

# PATRIARCHY

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CHRISTIANITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN PATRIARCHAL ... SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?

Christianity has always been patriarchal, as was / is Jesus' religion, Judaism. The Christian faith is, after all, the continuation and fulfillment of the covenant religion of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), plus Moses, David, Hezekiah, and Ezra. It's always been patriarchal from the calling of Abraham, even till today. And what's wrong with that?

If you say, "Well that's changed now and Christianity, the EKKLESIA, should no longer be patriarchal," my question to you would be, "When did this change?"

If you say, "At the cross," then I would answer, "If so, then why didn't Paul and others seem to be aware of this fundamental change ... almost thirty years after Christ's ascension?" (1 Cor 14:34, 35; 1 Tim 2:11-14; etc).

If you counter, "It was an evolving understanding," I would again ask, "When [on a timeline] did it change so that the EKKLESIA was / is no longer patriarchal?"

If you answer, "After 70 A.D., once the Jewish temple was destroyed [or something like that]," I would counter by reminding you that this is merely an inference, and not a very defensible one at that. I

would also wonder why you have to go outside the canon of Scripture to defend what amounts to a fairly substantial change in how God has been doing His business of world redemption for thousands of years, within a patriarchal framework.

I would also be thinking to myself of that command which Paul wrote to the troubled Corinthian EKKLESIA: "Do not go beyond what is written" (1Cor 4:6).

If you argued deductively from the principles of fairness and equality, I would remind you that God does not always limit His ways to principles like fairness and equality (e.g. God's command to exterminate the seven people groups of Canaan [sometimes down to men, women, children, infants, and animals], God's choosing and favoring of Israel over all other nations, the cross [that wasn't fair!], Christians suffering for righteousness, etc).

The proper order for discovering God's will on any topic is not to define a principle, then either read that definition back into the biblical revelation (eisegesis) or to ignore or explain away those aspects of the Bible which do not fit your foreign definition of the principle (selective reading / worldliness). The proper order is to read the Bible intelligently, employing all the tools of good hermeneutics

(the science and art of interpreting texts) at our disposal, listening to the Spirit during the process and for the result. Then gaining a biblical definition of the principle in question, developing a truly biblical theology.

After all that, by God's grace and through the empowerment of the Spirit, we should submit ourselves to God's will as revealed in Scripture, even if this puts us counter culture and sets us up for censure or active persecution. We have this as the example for all the notable martyrs throughout the centuries, biblical and post-biblical. They refused to compromise with the world, and they suffered for it, within the will of God. They will be rewarded for their patient endurance at the resurrection. So will you. Endure!

I do not trust what my heart alone tells me (Jer 17:9). I test what my heart tells me against other standards outside of myself, outside of my time, and outside of my culture so that I am less likely to simply follow something convenient, the path of least resistance. And I don't trust what your heart tells you. Sorry. You have to test these things against standards outside of yourself, your time, and your culture too, so that you are less likely to be following something that is simply convenient or seems right.

From my perspective, it appears that many who advocate against Christian patriarchalism already have some defined principles

in place such as fairness and equality. If that's you, where did you get your definitions for these principles that seem to be guiding you with regards to Christianity, the EKKLESIA, and gender issues? From standards inside of yourself, your time, your culture? Or from what God has revealed via His Spirit through Scripture?

One may never rightly argue from principle against specific texts of Scripture which touch on these matters. Instead what is written in those specific texts that touch on these matters should help us to define our principles. Inductive Bible study is always best, although total inductivity is impossible. But inductivity should be our goal when going into Bible study to discover what God's actual will is for us. As Paul, our brother, wrote:

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom 12:2).

Patriarchy in the EKKLESIA is good. If you disagree, then please tell me from where specifically in Scripture you are getting your idea that patriarchy in the EKKLESIA is bad ... or at least outmoded?

Please be sure you are not defining a principle, then reading it back into the biblical texts, and please be sure that you are not [wittingly or unwittingly] ignoring those specific texts of Scripture which seem to argue against your notion. □