the obvious, clear, and consistent scriptural teaching. It is likely that Adam's silence in Genesis 3:6 has this law in Numbers 30 behind it, which would help explain why Adam was culpable for Eve's sin.[1]

1. See John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Zondervan, 1992), 417.