

Questions and Answers on *From Eternity to Here*

In chapter 8, you footnote your reference to Mary Magdalene as being the unnamed woman in Luke 7. Although the chapter is beautifully written and the point driven home about the importance of being aware of one's own darkness, is it a bit reckless to confidently make a correlation that remains unverifiable?

Answer: The footnote on page 80 reads:

"According to most traditional scholars and the testimony of ancient church history, Mary Magdalene is the unnamed woman described in Luke 7:36-50. She is not to be confused with Mary of Bethany, who anointed the Lord in the home of Lazarus near the end of Jesus' earthly life."

One cannot prove if this woman was or wasn't Mary. But I agree with those scholars who believe it was, and it makes sense to me seeing that she's mentioned right after the story. I believe Luke didn't want to denigrate her.

I don't see how using her in the story the way I did and footnoting the reason why can be considered "reckless."

Nonetheless, if you don't believe the woman is Mary, no worries. It doesn't affect the story or the points I make about it. Let's be careful not to strain at gnats and swallow camels. ;-)

In the beginning of the book, you talk about Eve being formed on the 8th day. Can you elaborate? It makes sense to me, but I have friends who don't get it.

Answer: That question is actually explained in the book itself in a footnote. Eve was "in" Adam when God created them both on the sixth day (per Genesis 1:27, 31), but she didn't come forth until the eighth day (per Genesis 2).

This idea is sketched out in the book.

This is hard for some Westerners to "get" because we are taught to linearly read Genesis 1 and 2, which is the typical way modern Western Christians approach an ancient Jewish text, which as you know, is written from an Eastern mindset (Israel is in the East, not the West).

Adam is said to be created on the 6th day. He is already there in Genesis 2 before Eve appears. She comes out of Adam in Genesis 2.

I agree with those scholars who have pointed out that the woman mentioned in Genesis 1 (Eve isn't mentioned, just "woman") is speaking of her being INSIDE of Adam.

Her coming out of Adam on the 8th day fits all the types and shadows of the new creation being born in resurrection perfectly. (8 is always the number of resurrection and new creation.)

The ekklesia was born on the 8th day (the day of Jesus' resurrection). And Eve is a type of the ekklesia according to Paul).

We have to understand how the Old Testament is written. So I wish to be faithful to Scripture even if the modern Western mind doesn't understand it.

Here is the way one scholar put it in his commentary on Genesis 1:

"Eve received all her blessings in Adam: in him, too, she got her dignity. Though not yet called into actual existence, she was, in the purpose of God, looked at as part of the man."

The view that "Adam" in Genesis 1 included Eve before she was taken out of him was argued by A.B. Simpson, C.H. Mackintosh, and Asbury Theological Seminary Professor Donald Joyce in his excellent book, *Bonding*.

Male and female were included in Adam before God "split the Adam" and took the woman out of the man. This understanding is also articulated in the Jewish Midrash.

If you don't agree with any of that, it's no problem. It doesn't overturn any major point made in the book.

I want to know your opinion about the role of the Jews in God's eternal purpose. I know this is a controversial question among Christians, but since I have some friends who are messianic Jews who I want to share your book with, I know this question will arise.

Answer: God's passion is for the ekklesia, where "there is neither Jew nor Gentile." (I'm quoting Paul.). The middle wall of partition has now been broken down, and God's heart is set on "one new humanity" (Ephesians 2). I don't know what God's plans are for the nation of Israel or the

Jews as an ethnic people. And I don't believe anyone else does, despite those who feel certain about it.

Romans 9-11 are difficult texts to interpret. My view of those texts are along the lines that the ekklesia doesn't *replace* Israel, she *fulfills* Israel's original commission.

Let me say a word from my experience. When a local expression of the church of Jesus Christ is operating and functioning as she should, and God's people in that church (both Jew and Gentile) are revealing Jesus together, it provokes the religious Jew to jealousy. Interestingly, this is what Paul said would and should happen in Romans.

First, I want to thank you for working hard to get this revelation out. This book has seriously transformed my relationship with Christ. It has really helped me strip away so many minor details that often cloud the big picture of the gospel. My question is, Do you think systems and traditions are ok as long as they produce loving relationships and don't override New Testament principles?

Answer: I'd prefer to say that they are ok so long as they do not 1) hinder the organic expression of church life 2) suppress the functioning of the body of Christ and the full operation of the priesthood of all believers, and 3) subvert the living headship of Jesus Christ and obstruct God's eternal purpose in Him.

So much has been taught in the "church" regarding God's purpose is mainly "to save the lost." Do you feel that your presentation slights that view?

Answer: The teaching that says that "saving the lost" is God's desire is certainly correct, but it's not complete.

God's purpose was in view before the fall ever occurred. Humans came into this earth not in need of salvation. Consequently, there was something else in God's heart that provoked creation, and He's never let go of it. This is what the book explores.

Who was your cover designer? I love it. I always wash my hands before reading it because I want it to stay white. :) Love what I've read so far, it's been a great study book for me. I'm about halfway through.

Answer: The graphics designers at David C. Cook are great. They deserve all the credit.

What suggestions do you have for incorporating the eternal purpose paradigm into group situations? (Small groups, friends' discussions, Sunday School classes, etc.)

Answer: There's a [group discussion guide](#) that goes with the book.

When did you get the idea for this book? The concepts are captivating and the endorsements are excellent.

Answer: I've been speaking on the eternal purpose since 1992. But the actual idea to put the message into a book occurred to me around 2005, I believe.

On page 68, you say that God could have divorced Israel. But doesn't the Bible say that He did divorce Israel?

Answer: During Hosea's day, which I talk about in the book, God did not divorce Israel. Years later, the Lord gave the northern kingdom of Israel a certificate of divorce, but not the southern kingdom, Judah (Jeremiah 3:8). He eventually took her back, so it wasn't really divorce, but more like a temporary separation.

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