

I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN

Part Two

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

I. Timothy 2:12

Tonight we're going to continue to look at this issue of woman in ministry, and the first thing I want to do is examine very carefully the primary verse that's used to limit the ministry of women. Let me start off by saying, I find it ironic (*maybe even a wee bit hypocritical*) that the very people who demand strict obedience to (*their view of*) this passage, pay no attention to other verses of Scripture which require certain things—some of which are not only in the same letter to Timothy, but which immediately precede the comments on women not teaching! For example, just before making his infamous statement regarding women not teaching, Paul said:

*I will therefore that **men pray** every where, **lifting up holy hands**, without wrath and doubting. 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;*

I. Timothy 2:8-9

How many men who demand full obedience to Paul's admonition about women not teaching, follow his admonition to "lift up holy hands" when they pray, let alone *demand* full obedience by all the men of the congregation.

Paul also says that men should pray "without wrath and doubting". The term that was translated "doubting" here does not convey the same idea in the Greek as we get when we read the word in English. Paul isn't saying that men should pray "in faith" as opposed to praying "in doubt and unbelief". A better translation is: found in the: "*I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing*" (Revised Standard Version). Paul is saying that men should not pray with a mind that is angry and heated with debate. How many men demand obedience to this admonition?

Next, Paul tells the women to dress in "modest apparel". There are very few ministers today who demand that the women dress "modestly". Heck, most ministers don't even demand this of their own wives! Of course, the question is: Who is *defining* the term "modest" for us? One person's idea of modesty is another person's idea of prudishness. Most of today's Christians—both men and women—let the surrounding culture tell them what's proper to wear, which is a joke, since our culture is constantly promoting sexual lust, homosexuality, and a unisex world view, when it comes to fashion.

I'll tell you what it means for a woman to *dress modestly* in the eyes of God. It means to dress in a way that *does not* incite lust in the men who look at you—and that excludes about 80% of today's fashions. It also means to dress in a way that *does not* draw an inordinate amount of attention to one's self, which again excludes most of today's fashion lines. Oh, and we can't forget another exhortation of Paul, which he explains the proper behavior and decorum of women in public worship to the believers at Corinth:

But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

I. Corinthians 11:5

Except for the Mennonites and various other groups from the Anabaptists tradition, nobody pays any attention to this admonition from Paul. There are some other pesky little directives in the New Testament which nobody pays any attention to because they find them culturally irrelevant, but that's not my main point here.

In addition to ignoring many of the admonitions of Paul in the New Testament, the same ones who demand obedience to Paul's words about women not teaching and remaining "silent", participate in all kinds of things that are extra-Biblical, yet they don't seem to notice or care. The same people who are ready to fight to the death to stop women from moving in any kind of spiritual authority, couldn't care less about the fact that *virtually everything* they do in a typical "church service" is completely without Scriptural support!

The very existence of church buildings, let alone using them as gathering places, is not supported by a single Biblical text. The same is true of deacon boards, congregational business meetings, Sunday gatherings, the Sunday oration (*ie: sermon*), orders of service, the current view/role of the pastor, voting in the pastor, worship teams, Christian Education, youth groups/pastors (*or any age segregation*)—oh, and we can't forget about the celebrations of Christmas and Easter!

None of this came from the Scripture. Literalists *ignore* Paul's admonitions all the time and don't think twice about it. They practice Christianity in ways that are extra-Biblical (*and sometimes un-Biblical*) without a second thought. None of *this* bothers them. But let a woman try to exercise some gift she has received from God and the story changes. All of a sudden these same people are very concerned about staying within the bounds of Scripture. That's called swallowing camels and straining at gnats. It's also called hypocrisy. There's much more Scriptural justification for including women in ministry than there is for the majority of what passes for Christianity, or "church" in these days—you can be sure of that!

Why are women ministers such a divisive issue? I'm not sure I know the complete answer to that question. I believe part of the answer can be found in the original fall, and the resulting curse. However, one thing I am sure of: it's *not* because male religious leaders have such a high view of Scripture they are making sure they are obeying it. If that was the case, they wouldn't be doing (*or not doing, as the case may be*) so many of the things I have just mentioned. Those who say they are just trying to be "Biblical" should explain why they are *so particular* in their "Biblicalness".

Those who believe a woman should never teach or be in a position of spiritual authority, and who base this view on *one* passage of Scripture (*I. Tim. 2:12*), are assuming certain things from Paul's words in that passage which simply are not there.

First, they are assuming that if a woman "teaches" a man, that in and of itself *equals* usurping authority over a man.

Secondly, they assume that the English phrase, "usurp authority over a man" means "*be a pastor*".

Thirdly, they assume that what Paul means when he says a woman should not usurp authority, is *identical* to what today's pastors do every Sunday morning—namely, teach the Scripture to the people of God.

None of these assumptions are correct, and none of them are found in the passage in I. Timothy 2:12. The first assumption is debunked by the fact that a woman (Priscilla) did in fact “teach” a man (Apollos) about the Christian faith. Moreover, Apollos was not just any ordinary man. He was himself a brilliant and eloquent minister.

The second assumption is wrong because none of the believers who received ministry gifts in the Early Church—including the gift of the pastor/teacher—claimed authority *over* the rest of the congregation. So Paul wasn't talking about women rising up and usurping the authority of the beloved pastor.

The third assumption is wrong because the idea of one man standing before a crowd of believers once a week, in order to present a religious oration (*ie: sermon*), didn't even enter the minds of people until hundreds of years after Paul wrote his letter to Timothy.

Whatever Paul meant when he said—“*I suffer not a woman to teach...but to be in silence*—we must not insist on interpreting it in the context of today's culture, which is so different than the culture of that time. Nor should we interpret what he said within the framework of our modern church structures and practices, all of which would be totally foreign to Paul, as well as to those of the Early Church.

Likewise, we must be careful not to interpret what Paul said in such a way that it contradicts what he taught in other passages. For example, as I just mentioned: in **Acts 18:26** we have a woman (Priscilla) teaching a man (Apollos). Also, in **I. Cor. 11:5** we have women praying and prophesy out loud in a corporate assembly.

Finally, we must not view what Paul said in such a way that it violates one of the fundamental rules of interpretation, which is that you never build a theology on just *one* verse of Scripture. This rule must especially be applied to what Paul said in I. Timothy 2:12 because the Greek term which is translated “usurp authority over” in the KJV, is a very unusual word, even in ancient Greek language. The term is “*authenteo*” (ow-then-the'-o), and it only occurs *once* in the entire Bible. Without other examples of how this word is used in the Greek Text, interpreters are left with a bit of a puzzle as to what Paul really intended to express. Consequently, they must go outside the Scripture and examine how the term was used in ancient Greek literature.

As if this was not a complicated enough task, the situation becomes even more complicated by the bias of the translators. When it comes to *authenteo*, we are in the same situation I described last week regarding *Junia*. The interpretation is colored by the theological positions of the scholars who are translating it.

Those who are against women in ministry claim it simply means “to have authority over” someone or something. Those who believe it is acceptable for women to minister, claim it carries a much more forceful and negative meaning. They say it means to *take* authority wrongly and/or to exercise that authority in a domineering way. Thus, once again, different versions have translated *authenteo* in different ways. Only the King James brings out the *controlling* aspect of the authority in question.

KJV - “*usurp authority over*”
NAS - “*to exercise authority over*”
ASV - “*to have dominion over*”
NIV - “*to have authority over*.”
NASB & ESV - “*to assume authority over*”

Scholars and theologians in both camps have scoured ancient Greek documents to provide “proof” for their opposing views. I have read many articles from both perspectives and I believe the authority Paul was referring to was not authority in general, but a very negative, domineering authority which was directly connected to the false worship that went on in Ephesus at that time.

But before I get into that, I want to say that there are several words in the Greek language that express the idea of having authority over others in a general way. The most prominent one is the noun, “*exousia*” and its corresponding verb, “*exousiazo*”. If I counted correctly, *exousia* is used 104 times in the New Testament. The rest of the words for authority are:

<u>Nouns</u>	<u>Verbs</u>
~ <i>epitage</i> - 7 times	~ <i>exousiazo</i> - 7 times
~ <i>huperoche</i> - 2 times	~ <i>katexousiazo</i> - 3 times
~ <i>dunastes</i> - 3 times	~ <i>authenteo</i> - 1 time

Exousia is rendered “to have authority over” in English translations an overwhelming majority of the time. For examples of this, see I. Cor. 7:4 & 11:10; Matt. 8:8-9 & 20:25; Luke 22:25. A few examples of other words which are translated “authority” are where Paul tells Timothy at the beginning of his letter to pray for “...*kings, and for all that are in authority (**huperache**); that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life...*” (2:2). Also, when Paul tells Titus to “...*exhort, and rebuke with all authority (**epitage**)*” (Titus 2:15).

With all the choices available to convey a general sense of “having authority over” someone, I believe it’s highly unlikely that Paul would choose such an obscure term like *authenteo* to convey precisely the same meaning as *exousia*. It’s much more likely that he used this obscure term to indicate an especially negative kind of authority.

The key to understanding what Paul meant when he said women must be “silent” and not “teach” lies in understanding the context of the *entire* epistle. As you read the whole letter, it becomes clear that Paul was addressing some specific problems in this congregation. In order to understand what was going on, we have to look at the clues that are found in the letter itself. Then we must combine what we find with the knowledge of that culture which is revealed in other parts of the Scripture, as well as in recorded history.

As just a little background information, Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to look after the new congregation. It was Paul’s intention to return to Ephesus eventually, probably because he had received a message from Ephesus, describing some problems that were beginning to arise. Since there is no record of the message Paul received, we don’t know precisely what the problem was. We only have his *answer*. It’s like listening to someone talk on the phone with another person—you can only hear half the conversation. So you have to fill in the blanks by listening closely to what’s being said by the person you can hear. Likewise, we have to look closely at Paul’s response and try and fill in some of the blanks.

*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.*

I. Timothy 3:14-15

Until Paul could return to Ephesus personally and help Timothy correct the problems, he gives Timothy some advise on how to deal with the issues he was facing. He also gives instructions on how the believers in that fellowship should *behave* when they come together for worship. What were some of the problems?

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that **thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine. Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.***

I. Timothy 1:1-4

One problem was that “some” in the fellowship had begun to teach false doctrine, religious fables and endless genealogies. Paul tells Timothy to warn both those who are teaching these things and those who are listening to them, to stop it.

*This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: **Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.***

I. Timothy 1:18-20

Another problem had to do with two individuals named Hymenaeus and Alexander, who were blaspheming the name of the Lord. Whatever *they* were doing, it was wicked enough in Paul’s eyes that he decided not to even try to correct. Instead, he turned them over to Satan—the idea being that Satan might bring so much destruction to their lives, they might come to their senses and repent.

*Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. **Them that sin rebuke before all**, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.*

I. Timothy 5:19-21

Here we have a hint of two other issues facing this congregation—accusations and sin. It appears that there was some kind of internal struggle going on. Someone was being accused of something—which means someone else was doing the accusing. Also, there was a problem with “sin” in the congregation. Paul tells Timothy to rebuke those who are sinning *publicly*, so the rest of the fellowship will acquire a proper fear of the Lord.

Now *that’s* a novel approach to sin in today’s “seeker friendly” world, isn’t it? I wonder how many “Saddle Back Sams” would return to a Rick Warren’s church if they were called out in front of the whole congregation and *publicly* rebuked for some sin they were practicing? This one admonition *alone* is enough to totally destroy the whole concept of a “seeker friendly—which actually means “sin friendly”—church environment.

And let me interject something here, for those who think Timothy was the leader of this assembly in the same way today’s “pastors” are leaders of *their* assemblies. If Timothy was a “pastor” as we understand the term today, there wouldn’t have been any false doctrine being taught....unless *he* was the one teaching it. There wouldn’t have been any fables being taught....unless *he* was the one teaching them. The only way a situation could arise where false doctrines and fables were being introduced into the assembly would be if *everyone* was free to teach and preach in the gatherings.

Timothy knew the Scripture well. There is no doubt that he knew the difference between the false doctrine that was coming forth in that fellowship, and the true doctrine of the Hebrew Scriptures. He also knew the difference between those errors and what he had learned from Paul. If he was your typical 20th Century “pastor” you can be sure that he would have *asserted* his own authority and taken control of that situation.

Do you know *why* he waited for Paul to tell him what to do? He waited for Paul’s advise because he didn’t want to *usurp* the headship of Jesus Christ over that church. He knew that he was not the “head” of those believers—Jesus Christ was their Head. He didn’t think or talk like today’s pastors, who don’t seem to know the difference between authority and *authoritarianism*. He never once viewed that group of believers as “*his*” church and he had no desire to insert himself between them and their Head. But when Paul wrote to him, he instructed Timothy take the spiritual authority God had granted him and *use it* to stop the confusion that was swallowing up that congregation. At that point, knowing he had the backing of Paul and the Holy Spirit, Timothy exercised his authority.

*Now **the end of the commandment** is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; **Desiring to be teachers of the law;** understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.*

I. Timothy 1:5-10

Another problem was that some who really knew *nothing* about the Law of Moses, were trying to set themselves up as teachers of that Law. Paul informs them, through Timothy, that the Law is not for the righteous but for the sinner. In other words, the Law has no place in a New Testament assembly because we are made righteous *judicially* by the blood of Christ, and we walk in *actual* righteousness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Since Paul mentions two men by name, who were involved in blasphemy, and since he also mentions those who were trying to be teachers of the Law of Moses, most preachers and Bible commentators just assume it was *Jewish men* who were introducing Jewish false doctrines and Jewish fables in to that church. However, I believe that's not the case at all. If Jewish men were the main problem, why would Paul tell the *women* to keep silent? Why would he tell the *women* to learn quietly? Why would he tell the *women* not to teach? I think it was the women in that assembly who were causing the problems.

In order grasp what kind of false doctrine and fables were being taught in that church, and *who* was teaching them, we must have a basic understanding of the culture of Ephesus at that time. For this, we turn to the book of Acts. In Acts chapter 19 we are given a small glimpse of that culture.

*About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that **the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.**" When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "**Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!**" Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater....The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. But when they realized he was a Jew, **they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"** The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that **the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven?**"*

Acts 19:23-29 & 33-35 (NIV)

King James readers will notice that the NIV and other translations use the Greek name of this goddess (*Artemis*) instead of the Latin/Roman name (*Diana*). That's alright—it's the same false god. This account gives us some very valuable information.

Ephesus was not just some small secular city in a far off land, which nobody paid much attention to. It was a very famous city—actually it was the fourth largest city in the world at that time—and it was known throughout the entire world for its *religious culture*. People would make pilgrimages to Ephesus from all over the world, specifically for the purpose of worshipping at this temple.

Religion was a very important and intricate part of the social life of Ephesus, as can be seen by: (1) the fact that the craftsmen who made and sold “shrines” of Artemis made a “good income” from that trade; and (2) this is where the great temple of Artemis, which was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world, stood; and (3) the Ephesians saw themselves as the “guardians” of that temple. So when the gospel began to make a real impact on the city, those who obtained wealth through Artemis worship, along with those who simply wanted to remain faithful to that religion, began to rise up and defend the goddess.

Due to the intense religious nature of the city, I don't think it's either illogical or outrageous to suspect that at least some of the false doctrines and fables that were creeping into the Ephesian church, had to do with the worship of Artemis. The story (ie: fable) of Artemis, as well as the actual beliefs and rituals of Artemis worship, which were at *the center* of the social life of Ephesus, is not recorded in the Scripture. However, it *is* recorded in history.

According to the “*New Unger's Bible Dictionary*”, the “fable” (story) of the Ephesian people and the goddess they worshiped goes like this—the *people* were descended from a fierce tribe of *warrior women* known as Amazons, who believed themselves wiser and superior to men. These warrior women founded the city of Ephesus and established the worship of the fertility goddess, Artemis. Genealogies—which Paul calls “endless” in I. Timothy—linked the people (and especially the women) of Ephesus to these fabled ancestors. So the idea of *female superiority* was deeply ingrained in the culture and world view of Ephesus.

Gnosticism, which focuses on obtaining “secret spiritual knowledge” in order to obtain salvation, had also been mixed with Artemis worship at that time. This resulted in the teaching that Eve was created *first*, and far from being deceived as a result of eating the forbidden fruit, was spiritually enlightened by it. She received special secret knowledge, which she then passed on to Adam after *she* created him.

Part of the worship that went on in the great temple of Artemis included *religious sex*. Female priestesses, who were called “mediators” because they were functioning as a *channel* for Artemis, to pass on the same kind of secret knowledge that Eve received, to the men, during the act of religious sex. Artemis, was actually a *fertility* goddess. Ancient Greek inscriptions and sculptors of her show her with several rows of breasts going horizontally across her front, and a row of babies going vertically down her front. Her name literally meant “*safe*”—the idea being that she made faithful women fertile and kept them safe through the process of childbirth.

When we understand what kind of religious worship went on in Ephesus, we start to better understand some of the things Paul said to Timothy. For instance, Paul's comment about Jesus being the only “Mediator” between God and man (I. Tim 2:5), is a direct attack on the whole women mediator concept in Artemis worship. Now, before you chock this all up to wild speculation, consider what the apostle John wrote concerning what was happening in two of the churches in Asia, an area of the world which was also caught up in the worship of Artemis.

[Pergamos] *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

Revelation 2:14-15

The church of Pergamos is specifically said to have people in that congregation who were teaching others to “commit fornication”. Since we live in a secular society today, when we see the term fornication, we tend to only think in terms of secular adultery, extra-marital or pre-marital sex. But I believe John is talking about committing fornication in a *religious* setting, just like what was happening at Ephesus.

[Thyatira] *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.*

Revelation 2:20

John gets even more specific when it comes to the church at Thyatira. Like Pergamos, this congregation was getting involved in religious sex. And notice who was leading the people into it. It was a *woman* who claimed to be a prophetess! Are you starting to see the picture yet.? A woman was *teaching* the men in that fellowship to commit religious fornication!

This is where our study of that Greek term, *authenthein* begins to take on a whole new light. For you see, the women priests who served in the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, who were called “mediators”, and who passed secret knowledge to the men during religious sex, were also called “*authenia*”, which is the same word Paul used, only in another form.

John Chrysostom (347-407) was one of the dominant Church Fathers and patriarch of Constantinople. In his commentary on 1 Timothy he used *authenia* to express sexual license. Clement of Alexandria (d. 215) tells in his writings of love feasts that were turned into sexual orgies. Clement calls a group of women who are practicing such behavior *authenia*—which is the same term Paul used, except Paul used the verb form of the word. Another writer named Moeris, also from the second century, advised his students to use another word instead of *authenthein* because the word is too coarse.

The point is, it’s very probable that when Paul wrote to Timothy that women should not usurp authority over the men, the word *authenthein* had not yet taken on the meaning we associate with it today. Rather, it meant something totally different. It had to do with women exercising power over the men through *religious seduction*.

Again, this may sound far-fetched to those of us who have never been exposed to such disgusting religious practices. But engaging in this type of thing was as common for them in those days, as it is for us today to go to Wall Mart. Religious sex—which Christianity views as evil, and as fornication, was not at all strange to these people. Neither was it evil in their eyes. It was holy, and it was their way of life. It’s all they knew.

Now that we understand the cultural background of the Ephesian church, we can look at this much-debated passage a little better.

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.

I. Timothy 2:12-15

Most of those in the “women-can’t-teach” group maintain that after Paul says women can’t teach (doing so equals taking authority over men), he uses the *order of creation* to prove his point. Man was created first, so he is the one who has the authority—and besides, it was the woman who got deceived and transgressed. The point is, God gave man the authority and we can all see *the result* of Eve not submitting to that authority. She ended up “teaching” Adam to sin and in the process, *she* wrecked the whole creation.

I don’t believe that’s what Paul is saying at all.

First of all, I believe he is attacking the whole Gnostic false teaching that the woman were superior to men because the woman was created first, and because it was the woman who received spiritual enlightenment first. Paul is hitting at all the *female aspects* of the doctrines and the fables that are connected with Artemis worship.

Secondly, I don’t think too many people have really read and understood the Creation and the Fall. Where do you suppose Adam was when Eve was being deceived? For many years I had this picture in my mind where Adam was off somewhere communing with God, or doing something, and Eve sort of sneaks over to the forbidden tree, just to look at it. Then the Serpent talks to her and deceives her into eating the fruit. Then, after she has fallen, she goes and finds Adam and brings him back to the tree and talks him into eating the fruit. But that’s not the way it went down.

*When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, **who was with her**, and he ate it.*

Genesis 3:6 NIV

Wait a minute! Adam was *there* when Eve fell! What in the world was he doing? Didn’t he realize he should be watching over the “weaker vessel”? Didn’t he realize that since he was created first, he was in authority, that he was her “head”, that he was her “covering” and that he should be keeping an eye on her to make sure she didn’t get into trouble? Apparently he didn’t realize these things. Apparently he didn’t see himself as her spiritual covering. Apparently he didn’t see himself as having authority over her. And apparently he didn’t think she was more less intelligent or more prone to deception than he was. Anyone want to take a guess as to *why* Adam wasn’t watching over his woman? Or why he wasn’t making sure she was moving under his spiritual covering?

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God **blessed them**, and God said **unto them**, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

Genesis 1:27-28

God gave them a *joint* commission—be fruitful, subdue the earth and have dominion over all the beasts of the earth. He didn't tell Adam to do these things, and then tell Eve to follow her husband or submit to her husband as he does them. Eve was not in a subordinate position to Adam, as far as spiritual authority, before the fall. They were one unity, one in purpose, one in spirit and one *in authority* over the whole earth.

Since the woman was not “under the authority” of the man in the beginning, Paul would not use this as an example as to why she should *remain* under his authority now. Again, if the creation of Adam first was God's way of saying the woman should *never* be in a position of authority *over* a man, why did He go against His own divine order throughout the Old Testament? Why did He allow women to have positions of authority over the men of Israel at times. Certainly this would cause confusion regarding spiritual authority.

Paul is not using the order of creation to keep the Ephesian sisters from teaching anything or moving in any kind of authority. Rather, he is using the truth of Creation and the Fall to expose the false doctrine and the fables connected with Artemis worship, which some women were apparently trying to bring into that fellowship. Paul is telling these woman that they are not superior to the men, and in fact have been deceived, just like the first woman was deceived. Therefore, they should *stop* trying to teach anything to anyone until they themselves have been delivered from all these doctrines and fables. They should sit down and quietly learn the truth.

What Paul says next, about the woman being saved through childbearing, is very hard to decipher or understand. We know he is *not* saying that a women can actually receive forgiveness of sins and justification by getting pregnant and having a baby. If he were preaching that, he would have been a heretic, not an apostle. Well then, what did he mean? Various interpretations have been proposed:

(1) Man sinned and so men were condemned to painful labor. Women sinned and so women were condemned to pain in childbearing. Both men and women, however, can be saved through trusting Jesus Christ and obeying Him

(2) Women who fulfill their God-given roles are demonstrating true commitment and obedience to Christ. One of the most important roles for a wife and mother is to care for her family.

(3) The childbearing mentioned here refers to the birth of Jesus Christ. Women (and men) are saved spiritually because of the most important birth, that of Christ himself.

(4) From the lessons learned through the trials of childbearing, women can develop qualities that teach them about love, trust, submission, and service.

Though any one of these could be the correct interpretation, I think that if what I have presented tonight is true, if Paul was speaking directly to the false doctrines and fables of Artemis worship, which were being introduced into the Ephesian church by *woman* who had not yet been fully delivered from their former religious training and who were trying to be teachers, then it's very likely that Paul's statement about the women being saved in child bearing also is an attack on Artemis worship.

The actual Greek phrase which has been translated, "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing" literally reads "But she will be safe throughout the childbearing"—or as the Phillips Bible translates it: "*Women will come safely through childbirth*". This is actually a play on words. Paul is telling these woman who haven't let go of their former religion that they don't need Artemis to protect them during childbirth, "*if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*"

We must remember that: (1) Artemis was a *fertility* goddess. The people prayed to her especially with regards to bearing children; (2) her name meant "safe" and was directly linked to *safety* in child bearing; and (3) death during child birth was a fairly common thing in those days. So having the blessing and the protection of the great fertility goddess was very important to pregnant women.

One of the more subtle points of both this passage and the one in I. Corinthians 14, where he tells women to keep quite, is often missed by those who forbid women to teach. Compare the two statements:

"Let the woman *learn* in silence with all subjection." (I. Tim. 2:11)

"And if they will *learn* any thing, let them ask their husbands at home..." (I. Cor. 14:35)

Notice who Paul is referring to here—women who were there to *learn*. If they had "questions", then they were obviously not there to teach, nor were they qualified or gifted to teach. Wives with questions were not to cause a public disturbance. Rather, they were to ask their husbands their questions at home because it is "a shame for women to speak in the church" (I. Cor. 14:35). In other words, women should not be "chattering" in church, even if it's only to ask a question. They are there to learn and they can speak with their husbands at home.

When Paul said it is a "shame for a women to speak in the church" we have to know that he is not forbidding the women to open their mouths because this would be direct contradiction of his earlier instructions for women when they pray or prophesy.

*But every woman that prayeth or **prophesieth** with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.*

I. Corinthians 11:5

Paul would never instruct women on how to properly prophesy in the gatherings and then turn around and forbid them to even open their mouths. Whenever he places restrictions on women, it is for a specific purpose and it has to do with a specific situation. He's not giving a sweeping commandment for all congregations everywhere, forever.

Again, millions of women in the past (and the present) have been impacted in a very negative way by Paul's words to Timothy. A passage of this importance deserves a very thorough study, and such a study must involve:

- ~ Studying the *context*—what is revealed in the surrounding verses and entire letter.
- ~ Researching the *conditions* and *problems* of those receiving the letter.
- ~ The scripture must be balanced against *other* scriptures in the Bible.
- ~ Finally, we must be very sure that it has been translated correctly.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man (hekastos) to profit withal.

I. Corinthians 12:6-7

In First Corinthians chapter 12, Paul speaks about spiritual gifts. The King James has it that God gives gifts “to every man”. But the Greek term *hekastos* does not mean every man. It means each and every person. The word “man” is not there. Later, in the same chapter, he is still talking about God appointing leaders and appointing every role in the Church through the *gifting* of His Holy Spirit.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

I. Corinthians 12:27-28

Now *you* are the body of Christ, said Paul. And *each one of you* is part of that body. Was Paul talking to just the men? Then he gives a list of gifts—teachers included. Paul does not say, “Some of these gifts are the male gifts, and the rest of them are the female gifts.” God is the one who dispenses His gifts to whomever He chooses. If He gives one of His gifts to a woman and the men around her forbid her to use it, they will answer to God for their wickedness in the day of judgment.