

Women Ministers?

Introduction

This issue is commonly debated in the church today. Except for sin in the hearts of many that would attempt to pervert the Word of God, this should not even be an issue. This is the situation we find in our day with the subject of women as ministers, pastors, elders, deacons, or leaders.

To be clear, this is not a matter of male chauvinism, misogyny, or discrimination. It's simply an issue of accurate and correct Biblical interpretation.

It is imperative that God's Word (the Bible) be our sole and complete authority on **all** matters. Some have attempted to use the "historical-critical method"¹ of interpretation to erase unpleasant teachings. This is poor loyalty to God and His Word and faulty Theology.

In order to conclude the lawfulness of a thing we need look to God and His Word, what He says is to be obeyed without question. We can also look back at "precedent." For example, what did they practice Biblically centuries ago regarding this subject? It does not matter what the culture says today, culture does not dictate to, nor overrule God's commands.

We are facing a growing apostasy that is moving at a monumental pace. We, believers, are fast becoming forced into ambiguity and that to the rebellion and abandonment of God's Word. We cannot accept the false doctrines of men in order to appease a particular social group, or trending social movement. Neither can we, or should we, pander to the false claims of gender equality when it comes to ecclesiastical matters. Many will not give heed to this teaching and will continue to live in folly.

¹ "...historical-critical methods are those which take account of the fact that the biblical texts were written long ago, in a cultural matrix very different from our own, and that attempt to understand the texts first of all in the context of that ancient setting."

Paul, speaking of the antichrist, states that there will be, preceding his (antichrist) arrival, a falling away.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first... (2

Thessalonians 2:3).

Again, Paul speaking prophetically to the pastor Timothy by the Holy Spirit, says:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:1,2).

And again:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away[their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Timothy 4:3,4).

It is an established solid principle that what we are facing is a prophetic apostasy towards Biblical doctrine.

Patriarchal Social Structure

The Biblical social structure was built on a patriarchal system for family, governmental, and religious affairs. Many so-called liberated women do not like this, and refuse to recognize it. God has set an order, and a place of position for her.

In Biblical times in the family the father is supreme ruler.² He is to be the provider, preserver, the one in command. There are several reasons for the "male" head in Biblical times. As well as in our day. The head of the family represented its members in the assembly of the people, as a village elder and in worship. One example of his responsibilities appears in Exodus 33:10.³

The Bible is clear that the position of the father, and his actions in all aspects of life, are held accountable by God. The account of Achan is a good example. His whole family suffered for his actions (Judges 7:24-26). I dare say there would not be one "so-called" woman minister that would stand up and bear the responsibility for her actions at the risk of losing her family. They are willing to pretend to play pastor, but when trouble comes they run to hubby.

One could go on and on in an attempt to show the reason why the male has always, and will always be, the head of the family, government, and religious social order.

We want to provide clear, authoritative, biblical proof as to the prohibition of women occupying an authoritarian position in family, government, and ecclesiastical affairs.

² Fred H. Wright, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*, Chapter 10, Pg. 103.

³ Victor H. Matthews, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, Chapter 1, Pg. 68.

In the Beginning

None would deny that in the beginning God set the foundation of the family structure, with the man as sole in authority and responsibility.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Genesis 2:16,17

Man is consistently placed "first" (Hebrew - *ri'shown*) in the opening account of Genesis:

...male and female created he them (1:27).

And Adam said, This [is] now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man (2:23).

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife... (2:24).

And they were both naked, the man and his wife... (2:25).

Unto Adam also and to his wife...(3:21).

Along with this, we must look at the "fall" account in order to gain a good picture of events that bring us to our modern day folly.

We have already established that God created man before the woman, and that He set the man "over" the woman. Adam was given a command in Genesis 2:16,17 this was given prior to the creation of the woman (2:21-23). However, Eve knew of the prohibition because she quotes it in 3:2,3, although imperfect, she must have heard it from Adam.

Let us take a look at what happened to Eve.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree [was] good for food, and that it [was] pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make [one] wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat (Genesis 3:1-6).

Notice the devil speaks to the woman **he said unto the woman**. He asks her a question that is designed to make her doubt God. He does not ask Adam, but the woman, why? Because 1 Peter 3:7 says "...giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel..."

And 1 Timothy 2:14 says, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." He then goes on to invite doubt mixed with a reward **your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil**. He was offering her a higher "place" than she was used to, and that of being on an equal footing with Adam.

She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. It is clear that Adam let her make the decision and the lead. She took, at the clear prohibition of God's Word, the spiritual and authoritative role over Adam!

We come to the judgement side of this act in which God is delivering His retributive justice upon the woman. He says,

Unto the woman he said, 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).

God's judgement upon her is that she will forever more give birth to children in pain. God also places a binding seal of judgement upon her that has never been removed. **And thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.**

Because she has rebelled against the authority of her husband she will now be permanently locked under his authority. This is passed on from generation to generation. **Thy desire [shall be] to thy husband.**

Notice two things here, one, He says, **thy desire**, the Hebrew word is *tshuwqah* meaning "longing or craving." In the original sense it meant of stretching out after of a beast to devour.⁴ It's compared to a beast "desiring" its pray before it strikes.

The Greek "Septuagint" has *h apostrophh* (apostrepho) a turning back. She, and all women from that point on, are to have a desire and craving for their husbands only.

Two, it says **thy husband** not a woman, animal, clothes, etc., but to **thy husband**. Again, many women have great problems with this, and seem to even hate it. As we will see it is not meant to be denigrating.

He says to her **and he shall rule over thee**. Clearly, it speaks about the husband, not someone else but the husband only. He says he **shall**, future continuance, **rule over thee**. The word **rule** (*mashal*) means: ruled over, reign, have dominion, to cause to rule, to exercise dominion. This is a verb--It's an action that is performed. This is the same word used as one that "rules" over another (cf. Genesis 4:7; Judges.8:22,23; Proverbs 12:24; Isaiah 3:4,12; 28:14).

Why does God say that the man will rule over the woman? Because she took upon herself the role of authority in teaching him, and plunged us all into sin and darkness. She usurped her position and fell into deception.

⁴ Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew English Lexicon*, Pg. 1003 #8669.

Many would say "Well that was for Eve only." No, it's not, the problem manifested itself again and again throughout Biblical history we see by Isaiah's time it was rampant:

[As for]my people, children [are] their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause [thee] to err, and destroy the way of thy paths (Isaiah 3:12).

And again:

Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the [women] that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive [that come] unto you? And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear [your] lies? Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I [am] against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make [them] fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, [even] the souls that ye hunt to make [them] fly. Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD. Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD (Ezekiel 13:17-23).

This goes on into the New Testament as well:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God (1 Corinthians 11:3).

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23).

The continuance of the judgement upon Eve to all generations, from her time until now, is summed up thusly:

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 2:12-14).

How much clearer does God's Word need to be? It takes a truly rebellious woman to see this passage, completely ignore it, and turn their face against God!

To understand how the roles were reversed and the natural order of things became eschewed when Adam received the fruit from Eve. God declared,

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life. (Genesis 3:17)

God says, **because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife.** To **hearken** means: to hear, to obey, be obedient, to hear with attention or interest, to understand, give heed, to consent, agree, to listen to, or to yield to it is the Hebrew word shama (*shaw-mah'*).

The many definitions of this word are very helpful. The problem was that Adam, wrongly out of the Divine order, was obedient to, yielded to the voice (instruction in teaching something) of his wife! Sin was the result and therefore she, rightly, was placed back in a submissive position as God had intended. She could not be trusted and neither can many so-called "women ministers."

In the judgement of Adam God says: **cursed [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life.** This retributive justice comes because of three things. One,

because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife. Two, and hast eaten of the tree. Finally, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it. Adam obeyed his wife's teaching and disobeyed God's. In the severity of his judgement it is clear God felt strongly about the roles being reversed, and stepped in to correct this error.

It has been clear that "from the beginning" it was not so that a woman should have the rule over a man. God's design was for a family structure with the man (husband) as the head. This He has ordained for His Church order as well.

What about Deborah?

Those that are determined to have this false doctrine always pose the question, what about Deborah?

This is used frequently as a panacea for women to be ministers. We need to look at this and address it as succinctly and accurately as possible.

If we look at just the texts without understanding the background of the book it resides in; we would be guilty of poor exegesis. Some things to note. One, this is the book of apostasy. Two, it's in a time when Israel was overcome by her desire for heathen practices. Three, it's in a time when Israel had no King, nor did she desire God to rule her. We call this "interregnum"—a time between rulers. Simply put, Israel at this time, was a generation of apostates. Judges says,

And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that [were] round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. (Judges 2:10-12)

Given that we can now understand the setting and practices of this time. As a preface to the rise of a judge there was always **and the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD** (Judges 4:1). The narrative is unfolded with **and the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host [was] Sisera** (Judges 4: 2).

And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. (Judges 4:4)

We notice several things in this passage. First, yes Deborah was a woman (her name means bee).

Second, she was a **“prophetess”** (feminine form of prophet). What does that mean? There are eight verses in the entire Bible that use this word. Only five women in all of Scripture have this title: Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, and negatively, Jezebel in Revelation 2:20.

The word **prophetess** (Hebrew *nbiyah*) is a feminine noun for an ancient type endowed with gift of song, speaker or spokesman. God spoke through Deborah it's clear she also was endowed with the gift of song (Judges 5:1-31) just as Miriam was (Exodus 15:20,21).

Third, she was **the wife of Lapidoth**—she was married. The question is where was Lapidoth? He is never mentioned in all of the narrative.

Lastly, **she judged Israel** what does this word signify? It's the Hebrew word *Shaphat* it means: to judge, plead, avenged, condemn, execute, judgment, defend, deliver, to judge, governs, vindicates, and punishes.

It's helpful to understand this, because the judging of Israel by a woman is an isolated incident, and not repeated anywhere else in scripture. Nor is it to be taken as a norm.

“For the most part, the judges were military leaders, not judicial or religious leaders. Their role was to carry out a God-directed campaign...the combined intervention of Yahweh and the judge then relieved the people...Deborah relied upon the generalship of

Barak and a promise of victory from Yahweh to inspire the troops."⁵

So it is clear, even though Deborah was a judge and prophetess, she was not in "religious" leadership. Therefore, it is improper to refer to the narrative of Deborah as a "proof text" for justification of feminine authoritarian ministry.

Please also note the improper use of verse nine for added justification is altogether fallacious. **"And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh."**

Many refer this passage as reflexive on Deborah this is untrue. It's calling attention, not to Deborah, but to "Jael" in verse 21 of chapter 4, **"Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died."**

What the Prophets had to say

The true prophets of the Old Testament were spokesmen for God. Through them we are able to peer into the norms of society and observe the rebellion and sin of the people.

There is wise council given about the potential rebellion of women in the book of Esther:

And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that [are] in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. For [this] deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The

⁵ Victor H. Matthews, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, Chapter 1, Pg. 70.

king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not (Esther 1:16,17).

Isaiah, also spoke out, and said,

[As for] my people, children [are] their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause [thee] to err, and destroy the way of thy paths (Isaiah 3:12).

Interestingly enough, the word "rule" is the same one that is used in Genesis 3:16.⁶ It's also in the Hebrew "perfect mood" which means a completed action—it was happening and continued to happen. Obviously, Isaiah is crying out the desire of God to His people of their error in this matter.

Jeremiah called the men of his day to account concerning their apostasy with their wives,

Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, [As for] the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for [then] had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. (Jeremiah 44:15-17)

Ezekiel, also spoke out,

Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them, And say, Thus saith the Lord

⁶ The word **rule**, *mashal* (*maw-shal'*), ruled over, reign, have dominion, to cause to rule, to exercise dominion. This is a verb--It's an action that is performed. This is the same word used as one that "rules" over another, cf. Gen.4:7; Judg.8:22,23; Prov.12:24; Isa.3:4,12; 28:14; etc.

GOD; Woe to the [women] that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive [that come] unto you? (Ezekiel 13:17,18)

As we leave the Old Testament remember the priests of the true and living God, were men never women. This is understood from the following scriptures:

And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, [even] Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons (Exodus 28:1).

It does not at all mention Aaron's daughters, but his sons. And again, it was to be his son's sons after him:

And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy [place]; that they bear not iniquity, and die: [it shall be] a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him (Exodus 28:43).

All through the Old Testament period women never occupied a place of "religious authority" (except for maybe wicked and pagan women of the heathen nations around Israel) in Jehovah worship.

Many would say well, that was in the Old Testament era when women were under a patriarchal oppression, but in the New Testament hasn't God changed the order of things? The answer is NO.

The New Testament speaks

By the first century the system of patriarchalism was still in practice **"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so [let]**

the wives [be] to their own husbands in every thing."

(Ephesians 5:23,24)

Moreover, customs also give evidence to this the father is the supreme ruler, "...the father is supreme in command. This authority which the father has, extends to his wife, to his children, his children's children, his servants, and to all his household."⁷

It is also stated "The father was the priest for the whole family...."⁸

It's interesting to note that in the first century the Greco-Roman society also held to a patriarchal system. In Plutarch's *Advice to Bride and Groom* he insists, "The husband rule and the wife be subordinate" (142d-e).

Women in these times were very much dependent on the men, both financially and legally. In the first century women were not allowed in the area immediately outside the temple proper where sacrifices were conducted on the alter. Moreover, in the synagogues the women were not kept from hearing the Word of God or praying, but they could have been directed into what was called "women's galleries or separate rooms" divided by a screen.

We have set the background for the New Testament era, and we are ready to take a deeper look into the texts of the Scriptures themselves.

No where in the Gospels, narratives, or parables do we observe women teaching or having authority over men. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER.

The phrase that is used quite often is, "Well, Jesus brought women up to a higher level." Only in the sense of salvation. Concerning the classes of people given salvation we read:

⁷ Fred H. Wright, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*, Chapter 10, Pg. 103.

⁸ *Ibid.*

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

This is a verse that is often used to support women in authority. However, notice **for ye are all one in Christ Jesus** this is simply stating that God does not exclude various races or genders from salvation. This cannot be taken to promote ordination of women the text simply and obviously does not allow that. As stated before, the Gospels do not present to us in any of the narratives or parables women teaching or having authority over men.

All of us would agree that the book of Acts is a narrative of the infancy, growth, and spread of the Church in the first century. In surveying the book of Acts one can not find any place where a woman is teaching and having authority over men. Nowhere is there a women in an authoritarian role like that prescribed for men. NOWHERE!

In Acts 1:13,14 the disciples come to Jerusalem and enter the upper room.

And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James [the son] of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas [the brother] of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

It's clear that, "the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus" are present. In the subsequent verses (15-22) the Apostle Peter stands up with the intention of concluding some unfinished business—of choosing a replacement Apostle. Now at this point, given it's the prelude to the Church age, one would think that God had the opportunity to choose a woman as the replacement Apostle. Wouldn't this be logical according to feminist theology? However, this is not the case. Verses 21-26 state,

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that

he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all [men], shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Why weren't any of the "women" or "Mary the mother of Jesus" chosen? The fact that they were completely overlooked cannot be underscored.

In Acts 2:1-4 the disciples and the women are gathered together in the upper room on the day of Pentecost.

"They were all with one accord in one place...and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (vv.1,4)

Many of the people present were confused as to what tongues were, taking the opportunity to share the Gospel Peter and the eleven, stand up and testify in verse 14.

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all [ye] that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.

Again, it would have been a perfect time to introduce the office of women Apostles and teachers to the world. But, once again this is not the case.

The Scriptures tell us, **But Peter, standing up with the eleven.** No women are mentioned as having taught the people. This would have been yet another logical opportunity to introduce a form of feminist theology? However, God stands on His original decree (Genesis 3:16).

The dogmatic truth text against women in authority is found in 1 Timothy 2:11-14.

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.

The Apostle Paul, commenting on the mode of worship, gives guidelines for ecclesiastical authority in the following:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

Paul, gives the Corinthian Christians clear instructions to correct their deficient knowledge into orthodox knowledge by stating, **but I would have you know.** He says to them that **the head of the woman [is] the man.** What does the word **head** mean? We know, in this context, that it does not mean ones physical head on his shoulders. It's *Kephale* in Greek, meaning: supreme, chief, prominent, the place of leadership or command. Three times this word is used all three are the same Greek word. Paul, by the Holy Spirit, says just as Christ is the **head** of the man so is man the **head** of the woman. Why? Because,

For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. (1 Corinthians 11:8,9)

And again,

For God is not [the author] of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. 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 14:33-35)

Paul, addresses the problem in the Corinthian Church in regards to women speaking in the service.

Corinth was a prominent Greek city. It lay south east in Achaia (Greece) with Athens to the east and Cenchrea to the west. The men and women were of pagan background, and had not yet seemed to learn decorum in a Church service.

The word **silence** (*sigao*) means: to keep silence, hold one's peace, not to speak. It should be noted this is in the Greek "imperative mood" which is a command! The word **speak**, used twice, is not the Greek word for preach or teach it simply means: talking, speaking, asking questions, general disturbance.

So the question is, if we have a command for women **not** to even speak in Church how can God's Word allow them to preach and teach that setting? Some would say "well, preaching and teaching are different from speaking." That is true, but later we will see God means for women not to teach or preach either.

Paul, concluding his admonition, says **it is a shame for women to speak in the church**. He uses the word *aischron* meaning: base, dishonorable, disgrace. He says it's a dishonorable thing, an action on their (women's) part, to speak and disturb the service. Wow! What does that say for today's chatter boxes?

Before we move on two things need to be pointed out.

One, there are those that say "Well, Priscilla taught Apollos in Acts 18." Priscilla, was not an appointed ordained pastor, she was not teaching in a Church setting she was co-teaching with her husband. The passage states,

And he^[Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto [them], and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. (Acts 18:26)

Aquila is even placed in the text before Priscilla, and the plurals "they" and "them" are used. There is nothing here to indicate she had any authority or excised authority over Apollos.

Second, there are those that would say Phebe was a deaconess in the early church. Let us examine the pertinent passages regarding this,

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer [helper] of many, and of myself also...to God only wise, [be] glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. [Written to the Romans from Corinthus, [and sent] by Phebe servant of the church at Cenchrea]. (Romans 16:1,2,27).

The word **servant** (Greek *diakonos*) means: to run on errands, one who executes the commands of another, a servant, attendant, one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use, a waiter, one who serves food and drink. This definition explains exactly what the seven disciples in Acts chapter 6 were to do.

Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples [unto them], and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. (Acts 6:2,3)

Notice they chose "seven **men**" again, logically, it would have been a good time to place women as well as men for this business. However, once again this is not the case they were all men.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch (Acts 6:5).

In reality, Phebe was a tireless worker in the church. She was one of many that served and helped, with the Lord in mind and heart, giving all to Him and His people, nothing more. We are never told that she was ordained or a pastor she was simply a servant.

I can think of many men and women that are like this today. If more saints got involved in helping the whole of Christianity would benefit greatly.

So far we have learned that from the beginning the woman was to be under the authority of the man; not the other way around.

We learned Old Testament examples of women in authority have been misinterpreted. The man's position of authority had been rebelled against throughout the Old Testament.

God's system and standard of authority by the man over the woman is continued in the New Testament.

We now come to the question, does God's written Word alone allow or disallow for a women to be in authority as a pastor, minister, elder, etc.?

The Answer

Paul, in writing to young Timothy a pastor at Ephesus, exhorts him in church practice. He is outlining what is orthopraxy and what is not.

We need to remember the book of Timothy is the thought and mind of God speaking through Paul to Timothy. It's a "pastoral letter" intended to keep doctrine and Church conduct in line with the prescribed methods God wants for His Church. If any epistles are to "approve" of women's ordination certainly Timothy or Titus would be the ones.

In the first eight verses of chapter 2 of 1 Timothy, Paul gives exhortation on prayer for all people, and his ecclesiastical authority. He then instructs Timothy, and the Church, about the position of women within the Church.

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 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. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. (1 Timothy 2:9-15)

I quoted the whole section so as not to be accused of reading something out of context. It is worthy to note that verses 9-15, of chapter 2, precede the first fourteen verses of chapter three which deal with choosing bishops (pastors) and deacons. Notice, **that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works** (2:9,10).

The women of the Church are exhorted to show inwardly and outwardly that they are true followers of Christ in all humility and meekness. God desires this of **women professing godliness**. The Holy Spirit, through Paul, continues His exhortation to women by recapitulating what was said to the Corinthians, **let the woman learn in silence with all subjection**. God is not the author of confusion and is very consistent.

He then says, **but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence**. In looking at this passage, with all of the other teachings of the Bible in mind, we find great harmony.

I want to go over this step by step so that there is no possibility of one misconstruing what is being said.

First, this passage is a command, **but I suffer not**. The word **suffer** (*epitrepo*) in Greek means: to give leave, give liberty to, give license, let, to permit, allow. He's saying I do not allow, permit, or let a woman teach or usurp authority over the man, explicitly, he says we (the Church) should not either! The gender here **a woman**. In the context this is what is being discussed. Previously, he said what women **should do** (see also 1 Timothy 5:14.) now he says what she must **not do**, and what is that? **"to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man."**

To teach means: to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses, conduct one's self as a teacher, to teach one, to impart instruction, instill doctrine into one. The word used here is "*didasko*" the same one used in: Matthew 5:19; 11:1; 28:19; Mark 4:1; 6:2,34; Luke 11:1; 12:12; John 7:35; 14:26; Acts 1:1; 4:18; 1 Corinthians 14:19; and so on.

He says for them not to teach and adds, **nor to usurp authority**. To usurp authority means: an absolute master, to govern, exercise dominion over one. The word is "*authenteo*" where we get our word authority. Notice this definition of authority in the New Testament **exercise dominion over one** is the same one as back in the beginning of creation. (Genesis 3:16)

Unto the woman he said, 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.

Who is she is not to usurp authority over? **the man**. She is to do what? **be in silence**. Why? **For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression**. Clearly, Paul, like Jesus, bases his argument on the creation account using two things.

One, the man being created in order first **For Adam was first formed**.

Two, **And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression**.

There is no further room for argument on this subject God has spoken, harmoniously, that women are NOT to occupy the position of a pastor, elder, deacon, or any position of authority in Church.

Paul, develops the qualifications of a bishop (pastor) in chapter 3, and concludes it with this statement on exactly what he has been discussing.

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou

oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14,15)

Notice, the underlined statements clear and veracious of Church conduct. What can be more clear than the teaching we have covered in this study? How can supporters of famine theology not see this?

"In the case of those denominations that allow those women to be ordained to the office of elder, we have to see this as arising from the spirit of our modern age, which feels at liberty to correct God's Word." Dr. Greg L. Bahnsen ⁹

Jesus speaks about a Church, like today's, that allowed a women to teach and preach.

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that **woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.** (Revelation 2:20-23)

Did you read the above Scriptures carefully? Did you read the displeasure that Jesus exhibits against a women teaching and usurping authority?

Beloved, this is such a solemn warning to our modern Church! If the above Scriptures have not moved you with consternation nothing from God will.

We have seen that women, that were and tried to be in authority over men, are always presented in a negative light. God asks us

⁹ Dr. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Pinpoint*, Vol.8, No.1, Jan. 1997.

for our strict obedience to His Word. We as the Church must not allow a women to have an unBiblical position of teaching and having authority over men. Which is the case of our modern Church age.

We have concluded, conclusively, from the Scriptures themselves that women must not occupy the office of pastor, minister, bishop, elder, deacon, or any other position that places them in authority in the Church.

The idea of women being adverse to a subaltern position started in Eden with Eve, moved through the Old Testament, and continued on into the New. This rebellion against God and His Word had its roots in America in 1848 by a woman named Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In a declaration titled *The Seneca Falls Declaration of Resolutions on Women's Rights* she is quoted as saying:

"That a women has to long rested satisfied in the circumscribed [narrow] limits which corrupt customs and a perverted [misdirected] application of the Scriptures have marked out for her, and that it is time she should move in the enlarged sphere which her great Creator has assigned her...that the speedy success of our cause depends on the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women, for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to women an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions, and commerce."¹⁰

Picking up on this in the 1960s a women named Pauli Murray, writing about her experience as a black woman involved in Church, was becoming dishearten over the "male" dominance of her parish Church, were women "occasionally" were allowed to read the lessons. While attending Church one Sunday morning she became very angry during a Eucharist service and walked out, she writes:

"I wondered about the streets full of blasphemous thought, she recalled, feeling alienated from God. The intensity of this assault at the deepest level of my devotional life produced a crisis of

¹⁰ *California State Series, Living American Documents, Pg.153,154, 1967.*

faith...if the present Church customs were justified, then I did not belong in the church and it became a stumbling block to faith."¹¹

Years later the World Council of Churches Uppsala Assembly helped convince her to pursue women's ordination. In subsequent years she became an active participant in securing women's ordination. At age 67 she was one of the first women regularly ordained in the American Episcopal Church. She died in 1985.

Today, this rebellious work is still carried on, the *Sacramento Bee* Newspaper stated:

"Thanks to more opportunities for ordination, many women are enrolling in divinity schools. At the Church Divinity School, where 106 students are enrolled, women make up 60 percent of the student body...At the Pacific School of Religion, about two-thirds of the 200 students are women."¹²

Moreover, in an article taken from the *Boston Globe* by the *Sacramento Bee*, titled *Clergywomen numbers up, but some obstacles remain* is quoted as saying:

"The pulpit...has become increasingly open to women over the past 20 years as many denominations have formally amended their rules to permit the ordination of women."¹³

Was the ordination of women closed 20-30 years ago? It must have been for it to have only begun 20 years ago.

"The number of clergywomen [in the UMC] jumped from 319 in 1977 to 3,003 last year (1997)"¹⁴

¹¹ Murray, *Pauli Murray*, Pg. 370

¹² Religion Scene section, *The Sacramento Bee*, Saturday, March 8, 1997.

¹³ Religion Scene section, *The Sacramento Bee*, Saturday, February, 21, 1998.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Brown Zikmund, president of Hartford Seminary, is quoted as saying

"We couldn't figure out any other reason for that than gender discrimination."¹⁵

This is a very nice politically correct statement coming from a woman! This is incredible! The woman does not read her Bible "We couldn't figure out any other reason for that than gender discrimination"? God's Word has just shown us many! She also added:

"The study also argues that churches need to give greater attention to systematic change."¹⁶

What she means is churches must give in to the pathetic cries of feminist theologians and reject the truth of God's Word! The reason she gives? "The system is failing women."¹⁷

In our day, as with other apostate times, the truth of God's Word is rejected for liberal higher critical interpretations. Truth that seems too unfair and "gender restrictive" is rejected. In a day when we are told we must realize that we are to rise above the confining social stereotypes and evolutionary exaltation of all genders God's Word has no place. Therefore, as the prophet Jeremiah said:

The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love [to have it] so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? (Jeremiah 5:39)

Oh, my beloved Church, hear His Word! Be not as the man with his fingers in his ears not willing to hear. Open your eyes, open your ears, see and hear what your God says!

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

What happens if this is allowed?

1. God's Word is made of none effect and is looked upon as invalid.
2. The unBiblical practice of this brakes down the natural order of things, which God has not allowed. When a women is running a Church and has all the men in her authority, including her husband, what happens when they go home? Are the roles reversed? Then comes confusion.
3. This is purely a tactic of satan to discredit and confuse, the already confused Church, all the while lulling her into compromise. Tertullian, in his *The Apparel of Women (1:1)*, is quoted as describing women as, "the gateway of the devil...that lure men away by their lusts."¹⁸
4. Ask any so-called women minister to show you one single passage from the whole of Scripture, that clearly allows them to be ordained, they will never be able to produce not even one. Contrariwise, they will need to "invent" some out of context passage, or say God told them they could.
5. This unBiblical practice must not be allowed to continue. It is not ok with God, it is not ordained of God, it is wrong! The Church must get back to sound doctrine on this issue. Those that condone this practice are no better than them that practice it! (Romans 1:32).

If you have understood this study and God has spoken to you through it, but you have been condoning this issue, go to Him and pour out your heart to Him. Ask Him to forgive you. Tell Him you will no longer accept the false doctrine served to the Church by twisted false prophets.

If you're a true elect child of God and already know this doctrine is wrong; God has confirmed its validity to you. If you are a female perpetrator of this doctrine, repent of this wicked doctrine and ask Christ Jesus to forgive you of your sin and renounce your

¹⁸ Tertullian, *The Apparel of Women*, 1:1

unBiblical position. If you're attending a Church that has a women minister go to her and declare God's truth to her, if she refuses to heed, remove yourself from that fellowship! We pray God has spoken to you, and you have become strengthened in His sacred Word.