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**“Woman’s Equality: the Final Redemption”**

The aim of this presentation/paper is to correct an historical error: the ancient claim, grounded in a flawed understanding of the reproductive act, that woman is inferior to man. My claim is that it is this error that contemporary feminism is attempting to combat without, however, fully grasping the nature of the problem. I will show that the lineage of this can be traced as far back as the pre-Socratic philosophers, finally finding its earliest concrete expression in a claim most have either dismissed, forgotten, or never heard: Aristotle’s argument that women are merely “malformed males” and are therefore “inferior to man.” The theory found support in the first century with a historical interpretation of Genesis 2:18-23, traceable in particular to the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, Philo (BC 13-AD 54). Philo’s own theory about woman echoed that of Aristotle’s; his legacy includes the vague feeling that Scripture itself declares that, since woman is created after man, she is necessarily subservient to him. She becomes, as it were, the “second sex.” I dispute both these accounts and show that they can be defeated on their own terms. Through the lens of Hebraic and Aristotelian-Thomistic anthropology, and building on the insights of St. John Paul II, I provide a robust, philosophically and theologically grounded account of man and woman from within the Catholic exegetical tradition. I demonstrate that Scripture itself reveals that man and woman are unequivocally equally human, both instantiations of the same human nature, possessing intellect, will and freedom in equal measure, and who both occupy a certain “pride of place” in the created order in distinct though equally significant ways.