



Organised religion always has been, and remains, the greatest enemy of women's rights. In the Christian-dominated Western world, two Bible verses in particular sum up the position of women.

In the Old Testament, the supposed voice of God curses Eve and by extension, all women:

"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." – Genesis 3:16

By this third chapter of Genesis, woman lost her rights, her standing – even her identity, and motherhood became a God-inflicted curse degrading her status in the world.

Nor are women restored to an equal footing with men in the New Testament:

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." – 1 Timothy. 2:11-14

What harm to women has the Bible caused?

One Bible verse alone:

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"
– Exodus 22:18

is responsible for the death of tens of thousands, if not millions, of women. Do women and those who care about them need further evidence of the great harm of Christianity, predicated as it has been on these and similar teachings about women?

Catholic Misogyny

Early Catholic church writer Tertullian said "each of you women is an Eve . . . You are the gate of Hell, you are the temptress of the

forbidden tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law."

Protestant Misogyny

The founder of Protestantism, Martin Luther decreed: "If a woman grows weary and at last dies from childbearing, it matters not. Let her die from bearing, she is there to do it."

Such teachings prompted 19th-century feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton to write: "The Bible and the Church have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of woman's emancipation."

A plague on both their houses...

The various Christian churches fought tooth and nail against the advancement of women, opposing everything from women's right to speak in public, to the use of anaesthesia in childbirth (since the Bible says women must suffer in childbirth) and woman's suffrage. Today the most organised and formidable opponent of women's social, economic and sexual rights remains organised religion.

Religionists defeated the Equal Rights Amendment bill in the US. Religious fanatics and bullies are currently engaged in an outright war of terrorism

and harassment against women who have abortions and the medical staff which serves them. Those seeking to challenge inequities and advance the status of women today are fighting a massive coalition of fundamentalist Protestant and Catholic churches and religious groups mobilised to fight women's rights.

More Biblical Chauvinisms:

There are more than 200 Bible verses that specifically belittle and demean women. Here are just a few:

During the course of their menstruation women themselves and everything and everybody they touch are 'unclean'.
"And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And every thing that she lieth upon... every thing also that she sitteth upon... And whosoever toucheth her bed... And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even."

Leviticus 15:19-23

Men are not clean because they come from unclean things – women:

"Man that is born of a woman is of few

days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not... Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."

Job 14:1-4

Isaiah prophesies that God will punish women for being taking pride in their appearances:

"Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet... the LORD will smite [them] with a scab [on] the crown of the head... and the LORD will discover their secret parts."

Isaiah 3:16-17

The Apostle, Paul, tells the Corinthians that women should keep silent, be obedient and learn only from their husbands:

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

Paul tells the Ephesians their marriages should give all the power to the husbands:

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife..."

Ephesians 5:22-23

If reason tells you men and women are equal and that all people, regardless of their sex, should be treated with compassion and respect, then how can you support a religion which preaches women's submission, which has women's subjugation a cornerstone of its theology?

Why this brochure?

Many Christians feel they have a religious obligation to proselytise, to try to convince others that they should come to think their way about the Bible and how it should be interpreted.

With the greatest respect, I feel the Bible, as any text, should be considered under the light of reason and subjected to scrutiny and critical analysis.

When I do this, I can not conclude it is "the inerrant/literal word of God". Neither do I find it to be the "Good News" offering me and other readers salvation and eternal life. Reason will not allow it.

I hope this brochure, given in exchange for one of yours, provokes the faculty of reason in you and that you benefit from its use.

Your Friendly
Neighbourhood Atheist