

A Feminist Reformist Interpretation of Adam and Eve in Genesis

"Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." (Gen. 2:7)



Figure 1.
Sistine Chapel Ceiling:
Creation of Adam

"Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." (Gen. 2:18)

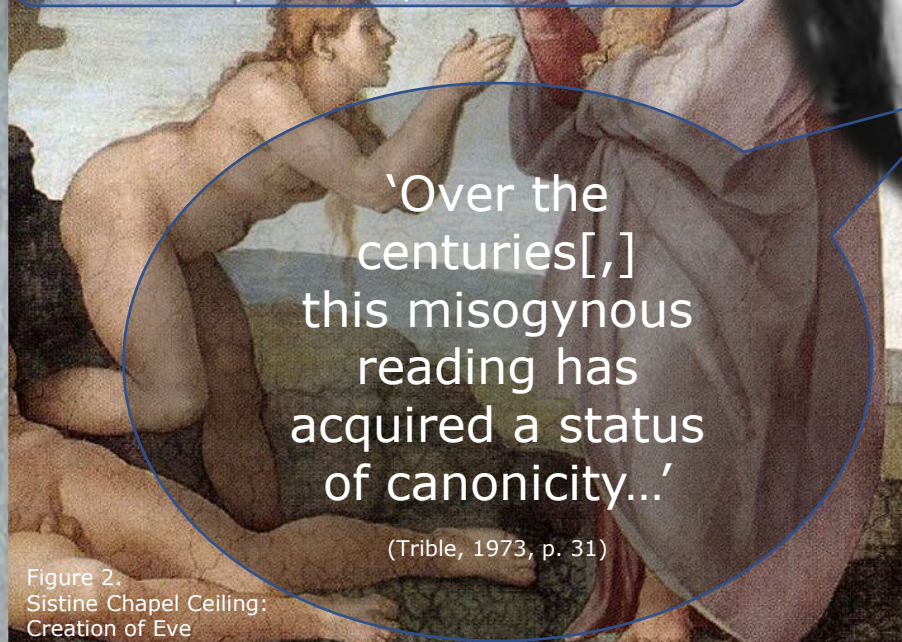


Figure 2.
Sistine Chapel Ceiling:
Creation of Eve

'Over the centuries[,] this misogynous reading has acquired a status of canonicity...'

(Trible, 1973, p. 31)

'The hermeneutical challenge is to translate biblical faith without sexism.'

(Trible, 1973, p. 31)

Trible's work—widely considered ground-breaking in feminist biblical scholarship—challenges patriarchal readings and seeks salvation through new interpretations. She places confidence in the idea that the text itself 'negates patriarchy in crucial ways' and 'does not legitimate the oppression of women'. (Trible, 1978, p. 102)

Man Created First;
Woman Created Last

Woman Created
From Man

With reference to Creation (Gen. 1:27-28), Trible points out that humankind is created last but given dominion over all previously created living things; therefore, in continuity of this principle, she rejects the claim of female inferiority by positing that woman may in fact be seen as the culmination of Creation. (Trible, 1973, p. 36)

Trible draws a parallel between woman being formed from man's side (Gen. 2:22-23) and man being formed from the earth (Gen. 2:7); she asserts that, despite this fact, no one suggests that man is therefore subordinate to the ground. (Trible, 1978, pp. 101-102)

For Trible, the problem is not biblical; therefore, Genesis is not irreformable. In order to remove the patriarchal biases within past exegeses, the text need only be re-read, recovered, and appropriated in line with the enterprise of modern feminism.

Figure 3.
Phyllis Trible

Feminist
Biblical
Scholar
Phyllis
Trible

Trible, Phyllis, 'Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (1973), pp. 30-48. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1461386>.

Trible, Phyllis, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978)

Figure 1: Michelangelo, *Creation of Adam* [fresco], (1508-1512), Sistine Chapel Ceiling, Vatican, Rome, <https://www.thesistinechapel.org/the-creation-of-adam> [accessed Tuesday 28th March 2023].

Figure 2: Michelangelo, *Creation of Eve* [fresco], (1509-1510), Sistine Chapel Ceiling, Vatican, Rome, https://www.wga.hu/html_m/m/michelan/3sistina/1genesis/5eve/05_3ce5.html [accessed Tuesday 28th March 2023].

Figure 3: Available at: <https://www.womenshistory.org/dr-phyllis-trible> [accessed Wednesday 29th March 2023].

