



JOHAN SETIAWAN | BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER & SEXUALITY

WOMAN IN THE BIBLE

by Mary J. Evans (1984)



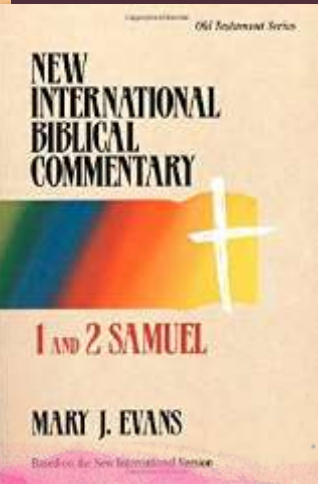
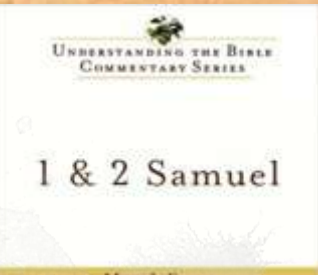
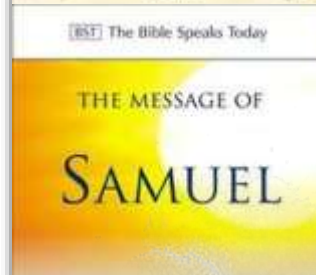
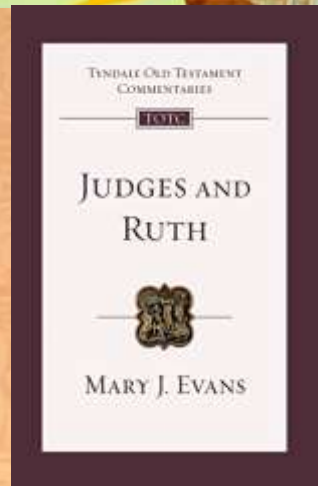
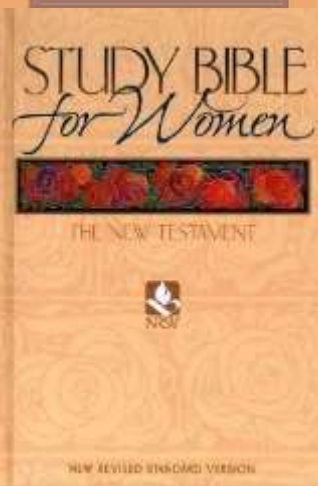
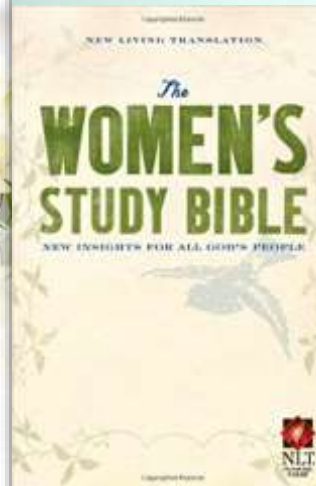
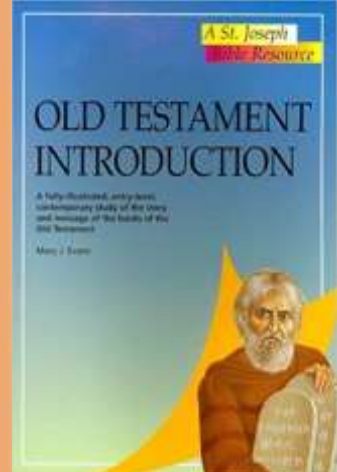
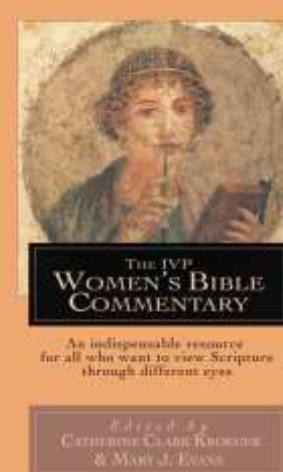
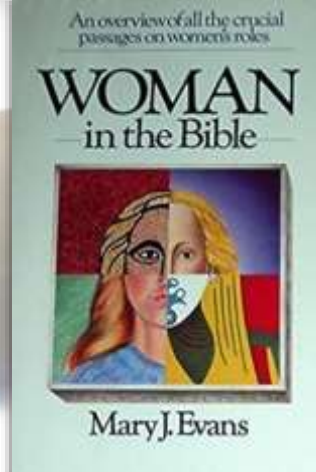
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The Gospels

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in the Passion Narratives

The Attitude of the Disciples

Excursus: Mary the Mother of Jesus

Conclusion

Comments

Construction



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Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Subjects not Objects

MATT 5:28 *But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

Judaism view of women in Jesus' time:

- 🌸 Primary function of women was to be man's sexual partner (to create children & as temptations).
- 🌸 Sexual desire is uncontrollable.
- 🌸 Men need to be protected from danger.

Women were removed as far as possible from the public eye. Practice of sexual segregation.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Subjects not Objects

Jesus' view of women:

- ❁ Women are people who can be related in other ways than of sexual desire.
- ❁ Sexual desire is not uncontrollable.
- ❁ Women's rights are to be recognised as important and not to be endangered by the natural desires of the men.

Women are to be recognised as *subject in her own right*, as fellow human beings, fellow disciples, and *not just the objects of man's desire*.

Jesus does *not warn His followers against looking at a woman, but against doing so with lust*.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Subjects not Objects

MARK 10:12 *And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.*

Judaism: It is *unthinkable* that woman could be responsible for divorcing her husband.

Jesus: Loyalty and commitment in marriage is *the responsibility of both partners.*

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Subjects not Objects

MATT 19:29 *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.*

Judaism: “Leaving one’s sister” would not have been seen as sacrifice; a sister was seen as a *responsibility or burden*.

Jesus: Valued women enough to assume that *leaving a sister would be as much a sacrifice as was leaving parents or children or houses*.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Subjects not Objects

LUKE 13:16 *Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?*

Judaism: “Son of Abraham” was a commonly used title, particularly when the worth of a man as a member of the covenant community was being emphasised.

Possibly because women were generally thought of as related to their families rather than as citizens of the nation, the title “daughter of Abraham” is *virtually unknown* in Judaistic writings.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Subjects not Objects



Thus we are left with impression that, to Jesus ...

- ❁ the *intrinsic value of women as persons* is just as that of men (alien to the Judaism of the time).
- ❁ this *attitude* led to radical differences in the way that *Jesus treated women*, also in the way that he expected *His followers to treat women*.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in Everyday Life

Norms in paternalistic society:

- ❁ Father was the head of the family and was all powerful, he often had the right of life or death over his wives, children and slaves.
- ❁ Women were little better than slaves and were bought and sold as wives.
- ❁ Hebrew men at the time of Christ were forbidden to even speak to strange women in public.
- ❁ Women were either mothers, wives, or prostitutes.
- ❁ Women were considered weak, stupid, and useful largely for procreation and sex.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in Everyday Life



Jesus numbered *many women* among His friends and followers. It is astonishing that in the society in which they lived and with the strictness of His teaching on sexual matters, Jesus also *expected men and women to mix freely*.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in Everyday Life

LUKE 23:2 *And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king."*

The religious leaders took Jesus so seriously, asking complex theological questions in an attempt to trip Him up.

If there had been the *slightest evidence of sexual misbehaviour*, then Jesus' ministry would have been discredited.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in Everyday Life

MARK 5:24-34 *So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."*

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in Everyday Life



That Jesus had compassion for those who suffered, whether male or female, and that He healed women as well as men is not surprising. What is surprising is that *He ignored any injunctions against incurring legal or ritual impurity in order to do so.*

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in Everyday Life



This is probably an indication that in fulfilling the law Jesus makes purification rites unnecessary, but it may have more significance regarding the place of women under the new covenant.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in Everyday Life

Jesus' radical approach to women lived out in His day to day life:

- 🌸 freely spoke with women
- 🌸 freely admitted them into fellowship,
- 🌸 healed them (even on the Sabbath)
- 🌸 not hesitate to touch them
- 🌸 allowed them to touch Him
(even those recognised as being immoral)
- 🌸 allowed them to serve Him

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women used in Parables

Judaism: Rabbinic parables pointedly avoided mentioning women.

Jesus: Often told stories relating to the life of women: housewives, childbirth, wedding attendants, widows, grinding meal, using yeast, etc.

The impression is gained that women are *necessary, significant, and integral part of the creation*, having worth as persons not simply in relation to men.



Pope Paul VI

toward the end of Vatican II



*Woman is
a reflection of beauty
greater than herself,
the sign of a goodness
that appears to us
as having no bounds*

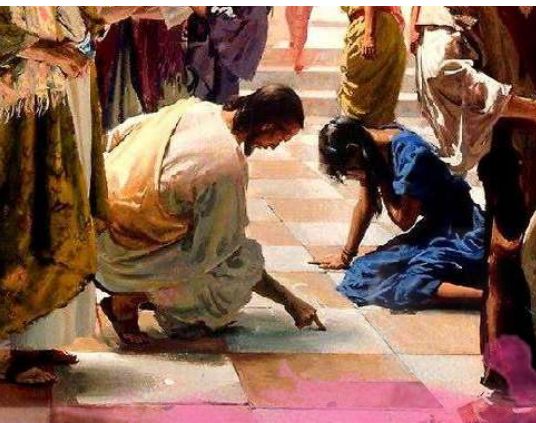
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Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Responsible People

Although the approach of Jesus to women was radically new, and although He positioned them of equal worth with men, the gospels nowhere present an *idealistic or romanticized* picture of women.

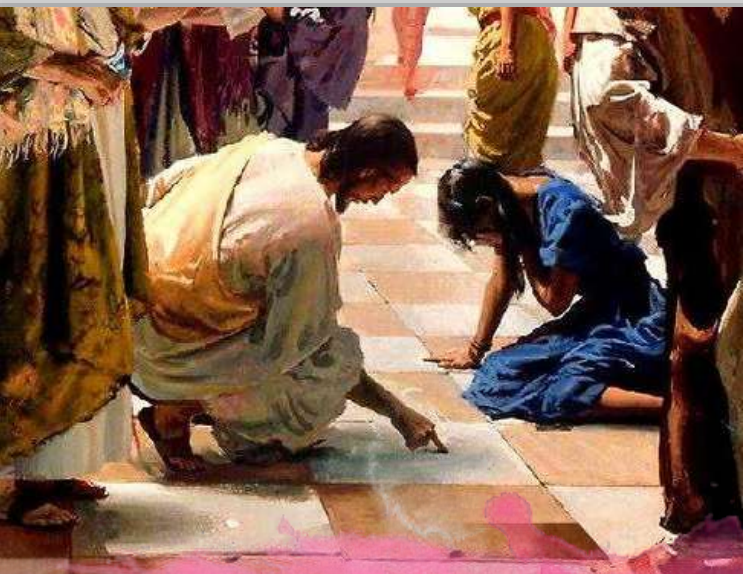
Like men, women are all sinners in need of forgiveness. Like that of men, their sin needs to be dealt with and is never overlooked.



Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Responsible People

JOHN 8:10-11 *Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*



Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Responsible People

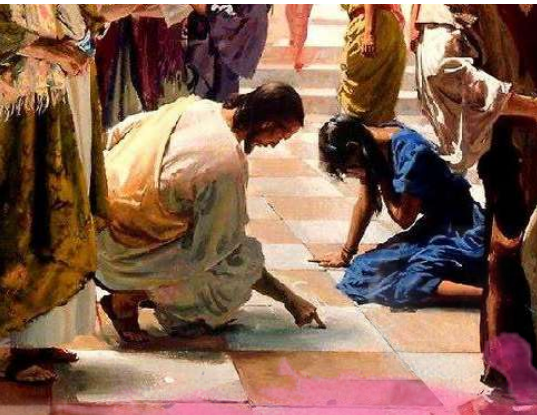
JOHN 4:17-18 *"I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."*



Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Responsible People

LUKE 7:37 *A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. ... Jesus answered him, ... "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"*



Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Followers and Disciples

LUKE 8:1-2 *After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out*

It is impossible from the information given in the gospels *to assess accurately* when Jesus is teaching the twelve and when He is addressing the wider group of disciples, including women.

However, Luke 8:1-2 makes it clear that on many occasions when only the twelve are mentioned, *the women were there as well.*

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Followers and Disciples

It has been seen as significant that the twelve apostles were all men. Although women fulfilled the conditions for apostleship in Acst 1:21-22 there were no women among the twelve.

Possibilities for the leadership of the church:
Permanent or Temporary?

Parallel between 12 apostles and the patriarchs (signify the 12 tribes of Israel) in Luke 22:30?

Whether the fact of their being male has any greater, or any different, significance for the leadership of the future church community than the fact of their being Jewish *is not made clear in the gospels.*

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Followers and Disciples

It is not unlikely that some of the 70 who were sent out were women. Reasons:

- 🌸 The Samaritan woman *went back to tell* the people in town about Jesus.
- 🌸 The women at the tomb *were sent out to proclaim* the message of the resurrection.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Followers and Disciples

LUKE 8:3 *Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.*

MATT 27:55 *Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs.*

These women following Jesus were *not only passive spectators, but actively serving (diakonein).*

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women as Followers and Disciples

Judaism: It was not unusual for women of means to make contributions towards the support of Rabbis (Luke 20:47 shows that this fact was sometimes taken advantage of by certain of the scribes). However, the Rabbis in general preferred to avoid as much as possible the company of even such women as these.

Jesus: Encouraged many women to take this very unusual step of following Him and ministering to Him.

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in Theological Conversation

Possibly the most revolutionary aspect of Jesus' approach to women is *not* that He associated freely with them and treated them as responsible human being, *not* that He allowed them to listen to His teaching; but rather that *He taught them personally, indulging in theological conversation with them, encouraging and expecting a response.*

Judaism: At the synagogue women were thought as *coming to listen rather than to learn.*

Jesus: The Syro-Phoenician woman (Matt 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-39), the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-12), Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:20-33), "one of the travellers to Emmaus" (Luke 24:13-35).

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in Theological Conversation

LUKE 10:39 *She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.*

Jesus gave private teaching to His disciples, including women.

JOHN 11:21-27 *"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."*

Nearest equivalent to Peter's confession of Christ (Matt 16:16). Martha too *was taught and reveals understanding.*

The Gospels

Jesus' Approach to Women

Women in the Passion Narratives

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Women in the Passion Narrative

Women were ...

- 🌸 Present at the crucifixion & burial of Jesus
- 🌸 First to hear the news of resurrection
- 🌸 First to see the risen Jesus
- 🌸 First to speak of the resurrection

CRANFIELD: One feature of all four gospels which goes a long way towards authenticating the story as a whole is the prominence of women; *for this is a feature which the early Church would not be likely to invent.*



Women in the Passion Narrative



The gospel writers *give so much space in the passion narratives* to the activities of women. It is not clear whether ...

They are merely recording the facts, or ...

They are deliberately want to make a point (to encourage the women to faithful discipleship).

The Gospels

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The Attitude of the Disciples

The picture of Jesus' radically different approach to women *has been preserved in the gospels* in spite of an alien environment both in Judaism and in the early church.

MOULE: In the epistles there is a new concern for women and a new tenderness towards them.

The Attitude of the Disciples

In the gospel, the disciples were presented ...

- ❁ asked Jesus to send away the Syro-Phoenician woman
- ❁ rebuke those who brought children to Jesus (probably women)
- ❁ reproach the woman who annointed Jesus
- ❁ astounded when Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman
- ❁ did not believe the women's resurrection story

The fact that the gospels were written, showing very clearly the revolutionary attitude of Jesus and the lack of understanding of the apostles, is *an indication that a measure of understanding had, at last, been reached.*

The Gospels

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Excursus: Mary the Mother of Jesus

Mary was given unique role as *theotokos* (the one who gave birth to the divine Son of God). *Her significance?*

ACTS 1:14 *They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.*

Though she is singled out for mention by name, she comes only after 'the women' and does not appear to have any particular precedence in the group.

Together with the fact that NT does not ever, either by implication or by definite assertion, build upon the story of Mary in the doctrine of Man, salvation, and the Church, means that we must be very wary of asserting that Mary has any further significance, other than as a witness and an example.

The Gospels

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Conclusion

There can be little doubt that in Jesus' attitude towards women we have a highly *original* (radically different from His time) and *significant* (changing the lives of His followers) feature of His life and teaching.

Jesus treats women and men as valued human beings: responsible individuals (capable of spiritual understanding & making decisions) with personal needs & failings (sinner in need of repentance).

Jesus appointed the twelve and that they all male, and women played larger role in crucifixion & resurrection. It is doubtful that these has any permanent significance for the future church.

Comments

- ☑ Penulis memegang teguh (mempercayai) otoritas Alkitab sekaligus mengkritisi (mencurigai) penafsiran androsentris terhadap Alkitab yang ditulis dalam konteks budaya patriarkal.
- ☑ Penulis menunjukkan bahwa Alkitab dan Injil itu sendiri memiliki pandangan dalam hal gender dan seksualitas yang revolusioner melampaui pandangan budaya pada masa penulisannya dan relevansi implementasinya pada budaya masa kini.
- ☑ Dapat dikatakan, buku ini bukanlah tentang rekonstruksi feminis terhadap perempuan di dalam Alkitab, melainkan penggalan hermeneutik terhadap sikap Alkitab tentang perempuan.

Comments

- ☑ Penulis melakukan banyak riset dan menuliskan banyak informasi dari penyelidikannya.
- ☒ Penulis menulis dengan agenda tertentu dalam pemikirannya, sehingga dalam menyusun argumennya penulis dapat terjebak menjadi kurang objektif dan terlalu selektif dalam berinteraksi dengan teks.

Comments

- ☑ Penulis sangat sering menggunakan kata “seems” (tampaknya) atau “appears” (sepertinya) yang menunjukkan kejujurannya dalam menilai bahwa sudut pandang yang diajukannya sering kali bukan sudut pandang yang absolut atau satu-satunya terhadap teks.
- ☒ Penulis pada akhirnya mengambil kesimpulan yang absolut dengan didasarkan pada penafsiran yang tidak absolut terhadap teks tersebut, dengan sangat dilandasi oleh agendanya atau asumsinya (yang bisa berbeda dengan maksud teks sebenarnya).

Construction

LINGKARAN HERMENEUTIK
(G. Gadamer)

ALKITAB SEBAGAI FIRMAN TUHAN
vs Prototipe (E.S. Fiorenza)
vs Partner Dialog (T. Plattje)
vs Pembebasan (R. Ruesthe, L. Russel)

PENGALAMAN FEMINIS
(E.S. Fiorenza)

HORIZON OF MEANINGS
(G. Gadamer)

Menggumuli
KONTEKS
MASA KINI

Menyadari
KONTEKS
PRIBADI

Keyakinan
Pengalaman
Pandangan

KEINGINAN BERTEMU
DENGAN TRADISI ASING
(G. Gadamer)

HERMENEUTICS OF SUSPICION
(E.S. Fiorenza)
w. "Hermeneutics of Conviction"
(M.J. Evans)

TAFSIR KRITIK HISTORIS;
TAFSIR KRITIK NARATIF
(E.G. Singgih; H. Kinukawa)

HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION
(E.S. Fiorenza)
vs "Hermeneutical Rediscovery"
(M.J. Evans)

METANARASI
(J.R.W. Stott, C.J.H. Wright)

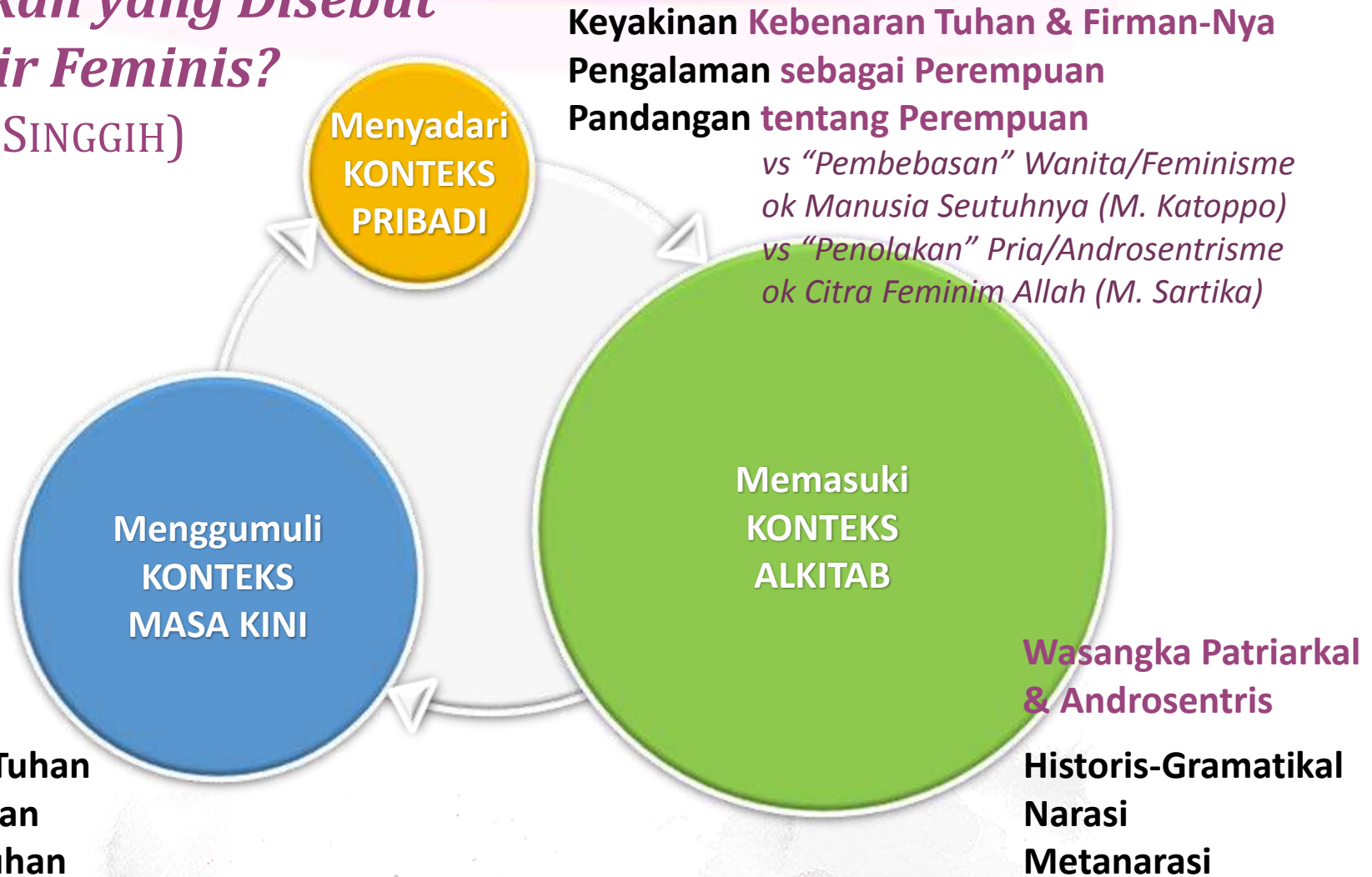
Memasuki
KONTEKS
ALKITAB

Firman Tuhan
Roh Tuhan
Umat Tuhan

Historis-Gramatikal
Narasi
Metanarasi

Construction

*Adakah yang Disebut
Tafsir Feminis?
(E.G. SINGGIH)*





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WOMAN IN THE BIBLE

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