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Sermon Notes

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Teaching Summary: Gender & Authority in the Church

I. How to Approach This Discussion: Manner & Method

- God has ordained that “speaking the truth in love” builds the Church to maturity; we must therefore NEVER give up on EITHER one: either by speaking right doctrine with harshness, or by compromising the truth so as not to hurt someone’s feelings.
- There are “debatable issues” in Christian doctrine; not everything is equally clear. This should give us humility in speaking our positions, and it should help people not to become bitter or divisive. However, such uncertainty stems from our own ignorance and/or hardness of heart.
- In this and any doctrinal issue dealing with the life and faith of the Church, we must look to the Bible alone for our ultimate solutions, and we must submit to its teachings, no matter how difficult they may seem.

II. God’s Sovereignty in the Universe and the Church

- God actively rules over His creation for His own glory, and no one has the right to question the way He chooses to do things.
- God makes rules for how His people are to live, and these include the way the Church is to be run. Though these may seem arbitrary, they are always loving and wise, and must be obeyed gladly by His people.
- God and God alone decides who gets what spiritual gifts and who is to be called to minister in this or that way.

III. Authority and Submission in God’s Universe

- God delegated His authority to created beings (angels, celestial bodies, humans) at creation. God upholds the rights of these beings to rule their domains, but He sovereignly guides their rule and calls the responsible rulers to account for their rule.
- The angels were created in a hierarchy of authority, since there are “archangels.”
- God has arranged human society along similar patterns of authority, both in the household and in the society at large. Fathers are the heads of their homes, governments have the right to rule, and rebelling against these authorities is rebelling against what God has established.

- In Matthew 8:5-13, the Roman Centurion likened the spiritual world to the Romans army in terms of its authority structure: “I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me.” Jesus praised him with extraordinary praise for his perceptive faith.

IV. Authority and Submission in God’s Church

- Christ is head of His Church, ruling over it by right of creation, purchase, and a husband’s love.
- Christ communicates His authority primarily through the Holy Scriptures, inspired and illuminated by the Holy Spirit.
- Christ delegates His authority to human “under-shepherds”; first the apostles, then later disciples trained by the apostles and their spiritual descendants. God established “elders” to be the human authorities in the local church, and commanded the churches to submit gladly to the authority of the elders.
- All Christian leadership is truly servant leadership; positions of authority are not given for personal pride or profit, but for the benefit of God’s people. Leaders must be the “slave of all.”

V. Manhood and Womanhood in Creation

- In the beginning, God created male and female in His own image and likeness. Males and females are equally in the image of God, equally responsible to Him on judgment day, equally fit vessels of eternal glory in Christ.
- God entrusted the rulership of the world to humanity, both male and female. God’s plan to fill the earth with His image through the fruitfulness of the human race could only be effected as male and female worked together, each fulfilling their special functions.
- Yet, Adam was given a special place as Head of the human race; Adam was created first, Eve formed from his body to be a “helper suitable” for him. When Adam sinned, the whole human race sinned through him (Romans 5), and thus Adam was the one ultimately responsible in Eden for the final effects of sin.
- The “headship/submission” relationship of male/female was NOT a result of the Fall into sin, but part of God’s wise plan for the earth. Therefore, these functional roles continue in the New Covenant as well, and the teaching that “in Christ there is no male or female, but all are one” (Galatians 3:28) does not remove all gender distinctions. “Unity in Christ” is not the same as “equality of role.”

VI. God’s Plan for the Family

- In Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 3, Titus 2, Colossians 3, God establishes the consistent pattern of the headship of the husband over his wife, and the wife’s glad submission to her husband. The analogy is “husband is to wife what Christ is to the Church,” and is never reversed. Husbands are never told to submit to the headship of their wives.

- In Titus 2 and 1 Timothy 5, the role of women focuses on the management of the home and of the training of children.

VII. Woman in the Bible & in the Ministry of Jesus

- While there are many examples of godly women in the Old Testament, there are extremely few of godly female leaders. Miriam and Deborah are the only two; Miriam led Israel's women in a song of praise after the Exodus, and Deborah ruled during a rebellious time in Israel's history when no godly men would step forward to rule. The consistent pattern in the Old Testament was of godly male leadership.
- In the New Testament, there are likewise a few women who are cited as godly leaders: Priscilla (who with her husband Aquila led Apollos to a more mature faith in Christ), Phoebe (perhaps a "deaconess"), Lydia (at whose house Paul stayed in Philippi). However, none of these women are spoken of as authoritative spiritual leaders in a local church, whereas there are large numbers of men who are cited as church leaders. Thus the NT is just as silent as the OT when it comes to examples of women leading men.
- Jesus Christ was the most courageous man in history in terms of confronting erroneous cultural norms; the Pharisees were right about Him when they said "You are a man of integrity and you teach the word of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, since you pay no attention to who they are." (Matthew 22:16) Therefore, it shouldn't surprise us that Jesus elevated the role of women in His day, allowing them to learn from Him as disciples (Mary in Luke 10:42), and to be the first witnesses of His resurrection (Mary Magdalene in Matthew 28). However, He did not put them in positions of spiritual leadership; all His Twelve Apostles were men.

VIII. Key New Testament Passages (1 Timothy 2-3, 1 Corinthians 11 & 14)

- 1 Timothy 2:12 is the most significant passage in the Bible on the issue of female teaching and authority in the church. Paul writes: "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent." Any attempt to say that this passage was a temporary restriction falls apart in verse 13, when Paul cites creation order as the grounds for the restriction. Thus, there is no Biblical reason for ignoring this clear command.
- 1 Timothy 3 possibly implies that women cannot be elders, but could be deacons. This would not be inconsistent with the prohibition of 1 Timothy 2, if "deacon" is understood as someone who serves in a role in which they do not teach or have authority over men.
- 1 Corinthians 11 discusses women wearing head-coverings, and while this issue seems difficult and archaic to many, yet the underlying principles Paul cites are again tied to creation: man was formed first, man is the head of woman, woman should have some sense of submission to this creation authority as they worship.
- 1 Corinthians 14 again limits women in public worship, saying that they are to remain "silent in the churches." The context is the proper exercise of prophesying ministry, and the restriction most

probably concerns the “careful weighing” of the prophecies which Paul commands in 14:29. In any case, the passage contains once again a clear restriction on the ministry of women.

- NOTE: Some people wonder why God would allow women to prophesy but not to teach. The answer lies in the basic difference between the gifts. Prophecy was the passive receiving of a word or revelation directly from God, was inerrant, and involved no reasoning or training on the part of the prophet. God used the murderous King Saul and his men (1 Sam. 19), Balaam’s donkey (Num. 22), and the evil high priest Caiaphas (John 11:51) to prophesy. Teaching is a different gift, is exercised differently, and, in the wisdom of God, is restricted differently than prophecy.

IX. Encouragement to Women to Minister As God Directs

- Women should regard their own ministries as indispensable to the healthy growth of the Church, and men should see it the same way as well. No woman should consider herself of any lower value because she is restricted from teaching or having authority over a man.
- All Christian women are spiritually gifted, and are commanded by God to use their gifts freely for the building up of the Body of Christ. For some women, this includes the gift of teaching, but that gift is restricted to teaching other women (Titus 2) and teaching children. Such teaching ministry is absolutely vital to the life of the church, but must be done in full submission to the male leadership God has established. Women can (and must) use all their other gifts as well: faith, evangelism, administration, giving, serving, etc.
- All Christian women who use their gifts to build up the church will receive gracious and just rewards from God on Judgment Day, and will be rewarded by exactly the same criteria as men: faithfulness, obedience, love, fruitfulness, etc.

X. Questions and Answers

Teaching Outline: Gender & Authority in the Church

I. How to Approach This Discussion: Manner & Method

A. "Speaking the truth in love"

Ephesians 4:15-16 *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

1. Unity in love essential
2. Unity in truth also essential
3. Manner of speaking is crucial
 - a. 1 Corinthians 13: "If we have right doctrine but have not love, it gains nothing"
 - b. Galatians 5:22-23 "The fruit of the Spirit is love..."
 - c. 2 Timothy 2:23-26

2 Timothy 2:23-26 *Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. ²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. ²⁵ Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*

B. "Debatable Issues"

1. Romans 14:1

Romans 14:1 *"Accept him whose faith is weak without passing judgment on disputable matters."*

2. Hierarchy of Certainty of Truth

Some things are clearer than others in Scripture... the existence of God, the full deity and humanity of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, etc. are far more clearly taught than is adult baptism

“All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all...” Second London Confession, 1677 (Early Baptist Confession of Faith), Chap. 1, Sect. 7

3. BUT... what is the source of the uncertainty
 - a. no debates in heaven on this or any issue
 - b. Matthew 22:29 & 2 Peter 3:16... ignorance & willful distortion

Matthew 22:29 [To the Sadducees who denied the resurrection] Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.”

2 Peter 3:16 “[Paul] writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand which ignorant and unstable people distort as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

All error on doctrinal issues springs from either ignorance or willful sin. There are no debates over Scripture in heaven.

C. Bible Alone the Source of Our Information; the Authority for our Solution

1. Scripture is perfect, and is given for the purpose of governing the life of the Church

2 Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.”

2. The doctrines of Scripture are not a matter of the author’s own private opinion

2 Peter 1:20-21 “Above all you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture ever had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

3. Scripture ALONE should decide every issue related to the life/doctrine of the Church

“The supreme judge by which all controversies of Religion are to be determined, and all Decrees of Councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined and in whose sentence we are to rest can be none other than the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit...” Second London Confession, Chap. 1, Sect. 10

4. Other sources of information not authoritative
 - a. church history

- i) although a sense of history can be useful in interpretation, history does not come to us with the promise of inerrancy that the Bible does...
- ii) even if we were to find some groups that supported female authority in the local church, we would have to work hard to show that the existence of such groups represented the will of God
- iii) church history overwhelmingly opposes women in positions of authority, but that does not prove anything conclusively about the role of women

b. Missions and the "look at the results" approach: (Lottie Moon)

This argument teaches that, if God opposed women's teaching or authority over men, than why does He so abundantly bless ordained women with fruit: people come to Christ, live changed for the better, godliness increasing, etc. This has especially been true on the mission field.

Response: But God also blesses the ministry of those who oppose women's ordination! "Blessing in ministry" is not the mark of total approval of all aspects of the doctrine, godliness, and faith of the one ministering. Jimmy Swaggert led people to Christ while committing adultery on the side. All of us have some aspects of our doctrine and practice out of harmony with God's will!

c. Not "inner sense of call" (i.e. "private spirits" in 2nd London Confession):

- i). some feel an inner sense of call to do ministries that are not validated by the body
- ii). some feel inner sense of call to write books against women teaching & having authority over men!
- iii). none of this proves anything: zeal and intense commitment never proves CORRECTNESS of views held... few of us are as zealous as the Homosexuals that marched on Washington D.C., or the Muslims who sacrificed their lives in the Iran-Iraq war, or even Paul when he persecuted the church...Romans 10:2-3 zeal not based on knowledge (of what? of God's will as revealed in His Word & His Son)
- iv). ALL CALLS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE WORD OF GOD... he retains the right to dictate how a gift & ministry is to be worked out in the Body

d. Not "anti-spirit of the age" (i.e. be different from the world's values)

Why?... simple! Ask someone who supports women's ordination what the "spirit of the age" is... answer "Male chauvinism and repression of women" Ask someone who opposes women's ordination. Answer: "Feminism"

- e. **Not intense emotion (i.e. the person who gets most upset wins!)** This may seem obvious, but this issue needs to be settled with ideas, not emotion, even though it is emotional

BIBLE MUST BE CENTRAL !!!

Our simple task is this: to find out what the Scripture says about this issue, to discuss it together in love, and then to act in obedience to what we've found

II. God's Sovereignty in the Universe and the Church

A. God's Sovereignty in General

Psalm 97:1 "The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice."

Psalm 99:1 "The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble..."

Isaiah 14:26-27 "This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?"

B. God's Sovereignty Over His Chosen People

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."

Psalm 59:13 "Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob."

Acts 20:28 "Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."

1 Timothy 3:14-15 "Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."

1. God deals with all according to His own plans and purposes

2. God's ways may seem arbitrary... but we cannot question them
 - a. OT: The sign of covenant was male circumcision
 - b. OT: only Levites could take part in sacrificial system at the Tabernacle, and only descendants of Aaron could be priests
 - c. The Ark of the Covenant could only be carried by the Kohathites on their shoulders

Numbers 4:15 “After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles, and when the camp is ready to move, the Kohathites are to come to do the carrying. But they must not touch the holy things or they will die. The Kohathites are to carry those things that are in the Tent of Meeting.

2 Samuel 6:1-9 They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart ⁴ with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it.... When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. ⁷ The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God.

God told the Israelites how to carry the sacred things, and they disobeyed. God has also told us how we are to act in His house, the church... we are not permitted to “grab hold” of the Church and do it our way.

C. Spiritual gifts & ministries: “As God wills”

1. The ministry of the Church is to be done by those whom God gifts and calls
2. God's gifts and calling are given by His sovereign grace

Ephesians 4:7 “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”

Romans 12:6 “We have different gifts according to the grace given to us.”

1 Corinthians 12:11 “All these [gifts] are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one just as He determines.”

3. No one should be jealous of someone else's gift, nor should anyone boast about their own gift
4. Every gift is vital for the Church to function properly

1 Corinthians 12:15 “If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.”

1 Corinthians 12:21 “The eye cannot say to the hand ‘I don’t need you!’”

Not everyone will be gifted or called to be a spiritual leader in the Church... that doesn't make them any less vital to the function of the Church.

III. Authority and Submission in God's Universe

Basic lesson: God delegates His authority to created beings, and upholds their authority over those who are to be subject to them

A. Creation and the Fall

1. Genesis 1: Spheres of influence

- a. the sun “rules over” the day
- b. the moon “rules over” the night
- c. humanity (male and female) to “rule over” the earth, sky & seas

2. Genesis 2: Adamic priority

- a. Adam created as first human being
- b. Adam “head” of the human race

3. Genesis 3: Sin as rebellion

- a. Adam's sin was open rebellion against God's authority
- b. All authority in heaven & earth ultimately is God's

B. Angelic Authority

1. Angels arranged in order with authority structure
2. “Arch-angels” = “ruler-angels”

Jude 9 “... the archangel Michael...”

C. Household Authority (Ephesians 6)

1. Husbands “head of wife” (see below, Section VI)
2. Children obey parents

D. Governmental Authority (Romans 13)

Romans 13:1-9 *“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.”*

1. Governmental Authority is instituted by God
2. God upholds the right of governments to rule, to tax, to judge, & to punish their subjects

E. The Faith of the Centurion

Matthew 8:5-10 [Read this passage together]

1. The centurion saw by faith that the invisible spiritual world had a hierarchy like the Roman army... from the great Emperor to the lowly foot soldier
2. The word of command came from top down and had to be obeyed, even if mediated by lesser authorities
3. Jesus COMMENDED this viewpoint... this is exactly how His Kingdom is organized

IV. Authority and Submission in God’s Church

A. Christ’s Supreme Authority

1. All authority in the Universe is Christ’s, given by the Father

Matthew 28:18 *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*

2. Christ therefore rules over the Church, and over everything for the Church

Ephesians 1:22-23 *“And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.”*

Colossians 1:18 *“And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead so that in everything He might have the supremacy.”*

3. The mark of a true disciple of Jesus Christ is glad obedience to His commands

John 14:15 “If you love me, you’ll obey what I command.”

B. The Authority of the Word of God

1. Christ commands His church through the written Word of God
2. He has committed this Word to the apostles and prophets, and His words are thus contained in the Holy Scriptures

John 10:35 [Jesus said] “...the Scripture cannot be broken.”

C. Human Authority Under Christ

Christ also delegated His authority to human beings under His ultimate authority

1. The Apostles

John 15:20 “If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.”

- a. Peter and the Twelve Apostles given the “keys of the kingdom” & authority to bind and loose

[Jesus to Peter] *Matthew 16:19 “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

[Jesus to the Twelve] *Matthew 18:18 “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

2 Peter 3:2 “I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.”

2 John 5 “And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another.”

NOTE: Both Peter & John saw their authority to “command” as coming directly from Christ... they had no authority in themselves, but only as coming from Christ

- b. Paul also had the authority of an apostle

1 Corinthians 14:37 “If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command.”

2 Thessalonians 3:4,6 *“We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command.... In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.”*

c. This authority was loving and persuasive, not coercive

Philemon 8-10 *“Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, ⁹ yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains.”*

2. Second-generation authority

This same authority to command in the name of Christ passed on to Timothy, who was not an apostle!!

1 Timothy 4:11-12 *“Command and teach these things. Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”*

1 Timothy 6:17 *“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.”*

D. Elders: A Balanced Understanding

1. “Over you in the Lord”

1 Thessalonians 5:12 *“Now we ask you brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord, and who admonish you.”*

Hebrews 13:17 *“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”*

NOTE: in both cases the leaders are PLURAL... a plurality of elders is constantly in view in the local church

2. “...not lording it over those entrusted to you...”

1 Peter 5:1-2 “To the elders among you I appeal as a fellow elder... Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing as God wants you to be; not greedy for money but eager to serve; NOT LORDING IT OVER THOSE ENTRUSTED TO YOU, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

A plurality of elders were to be in authority in every local church; they were to carry on the delegated authority from Jesus Christ which the apostles had (though in a significantly different way)... they were not to lord it over people, but were to live as examples. The people were to submit to their authority and obey them in the Lord

E. Servant Leadership

Matthew 20:20-28 [Read together] Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

All true Christian authority and leadership is servant leadership... we recognize that our authority is on loan from Christ, and that it was given to bless and to benefit His Church.

V. Manhood and Womanhood in Creation

The idea of gender distinctions has come under tremendous attack from our secular culture... the constant message is that there is absolutely no significant difference between male and female, and that anything anyone wants to do or be should be embraced by everyone. This even extends to intimate relations and marriage.

However, God created humanity “male and female” for a reason. Christians should therefore take their understanding of gender from the Bible, not from popular culture.

A. The Image of God: Created male and female

Genesis 1:27 *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

B. Both given dominion & mandate to fill the earth & subdue it

Genesis 1:28 *And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”*

C. HOWEVER... God chose to create Adam first, and Eve from Adam

Genesis 2:21-22 *“So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; ²² and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”*

1. Paul consistently referred to the order of creation as significant

1 Timothy 2:13 *“For Adam was formed first, then Eve.”*

1 Corinthians 11:8 *“For man did not come from woman, but woman from man”*

2. To Paul, this order gave Adam a position of authority & responsibility Eve didn't have

D. Eve was created to be “a helper suitable for” the man

Genesis 2:18 *The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”*

E. Adam was “Head of the human race”... representing all His descendants at the Tree in Eden

Romans 5:12 *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...”*

Romans 5:15-19 [five times, Paul refers to the sin of the “one man” which brought judgment upon the entire human race... Adam's sin brought the judgment on us all, not Eve's sin]

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 *“So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we*

have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.”

F. What About the New Covenant? Does Gender Still Matter to God?

1. Some will cite Galatians 3:28 as “proof” that gender no longer matters to God

Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

2. However, being “one” in Christ Jesus doesn’t mean there is no authority structure

a. we are “one” with Christ, but still must obey Him

b. we are “one” with our believing children, but still have authority

c. we are one with believing “masters” (bosses, government leaders), but still must submit to their authority (actually, we supposed to submit even better because they are Christians... see 1 Timothy 6:2)

3. Furthermore, the argument that Gal. 3:28 teaches no gender distinctions could even lead to same-sex marriages

4. Paul still seems to think gender matters, even though he wrote Galatians 3:28

5. All Gal. 3:28 is teaching is that these earthly distinctions mean nothing in terms of SALVATION... there are no restrictions in terms of becoming a child of God

VI. God’s Plan for the Family

A. God Establishes Male Headship for the Family

Read Ephesians 5:21-33 together

1. Wives are commanded to submit to their husbands, not the other way around

2. Male headship, like all other Christian authority, is to be servant-leadership... for the BENEFIT of the wife

3. Many have said: “If the husband would love the wife as Christ loved the Church, the wives would have no problem submitting to their leadership.”

a. perhaps true, and it makes a valid point... love covers a multitude of sins

- b. HOWEVER, wives should still submit anyway

Read 1 Peter 3:1-7 together

B. Wives' Roles: Consistent Focus on the Home

Titus 2:3-5 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴ Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

1 Timothy 5:14 So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander.

VII. Woman in the Bible & in the Ministry of Jesus

A. Old Testament Women Leaders

1. Miriam

- a. led woman of Israel in a song of worship after God destroyed Pharaoh's army (Exodus 15:20-21)... these verses tell us she was a "prophetess"
- b. Micah says Miriam was sent "to lead" Israel

Micah 6:4 "I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam."

- c. however, she was judged by the Lord when she pridefully tried to take Moses's position of authority over Israel... God rejected her and struck her with leprosy, saying Moses's place was unique

Numbers 12:1-16 Listen to my words: "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. ⁷ But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. ⁸ With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" ⁹ The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them. ¹⁰ When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam—leprous, like snow."

2. Deborah

- a. during a bizarre period of Israel's history, Deborah was raised up as a judge
- b. this period of time was twice characterized as follows

Judges 21:25 "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit."

- c. Deborah actually criticized Barak, an Israelite general for his cowardice, saying the glory for the victory would go to a woman

Judges 4:8-9 Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go." "Very well," Deborah said, "I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman."

3. Esther

Esther is actually a great example of a submissive woman and wife... she obeyed her cousin Mordecai's instructions explicitly, and was openly submissive to her husband, King Xerxes. God blessed her for her godly character, which included this submissiveness.

4. "Prophetesses"

- a. Miriam, Deborah, Isaiah's wife, Huldah, Noadiah, Anna (Luke 2)
- b. Biggest issue to be dealt with: the difference between prophecy & teaching... will deal with in Section VIII.

5. Isaiah's perspective

Isaiah 3:1-12 [God judges Judah & Jerusalem by removing all their key leaders]

Isaiah 3:12 "Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. O my people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path."

To Isaiah, female leadership was a form of judgment on Judah and Jerusalem.

B. New Testament Women Leaders

- 1. Priscilla (Acts 18, with husband Aquila, instructed Apollos more adequately about Jesus, since he lacked information about what had happened after John's baptism... however, no indication that she was teaching or having authority over men)

2. Lydia (Acts 16; first convert in Philippi, had a church meet in her house... again, no indication that she was teaching or having authority over men)
3. Phoebe

Romans 16:1-2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. ²I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.

- a. the word “servant” is “diakonon”, which is usually translated “deacon” but literally means “servant”
- b. it is quite possible that she was a deaconess, but not at all teaching or having authority over men
- c. we’ll address women deacons when we deal with 1 Timothy 3 below (Section VIII)

4. Junias, Romans 16:7... a “female apostle”???

Romans 16:7 “Greet Andronicus and Junias my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles and they were in Christ before I was.”

Two key questions:

- a. Was “Junias” a man or a woman? Grammar and early church writings are divided 50-50... some treat this person as a man, some as a woman
- b. What does “outstanding among the apostles” mean?
 - i) they were very well thought of by the apostles
 - ii) they were considered “apostles” (i.e. messengers) in the same sense as Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25, the “messenger” whom they sent to take care of Paul’s needs
 - iii) they were authoritative “apostles” in the same sense as Barnabas in Acts 14:14

This is rather shaky ground on which to build a doctrine!

5. Prophetesses

Acts 2:18 “Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”

Acts 21:9 “[Philip the evangelist] had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.”

Again, we will deal with this issue below in Section VIII.

C. Jesus’ Attitude Toward Women

1. Jesus’ Counter-cultural Courage

Matthew 22:16 “Teacher,” they said, “we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are.”

Matthew 15:1-3 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!” Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?”

Jesus had no fear whatsoever of challenging prevailing cultural ideas, if they were contrary to the will of God. He did it constantly concerning the Sabbath regulations.

2. Prevailing Restrictions on Women

- a. restricted from parts of the Temple
- b. restricted from taking part in synagogue services... separated by a wall
- c. restricted from studying the Scriptures as a disciple would

3. Jesus: Placed Very High Value on Women

- a. spoke the Word directly to women (John 4:1-26... Samaritan woman at the well)
- b. allowed them to sit at His feet and learn as disciples (Luke 10:38-42... Martha & Mary)
- c. committed the news of His resurrection to women (Matthew 28... Mary Magdalene)

4. Jesus: recognized role distinctions for males & females

- a. He did not choose a single woman to be an Apostle
- b. many dedicated women to choose from

This is extremely significant, since Jesus had no fear of prevailing cultural norms. If He intended women to be in positions of authority, why didn't He choose at least one to be an Apostle? Some argue that Christ didn't choose Gentiles to be Apostles either. However, Jesus expressly stated that His first earthly mission was "only to the lost sheep of Israel." (Matthew 15:24), and after His resurrection, expressly commanded His disciples to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20). There is no such shift in the gender issue.

VIII. Key New Testament Passages

A. 1 Timothy 2:11-15

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

1. Clear teaching in a teaching section of an epistle; must be taken as Scripture's testimony on women teaching & having authority unless contradicted by some other passage of Scripture.
2. Exegesis: This passage contains:

vs. 11) One positive command with two descriptions:

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.

Paul wants women to learn doctrine (just as Jesus did with Martha & Mary). But here he describes what attitude they should have while learning... an attitude of "quietness and full submission." Women are not to be contentious, argumentative, rebellious, or usurping of authority while they learn.

vs. 12) Two restrictions with one further command:

I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

Paul then restricts women from two things: teaching and exercising authority over a man. Some commentators think that Paul may be giving just one restriction; i.e. "I do not permit a woman to teach with authority over a man." However, Greek grammar argues against that: The sentence literally says "But a woman to teach I

do not permit, neither to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence.” That Paul is restricting women from teaching men, and not from all teaching is clear from Titus 2:4, which implies that Paul wanted older women to teach younger women to be subject to their husbands, etc. The further command is a restatement of verse 11, concerning the quietness of a woman while learning doctrine. Women were not to question or sow division against the God-authorized male leadership of the church, saying “Well, I just don’t agree with that!” or some such statement.

What does “teach” mean? In the New Testament, the word “teach” (along with “teaching” & “teacher”) relates to “the authoritative transmission of the tradition concerning Jesus Christ, and the authoritative proclamation of God’s will to believers in light of that tradition.” (Douglas Moo, Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, p. 185.) Application of this to the modern setting cannot be avoided, however difficult. Wherever the church is gathered to receive doctrinal instruction with the authority of the Lord (i.e. preaching and the authoritative teaching of the Bible), women should not do that instruction to men.

What does “have authority over men” mean? The verb implies a strong form of leadership which involves submission to the will of another. Again, the issue is one of application, and the best way is to understand this in light of other passages which describe the way leaders exercise authority in the church, such as 1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12 & Hebrews 13:17

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

1 Thess. 5:12 Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Thus, the oversight of the life and doctrine of the church is what Paul has in mind. This would not preclude women from using gifts of administration, or serving on committees. But all of this must be seen in submission to the male leadership God has appointed.

Other views & applications of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 may be discussed, but this passage may not be ignored. If in the end we simply say “I don’t agree with that!”

and give no better explanation of these verses, the problem we're having is with Scripture itself.

vs. 13-14) Two supporting reasons for these commands:

For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

1) Paul first reason goes back to God's intention in creation, for it was God who chose to create Adam first. Though to us this may mean little, what really matters is what it means to God. According to Paul, God's decision to create Adam first was a decision to put Adam in a position of responsible authority (headship, 1 Cor. 11, Ephesians 5) related to Eve. This was NOT a result of sin, but God's original purpose in creation of male and female.

2) Paul's second reason goes to the circumstances of the Fall in Eden. Paul says that Adam was not deceived by the temptation, but willfully turned to sin; and he uses a strong word here, saying the woman was "completely deceived" and in her deception became a transgressor. Some critics say, "Which is worse, a willful sinner like Adam or an ignorant one, like Eve?" But this is to question Paul's conclusion. Apparently God thought the lack of deception on the part of Adam & deception on the part of Eve was a reason for the commands given here in 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

vs. 15) One promise:

But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

This is a notoriously difficult verse, but it in no way decreases the clarity of the previous verses. Perhaps the best way to understand it is that Paul was speaking of Eve in the previous verse, referring to the "greatly increased pains" of childbirth, and of God's salvation plan in bringing about the ultimate Savior through Eve's descendent, Jesus Christ. Women are still indispensable to God's ultimate plan.

3. Other views:

The following are nine possible ways of understanding this passage:

#1: Paul was wrong: Paul was mistaken (he was a Rabbinic Jew, and he allowed some of their sexism to creep into his thinking at this point)

- #2: Paul didn't write this: This verse was not written by Paul, but by some later disciple of his writing in his name.
- #3: Paul was bowing to culture; this was temporary: Paul was making a restriction, but that restriction was cultural, given only to a male-dominated patriarchal culture which wasn't capable of handling the truth.
- #4: Unruly or ill-trained Ephesian women: Paul was making a restriction, but it was only because of some situation going on in Ephesus at that time (i.e. the women were particularly uneducated or easily led into heresies, and Paul was restricting women at that time and place, not all women at all times and in all places).
- #5: Mistranslation: The verse has been mistranslated, and it should read "I do not allow a women to teach that she is the origin of man; she must be silent."
- #6: Restriction for the home, not the church: Paul was making a restriction, but it was for the home, not the church (the words "woman" and "man" can be translated "wife" and "husband").
- #7: This is a difficult passage, so forget about it: Paul was making a universally binding restriction, but we have no idea what it was, since other Scriptures show that men and women are to be equal in the church... perhaps the restriction was on the manner of teaching... we just don't know, but since this is a difficult passage, don't forget here what you learned elsewhere.
- #8: Women should not be pastors or elders: Paul was making a universally binding restriction on women, that they should not be pastors or elders.
- #9: Universal restriction in the church: Paul was making a universally binding restriction on women, that they should not teach or have authority over a man in any way, including any form of organized Scripture exegesis, and perhaps other leadership functions as well.

Responses:

#1: Paul was wrong:

- This is totally unacceptable, since it contradicts our doctrine of Scripture

#2: Paul didn't write this:

- There is no evidence whatsoever that Paul didn't write this
- Furthermore, this passage is in accord with Paul's other teachings on gender issues (1 Cor. 11,14)

#3: Paul was bowing to culture; this was temporary:

- The problem with this view is that Paul supports his conclusion from a timeless creation principle:

2:13 “For Adam was formed first, then Eve.”

- Then, Paul adds the issue of Eve’s deception:

2:14 “And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.”

- These two supporting reasons for Paul’s prohibition come not from any situation in Ephesus or anyplace for that matter, but went back to the beginning of history.
- For this reason, Paul does not see his prohibition as temporary or cultural, but rather as universally applicable while the Church remains on earth.

#4: Something strange was going on with the Ephesian women:

- Once again, verses 13 & 14 are timeless, not connected to the Ephesian situation
- Also, there is no indication that there was anything specifically unusual going on with the Ephesian women.
- Finally, if Paul was concerned about the errors or excesses of some of the women, but really wanted women to teach & be in authority over men, why didn’t he spell out the errors and excesses, and rule those women out, while accepting the ministry of godly women?
- NOTE: Priscilla was at Ephesus!! (See 2 Timothy 4:19... “Greet Priscilla and Aquila”) She is for many people the clearest example of a woman leader, yet Paul does not permit her to teach or have authority over a man.

#5: Mistranslation:

- To explain this requires more technical knowledge of Greek grammar than is reasonable to delve into at this point
- However, it should be noted that the KJV, NASB, RSV, NIV, NRSV, NEB all translate this about the same way:

KJV: *But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*

NASB: *But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.*

RSV: *I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent.*

NIV: *I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.*

NRSV: *I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent.*

NEB: *I do not permit a woman to be a teacher, nor must woman domineer over man; she should be quiet.*

- The key here is the Greek word “oude”, which is usually translated “or”... the “mistranslation” advocates say that it can be used to initiate indirect discourse, “I do not permit a woman to teach THAT she is in authority over a man.” I have found no example in the New Testament for that use of the word “oude”.
- Therefore, the proposed substitute translation has no support from any of the modern translations, nor from any other example in the Greek NT

#6: Restriction for the home, not the church:

- This rests on the fact that “woman” can be translated “wife”, and “man” can be translated “husband.”
- The problem with this view is that Paul is giving instructions about how people are to conduct themselves in God’s church (3:14-15), and immediately (chapter 3) goes into instructions about the requirements for elders and deacons.
- Also, why should a woman “learn in quietness and full submission,” but teach and lead him in the church; and why should she “not teach or have authority over her husband” at home, but be free to do it in the church?

#7: This is a difficult passage, so forget about it:

- This relies on the basic idea that this passage contradicts the consistently clear teaching in the New Testament that woman and men should have full equality of role in leadership; but this is not clearly or consistently taught anywhere in the New Testament, and actually many verses (Ephesians 5, 1 Corinthians 11 & 14, Colossians 3, etc.) teach the opposite.
- Therefore, is this really such a difficult passage to understand? There is one word that occurs only once in the NT (“have authority”), but that happens frequently. If we considered every passage which had words only used once in the NT to be “difficult passages” that should be ignored, we would lose the following verses (underlined words appear only once in NT):

John 11:11 “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.

John 19:34 “Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.”

[After Peter’s sermon on Pentecost] Acts 2:37 “When they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’”

There are hundreds and hundreds of these “single-use” words in the New Testament. But there are enough other Greek writings, and enough help from context, that these verses are not in doubt.

#8: Women should not be pastors or elders:

- This view sees that Paul is actually making just one restriction, namely, the holding of the ecclesiastically authoritative teaching office in the church.
- This may be possible, but the Greek grammar tends toward seeing Paul making two restrictions, not just one (again, the word “oude” means generally, “and not” or “not this NOR that”

#9: Women should not be teach or exercise authority over men in the church:

- This is the simplest reading of Paul.
- See above for the explanation of this view.

B. 1 Timothy 3:1-13

- Immediately after the previous passage, Paul gives instructions for those who are to lead & teach the church spiritually (i.e. “episkopos” or “elders”), and those who are to “serve” the church (“diakonos” or “deacons”)
- vss. 1-7 describe requirements for elders; vss. 8-10 describe requirements for deacons; vs. 11 describes requirements for “women” or “wives” (the Greek can mean either); vss. 12-13 resumes describing requirements for deacons. Thus the structure is as follows

A: vs. 1-7 “elders”

B: vs. 8-10 “deacons”

B': vs. 11 “women” or “wives”

B: vs. 12-13 “deacons”

Question: if the word should be translated “wives” in vs. 11, why are there requirements for the wives of deacons BUT NOT for the wives of elders? Perhaps, therefore, Paul is giving instructions about women deacons.

However, this should be kept in context: chapter 2 just got done saying that women should not “teach or have authority over men”, therefore, did not teach or exercise authority, but were merely visible servants in the church

C. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

1. Headcoverings & Timeless Principles: This passage contains some (almost universally) unapplied portions (i.e. “head coverings”) along with some timeless principles (female submission to male authority in the church, and the visible manifestations of that submission) which Paul bases on God’s original purposes in creation
2. Selective Literalism?? Critics say “If you don’t have headcoverings, why believe in the submission of women to male leadership?” These critics are suggesting “selective literalism”... sometimes we take the Bible literally, sometimes we don’t
3. Exegesis (cf. Thomas Schreiner, Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, p. 124-139)

What Is the Adornment for Women in this Passage?

- Two possible suggestions: 1) Paul desires Corinthian women to wear shawls; 2) Paul objects to women wearing their hair hanging down, loose; he wants them to follow the usual custom of piling their hair on their heads when in public; for wearing one’s hair loose in public was a sign of loose morality (See Numbers 5:18... a woman suspected of adultery was to loosen her hair)
- Paul was probably talking about some kind of shawl, however... this does best justice to the Greek word for “cover” in this passage
- The exact nature of the covering is not as important as the REASON why Paul wants Corinthian women to adorn themselves a certain way

The Meaning of the Word “Head” in 11:3

vs. 3 *“Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”*

- Paul consistently used the word “head” to mean “one in authority over”:

Ephesians 1:22-23 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Colossians 2:9-10 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

- THEREFORE, 1 Corinthians 11:3 is teaching that “The one in authority over every man is Christ, and the one in authority over every woman is man, and the one in authority over Christ is God.”
- THE TRINITY: God is “in authority” over Christ, not because He is in essence higher than Christ, but because Christ willingly submitted Himself to the Father to accomplish the plan of salvation:

1 Corinthians 15:28 *When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.*

- Submission therefore is not at all demeaning, but rather accomplishes God’s saving purpose in history... Christ’s glad submission to the will of the Father is therefore a perfect example of the kind of submission all of us should have to any authorities in our lives

Adornment Consistent With Verse 3 (11:4-6)

- Verses 4-6 flow from the theological principle of vs. 3: since Christ is the authority over man, man OUGHT NOT TO cover his physical head; since man is the authority over woman, woman OUGHT TO cover her head (This is plainly the logic Paul uses... the question is, what does head covering have to do with this principle?)
- The general idea is that it is disgraceful for a man to dress like a woman, and it is disgraceful for a woman to dress like a man. Paul plainly says this in vs. 14 & 15 concerning men looking like women:

vs. 14-15 *Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, ¹⁵ but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.*

- Therefore, in vss. 4-6, Paul is saying that, for a man to cover his physical head would be to dishonor his spiritually authoritative head, Christ... for a woman not to cover her physical head would be to dishonor her spiritually authoritative head, man
- Therefore, the abiding principle is that physical adornment should be in a manner consistent with the order God set up in creation... clothes, head coverings, etc. are cultural issues that change with each era, but the abiding principle does not change; one must not dishonor one’s spiritually authoritative head by dressing in a manner inconsistent with gender

Bringing Honor to One’s Head (vs. 7-10)

- In vss. 7-10, Paul gives further arguments why Corinthian men should not dress like Corinthian women, and Corinthian women should not dress like Corinthian men: man is the image and glory of God, woman is the image and glory of man

- Of course, Paul knew full well that women were also created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). The focus is on the word “glory” which appears in both phrases... in all cases in this passage, the word “glory” is related directly to “honor”... woman was created from man “for him”, i.e. to be a helper suitable for him AND to honor him... Verse 15 shows us this understanding of “glory”... long hair brings honor to the woman, and to be without it is a disgrace (as if her head were shaved, like a man)

vs. 15 “...if a woman has long hair, it is her glory.”

- vss. 8-9 enhances this concept: man was the source of woman (“for man did not come from woman, but woman from man”), and woman was created to help man in his calling (“neither was man created for woman, but woman for man”)... again note that Paul connects his reasoning here not from the Fall into sin, but from God’s original purpose in creation
- vs. 10 is a difficult verse, but again it commands that a woman’s adornment should show a proper understanding of authority. “Because of the angels” is a difficult verse for all of the commentators; perhaps it means that good angels are observing and helping with the Corinthian worship

Concluding Arguments For Head Coverings (vs. 13-16)

- In these final verses, Paul underscores the interdependence of male and female to accomplish the plan of God... man needs woman, woman needs man (vs. 11-12)
- Therefore, since man needs woman, he needs her as a woman; and woman needs man as a man
- “The very nature of things” (vs. 14) teaches us the basic differences between male and female (cf. Romans 1:18-27 where people try to deny gender distinctions)... these basic differences are part of God’s plan for the world and must be upheld
- vs. 16 shows again that this was not a cultural issue, but included every church in the world... not just Corinthian churches... the way the principle got worked out may have been different in every place, but the basic principle was to be upheld: men are to dress like men, women are to dress like women, both are to carry themselves in a way that brings honor to their spiritually authoritative head

D. 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 On Woman Prophets in the Church

- There were certainly female prophets throughout the history of the Bible
- NOTE: Some people wonder why God would allow women to prophesy but not to teach. The answer lies in the basic difference between the gifts. However, prophecy is different than teaching in that it is essentially PASSIVE... the Spirit moves in someone, they open their mouth and speak the word God put there. Prophecy was thus the passive receiving of a word or revelation directly from God, was inerrant, and involved no reasoning or training

on the part of the prophet. God used the murderous King Saul and his men (1 Sam. 19), Balaam's donkey (Num. 22), and the evil high priest Caiaphas (John 11:51) to prophesy. Teaching is a different gift, is exercised differently, and, in the wisdom of God, is restricted differently than prophecy.

- In 1 Corinthians 14:34, Paul places some requirement on women, that they are not allowed to speak in the church but must be silent. This should not be seen as a universal prohibition against women speaking in church, for in 1 Cor. 11:5 & 13, Paul give regulations for how women are to pray & prophesy, and these regulations make the most sense in they are seen in the corporate setting... women were praying and prophesying in church
- So what was this restriction? It seems best to relate it to the “careful weighing” of the prophecies Paul commands in 29:

1 Corinthians 14:29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.

- The “careful weighing” of the prophecies was done to be sure that the prophecies were doctrinally accurate, and in harmony with past prophecies. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 & 1 John 4:1-4 describes this same “weighing” calling it “testing”:

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.

1 John 4:1-4 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

- This “testing” or “weighing” in a time of corporate worship was a form of authoritative doctrinal assessment, and Paul commanded that it be done by men.
- Many scholars believe that this kind of immediate prophecy from God ended when the New Testament was completed. Even if this were true, the abiding principle is clear: female submission to male authority in the corporate life of the church.

IX. Encouragement to Women to Minister As God Directs

A. Service of Women Indispensable

1. Women are indispensable to the healthy life of the church

2. No woman should ever feel that her ministry is not essential and vital because she cannot “teach or have authority over a man”...that kind of feeling is exactly the same as 1 Corinthians 12:15-16

1 Corinthians 12:15-16 *If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.*

3. Proportionately, only a “few” men are called to be teachers and elders/leaders:

James 3:1 *Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.*

Just as men who are not “called” to be teachers/leaders should not feel that they are unimportant, neither should women feel that way

4. Every single member of the Body must use his/her spiritual gift for the Body to become mature and complete (Ephesians 4:16)

Ephesians 4:16 *From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

B. Service of Women Varied & Spiritually Gifted

1. Women are called to all of the following in pursuit of their spiritually gifted ministries

teaching [both younger women (Titus 2:4) and children (Timothy’s mother & grandmother taught him doctrine from Scripture...2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15)], evangelism, prayer, service, stewardship, administration, encouragement, hospitality, good works, faith, etc.

Titus 2:3-5 *Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴ Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.*

2. This calling on the lives of women is incredibly rich and varied
3. There is no reason for any man or woman to say, “Because I cannot do _____, I won’t do my spiritual gift ministry!” Each part should function as God has appointed.

C. Service of Women Will Be Rewarded Fully

1. God will reward everyone according to what he has done

Romans 2:6 “God will give to each person according to what he has done.”

2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

2. God will not accept any excuses from people who hide their “talent” in the ground, but will demand a full accounting for every ability and resource
3. God will give gracious and rich rewards for every act of service; none will be forgotten

Hebrews 6:10 “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work, or the love you have shown as you help his people and continue to help them.”