

Are women more easily deceived than men?

Sometimes...but sometimes not! Consider, who began Buddhism? Buddha. Islam? Mohammed. Mormonism? Joseph Smith. Those three men have influenced the spiritual destinies of 2+ billion people. Both men and women can be deceived and can lead others astray! It's not just a girl thing. It's not just a boy thing. Deception is a human thing!

Some people read 1 Timothy 2 and believe the Bible teaches women should *never* teach. They believe Paul issued a UNIVERSAL ban on women teaching for *all cultures* and *all time*. Why? Because Eve was deceived, all women are more easily deceived. 1 Timothy 2:14 states:

“For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”

Ephesus and the Cult of Artemis

To understand biblical passages, it is always important to understand the context. In the first century, Ephesus was a sensuous, immoral, knowledge-seeking (pre-Gnostic) metropolitan area. Much of its economy was based on occult activity (see Acts 19:23-41). The goddess Artemis (Diana) was worshipped in Ephesus. Her gold-covered temple, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, took 120 years to build. It could be seen from the sea.



Artemis was a powerful fertility goddess, often pictured with two-dozen bare breasts (or pouches of magic “potions”). She was known as the Great Mother of Asia. The cult of Artemis worshipped her cosmic power over life and over demonic spirits. Ephesus also celebrated Mother Eve (linking her with Artemis) as being **created prior** to Adam. They considered gaining secret knowledge was **good** since people could now have **enlightenment**. In this knowledge-loving, power-seeking city, false teaching abounded inside and outside the church. Timothy labored to guide this church into truth.

What false teaching was Paul correcting in Ephesus?

In the face of heretical cultural fables, Paul instructed Timothy with key doctrines:

- The first woman did **not** precede the first man. **Man was created first - not woman.**
- The woman was **not** enlightened with knowledge (of good and evil). **She was deceived.**
- This knowledge gained by Eve was **not** good. Instead, **she became a sinner.**

Paul was answering Ephesian heresies of the Artemis cult.

Conclusion

Some Christian teachers seek to limit women teaching the Bible because they claim women are more easily deceived. This interpretation misses Paul's point. Rather, Paul was correcting the false doctrines of the cult of Artemis. He was not setting up created order as proof that only men should teach and have authority.

Key Term

Artemis

Mother Goddess of Ephesus

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?