

A FRESH VISION

Of a woman's glorious heritage in Christ

By Joann Yates Lepper

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Written for my daughters Andrea, Juliane, Karyn, and my granddaughter Regina, and for all those men and women in whom the Holy Spirit bears witness that there is something "not right" about suppressing a woman's ministry.

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The front cover was furnished by Andrea. The picture on the inside of the back cover was produced by Tom and Andrea, when together the Schneiders climbed Sundance Mountain in Colorado: he, the photographer; she, the model.

After years of compiling this treatise, all pivotal Hebrew and Greek words are keyed to the **highly respected and widely accepted** Strong's numbering system, using the form of the word listed in Strong's Concordance. Thus, the word *Strong*, followed by a number, designates: James Strong S.T.D., LL.D., *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, With Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries (1988 Christian Heritage Publishing Co. Inc.). Consequently, one need not be a Greek professor to verify the precepts you are about to encounter. A not-too-big investment in Strong's Concordance is all that is needed in order for you to build a solid foundation that cannot be shaken.

If not designated, most Scripture is taken from the NEW OPEN BIBLE, New American Standard Version (NASV) Study Edition (1990, Thomas Nelson, Inc.). Strong's Concordance is keyed to the King James Version, so when another version is quoted the verifying must be done by finding the corresponding chapter and verse in the King James Version (KJV).

The perceptions in this booklet are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Any technical errors including spelling and grammar are my own. All **bold** print for emphasis in quotations of Scripture is my own.

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INTRODUCTION

The truth about God's glorious design for women lies in God's unabridged Word: the original Greek and Hebrew texts of the Bible. Far too often this truth is obfuscated by an English translator and thus remains hidden from the English-speaking people. Uncovering the truth found in the original biblical texts delivers a woman from her second-to-man bondage--imposed upon her by many traditional Christian denominations, the Islamic religion, and Hinduism--thus propelling her into the glorious liberty due a daughter of the Most High King! **This liberty is her due because it is etched in the Blood of Jesus Christ throughout the New Testament.**

A Christian woman, lovingly nurtured by traditional Christian parents or whose father was a strong authority figure, may easily believe that God made the man to lead and the woman to follow simply because her authority figures whom she trusts have told her so, have told her that to question this is tantamount to rebelling against the authority of God's Word over her life. If this belief happens to wound her soul, she remembers the great wealth of Scripture revealing God's overwhelming love for her and so soothes her wounded spirit. Because of her desire to be obedient to her God, she may even promote subordination of other women, not consciously aware that her zeal is not according to her knowledge of God's Word in the original text of the Bible, but according to what she has been told by others to believe.

A Christian woman who is not only well-grounded in Scripture but also is an independent thinker knows God does not let the fact that she is a woman exempt her from testing doctrine to be certain it is of God and not the enemy. She knows the excuse--my husband led me to do it--will not be any more acceptable to God than was Adam's excuse--my wife led me to do it. As she searches for Scripture saying the male was made superordinate and the female made subordinate, she is totally at a loss, and so she is compelled to ask: "Where in Scripture is that *mandate* from God? Where is there a *direct command*: Men alone must lead my Church? In what chapter and verse of the Bible does God authorize males to prevent a female from serving her Lord with *all* of her heart, *all* of her mind, and her good Gifts of the Spirit?" She searches in vain for *one* Scripture stating that God has bound Himself to ordaining only male leaders, or His people to following men only; that at home and in worship a male is greatly privileged by God.

If she searches the Bible cover to cover, she will find not *one* of the above: not *one* Scripture declaring God made the man to lead and the woman to follow, not *one* Scripture affirming males only must lead the New Testament Church, not *one* Word going forth from the mouth of God declaring woman was made to be a lower-rank of creature, not *one* Scripture authorizing a man either to impose limitations on a woman's service to Christ or to quench the Spirit in a woman during public worship!

But she will find man and woman projecting a double image of God at creation. She *will* find an equality--despite the distinctions between male and female--in the Lord. And she *will* find a crystal-clear record of women in the Old and New Testaments who were deliberately chosen by God and anointed spiritual leaders of men and women, thus making them supreme leaders of His people, the Church.

So as beloved children of God, heirs of a heavenly kingdom, we begin to explore for ourselves, to diligently search all the way from Genesis to Revelation so *our* zeal *will* be matched by our first-hand knowledge of God's design for us. And now for the adventure of our lives....

THE DAWN OF CREATION

“While the morning stars sang together,” (Job 38:7) “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.” (Gen. 2:7)

Then the Lord God said, “It is **not good** for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” (Gen. 2:18)

How could anything be **not good** about a perfect dew-fresh Creation filled with wonder and amazement? Why was God not satisfied? Obviously, without the woman Creation was incomplete. Man was incomplete. Without Eve, something was lacking, not right! Otherwise Creation would have been **very good** without her. And God was not completely satisfied until after He had made her. Then, and then only, did God look with **complete** satisfaction and **ultimate** pleasure upon all He had made:

And behold it was **very good**. (Gen. 1:31)

Eve – Image of God

Does it sound as if woman were merely an afterthought? Not so! Chapter One of Genesis reveals: After God had created the heavens and the earth, “God saw that it was **good**” (v. 10), and the vegetation on the earth, “God saw that it was **good**” (v. 12), and the lights in the expanse of the heavens, “God saw that it was **good**” (v. 18), and the sea creatures, “God saw that it was **good**” (v. 21), and the animals, “God saw that it was **good**” (v. 25):

Then God said, “Let us make **man** in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let **them** rule over...all the earth.” (v. 26)

So God planned on making **them**, male and female, all along. God’s “not good...alone” statement emphasizes how very necessary woman was to complete the man, and to cause God to be absolutely delighted as He viewed His Creation.

And God created **Adam** in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created **them**. (Gen. 1:27)

The Hebrew word for man is *Adam*. God used the word *Adam* in both a singular and plural way (similar to our usage of the word *deer*). At first He employed it for man and woman as a unit, later on for the name of the male. But throughout Chapter One of Genesis God used the plural *Adam*: “And God created **Adam** in His own image...male and female He created **them**.” Therefore, man and woman each reflected the image and likeness of God; together they projected a double image of God. God did not give the man full custody of the earth, thus making woman a lower rank of creature; man and woman were given joint custody of the earth, making them **co-rulers**: “let **them** rule over the earth.” We can easily comprehend this, because we are familiar with judges giving parents joint custody of a child, meaning joint responsibility. Various leaders have been known to lament over the loneliness of their vigil, of bearing great responsibility **all alone**. Leading others is always a solitary and frequently lonely task. Loneliness in God’s eyes is obviously not a good thing. And so He made them marriage **partners**.

Observe: From start to finish, God created living creatures on an *ascending* scale beginning with sea creatures and crowning His Creation with **them--Adam** (the human species consisting of male and female). God characterized all things **good** until He made the male who was “**not good...alone**,” who needed the female to make it all “**very good**.” And so when the Apostle Paul explains, “for man was not created because of the woman, but woman because of the man” (1 Cor. 11:9, literal), he actually conveys man’s **need** of woman, that he was insufficient on his own: **not good ...alone**.

Woman is the glory of the man (1 Cor. 11:7), because mankind is the crown of God's Creation, and woman is the pinnacle of that crown.

Our society tends to think of a "helper" as an assistant; but that did not hold true of Adam's helper:

"I will make a help (Hebrew = *'ezer*) **suitable** for him." (Gen 2:18)

The Hebrew word *'ezer* (**one who helps**," Strong 5828) most frequently is used as a reference to God in the Old Testament--thirteen times for God and four times for the military or human protectors, suggesting either superiority or equality.

Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our **help** and our shield. (Ps. 33:20)
Hasten to me, O God! Thou art my **help** and my deliverer.... (Ps. 70:5)
I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from whence does my help come? my **help** comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. (Ps. 121:1-2)

Can God be classified as a subordinate helper? Of course not! He is superior to us in every way. Therefore, there can be **no** subordination implied by *'ezer*. Quite the contrary, based on *'ezer* alone and nothing more, it could be argued that God made a superior helper for Adam. This fact strikes at the very foundation upon which the male hierarchy rests in most traditional denominations, for it nullifies the notion prevalent among traditionalists that since man was made first and named the animals and Eve, he was superordinate and woman subordinate.

It may sound as if Eve *'ezer* were the more powerful of the two, but God said Eve was to be a **suitable** (*knegdwo*) help. The King James Version would have it a "help **meet** for him." *Knegdwo* is defined by the New Open Bible (NASV, p.6) and the respected Brown, Driver, and Briggs* as a help "**corresponding to**" him, or "equal and adequate to himself"--in other words, an equivalent of the **same** kind, a coequal. This, in turn, corresponds with God's making man and woman in the **same** image and likeness of Himself and giving them the **same** dominion.

It comes as a surprise to find that in Eden the husband was told to travel the *full* distance, to leave his father and his mother to be united with his wife. And when we listen to what Jesus has to say about marriage, He confirms that God's design for the primal marriage and His design for New Testament marriage is one and the same:

For this cause **a man shall leave his father and his mother**, and shall **cleave** (Hebrew = *dabaq*) to his wife; and the two shall become **one flesh**. (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5)

"The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David" (1 Sam. 18:1 KJV), so marriage partners could become soul mates. But here God speaks of **one flesh**--physical union only of a husband and wife who retain autonomous minds and souls.

"**Cleave** to his wife." Instead of leading, the man was given the responsibility of holding the marriage together:

"**cleave**—*dabaq*--'to cling, cleave, adhere to, keep close.' This usage reflects the basic meaning of one object's (person's) being joined to another. In this sense, Jeremiah's linen waistcloth 'clung' to his loins, symbolic of Israel 'clinging' to God (Jer. 13:11)."⁺

* "A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament" by Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs (Oxford Clarendon, 1907), pp.617-618

⁺ "Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words" (Thomas Nelson, 1985) p. 37

It is worth noting that in the Jewish customary marriages of the Old Testament, the reverse appeared to be the norm: the wife leaving her father and mother and trailing after and obeying her husband, often living with his family.

There is nothing indefinite about God commanding the husband to cleave to his wife; Scripture clearly attests to this fact. But nowhere in the Creation account does God command the husband to rule over his wife even though the word **rule** is in God's vocabulary, and He used it freely *when it applied*:

And God made...the **greater** light to **rule** the day and the **lesser** light to **rule** the night.
(Gen. 1:16 KJV)
...and let them (male and female) **rule**...over all the earth... (Gen. 1:26)

And so God did create a hierarchy: the sun to rule the day, the moon to rule the night, and man and woman to rule over the earth. God also created a hierarchy of angels. His description, however, does **not** include a male hierarchy--that is, man ruling over woman. How could it, when God made both of them rulers?

Not until *after* the Fall did God apply "rule" to marriage: "Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall **rule** over you." (Gen. 3:16) A Hebrew scholar contends English verbs have a past, present and future tense; whereas, Hebrew verbs show either incomplete or completed action. So Moses in relaying God's Word to us had two options: (1) "he ruled over you," or (2) "he is ruling over you." The fact that his ruling is not a completed action but an incomplete or continuing action verb has been exploited by some scholars who say Adam was to continue his past rule over Eve which began in Eden. Thus they take advantage of a function of the Hebrew language. Conversely, other scholars argue that it should be rendered, "He **shall** rule over you," a future imperative--this would make the statement mandatory with the force of a command addressed to all husbands to rule over their wives. Walter C. Kaiser* informs us, "the Hebrew grammar will not allow this construction. The verb contains a simple statement of futurity. There is not one hint of obligation or normativity in this verb."

Kaiser gives his reasons: "The Hebrew reads: 'You are **turning** away to your husband and he will rule over you.'" He found the Hebrew *teshugah*, almost universally translated as "desire," previously was rendered as "**turning**," not desire, in the twelve known ancient versions of the Bible: the Greek Septuagint, the Syriac Peshitta, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Old Latin, the Sahidic, the Bohairic, the Ethiopic, the Arabic, Aquila's Greek, Symmach's Greek, Theodotion's Greek. Thus the Hebrew conveys: "You are turning away (from God) to your husband, and (as a result) he will rule over you (take advantage of you)." "This text only predicts how some husbands will take advantage of their wives, when the wives turn to their husbands after turning away from God..."* "Christ," however, "redeemed us from the curse of the Law and reconciled us to God." (Gal. 3:13) So a Christian marriage is to be based upon Christ's ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:17-18), not the curse under which we are no longer.

Subordination of the woman is not spoken of in the Creation account, not written there in black and white, and so those who say man was made to lead and woman to follow are arguing from silence. Not only is the word *rule* absent from God's definition of the primal relationship of husband and wife, but there is also another thing missing, something quite conspicuous by its absence, that God would have said if Adam had been left in charge of Eve.

To illustrate, parents are *in charge* of their children, and if they *passively* watch a child drink poison, they are guilty of neglecting their duty. Similarly, Adam was with Eve, and he did not try to

* *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* (InterVarsity Press, 1988) pp.34-35

stop her as she ate the forbidden fruit: “She also gave some to her husband, **who was with her**, and he ate it.” (Gen. 3:6) Look closely at God’s words of chastisement: “**because you listened to your wife and ate...**” (Gen. 3:17) Had Adam been left *in charge* of Eve--been given **authority** over her--he would have become guilty of neglecting his duty while he *passively* watched her eat of the forbidden fruit. Yet, God *specifically* faulted Adam for a sin of *commission*; not one word was breathed by God about a sin of *omission*: failure to exercise authoritative command!

A CURSE AND A PROMISE

The most exquisite, carefree, brilliant, and gifted woman of all time wanted more, and so she turned away from her God in order to get it, away from the God Who had been so delighted with her. Basically, in her disobedience, Eve said “No!” to God. How the angels in heaven must have shuddered! The whole of Creation began to groan mightily in pain (Rom. 8:22), and to this very day, we still are crying. (Rev. 7:17) Yet, “Adam was not deceived” (1 Tim. 2:14): He **deliberately** partook of the transgression. He knew exactly what he was doing.

The Fall resulted in a *painful* deterioration of relationships and things. The man’s source, the ground, began to bear thorns and thistles, becoming a source of pain and frustration to him. The woman’s source, the man, began to rule over her, becoming a source of pain and frustration to her. Pain entered into motherhood. (Gen. 3:14-19) Ruling is a continuous action--that is, a **process**. Man’s ruling over woman definitely is not a continuation of a process that originated in Eden. On the contrary, the process of man ruling over woman is introduced along with other penalties for sin. Consistency holds that if prior to the Fall the serpent had **not** traveled on its belly and the ground had **not** borne thorns and thistles, then man had **not** ruled over woman. Moreover, “Dawn of Creation” firmly established that God made a **ruling helper** for Adam!

And the Lord God said to the serpent...I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel. (Gen. 3:14-15)

God promised them a second chance at paradise, a paradise reserved for them in heaven, never again to be lost! (1 Pet. 1:4) The creature made a little lower than angels would be set upon the throne with Christ. (Heb. 2:7; Rev. 3:21)

Sarah – To Whom God Made a Promise

God made a promise to Abraham, but He made one to Sarah too. And both of these promises are entwined in the golden thread of the promised Redeemer.

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy **seed** after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant. (Gen. 17:7)
I will bless her, and she shall be the mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. (Gen. 17:16 KJV)

In the Old Covenant, the spotlight usually shined upon Abraham, giving him the most publicity. However, when we follow Sarah’s thread into the New Testament, we discover that behind the scenes, the less publicized marriage partner, the wife, did not cease to be an equal partner, because Sarah’s role in the Covenant of Circumcision was no less determinative than Abraham’s role. Indeed, the writer to the Hebrews (11:11) lauds her as a great heroine of faith who received her ability to conceive through faith. (Hebrews 11:11 speaks of Sarah’s great faith in the original text as well as in most English translations, with the exception that the NIV erroneously credits Abraham with Sarah’s

faith.) And the Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians (4:22-31), brings to light that all of Sarah's natural descendants were reckoned by God to be children of the promise; whereas, all of Abraham's natural descendants most certainly were not. God was equally committed to Sarah. Abraham and Sarah must not have understood this, or they would not have caused the bondwoman to bear a son for Abraham in Sarah's stead.

But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the freewoman." (Gal. 4:30)

If Sarah merely had been Abraham's satellite, then the son of the bondwoman would have qualified as the child of the promise: Her child was Abraham's **seed**, as well as his **first-born**. Subsequently, God directed Moses to dedicate every first-born male to Him (Ex. 13:2), but Abraham's first-born son was cast out! In his place, Sarah's child, Isaac, Abraham's **second-born**, was regarded by God as the child of the promise. The Messiah directed the children of Israel to focus upon Sarah as well as Abraham, so they knew the significance of her role:

Look to Abraham your father, **and to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain....**
(Isa. 51:2)

(A clarification may be in order. The Jews were to look to Abraham and Sarah for encouragement--not for Salvation--because the Messiah was to spring forth from their union. Little wonder, then, that Jews used Sarah and Abraham's Old Covenant marriage as a role model for Jewish marriages, not only during Old Testament times, but also into the New Testament era. For by then, the Old Covenant model of marriage had become a basic element of their society.)

THE SHADOW AND THE SUBSTANCE

Miriam – A Leader of the Exodus

A shadow is not self-sustaining. In order for a shadow to exist, something with real substance must cause it. People and things that were recorded in the Old Covenant were shadows of real people and real things that were yet to come:

Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day--things which are a mere **shadow of what was to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.** (Col. 2:16-17)

Since the shadow appeared on earth before the substance, the major events which occurred in the Old Covenant were "foreshadowing" events of the New Covenant. Consequently, when we see a shadow in the Old Covenant, we are sure to find its substance in the New Covenant; for example: All the lambs on Jewish altars slain foreshadowed the Lamb of God Who took away the sins of the world; God's deliverance of His people from Egypt foreshadowed God's deliverance of His people from the kingdom of darkness; the blood of the lamb on the Israelites' door posts that protected them from the angel of death foreshadowed the Blood of the Lamb that would protect His people from eternal death. After their deliverance from Egypt, God's people had to journey before they reached Canaan; after deliverance from the kingdom of darkness, God's people have a journey to make before they reach the heavenly Canaan. God ordained three to lead the children of Israel during their journey to the earthly Canaan:

Indeed, 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. (Micah 6:4 NIV)

Moses foreshadowed Christ; likewise, Aaron and Miriam foreshadowed the New Testament Church leaders: men and women. For what we find in the shadow, of necessity, we must find in substance--a shadow cannot appear on its own.

Long before Miriam (along with Moses and Aaron) led the people of Israel in their exodus from Egypt, she had saved Moses' life. When but a child herself, Miriam kept watch over the baby Moses who was hidden in the bulrushes, and with boldness she exercised her quick wit to bring about her brother's rescue. (Ex. 2:1-10) After the parting of the Red Sea, we find Miriam, by then a vibrant prophetess, passionately glorifying God in dance and song:

And Miriam the **prophetess**, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing. And Miriam answered them, "Sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; the horse and his rider He has hurled into the sea." (Exodus 15:20-21)

We will find in the pages to follow that Miriam as a **prophetess** was a spiritual teacher and guide of God's people, a woman authorized to teach and lead men.

Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married...**"Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?"** (Num. 12:1-2)

The verb "spoke" is feminine singular, indicating that Miriam led in the criticism. (Ryrie Study Bible; Moody Press, p. 227) God punished Miriam for speaking against His humble servant Moses whom God spoke to face to face. She, like her brothers, was human with human failings. All three of the great Exodus figures were chastised at one time or another. Aaron designed the golden calf, and God disciplined Moses for his special weakness by not permitting him to enter the promised land. Yet, while Miriam was ostracized, the people stayed close to her and did not journey until she was restored to them. (Num. 12:15-16)

Although it is a "given" among Christian scholars that Moses the supreme leader was a type--or picture prophecy--of Christ, these same scholars destroy the continuity of Scripture by overlooking the obvious: Aaron and Miriam were types--or picture prophecies--of New Testament Church leaders. Had God wanted to point to an all-male pastorate in the New Testament Church, He could have selected Joshua or Caleb in place of Miriam. They were part of the Exodus from its beginning and soon (Num. 14:6-9) distinguished themselves as outstanding leaders of great faith. Miriam was not God's second choice. She was His deliberate choice! God anointed Miriam to lead in a predominantly male era when He had literally millions of Israelite men from which to choose.

Miriam's death is lovingly recorded in Numbers (20:1). And her body lies buried, conveniently so for those who have built the male hierarchy over the dead bodies of women leaders appointed by God. But the truth cannot be buried: God deliberately chose Miriam to be one of three leaders of great prominence whom He placed before His nation during a historic and spiritual event of such great magnitude that her anointing cannot be ignored! The mention of her name among the males of her priestly tribe (Num. 26:59; 1 Chr. 6:3) indicates the significance of her role as a spiritual leader. And so, God Himself has repudiated the doctrine that forbids a woman in the Church to hold a spiritual office in which she exercises authority over men. Miriam's elevation to a position of authority over millions of men and women cannot be disputed because no reading between lines is required. God spoke clearly:

I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam.

THE JUDGES

When God's people finally reached Canaan, God governed the people directly through His appointed judges. Since God's direct control extended over both spiritual and civil affairs, Israel was known as a Theocracy. After a time, the people resented such close supervision by God and complained to their prevailing judge, Samuel: "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations." (1 Sam. 8:5) When the distraught Samuel relayed all of this to God, God knew the people no longer wanted a judge as their supreme ruler because the judge ruled over them in the stead and by the command of God.

And the Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all they say to you, for **they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them....**" (1 Sam. 8:7)

Deborah – National Judge and Prophetess

The era of the biblical judge was ushered in when "Moses sat to judge the people...." (Ex. 18:13) Moses' task of judging millions became too burdensome, and prompted by his father-in-law, he appointed more judges whom he placed over various tribes gravely declaring they were to "be the people's representative before God,...and leaders of the people." (Ex. 18:19,25 KJV) The book of Judges (chs. 4-5) relates unusual events in the life of another judge, who like Samuel and Moses was a supreme political and spiritual leader of God's people:

Now **Deborah**, a **prophetess**, the **wife** of Lappidoth, was **judging** Israel at that time. And she used to sit under a palm tree...and the **sons of Israel came up to her for judgment.** (Jud 4:4-5)

Deborah was judging during a time when the Lord had sold Israel, because of their evil deeds, into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, who had oppressed the sons of Israel severely for twenty years. (4:1-3) Their time had come: God decided to put an end to the misery. And so Deborah sent for Barak and said:

Behold, the Lord the God of Israel has commanded, "Go and march to Mount Tabor...and I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army,...and I will give him into your hand." (4:6-7) Then Barak said unto her, "If you will go with me, then I will go: but if you will not go with me, then I will not go." (4:8)

Deborah courageously rode into battle and Israel was victorious. Deborah and Barak sang songs on that day. (5:1) Deborah sang of how dreadful things had been for God's people: "Until I, Deborah, arose, a mother in Israel." (5:6-7)

An attempt is made to bury Deborah's sphere of influence by equating Deborah, who was appointed by God and placed over the nation, with the judges appointed by Moses and placed over various tribes. This is tantamount to comparing a county judge with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who also happens to be President. Some scholars point to the wars fought by other judges and reason that the troop commander was also a judge, but Scripture says Deborah, not Barak, was judging. He received his orders through her. Others attempt to diminish her leadership capacity by insisting her jurisdiction was limited to civil cases; thus, they hope to rule out her spiritual leadership; in which case, she would have been merely a political leader of males. Would God who explicitly stated the judges were the instruments with which He Himself ruled His country (1 Sam. 8:7) limit His decrees to mere matters of state? In any dispute, however, Scripture alone must be the

final authority. And bearing arms was not part of the job description given by Moses to candidates as he comprehensively defined the three-fold duties of a biblical judge: (1) settling disputes, (2) teaching God's Word, then (3) providing spiritual guidance:

...and you bring the disputes before God, **then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk, and the work they are to do.** (Ex. 18:19-20)

It was impossible to separate secular from sacred in the Theocracy where every thought and action was to be directly related to the will of God. Furthermore, the body of civil law given by God to His nation, which among other things defined crime and allocated punishment, was based upon a "constitution" known as the Ten Commandments, of which the apostle Paul said: "For we know that the law is spiritual..." (Rom. 7:14) The Law of Moses, the judges' textbook, regulated the entire life of an Israelite: it was absolute in its supremacy and unlimited in its scope with piety as its first object--nothing secular about it! The biblical judge was not an officer of a secular court of state or nation, but a spiritual officer of the spiritual court of the Most High God.

Even if the jurisdiction of a national judge had been confined to civil matters, Deborah was more than a judge; she was a **judge/prophetess**. (Jud. 4:4) The duty of a prophetess was to speak God's Word to His people, making her for certain the nation's spiritual leader. Deborah held the highest political and spiritual office in the land, an office previously occupied by Moses the **judge/prophet** and Samuel the **judge/prophet**, who were God's supreme leaders.

Samuel was a national judge who did not take up arms. As far as we know, his only military involvement was at Mizpath where he prayed for the children of Israel because the Philistines had them surrounded. God answered him by confusing the Philistines, and then the men of Israel pursued them. (1 Sam. 7:5-11) Deborah did it all! She judged like Moses the prototype of all prophets and judges, prophesied like Samuel the well-known judge and prophet, commanded the general in the stead and by the command of God, and rode before the troops into battle. She may have been the mother of children, but she is known as a matriarch because she was a woman leader of a tribe. You have heard about the patriarchs of the Old Testament; but have you heard about a matriarch leading the tribe of Israel? Deborah stood under her God, but over all of Israel (including her husband Lappidoth)--the day she arose, a mother in Israel!

PROPHETS AND KINGS

God knew beforehand that the people would ask for a king, and had limited the king's power in the law given to the prophet Moses. (Deu. 17:14-20) The king was to be one chosen by God (v. 15); he was not to "multiply wives for himself," or "greatly increase silver and gold for himself." (v. 17) The king was to "write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God,...." (vv. 18-19)

Some kings were obedient to God, and led the people along the right path; whereas other kings led them astray. The books of the Kings (1 and 2) record many kings who did evil in the sight of the Lord. Others, like King Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 19:4-11), instituted reforms for the people "and brought them back to the Lord, the God of their fathers." (v. 4) "And in Jerusalem also Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests...." (v. 8) Observe, the king's influence extended to the temple and the priests. "And he appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city." (v. 5) Jehoshaphat's regional judges, unlike the national judges, had superiors over them: a chief priest, a representative of the king, and the Levites. (v. 11) Still, the regional judges were left with grave

responsibility: “And he said to the judges, ‘Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for men but for the Lord, who is with you when you render judgment.’” (v. 6)

When the nation was threatened, Jehoshaphat “proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to seek help from the Lord;.... Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord before the new court, and he said, ‘O Lord, the God of our Fathers....’” (2 Chr. 20:3-6) The king led the prayer meeting. God heard their prayer and “made them to rejoice over their enemies.” (2 Chr. 20:27) The people were blessed when they followed their righteous king.

At other times the people were known to suffer as a result of a king’s wrongdoing. Yet, hadn’t the people ask for it by rejecting the judge who **always** led them to walk in God’s ways? For instance, “the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and it incited David against them.” In his anger he partook of their sin by sinning himself. Going against God he called for a census (2 Sam. 24:1,10), and the people suffered mightily:

Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, “Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done?” (2 Sam. 24:17)

Huldah – Supreme Spiritual Authority

King Josiah was a king who “did right in the sight of the Lord and walked in all the way of his father David....” (2 Kings 22:1-20) Josiah destroyed all outward signs and relies of idolatry in Judah and commissioned the restoration of the temple. In the course of the repairs (v. 8), Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law (all five books of Moses or Deuteronomy in particular) which the scribe read to the king. Unsure of its implications, the king said:

“Go, inquire of the Lord for me and all the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the Lord that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book....” So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum.... And she said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, “Tell the man who sent you to me, thus says the Lord, “Behold, I bring evil on this place and on its inhabitants, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read” ” (vv. 13-16) “But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord thus shall you say to him, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, “Regarding the words which you have heard, because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the Lord,...I truly have heard you,” declares the Lord.” (vv. 18-19)

Huldah dictated with assurance the message to the king; she was sure of her position as spokesperson for Yahweh. The king, the high priest, the king’s cabinet, indeed, all of Judah looked to this woman as God’s uppermost spiritual advisor. King Josiah accepted Huldah’s evaluation of the scroll as the authentic Word of Yahweh, and entered into a covenant with Yahweh to follow all the commandments and decrees written therein. Here we have a scriptural example of the king--the shepherd of the nation--being shepherded by a prophet, in this case a woman. In other words, if both were shepherds, she was the chief shepherd. Peter characterizes Christ as our “Chief Shepherd.” (1 Pet. 5:4)

Again, we find that wedlock has no bearing upon whether or not a woman can be a supreme spiritual authority of God’s people, for Huldah, like Deborah, was a married woman. Contemplating all the implications of Huldah’s status and actions, we perceive that with God only as her superior she taught a man’s Bible class, or presided over Judah’s commission on theology, with the scroll as

her textbook. When Huldah authenticated the new found Book of the Law, the process of canonization--the decision as to which books are and are not Holy Scripture--was begun. Furthermore, the male ego-boosting platitude "God chooses a woman only when no man is available" does not apply to Huldah's ministry any more than it applies to Miriam's ministry. Jeremiah* and Zephaniah,* two mighty prophets, were available during King Josiah's revival. This woman was God's **deliberate** choice. By requiring the king to submit himself to Huldah in order to learn of God's precepts, God shattered all arguments for barring a woman on the basis of her sex from any contemporary ecclesiastical duty.

The Old Testament king and high priest accepted Huldah's spiritual supremacy--no problem. But many New Testament scholars have a problem with it. So they attempt to downgrade the prophetic office. Recalling Peter's words: "...for no prophecy was made by an act of human will, but **people** (Greek = *anthropos*, Strong 444) moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:21), they claim that the prophet's mind was bypassed by God--as if an Old Testament prophet were merely a mindless mouthpiece. The mind of a speaker in tongues is bypassed but a prophet's mind is operative as he or she acts upon God's words.

Indeed, after God had spoken to or put words into the mouth of a prophet like Jeremiah, that was only the beginning: "And when Jeremiah finished speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak...the priests and the prophets, and all the people seized him saying, 'You must die!'" (Jer. 26:8) Then Jeremiah replied with a clear mind and straight from his heart:

"But as for me, behold, I am in your hands; do with me as is good and right in your sight. Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood on yourselves, and on this city and on its inhabitants; for truly the Lord has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing." (Jer. 26:14-15)

The prophets, like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, set an example for the people when they were willing to die, if necessary, rather than deny the messages they had delivered from God. In common with the apostles, the prophets' willingness to die attested to the authenticity of their message.

Like the Old Testament prophet and prophetess, Jesus our Most High Prophet spoke those words given to Him by the Father: "Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for **the words which Thou gavest Me** I have given to them;..." (John 17:7-8) In fact, when you think about it, the Great Commission given by the Lord to go "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mat. 28:20) simply meant: Speak **My** words--deliver **My** message. Actually, the quintessence of preaching is to speak God's revealed words or "forth telling"-- that is, speaking God's Word to a situation.

Both Old Testament prophets and New Testament leaders were said to be **commissioned** by God and were termed God's "**messengers**."

(Old Testament prophets)

Then Haggai, the **messenger** of the Lord, spoke by the **commission** of the Lord, to the people saying... (Hag. 1:13 NASV, KJV)

(New Testament leaders)

As for Titus, he is my partner...; as for our brethren, they are **messengers** of the churches, a glory to Christ. (2 Cor. 8:23)

* The Thompson Chain Reference Bible KJV locates the book of Jeremiah "from the thirteenth year of Josiah. . .until some years beyond the captivity." (p. 200) It says of Zephaniah: "He prophesied during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah, ch. 1.1. It is thought he uttered his prophecy near the beginning of Josiah's reign, before the religious revival...see 2 Kings chs. 22, 23." (p. 205)

Likewise, both Testaments record that supreme leaders were anointed by God: “Do not touch **My anointed ones**, And do **My prophets** no harm.” (1 Chr. 16:22) And Jesus said of Himself in the synagogue (Luke 4:18): “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because **He anointed Me to preach....**”

The Old Testament affords other examples of prophets involved in various aspects of leadership, for instance: Samuel. This ex-judge and true prophet in the stead of God disclosed the identity of Israel’s first two kings. He may have been a chief prophet because he would stand “presiding over” the company of prophets while they prophesied. (1 Sam. 19:20) When we consider the inter- relationship of prophet and king, we find it was much the same as pastor and parishioner today: The prophet would speak God’s Word, and the king would either listen or fail to listen. Failure to listen usually resulted in serious consequences. For instance, a previous warning (1 Sam. 13:13-14) delivered by Samuel to Saul went unheeded, and so Samuel confronted Saul again:

Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed against the command of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. Now therefore please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the Lord.” **But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the Lord and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.”** And as Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, “the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you, today,…” (1 Sam. 15:24-28)

Observe, the prophet was God’s absolute and ultimate authority, for the prophet’s authority went unchallenged by the king--the king bowed to the prophet, not prophet to king. All of which informs us that the prophet’s jurisdiction was above and beyond the jurisdiction of the king.

Saul’s reign that ended so tragically had begun with much joy, when the same prophet “brought all the tribes of Benjamin near by its families” (1 Sam. 10:21) and decreed Saul to be the first king of Israel:

And Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen?” **...Then Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote then in the book and placed it before the Lord.** And Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his own house. (1 Sam. 10:24-25)

Observe, Samuel called all the people together and taught them ordinances previously revealed by God. It is obvious that the prophet spoke **for** God and was the **guardian** of His Word. The king may have been the leader of the nation with his influence extending to the temple and the nation’s religious observances and worship but the prophet was the official teacher and supreme spiritual authority and leader in the Old Testament Church.

Finally, as we move on to the second king of Israel, David, again we find the prophet in God’s stead anointed the king, not king the prophet. When Samuel anointed him, “the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.” (1 Sam. 16:13) Scripture bears record of other kings being anointed as king, but not all kings prophesied like David. King David was one of a kind: a man after God’s own heart, the apple of God’s eye, a progenitor of the Messiah, the man whose kingdom the Messiah was to establish forever, and the man who prophesied in the Psalms. He himself was a prophet. But in this case, when David developed a moral blind spot, God sent Nathan the prophet to counsel the king. Through an analogy, Nathan caused David to recognize the gravity of his sin of murder and adultery. (2 Sam. 12:1-6). After Nathan had used his mind to lay the groundwork, he delivered God’s Message:

Nathan then said to David, “You are the man! **Thus says the Lord God of Israel,** ‘It is I who anointed you king over Israel....’” (2 Sam. 12:7-9)

Before the pages close upon the Old Testament king, prophet and prophetess, we behold an Old Testament queen who through the grace of God prevented the extinction of her people, the Jews. Queen Esther was advised by her kinsman Mordecai of a devious plot against the Jews, and he urged her to do something about it. The Persian King, who ruled over the captive Jews, had chosen Esther to be his wife. In spite of this, it was against the law for her to approach him without an invitation. And she did not know if he would exercise his legal right to sentence her to death when she broke this law by entering his chambers uninvited. After asking for supportive fasting and prayer from her fellow Jews, however, she took the risk in the hope of saving her people: "When this is done I will go to the king even though it is against the law, and **if I perish I perish.**" (Esther 4:16 NIV)

Her sense of timing along with her complex and innovative strategy culminated in success. A woman chosen and empowered by God saved the Jews from a ghastly slaughter. THE NEW OPEN BIBLE NASV apprises (p. 565): "Esther, like Christ, puts herself in the place of death for her people but receives the approval of the king. She also portrays Christ's work as an Advocate on our behalf." A Book of the Bible bears the name Esther. Little wonder! No greater love exists than her love: She was willing to lay down her life for her people.

Now, let us pause briefly between the two Testaments. During this era, the four hundred years preceding our Messiah's entry into human history, God took away His prophets because of Israel's sins. (Amos 3:2) Amos had forewarned God's people: "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord God, 'When I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord.'" (Amos 8:11)

Looking back, we have a clear view of prophets and prophetesses, the commissioned messengers whom God anointed to be His official preachers and teachers, the prevailing spiritual authorities in Israel. Then turning forward, we look ahead with the conviction that Old Testament prophets--including Miriam, Huldah, and Deborah--are in a league with the New Testament apostles, for both were given the primary responsibility of speaking God's pure Word to His people. The apostles and prophets are the strictly human agents God worked in and through to institute Christ's Church on earth. And we are right: "God's household," the church, is "**built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone.**" (Eph. 2:19-20)

We have observed that God was able to elevate Old Testament women to positions of spiritual authority over men and women without violating the role of wife and mother that He had assigned to them at Creation. And so we ask, "What is there to prevent Him from doing the same in the Covenant of grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ?" Although those ugly companions pride and prejudice who lurk in human nature shriek in protest, the biblical reply is, "Nothing! God has no favorites!" In the Covenant written in the Blood of Christ, His Blood alone qualifies both male and female for God's **LAST DAYS' PROMISE**: the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was the beginning of the end of an elite race or sex:

But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, ...this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

'AND IT SHALL BE **IN THE LAST DAYS,**' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON **ALL MANKIND: AND YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY,** ...EVEN UPON MY BONDSLAVES BOTH **MEN AND WOMEN** I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT....'" (Acts 2:14-18)

Some scholars surmise that prophecy was given by God during the First Century only, for the purpose of getting the New Testament “show on the road.” On the contrary, there is no cut-off date in Scripture: a time set for prophecy to cease. And so till there appear “WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE, AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BENEATH,” **without discrimination** man and woman will continue to prophesy. And as sure as “THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON TO BLOOD’ (Acts 2:19-20), the woman will **continue** to be given the ability to “**edify**” the Church (1 Cor. 14:4)--that is, to preach and teach God’s Word to His people.

WHAT GOD HAS WRITTEN, HE HAS WRITTEN

As we cross the threshold of the New Testament era, we should be mindful of three things. First, Jesus said: “...**all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must he fulfilled**” (Luke 24:44), meaning the New Testament Church originated in the Old. And so, those things foreshadowed in the Old Testament will become substance in the New.

Second, God does not vacillate. (Jas. 1:17) I called to the attention of a theological commission that its dogma of an all-male pastorate in the New Testament Church did not take into account those Old Testament women prophetesses. “Surely,” I declared, “it is impossible for a God – ‘**with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow**’--to shift in the shadow and vary from electing to rejecting women leaders.” The commission replied: “God doesn’t tell us why He chose those particular Old Testament women prophetesses.” The commission classified God’s election of those Old Testament women Church leaders as a “**mystery**” to avoid conceding that God in the Old Testament has set a precedent for women leaders of His people. To be sure, God has not vowed to explain His oft mysterious actions to us, but if the commission applies this truth to those things that God has revealed to us in His Word, it supplies us with a classic example of truth misapplied:

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, **but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever....**” (Deu. 29:29)

Those things God does not want us to know, He keeps to Himself; but things He reveals will remain constant **forever**. God may tell us that His ways are past finding out, but that is not to say we cannot rely on His Word. Actually, it would be possible to substantiate any kind of scriptural *guesswork*--any tenet that contradicts the whole Bible--by attributing its inconsistency to the mysterious actions of a mysterious God. And when we think about it, if God in the shadow changed His mind about women leading men, then how can we be sure that God for unknown reasons has not changed His mind also about many other things He has revealed to us, abandoning us in a quagmire of uncertainty? It is impossible, indeed, for our mysterious God to lie (Heb. 6:18) or contradict Himself. Yet, the all-male pastorate in the New Testament Church is based on the presumption that for unknown reasons God *did* contradict Himself.

Third, we found only male priests and kings in the shadow. However, we have discovered in Paul’s letter to Ephesus that God did not lay His foundation with priests and kings: It was built with, prophets! God’s “**household**” has been “**built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.**” (Eph. 2:19-20) By isolating apostles and prophets and putting them into a select category, Paul attests that the prophets and prophetesses along with the apostles make up God’s highest order of servants. Therefore, God has established that her sex does not disqualify a woman as a candidate for any high ecclesiastical office.

God is building His house still. Peter tells us that we “as living stones are being built up as a spiritual house for a **holy priesthood.**” (1 Pet. 2:5) So the Levitical male priesthood has been displaced by a **holy priesthood** that has been opened by Jesus’ sacrifice and triumph to female and Gentile believers.

Royal Priestesses

Then what did the Jewish royalty, the kings, foreshadow? Peter solves that mystery: "But you are a CHOSEN RACE, A **ROYAL** PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION..." (1 Pet. 2:9) Thus each believer in Christ is royalty, a king and priest all in one. Jesus of course is sovereign--Prophet, High Priest and King--but His **ROYAL** priesthood is composed of **ROYAL** priestesses and **ROYAL** priests!

THE MESSIAH

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law...
(Galatians 4:4-5)

when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son

God kept the appointment made before the world began (Eph. 1:4)--right on time! The golden thread of the promised Redeemer led to Jesus of Nazareth.

born of a woman

Mary – Who Believed God

Mary said, "Yes" to God! As happens so often, the pendulum has swung far, far in the opposite direction: In order to avoid deification of Mary, Protestants have gone to the other extreme. Protestants disregard that Mary was as highly favored by God as David. As members of future "generations," they rarely count her "blessed." (Luke 1:48) And they fail to acknowledge that Mary's "Yes" was needed along with her body when God used her to implement His plan of Salvation. Mary, like Eve, could have turned away from God, refusing to be overawed by all God chose to give her. After all, there were great risks involved for an unmarried pregnant woman in Jewish society. Mary, too, could have said, "No" to God. But she did not falter: **"And Mary said, 'Behold the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.'" (Luke 1:38)**

Mary's obedient response to God that culminated in the birth of our Savior may be what Paul is alluding to when he emphasizes the positive consequence of childbearing: "...she shall be saved in childbearing..." (1 Tim. 2:15) **Saved** in childbearing? We can be sure of our *eternal* Salvation only when our confidence is fixed upon our glorious Lord Jesus: the 'author and perfecter of our faith,' the beginning and end of our Salvation, the **only way** to the Father! (Heb. 12:2; John 14:6) Moreover, Paul himself declares there is nothing a woman can do to be saved: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; **not of works...**" (Eph. 2: 8-9) Hence, we can be certain Paul does not mean that through childbirth women will be saved *eternally*. Paul leaves us no room in which to challenge him on this issue: "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8-9)

If the Apostle is not saying that there is another way to heaven apart from Jesus, or a woman must add something to Christ's complete sacrifice made at one time and for all people

(Heb. 10:12-14), then what does he mean? Some think he is assuring Christian women that during childbirth they will be kept safe from the Curse of God. The passage may forever remain too obscure for major doctrine to be built upon it. Yet, when we look at its immediate context, it is safe to assume that the woman's *image* had been badly battered in Jewish society because "Eve sinned first." And we have established that Paul speaks *not* of eternal Salvation. So in league with the Apostle, let us lower our sights from heaven to earth, from eternal things to First Century society, making the transition from "soul saving" to "face saving." Viewing the passage in this new light, we answer: *If* something needed doing to **save the woman's earthly image** – in the eyes of men, in the eyes of angels, in the eyes of all creation--at one time and for all women it was accomplished about 2000 years ago by Mary's "**Yes.**" With eyes wide open Adam emulated Eve's disobedience; people today with open eyes see God using a woman's obedience when He undertook His plan of Salvation.

Some justify their bias against women ministers by saying the virgin birth shows a Spirit-filled woman's job is to bear children; while a man does the preaching. Such fantasy hardly deserves to be dignified with a response. When Peter stood up at Pentecost (Acts 2:17), did he say that your sons shall prophesy and your daughters bear children? or did he say that your sons **and** daughters shall prophesy? meaning both shall be equally empowered to speak God's Word. Fact not fiction establishes that as far back as the Jewish exodus out of Egypt, God spoke to His people through a woman, Miriam: "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" (Num. 12:2) Actually, God's favor rested on a woman in a way that it did not rest on any man--such as Joseph, a priest, a male prophet or a rabbi--for Mary was the first to be told the long-awaited time had come for God to send forth His Son to earth and to be given the true identity of the Messiah: Jesus of Nazareth.

Redemption is the mirror image of Creation. Eve's body was "**taken out of**" Adam's flesh, so the first Adam said: "**bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.**" (Gen. 2:23) Mary could have said the same of the last Adam, Jesus. (1 Cor. 15:45) His body was **bone of her bones and flesh of her flesh**: Jesus was **taken out of** her. But the sequence is reversed in the "**order of Redemption**": Mary's body was made before the body of Jesus. Does that make Mary more of a leader than He? The **reason** Christ entered a physical body (Heb. 10:5) was to be a **help** to mankind. Who is subordinate? the One giving help or the one needing it?

Therefore if anyone says "the **reason** woman was made was to be a **help** to man, thus she can serve her God best by serving her man," remember--this is not God our help (*'ezer*) speaking, but someone with his or her nose in the dust who has taken their eyes off God. Make *no* mistake about the real reason God made woman:

The people whom I formed for Myself, Will declare My praise. (Isa. 43:21)

Woman indeed was formed for God Himself, and to praise HIM--ONE GLORIOUS REASON! Since humans were made to praise God, with the earth as their habitation, then multiplying and ruling over the earth could not have been the *reason* they were made but a *gift* of work the same as was tending the Garden. And *now*, in these *last days*, marriage has taken a back seat to the cause of the gospel; otherwise, Paul would not have been of the "opinion" that unmarried people could more fully devote themselves to God. (1 Cor. 7:25-34) Everyone would do well to emulate Mary who glorified God with her body, soul and spirit and responded to Him in faith, love, and obedience, **thus fulfilling her reason for being made!**

This is not to say that God could not have achieved Salvation without Mary, or for that matter, without David or Abraham. But heroes of God are lauded frequently, while the qualities of His heroines are merely brushed aside as if they were of little import. Mary, like Zacharias the male priest, could have stumbled in unbelief. Zacharias the father of John the Baptist was struck dumb: "And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, **because you did not believe** my words...." (Luke 1:20) Yet, when Mary was told of an incredible

conception she believed God. The Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41) disclosed this through Elizabeth's prophecy: "And blessed is **she who believed** that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." (Luke 1:45)

Mary's heart sang so gloriously while with dynamic faith she prophesied:

"My soul exalts the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For behold from this time on all generations will count me blessed, For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and Holy is His Name." (Luke 1:46-49)

born under the Law

"Born under the Law" designates under the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13), under a yoke of backbreaking bondage (Gal. 5:1; Acts 15:10), and into the Covenant of Circumcision. We "upon whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (1 Cor. 10:11 NIV) are in an age of grace and truth because, in the way that Moses entered Egypt to deliver the Jews from back-breaking bondage, Christ entered human history to deliver His people from back-breaking spiritual bondage. Jesus came to set His people free, but He had to enter into bondage under the Law with them in order to earn freedom for them. He caused a revolution that vouchsafed their freedom through fulfilling, not by destroying:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I did not come to abolish but to fulfill**. (Mat. 5:17)

Since His mission was one of fulfillment, His course was fixed from birth even till He set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem. (Isa. 50:7; Luke 9:51)

And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus,... And when the days for their purification **according to the Law of Moses** were completed, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the **Law of the Lord**,...), and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the **Law of the Lord**... (Luke 2:21-24)

Anna – First Missionary to the Jews

When Jesus was presented in the temple, "there was a **prophetess**, Anna," who had married young, but after seven years of marriage, her husband had died. From that time until she was eighty-four, "she never left the temple serving night and day with fastings and prayers." While Simeon was blessing the infant Jesus, "**at that very moment** she came up and began giving thanks to God..." The Holy Spirit led Anna to recognize the Messiah, and she "**continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem**." (Luke 2:26-38) In other words, she proclaimed the Good News of the Messiah's birth to those Jews who had waited centuries for His arrival. God was in control of this sequence of events, for it was the Holy Spirit Who enlightened and led Anna to evangelize the Jews. Thus a Jewish prophetess authorized by God was the first missionary to the Jews. If a denomination refuses to equip and send out women missionaries to preach that same Good News it rejects God's **first** commission.

Herod's Temple, where the infant Jesus was presented, was composed of several courts that ultimately led to the Sanctuary or the **Holy Place** and the **Holy of Holies**. The Holy of Holies was where God met once each year with the High Priest to accept the sacrifices for sin offered there. Scripture declares that the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity, and in Whom we live and move and have our being, actually dwelt in that temple: "And let them construct a sanctuary for Me; that I

may dwell among them.” (Ex. 25:8) Although the **Gentiles** could worship outside the temple in an outer court, only pure **Jews** could enter the Gate Beautiful which led to the women’s court. The **women** could go no further, but the **pure Jewish men** could advance to the Israeli Court, and 3½ feet above the Israeli court: was an area reserved for the **priests**. The Sanctuary which included the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was modeled after the Tabernacle in the wilderness designed by God Himself. (Ex. 25:9,40; 26:30; 39:32,42,43; Num. 8:4; Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5) But in addition to the Sanctuary, God’s design included only a porch. The Tabernacle with its porch stood in a court surrounded by canvas screens. God’s design did partition the priests from the people, but God designed no court with barriers between the sexes. The Tabernacle was designed by God to emphasize the separation of sinful mankind from God and the difficulty in approaching Him under the Old Covenant.

in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law

Jesus was born into the Old Covenant Church under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law. Gentiles too were under the Law, but not a written law. (Rom. 2:14-15) God gave the Jews the written Law of Moses consisting of: (1) Moral Law, (2) Ceremonial Law, (3) Civil Law. God said to Jews: “You **only** have I chosen among all the families of the earth....” (Amos 3:2)

The Old Testament Church is embodied in that chosen Jewish race, which retains a significance in the last book of the Bible, in eternity: “And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out being in labor and in pain to give birth.... And she gave birth to a son....” (Rev. 12:1-2,5)

The Old Testament Church with its male and female members is personified in--or symbolized as--a woman. God speaks of Himself as her Husband. God also speaks of Himself in terms of the feminine sex--that is, if women give birth:

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is **born of God**. (1 John 5:1)
But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, **...who were born** not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God**. (John 1:12-13)

God, here, speaks of Himself in terms of motherhood. Does it follow, then, that God is a woman? No! Similarly, when God speaks of Himself in terms of fatherhood, does it follow that God is a man? No! God does not have a physical nature: “**God is spirit...**” (John 4:24) Passages which use terms implying that God has a physical nature must be taken in a *figurative* sense, for “**a spirit does not have flesh and bones**.” (Luke 24:39) God speaks forcefully about this matter: “For I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst.” (Hosea 11:9)

“Salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22) because the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, gave birth to our Savior. The twelve stars in her crown were the twelve tribes of Israel. Conforming to a fixed course, Jesus called twelve male Jewish disciples at the onset of his public ministry. They had a destiny: “And Jesus said to them ‘...you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’” (Mat. 19:28)

The fact that those twelve were male Jewish disciples is stressed by some to justify a male hierarchy in the New Testament Church. A Jewish hierarchy would emerge, then, if it were stressed that Jesus called twelve male Jewish disciples. A Jewish hierarchy would find strong scriptural support, for the believing Jew (only a group of them cried, “crucify him!”) was twice-chosen: (1) by race and (2) through faith. Jesus “**came to His own**” (John 1:11), Jewish men, women and children: “These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, ‘**Do not go in the way of the Gentiles**, and do not

enter any city of the Samaritans; **but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.** And as you go, preach, saying, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”” (Mat. 10:5-7)

Therefore, when innumerable Gentile males stand upon their conviction that Christ wants them merely because they were born male to oversee His Church, their position is fraught with irony. For had the theological clock stopped at that period in time when Christ called the twelve Apostles, He would have rejected *all* of those countless Gentile males--that is to say He would have refused to allow *any one* of them to lead His Church. They would not have qualified, for they could not have met the physical requirement of being a Jew.

Jesus Himself was constrained to fulfill the Law of Moses, but He began the shift from justice to mercy with His people. For instance, some of the sick and the lame had been kept outside the camp; Jesus healed the sick and made the lame to walk! The woman caught in adultery was not stoned to death, as the Law would have it; when they brought her to Jesus, He said: “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Jesus was exhibiting the forgiving love and second chances of God’s New Covenant with humanity that was drawing near. For soon, the Lamb of God would be slain--an eternal sacrifice (Rev. 5:6)--eliminating the need for the Jerusalem temple and the male Jewish priesthood to offer sacrifices. All those animal sacrifices ever did was charge the existing sins of the Jews to (if you will) a charge account bearing the Name of Christ Jesus, Who would pay the account in full on Calvary. It was a time of transition: Although the Messiah full of grace and truth had entered human history, He had yet to withstand God’s justice, absorb God’s anger at our sin, so that we might receive God’s mercy.

The Old Testament Tabernacle and the all-male priesthood only “served as a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things.” (Heb. 8:5) And now they have become “obsolete.” (Heb. 8:13) Protestants almost universally acknowledge that the New Testament “holy priesthood” has been opened to each and every New Testament believer regardless of race or sex to “offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 2: 5,9) The Old Testament Levitical Priesthood could not have been opened to Gentiles and women because it depended on a law of physical requirement: one had to be a male descendant of Aaron. Since Christ Himself is a priest “**not** to be designated according to the order of Aaron” the “**priesthood is changed.**” (Heb. 7:11-12) Christ is a priest “not on the basis of a law of **physical requirement** but according to the power of an indestructible life.” (Heb. 7:16) Therefore, causing a (male) physical requirement (for the pastoral office) to contaminate the New Testament Church is a travesty of Christ’s priesthood and of God’s “new and better covenant” (Heb. 8:6) in which the physical has been surpassed by Christ and “God is no respecter of persons.” (Acts 10:34 KJV)

Women may not have met the physical requirement of the Levitical priesthood, but this did not prevent them from holding the two major leadership offices of the male-dominated Old Covenant, given in evidence by (1) the **prophetesses**, Miriam and Huldah, and (2) the matriarch Deborah, the **national leader**. A male king to rule over them was agreed to by God according to the will of rebellious people (1 Sam. 8:7); the will of God included a woman judge.

There may have been no women among the first twelve disciples that Jesus called (their maleness may have been a condition of His fulfilling the Law, for Christ was in the process of leading His people out of the male-dominated Old Covenant), but God put women first in so many other ways during the transitory period from Old to New Covenants: (1) the Holy Spirit led Anna to be the **first** missionary to the Jews; (2) Elizabeth’s prophesy was the **first** to be recorded in the New Testament; (3) Mary was the **first** person to whom God revealed the identity of the Messiah and the period in time of His arrival; (4) women were the **first** to be told of Christ’s resurrection and ascension and the **first** to be commissioned by Christ to proclaim, “He is risen!”; in fact, (5) women

were chosen by God to be the major witnesses of those events of “**first importance**” to Salvation, the *birth, death, burial and resurrection* of Christ:

For I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received that Christ **died** for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was **buried**, and that He was **raised** on the third day.... (1 Cor. 15:3-4)

Many Women Disciples

After the Twelve, Jesus called a considerable number of women disciples and more male disciples. A disciple of Jesus was one who was called by Him, followed Him and was taught by Him. Those whom He also sent out are known as apostles. To exemplify, the Great Commission directs us to **teach** and baptize others, thereby making them disciples. (Mat. 28:18-20) “**Follow me!**” was the call given by Jesus to disciples. (Mat. 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 16:24) Following Jesus was not an easy journey. (Luke 9:58-60) Many who began the journey turned back. (John 6:66) And Jesus restricted His steady following: a “man...was entreating Him, that he might accompany Him. And He did not let him, but He said to him, ‘Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you....’” (Mark 5:18-19) Of course, all who followed Him were taught by Him. We, then, see the significance of Mark’s “**many women**”--a considerable number of women--who **followed** Jesus: “among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome” (Mark 15:40-41):

And when He was in Galilee, they used to **follow Him** and minister to Him; and there were **many other women** who had come up with Him to Jerusalem.

Others known to have followed Him are Mary the mother of Jesus, and Joanna. Mary the mother of Jesus along with other women were part of that privileged group of disciples who stayed together waiting and praying in the upper room until the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost. (Acts 1:14)

Even so, during the First Century, Jewish men only were regarded as valid witnesses by those lost sheep of Israel that Jesus tried to gather. The Mishnah* reveals that according to Jewish law only certain Jewish men could testify officially about a person.⁺ As a consequence of man-made religious laws, Jewish women were not usually looked upon by the Jews as official witnesses. Jesus must have begun a cultural revolution by allowing women to follow Him. Surely, they had to travel in groups in order to appear respectable. The Mishnah continues to expose the cruel cultural barriers erected by the rabbis around women. A woman could be divorced without any financial settlement (Ketubah): “If she goes out with her hair unbound, or spins (wool) in the street, or speaks with any man.” (m. Ketub. 7:6) If a woman spoke with a man on the street, she was presumed to have had intercourse, unless proven otherwise. (m. Ketub. 1:8) Jesus’ acid rebuke revealed His feelings toward the rabbis and their man-made laws, including those about women. He sentenced the Pharisees by saying, “Woe to you,” seven times and calling them snakes, blind guides and sons of hell. (Matt. 23:13-36)

The Gospels do not specifically record a woman being sent out alone to preach when her testimony would have been discredited simply because of her sex, or where she may have been stoned as adulterous merely for witnessing to men on the street. Yet, the Gospels do not record the sexes of the seventy whom Jesus sent out in pairs. (Luke 10:1) Nevertheless, it had to have happened, because Paul comments about his kinsman Junia (she will be investigated in the pages to

* The Mishnah was the first part of the Talmud written by rabbis (not God). Compiled about 200 A.D., it contained much of what was practiced during the First Century by the Jews.

⁺ m. Sheb. 4:1-6. See also m. Ros. Has. 1:8 and m. Sanh. 3:3-5. References derived from *Beyond the Curse*, Dr. Aída Besançon Spencer (Hendrickson Pub., June 1989), p. 62.

come) who was “**outstanding among the apostles.**” (KJV, NASV, Rom. 16:7) Considering the hostile social climate, Jesus may have sent various women to witness in mixed pairs, like the co-pastors and teachers Priscilla and Aquila--shipmates of Paul who are brought to light in the book of Acts (18:26).

Mary – Scholar

The manner in which Jesus taught Mary, the sister of Martha, discloses that it is not according to His will for men to have more advantages than women in Christian institutes of higher learning, like seminaries. At that time, only Jewish men were required to learn in the synagogue, but Jesus disclaimed this practice revealing it was not of God when He taught Mary privately while she was **sitting at His feet**. In the United States we think of sitting at another’s feet as indicative of affection. In the First Century, sitting at another’s feet was the posture of a scholar, one of learning. Paul, a student of the great teacher Gamaliel, informed the crowd that he was “**brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel**” (Acts 22:3 KJV), meaning he had “studied under” Gamaliel. Martha received Jesus into her house:

And she had a sister called Mary, which also **sat at Jesus’ feet**, and heard his word.
(Luke: 10:39 KJV)

Jesus did not merely “happen by.” He was and is the Author of circumstances. He arranged her private session. And **the Holy Spirit inspired the account for our instruction.** (2 Tim. 3:16) When Jesus elevated Mary to the highest seat of learning known to mankind--at the feet of her living Lord --He set a precedent! Therefore, the men in certain traditional denominations who would be known as conservatives have privileged themselves by reserving seminary funding and scholarships for men only. Apparently, they would rather follow in the footsteps of those First Century rabbis than in the footsteps of our Lord. In fact, the set-up is frequently the same: A woman may attend a seminary, as she could a synagogue, if she is willing to sit on the sidelines, as in a synagogue, and stay there in whatever position the men assign to her.

But Martha grew weary of serving while her sister studied. Maybe Martha like many other Jewish women had been led to believe that a woman served her Lord best by keeping house while the men studied in the synagogue. This school of thought has been projected into the New Testament by those who say a woman’s job is to have children while the men run the Church. Or perhaps she like many Christians was so intent on doing things for God that she neglected communion with Him. Whatever her motivation Martha asked Jesus to bid Mary help her:

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: **but one thing is needful: and Mary has chosen that good part**, which shall not be taken away from her. (Luke 10:41-42 KJV)

Martha had her priorities confused, but Mary was a woman of discernment. Jesus’ reply repudiated all discrimination against women in seminaries upon the basis of sex. He decreed the good part--learning of Him and from Him--is a woman’s highest priority and her God-given right. But there are some men and women who would rather exalt the male in seminaries than follow Jesus’ precedent.

Mary – A Woman Immortalized by Jesus

A woman named Mary, **by her foreknowledge of Jesus’ crucifixion**, clearly demonstrated that she had been taught by Jesus. When Mary poured a “vial of very costly perfume” upon Jesus’ head: “The disciples were indignant..., and said, ‘Why this waste?’” Jesus rose to her defense, rebuking those men:

Why do you bother this woman? ...For when she poured this perfume upon My Body, **she did it to prepare Me for My burial.** Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her. (Mat. 26:6-13)

If anyone thinks the husband has received an unction from the Lord that makes him the marriage partner who is always right or gives him the right to be wrong he or she should look closely at this incident. Jesus rebuked the men who represented the twelve tribes of Israel--the stars in the crown of the woman personifying the Old Testament Church--for the sake of a woman. He then elevated Mary by requiring the Church to preserve her memory through the ages and throughout the world. Although the Twelve had trouble grasping it, this woman who so obviously had followed Jesus and had been taught by Him understood that the Messiah would suffer before He would reign. Jesus may have wanted the Church to preserve her memory for what she had done not only because it revealed her great devotion to and compassion for Him, but also because it revealed that in advance of the disciples she had grasped the concept of redemption, that Mary had an **understanding** heart!

Samaritan Woman – Evangelist to Gentiles

The Son of God took a significant step toward the Gentiles through a woman. (John ch. 4) When the race-conscious disciples found Jesus speaking to a Samaritan woman at the well, they **“marveled”** (v. 27), because the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. (v. 9) Jesus revealed His Messiahship to the adulterous Gentile woman: “The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ)....’; Jesus said to her, **‘I who speak to you am He.’**” (vv. 25,26) He also expounded upon the New Way of the Spirit, giving this Gentile woman an insight into the very heart of the Father.

“Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father.... **But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth;** for such people the Father **seeks** to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (vv. 21,23,24)

Notice, God’s clear way of saying it was a period of transition: “an hour **is coming**, and **now is.**” Whenever Jesus by word or deed pointed to the New Covenant, the Jews usually got confused the same as the disciples who **marveled** because He spoke to this woman. Was there room for honest confusion on their part? Had not Jesus said to them, “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans....” (Mat. 10:5) And now the Lord Himself was reaching out to this Gentile woman giving her glorious revelations. By reaching out to (1) a Samaritan and (2) a woman and (3) an adulterous one, He gave the disciples an object lesson: In the New Way of the Spirit, that soon would be upon them, (1) race and (2) sex would become neutral characteristics in God’s eyes; and (3) He came not to call the righteous (in their own eyes) but those who knew they were sinners to repentance. Long before His encounter with Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles, Jesus began opening the door to the Gentiles through a woman who immediately evangelized a whole city of Gentiles:

And from that city **many** of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I have done.” (John 4:39)

Nevertheless, Jesus was zealous for that temple in Jerusalem. We recall His fervor as He evicted the moneychangers: “It is written, ‘AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,’ but you have made it a robbers’ den.” (Luke 19:46) This temple, however, was on its way out along with the natural birthrights that were fundamental to the Old Testament: A Jew was **born** a Jew, a Gentile was **born** a Gentile, a man was **born** a man, a woman was **born** a woman. Back then, the natural birth was the

dominant factor, for some were **born** into slavery, while others such as Paul were “free born.” (Acts 22:28 KJV)

The time **now** is when the natural birth is not a dominant factor conveying rights, because now only those who are **born of God** are His legitimate children:

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the **right to become children of God**, even to those who believe in His name, **who were born not** of blood, **nor** of the will of the flesh, **nor** of the will of man, but **of God**. (John 1:12-13)

In fact, Paul declares that Christ – not temple worship, animal sacrifices, works of the Law, or circumcision – is and always has been the only everlasting way to the Father, because the Law came four hundred and thirty years after God had made the promise to Abraham. (Gal. 3:17) So God’s new covenant with mankind was promised *long* before the Old Covenant with the Jewish race was instituted.

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his **seed**. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to **one**. “And to your seed,” **that is, Christ**. (Gal. 3:16) For **you are all descendants of God through faith in Christ Jesus**. (Gal. 3:26) And **if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring**, heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:29)

So when faith in Christ is present, both Gentile and Jew qualify as descendants of Abraham, heirs of the promise made before the Law was given. Paul then stresses that natural birthrights became passé along with the Old Covenant:

There is neither **Jew nor Greek**, there is neither **slave nor free man**, there is neither **male nor* female**; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28)
(*literal translation: “male **and** female”)

Paul insists there is neither male and female in Christ Jesus. And who would dare to argue that *in* the Church and *in* Christ Jesus is not *in* one and the same place? Thus there is neither male and female in the Church. The apostle does not mean that Christians lose those qualities which set them apart in the physical creation, for a Jew remains a Jew, a Greek, a Greek, etc. He is imparting to us that in the Body of Christ, the Church, physical attributes count for nothing.

Paul expounds on the Body of Christ: “even as the body is one and has many members, and all are members of the body, though they are many are one body, so also is Christ,” “But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.” (1 Cor. 12:12,18) For centuries scholars have been giving Galatians 3:26,28-29 (see above) a strange twist. Rightfully asserting faith is all that is necessary to become a member of the Body of Christ, they allege that **sex again becomes a dominant factor** *after* male and female have become members of His Body, so male members of Christ’s Body are to rule over its female members; whereas, **race does not again become a dominant factor** among the members of the Body of Christ, and so its Jewish members are not to rule over its Gentile members, because all Christians by faith are descendants of Abraham. Thus, based more upon their imagination than Holy Writ, they strive to bestow upon the male the best of both Covenants by standing with one foot in the Old and the other in the New. Male dominance is out of its time and out of its place. The time **now** is when circumcision of the male organ has been displaced by “circumcision... of the heart, by the Spirit.” (Rom. 2:29)

When Jesus declares that the Father **seeks** those who worship in spirit and truth, He strikes at the very heart of the claim that God **must seek** male leaders—that somehow God has bound Himself to a trace of glory still lingering in male flesh. In truth: “ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS,...” (1 Pet. 1:24) And so, the glory in Christ that obliterated

the sinfulness of the flesh (human nature) also obliterated the glory of the flesh, including any glories to be found in natural origins. It is written: **“He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”**

Now that **the time has come** when Jesus has fulfilled the Old Covenant and has opened to us a New Way to God not based on physical requirement but on faith, it is ridiculous to imply a male is “born again” (John 3:7) into the Church of Christ with more authority than a female. Scripture is not open to such ridicule, for “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Cor. 15:50) God chose not to recycle the physical creation but to sentence it to decay. That God does not intend for the physical to dominate a kingdom that is spiritual is emphasized by Paul: “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means any thing; **what counts is a new creation.**” (Gal. 6:15 NIV)

Listen to Jesus saying in other ways that a natural birthright is insignificant: “I say to you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” (Luke 7:28) **“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”** (John 6:63) Only a scholar *deaf* to Jesus’ words and *blind* to the changeover on Pentecost would suppose that the Spirit works more authoritatively through the male of the fallen species—that the life and truth of His **“words”** depend upon the speaker!

Royal Priestesses

Jesus began to prepare His disciples. The time was drawing near for the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. Fulfilling the Law of Moses to the letter, Jesus celebrated the Passover with the men who represented the twelve tribes of Israel out of which Salvation was to come to the whole world. (John 4:22) Jesus, the Victim to be sacrificed, was also the High Priest:

Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take eat; this is my body.” And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” (Mat. 26:26-28)

Our Great Prophet, High Priest and King was officiating as High Priest while He blessed the bread and the wine: His own Body and Blood. Then He said: “...do this in remembrance of Me.” (Luke 22:19) By these words that instituted the Lord’s Supper, Jesus the High Priest passed on the responsibility and privilege of giving thanks and blessing the bread and the wine and partaking of His Body and Blood onto the New Covenant Priesthood – that is, all Christians. Although there is nothing wrong with a congregation wanting an ordained minister to bless the bread and the wine before they are distributed during Holy Communion, Scripture clearly states that every believer, man and woman, Jew and Gentile, is a member of Christ’s **“ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.”** (1 Pet. 2:9) The Blood of Jesus qualifies every New Testament priest and priestess for the task.

Sorrow filled the disciples’ hearts when Jesus spoke of His departure. His words of comfort to them comfort us also: “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away the Helper (*Parakletos*) shall not come to you, but if I go, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7) Jesus Himself is called a Paraclete: “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate (*Parakletos*) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;...” (1 John 2:1) NEW OPEN BIBLE NASV: “It is noteworthy that Jesus calls the Holy Spirit **another** Paraclete (*allos*, ‘another of the same kind’) He is like Jesus” (p. 1225). Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit’s arrival on earth at Pentecost. And He remains with us: We who believe have the Spirit of Christ indwelling our clay temples.

Later, outside of Jerusalem, a sword pierced Mary's soul. (Luke 2:35) Abraham was spared the horror of seeing his son offered as a living sacrifice, but not so Mary. Before her very eyes, the Son cried out in anguished triumph:

"It is finished!"

And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit. (John 19:30)

And behold, **the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom**, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split. (Mat. 27:51)

The earthquake did not tear that heavy curtain in two from top to bottom. That curtain measured about thirty by sixty feet and was as thick as the palm of one's hand. It was torn by the very hand of God to signify that humanity's sin need no longer keep it from approaching Him, a Holy God. Once the curtain was torn God abandoned the Jerusalem temple. He allowed it to be destroyed by the Roman General Titus in A.D. 70.

The redemption of humanity was "finished." The Old Covenant was *closed*, the account "paid in full," and the New Covenant was *opened*! Christ paid in full for all the sins of the whole world that had been committed up to the moment He cried "It is finished!" and for all the sins of the whole world that had yet to be committed in the interval before He returns to judge the earth. Christ's sacrifice for sin is the **only** sacrifice for sin God will accept. So anyone who rejects Christ as his or her Savior remains under the Curse of God.

Jesus' ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18) whereby God reconciled humanity to Himself restored the primal relationship between man and woman which had been distorted by the Fall, the man and woman who had stood side by side in Eden looking to God and lovingly supporting one another. But those who mishandle God's Word would keep the woman under the Curse, looking to her husband instead of God as her authority figure and author of her decisions. Thus positioned she would shirk her responsibility as a **co-ruler** of the earth and as a marriage **partner**, *both of which God made her*! Because He cried "**It is finished!**" about 2000 years ago, every Christian may now once again commune directly with God through our Mediator and Savior Jesus Christ:

For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. (Heb. 9:24) Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.... Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:14,16)

When God abandoned the Jerusalem temple, His movement launched a cosmic tidal wave that engulfed His people with a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and tongues as of fire at Pentecost. (Acts 2:2-3) The time **now** is when God pours forth of His Spirit upon "all mankind" (Acts 2:17), upon "both men and women." (Acts 2:18) the time **now** is when the Spirit of God took up His *new abode* – a **LIVING TEMPLE** – the **BODY** of each and every believer:

Do you not know that **you are a temple of God**, and that **the Spirit of God dwells in you**? (1 Cor. 3:16)

"He has risen from the dead"

Mary Magdalene – Apostle to the Apostles

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.... And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here **for He has risen, just as He said**.... And **go** quickly and **tell** His disciples that **He has risen from the dead**;"... (Mat. 28:1-2, 5-7)

Commentators have a penchant for viewing God's encounters with women as matters of small consequence – even flukes. But if the same standards are justly applied to both sexes, these women qualify as apostles: They were **taught** (disciples) by Jesus and **sent to bear witness** (apostles) of the Resurrection. The angel's words prove Jesus had taught them: "**Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee**: 'the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" (Luke 24:6-7) And God by means of an angel commissioned them when He sent them: "**go...tell.**"

On Resurrection morning Jesus granted Mary Magdalene the matchless favor of being the first person to whom He appeared. Mary, recoiling in grief and shock from the spectacle of the crucifixion and no doubt confused, was standing outside the tomb weeping (John 20:11-18) when Jesus called her by name: "**Mary!**" Time must have stood still for her while her heart all but burst with joyous amazement. Jesus may have favored Mary because she had stood by Him through His crucifixion and burial – risking torture, for the Roman soldiers were known to be notoriously cruel to women, too. Yet, if that had been His only goal, He could have attained it by appearing to her first and immediately thereafter to the men. There is **far more** involved here than her eyewitness: Jesus commissioned Mary saying, "...go to My brethren, and say to them, '**I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.**'" (John 20:17)

Mary was endowed with AUTHORITY by Jesus Who had been given all authority, to bear witness of the risen Christ and **to TEACH THE MEN of the Church** a mystery: "I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." In other words, Jesus appointed Mary to be an apostle to the Apostles. This event should open the eyes of those who have been led to believe that God has decreed: "Women must not teach men from a position of authority" – unless one is foolish enough to think that the Lord of the universe violated His own decree.

Jesus made a statement: **Men do not outrank women in His Church.** Think about it – what must have been in his heart. His first recorded action after His Resurrection was to let the women know He had triumphed and commission them to be the first to proclaim His victory. Jesus was not bound by time or space or any one place. He, Himself, could have spoken to the men, especially to John who stood by during His crucifixion and who ran to the tomb. (John 19:26-27; 20:4-5) But He did not! He delayed showing Himself to males until after: "Mary Magdalene came announcing to the disciples, 'I have seen the risen Lord,..."

A direct rebuttal is given here by Jesus to those commentators who, in their passion to justify a male hierarchy, interpret every service rendered by women to Jesus as a non-spiritual service. Jesus also discredits another twist and turn on the male-female issue: Some traditional scholars say Christ has made the male and female spiritual equals, but as long as those spiritual equals inhabit physical bodies, women have less authority than men. Conversely, if Christ had made the woman to be a lower rank of creature in His Church, He would not have appeared to a woman and commissioned a woman before any man, thus causing her to OUTRANK all men at the CLIMACTERIC moment of Christendom.

God sent an angel to commission the women, and then the Lord Himself commissioned Mary. It was as if He wanted to broadcast to his Church that women were God's *deliberate* choice in this matter – the matter of proclaiming the Resurrection, the most astounding theological fact ever known to mankind! The spiritual leadership required in this commission can no more be ignored than can the

Great Commission. Thus, it had come to pass according to a plan made before the world began (Eph. 1:4) that the *first* proclaiming of the Good News--He is risen! He is risen, indeed!--was done by a woman. And the New Testament Church is still following in her footsteps: following her lead. **Mary led the way!**

Later when Jesus showed Himself to the eleven, He reproached them for not believing Mary. He had commissioned her in earnest. By waiting until *after* Mary had witnessed to the disciples to show Himself to them, Jesus demonstrated that male privilege is *not* a factor with Him. What more could the triumphant Christ have done to spurn those Jewish men who would not allow women to be *official* witnesses than to authorize a woman to be the first *official* witness of his Resurrection and ascension? If women wished to turn the legalistic tables on the men, they could contend that women have been designated by Christ to teach the men of the Church the *most* profound of the eternal verities.

Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He **first appeared to Mary Magdalene,...** **She went and reported to those who had been with Him....** And when they heard that He was alive, and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it. **And after that, He appeared in a different form to two of them,** while they were walking along.... And afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves, and **He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.** (Mark 16:9-14)

When Paul's account of the Resurrection is added to Mark's (above), we have a more comprehensive list of those to whom the risen Christ appeared:

He appeared to Cephas, **then to the twelve.** After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time... then He appeared to James, **then to all the apostles;**... (1 Cor. 15:5-7)

So there were more than twelve apostles. Yet, eleven only were present when the Great Commission was given. They symbolized the Old Testament Church: the Jews who gave us Christ. (John 4:22) Those eleven were also children of Abraham through faith in Christ Jesus. And at the time the eleven were authorized to preach the Gospel to the nations, they represented the New Testament Church, composed of all who believe: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God...." Observe, as Jesus bade Mary "go...tell" the disciples, He now bids the disciples "Go" tell the nations. (Mat. 28:19)

Junia – Woman Apostle

The Great commission, given to *all* who believe, consists of teaching: "**teaching** them to observe...." (Mat. 28:20) I asked a pastor: "How can you deny that Christ empowers women to teach men, when teaching men and women of all nations is the heart of the Great Commission?" He replied that men are Christ's *official* witnesses; whereas women are His *unofficial* witnesses. Abiding by the Talmud, he treated as relatively unimportant the precedent set by Jesus! Fully aware of Christ's precedent, Paul greets a woman apostle:

Salute Andronicus and **Junia**, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, **who are of note among the apostles**, who also were in Christ before me. (Rom. 16:7 KJV)

Junia is a common Latin woman's name. Junius is the male counterpart, as Julius is the male counter part of Julia, and Priscus is the male counterpart to Prisca. The names **Andronicus** and **Junia** are the recipients of the verb **salute**, so they are in the accusative form in the text. The word recorded in the original text is **Junian** which is the accusative of the feminine **Junia**. The NASV OPEN BIBLE adds the letter *s*, rendering the name "Junias," but it confirms that the feminine is justified by the original

language: “**Junia (feminine)**” is listed under “**A**” = “*Alternate Translation. These words are different from those in the text, but they are justified by the original languages.*” (Rom. 16:7; p.14 NASV OPEN BIBLE) And so two pre-eminent translations, the King James Version and the New American Standard Version, acknowledge that the literal translation of the name appearing in the original text (**Junian**) is the feminine name **Junia**.

Attempting to impose their own personal bias upon Scripture, scholars have taken liberties with the name **Junia** (such as adding a meaningless letter *g* to it) to obscure its gender. This does not hold true of early commentators. Origen who lived near the end of the Second Century – a little over a hundred years after Paul saluted Junia – took it for granted that Junia was a woman (*Epistolam ad Romanos Commentariorum* 10, 26; 39*). Jerome, who lived in the latter half of the Fourth Century, spoke of the apostle as a woman (*Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum* 72,15*). John Chrysostom, living in the Fourth Century, was so celebrated that his views influenced theologians for centuries. Although he thought that a woman could run the race of an evangelist or an apostle, he expressed his view that a woman should not speak from the raised platform in the meeting place. Thus he greatly hampered the woman’s ministry. Nevertheless, Chrysostom who so obviously was not engaged in dignifying women praised Junia (*Homily on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans XXXI**):

Oh! how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!

As an apostle, Junia had signs following her, because Paul wrote to Corinth: “The **signs** of a true apostle were performed among you.” (2 Cor. 12:12) Since Junia and Andronicus were prominent – “**of note**” – among the other apostles and were “**in Christ before**” Paul, they may have instituted the church in Rome.

Jesus gave a final overview of his mission to the disciples before He ascended into heaven. Many Jews stumbled upon Christ because they lacked a clear overview of Scripture and, like certain males in the contemporary Church, yearned for privilege based upon some kind of an inherent natural worth.

Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.**” ... “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name **to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.** You are witnesses of these things. And behold I am sending forth the **promise of My Father** upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:44-49)

The proclamation of Salvation came forth from the Old Testament holy city, Jerusalem, and was first preached by those who represent the Old Testament Church. The promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, was given in the same holy city. But the Father Who had proclaimed (Mark 12:26), “**I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB,**” gave the “promise of My Father” – the Holy Spirit – to “all mankind,” “both men and women!”

* References derived from Dr. Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, p. 101. Plus James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (Grand Rapids: Ederdmans, 1930), p. 306. One Junia is described as “the daughter” and another one as “mother” in *Corpus Inscriptionum, Graecarum* (I.448; III.3927). In addition, a reference on Chrysostom’s quote (see above) is supplied by Richard Kroeger, M. Div.: *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* 1st Series, X1555.

* Ibid.

The awesome lesson to be learned from the panorama of the Old Covenant is not male supremacy but rather, inconceivable humility: **Almighty God, Who made the heaven and the earth and all therein, employed the human characteristics of race and sex to make His divine power and Godhead subservient to our Salvation.**

NEW WINE INTO OLD WINESKINS

Jesus said, "Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined;..." (Mat. 9:17)

This said He of the message: the Spirit and the letter (Law and Gospel) cannot be mixed without disastrous consequences. In a sense, however, the new wine of the Gospel was poured into an old wineskin: the people of the Old Testament Church. For up to then, the Law of Moses had shaped their existence. Unlimited in its scope and control over their lives, it had proceeded directly from God and set them apart from the other nations. More than a lifestyle, it affirmed their identity as the chosen race. Jesus may have led His people out of the Old Covenant, changing their approach to God, but from a sociological standpoint, the Old Covenant remained in His people, who were encased in Jewish custom and tradition. The moral law is all that applies to Christians; however, extensions of the civil law and ceremonial law (a part of the shadow, Col. 2:15-17) tarried in the lives of those First Century Jewish Christians in the formalities of their *practices* and *customs*, and also as a matter of *conscience*.

Jesus did not want the Jews to discard or dishonor the Law of Moses. They had to study it to learn about the Messiah and teach about the Messiah to other nations, thus fulfilling their calling as a nation: "they were entrusted with the oracles of God." (Rom. 3:2) The New Testament Church much like a tree grew spreading over every nation under the sun. Yet, it remains rooted in the Old Testament: "behold the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." (Rev. 5:5)

No shallow approach to Scripture will properly distinguish between the new wine of the gospel and the old wineskins of Jewish customs. Only a Spirit-led journey will accurately bring those First Century Jews to life in order to give us a grasp of the historical context into which the new wine was poured.

Paul and Barnabas had great dissention with some Jews who were advising Gentiles: "Unless you are circumcised **according to the custom of Moses**, you cannot be saved." So it was determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others "should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue." (Acts 15:1-2) Some of the Pharisees who believed stood up in the meeting, saying of the Gentiles: "It is necessary to circumcise them, to direct them **to observe the Law of Moses.**" (v. 5) "And the apostles and elders came together to look into this matter." (v. 6) Peter set them all straight, saying God had called the Gentiles in the same manner as the Jews: "cleansing their hearts by faith." (v. 8-9) James, however, thought that the Law of Moses could not be totally disregarded: "For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath." (v. 21) As a result, the following letter was written to the Gentiles:

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: **that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled** and from fornication;... (Acts 15: 28-29)

The Gentiles were required to make a concession to the Law of Moses by eating kosher meats. Elsewhere (1 Cor. 10:23-33) Paul says that eating meat offered to idols is of no significance, unless it offends another's conscience. And he also warns the Gentiles: "let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink." (Col. 2:16) Still, the Holy Spirit in deference to the collective Jewish *conscience* activated by the Law of Moses sanctioned the concession.

Paul's adherence to Jewish *customs* led to his arrest. For while he was completing his days of purification in the temple, Jews from Asia stirred up the crowd against him. (Acts 21:27) Earlier, James and the elders had advised:

"You see brother, **how many thousands** there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and **they are all zealous for the Law**; and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles **to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.**" (Acts 21:20-21)

They recommended that Paul make himself ceremonially clean to show the Jewish Christians: "there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that **you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.**" (Acts 21:24) These men were not uttering a falsehood when they stated that Paul himself kept the Law of Moses. Paul acquiesced in "purifying himself." (Acts 21:26) The Apostle had most vigorously established that Jewish customs are not relevant to Salvation, but evidently, he himself looked upon them as an **honorable practice.**

The contemporary Church is not concerned about the identity crises and culture shock those First Century Jews were experiencing, or about offending the Jewish conscience. Jewish practices and customs have all but ceased to be a consideration: (1) Christians no longer eat kosher meats as the Holy Spirit required of First Century Christians in deference to the Jewish conscience; (2) Christian men no longer purify themselves as Paul did, making themselves ceremonially clean; (3) circumcision is not required of Christian men. Although the *practices* and *customs* of the First Century Jews have ceased to affect Christian men, some have been extended to reach many Twentieth Century Christian women, for Christian women have adhered to the female Jewish custom of the covering of the head, wearing hats in church, into the first half of the Twentieth Century. While the male scholars in charge have made a proper distinction between the new wine and the old wineskin, rightfully applying it to men, they have failed to make a proper distinction between the new wine and the old wineskin, justly applying it to women – double standards. Thus the Christian woman's participation in worship and her service to her Lord are often governed by Jewish *customs* and *practices*, instead of her position **IN THE LORD.**

"IN THE LORD" is an expression oft used by Paul. During his letter to Philemon, Paul contrasts **"in the Lord"** with **"in the flesh,"** indicating quite clearly that his "in the Lord" defines relationships in the Church; whereas, his "in the flesh" defines relationships in society. Paul sent the runaway slave Onesimus whom he had converted (v. 10) back to his owner:

For perhaps he was for this reason departed from you for a while, that you should have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as **a beloved brother,** especially to me, but how much more to you **both in the flesh and in the Lord.** **If then you regard me as a partner, accept him as you would me.** (Ph'm. 15-7)

In the flesh (or in society) Philemon had every right under Roman law to put his runaway slave to death. But **in the Lord** (or in the Church) Paul requires Philemon to regard his slave as a beloved brother and his partner in the same way he regards Paul as his partner. Observe, in the Church the lowborn slave has been elevated to the level of the freeborn Apostle. Hence, there is no Spirit-motivated task, leadership or otherwise, in the church which the owner can perform that the slave cannot perform also. As Paul puts into practice his words "there is neither slave nor free," he offers

us a blueprint for the practical application of his two parallel passages: “there is neither male and female,” “there is neither Jew nor Greek” in the Body of Christ. (Gal. 3:28)

the new wine

Women in the Lord

In that same vein—**IN THE LORD**—Paul describes how male and female relate:

However, **in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.** For as the woman **originates** from the man, so also man **has his birth** through the woman; and all things **originate** from God. (1 Cor. 11:11-12)

IN THE LORD is where all God's people dwell, his physical and spiritual creatures, whether formed from the dust of the ground or born again from above. IN THE LORD, Paul describes an interdependence: Man was the first of the species so woman *needs* man; as the species is reproduced, man *needs* woman for his life. Neither is independent of the other. Notwithstanding, God, not man or woman, is to be glorified as the source of life. Verily, those thirsty for new wine may drink freely of equality despite distinctions found **IN THE LORD**.

“Head” – Kephale

the old wineskin

Most scholars acknowledge that prior (1 Cor. 11:2-10) to the “in the Lord” section, Paul expounds upon Jewish traditions (including the tradition of the veil or covering of the head by women) that he passed on to the Gentiles:

Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the **traditions** (Strong 3862. “*paradosis*, Jewish **traditionary law**”) just as I delivered them to you. (v. 2)

Having said that, Paul then reviews the principles behind those Jewish traditionary practices that—much the same as circumcision and dietary laws—had been carried over by the Jews into the New Testament era because they were an integral part of Jewish society (“in the flesh”):

But I want you to understand that Christ is the head (*kephale*) of every man, and the man is the head (*kephale*) of the woman, and God is the head (*kephale*) of Christ. (1 Cor. 11:3. Strong : “2776. **kephale**...lit. or fig.:--head.”)

Identifying his subject—traditions worth keeping in the First Century Church—Paul now expounds upon the traditional point of view. But this viewpoint, however accurate, is based upon an *incomplete* account of the male-female interdependence, for it sounds as if woman depends upon man and that's the end of the story. **So as not to create a false impression, Paul gives us the rest of the story:** “IN THE LORD,” he contends, woman needs man, but man also needs woman. Furthermore, he says: “indeed, man was not created because of the woman, but woman because of the man” (1 Cor. 11:9, literal), reminding us that man was insufficient with out woman: “**not good...alone.**” Indeed, man *needs* woman.

As if to exacerbate the issue, Americans usually have a faulty understanding of the traditional point of view, because the language and the cultural barriers between Americans and First Century Greeks block the Americans' view of First Century usage of the Greek word *kephale* = “head.” Another blockage also occurs in the minds of those who cannot grasp the concept of a **metaphor** or a **figure of speech**. When they are informed “head” is a **metaphor** that usually did not mean “boss” to the First Century Greeks, they react as if they were being told black did not mean black and white did not mean white during the First Century. Even so, when an American who *does* understand the

concept of a metaphor sees the word *head* in Scripture, he or she knows the **literal** meaning of the word is “the upper part of the human body, the seat of the intellect.” But he or she is just as certain that the **metaphorical** meaning of the word *head* is “boss,” for the head of a state is its leader, and the head of a department is its boss, that the designation “head” indicates some sort of superiority.

Consequently, the American mind plays back the traditional point of view, with its frequent use of “head,” as if it were a First Century version of “Who’s the Boss?” Although Webster’s Dictionary lists the metaphor of “head” implying leadership as one among a possible 23 meanings (“a source of a river or stream; the membrane stretched across the end of a drum; a culmination, climax or crisis; a position of leadership or honor; steam in an engine; the front or forward of something; Nautical, the bows of a ship, the ship’s latrine; the foam on top of a glass of beer”; etc.), “boss” or “authority figure” is perhaps the most common English metaphor. Nevertheless, it has been established by the translators of the Septuagint that “authority figure” is a most uncommon metaphor of the Greek *head* = *kephale*.

The Septuagint is a Greek version of the Old Testament written about 250-150 B.C. The Hebrew Scriptures were translated into the Greek language by the seventy (LXX), hence the name Septuagint, which means seventy. The Hebrew language has a word for “head”—*rosh*—with metaphorical extensions of “**chief**” or “**ruler**” or “**leader**,” quite similar to English metaphors of “head.” But in spite of the fact that the Greek *kephale* and the Hebrew *rosh* have the same literal meaning—“head”—the seventy reveal that *kephale* does not have the same metaphorical extensions as *rosh*. Richard C. Cervin (Doctoral candidate for the degree in Linguistics, U of I Urbana-Champaign) conveys that the translators of the Septuagint raise real problems for those who want to maintain that *kephale* usually means “leader” in the Greek language”:

The biggest problem is the fact that *kephale* is seldom used as a translation of the Hebrew *rosh* when the Hebrew word refers explicitly to leaders. The Mickelsons* have pointed this out and they show that *kephale* is translated for *rosh* “leader” only 8 out of 180 instances. That is 4.4%, a rather slim percentage. If the “head” = “leader” metaphor is as common in Greek as it is in Hebrew, **why** did the translators of the LXX not use it?

In 1991 the “Commission on Theology and Church Relations” of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod supplied us with a word study: “The Meaning of *Kephale* (‘Head’): A Response to Recent Studies,” by Wayne Grudem. Professor Grudem is determined to establish the *kephale* = “leader” metaphor. Instead, his **isolated** interpretation of 2,336 examples of *kephale* found in Greek literature (not the Bible) turned up an 83.3% chance in the realm of the metaphor that *kephale* does **not** mean “leader” to the Greeks. Grudem is equally determined to prove that *kephale* does **not** mean “source” (a view ascribed to by many contemporary scholars). He judges (p. 46) that “beginning point”—a meaning of *kephale*—does **not** mean source or origin. Contrary to Grudem, Webster’s New World Dictionary does not indicate that “source” and “beginning point” are a contradiction of terms: “**beginning 2. The time or place of starting, birth; origin; source.**” Similarly, (p. 44) Grudem fails to take into consideration that natural things such as planets were treated as if they were living beings with personalities by the Greeks, and so it would be difficult to draw the customary linguistic line between words applying to natural things and words applying to people.

A conscious decision must be made here: In order to remain true to Scripture, should we view “head” = “*kephale*” through the eyes of the translators of the Septuagint who were Jews in Greek society or should we view it through the eyes of various Americans second-guessing 2000 years after the fact?

* Berkley and Alvera Mickelsen, “What Does *kephale* Mean in the New Testament?” in *Women Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986), pp. 97-110.

Manfred T. Brauch, author of *Hard Sayings of Paul* (InterVarsity Press, pp. 137-138), also remarks upon the close similarity between the English word *head* and the Hebrew *rosh* (“head”) due to the fact that the metaphorical or figurative meaning of both words frequently designates an “authority figure”:

When the translators [of the Septuagint], however, sought the appropriate Greek word to render this figurative meaning [authority figure], they used not *kephale*, but *archon* (and its derivatives) in the great majority of cases (138 times). *Archon* means “ruler,” “commander,” “leader.” Its derivatives included meanings such as “authority,” “chief,” “captain,” “prince,” “chief of tribe,” “head of family.” Most of the remaining occurrences of *rosh* (when it designates an authority figure) are translated by several other specific Greek words (such as *hegeomai*, “to have dominion over.”) In only 8 of the 180 cases was *kephale* used to translate *rosh* when it designated the leader or ruler of a group....

It is clear from this data that the Greek translators were keenly aware that *kephale* did not normally have a metaphorical meaning equivalent to that of *rosh*, else they would have used it for most if not all, occurrences of *rosh* [since both mean “head”] when it carried the meaning “chief” or “leader,”....

This linguistic evidence, which suggests that the idea of “authority over” was not native to the Greek *kephale*, has led numerous scholars to see behind Paul’s use of “head” either the meaning “source, origin” or “top, crown, completion.”

Cyril of Alexandria, an important Greek speaking Church leader in the Fourth Century, is quoted by Brauch (p. 139) to illustrate that while American ears hear “authority figure,” the Greek ears heard “source, origin” or “**beginning** of” when Paul spoke to them of *kephale* = “head”:

Thus we say that the *kephale* of every man is Christ, because he was excellently made through him. And the *kephale* of a woman is man because she was taken from his flesh. Likewise, the kephale of Christ is God, because he is from him according to nature. (G.W. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 749.)

The IN THE LORD segment confirms Paul’s “source-origin” intent: “woman **originates** from man”; “man **has his birth** through the woman”; “all things **originate** from God.” Paul speaks fundamentally of a sequential coming forth: “Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your father, you would love Me for I **proceeded forth** and have **come forth from God**....’” (John 8:42); “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that **He had come forth from God**, and was going back to God,....” (John 13:3)

Christ’s body emerged from God: “BUT A BODY THOU HAST PREPARED FOR ME” (Heb. 10:5); man’s body emerged through Christ; woman’s body emerged from the flesh and bones of the man. Therefore, where an American hears a chain of command – God, Christ, man, woman – the Greeks heard a chronology of natural origins. It is amazing how the doctrine of the “headship of man” has blazed like wildfire through so many denominations apparently without anyone bothering to find out *what on earth* the First Century Apostle Paul is talking about!

In requiring Gentiles to adhere to Jewish customs, Paul simply is wielding the authority given to him by the Lord over the First Century Gentile congregations in a way that he thinks best: “For even if I should boast somewhat further about our authority (*exousia*) which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame,....” (2 Cor. 10:8)

Other principles behind Jewish practices like man is *not* dependent upon women fade in the light of the whole Bible. (The fact that, before the command to procreate was given, Adam needed a “helper” reveals man’s need of woman.)

Every man who has something on his head **while praying or prophesying disgraces** his head. (1 Cor. 11:4) A man ought not to cover his head for he is the image of God. (1 Cor. 11:7)

Feel free to question this principle stated by Paul. God commanded high priests: “when they enter the gates of the inner court”: “**Linen turbans shall be on their heads....**” (Eze. 44:17,18) Now, God *never* would require a high priest to **disgrace** his head.

But every woman who has her head uncovered **while praying or prophesying** disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved. (1 Cor. 11:5)

Observe (above), Paul has just **upheld** the right of men and women to pray and prophesy – “*speak God’s Word*” – in church. *He merely expostulates with them on their attire.* Spiros Zodhiates in the Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible explains the dilemma Paul faced and why he wanted women to restrict their Christian liberty:

Paul’s comments in 1 Cor. 11:2-16 in regard to the covering of the women’s heads were a reaction to the existence of a thousand priestesses of the temple of Aphrodite on Acrocorinth. These priestesses, or temple prostitutes, were commonly seen without any covering on their heads and having short hair, unbecoming to a modest woman of those days. Paul’s concern, therefore, was that Christian women should never allow themselves to be viewed in any way as resembling those of low moral stature. In 1 Cor. 11:3-16 his concern is that a woman in worship should very clearly be identified as a moral woman, if by nothing else than long hair or the covering of the head. (Baker Book House, pp. 1406-1407)

Paul makes it quite clear that if Christ has given us liberty, He has not with it given us a license to mislead. And back then if Christian men covered their heads and women uncovered theirs, they resembled existent cult members. Dr. Catherine Kroeger tells of the deliberate sex reversal practiced in the surrounding cults (“The Apostle Paul and the Greco-Roman Cults of Women”):

Such sex reversal was a specific distinctive of the Dionysaic cult and by the second century A.D. was considered to be indispensable to the religion. Men wore long veils and long hair as signs of their dedication to the god, while women used the unveiling and shorn hair to indicate their devotion.* Men masqueraded as women, and in a rare vase painting from Corinth a woman is dressed in satyr pants equipped with the male organ. Thus she dances before Dionysos, a deity who had been raised as a girl and was himself called the male-female and “sham man.”*

The sex exchange that characterized the cults of such great goddesses as Cybele, the Syrian goddess, and Artemis of Ephesus was more grisly. Males voluntarily castrated themselves and assumed women’s garments.* A relief from Rome shows a high priest of Cybele. The castrated priest wears veil, necklaces, earrings and feminine dress. (*Plutarch Maralia 268 C-E; Althensus 12.525; Lucian, Dra Syria 6)

Overall, God is not partial to any one sex (Gal. 3:28), and sex is merely temporal: In heaven, like the angels, they will neither marry nor reproduce. (Mat. 22:30) But to this day, Christians are to take heed to their apparel so that what they wear does not mislead or make an improper social statement.

Many scholars* arduously are objecting to a subordination of women that sprang to life through deceptive translations; for instance, 1 Cor. 11:10:

For this reason, a woman must have power (*exousia*) on her head.

(Strong: "1849. *exousia*...privilege...capacity...freedom...authority...power.") *Exousia* is employed to describe the "authority" in heaven and on earth given to Jesus. (Mat. 28:18) Nowhere in the New Testament is *exousia* used as a metaphor for a piece of clothing. The word *veil* emerging in so many English versions is there because of a translator's presumption. Paul does *not* say a woman should have a symbol of authority such as a veil on her head. Many scholars* hold that Paul by selecting *exousia* ("authority")—rather than "veil" or "symbol" or "sign" on her head—is referring to the dominion and authority given to the woman at Creation. For she was made *not* in man's image but in *God's image*. In the physical realm, she may be the glory of the man, but as a firefly is to the sun at high noon is her temporal glory compared to the *glory* given to her by Christ (John 17:22). *Look at Paul's words: "For this reason, a woman must have power (or authority) on her head"—that is to say, "invested in her."* Of this we can be sure: Paul affirms that women have authority (*exousia*) in the Church. *Exousia* is the "authority" over the Gentiles bestowed upon Paul. (2 Cor. 10:8)

However the phrase "authority on her head" is construed it is of no far-reaching consequence, for it is obvious that the Jewish traditionary law upon which Paul is expounding is a *law unto itself* based upon its own set of rules—*not* biblical principles; for instance: "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a **dishonor** to him,...?" (1 Cor. 11:14) The short hair that nature taught does not harmonize with what God taught:

Again the Lord spoke to Moses saying, "...when a **man or woman** makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to dedicate himself to the Lord,... All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall pass over his head. **He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled...he shall let the locks of hair on his head grow long....**" (Num. 6:1,5)

Now, God *never* would require a **holy** man to **dishonor** his head! The long hair of Samson and John the Baptist was honorable, indeed. If the principles behind the practices of Jewish men do not harmonize with the entire Bible, how can corresponding principles ring true for women? The time has come for those principles behind Jewish practices to be laid to rest alongside the practices themselves.

Guided by an erroneous impression of "head" = "boss," scholars tore a patch from the "in society" = "in the flesh" passages and began stretching it, making themselves leaders of their wives and leaders of the Church. And thus they *s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d* the patch relating to *natural* origins till it also covered *spiritual* elements. They violated the Lord's province when they appointed themselves *spiritual* leaders (heads) of women—as if Christ had made their flesh a god, or made them fleshly idols. Christ has not been content with less than making the woman a *joint-heir with Himself!* (Rom. 8:17) But some men strive to confiscate her spiritual legacy while she inhabits the earth. It is tragic to find so many abusing a Greek metaphor pertaining to Jewish "*practice*" (1 Cor. 11:16)—a metaphor imaging a mere half-life. If woman took her life from man, she gave it back to him—and ultimately, the breath of life is breathed by God.

the new wineskin

* Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, p. 26; Manfred T. Brauch, *Hard Sayings of Paul*, p. 151; Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*; M.D. Hooker – "Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Corinthians 11:10," *New Testament Studies*, pp.410-416; Walter L. Liefeld, *Women, Authority and the Bible*, pp. 145-146; Orr and Walther, *The Anchor Bible*, Vol. 32, pp. 260-264.

* Ibid.

For by Him [Christ] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible,... And He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together**. He is also the **head** (*kephale*) of the body, the Church; and He is the **beginning**, the first born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have **first place in everything**. (Col. 1:15-18)

So Christ the **Head** of the Church is its **beginning**. And the words beginning and source/origin are similar. Incidentally, a literal meaning of the first word of the Bible is "Head." The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible (Zodhiates, Baker Book House, p. 1): "The name 'Genesis' comes from a Greek word meaning 'beginning,'... taken from the Septuagint. The Hebrew title, *Bereshith* ('in beginning,' literally, 'head'), was derived from the first word of the Hebrew Text."

Christ the **beginning** of *all* life **sustains** *all* life. In the *physical* realm, it takes man and woman together to reflect this two-fold work of Christ, for if man was the **source** of a woman's body, man now depends upon woman to **sustain** the species. The *creature* Adam was not made as a *match* for his *Creator* (Rom. 1:25): Adam had no dominion *with* Christ *over* Eve; Adam had dominion *with* Eve *over* the earth. One must mindlessly scramble **spiritual** and **physical** elements to infer that which is *corruptible* (1 Cor. 15:54)–male flesh–is **born** in charge of that which is *incorruptible*–the female's spirit. Christ has not yielded to the male His "**first place**" in a woman's life! *All* persons are **born** into this world quite equal, having *one* Author of life and *one* Master and *one* God-Man Mediator!

When Paul exercises the authority given to him by the Lord and uses his own judgement, he clarifies this, usually by using the first person ("I"), and then qualifying the "I," or making a contradistinction, such as 1 Cor. ch. 7:

But this **I say** by way of concession, **not of command**.... (v. 6)

But to the married **I give** instructions, **not I, but the Lord**,... (v. 10)

But to the rest **I say, not the Lord**,... (v. 12)

Likewise, Paul conveys that he himself delivered those Jewish traditions to the Gentiles: "Now I praise you because you remember **me** in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions just as I delivered them to you. But **I** want you...." (1 Cor. 11:2-3) He then makes the contradistinction to clarify the Lord's position: "**However, in the Lord**...." (1 Cor. 11:11) This is not to say that each time he employs the first person ("I") that the message is from Paul and not the Lord. Yet in those rare instances where he *clearly* states he is using his own judgement or expounding upon the basis of Jewish tradition (an honorable and orderly way to walk), we must grant Paul credibility by taking him at his word.

Women in the Lord

The Apostle Paul plainly indicates also which one *stands above* the other: the *equality despite male-female distinctions* found in the Lord, or the *human reasoning* behind the Jewish customs; God's point of view, or man's point of view; the cycle of life or the half-life. For he employs the Greek word *plen*, Strong: "4133. *plen*...but (rather)...." *Plen* is spoken by Jesus in Gethsemane:

Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from me: *plen* (rendered "yet" RSV, or "nevertheless" KJV), not what I will, but what Thou wilt. (Mark 14:36)

Which one stands above the other: Above all else does Jesus want God to save Him from the crucifixion, or above all else does He want God's will to be done? Thus we find the concept introduced by *plen* is the most important one, standing far above the other. Consequently, "***Plen*** ('however'), in the Lord...." stands far above those encircling verses (vv. 2-10, 13-16) supporting Jewish customs.

OUR BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR IS KING OF CREATION

Our beautiful Savior is Lord of both creations! The Natural Creation: "All things came into being by Him (Christ), and apart from Him nothing came into being." (John 1:3) The Spiritual Creation: "Therefore if anyone (*tis*) be **in Christ**, he or she is a new creature." (2 Cor. 5:17) In the way that God gave "them" (male and female) joint dominion over the earth, God gives birth to spiritual creatures who will inherit a spiritual kingdom, for every new creature is a **joint heir with Christ**." (Rom. 8:17) The joint heirs are termed "sons and daughters" of the King (2 Cor. 6:18) and "brothers and sisters" in Christ. (1 Cor. 7:15) And each individual heir - son or daughter - has the **same** "earnest" or "pledge" of his or her "inheritance" dwelling within them (the Holy Spirit)--that is to say, the natural man and the natural woman independent of one another have the **same legal claim** to their heavenly inheritance. (Eph. 1:13-14)

The position of man and woman is the same in both creations, in Eden and in the Church, where both stood and now stand on level ground. Each of them was and is responsible only for his or her own actions: (1) God faulted Adam only for his own transgression and not Eve's, and the reverse is true; and (2) to each of "them" has been assigned equal responsibility in ruling over the earth and in spreading the Gospel throughout the earth. Recalling Eden, where God joined **only** the flesh of the primal marriage partners who retained autonomous minds, souls and spirits--revealing the husband is merely the head (source) of the wife's **body** and not of her mind or her spirit--how outrageous becomes the allegation that in the Last Days Era man suddenly becomes the woman's **spiritual** head. And according to the untimely thus misbegotten impression that "head" = "leader," this would make man the woman's spiritual director with far more responsibility than woman in both the home and in the Church. How could the male who was **in-sufficient** on his own to rule over the earth suddenly become **all-sufficient** to lead the Church? The **Truth** of the matter remains: Christ is the woman's **only** spiritual Head, and as He anoints leaders He is not influenced by race or sex. (Gal. 3:28) Why? - because "It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh counts for **nothing**." (John 6:63); **what counts is a new creation**." (Gal. 6:15 NIV)

Marriage Partners in the Lord

God winked at first-born privilege when He elevated Old Testament people: He chose Jacob the second born, and Joseph and David the youngest sons. If during the era when God required the first-born male to be dedicated to Himself, God demonstrated a natural birthright has no clout in His eyes, no bearing at all upon those He chooses to make preeminent, then from whence cometh the myth that a male birthright has clout with God after His Blood has rent the veil for all races and both sexes? Similarly, in the sinful "he shall rule over you" era, God bypassed two husbands to anoint their wives Huldah and Deborah as supreme spiritual authorities of the nation. Now that husband and wife (although one in Christ) are each one individually joint heirs with Christ, whence cometh the myth that their one-flesh relationship has any bearing at all on God's choice of leaders? In fact, each heir's dedication to Christ reigns over their marriage:

And **be subject to one another in reverence for Christ**. (Eph. 5:21)

wives (***be subject***) to your own husbands as to the Lord.... (Eph. 5:22)

Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;... (Eph. 5:25)

FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. (Eph. 5:31)

The words "***be subject***" in verse 22 are **not** in the Greek text! They have been added by translators. The Greek reads: "**And be subject to one another in reverence for Christ, wives to your own husbands as to the Lord....**" Look at any Greek and English interlinear or parallel or a translation where words

added to the Greek by the translator are set in italics to verify this. The instructions to wives are merely the **first half** of Paul's "be subject" principle; his instructions to husbands, the **second half** of that same principle. Hence, Paul makes his appeal to husbands and wives in the context of *mutual* submission.

Most English translations obscure this by inserting a heading such as "Instructions To Husbands And Wives" in the middle of Paul's sentence (between vv. 21 and 22) in a futile attempt to spare the husbands that submission the Apostle requires of **all** Christian men and women (vv. 15-20)—**including** husband and wife (vv. 22-32). Here we have a clear demonstration that "subjection" or "submission" in the mind of St. Paul does not mean "obedience," for it would be as impossible for a group of people to be obedient to each other as it would be for a group of people to follow each other. The same holds true of husband and wife: They cannot concurrently lead and follow each other. Consequently, "**subjection" or "submission" in the biblical sense cannot mean "to obey."**

Along with Paul, Peter does not think of "submission" as "obedience." His directive "submit...to every human institution"—such as kings, slaves to their masters, etc. (1 Pet. 2:13-21)—confirms this. If the apostles had *obeyed* the Roman regime, their religion would have been Caesar worship. And had the Jewish slaves in Egypt *obeyed* their masters, they would have worshiped Pharaoh instead of Yaweh! And so "*obedience*" is strictly reserved for God! "Submission" in the minds of both Peter and Paul must imply: **In so far as your conscience allows, be supportive of, or execute your duty toward, your government, spouse, etc.**

Similarly, Peter asks wives to be submissive to unbelieving husbands—in so far as their conscience allows, be a "dutiful" wife—so the unbelieving husband may be "won without a word by the behavior of their wives." (1 Pet. 3:1) If that fails, Paul says: "Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave, the...sister is not under bondage in such cases." (1 Cor. 7:15)

Peter—with nostalgia—advises wives to strive for *inner* beauty: "And let not your adornment be merely external...but let it be the hidden person of the heart. For in this manner in the **old time (Old Testament)** the holy women also...adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord..." (1 Pet. 3:4-6 KJV) Now, is Peter **demanding** that the Jewish customary marriage be carried over into the New Testament era, or is he **encouraging** women to strive for Sarah's inner beauty?

A Jewish woman **hoped** in God's promise of a Messiah and wanted to be the one to bear Him, so she submitted to her husband and was "not afraid with any amazement." (1 Pet. 3:6 KJV) Strictly speaking, Christ forbids Christians to call any human "lord": "**neither be ye called masters for one is your Master, even Christ.**" (Mat. 23:10) And so Peter qualifies his narrative: "Likewise, ye husbands...**giving honour unto the wife**, as to the weaker vessel*, and **as being heirs together of the grace of life**; that your prayers be not hindered." (v. 7)

Peter by ennobling the Jewish customary marriage of his father Abraham and mother Sarah (Isa. 51:2) is not advocating that marriage partners continue to live under the penalty of sin imposed upon Adam and Eve, as if Christ had brought nothing new into the marriage relationship, for he stresses the wife is a **fellow heir**, an heir whom the husband must **honor**, lest his prayers be hindered. **God demands it.** If, in fact, the wife has a weaker earthen vessel, is the strength of one's intellect or one's spirituality determined by the strength of one's physique? Notwithstanding, the time is short, says Paul, and marriage must take a back seat to the cause of the Gospel. (1 Cor. 7:25-40)

* "vessel" (*skeous*), Strong 4632. Peter, here, is speaking of the human body. The same word is employed in 2 Cor. 4:7—"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels (Strong 4632), that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves." The "treasure" we have is the Spirit of Christ.

Returning to Paul's words on marriage in Ephesians, chapter 5, we find Paul following in his Master's footsteps (Mat. 19:5), basing New Testament marriage on God's prototype marriage in the Beginning. Because Ephesians 5:31 echoes Genesis 2:24: "FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER..." Therefore, the **mutual** subjection principle originated in Eden.

During the husband's half of the mutual subjection principle found in Ephesians 5 (v. 21), Paul lays a restraining hand on husbands, evidenced in the Greek *paradidomi* meaning "to surrender" (Strong 3860): "Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church **and gave Himself** (*paradidomi*) for her" (v. 25). This same Greek word is employed in Romans 1:24: "Wherefore God also **gave them up** (*paradidomi*) to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts...." This was a **total** giving up—for God **completely** gave them over to their lusts—a **complete** surrender. How tragic that the Apostle's vision of **mutual**—but **sweet**—surrender between Christ and the Church and between husband and wife has been used by many husbands as an excuse to have their own way. On the contrary, Paul demands self-sacrificing love on the part of the husband: "love," "love," "love" (vv. 25,28,33). "So husbands **ought** to love their wives" (v. 28)

In turn, the wife's performance of her wifely duties (v. 22) – the same as with *all* other earthly duties – is to be a demonstration of her love for Jesus.

Paul then makes a **comparison** (v. 23): "For the husband is the **head** of the wife, as Christ also is the **head** of the Church." Elsewhere Paul says that Christ is the **head** of the man who is the **head** of the woman. Now, the translators of the Septuagint have established that the metaphor "head" in the mind of First Century Greeks did not usually mean "authority figure" (only 4.4% of the time, see pp. 30-33). The fact that this metaphor means "authority figure" to a culture like ours existing 2000 years after the words were written establishes *nothing*. Christ is man's authority figure because He is God, the Author of life, man's Creator. Man is a creature, so strict limitations must be put on the comparison. Everyone knows the difficulty of comparing apples and oranges: An apple remains an apple and the orange an orange. Likewise, when comparing the creature with the Creator, the creature remains a creature. Paul did not intend to dispense Christ's glory to the male, but rather, His humility and self-sacrificing love.

Knowing where to draw the line is *imperative* if we are to remain faithful to God's Word! A case in point: Jesus, Paul, Apollos and Phoebe are all termed *diakonos*. Clearly, all four had *one* thing in common, a ministry. They did not have *all* things in common: All were not Saviors; all were not apostles; all were not men, nor were all women. In other words, we make a **limited** comparison. Similarly, we must not stretch any of Jesus' parables beyond His singular point of comparison. Yet, many scholars stretch Paul's comparison of the love nourished relationship between Christ and His Church (the pattern of an ideal Christian marriage) beyond Paul's point of comparison: the unique **oneness**—the complete **unity**—of head and body. Making an **unlimited** comparison, they equate the husband with Christ to the extreme of reaching into God's glory, making the husband equal to Christ's Lordship. Indeed, while relating the metaphor "head" to wedlock, some men (but not all Christian men—especially not humble men) lack perception like the proverbial ball player who receives the ball and runs down the field under the goal post out of the stadium into the open field. **They know not where to stop**, to stop within the boundaries fixed by immutable truth, within the clearly defined principles of God's New Covenant.

While comparing the one-flesh marriage union to the mysterious bodily union of Christ and the Church, Paul declares of Christ: "that He might **present** (*paristemi*) **to Himself** the church in all her glory." (Eph. 5:27) Strong: "3936. *paristemi*...to **stand beside**." So presenting her to Himself signifies standing her at His side. Husband and wife, then, belong side by side, prefigured in Genesis 2:21: God made woman not from man's head or his feet but from his side.

IT WAS FOR FREEDOM THAT CHRIST HAS SET US FREE

The matter before us is *not* women standing on their rights! The matter before us is women desiring **freedom!** – **freedom** to be faithful to their God, **freedom** to serve Christ unhampered by *man-made* shackles manufactured by people whose zeal is not according to knowledge of Scripture, **freedom** to exercise their natural and spiritual gifts in the cause of the Gospel and family life without a traditional foot coming down hard on their necks as its owner without one clear-speaking Scripture to support his or her actions erroneously alleges the woman is being trounced on in the stead and by the command of Jesus Christ.

As a matter of record, Christ commands women to “Stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ has made you **free** and do **not** be entangled again in the yoke of bondage.” (Gal. 5:1) In other words, do not become entangled again in physical requirement in order to approach God, because Christ has opened to us a new way to God not based on physical requirement but on the power of Christ’s resurrection and His atonement for our sin. Furthermore, **in** Christ Jesus (which is just another way of saying **in** the Church) there is neither male and female. This does not mean a Christian loses his or her sex, is forbidden sex, or is permitted to abuse sex but rather, as God views His sons and daughters in Christ, He sees Christ’s robe of righteousness covering their physical bodies.

Another matter equally before us is to demonstrate clearly to American women who are not members of the Christian Church that God is not the author of that second-to-man bondage experienced by women in traditional denominations. Something said by an English Bishop long ago should be heard by women today:

Profound religious truths are eternal. The man-made divisions of Christendom, trapped in time, are subject to corruption, and because of this, no man-made institution shall impose itself in a dictatorial fashion between a human being and his or her God.

Eternal truth states God made both man and woman in His own image and likeness, and (although obviously each one was made to function differently in reproduction) He gave them joint-custody of earth. And in the Church, peopled by those spiritual creatures that make up the body of Christ, sex is not even relevant. Therefore, no fallible man or woman, who imagines the male is superordinate and the female subordinate, should impose him- or herself in a dictatorial fashion between a human being and his or her God. Christ has called women to **FREEDOM!**

Sadly enough, some scholars will go to any extreme in an attempt to make the man *appear* superordinate. The traditional element in this writer’s denomination agrees that man and woman were made equal under God and in ruling over the earth. But! But they say, as man and woman related to one another in Eden, man led and woman followed. In other words, woman was the man’s equal, yet she was also his subordinate. This very same kind of thinking—Christ is equal to yet subordinate to the Father, known as subordination theology—these very same traditionalists brand as heresy. Nevertheless, subordination theology is actually promoted by them when it applies to the link between man and woman.

Traditional scholars who remain in bondage to the contemporary impression of “head” have not climbed high enough—that is to say, dug deep enough—to discover that the First Century Greek’s impression of “head” (*kephale*) was a chronology of natural origins—God, Christ, man, woman—not a chain of command. To be sure, even the application of the English language varies from culture to culture: What an American terms a “mobile home” a Britisher terms a “caravan”; an Englishman will speak of a car’s “wing” and “boot” instead of the American “fender” and “trunk”; a British “lift” is an American “elevator,” and so on.

Therefore, given the fact that the New Testament is written in a foreign language to peoples of a dissimilar culture living in an earlier time frame, trustworthy scholars lean heavily on the Septuagint to provide priceless insight into God's Word. A case in point, Isaiah delivered to Ahaz God's promise of the Savior to be born of the Hebrew *almah* that some scholars claim simply means "a young woman of marriageable age"; but the translators of the Septuagint demonstrated, by selecting the Greek word *parthenos* as an appropriate one in this passage, that *almah* referred specifically to a "virgin." (*Parthenos* literally means "one who has not engaged in sexual intercourse.") Of no less certainty is the fact that those same translators clearly have demonstrated *kephale* = "head" typically did *not* mean "leader" to those peoples Paul was directly addressing.

To finalize our comments on the pivotal Greek word *kephale* = "head," we look again at the Scripture saying God is the head = *kephale* of Christ and man is the head = *kephale* of woman. Although there are reservations when comparing creatures with Creator, the interrelationship of God and Christ could illumine the interrelationship of God's male and female creatures. The Roman Catholic Church and those Protestant denominations that confess the Athanasian Creed, if they are consistent, must surely agree with Linda Aronson's "A Short Discussion of 1 Corinthians 11:3":

Christ is God. As the Athanasian Creed puts it when speaking of the Trinity: "**none is before or after other; none is greater or less than another**".... Christ put off His Godhood when He became Man and placed Himself in obedience to the Father—so He might overcome sin for us. This was a temporary thing, and at the same time as He willingly became obedient to the Father He remained full God.... What may we understand about the woman-man relationship from this? We may understand that man and woman are equal—**neither is greater than the other, neither is before or after the other.**

Furthermore, the Athanasian Creed expressly states: "But the whole three Persons are coeternal together and **coequal**...." Therefore, man and woman are **coequal**.

Because we have learned that Christ is **not** subordinate to God the Father—Christ's *kephale*—and we know that man is subordinate to Christ—man's *kephale*—we must conclude that subordination cannot be the common link between God-Christ-man-woman in 1 Corinthians 11:3. Consequently, the Greek *kephale* = "head" could **not** have borne the meaning of "chief," "ruler" or "leader" in the mind of the Apostle Paul.

"In the beginning was the Word,...and the **Word was God**.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:1,14) Christ with the glory He had before the world began (John 17:5) is now on His Father's throne. (Rev. 3:21) The Father is restoring all things to Christ Who will present all things to the Father.

How do we bring all of this down to earth? We who are mere mortals are in the kingdom of grace and have yet to be transported into the kingdom of glory. In fact, we still bear scars of the Fall of mankind, for the ravages of sin are all around us and in us. Although redeemed, the body still dies and decays and nature continues to groan in pain because of our sin. Must the woman bear deeper and more painful scars of the Fall than man? Is the man to continue ruling over her? Is she to lay down her equality with the man temporarily as Christ did in His humility—**as touching His manhood**? And is the male to be exalted as is our glorified Christ—**as touching His Goodhood**? Never!

Let this mind be in **you**, which was also in Christ Jesus: **Who**, being in the form of God, **thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation**, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in likeness of men:... (Phil. 2:5-7 KJV)

If the “**you**” means women only, men might boldly equate themselves with the Father or with Christ in all His glory, in spite of our Lord’s denunciation of male supremacy: “**one is your Master**, even Christ, and ye are all brethren.” (Mat 23:8) But the “**you**” includes **all** believers. Man must also have the mind of Christ in His humility. Indeed, he who was made before her in time was *not* made before her in rank. We have gone full circle: “**none is greater or less than another!**” Those who are perplexed about the male-female issue must bow to Paul who told both men and women: “***SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER IN REVERENCE FOR CHRIST!***”

IT’S ALL GREEK TO ME

Tis = “**anyone,**” “**someone,**” “**whoever,**” “**a certain one**”

God’s pure and unabridged Word is found in the Greek New Testament, and since few understand Greek, most are dependent upon the integrity of the English translation. Dr. Joseph Webb,* however, brings to light that Paul, by his most frequent use of *tis*,⁺ addresses both men and women when he sketches the qualities desired in people holding the office of New Testament overseer. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) Dr. Webb also shows that Paul confronts a specific *male* problem existing in the First Century, with the words: “An overseer must be...the husband of one wife”–literally: “**one-woman man.**” (1 Tim. 3:2) Many have taken this to mean that an overseer *must* be a *man*–but the text does not say, “*man*”; it says “*husband.*” If his statement requires no interpretation, and *all* overseers *must* be *husbands*, then Paul who was not married (1 Cor. 7:7; 9:5) has disqualified himself. Consequently, if Paul does not imply that *all* overseers are to be married, it cannot be *assumed* that he implies *all* overseers are to be *men*. And if it is *not* a command that a man be married in order to serve as an overseer, then the *only* thing the phrase can mean is that a male candidate for overseer may have *no more than* one woman.

Doubtless, the social climate prompted Paul to restrain men. While adultery within the Greek State and under Roman law was severely punished, such punishment was usually reserved for women, with men having considerable latitude in their sexual relationships.* Considering this environment, and the rapid expansion of the Church into large non-Jewish regions, it would follow that Paul would warn male overseers not to be involved in bigamous or polygamous relationships or attached in any way to concubines or harlots.

In the 1 Timothy text before (v. 1) and after (v. 5) the phrase–“one-woman man”–Paul employs *tis* which opens leadership to “**anyone**,” male or female. In other words, He sandwiched “one-woman man” between terminology that includes *both men and women*. Thus he isolates it to clarify that leadership is not exclusively for the male. But as Dr. Webb reveals, translations obscure the apostolic intent. Below is 1 Timothy, ch. 3 (NIV) with words not justified by the Greek text underlined:

He desires a noble task (v. 1)
He must manage.... (v. 4)
(If anyone does not know how to manage
his own family, how can
he take care of God’s church?) (v. 5)
He must not be a recent convert, or
He may become conceited.... (v. 6)
He must also have a good reputation...so that
He will not fall into disgrace... (v. 7)

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⁺ Strong: “5100.*tis*; an enclitic indefinite pronoun; some or any person or object....”

• Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. II pp. 575-576.

Here is the same text with the justifiable translation (to be explained) in bold print:

If **anyone** sets the heart on being an overseer, **he or she** desires a noble task...**managing the** family well.... (If **anyone** does not know how to manage **the** family, how can **he or she** take care of God's church?) **He or she** must not be a recent convert.... **He or she** must also have a good reputation...so that **he or she** will not fall into disgrace...."

An explanation of the preceding improved version of the Timothy text is found in Dr. Webb's article, "Women and the Eldership." A segment of his exegesis follows:

Can a woman, from a biblical point of view, be a leader in the church?... Two New Testament texts, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, appear to address these questions directly. There the apostle Paul outlines what he sees as the qualities or the characteristics of those who would be leaders in the church of Jesus Christ.... In this article, we will examine the problem created by the way in which the pronouns in these texts are translated.

Begin by reading an English translation of these two texts. Look closely at their pronouns. All of them in the English are male pronouns: "he desires" (v. 1), "he must manage" (v. 4), "his own household" (v. 5), "how can he care for God's church" (v. 5), "he may be puffed up" (v. 6), "He must be well thought of" (v. 7), and "he may fall into the reproach of the devil" (v. 7).

With this lineup of male pronouns—and it is this way in virtually all English translations—it is little wonder that the reader of this material would assume that it calls for men to fill the positions of leadership and for women to be excluded. The fact is, however, that the repetition of the "he" in the text, as overwhelming as it is in an English translation like the RSV, is simply not a correct handling of the verbs and pronouns contained within those verbs. In the Greek text, no pronoun is inserted at any point where the "he" appears in the above list. The pronoun, instead, is always "implied" within the verb form that is used. In every instance listed above, moreover—and that includes virtually every verb in the text – the Greek verb is in the third person singular and should always be translated as "he," "she," or "it." "He" is only a part of the correct translation. The third person singular pronoun could also be translated as "she." It is without question most accurate to translate the pronoun each time it appears as "he or she."

At the end of verse 1, for example, the verb is *etithumei*, third person singular. It should read that "he or she desires" a noble task. It is giving an improper grammatical viewpoint of the Greek text to translate it with "he." Rather, we must depend on other elements within the text to tell us whether the "he" or the "she" is intended within the passage. Wherever a third person singular verb appears, as it does throughout these texts, it may be either "male or female." The same problem of the pronouns appears in the Titus text.

The second thing to be noted is that a male pronoun is often added to the English translations where no pronoun at all is called for in the Greek text. For example, in verse 4 we see the word *proistamenon*, translated in the RSV as "manage": "He must manage his own household well...." *Proistamenon* in the Greek text is a participle, meaning that it carries no specific pronoun with it. The participle itself has gender but the writer is quick to neutralize the masculine gender by inserting the indefinite pronoun in a repetition of the "manage" statement which follows immediately. The participle means "managing." If we pick it up at the beginning of verse 4, it literally means, "managing the own household well."

The same thing occurs, though in slightly different forms, in both vv. 6 and 7, where the RSV inserts two male personal pronouns in each verse, neither of which is in the Greek text.... Thus it should read: “Not a neophyte, lest being puffed up, he or she”—the third person singular verb—“fall into the judgement of the devil”; “And it behooves also to have a good witness from the ones outside, lest he or she”—the third person singular—“fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Although the male personal pronouns are intent in the English translations, the male personal pronouns are not even part of the original text. In fact, we could contend that by carefully structuring his sentences, the writer wants to ensure that such a male personal pronoun should not appear as part of the text. This same example about the male personal pronoun being an “addition” to the English translation of the Timothy text applies as well to the text in Titus.

What within the text could help us to know whether the third person verb form should be translated as either male or female? The answer is found within the Greek word *tis* which leads off both of these texts and is repeated at a critical point midway through the Timothy text. In the Greek language, *tis* is called an “enclitic”; it is an “indefinite pronoun.” It always has an indefinite referent, applying to either male or female or both, and means “anyone,” “someone,” “whoever,” “a certain one.” So chapter 3 of 1 Timothy opens with “If anyone aspires to oversight.”

If the apostle Paul had intended to indicate that “if any male aspires to oversight,” he could have very clearly stated that and, given his penchant for precision, would have done so. Instead he goes out of his way to insert a specific term, *tis*, to indicate what he meant. The insertion of *tis* indicates that anyone without regard to sex, could aspire to the work of oversight. It also appears, again very deliberately, as the opening term in the parallel Titus text.

Lest it be thought that the word “slipped in” without much forethought, *tis* appears a second time in the Timothy text, in verse 5. What is remarkable, is that the RSV translates verse 5 not with a male personal pronoun, but with the male noun, “man,” saying that “if a man does not know how to manage his own household....” In fact, that is precisely what the Greek text does not say; it is what the writer goes out of his way to negate as part of the text.

Moreover, it is the *tis*, this explicit statement that “anyone” can aspire to oversight, that lets us know what we are to do with the third person verbs that are the substance of the text. We are required by *tis* to translate them with “he or she” because only the “he or she” harmonizes with the inclusive indefiniteness of *tis*, the “formative” pronoun of both the Timothy and Titus texts.

Can a woman serve as bishop? Can a woman “qualify” to be a bishop or an elder? Without question, a woman may qualify as readily as a man; there is nothing here to prevent such a thing from taking place. In fact, the apostle’s strategic—and repeated—placement of *tis* makes it startlingly clear that he intended for us to read these lists as applying to “anyone,” man and woman alike, who “aspired” in the name of Christ to leadership in the church of the Lord Jesus. (*finis*)

Dr. Webb relays that certain words in the Greek language have the gender, **not sex**, fixed; for example: *gastar* or “stomach” is always feminine even when a male’s stomach is under discussion; *pous* or “foot” is always masculine even when it is used to indicate a woman’s foot. There are several masculine gender nouns in the Timothy and Titus texts—*nafalion*, *sofrona*, *kosmion*, *philoxenon*, *didaktion*, *paroinon*, *plaktan*, and *epieika*—meaning “temperate,” “sensible,” and the like. While these are masculine gender nouns used in the accusative case, that does not in any way mean that they refer only to males and hence cannot be applied to females. Nouns, like these, that have the

masculine gender--**not sex**--inherent in them, do not exclude women because they are masculine (in the way that "stomach" is feminine) as a function of the language.

Dr. Webb's point is well taken. The Greeks had a sex-specific word for males--*aner*--that Paul employs in the Corinthian text to distinguish men from women. (1 Cor. 11:2-16; Strong 435) But he shuns *aner* in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Going on to 1 Timothy 3:8 where Paul speaks of deacons, we find the noun rendered "deacons" -- *diakonos* (Strong 1249) -- the same as the pronoun *tis* is inclusive of men and women. Paul applies the term *diakonos* to the woman Phoebe (Rom. 16:1; Strong 1249) and also to himself and Apollos. (1 Cor. 3:5) Literal translation: "(It behooves) deacons similarly (to be) grave, not double-tongued...." The NIV and NASV imply all deacons are men, but *diakonos* does not change its form to set apart men from women, so a proper rendering would be: "Deacons...must be **people** (not "men") of dignity...." Viewing all Paul says about deacons, the First Century norm may have been married male deacons, a factor that does *not* rule out unmarried men or women (married or unmarried) serving as deacons.

Think on the king and all of Judah looking to Huldah for an interpretation of God's Word, and of Deborah the judge/prophetess like Moses and Samuel the judge/prophets leading Israel. Now consider--if God was able to promote these Old Testament women leaders without transgressing the natural order of things created in the Beginning, isn't it senseless to decide--**after** God has given us a New Beginning where sex is no longer a determining factor (Gal. 3:28)--that the natural order of things would arise to outlaw women from teaching and leading men?

***Authenteo* = "authority"--"core" meaning = "control"**

Genuine confusion arises in the minds of Christians when they read an English translation of a statement made by Paul. On the surface, Paul appears to have broken faith with his Master Who had authorized Mary to teach the men of the Church the profound truths of His Resurrection and imminent ascension.

But I suffer not a woman to **teach** (*didasko*) nor to **usurp authority over** (*authenteo*) a man.... (1 Tim. 2:12 KJV)

Christians who are unfamiliar with biblical commentaries are unaware that *authenteo* appears *one* time only in the Bible. Therefore, in order to discover some of its implications, First Century Greek literature must be explored. (Strong: "831. *authenteo*,...to act of oneself, i.e. [fig.] **dominate**....")

Although Greek literature must be explored in order to find what kind of authority *authenteo* represents, the Bible reveals what kind of authority it does *not* represent. It does not represent the *legitimate* authority claimed by Christ and delegated to his Church. *Exousia*--not *authenteo*--is the authority claimed by Jesus and delegated to the Church:

All authority (*exousia*) has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples.... (Mat. 28:18-19)

Exousia is the authority delegated to Paul by Jesus: "For even if I should boast...about our authority (*exousia*), which the Lord gave...." (2 Cor. 10:8) (Strong: "1849. *Exousia*,...delegated influence:--authority,...power.")

Paul does not object to a woman properly exercising her *legitimate* authority (*exousia*) over men, authority **delegated** to her by Jesus, as it was delegated to Paul himself. Plainly, there is no conflict between Paul and his Master. But Christians who do not understand Greek are of the

impression that Paul does not permit a woman to be placed in authority over men, because they *think* they read this in God's word. Yet, a thorough investigation reveals that Paul is forbidding a woman to exercise an abusive control over a man.

The King James Version by adding the word *usurp* gives the impression that a woman is not to seize by force the authority belonging to a man and then to wield it over him. On the contrary, the authority exercised is her own. Young*: *authenteo* – “to exercise the **power of one's self**” and to “use **one's own armor.**”

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod's “Commission on Theology and Church Relations” supplied this writer (1991) with two extensive studies of *authenteo*. The first (“*AYOENTEIN* – A Word Study,” Armin J. Panning, pp. 186-187) states:

From patristic times there are literally hundreds of instances where there emerges unmistakably the meaning of “thrusting oneself forward, asserting oneself, acting as lord and master.”...we have here a case of “haplology,” i.e., one word with two different etymologies, thus allowing the two diverse meanings of “to murder” or “to dominate.”... It is the basic thesis of this study...that the two anciently attested meanings of “to murder” or “to dominate” fit very well in all instances.

Panning then attempts to explain away his basic thesis, for it indicates that many churches have misconstrued Paul's message. Based on a preconception that men forever are to teach and women forever are to learn, he concludes that Paul is warning against “**role reversal**”–that is, women teaching men. (p. 191) The writer of Hebrews (5:12) abhors Panning's view of women as perpetual students: “For though by this time you **ought to be teachers**, you have need again for someone to teach you.” Herein lies the weakness of Arthur Panning's exegesis: It is supported by his own personal preconception; it has no scriptural basis.

The second study (New Testament Studies, Vol. 30, George W. Knight III, pp. 143-147) disputes the first. George Knight found examples in which he says the power inherent in *authenteo* is not exercised in a harmful fashion. He concludes: “The ‘authority’ in view in the documents is understood to be a positive concept and is in no way regarded as having any overtone of misuse of power, i.e., to ‘domineer.’” (p. 150-151, 154) Contrary to ethical judicial procedure, this judge sentences the woman to lifelong subordination *in spite of* a great shadow of doubt, for then he acknowledges a problem (“III. *Etymological Considerations*,” p. 153): “...why is it that **there is another usage which has the meaning of murder...** This problem is also present in the related noun...which bears the meaning of murderer but also perpetrator or more generally, doer or master....”

In short, the first scholar concludes that *authenteo* means either “to murder” or “to dominate”; whereas, the second scholar disagrees, stating that the authority in view is a positive concept even if *authenteo* at times bears the meaning of “to murder.” If they disagree on the meaning of *authenteo*, these scholars agree on one thing: **Whatever!**–it **dictates** an all-male pastorate. In a secular court, their method of executing justice is known as “railroading.”

Nothing can expunge from the Greek language those hundreds of instances where *authenteo* means “to murder” or “to dominate” or the related noun's meaning of “murderer.” They are witnesses who testify the traditional churches are subordinating women on a random choice of one out of the three possibilities (“murder,” “dominate,” “a positive concept”)–on a *conjecture* made by fallible men subject to error who present it to God's people as if it were an *absolute truth*: A cut-and-dried **mandate** from God! Wounded souls of women, your cure is in acknowledging God did not make

* *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, by Robert Young, LL.D. (Wm. B. Edermans Publishing Company, 1975) “usurp,” p. 1018; “authority,” p. 63.

you second best to any man. God has made no promise of preeminence to the Christian male that He has not made to the Christian female also.

The widely accepted *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words** states:

3. *authenteo*, from *autos* "self," and a lost noun *hentes*... (English, "authentic"), "to exercise authority on one's own account, to domineer over" is used in 1 Tim. 2:12 KJV, "to usurp authority" In earlier usage of the word it signified "**one who with his own hand killed either others or himself.**" Later it came to denote one who acts on his own "authority"; hence, "to exercise authority, dominion."

Hence, Vine's and other widely accepted commentaries are in accord upon the meaning of *authenteo*: "to act of oneself," "dominate"; "to exercise the power of one's self"; to "use one's own armor." Other examples⁺ are found in which *authenteo* portrayed "one whose hands were dripping with blood," and the noun rendered "murder." If women must not be pastors, *authenteo* **must epitomize** *exousia*, the authority claimed by Christ and delegated to Church leaders. How can it, when exercising authority on one's own account—doing something on your own—and exercising authority generated from Christ are poles apart? Also, the former can be **selfish**; the latter is always **selfless**:

Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles **lord it over** them;... but not so with you, but let him, who is the greatest among you, become as the youngest, and the **leader as the servant.**" (Luke 22:25-26)

If we correlate the major commentators' definitions of *authenteo* and Panning's "hundreds of instances where there emerges unmistakably the meaning of 'thrusting oneself forward...acting as lord and master'," then in all good faith and *harmony* with the entire Bible, we can render 1 Timothy 2:12" as "I do not permit a woman to teach or **lord it over** a man." To "lord it over" others was something of which no leader must be guilty: "...not **lording it over** those allotted to your charge..." says Peter echoing Jesus' words. (1 Pet. 5:3) Recently in this writer's denomination, a district president was reprimanded for abusing his power—that is to say, he was lording it over the pastors in his district.

Clearly, *authenteo* and *exousia* are *not* synonyms! If Paul had wanted to ensure that he would not be misunderstood, that he does not object in principle to a woman exercising authority over a man, but he does object to her abusing her authority, what would he have done? He would have avoided *exousia* and reached outside of his other writings for a word (*authenteo*) associated with abuse. *And that he did!* The apostle known for his precision of speech does not employ *exousia* in 1 Timothy 2:12. Paul does not in *any* way prohibit women from possessing *exousia*, the authority delegated to leaders by Jesus, the authority that imparts power for a given task in the Church. Consequently, when we rise to Paul's level of precision, we *must* conclude: Paul does not contend *in any way* that women cannot be genuine authorized leaders of the Church!

Folly would have it that an *uncertain* exegesis of the *obscure* Greek word *authenteo* could put to silence the ever reverberating clear message broadcast by our risen Lord when He commissioned a woman to bear *first* witness of His Resurrection: **Women are *first-class* citizens second to *none* of His domain!**

* W.E. Vine, M.A.; Merrill F. Unger, Th.M., Th.D., Ph.D.; William White, Jr., Th.M., Ph.D. (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985) p. 46 of *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.

⁺ Dr. Spencer: Josephus uses the noun form of *authenteo*—*authentēs*—to describe Antipater, Herod's son, accused of killing his two brothers and attempting to kill his father. (*War* BK.I.XXX.1) He employs *authentēs* to render "assassins, murders" of a Galilean Jew(s) on their way to a festival. (*War* BK.II.XII.5) "Wisdom of Solomon" in the Apocrypha (written anywhere from 100 B.C. to A.D. 40) the noun modifies parents ("slaughtering parents") who wish to kill defenseless souls with their own hands. (12.6)

Didasko = “teach”

Therefore, **I want men to pray** in every place, lifting up holy hands, **without wrath and dissension**. Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing.... Let a woman quietly receive instruction.... But I do not allow a woman to **teach** (*didasko*)... (1 Tim. 2:8,9,11,12)

Linguistic evidence gives no hint of the *kind* of teaching Paul disallows. The Greek word *didasko* (“teach”)—like the English word *teach*—is a general term employed for all kinds (Strong 1321). *Didasko* is employed when our Lord proclaims the Gospel (Mat. 4:23), for false doctrine (Mat. 15:9), and for seductive teaching. (Rev. 2:20) Paul, however, does *not* employ the related noun *didaskalos* (“teachers”) and say women should not be *teachers* of men.

The **broad contextual setting** may give us insight into the *kind* of teaching Paul disallows. His letter to Timothy reveals Paul returning repeatedly to the theme of heresy: 1 Tim. 1:3-11, 19-20; 4:1-10; 6:3-4, 20-21; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:14, 16-18, 23; 3:1-9, 13; 4:3-4. Paul, in fact, had left Timothy in Ephesus to command certain people to “stop preaching other doctrines.”(1 Tim. 1:3) 1 Timothy 5:11-15 indicates that women were involved in the errors which plagued the church at Ephesus: “Some [women] have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.” (v. 15) This causes many scholars to believe that Paul was putting an end to unsound doctrine; the teaching of unorthodox beliefs and practices in which the women were engaged. While Jewish and Greek men had been educated, most women were left untutored. Paul wants to change all that. In fact, he is adamant about it: “**Let** a woman quietly receive instruction.” **Let** her learn but quietly. If the Ephesian women were instructed, they would be far less likely to be led astray. Perhaps some Ephesian women who had yet to learn before they could teach were thrusting themselves forward during the meetings.

Still, with no cause to believe that Paul has changed his focus, the **immediate context** indicates he is directing women on the *manner* in which they are to teach. For he focuses upon the *manner* in which men are to pray (v. 8), the *manner* in which women are to dress (v. 9), and the *manner* in which women are to learn (v. 11), and then the *manner* in which women are to teach. He objects to women teaching men in an overbearing *manner*. As Paul is ashamed of the fact that he formerly had been a violent aggressor, he attempts to shame overbearing women by reminding them that Eve sinned first. If the men were not quarreling and the women abusive, Paul would not have had to reprimand them.

The **historical setting** supports this view. It highlights the domination by men that women had suffered until Christ put an end to it, thus causing a revolution in the male-female relationship. As frequently happens after a revolution, the women who formerly had been the **victims became the aggressors**.

Having said this, we are certain that Paul does not convey the message traditionalists proclaim: “A woman may teach a man, but not from a position of authority.” Do they actually believe a man is born with more authority than a woman or that the authority of God’s Word depends upon the **speaker**? A wise pastor has said: “Among Christians, the person who has the authority is the person who speaks with God’s Word and faithfully expresses it. A little girl can speak authoritatively if she correctly expresses what God’s Word declares, in contrast to a bishop who if he preaches false doctrine is not speaking authoritatively for Christ.” He stresses, “Authority is not determined by gender, age or force. It is not necessarily determined by how much education or experience a person has. **The authority in Christianity is God’s Word.**”

But as God is faithful, our word to you **is not yes and no**. For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you...**was not yes and no**, but is **yes** in Him. (2 Cor. 1:18-19)

Our Lord Jesus Christ is stable—a solid Rock. He does not say “**yes**” to a fundamental principle today and “**no**” tomorrow. He said “**yes**” to Huldah who taught a king via high priest and cabinet with authority delegated to her by Yahweh. (2 Kings 22:14-20; 2 Chr. 34:22-28) Jesus said “**yes**” to the prophetess Deborah who judged Israel with political and spiritual authority. (Jud. 4:4-5) He Himself *instructed* Mary Magdalene to teach glorious truths to the men of the Church. How could anything be *more* official? He also said “**yes**” to Priscilla. Jesus, indeed, says “**YES**” to women teaching men from a position of authority.

Priscilla – Pastor and Teacher

Priscilla not only taught the man Apollos (whom Chrysostom wrote was pastor of the church in Corinth after Paul left. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 11:554, 13:515), but she also led a church. Paul sailed for Syria “and with him were **Priscilla** and Aquila.” (Acts 18:18) Upon landing, **the woman** Priscilla and her husband **taught the man** Apollos, whom they found speaking boldly in the synagogue about Jesus:

But when **Priscilla** and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and **explained** (“**expounded**” = *ektithemi* Strong 1620) to him the way of God more accurately. (Acts 18:26)

Ektithemi denotes mastery of a subject. Young’s concordance lists two more New Testament references of the word: (1) When Paul was in Rome, from morning till evening he “expounded” (*ektithemi*) to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets (Acts 28:23 KJV); (2) Luke employs the same word (*ektithemi*) to describe Peter’s defense before the circumcision party. (Acts 11:4) Like Paul and Peter, Priscilla was capable of an in-depth probe of Scripture. But many women in the early church would not have been ready to teach others; they themselves had yet to learn. Until Christ obscured those temple barriers, most First Century women had been denied the learning privileges afforded men. It was extraordinary that a woman like Priscilla—*equipped to educate*—would emerge from such a culture.

While the wives of the apostles are left unknown (1 Cor. 9:5), Luke places *this* wife’s name *first*. (Acts 18:26) In fact, four out of the six times this couple is brought up in the Bible, her name is placed before that of her husband. Since Luke and Paul were men of a culture where wives covered their heads, with the freedom granted prisoners of war, it is revolutionary (Jesus brought about this revolution in their thinking) to find them both placing Priscilla’s name first in the *majority** of references. Hence, scriptural integrity prohibits terming Priscilla (also known as Priscia) an “assistant,” as some do, attempting to squeeze her into a mold. Indeed, it could be argued that she was more of a leader than her husband. Hence, Aquila was either her assistant or they were *co-leaders* of the church in their house:

Greet **Prisca** and Aquila, my **fellow workers** (*sunergon*) in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also **all** the churches of the Gentiles; also greet the church that is in their house. (Rom. 16:3-5)

Clearly, Priscilla was an accomplished teacher and church leader. Not only Paul but also “**all** the churches of the Gentiles” felt the impact of her ministry. With confidence, then, we can view her as a woman to whom our *steadfast* Lord delegated His authority (*exousia*) to teach and to lead both men and women.

* Priscilla listed first: Acts 18:18,26; 2 Tim. 4:19; Rom. 16:3. Aquila first: Acts 18:2; 1 Cor. 16:19. *Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English* (Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1975) KJV inverts the proper sequence: Acts 18:26.

Paul classifies Priscilla and Aquila when he speaks of them as “*sunergon*.” *Sunergon* or **fellow workers** signifies “a person of the same trade, a **colleague**” in the genitive case as used here.* Colleagues are people who are *coequal*. The coequal implication of the word is quite detectable by the many New Testament Church founders who are classified by Paul as *sunergon*: **Timothy** (Rom. 6:21); **Apollos and Paul** (1 Cor. 3:5,9); **Titus** (2 Cor. 8:23); Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25); Aristarchus, Jesus Justus, Epaphras, **Luke**, Demas (Col. 4:10-14); **Philemon, Mark**, Aristarchus, Demas, **Luke** (Philem. 1:23-24); **Euodias** (woman), **Syntyche** (woman), Clement (Phil. 4:2-3)⁺ To be sure, all of these people, like Priscilla and Paul, were front-runners of the early Christian Church.

Euodias and Syntyche – Paul’s Partners

Paul’s approach to his fellow workers contrasted dramatically with those orders he gave to the Gentile congregations that God had put under his thumb. While the Gentile congregations could be unruly, Paul depended upon his fellow workers for support in the spread of the Gospel. And Scripture clearly reveals that he greatly respected them. When the two women fellow workers listed above had a dispute, Paul makes no demands—“I **want**”; he earnestly requests:

I **beseech** Euodias, and **beseech** Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, to **help those women which laboured (*sunathleo*) with me in the gospel**, with Clement also, and with my other fellow labourers (*sunergon*), whose names are in the book of life. (Phil. 4:2-3 KJV)

Strong: “4866. *Sunathleo*, to **wrestle** in company with, i.e. to **seek jointly**....” Thus Paul identifies these women as his **partners** in combat, as his fellow soldiers, not his charges. And so he requests—almost begs—them to settle their dispute: “**Beseech**,” Strong: “3870. *parakaleo*, to call near, i.e. **invite, invoke** (by imploration, hortation or consolation): --beseech...entreat, pray.”

The Gentiles had to be under someone’s thumb. In fact, Paul contends that in their worship: “**you come together not for the better but for the worse.**” (1 Cor. 11:17) Actually, there was much suffering among them because of their blatant, even drunken, irreverence in celebrating the Lord’s Supper:

Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk.... For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. (1 Cor. 11:20-21,30)

The Gentiles were those “both evil and good” taken from the byways, when the Jews invited to the wedding banquet ignored their invitations. (Mat. 22:2-10) Some Gentiles had been engaged in sinful practices. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) The disciplined Christian walk was alien to them. Clearly they tended to be disorderly. If you recall (pages 28 and 29; Acts 21:24), the disciples thought that adherence to Jewish customs was an “**orderly**” way to walk. Was there a more efficient way for Paul to instill order in the Gentiles’ life and worship than having them adhere to time-honored Jewish customs? By forcing **all** women in **all** churches to operate within the strict parameters set by Paul to restrain unruly Gentiles, men have sought to make a mockery of God’s chosen women, like Priscilla and the countless women who followed her example. Yet, how many of those same men wink at 1 Timothy 2:8 by refusing to lift up their hands in prayer during worship?

* Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, eds. Henry S. Jones and Roderick McKenzie (9th ed.: Oxford Clarendon, 1968), pp. 1711-1712.

⁺ Translations vary, but the Greek word used in each Scripture is Strong 4904.

Hesuchia = “quiet” Sigao = “silence”

These two Greek words are not synonyms. *Sigao* means **absolute** silence, the absence of sound. (Strong 4601) *Vine’s Expository Dictionary* defines the adjective *hesuchios*, the verb *hesuchazo*, and the noun *hesuchia*. Vine explains that the Greek word denotes an **inner** silence: the adjective “...indicates ‘tranquillity arising from within,’ causing no disturbance to others”; and the verb and noun convey: “to be still, to live quietly.” (pp. 503-504 N.T.)

Let a woman **quietly** (*hesuchia*) receive instruction with entire submissiveness...to remain **quiet** (*hesuchia*). (1 Tim. 2:11-12)

The NAS version (above) is true to the Greek text. And throughout the New Testament, wherever a form of *hesuchia* appears (noun, verb or adjective), the word is rendered in line with Vine’s exegesis; for example: “busybodies” are commanded that “with **quietness** (*hesuchia*) they work....” (2 Th. 3:11-12 KJV) Yet, when the word applies to women in 1 Timothy 2:11-12, both KJV and NIV *abruptly* change the translation to imply that a woman must learn in *sigao*. KJV renders it “**silence**,” and NIV: “**she must be silent**.” Abruptly, because both of them in the *same* chapter—a mere nine verses earlier—translate it properly:

...that we may lead a quiet and **peaceable** (*hesuchios*) life.... (1 Tim. 2:2 KJV)
...that we may live peaceful and **quiet** (*hesuchios*) lives.... (1 Tim. 2:2 NIV)

Since Paul cannot mean that we may live life without **speaking**, the word cannot be rendered **silent** lives. And with nothing in the text to indicate the meaning varied in Paul’s mind, the word should be rendered the same in both instances: Women then are not to receive instruction in **silence** but in a **peaceable** manner.

Observe, Paul demands that an untutored woman be allowed to learn—“**Let**” her learn—a privilege denied her in the synagogues. Women, however, were to learn in the peaceable and obedient manner of learning that he had displayed at Gamaliel’s feet—that is, to exchange their raucous behavior for a serene and respectful attitude. Some scholars straining to impose their own bias upon Scripture would *add* the word *man* to the text; thereby subordinating women to men. But as it stands, “entire submissiveness” and “quietness” *modify a manner of learning* depicted by Paul. Without question, Paul wants the Gentile women to conform to the Jewish practice of receiving instruction with quiet solemnity:

Such behavior was appropriate for all rabbinical students and all wise persons. Simon, the son of Rabbi Gamaliel (Paul’s teacher) comments:
“All my days have I grown up among the Sages and I have found naught better for a man to be in silence;...and he that multiplies words occasions sin.” (m. ‘Abot1:17)*

Indeed, Paul quiets the men no less than the women. Professor Joseph Webb:

Note, too, that the Apostle deeply desires that Timothy promote peace and tranquility among both men and women within the churches. This is seen...by the fact that he insists on the same thing for men, though the language is even stronger when applied to men. This is clearly the intent of verse 8, where he expresses his desire that the men “lift up holy hands without anger or quarreling” or, more literally, “**without vocal wrath or jarring dialogue.**”⁺

* *Beyond the Curse*, p.77.

⁺ *Women as Christian Leaders*, “1—Searching for the Meaning of 1 Timothy 2,” by Joseph M. Webb, B.A., M.S.,

MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER

And Jesus entered the temple and cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and over turned the tables of the moneychangers and seats of those who were selling doves, and He said to them, “**It is written, ‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER’....**” (Mat. 21:12-13)

It does not take much imagination, then, to envision Paul’s distress when the Gentiles turned the Lord’s Supper into something tantamount to a drunken brawl, or his dismay at the men’s vocal wrath and the women’s disruptive behavior. Before Paul told men to stop quarreling and women not to lord it over men, he assured the Gentiles that he was responsible for and had authority over them:

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus....**And for this I was appointed** a preacher and an apostle (**I am telling the truth, I am not lying**) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. **Therefore I want men....Likewise, I want women....But I do not allow....**” (1 Tim. 2:5,7,8,9,12)

Well we know: “man looks upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Sam. 6:7) Yet, Paul dictates outward things like posture in prayer, clothing, hair, and accessories. Why? The Gentiles had no Old Testament roots and lacked the Jewish sense of awe before God. Their irreverence prompted Paul to scold them and school them upon propriety in worship. Apart from *one* exception (noted in the next two pages), Paul did *not* call for the **silence** (*sigao*) of women during worship as most translations imply; he bid women to be **peaceable** (*hesuchia*).

The Apostle’s final words on propriety in worship inform the Gentiles that the woman (Eve) was deceived and sinned first. (1 Tim. 2:14) Consequently, this section cannot relate to whether or not a woman may lead in the Church. Because his statement encompasses *all* women in church history since the Fall of mankind, including *leaders* like Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and Queen Esther, whom God used to prevent the genocide of his people. And nothing can be added to or taken away from Old Testament history which was completed over four hundred years before Paul’s statement. Moreover, some things come and go, but Jesus remains the same—yesterday, today and forever. (Heb. 13:8) Hence, his policy toward women has not changed since that moment on Resurrection morning when He *favored* a woman. The Apostle simply is continuing in the same vein with his own painful recollection (eight verses earlier, 1 Tim. 1:13-16) that he was “formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor”:

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am the **foremost of all**. And yet **for this reason** I found mercy in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in him for eternal life. (1 Tim. 1:15-16)

In other words, God chose Noah because he was a bright and shining preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5), but He chose Paul because of his horrifying transgressions, to illustrate Christ’s unfathomable forgiveness. Indeed, the gravity of Paul’s sin before forgiveness, did not prevent him from leading people who never had been blasphemers, persecutors and violent aggressors. Likewise, in order to demonstrate the full scope of His forgiving love, God chose the woman who sinned first to bear the promised Messiah: the *healer* of all the scars left by the Fall upon mankind. Indeed, the gravity of her sin before forgiveness has no bearing upon the woman’s leadership role in the Church.

Paul comments also upon the gravity of Adam’s sin: “And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression.” (1 Tim. 2:14) Shortly before saying this, Paul qualifies his own sin: “And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted **ignorantly** in unbelief”

(1 Tim. 1:13)—so says he, the woman was “**quite deceived**” and “**fell** into transgression”: She was tricked so she slipped and fell. Not so with Adam! He was **not** deceived; he knew exactly what he was doing. His sin was **deliberate**. Now, we know that deliberate sin is the gravest of sin. Paul balances the account here so that neither man nor woman can put all the blame on the other. Thus he challenges the popular thought of that day that put all the blame on Eve. The Jews in the Talmud and the Greek Stoic philosophers blamed the lust in their own hearts upon women. Woman was the object of their lust, so they transferred their guilt to her.

Nevertheless, that which applies to Eve applies to Adam. The gravity of Adam’s sin before forgiveness has no bearing upon the male’s leadership role in the Church. **Christ absorbed the penalty for ALL of humanity’s sin; no further penalty is to be exacted by God! To say otherwise is to compromise the Gospel!**

Pandemonium reigned in Corinth also. In order to put an end to their lawless confusion in worship, the Apostle imposes *sigao*, absolute silence, upon three groups of people: (1) speakers in tongues, (2) prophets and (3) women.

speakers in tongues

If therefore the **whole church** should assemble together and **all** speak in tongues, and ungifted people or unbelievers enter, will they not say you are mad? (1 Cor. 14:23) If anyone (*tis* = man or woman) speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him **keep silent (*sigao*) in the church.** (1 Cor. 14:27-28)

Observe, in **no way** does Paul require absolute silence of every speaker in tongues in all churches in all ages. The (*sigao*) **absolute** silence Paul requires of those First Century Gentiles is conditional, forbidden only when such speaking creates confusion.

Also take note that the “**whole church**”—not males only—but “**all**” its members are guilty of speaking in tongues simultaneously. Therefore Paul puts to silence both sexes. Unless one wants to promote heresy by saying that women are not part of the whole Church—the Body of Christ—we have here an example of Paul as a matter of course touching on women *speaking* in the assembly, in church.

prophets

And let two or three prophets speak...But if a revelation is made to another who is seated let the first **keep silent (*sigao*)**...and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.... (1 Cor. 14:29-30, 32)

“AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS’ God says, “THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY.” God Who is the Author of the Gift of prophecy is not the author of the confused manner in which it is being exercised, “for God is not a God of confusion but of peace....” (1 Cor. 14:33) Paul may require men to prophesy with heads uncovered and women to prophesy with covered heads (1 Cor. 11:4-5), and that they prophesy in an orderly manner, but he in **no way** challenges the right of “**SONS AND DAUGHTERS**” to prophesy during worship services. The absolute silence or absence of sound Paul requires of the prophets is conditional for the sake of eliminating confusion during worship. Paul here is not forbidding the use of spiritual Gifts in church; the Apostle is instructing those First Century Gentiles upon the *manner* in which they are to be exercised.

Strong defines prophesy: “4395. **propheteuo...speak** under **inspiration...**” Young defines “to prophesy” as to “**publicly expound.**” Hence, “YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY” calls for *inspired public*

speaking by women during worship. Men and women side by side speaking God's Word is a *sign* specified by God of the LAST DAYS! Women prophesying is demanded in the *New Way* of the Spirit!

women

Let the women keep **silent** (*sigao*) in the churches; for they are not permitted to **speak** (*laleo*), but let them **subject** (*hupotasso*) themselves, just as the Law **also** (*kai*) says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. (1 Cor. 14:34-35)

How can Paul be banning **all** speaking by **all** women in **all** churches when he has just instructed women prophets and women speakers in tongues upon **when** and **how** to speak in church? Therefore, the absolute silence Paul requires of those First Century Gentile women is likewise conditional for the sake of a decent and orderly worship. They are asked to refrain from asking questions of the menfolk because such speaking is disruptive and creates confusion. Actually, it is nonsensical to say that the Apostle who would not contradict himself would instruct women to **speak** in tongues with the absence of sound (*sigao*) and to cover their heads and prophesy in absolute silence (*sigao*).

The Greek *laleo* ("speak") does not define a specific **kind** of speaking; it is a generic term meaning to "talk," "speak," or "tell" listed over two hundred times in Young's Concordance. It is used when the Lord speaks (Mat. 9:18), when the dumb man speaks (Mark 7:37), and when the beast speaks. (Rev. 13:5)

The Greek word *gune* rendered "women" in the text also bears the meaning "wife." (Strong: "1135. *gune*...wife, woman.") and the word *husband* could possibly be rendered "menfolk." Taking Paul's words at face value, we conclude that he is addressing a local problem: Corinthian wives (women) who are adding to the confusion by inquiring of the husbands (menfolk) in a manner disruptive to worship. There is a time and place for everything, and Paul is rebuking the Corinthian women for being "out of order":

"Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But **let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner.**" (1 Cor. 14:39-40)

This text is not a **man verses woman** text but a **chaos verses order** text. Worshipping God responsibly in awe and with great reverence is the Alpha and Omega of worship.

a patch is torn

Ripping 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 from its historical and grammatical context, traditional scholars allege that somewhere in the air or in the Bible is a law forbidding women to speak in church and subjecting women to men: "let them **subject** themselves, just as the **Law also** (*kai*) says." They err on two counts.

First, Paul instructs women to "subject" (*hupotasso*) themselves (v. 34) just as he instructs men and women prophets in verse 32 (previous page): "the spirits of the prophets are subject (*hupotasso*) to the prophets." Observe, Paul tells both prophets and women to do exactly the same thing: *hupotasso* (Strong 5293). The English language has two voices: active and passive. But the Greek has three voices: active, passive and middle. In the middle voice, the subject does the acting and also is acted upon. In **both** verses 32 and 34, *hupotasso* is in the **middle** voice, meaning the person does this to him- or herself. Clearly, the concept stressed by Paul here is self-control, an **internal** control exercised of one's own volition. Therefore, if it is ludicrous to assert that Paul is instructing the people who are prophesying to get themselves under control and subject themselves

to men, it is equally ludicrous to assert that Paul is instructing those women who are disrupting the service with their questions to get themselves under control and subject themselves to men. In reality, Paul is telling the Corinthian women to control themselves, just as the Law also says. And well he may, for the Fruit of the Spirit is self-control.

Second, that which is written in the illusive Law is not the *basis* of Paul's argument. The **foundation** of Paul's argument is "the Lord's commandment": "...the things I write to you are the **Lord's commandment.**" (1 Cor. 14:37) And so when we rise to Paul's level of precision, we see whatever the Law says is in agreement with, merely secondary to, the Lord's commandment: "the Law **also** (*kai*) says." Lacking precision, many scholars bypass *kai*, "also." Although the "Law" is secondary or incidental, and Paul is advising the women to subject themselves to *themselves*, and he does not put to silence all women in all churches in all ages, scholars probe for a law silencing women and subjecting women to men. Thus they strive to accommodate their own preconception, not the Greek text. Instead of magnifying the Lord, they would magnify a law. Some go to the extreme of making up a law such as "the order of Creation," even though Genesis (chs. 1-2) does *not* say that God created a male hierarchy in the Beginning. Others say the Law is the Curse of God, but if woman is under the Curse, so is man, and Christ died for nothing. No one, however, suggests that Christians are restricted by the Ceremonial and Civil Laws recorded in the Bible, or the laws written by rabbis in the Jewish Talmud, and rightfully so!

The Moral Law composed of the Ten Commandments still applies to Christians because it is valid as a guide to a God-pleasing life. Jesus says *love* is the fulfilling of that Law. Corinthian women who were disrupting the worship of others were not observing the Law of love. Male scholars who exalt themselves by treading on Christ's daughters are not observing the Law of love either.

There is *one* Law overpowering all else in the New Covenant: "**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.**" (Rom. 8:2) Scripture also declares there is "**no law**" against the manifestation of the Fruits of the Spirit, such as love, joy, peace. (Gal. 5:22-23) It would follow, then, that there can be no law against any manifestation of the Spirit, such as the Spirit's Gifts of prophecy and tongues. Hence, Paul speaks not of a law forbidding a woman to exercise her spiritual Gifts in church. He clarifies this in his summation: "Therefore, my brethren, **desire earnestly** to prophesy, and **do not forbid** to speak in tongues." (1 Cor. 14:39)

Paul himself in this same chapter (1 Cor. 14:21) just 13 verses earlier divulges his understanding of the word **Law**: "In the **Law** it is written, 'BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE...' Says the Lord." Paul is quoting Isaiah 28:11. Obviously, as Jesus refers to that which we term the "Old Testament" as the "Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44), Paul refers to the Old Testament simply as the "Law." And nowhere in the Old Testament is it written that women must be silent in church.

Yet, we are not left adrift. The basis for, or the foundation of, Paul's argument is "the Lord's commandment," and rightfully so, because Jesus is the *one* foundation upon which the Church is to build *all* doctrine. And we vividly recall Jesus making an emotional outcry, while assaulting the moneychangers: "It is written"—in the Law and Prophets and Psalms—"MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER." (Isaiah 56:7) **Worshipping God with reverence and respect is an outgrowth of the First Commandment that reaches into eternity.** God, Who is the Author of their spiritual Gifts, is *not* the author of their irreverent confusion, "for God is not a God of confusion but of peace." (1 Cor. 14:33)

Paul leads into his discourse on the proper exercise of spiritual gifts with the words: "For if the bugle produces an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle?" (1 Cor. 14:8) And so scholars must no longer continue to accuse Paul himself of making an uncertain sound, by pretending that Paul desires women to "speak" in tongues in *sigao* ("**absolute** silence, the absence of sound") and to cover their heads and prophesy in *sigao*. (1 Cor. 14:34) This accursed pretending

would with its legalism veil the Gospel and obscure the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ—a sin against Christ. God forewarned: “Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city of Jericho....” (Joshua 6:26) Since he who rebuilt Jericho was cursed, how then can God bless a man who labors to rebuild the Old Testament temple walls—flesh and blood distinctions—in the New Testament Church?

AND HE GAVE SOME AS PASTORS

Phoebe – Minister of the Cencherean Church

Leaders such as Paul and Luke are not indiscriminately ranked with those Gentile men, the babes in Christ, who celebrated the Lord’s Supper by becoming intoxicated (1 Cor. 11:12), erratically exercised the Gifts of the Spirit (1 Co. 14:27-33), participated in a misleading practice (1 Cor. 11:16), and quarreled and prayed in the same breath (1 Tim. 2:8). And so the spiritually immature Gentile women who were lording it over men (1 Tim. 2:12), improperly exercising their spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 4:27-33), participating in a misleading practice (1 Cor. 11:16), getting drunk at Communion (1 Cor. 11:21), and disrupting the worship services by calling out questions to the men who traditionally seated themselves apart from the women (1 Cor. 14:34-36), should not be recklessly lumped together with leaders like Priscilla, Euodias, Syntyche, and Phoebe. And justly so! Those double standards of interpretation for men and women are from the pit of hell. When the same standards of interpretation are justly applied to both sexes, we find Scripture revealing that Phoebe is the minister or pastor of a church:

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a *diakonos* (“minister”) of the Church which is at Cenchrea.” (Rom. 16:1)

New Testament ministry (*diakonia*) consists of two types, (1) ministry of the spoken Word and (2) a ministry requiring physical strength: “If anyone speaks (let that person speak) as a word from God; if any serve (let that person serve) as out of the strength which God provides.” (1 Pet. 4:11) The Book of Acts (6:1-5) supplies an example of those such as Stephen who were designated to serve tables—“ministry of service”—in order for others to devote themselves to the “ministry of the word.” Also the women who followed Jesus and “ministered” (*diakoneo*) to Him were probably seeing to His external needs in a ministry of service. (Mat. 27:55) The two types of ministries, however, can hardly be separated, for later Stephen was stoned to death while preaching to the Sanhedrin or engaging in his “ministry of the Word.” (Acts 7:1-58) According to James (2:15-16) one ought to include the other: “If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them ‘go in peace, be warmed and filled’ ...what use is that?”

In contemporary churches some call their minister “pastor.” In fact, the title of “pastor” could be considered the technical term for the pastoral office in the New Testament. However, there is not one individual—male or female—termed “pastor” or “shepherd” (*poimen*) in the New Testament, with the exception of Jesus our Chief Shepherd (*archipoimen*). But a systematic study of every passage I could find where Paul applies *diakonos* to Christ’s ministers indicated that *diakonos* is the term Paul uniformly applies to “ministers of the Word,” giving us scriptural reasons for believing Phoebe the *diakonos* of the Church which is at Cenchrea is such a minister.

This study deals not with theory but with Paul’s actual practice. So if you will put aside for the moment--*diakonia* (ministry), *didasko* (to teach), the government (a *diakonos* in the natural order of things, Rom. 13:4), and ministers of Satan (2 Cor. 11:15)—**we are free to focus on the Apostle’s practical application of the noun *diakonos* to Jesus and His ministers.**

Most certainly ministers (Strong 1249 = *diakonos*) of God's spoken Word

- Rom. 15:8 - Jesus Christ was a minister (1249) of the Jews
- 1 Cor. 3:5 - [Apollos and Paul] ministers (1249) by whom you believed
- 2 Cor. 3:6 - Who has made us [in particular, Paul] able ministers (1249) of the New Testament; not of the letter but of the Spirit
- 2 Cor. 6:4 - approving ourselves [in particular, Paul] as ministers (1249)
- 2 Cor. 11:23 - Are they ministers (1249) of Christ...I [Paul] am more
- Gal. 2:17 - [is] therefore Christ a minister (1249) of sin? God forbid.
- Eph. 3:7 - Whereof I [Paul] was made a minister (1249) according...
- Ph'p. 1:1 - Phillipi, with the bishops and the deacons (1249)
- Col. 1:7 - as you also learned [the Word of God] of Epaphras...fellow bond-servant...a faithful minister (1249) of Christ
- Col. 1:23 - whereof I [Paul] am made a minister (1249) of the gospel
- Col. 1:25 - whereof I [Paul] am made a minister (1249)
- 1 Th. 3:2 - Timotheus...minister (1249) (NIV—some manuscripts put fellow worker (*sunergos*) in the place of *diakonos*.)
- 1 Tim. 3 - Likewise the deacons (1249) must be grave
- 1 Tim. 3:12 - Let the deacons (1249) be the husband of one wife
- 1 Tim 4:6 - [Timothy] thou shalt be a good minister (1249)

The last male to be identified is Tychicus. The KJV terms him “minister”:

- Eph. 6:21 - Tychicus...minister (1249)...will make known [report] to you
- Col. 4:7 - Tychicus...a faithful minister (1249) and fellow servant

Our study discovered when *diakonos* refers to an individual male the King James Version translates it “minister.” But when it refers to a woman, the same translation destroys the uniformity of Paul’s application of *diakonos*:

- Rom. 16:1 - I commend unto you our sister Phoebe, who is a **servant** (1249) of the Church in Cenchrea.

If rendering *diakonos* “servant” obscured Phoebe’s ministry in English, it had no effect upon its reality in the Greek. Had Paul wanted to differentiate between Phoebe’s ministry and the ministry of her brothers, he could have chosen another Greek word for *servant*, such as *oiketēs* (3610), *doulos* (1410) or *therapon* (2324). Instead he chose *diakonos*, a word that does not change its form to set apart men from women, indicating men and women *diakonos* have similar tasks and equal status—the same as the English words *engineer* or *doctor*, irrespective of sex, designate a person’s capabilities and duties.

Although obfuscated by English translations, the Greek affirms a woman *diakonos* = minister or deacon—1 Timothy 3:12 (for review see pp. 38-44): If it is not mandatory that all overseers and deacons must be **married** men or husbands, it is not mandatory that all deacons must be **men**. Paul forewarns only the male candidates for that office because polygamy and promiscuous behavior by males were tolerated by various First Century communities.

Although the Greek text clearly affirms women may hold the office of *diakonos*, some still say a woman should not have authority over a man because man was made first. But their allegation cannot be proven with plain-speaking Scripture, so they must resort to (1) *ambiguity*, (2) *silence*, and (3) *bias*.

1. Ambiguity: The three diverse meanings of *authenteo* reduce 1 Timothy 2:12 to multiple choice—(a) a woman should not “murder” a man, (b) a woman should not “domineer” a man, or (c) a woman should not have “authority” over a man.
2. Silence: Subordination of the woman is not actually spoken of in the Creation account in Genesis 2; furthermore, Adam’s helper = *ezer*’ (Eve) typically refers to the *greater* of two powers—that is, God and the military.
3. Bias: Preconception’s denunciation, “Phoebe could not be a minister because she is a woman; Junia could not be a woman because she is an apostle; John’s (2 John 1:1) “**Elect Lady** could not be a **lady!** (Why not?)—so she must be a church.”

The burden of proof is on those who attempt to explain away with ambiguity, silence and bias Paul’s elevation of women to the status of *diakonos* = minister or deacon.

Those who reject the idea of a woman minister simply do not get it!—the transformation that took place at Pentecost! Just fifty days after Christ had completed His mission, God gave birth to the New Testament Church:

1. That there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male and female in the New Testament Church is given evidence by the well-known *Gentile* leader Titus, Paul’s partner the *slave* Onesimus, and the *woman* Priscilla who was either the chief pastor or an associate pastor.
2. Women cannot be barred on the basis of their sex from any New Testament **priestly duty** such as a ministry of the Word: “**ministering as a priest the gospel of God....**”; “**...with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God....**” (Rom. 15:16 RSV and NIV) Indeed, women are members of the New Testament priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9) that *displaced* the inferior Levitical male priesthood based on physical requirement.
3. The Law of Moses caused us to anticipate women leaders such as Phoebe: Moses was a type or picture prophesy of Christ, and Aaron and Miriam were types or picture prophecies of the New Testament men and women leaders. And I am sure you recall that women prophet “stones” are securely in place in the Church’s foundation. (Eph. 2:20)

Consequently in beautiful harmony with God’s New Covenant with all races and both sexes, we must allow Paul to mean that which he literally has stated: Phoebe is a minister of a specific church, the church which is at Cenchrea. (If anyone in spite of the sound linguistic evidence upholding Phoebe’s ministry of the Word is uncomfortable with the concept of a woman minister, it is essential to recognize this discomfort does not originate from God but from an instilled misconception spawned and nurtured by man-made traditions.)

As if to leave no room for doubt in our minds about Phoebe’s position, Paul reinforces his choice of *diakonos* with his choice of *prostatis*:

...that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a **helper** (*prostatis*) of many and of myself as well. (Rom. 16:2)

Paul by employing *prostatis* instead of other Greek words for helper which he may have used alerts us to the fact that Phoebe is a helper *extraordinaire*. She is the only person in the Bible called a *prostatis*. The verb form of *prostatis* which is *proistemi* (Strong 4291) does occur in Scripture and is rendered “rule”: “one that **ruleth** well” and “let the elders that **rule** well.” (1 Tim. 3:4; 5:17 KJV) Strong’s definition: “4291. *proistemi* from 4253 and 2476; to *stand before*, i.e. (in rank) to *preside...be over, rule.*” The ruling implications of *prostatis* is determined by the prefix **pro**, defined by Strong: “4253. ‘fore’, i.e. *in front of, prior* (fig. *superior*) *to*: above.... In comp. it retains the same significations.” Thus a *prostatis* helps by leading. Vine’s exposition: “*prostatis*..., a feminine form of *prostates*....*Prostates* was the title of a citizen in Athens, who had the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of resident aliens who were without civic rights.” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* [Thomas Nelson Publishers] “Succorer” p. 607)

A *prostatis* had more authority than those he helped. That is not to say Phoebe—who is a minister of the church at Cenchrea and not of the civil government—has more authority than Paul. But she may have led him for a time. Be that as it may, Paul’s use of *prostatis* makes it clear that Phoebe is not subservient to him, that she much the same as Paul has been placed by Christ in a position of authority for the sake of helping the people of God. If some female fledglings behaved shamefully in the church and flaunted their authority over men, in no way does this diminish the honor due (Rom. 13:7) distinguished Church leaders such as Phoebe and Priscilla!

Notable Women Empowered with Authority

The Romans are asked to roll out the red carpet for Phoebe: “receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you.” Paul admires **Phoebe**. He respects **Euodia** and **Syntiche**: his colleagues “in the cause of the Gospel,” or in the “ministry of the Word.” (Phil. 4:2-3) And he honors other women: “Greet **Mary** who has worked hard for you.” (Rom. 16:6); “Salute **Tryphaena** and **Tryphosa**, workers in the Lord; Greet **Persis**, the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.” (Rom. 16:12)

It was nearly three hundred years later that church buildings were erected under the rule of Constantine, who made Christianity Rome’s state religion. Until then, Christians met in various places, but mainly in homes. The cultural atmosphere would have severely hindered women evangelists, yet women could fill any office within the Body of Christ. Scripture records many women with churches in their homes. If a male were involved Paul included him, like **Priscilla** and **Aquila**, or a couple greeted in Paul’s letter to Philemon: “**Appia** our sister, and to **Archippus** our fellow soldier, and to the church in their home.” (v. 2) At other times, Scripture not so much as alludes to a male. Peter went to the house of **Mary** after his miraculous escape from prison because the believers were gathered there in prayer. (Acts 12:12) **Chloe’s** congregation or appointed leaders had reported to Paul the quarreling occurring at Corinth. (“Chloe’s people,” 1 Cor. 1:11) The brethren were all gathered at the house of **Lydia** where Paul and Silas went to be encouraged after their imprisonment. (Acts 16:40) Clearly, Mary, Chloe and Lydia were hosting churches in their homes.

In conclusion, nothing in the Bible forbids a woman to serve as pastor. Quite the contrary, today’s chief pastors may be the equivalents of First Century overseers, and this office is open to “anyone” (*tis*), “he or she.” Prophetesses were overseers in the Old Testament. Jesus gave to *some* women like Phoebe and Prisca (Priscilla) churches to pastor. Chrysostom in the Fourth Century said of both Phoebe and Prisca, “These were notable women, hindered in no way by their sex...and this is as might be expected, ‘For in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female.’” (Chrysostom, *ibid*, title, 11.550) This is factual indeed, for all those women listed above (Phoebe, Euodia, Syntiche, Mary, Tryphaena, Priscilla and Chloe) are notable women officially empowered by Jesus with His *exousia* (authority).

If you look at the brief letter, 2 John, you will conclude that the “elect lady” and her “sister” (v. 13) are two more women with churches in their homes: “**to the elect lady (*kuria*) and her children, whom I love in truth.**” (v. 1) *Kuria* (Strong 2959: “a Chr. woman: --lady”) is the feminine of *kurios* (2962) meaning “supreme in authority.” Dr. Aída Spencer: “The vocative which is **not** used in 2 John, in the First Century as in contemporary practice, could simply mean ‘Madam’” (p. 109). In spite of the fact that *kuria* nowhere in the New Testament is employed as a metaphor for a congregation, scholars fearful of the alternative (a woman pastor) bluster saying, “The lady is a church!” This is highly unlikely, because in his first letter John addresses adult believers as “children.” (1 John 2:1) In the second letter he greets the “elect lady **and** her children.” (1 John 2:1) If the lady is a church, then the believers who are the children would also be the lady (church), and John would be redundant, greeting the congregation twice. For instance, would we send a greeting “To Our Redeemer Church and its believers?” No! Since the church and its believers are one and the same, one salutation is both grammatically and theologically proper.

Furthermore, during the course of 2 John, John employs both singular and plural pronouns as if at times he is addressing an individual (vv. 4, “your children”; v. 5, “I ask you, Lady”; v. 13, “your chosen sister”) and at other times a group. (v. 8, “watch yourselves”; also vv. 9-12). This is a confusing interchange of metaphorical and literal—a meaningless variation—if John is speaking to a congregation only. But when the *kuria* is the pastor in authority and her children the congregation, the change in pronouns makes sense, agreeing perfectly with the singular and plural nouns in John’s salutation.

The obstacles facing First Century Woman *cannot* be ignored: her low level of literacy, her sociocultural limitations, the perils of traveling alone and sleeping under the stars. Considering all those obstacles, the women servant/leaders spotlighted in this treatise are far from being numerous exceptions to a vague discriminatory rule: They are *THE HOLY SPIRIT’S TRAILBLAZERS*.

Therefore in order to advance forward, those traditional denominations that would be known as “conservative” must retreat back to First Century Paul’s practices concerning women. Many, due to lack of objective scholarship, are simply remaining true to the tradition of the Roman Fathers, although they would have us believe that they are remaining true to the Word of God. Predating the Fall of the Roman Empire during the Fifth Century, the Roman Catholic bishops believed it was a “perversion of nature” for a woman to lead a man. This no doubt was derived from Paul’s discourse on Jewish practices and customs, which was thoroughly expounded upon earlier in this treatise (pp. 30-35). As late as 1985, the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (LCMS) obviously was remaining true to the tradition of those early Roman Fathers, such as Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 352-430), because it coined a phrase to designate the alleged man-was-made-first advantage over woman: “the order of creation.” Augustine of Hippo was a fanatic that thought a woman’s caress degraded a man.

One wonders how the traditionalists could have strayed so far afield, for the perception of a New Testament woman minister is not all that revolutionary. When we think on King Josiah and all of Judah looking to Huldah for an interpretation of God’s Word, and on Deborah the judge/prophetess holding the same office held by Samuel and Moses the judge/prophets, we pose a legitimate question: “Since God was able to promote those Old Testament women leaders without it being a perversion of the natural order of things created by Him in the Beginning, how, then, **at this late date** after God has given each of us a New Beginning, can the natural order of things suddenly erupt and prevent a woman from performing those tasks performed by her spiritual predecessors?”

During the 1990s two large Bible-based Protestant denominations, the Southern Baptists and the LCMS, and the highly publicized non-denominational Promise Keepers held fast to the school of thought that contends God has put man in charge of the woman. Obviously, they reached this conclusion by applying their 20th Century perception of the English word *head* to the First Century Greek word *kephale* (“head”). To compound this error, they then caused their casual understanding of the “headship” of the male in the physical creation to intrude upon Christ’s spiritual domain by making males leaders of the Church—the Church of which Christ is the *only* Head (Col. 1:15-18), the Church in which “**one** is your Master, even Christ,” the Church in which God’s sons and daughters “are **all** brethren,” or all on the same level, because **all** are siblings. (Mat. 23:8) To be fair, the LCMS is usually in the process of reexamining its policy on women in the Church. But the time is long overdue. The New Testament Church composed of spiritual creatures was born at Pentecost two millennia ago! Therefore, a contemporary denomination that causes the physical to dominate a kingdom that is spiritual is out of its time by 2000 years and out of its place in the New Covenant.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the **same** Spirit, and there are varieties of ministries, and the **same** Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the **same** God who works **all** things in **all** persons. But **one and the same Spirit** works all these things, **distributing to each one individually just as He wills**. (1 Cor. 12:4-6,11)

The doctrine of male privilege in the New Covenant relies on the *assumption* that the Spirit has reserved the Gift of pastor for males, which is precisely what the above Scripture does **not** say! THE SPIRIT HAS JUST DECLARED HIS INDEPENDENCE! He has not bound Himself to any one race, any level of society, or any one sex, as the ministries of the Gentile Titus, the slave Onesimus, and the women—Phoebe, Prisca, Junia, the Elect Lady—have demonstrated!

The Great Commission to teach and to baptize, making disciples of all nations, (Mat. 28:19-20) was given by Jesus to male Jews. But the elite Jewish disciples could not fulfill it merely because of their Jewishness or maleness. They were instructed to stay in the city until Jesus sent the promise of the Father, until they were clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49):

But you shall receive **power** (*dunamis*) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

(Strong “1411. *Dunamis*...miraculous power...ability.”) A small elite group of Jewish men and women disciples waited in that upper room in Jerusalem: “These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.” (Acts 1:12-14) When Pentecost arrived, however, God sent the Holy Spirit, not only to the elite group of Jewish disciples waiting for Him, but also to numerous others, for race and sex had served their purpose. Almighty God had taken on the human characteristics of race and sex to become *one* of us, in order to save *all* of us. But now, Salvation is perfected: “It is finished!” When Christ died on the cross, the Old covenant was **CLOSED**, the account “Paid in Full.” At Pentecost the New Covenant **OPENED**:

‘AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,’ God says, ‘THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHESEY...EVEN UPON MY BONDSLAVES BOTH **MEN** AND **WOMEN**, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT.’ (Acts 2:17-18)

Much has been made of the fact that there were no women among the original twelve disciples, but neither were there slaves nor Gentiles among them. The overriding message of the New Covenant is that Christ has won equal access to God for all humanity and that there has been a change in the Priesthood. (Heb. 7:12) Christ did not open the Jewish male Priesthood to Gentiles and women. He did away with it, made it obsolete. The New Testament Priesthood is not based on physical requirement (Heb. 7:16), thus it is open to all who have received Christ as their Savior.

The *dunamis* from on high was needed in order for the elite Jews to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission, and this miraculous power is the *only thing* that authorizes Gentile males to teach and baptize. Likewise **the same *dunamis* authorizes women to baptize officially and to be the official teachers of all the earth, “even to the remotest part of the earth.”**

Solomon said there is nothing new under the sun, but at Pentecost something new IS! A new Creation! The New Testament Church was born! ***The OLD order of things was OUT; a NEW order was IN!*** According to Joel and Peter, the *sign* of the ***LAST DAYS*** was Spirit empowered men and women prophesying. Whether to speak God’s Word about the future or to speak God’s Word to a present situation, ***prophecy is speaking the Word of God.*** And Paul gives both men and women instructions upon praying and prophesying in Church. Besides Paul himself, seven men and four women are identified as prophets in Acts (11:28; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9-10). Take notice! **The very SIGN that the NEW WAY of the Spirit is upon us—that soon the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood—is women and men, side by side on equal footing, speaking God’s Word!**

Much of earth dwells in darkness still, and the harvest is ripe for the picking, and countless sheep still are wandering in need of a shepherd. But the Lord’s compassion for the lost has been trodden under foot by those who are intent upon either defiling or denying the miraculous power

bestowed upon women **by** God, **for** God's work of shepherding the sheep. But Christ still reigns, and women have a very special promise: "The Lord gives the command; The women who proclaim the good tidings are a **great** host." (Ps. 68:11 RSV)

I rest my case on the matter of women before the highest court in the universe!

CONCLUSION

Traditional scholars have persuaded themselves that man is born to lead and woman to follow by devaluing all Scripture instructing men to submit to women and magnifying Scripture encouraging women to submit to men: Thus they shamelessly imply that *hupotasso* means one thing for men and yet another thing for women: *hupotasso* = "**be subject to,**" "**submit (self) to,**" Strong 5293.

Compiling doctrine by magnifying only a portion of everything Scripture has to say about a topic does not satisfy the *sola scriptura* principle. **Scripture must be viewed as a whole.** Therefore, if scholars dwell entirely on Scripture instructing women to submit to men without pursuing Scripture requiring men to submit to women, they arrive not at the whole truth but a distortion of the truth!

Men Instructed to Submit to Women

*If Paul really had not intended for a woman to exercise authority over a man—that is, the legitimate "authority" = *exousia* bestowed on Church leaders by Jesus—and if in Paul's mind "head" = *kephale* did mean "authority figure," THEN PAUL MOST SURELY WOULD NOT HAVE TOLD MEN TO SUBMIT TO WOMEN. YET HE DID!*

Priscilla, Eudoiias, Syntyche, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Mary are six women in particular to whom Paul requires men (and women) in the Church to submit. And submission to women in general is included in the mutual submission required of men as well as women in 1 Peter 5:5---"**Yea all of you be subject to one another**"---and Ephesians 5:21—"Submitting yourselves to one another in reverence for Christ" (as a demonstration of your love for Jesus).

One need not be a Greek professor to verify submission to the six women cited. I employ the King James Version keyed to Strong's Concordance for simple verification. Strong 4904 *sunergos* = "a colaborer," "workfellow," coworker. Strong 4903 *sunergeo* = "from 4904 to be a fellow worker." Liddell and Scott (p. 1711-1712) say that "coworker" comes from two words signifying "to work together." It can simply signify a "helper," if in the dative case. But in the genitive case, which Paul always employs for these people, it signifies a person of the same trade, a "colleague." Paul terms about twenty people colleagues (Strong 4904 = *sunergos*) including the eleven listed here:

- Rom. 16:3 - **Priscilla** and Aquila my "helpers" (4904) in Christ Jesus
- Rom. 16:21 - Timothy my "workfellow" (4904)
- 1 Cor. 3:9 - Apollos and Paul (v. 5) are "labourers" (4904)
- 2 Cor. 8:23 - Titus...my partner and "fellow helper" (4904)
- Ph'p. 4:2-3 - **Eudoiias** and **Syntyche** my "fellow labourers" (4904)
- Ph'm. 1 - Philemon my "fellow labourer" (4904)
- Ph'm. 24 - Mark and Luke my "fellow labourers" (4904)

There are enough prominent Church leaders listed above—Mark, Luke, Titus, Timothy, Apollos and Paul--to verify *sunergon* are not underlings but are, indeed, Paul's colleagues, to whom Paul urges people to submit (1 Cor. 16:16): "That ye submit yourselves (*hupotasso*) unto such, and to every one that helpeth (*sunergeo* 4903) with us, and labourerth (*kopiaio* 2872)." Observe, Paul tells people to submit also to *kopiaio* = hard workers such as "**Tryphena** and **Tryphosa** who labour (*kopiaio* 2872) in the Lord" (Rom. 16:12) and "**Mary** who bestowed much labour (*kopiaio* 2872) on us. (Rom. 16:6)

Only by sweeping under the rug the mutual submission principle along with the six women named by Paul to whom he tells men (and women) to submit can a man allege he was created to be a higher power, thus indirectly authorized by God to impose limitations on women in the Church. This is not sound Christian doctrine built on **BEDROCK** as Jesus would have it, but a lie built on sand which is now beginning to shift—**SHIFTING SAND!**

AFTERWARDS

Our knowledge of the early development of the Christian Church is rather sketchy because everything that had been written about it could not possibly have survived during the Fifth Century when the Roman Empire collapsed. In the words of the literary and historical scholar (faith unknown) Thomas Cahill*:

For as the Roman Empire fell, as all through Europe matted, unwashed barbarians descended on Roman cities, looting artifacts and burning books, the Irish, who were just learning to read and write, took up the great labor of copying all of Western literature—everything they could lay their hands on. These scribes then served as conduits through which the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian cultures were transmitted to the tribes of Europe, newly settled amid the rubble and ruined vineyards of the civilization they had overwhelmed. Without the mission of the Irish Monks, who single-handedly refounded European civilization,...the world that came after them would have been an entirely different one—a world without books. (pp. 3-4)

In the sixth century, Pope Gregory established a kind of library at Rome.... His library was a poor one. Even so, the resentful, illiterate mob tried to destroy its few books during a famine, for by now the Catholic bishops had become like islands in a barbarian sea. (pp. 182-183)

The Hebrew Bible would have been saved without them [the Irish], transmitted to our time by scattered communities of Jews. The Greek Bible, the Greek commentaries, and much of the literature of ancient Greece were well enough preserved at Byzantium.... But Latin literature would almost surely have been lost without the Irish. (p. 193)

The same historian* traces the government of the Church from a democracy with elected *episkopos* (a Greek word meaning “overseer” from which came the English word *bishop*) to the present day Roman Catholic hierarchy of male clergy:

Most early Christian congregations seem to have been run by some combination of bishops and priests, local men—**and, in the first stages of development women as well**—who were chosen by the congregants for specified terms.... With the deaths of the apostles (*apostoloi*, or envoys) the role of bishop grew...but still the appointee of his [or her] congregation. As its symbol of unity, he was duty-bound to consult his congregation in all-important matters.... Democracy depends on a well-informed electorate; and [the time came when] bishops could no longer rely on the opinion of their flocks—increasingly, uninformed and harried illiterates.... They [then] began to appoint one another; and thus was born—five centuries after the death of Jesus—the self-perpetuating hierarchy that rules the Catholic Church to this day. (p. 61)

* *How The Irish Saved Civilization* (Nan A. Talse DOUBLEDAY New York, 1995).

* Ibid.

A record does exist of the word *diakonos* or “minister” applied to women not too long after the death of the Apostles (Dr. Aída Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*):

Two women ministers at Bithynia-Pontus in Asia Minor were tortured during Emperor Trajan’s reign (A.D. 98-117) as leaders and most knowledgeable persons in their congregation. After Pliny describes a report of an apparently innocuous service he decides, “it was all the more necessary to extract the truth from the slave-women whom they called ministers (*The Letters of Pliny*, Bk.X.96).

During the first three centuries Christians usually met in homes, occasionally in the local synagogue, and while under persecution in catacombs and secret places. After A.D. 313 when the Emperor Constantine made Christianity Rome’s official state religion church buildings began to be erected and the Old Testament Priesthood reinstated. For soon it came to pass that only male priests were permitted to officiate from the raised platform (altar), and only the male High Priest could enter the Holy Place (pulpit). How foolish! “our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29), and the only thing that prevents the royal priest from being consumed by holy fire on that altar is Christ’s Robe of Righteousness covering his anatomy. Praise to Christ! His beautiful Robe also adorns the royal priestess qualifying her to officiate on the altar and in the Holy Place.

“Once the emperor [Constantine] had conferred on Christianity its position of privilege, most Romans had little difficulty in reading this sign of the times for what is was and grasping that their own best interest lay in church membership.” (Cayhill, p. 125) The Church under persecution had been composed of true believers, but once it became socially and politically advantageous to become a Christian one would have to wonder how many of those conversions were heartfelt conversions. In A.D. 365, 52 years after the wedding of Church and State, the ordination of presbytidal (women elders) was forbidden by the Council of Laodicea, a seaport remembered for its lukewarm early Christians. The prohibition makes it obvious it previously had been an official rank among those earlier Christians who had withstood persecution. The Council also forbade women to be “presidents” as those who sat in front and presided. In reality, women were not being persecuted so much as the Spirit of Christ indwelling them. Thus politically minded men began their attempt to muscle their way into the spotlight the Holy Spirit shines on Jesus. Thus egocentric men began to muddle the New Way of the Spirit and engender legalism in the New Testament. Actually, there is only *one* ministry in the Last Days Era: the ministry of the Holy Spirit working though damaged clay vessels.

Although the Roman Catholic Church could hardly be considered to be a role model by Protestants, the question has been raised in the past by Protestant seminarians: “If women were meant to be ordained, why were there no women priests? Love for their sisters in Christ would have spawned an entirely different type of question: “What have we done to the woman’s *incontestable* prophetic office?”; “Where have the women prophets gone, such as the four daughters of Phillip (Acts 21:9) and those women who prophesied (with covered heads) in early Gentile congregations?”; “Why are there no more women *sunergon*—prominent Church leaders—and female *kopiao* who labored with Paul in the Lord and to whom the Apostle directed men and women to submit?”

And now that archaeologists have begun uncovering evidence of women priests and bishops (see next page), excuses are still being made by those who would seize *authentico* (the unlawful rigid control Paul has forbidden Christians to exercise over other Christians) to impose limitations on women in the Church. This stems from the Protestant Reformation where the universality of the priesthood of all believers was reformed **in thesis and practice for men and in thesis only for women**. The Reformation merely replaced the hierarchy consisting of the elite Roman clergy with a ruling order of Protestant males—**just another male hierarchy!**

Indeed, there IS no excuse for failing to practice the universality of the priesthood of all believers on earth. Christ has given His royal priestess *exousia* and *dunamis*—divine “authority” and “miraculous power” to enforce her authority—and her royal priesthood reaches into eternity (Rev.1:6):

He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen

Ordaining women once accepted

Star Tribune

Evidence shows Catholics had female priests

By Joan Connell

Newhouse News Service
Boston, Mass.

For nearly 2,000 years of Christian history, a few biological facts gleaned from scripture were considered proof enough that women never were and never could be ordained: Jesus was a man who chose 12 male apostles to carry on his work, therefore only men could be priests.

But an Italian historian has uncovered new evidence—carved in stone, painted on ancient walls and written in letters by bishops and popes—that women served as priests in the early centuries of the church.

Giorgio Otranto, director of the Institute for Classical and Christian Studies at the University of Bari in southern Italy, has become a *cause célèbre* not only among U.S. Catholics challenging the all-male priesthood of their church, but also among Protestants concerned with enhancing women's roles as spiritual leaders.

"I am a historian and I am a believer and I will not take sides in the complicated issue of whether women today should be ordained. But considerable evidence exists that women also filled this role," said Otranto in an interview at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

This conservative Protestant divinity school 20 miles north of Boston was the last stop on a six-city lecture tour sponsored by a group of U.S. universities and seminaries in which Otranto presented his findings.

Otranto illustrated his lectures with dramatic photographs from newly excavated or restored archaeological sites that drew gasps of surprise from his audiences,

many of whom had never seen such images before. They included:

■ A fresco of women blessing bread in a Eucharistic ceremony, painted on the walls of the Priscilla Catacomb in Rome. This underground hiding place for early Christians, which historians date from the first to the third centuries A.D., is linked to Priscilla, a female disciple of St. Paul.

■ Inscriptions on gravestones and monuments discovered in France, Italy and Syria that attest to the existence of female priests—named Leta, Flavia, Maria and Marta.

■ An eighth-century fresco discovered in Yugoslavia, in which a woman, with her arms upraised in prayer, appears to be officiating at a religious ceremony.

■ A mosaic from the Church of St. Praxidus in Rome, showing four bishops, one of whom is a woman, Theodora.

Otranto also unearthed correspondence of popes and bishops on the subject of female priests. One epistle from Atto, an Italian bishop of the ninth and 10th centuries, explained to a priest the existence of female priests and deacons in the early church:

"For the helping of men, even religious women were ordained caretakers in the holy church," Atto wrote, "not only men but also women were in charge of the churches for greater efficiency."

Atto's letter goes on to say that the practice of ordaining women was forbidden by a church council of the fourth century. But Otranto said the bishop's letter is important because it establishes that the ordination of women was once an accepted practice.

"I think this is all pretty earthshaking," said Rosalyn Karaban, associate professor at St. Bernard's Institute, a Catholic graduate school of theology in Rochester, N.Y. "The argument against women's ordination has always been that historically there were no women priests. If we can show that there were, the argument can go out the window." Karaban expressed doubt that such findings would have any immediate effect on the Vatican's longstand-

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ing opposition to female priests. "This is the Roman Catholic Church you're talking about," she said.

Ruth Fitzpatrick, director of the Women's Ordination Conference, a national organization of Catholics agitating for changes in the priesthood, was more optimistic.

"We've been waiting for this for 2,000 years," she enthused after Otranto's lecture to a standing-room-only crowd at Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

Thus far, church officials both in Rome and in the United States have responded with silence to Otranto's research. But, according to Sister Mariella Frye, a staff member for a committee of U.S. Catholic bishops on women's concerns, it will have an effect.

"I can't speak for the bishops. but my gut feeling is that it will contribute to the dialogue," she said.

"Otranto's findings are important to all women—Evangelicals, Lutherans, Southern Baptists. It's not only Catholics who are hamstrung," said Catherine Kroeger, a Presbyterian theologian at Gordon-Conwell Seminary. Kroeger is also president of Christians for Biblical Equality, a 1,500-member group of evangelicals and fundamentalists based in St. Paul that advocates a gender-neutral interpretation of scripture.

"Even in denominations that do have a female clergy, people have trouble imagining women as legitimate spiritual leaders," said Kroeger. "Many ordained women end up behind a desk, doing bureaucratic work for their denominations because congregations can't get it into their heads that women can be pastors. Otranto's work provides some much-needed spiritual models."

But not everyone is convinced of the validity of Otranto's thesis. Sister Sarah Butler, a Catholic theologian at Mundelein Seminary in suburban Chicago, noted that there has always been considerable evidence of female priests in antiquity—but such women were members of heretical, sects.

"I have some serious doubts about this," Butler said. "Theologically and historically, I don't feel that this kind of evidence is really convincing."

Otranto's research on female priests gathered dust for nearly a decade until Mary Ann Rossi, a classics scholar at the University of Wisconsin, discovered his work in a journal at the Vatican Library. Her English translation of his work was published earlier this year in Harvard Divinity School's *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*.

Rossi said that Otranto's work could help "take the blinders off" theologians and church leaders who have ignored evidence in scripture and history that women preached, taught and officiated at sacred rituals.

"The traditional explanation of references to women priests and women bishops is that they were the wives of priests and bishops or that they were heretics," Rossi said. "Unquestionably, heretical sects did ordain female priests, but Otranto's work provides ample grounds to consider that other women were legitimately ordained."

Presbyterian theologian Kroeger agreed.

"When Christianity was an underground religion, to be a priest could cost you your life. But after it became the state religion in 322 A.D., things changed. It became politically desirable for men to hold positions of leadership in the church,

and the existence of female clergy became a litmus test for heresy," said Kroeger. "In an effort to stamp out heresy, the church threw the baby out with the bathwater and banned women clergy altogether."

Otranto was clearly uncomfortable with the idea that he might be a standard-bearer for women's rights in the church.

"I don't have any political agenda," he said. "I seek only to be a scholar who examines the daily life of the early church, in which women were an important element. By focusing our attention on their lives, perhaps we can explain the gaps and the silences of history."

The gaps and silences concern Carolyn Plampin, a Southern Baptist from Sunnyvale, Calif., who is studying Otranto's findings. The members of her denomination have endured a 10-year struggle between conservative and moderate forces, and the status of women in the church has been a key issue.

"Women want to be affirmed. They want to know what other women have done in Christian history," she said. "But men on seminary faculties do not have the time or interest to develop courses on the subject. It's up to us to say, 'Look at all the knowledge that's been left out.' When we compile a huge bibliography of material, we can demonstrate what's missing."

Minneapolis Star Tribune

EPILOGUE

During a visit to Quincy's Great River Library, my husband Robert found a book that he thought might be of interest to me: a book written by a young Jewish woman, Pearl Abraham, published in 1995 (Riverhead Books). Two comments on the cover caught his eye: "Pearl Abraham's *The Romance Reader* lifts the veil from a sealed-off world—that of the ultra-Orthodox Jews—and gives us a fascinating peek inside. Her story is of one girl's growing discontent with the restrictions imposed by her Hasidic family...."; and "Ms. Abraham depicts the world in which she grew up, the insular world of the Hasidim...."

Most startling of those restrictions is the contemporary Hasidic bride's practice of shaving her head and then covering it either with a kerchief or a wig created before the wedding that perfectly resembles her natural head of hair. The morning after the wedding night, the girl's mother arrived at the newlyweds' door, razor in hand, prepared for the task of shaving the bride's head. The bride's newly-shaved bristles created a dreadful itching under her wig in the heat. The head-shaving practice continues for as long as a Hasidic woman remains married. When the girl entered her parent's bedroom one night, her mother's kerchief had slipped, exposing the gray bristles underneath.

If this happens to be a tradition handed down from First Century Jews, it may be the practice Paul is opposing in his dissertation on Jewish traditionary law, during which he praises the Gentiles for keeping those Jewish customs that give an impression of propriety to the surrounding pagans but argues against a woman shaving her head, saying that long hair is a woman's glory. Who's to say? (1 Cor. 11:3-10, 13-16; see pages 28-33 of this publication.)

Learning of this senseless, vicious practice jarred me into an awareness of the remoteness of the situation with which Paul was dealing in Corinth. Who among us could have imagined such a practice? This very remoteness further convinces me that God does *not* intend Christian doctrine to rest on reasoning supporting Jewish customs. Yet, some traditionalists have *reached* for a principle behind those obscure Jewish customs—"man was made first"—and with it attempt to subjugate one-half of humanity. Falling from the heights of basing doctrine on principles clearly stated in the Bible, they descend to the depths of *reaching*. When we ascend to the heights, we do *not* see Christ *reserving* the loftiest positions in His Body for either sex. We *do* see: "**neither** male and female"; "**circumcision** is that which is **of the heart**"; "what **counts** is a **new** creation." We *do* see the Holy Spirit as unpredictable as the wind gifting *anyone* He will with His gifts of pastor, teacher, and evangelist.

To dispel some of the ignorance surrounding those First Century Jewish practices, I took another look at the Talmud. "The Talmud, exclusive of the vast Rabbinic literature attached to it, represents the uninterrupted work of Judaism from Ezra to the Sixth Century (A.D.)..."* I was amazed to discover that "In the Middle Ages, Rabbenu Gershom of Mainz, known as Light of the Diaspora, pronounced a *berem* (ban) on polygamy," because "...matrimonial law in the Talmud is based on the assumption that a man is entitled to take several wives, while a woman may wed only one man."† This information helps us to understand more fully why Paul—after he had opened the office of overseer to "anyone" (*tis*), man **or** woman—deemed it necessary to emphasize that a male candidate for the office of overseer must be the husband of *one* wife. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; see pages 40-43 of this publication.)

* Arsene Darmesteter, *The Talmud*, (The Jewish Publication Society of America), p. 7.

† Adin Steinsaltz, *The Essential Talmud*, (Basic Books, Inc.), p. 133.