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I. Introduction

To silence, or not to silence, that is the question. Some prescribe that all honorable women in the assembly have no voice. As proof they submit the following two passages:

1 Corinthians 14:33-35 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. "As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church."

On the face of it, this text appears straightforward. The triple phrasing of the same idea lends credence and force to this position.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 A woman must learn quietly with all submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. She must remain quiet.

1 Timothy 2:13-14 For Adam was formed first and then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, because she was fully deceived, fell into transgression.

Again, in light of this translation, the matter seems closed case. We are told what and why, right next to each other. But, is it really that easy? Is this interpretation right?

Proverbs 18:17 The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.

The question as to whether women should remain silent or not must be answered correctly. If women should remain quiet, but talk, we have disorder in the assemblies. On the other hand, if women should speak, and are silenced, then we have paralyzed half the body. The reader can readily see that the implications of getting the answer wrong are far reaching. The importance of this topic demands that we cover the issue carefully, not leaving any stone unturned.

A. Order in the assembly

Referring back to the 1 Corinthians text, we propose that applying the silence rule promotes confusion, confusion Paul desires to avoid. Bear with me as I explain.

If women are authorized to speak in a non-assembly setting, but not in an "official-assembly" setting, the question naturally must be posed, what constitutes an "official" assembly? Where is the dividing line where women can and cannot speak?

• Does a scheduled meeting constitute an assembly? And the ad-hoc meeting, such as might occur around the dinner table or in the parking lot does not?
• At what number X attendees and above do we have an assembly? And less than X is not?
• Does the presence of Jesus constitute an assembly, and does His absence (is this possible?) constitute a non-assembly? If this is the case, then how do we decide if Jesus is in our midst?
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• Does an assembly occur only in an appointed facility, and outside of that there is no "official" assembly?
• Is the official assembly dictated by the hands of the clock, such as between 10:00 to 12:00 on Sundays?
• etc.

If there is a delineation on where and when there is an official assembly, God failed to tell us exactly what it is in His Word. We have no record that says, "An official assembly, where women cannot speak, is in operation under conditions X, Y & Z". There are as many opinions as to what constitutes an assembly as there are congregations that practice some form of silence.

This disunity is on account of the fact that there is no definitive explanation. Some women are allowed to join in religious discussions at the dinner table, some are not. Some women are allowed to make a short "what I learned in the Bible last week" teaching, some are not. Some women are allowed to give a "this is how God moved last week" testimony, some are not. Some women are allowed to sing, some are not. Some are allowed to play musical instruments, some are not. This is confusion. The groups having these different views will never become one.

This burning fire of confusion is fanned by the fact that the Greek for silence [sigao] in 1 Corinthians 14 is in the sense of not talking, while the Greek for silence [hesuchia] in 1 Timothy 2 (verse 2, 11 and 12) is in the sense of not making a disturbance. Depending on which version of silence is weighed more heavily will determine if a woman is authorized to wield a clapper or sing along during worship time.

The silencing view demands by presupposition that church life is somehow separate from non-church life. It requires compartmentalizing our life. The Holy Spirit is allowed to move on women here, but not there. To the common sense observer, this presents itself as odd, and requires further thought.

Realize that I am not questioning whether there should be order. I am questioning a particular interpretation as to how order is to be established. And when chaos & disunity ensues, we must take a closer look.

But the silencing teaching does not end in the assembly. It reaches into family life.

B. The Order of Formation

The standard explanation for silencing women in the assembly is because women’s speaking assumes authority over man, thereby contradicting the lineage of authority on account of the order of the formation (Adam first, Eve second) and/or the fact that man is the head of woman, and/or women are more easily deceived (often on account of being more emotional).

Let us apply this order of formation principle to other situations to test it.

• Does Jesus (the lower in order) not speak in the presence of the Father (higher in order) in the assembly?
Does man (lower in the order) not speak in the presence of Jesus (higher in the order) in the assembly?

Since the animals were created before man, do the animals then have authority over man, even though God said to mankind, "have authority over the animals?"

Since the plants were created before the animals, do the plants have authority over the animals and man?

Since the dust was created before man, does the dust then have authority over man?

At some point, in spite of the fact that angels were created first, the resurrected man will be lifted above the angels. 1 Corinthians 6:3 asks "Do you not know that we will judge angels?" The latter are over the former. Maybe women are over men?

As we attempt to apply the order of formation argument, we find it lacking.

C. Usurping Authority

We also find historical evidence in the Bible of women exercising authority over men, and that in a positive light. Perhaps we need to rethink the assumption/interpretation that every woman has an incurable defect such that she "usurps authority" anytime she may be teaching a man.

D. Women are Deceived

One of the common arguments for the silence standpoint is that females as descendants of Eve are easily deceived, and males as descendants of Adam are not. However, consider, that sin is passed down via the seed of man, not the egg of woman. This is the reason Jesus was born of a virgin. This being the case, is not man more defective than woman?

We are free to ask, what does the formation order, or woman's supposedly incurable defect to "usurp authority", have to do with authority? Perhaps nothing. Paul is getting at something else in this text.

In any case ...

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his treachery, your minds (speaking to the entire congregation, including men) may be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Whatever mechanism that caused Eve to be deceived is a mechanism that works against men as well. And whatever implications for women this tendency to be deceived have, must, to be consistent, have the exact same implication for men. If women cannot be teachers because they are deceivable, then men can also not be teachers.

E. The Mute Disease

Outside of the wisdom of holding the tongue in order to refrain from uttering unfitting words ... from where does being silent come?
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Being mute is considered a sickness. Are we not self-imposing sickness on His women? The reader is challenged to do a word search for "mute" in the Gospels. Here is one:

Mark 9:17 A member of the crowd said to him, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that makes him mute.

The Bible is clear: demonic spirits have come to make us mute. Is God really asking women to become mute, like the son possessed by a mute spirit? One should let this question sink in when considering the silencing topic. What could be more out of God's order than self-imposed sickness?

Mark 9:25 Now when Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “Mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

Has the Devil, through cunning, deceived us like he did Eve in the Garden? Surely he is the master at twisting scripture.

Matthew 15:31 As a result, the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they praised the God of Israel.

Yes, Jesus came to set people free and to heal many sicknesses, self-imposed and otherwise. Let us praise God as His people enter into their calling, especially the prophetic! The prophetic encourages the Church to become all it is to be. The Devil has every incentive to turn off the prophetic by disallowing the voicing of His word.

F. The Silence of Death

Besides the mute, who else does not speak?

Psalms 94:17 If the LORD had not helped me, I would have laid down in the silence of death.

Psalms 115:17 The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any of those who descend into the silence of death.

Being silent is not only a sign of sickness, but is associated with being dead. Are we inviting death to reign in an assembly of life? Perhaps instead of the silence of death, we need the death of silence.

G. Other explanations

These initial thoughts behove us to take a second take on the issue. Let us see if there are alternate ways of explaining 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 in light of the entire letter to the Corinthians, and for good measure, the rest of the Bible.

In interpreting the Bible, the major issue is not the interpretation itself, or even the gathering of data. The major issue is determining how the text will be interpreted, for then the interpretation follows accordingly. That is to say, the interpretation is decided when the interpretation approach is decided.
Therefore, we highlight our approach here for critical examination by the reader. The reader should ascertain if these are valid methods, and whether I followed these methods in this document. If yes, then one can trust the outcome of the analysis.

Here are my rules of explaining text. The explanation of a text must reflect

1. the vocabulary and structure used in it
2. the context immediately around it
3. other clear scripture pertaining to the same subject
4. the culture in which it was written
5. the conversation in which it takes place
6. consistency in interpretation

In general, the explanation of a text must provide a best fit to the puzzle pieces around it.
II. Ground Work

While beginning to study this topic, I sent an email to the president of the company where I used to work. My supervisor informed me that she said that my email as not direct enough. I immediately rejected that by quoting what I wrote and asked, "How is it possible to be more direct than what I wrote?" He gave no answer, for there wasn't one. The fact of the matter is, she interpreted what I wrote to have the exact opposite meaning of what I did write.

At the same time, one cannot blame her. She did not have all the information. I had written many emails to the prospect on that topic prior to the email she read, and a few after as well. If she had read all the emails from me, and the emails that came from the client, she would understand without hesitation that I did exactly what she expected of me.

And this illustrates a point. We don't have access to all the correspondence (written and verbal) between Paul and the Corinthians, and Paul and Timothy. If we read the text as if it were the full story, we mislead ourselves. If we read the text with full knowledge that we are ignorant of many facts surrounding why something was said, who the target audience is, what their history is, then we are in a better position to arrive at truth if only because we come from a stance of humility.

We all experience this phenomenon: we can speak on the same topic to two different people. What we say, and how forcefully we say it depends upon the situation and the state of the person. If an alcoholic were to ask me what I thought about him having a drink, I would forbid it. If someone who had no prior problems with drinking asked what I thought about him having a drink, I would say enjoy yourself. Someone reading just my text, not taking into account the situation, would think I was contradicting myself. In reality, I have not. This is to point out that coming to a conclusion based upon half the conversation and without understanding the situation is fraught with dangers. That is not all.

Creating an overarching, all inclusive doctrine based upon two verses is shaky. It has been my experience that persons who claim that women must remain silent, and are not permitted to teach, disregard the myriad of examples in the Bible where women act in a way completely contrary to this interpretation. They will also add things to the historical record so that the doctrine holds.

They often neglect the subtle, but important, meaning of Greek words and grammar constructions. Only by digging into the Greek can we uncover the true intentions of the author. We shall not neglect these in this study.

Some have difficulties in allowing for Greek to trump the English. Rebuttals run like this: "God simply would not have allowed things to become so complicated!" or "I have to research Greek terms to understand the Bible?" Implied in these statements is that the English is the correct, while the Greek is then wrong. In turn this requires that the translator of the text is more inspired than the original author. We hold this view to be self-evidently false.

We also have observed that the "silence the woman" teaching is the prominent and dominating factor directing and guiding the entire life of those who practice it. In contrast however, Jesus never taught that woman should "remain silent" in any circumstance. How is it then, if this teaching is so critical to the
proper functioning of the Kingdom of God and life, that Jesus mentioned nothing about it during his ministry on earth? This makes the astute student pause for reflection.

And why can we not find one single instance of the application of the doctrine between and including Genesis and Revelations? The serious student should realize: not one recorded instance in the entire historical record is available.

The undeniable facts are that women played a role in Israel and in the early church. Their actions are recorded in the Bible. To begin this study we highlight their activities to help us understand their proper place.

In view of looking at Church leadership, in the epistles we observe that titles were applied only to a few persons. This is in keeping with the spirit of service in the Church; servants are to labor, not carry titles. With that, many names are found, both male and female. We can only determine their place by what they did or what was said about them. This lack of titles vis-a-vis knowing their actions is fine, for their actions is what we want to know anyway. The women's function in the Church is exemplified by their acts in the Church, not their titles. We can consider these exploits as the "The Acts of the Women" if you will.

Studying the "The Acts of the Women" in the Bible is a preferable place to commence. There is no discussion as to its proper interpretation, as might be the case when debating the meaning of the verses listed above, or what effect, if any, the formation/creation order has on church leadership, or any other similar lines of reasoning. The women did what they did. There actions were respected, honored, rewarded and accepted. End of story.

The historical context gives us a plain-to-understand picture of the godly woman. There are many attributes found in the godly woman; silence is not one of them. Looking at the historical evidence painting the picture of the woman - while it may not always directly speak to the silencing topic - gives us valuable insight. At the end of studying the "Acts of the godly Woman", we find that the "godly" woman does not fit into the "silence" box.

After the reader has a chance to reflect on the historical record, then we look at the perplexing verses quoted above.

It is our hope that by expanding the evidence, evidence that must be allowed for any serious study, men and women gain a greater appreciation of women's place in the Kingdom of God. We submit as evidence not only the English text, but also the Greek and the historical record. Ignoring large portions of data is a time tested method for falling into error.

It is important that the reader approaches the historical record objectively, not filtered by preconceived notions of "creation order", "thinking defects inherent in women", "usurping authority over men", "woman fragility", "woman emotions" or "silence". We find that the historical record in the Bible knows of no such things. Don’t read into the historical record what is not there.

The reader should duly realize that the vast majority of evidence as to woman's place occurs prior to the verses in question (1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2). Paul knew the historical record prior to his writ-
ing these words better than we. He wrote what he wrote in the light of the historical record. Often, the silencing doctrine wishes to impose itself on that which occurred prior, instead of just letting the historical record speak for itself. For the reason that the historical record came first, these verses in question must be weighed in light of the historical record, not the other way around.

The humble will allow themselves to move their position when the evidence warrants. The evidence is provided in this document.

For this study, we will refer to the "silence doctrine" as a teaching that maintains females must remain silent (no speaking, no praying, no singing) in the assembly under any circumstance. A less intense version of the silencing teaching is that females require explicit permission from a male to speak/pray in the assembly. And in some groups, the women are allowed to sing.

We will not focus on one particular version of this teaching over another; that would make this analysis unwieldy. What we will do is look at the evidence. Can we find examples of women having broken the "law of silence" and they therefore have been chastised? Or can we find examples of women having broken this same "law of silence" who were not chastised, or perhaps they were even praised for doing so?

If we can find no such evidence of chastising women when breaking the "law of silence", and/or we can find evidence of women being praised when breaking such "law", it would strongly indicate that no such law exists, and spur us to reevaluate the verses typically used to support such a law.

Likewise, the parallel doctrines associated with the silence doctrine will be evaluated in the same manner: women are easily deceived, women cannot lead men, women cannot rebuke men, women cannot be ministers, women cannot be leaders and the like.

One may wish to skip the historical evidence for review later. We handle the context of the verses in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 in part "1 Corinthians 14 in Detail" and in part "1 Timothy 2 in Detail". Feel free to read these parts first.

In the end, we find that the historical record and the context are in agreement. Whether one wishes to read the one before the other is a matter of preference. Note that there will be some references from the latter parts of this analysis to the earlier parts.

Let us begin.
III. Women in the historical record

I may very well be correctly accused of mischaracterizing the silencing teaching. The issue is, there are many different forms of it. I will focus on the more extreme versions to show contrast. One could rewrite this text to cater to the less extreme. The discussion would follow the same line of reasoning. In the interest of making progress on this topic without getting lost in the quasi-infinite number of iterations and variations possible, bear with me, as the analysis would become unwieldy if I tried to incorporate the exact rules for any and every silencing group.

The silencing teaching revolves around these big 3. These will be enforced in body life to some lesser or greater degree depending on the group's convictions.

1. Women are never to speak openly in the assembly.
2. Women are never to exercise authority over men.
3. Women are never to teach men.

It must be said that the silencing teaching reaches far beyond the above. Once one accepts these, he is forced to accept other supporting teachings to live out these concepts in a practical manner.

Common teachings that support the above (to some degree or another):

- Women are emotional and therefore they are more likely to be deceived and to make bad decisions.
  Conclusion: women cannot think straight. Men must think for the women to ensure women do not fall into error. Only men can discern truth.
- Women are not built for pressure or confrontations, therefore they cannot handle leadership roles.
  Leadership roles are reserved for men.
- God provides direction by speaking to men only, never by speaking to women.
- God leads through the voice of men only, never through the voice of women.
- God leads the family through the man only, never through the woman
- Women are allowed to speak in defined areas, but not in others. The defined areas will vary depending on the group.
- Women can only train/teach women, and young sons.
- Men (husbands) do not submit to women (wives).
- Women do not pray and/or sing in the assembly, or in the presence of men.
- Women are to help men meet their goals and function in the Church. Men do not help women meet their goals (they don't have any goals outside of their helping their husband), nor do they help women in their ministry (indeed, a woman cannot have a ministry).

From a debate standpoint, the silencer doctrine has taken a very difficult stand to defend. The "never" word appearing in the "big 3" makes the teaching very open to question, and easy to refute. Once one shows a single occurrence to the contrary in the historical record, the teaching is demonstrated to be false. Furthermore, once one shows the supporting teachings to be false via the historical record, the teaching likewise topples under its own weight; for its justification vaporizes. And this is where we begin.
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Note that the less intense version of silencing (the woman can teach as long as the topic is uncontrover-
sial, for example) is likewise difficult to defend; chaos ensues a the controversial discussion arise as to
what constitutes "uncontroversial".

Furthermore, it is clear that if the Spirit can use the woman in one gifting, why not the other? And
where is the scripture that details which gifting women can act in, and which not? Again, we have
chaos, for every silencing group has a different opinion.

As one can see, the stated goal of bringing God’s order into the Church appears to have not been ac-
complished. The straightforward interpretation that women must be silent is perhaps now not so cut
and dry. Be that as it may, the main body of this study is the historical record. Here we show from scrip-
ture that:
1 Women speak openly in the assembly.
2 Women exercise authority over men.
3 Women teach men.

We will compare the historical record against the silencing of women life-style. The reader should sim-
ply compare the historical record against the silencing teaching, and notice that there is a conflict. Ei-
ther the historical record is right, or the silencing doctrine is right. The reader is hereby requested to
choose which he/she believes.

The previous statement may be perceived as provocative. Perhaps so. Even so, we invite the reader to let
the historical record speak for itself.

After showing that the silencing teaching conflicts with the historical record, we look at the Greek lan-
guage and the culture of that era to make sense out of 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2.

Nevertheless, we ask the reader to ignore everything he knows about the above stated verses. Read the
historical record without glasses filtering judgement. Let the stories speak themselves as to woman's role
in religious settings, and in the family.

Read the historical record with the question in the back of your mind, "Where these women in any way
constrained by any tendency to be silent, or show an aversion to exercising authority over men?"

A. Creation account

We first turn to the husband-wife relationship as can be gleaned from the creation account. According
to the extreme silencer position, men always lead, and women always follow. There is no exception.
Otherwise, women are supposedly usurping leadership over men. Let us see what the creation record
has to say.
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1. **Husband and wife rule together**

   Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule (have dominion) over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth."

   Genesis 1:27 God created humankind his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.

   Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule (have dominion) over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground."

Man and woman were told to multiply, and they were given equal authority over the earth. The man had some authority, the woman had some authority. God did not say, "Woman shall rule over the earth, and man shall rule over the woman". To be clear: woman and man have been given the same mandate.

We highlight that this position given to woman to rule over the earth is a command. It is a woman's rightful position to rule, and it is sin if she does not. Furthermore, the ability to rule is given equal footing with the ability to multiply.

**Was this reverted after the fall?**

   Genesis 3:16 To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your labor pains; with pain you will give birth to children. You turn toward your husband, and he will dominate you.” with alternate translation "but he will want to dominate you."

   Apparently not ...

   Genesis 9:1-2 Then God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, **“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.** Every living creature of the earth and every bird of the sky will be terrified of you. Everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea are **under your authority.**

God speaks to the men about multiplying. It is quite difficult to multiple without the woman. The women are by extension part of this commissioning. This (multiplying and ruling) was God's plan before the fall, and after the fall. Not a single man (certainly not a husband) argues that woman should no longer multiply, quite the contrary! The men should also not argue that women should not rule.

From the 'multiplying' standpoint, multiplying is an act of co-creation. Co-creators certainly have a right to say something! How does one separate creating and ruling. The act of creating assumes ruling, especially ruling over that which was created.

If a man wants to argue this point, I'd have to ask him, "is your goal to live according to the nature of the fall, or according to God's original plan?" If the wife were to decide to live according to the nature of the fall, I doubt the husband would like it!
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And I wonder how the husband would respond if the wife made the logical statement, "If it is no longer lawful for woman to rule, then it is also no longer lawful for woman to have sex, for both commands are tied together; therefore, dear husband, no more marital entertainment!"

Anyone who believes that it is man's position to dominate a woman has not understood God's will on this matter, nor God's order. This is a good time to introduce the concept concerning the teaching of "women submitting" and "husbands loving". Many erroneously believe that these biblical teachings infer that husbands then do not submit to wives. There is not a single verse in the Bible that supports such a claim.

It is clear from the passage in Genesis 3:16 that there is a struggle for domination between the genders. The built in godly desire to dominate the creatures of the earth has been perverted. It is now redirected to dominate other men and women: women over women, men over men, men over women and men over women. If this scripture teaches us anything, it is that the flesh wants to dominate. The spirit, however, resists. Those who give into dominating women are then fleshly.

It might be stated that all sin has to do with the pride of wanting to lift oneself up over another. The fact that I am writing on the subject of "Should men dominate the assembly and force women to remain silent?" proves that this human frailty is operating at full tilt in men. It is a core sin for women to want to dominate men, and for men to want to dominate women. If the Bible can be used to "put women in their rightful silent place", then all the better! This is, however, a twisting of scripture. This should not come to anyone as a surprise. This error has been committed before. The Devil perverted the scripture in the Garden and in the Gospels, and he cons us into doing it as well.

Therefore, the Bible admonishes wives to submit to husbands instead of dominating them, contrary to their fallen woman nature, and men to love their wives instead of dominating them, which is contrary to their fallen man nature. This interpretation is much different than, "Husbands, do not submit to your wives, and wives, do not love your husbands."

Nonetheless, we wish to mention that love is giving yield to the other; submitting. One cannot love without submitting, and one cannot submit without loving. Paul above is describing two sides of the same love/submission coin.

a. 'to turn'

All inquiries to the relationship between man and woman must start with the first mention of them in the Bible. All further insight into this relationship are subservient to this one, and must fit under its headship and order.

Note: the term used to render "turn" above in Genesis 3:16 occurs three times. The two other times are Genesis 4:7 and Song 7:10.

Genesis 4:7 Is it not true that if you do what is right, you will be fine! But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. It desires [turns] to dominate you, but you must subdue it."
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Song 7:10 The Beloved about Her Lover: I am my beloved’s, and he desires [turns toward] me!

That sin wants to dominate is clear. It is not clear that the beloved wants to dominate; otherwise he would not be a beloved!

Concluding with where we started, God placed man & woman in a place of authority. Authority exercises authority, and it also speaks. This is God's supreme order. All understandings of the woman's proper place must be seen as subordinate to man and woman's creation story, and what God said at that time.

2. The suitable helper

The following text is often assumed to portray a leadership role for the male, and a helper/servant role for the female. The male has authority over the female. The argument is that "the helper helps the boss, the one in authority".

Genesis 2:18 ADONAI, God, said, “It isn’t good (correct) that the person should be alone. I will make for him a companion suitable (neged, Strong's H5048) for helping (ˇ ezer, Strong's 5828) him.”

The argument sounds logical, but misses the entire point. A closer examination of the text indicates that the word authority does not appear. That being the case, one cannot claim that one has authority over the other. The claim tries to read between the lines what does not exist. At no place in the Bible do we read that a male has a general authority over a female. Go look ... it is not there.

Let us review the Hebrew word rendered "helper" (ˇ ezer, Strong's 5828). The term signifies divine help. God decided that Adam was in need of, not just any type of help, but divine help. And why would Adam need help except that he was inadequate to perform his duties?

The extent of the help will be in keeping with the extent of the inadequacy. That divine help can only have positive effect if and only if man acknowledges his divine inadequacies and need of divine help, and then submits himself to his divine helper, his wife.

Man is then dependent upon woman to fill his inadequacies. The male-centric among us may find this hard to swallow, but the term means what it means. Examples of the term in use in the Bible are to follow.

Now that this is settled, the woman is to help him do what? Fulfill the mission in Genesis 1: multiply and subdue the earth. Just like the male cannot procreate on his own, he cannot subdue the earth on his own.

We shall not forget:

John 14:26 But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
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Are we to say that we have been given authority over the Holy Spirit, because He is our helper? Quite the contrary. We know that we are under the authority of the Helper. This then would require that the female is the male's authority.

Taken from another view point: is the Holy Spirit our domestic servant? Cooking and cleaning clothes?

Let us leave the "human reasoning" realm and return to the Genesis 2 term "ezer". To understand the meaning, we quote a few other verses using the same term:

Psalm 115:9-15 O Israel, trust in the Lord! He is their help (ezer) and their shield. 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord! He is their help (ezer) and their shield. 11 You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help (ezer) and their shield.

Is God my little domestic helper, over whom I have authority? I send Him off into the kitchen to cook my supper when I am hungry, and off to the laundry to clean my clothes when they are dirty, but other than that, He has nothing to do?

In another text, the sons of Moses are listed, and one son is named here:

Exodus 18:4 And the name of the other was Eliezer (Eli = God, Ezer = Helper); for the God of my father, said he, was my help (ezer), and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh ...

The deliverer of Israel, yes the one who performed the 10 wonders forcing Pharaoh to his knee, is the "suitable companion". Or perhaps ...

Deuteronomy 33:29 Happy are you, O Israel: who is like unto you, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help (ezer), and who is the sword of your excellency! and your enemies shall be found liars; and you shall tread upon their high places.

Shields, swords, war, enemies defeated, victory in battle, etc. And lastly ...

Psalms 70:5 But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help (ezer) and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.

The Helper comes to help the what? The needy. This goes back to what we discussed in the beginning. The male is needy; he cannot finish his mission, win the war, subdue the earth, without help. God made a help mate.

Doing a textual search, we find that the term for ezer is most regularly used in the context of making war and conquering enemies, or otherwise saving from disaster. This is a far cry from "domestic servant". The term is associated with strength, salvation in the time of need, dominion, and of course, the associated authority. The number of references using the term 'ezer' are too many to list here.

For a true understanding of what the female helper is, see https://www.blueletterbible.org/ and search for "H5828". Compare the Bible's view and your view. If there is a difference, align yourself with God's view. If you are a female, and you wish to understand your identity in Christ, do the word search. The "I'll be happy with being my husband's little domestic servant and that's all" attitude will be fixed.
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And how many conquering warriors have no authority? How many warriors cannot take the pressure of leadership? How many are silent in the assembly? Women are called to be warriors, not worriers! The devil should not be making the women worry, the women should be making the devil to worry!

Looking at the cloud of texts concerning "helper", perhaps our Devine Help snuck its way out of the back kitchen door onto the battlefield while we were not paying attention! Hopefully they will. Maybe we can get the Church moving again.

I can say for me and my house: I want a conquering warrior as a wife, not a cook! Keep in mind that this picture of the helper is in direct agreement with Genesis 1:26; she is to subdue the earth. I suggest that we view women as God made them, not according to how man has derided them!

Whom is the female supposed to be subduing, conquering, dominating? The Devil. And who has an interest in convincing the male to dominate female, so that male and female are fighting against themselves, and not the standing side by side against the devil? Who might want to convince the females to not go to war? Or convince the men from allowing their women go to war, because they cannot handle it?

The other critical word in this helper discussion is "negen" (Strong's H5048) found in Genesis 2:18. It has various connotations in terms of relative distance and relationship: in front of, corresponding to, parallel to, opposite to.

The point is, the picture of the Helper is one that is parallel to and in front of the man, to help him subdue his enemies, to finish the mission of Genesis 1. Instead of giving the woman a cooking spoon and laundry detergent, we should give her a sword and a shield.

In no way can one understand "ezer" to mean inferior or subordinate.

See my parallel discussion Women announce the Lord's command on page 33 about Psalms 68:12-13.

3. Animals brought to Man

God brought the animals to man for man to name them.

Genesis 2:19-20a The LORD God formed out of the ground every living animal of the field and every bird of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them, and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man named all the animals, the birds of the air, and the living creatures of the field ...

God brought the animals to see what man would name them, not because he had authority over them. But there is another reason for bringing the animals to him. Why?

Genesis 2:20b ... but for Adam no companion (‘ezer, Strong's 5828) who corresponded to him (negen, Strong's H5048) was found.

God demonstrated that man had no suitable helper through the exercise of bringing the animals to him.
Follow this: remember, Adam was commissioned to exercise authority over the animals. How can Adam correspond to that over which he rules? None of the animals where comparable, and therefore could not be a corresponding companion!

The German translation brings this out: "Aber für Adam fand er keine Hilfe seines Gleichen." Translation: "But for Adam He found no helper his EQUAL. "The Germans, as sticklers as they are for precision and accuracy, got it right.

The point is, God decided to make Eve to be EQUAL with Adam, because, there were no EQUALS for Adam. If God wanted a SUB-EQUAL, God would have picked out one of the animals; an animal would have been sufficient.

4. Naming

Genesis 2:23 Then the man said, “This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

Notice, Adam gave the name Eve not because he had authority to do so, but on account of her nature.

5. The Discussion at the fall

How did the man see his wife? Let us look at what the man says as he defines his relationship God ordained him to have with her.

Genesis 3:12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with (H5978, "· immad" & H5973, "· im") me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it.”

First, there is no blaming on Eve for insubordination. Likewise, There is no blaming Adam for failing to be the leader.

Second let us take a look at the Hebrew definitions

- H5978 (root from H5973): along with
- H5973: in conjunction with; specifically, equally with

The man said, "to be in conjunction with/equally with me", not "to be under me".

The logic behind the accusation to God is to say, "look, you gave me this equal partner, and being equal with me, she mislead me". There is no way to read this text as meaning that Eve was under Adam, any more than one could argue that Adam was under Eve.

6. Become one flesh

The man having authority over the women (and not in reverse) is a central focus to the silencing teaching.

Genesis 2:24 This is why a man is to leave his father and mother and stick with his wife, and they are to be one flesh.
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The two shall become one flesh, not man flesh over woman flesh.

Does one dominate him/herself? Does the one order him/herself around? They work together, not as one over the other. It follows, in keeping with the commissioning above, that whatever rights, authorities, duties one has vis-à-vis the other, the other has vis-à-vis the one.

Bringing the point to bear, would a person ever tell "him/herself" to be quiet and not to speak? For "him/herself" may be "usurping" authority over "him/herself". Does this make any sense?

7. Conclusion

The creation story gives no hint of male leadership over the woman, nor is there a hint of woman subordination under the man. There is no hint of weakness or inferiority on the part of the woman, nor any incapability of leadership. Quite the contrary.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.

We note that male and female were built as a team to rule all the creatures of the earth. The main issue was to rule the serpent, who came as a creature. They should have thrown him out. Jesus came as the second Adam to replace that position of authority.

Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

Matthew 8:8 But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Instead, just say the word and my servant will be healed.

Saying the word and healing has to do with the exercising of authority.

Matthew 17:18 Then Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of him, and the boy was healed from that moment.

Rebuking demons has to do with the exercising of authority.

Keep in mind that waging and winning war is the most expressive form of authority that exists. Females are built for it. God gave the female authority, dominion and a warrior spirit to punish the enemy. If we get out of the women’s way, maybe we can get something done!

B. Wives and husbands

1. Sarah exercises authority over Abraham

The silencer doctrine maintains that woman cannot hold sway over a man. Women cannot rebuke or command a man. This would be "usurping authority". Going back to the historical record we read.
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Genesis 21:10-11 So she (Sarah) said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son.

Sarah commanding Abraham "to cast away the slave woman and her son" is displeasing to Abraham. Why? because Sarah usurped authority over her husband? No. Because she rebuked him even though she is a woman and he is a man? No, "on account of his son".

Genesis 21:12a But God said to Abraham, “Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named ...

And God backs up Sarah in telling him to accept her authoritative word, because her word was in line with God's plan. Abraham's plan was not in line with God's plan. God specifically confirms Sarah's authority over Abraham in this matter. Abraham was overruled, rebuked and corrected via the word of his wife.

Paul is acutely aware of these facts; for he speaks of the story in Galatians.

Galatians 4:30 But what do the Scriptures say about that? “Get rid of the slave and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the inheritance with the free woman’s son.”

Paul never wrote against Sarah for her rebuke of Abraham. On the contrary, Paul is in agreement with Sarah's instruction to Abraham. Paul understands that the deciding point is that the message is in line with God's plan, not whether or not the message came from a woman directed to a man. In contrast, the silence position must stand on the peculiar claim that the truth of the message is not important, it is only important if the message comes through a male. This is what the silence doctrine must assume to some degree or another. In contrast, this practical example shows clearly that a woman can exercise over, and give direction to, a male, and indeed on important issues.

What makes this story even more astonishing is that Sarah is upset about a situation of her own making! Sarah gave Abraham the slave woman for the purpose of her bearing a child. Even after that grave mistake, God still respects her authority as the wife in the family, authority first provided for at Eve's creation.

2. Sarah the ruler

We are not done with Sarah quite yet. According to standard silence teaching, women simply are not in roles of authority over men. This is especially the case for husband and wife. We return to scriptures for guidance.

Genesis 17:15 Then God said to Abraham, “As for your wife, you must no longer call her Sarai; Sarah will be her name.
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Sarah means "princess", "queen" or "princess ruler". Abraham is commanded by God Almighty to call his wife "queen"! Abraham was never given the title "ruler". Abraham, the father of faith, gave men an example to follow. If the father of faith can call his wife ruler, then you can too. Even so:

1 Peter 3:6a ... like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

Here we find a perfect example of husband and wife submitting one to another. No one is usurping authority over anyone else. There are no discussions in these verses about who was formed first, or who was deceived or who is the head. This family is the first "family of faith". They are spiritually our mother and father. We must emulate them.

Genesis 17:16 I will bless her and will give you a son through her. I will bless her and she will become a mother of nations. Kings of countries will come from her!

In keeping with the creation account, she is, through multiplication, exercising authority over the earth. God did not call nations out of Abraham, but out of Abraham and Sarah: they are working together.

With that said, is it reasonable to say to a queen and mother of nations, "God wants you to be quiet during our assemblies?" Of course not. Please note that women are to emulate her, the mother of faith.

3. Rebecca & Isaac

The silence standpoint leads some to believe that all direction comes through the man to the woman, and can never be routed in the other direction. The watered-down version of this is that women can lead in minor matters, but not on major issues.

Genesis 25:21-23 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. But the children struggled inside her, and she said, "If it is going to be like this, I'm not so sure I want to be pregnant!" So she asked the LORD, and the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples will be separated from within you. One people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

God answered both Isaac's and Rebecca's prayer. Notice that God answered Rebecca's prayer to Rebecca with information that is vital to Isaac as father. In this case God leads the family through Rebecca on a major issue, an issue that contradicted the foundational customs of the age (and some customs of this age). Not only is the message for the family, but for the world; two nations are coming from Rebecca.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one intermediary between God and humanity (males and females), Christ Jesus, himself human,

Males are not the intermediaries between females and God, whether they be married or otherwise. God works with women and wives directly, and leads through both.

4. Samson's mother and Manoah

We note another example of God leading through the woman.
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Judges 13:2-4 There was a man named Manoah from Zorah, from the Danite tribe. His wife was infertile and childless. The LORD’s angelic messenger appeared to the woman and said to her, “You are infertile and childless, but you will conceive and have a son. Now be careful! Do not drink wine or beer, and do not eat any food that will make you ritually unclean.

Judges 13:5-6 Look, you will conceive and have a son. You must never cut his hair, for the child will be dedicated to God from birth. The woman went and said to her husband, “A man sent from God came to me! He looked like God’s angelic messenger—he was very awesome. I did not ask him where he came from, and he did not tell me his name.

The word of the Lord came first to the woman. Then she gave the word of the Lord to the husband. This shows that the Lord does impart important information first to the woman, and then the woman passes that information on to the man. This godly man has no problem with God speaking to whom and through whom He wills. Who is the male to question God’s order?

Judges 13:8-9a Manoah (the husband) prayed to the LORD, “Please, Lord, allow the man sent from God to visit us again, so he can teach us how we should raise the child who will be born.” God answered Manoah’s prayer.

The man was open to the word that came through his wife, and acted on it positively.

Judges 13:9-10-11 God answered Manoah’s prayer. God’s angelic messenger visited the woman again while she was sitting in the field. But her husband Manoah was not with her. The woman ran at once and told her husband, “Come quickly, the man who visited me the other day has appeared to me!” So Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he met the man, he said to him, “Are you the man who spoke to my wife?” He said, “Yes.”

God answers the husband's prayer by sending the angel to his wife a second time. The angel visits the wife in spite of the fact that the husband prayed to see them. The wife then calls her husband to meet the angel. The woman leads the man to the angel. The angel worked through the woman first, and the woman led the man. This is historical evidence and precedence for God's order.

The story is all the more pertinent to our study of woman's proper role; she was the one who received instructions about saving the whole nation from its oppressor. This shows, again, that God speaks to women on international (Israel vs. Philistine war) matters, leading the nation to be saved.

Judges 13:12-13 Manoah said, “Now, when your announcement comes true, how should the child be raised and what should he do?” The LORD’s messenger told Manoah, “Your wife should pay attention to everything I told her.

The angel simply repeats what he first told the wife. We find that the husband's prayer for instruction is unnecessary, for the instruction already came to the wife. Furthermore, verse 16 shows that the man did
not know that he was dealing with an angel, although the woman had figured it out (or at leased held it for a possibility) in verse 6.

Judges 13:22-23 Manoah said to his wife, “We will certainly die, because we have seen a supernatural being!” But his wife said to him, “If the LORD wanted to kill us, he would not have accepted the burnt offering and the grain offering from us. He would not have shown us all these things, or have spoken to us like this just now.”

The man is again slow in comprehending things, believing that they will die, whereas the woman understands they will not. We point this out not to make men look bad, but the show that there are circumstances where the woman understands before the man does.

5. **Elkanah obeys Hannah**

Listening to women like this is tantamount to her "usurping authority" for some. Just because some women spoken about in 1 Timothy 2 have this problem, does not mean that all have this problem.

1 Samuel 1:11 She made a vow saying, “O LORD of hosts, if you will look with compassion on the suffering of your female servant, remembering me and not forgetting your servant, and give a male child to your servant, then I will dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life. His hair will never be cut.”

1 Samuel 1:21-23 This man Elkanah went up with all his family to make the yearly sacrifice to the LORD and to keep his vow, but Hannah did not go up with them. Instead she told her husband, “Once the boy is weaned, I will bring him and appear before the LORD, and he will remain there from then on.” So her husband Elkanah said to her, “Do what you think best. Stay until you have weaned him. May the LORD fulfill his promise.” So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

In certainly what is considered a huge family decision, Elkanah submits to his wife's will, even though it crosses the husband's standard religious custom. What would have happened if the husband had the attitude that that direction cannot be right because it did not come from him?

6. **Maria & Zachariah**

Luke 1:18-20 Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure of this? For I am an old man, and my wife is old as well.” The angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will be silent, unable to speak, until the day these things take place.”

God tried to lead through the man, but in vain. The husband decided to not believe the message, and became mute. Being mute (being silent) is then a sign of disbelief.

Luke 1:38 So Mary said, “Yes, I am a servant of the Lord; let this happen to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.
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When God decided to lead through the woman, the woman reacted in faith, and was not struck with being mute.

In this text, the woman comes out ahead. We point out also that the woman had the more difficult test: which is more difficult, to believe the old can conceive, or to believe that the virgin can conceive? The woman lead in the family matters, the man resisted. We hope that this story encourages women that they can, and do, lead in the homes.

7. Simeon

Luke 2:27 So Simeon, directed by the Spirit, came into the temple courts, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the law,

Luke 2:34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “Listen carefully: This child is destined to be the cause of the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be rejected.

The prophet, directed by the spirit, spoke to the mother, not the father. It is critical for the proper functioning of the family that husbands submit to the word of the Lord that comes to the wives.

8. The Shunammite woman

Does God lead through and honor women? Let see.

2 Kings 4:12-13 He (Elisha) told his servant Gehazi, “Ask the Shunammite woman to come here.” So he did so and she came to him. Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tell her, ‘Look, you have treated us with such great respect. What can I do for you? Can I put in a good word for you with the king or the commander of the army?’” She replied, “I’m quite secure.”

Elisha, completely ignoring the husband, asks if he shall put in a good word to the highest civil and military authorities in the land. Where is the husband's honor? The disrespect that the great prophet showed the husband is immeasurable!

2 Kings 4:14-17 So he asked Gehazi, “What can I do for her?” Gehazi replied, “She has no son, and her husband is old.” Elisha told him, “Ask her to come here. So he did so and she came and stood in the doorway. He said, “About this time next year you will be holding a son.” She said, “No, my master! O prophet, do not lie to your servant!” The woman did conceive, and at the specified time the next year she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.

The silence tradition would argue that it is not right for the prophet to tell a woman that the Lord will give her a child. This message must first come through the man! The great prophet, Elisha, disagrees. So do I.
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2 Kings 4:20-23 So he picked him up and took him to his mother. He sat on her lap until noon and then died. She went up and laid him down on the prophet’s bed. She shut the door behind her and left. She called to her husband, “Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so I can go see the prophet quickly and then return.” He said, “Why do you want to go see him today? It is not the new moon or the Sabbath.” She said, “Everything’s fine.”

The son has now died, and she tells her husband nothing about it! So much for static submission (we will discuss this in detail later!)

2 Kings 4:24-26 She saddled the donkey and told her servant, “Lead on. Do not stop unless I say so.” So she went to visit the prophet at Mount Carmel. When she saw her at a distance, he said to his servant Gehazi, “Look, it’s the Shunammite woman. Now, run to meet her and ask her, ‘Are you well? Are your husband and the boy well?’” She told Gehazi, “Everything’s fine.”

She tells the prophet’s servant the same story, "Everything is fine." She wants to talk to the prophet and directly - no prophet assistant, no husband in-betweens. So much for women getting men's permission to talk to authorities! So much for women not being allowed to be the liaison of the family in important matters!

2 Kings 4:27 But when she reached the prophet on the mountain, she grabbed hold of his feet. Gehazi came near to push her away, but the prophet said, “Leave her alone, for she is very upset. The LORD has kept the matter hidden from me; he didn’t tell me about it.”

The Lord himself did not even speak for her! She has her own voice!

2 Kings 4:28 She said, “Did I ask my master for a son? Didn’t I say, ‘Don’t mislead me?’”

Now she is out of line. She is unthankful and accuses the prophet of wrong-doing. Obviously, she is disturbing the prophet with her voice.

2 Kings 4:29 Elisha told Gehazi, “Tuck your robes into your belt, take my staff, and go! Don’t stop to exchange greetings with anyone! Place my staff on the child’s face.” The mother of the child said, “As certainly as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So Elisha got up and followed her back.

After being accused of a crime, the prophet starts his "raising from the dead" miracle by sending Gehazi ahead and not running himself, thereby submitting himself to the word of the woman! For she said, she will not leave him, as certainly as the Lord lives. Here we have one of the very few persons in the history of the world to have raised the dead, and he is obeying a woman's voice as to how he should go about doing it. This story has got the silencers nervous indeed!

2 Kings 4:31 Now Gehazi went on ahead of them. He placed the staff on the child’s face, but there was no sound or response. When he came back to Elisha he told him, “The
child did not wake up.” When Elisha arrived at the house, there was the child lying dead on his bed. ...  
2 Kings 4:36-37 Elisha called to Gehazi and said, “Get the Shunammite woman.” So he did so and she came to him. He said to her, “Take your son.” She came in, fell at his feet, and bowed down. Then she picked up her son and left.

All is well that end's well. Or does it? The silence doctrine would sure wish her "head" were involved in this great miracle story. Then they could say, "See, she submitted to the head, the head stepped into his rightful place of authority and decision making, and look what happens, even the dead are raised!" That was not to be! This great woman took things into her own hand, went around the husband, and the dead was raised.

9. Joanna's ministry

A women's place is in the home, right. They cannot have a ministry outside of the man, right? This is the allegation for those who believe the women is always to be submitted to her "head", and have no leadership role whatsoever.

Luke 8:1-3 Soon afterwards [Jesus] went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

Presumably Herod's steward Chuza was busy about Herod's work at the city seat. This requires then that Joanna, his wife, was traveling with Jesus "through cities and villages" alone. Jesus never told her to go home to her husband.

We don't know what the women did, but it is only reasonable that they worked along side publicly like the other women we will see in this document. The fact that she was recounted among the many reveals that she had a prominent position.

We have a difficult time believing that Chuza did not agree to her ministry work. The point is, she worked in a public ministry, where Chuza held a "normal" job. Jesus agreed to it. The silencing doctrine does not.

10. Wives own their husbands

This next verse is a thorn in the side of the one-way submission teaching.

1 Corinthians 7:3-4 A husband should give to his wife her sexual rights, and likewise a wife to her husband. It is not the wife who has the rights to her own body, but the husband. In the same way, it is not the husband who has the rights to his own body, but the wife.
"Having rights" and "owning" X assumes authority over X. Where there is no authority, there are no rights, and there is no owning. Thus, wives have authority over their husbands; just as much as husbands have authority over their wives. It is a paradox; both have authority over each other. They both have an equal amount of authority. This is in keeping with, and confirms, Genesis 1. This is God's design, before and after the fall.

This rule is not limited to physical intimacy; it is a fundamental reality that makes itself felt in that arena. This discussion of sex brought it to light. The fact is, the wife and the husband own each other, they do not act independently. This is a reflection of the truth that they become "one flesh", and not, as the silence doctrine claims, male flesh over the female flesh.

1 Corinthians 7:5 Do not deprive each other, except by mutual agreement for a specified time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then resume your relationship, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

We emphasize here that the outgrowth of owning each other results in "mutual agreement", not "the man has the last word".

11. **Man is dependent upon woman**

1 Corinthians 11:12 For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman. But all things come from God.

All males owe their existence to a mother; the sole exception is Adam. She is then the bearer and giver of life in a very real and literal sense. If God has authority over mankind because He gave life to us, then women must have authority over men because women give life to men. In every man's individual life, women comes first, then man. By the silence teaching's very own logic, woman has authority over man, for she came first in the chronological order.

In any event, the text in 1 Corinthians 11 quoted above is undergirded by the same spirit in 1 Corinthians 7 and Genesis 1. There exists between man and woman a co-dependency, co-authority and co-submission.

What Paul has brought to light is that there is a co-dependence between men and women. Many men emphasize the dependence of the woman, and ignore the dependence of the man. This creates an imbalance, and results in false authority and false submission.

12. **For the sake of man**

1 Corinthians 11:8 For man was not made from woman, but woman from man; and indeed man was not created for the sake of the woman but woman for the sake of the man.

This text directly references the creation story. Any comments on this verse are reflected in The suitable helper on page 18.
13. Heads and authorities

Much talk is made about the man being the head of woman. What does being a "head" mean?

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions use their authority over them. It must not be this way among you! Instead whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

This text mirrors Ephesians 5:22-23 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife as also Christ is the head of the church - he himself being the saviour of the body.

The "male authority over the woman" constitutes abuse in the eyes of God if exercised from the worldly standpoint. It is not the man's obligation to "make the woman submit", it is the woman's obligation to willingly submit. Anything else is a perversion of what is said. And the woman submits so that she may be served by the man.

Should the woman not submit, she cannot be loved by her husband. "Not submitting to man" is the motto of the feminist. Feminists make very poor wives. "I will not submit" may be why many women feel "unloved". They put themselves in a position where they cannot be loved. For the woman to feel loved, (1) she must submit, and (2) the man must serve. It takes two to tango.

14. The body

Much is made about the husband being the head. Let's look.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body.

Ephesians 5:30 ... because we are members of his body.

First, keep in mind the text is in reference to husbands and wives, not men and women in general. To bring this into perspective, how does Christ "get things done" on earth. Do the gifts work through himself, or through his body? Christ cannot get anything done without his church. Christ is dependent upon his body to work in the earth.

In the same way, a husband is dependent upon his wife's divine help to run the family. Although this text does not specifically say much about women speaking in church, it does round out the discussion of the co-dependency relationship between men and women.

The silence position must claim that men don't need women to get anything (of importance) done. Quite the opposite is true.
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Furthermore, the word here rendered "head" is also rendered "corner stone" elsewhere. The "corner stone" keeps the building together. The corner stone holds the walls together. Question: the corner stone, is it under the house, or on top of the house? The man then supports the woman. He is a help-mate and supporter for her. The Bible never said he wasn't! Jesus loves the Church (a type of woman) and empowers her to act and speak. The silence teaching does the opposite.

15. Submitting one to another

Is submission only in one direction, from woman to man? The silence teaching wants us think so.

Ephesians 5:21 And do not get drunk with wine, which is debauchery, but be filled by the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for each other in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul describes submission in descending order beginning in Ephesians 5:21, ending in Ephesians 6:9: all believers to all believers; wife to husband; children to parents; slaves to masters. Those in the assembly (this is the backdrop of the first in the "orders of submission"), those baptized into Christ are to submit one to another. This is the rule overriding all others. This includes men and women. Men to women, women to men.

The term "Christ" is in reference to the anointing and gifts. When a man submits to a women upon her exercising a gift (including the speaking gifts, some of which are listed in Ephesians 4), this is in keeping with Ephesians 5:21. The man is to do this in honor of the Christ. This is a reflection of His anointing, His working, His order. Refusing to hold meetings in God's order results in disorder and disfunction; perhaps ordered disorder, but disorder all the same.

The view of "submitting to one another" reveals a dynamic submission, as opposed to the standard practice of static submission. Static submission demands submission in one direction, but not the other. It demands a boss-employee, master-slave, government-citizen relationships. The dynamic submission is alternating leadership as the Lord directs. This keeps people humble and out of the "I am in need of no one" syndrome; or, specifically in this case, "I don't need a woman, she needs me."

16. Conclusion

We see over and over that the the Lord can and does lead in important maters through the woman first. The balanced relationship between man and woman, husband and wife, is not static, one-way submission and authority. The submission and authority operate in both directions. This is in keeping with the first principles we know about men and women as laid in the creation story: both rule as one together.

We hope to have made it clear that: men are dependent upon women; women have something to say to men; women can have and exercise authority over men; and men should submit themselves to women out of reverence of Christ.
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We specifically point out that there was no "usurping authority" in these accounts. This requires that it is possible for women to teach, prophesy and rebuke while speaking in truth and in love (see Ephesians 4:15). Another way to look at this statement is to understand that a woman teaching, prophesying or rebuking a man does not require that she is "usurping authority". Once we understand that, the standard reason for women to be silent in the assembly melts away.

Men and women both have roles in the church. Both have roles of authority; when, where and how the Spirit wills. This is God's order. This is God's plan for peace and life and growth in the assembly. When the assembly is silenced by a half, half of God's fire in the assembly is extinguished.

C. Women in government

1. Women announce the Lord's command

Built into the silencing teaching is that God does not speak through women, but only gives his command through men. If they do speak, women would be exercising authority over men, and this is against God's order. I would agree that women exercise authority over a man when giving him the command of the Lord. I would disagree that exercising authority over a man is inherently wrong. One of the false mentalities that one has to overcome is that it is not the vessel that is important, but rather the Spirit to whom we submit. When one understands this basic truth, the entire discussion of silencing women comes to an agreeable end.

The silencing doctrine continues that if females do make decisions, these are limited to inconsequential things. The more important things are left to the males. On both counts, let us see what king David thinks about the concept.

Psalm 68:12 The Lord speaks; many, many women spread (proclaim) the good news.

The verse is straightforward. The Lord speaks, and the women spread the good news, presumably what the Lord spoke. Why would God lead the women speak if their speaking is inherently wrong? Not only that ...

Psalm 68:13 Kings and their armies are fleeing, fleeing, while the women at home divide the spoil.

Let us remember that David was a man of war. He is describing how he handles battles. And in battles, David listens for God's command as to how to lead the troops. As David leads according to God's direction, David is victorious. Note that it is custom that all soldiers partaking in the battle also partake of the spoils.

David sees the women as fellow soldiers in the war for he allows them to partake in the spoils. They may not be carrying swords and shields, but they are bringing witness to David as to how to fight the battle. David, a man after God's own heart, had no qualms about receiving instruction from the Lord through women. Consider ...
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1 Kings 20:28 The prophet visited the king of Israel and said, “This is what the LORD says: 'Because the Syrians said, “The LORD is a god of the mountains and not a god of the valleys,” I will hand over to you this entire huge army. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'”

1 Chronicles 14:14 So David again asked God what he should do. This time God told him, “Don’t march up after them; circle around them and come against them in front of the trees.

David and all good kings inquired of the Lord in important matters. In the text in Psalms 68, David has stated that the word of the Lord comes to women, and is proclaimed further. They have an important part in giving direction from the Lord and providing feedback as to how the war is progressing.

Directing war and receiving feedback thereof is the responsibility of the king, and no other. These women then are his advisors who assist him in making battle plans.

Based upon these facts, it is clear that (1) women speak to men standing in authority, and (2) their word has authority over these men, even in serious matters.

2. **Abigail’s rebuke**

The story of Abigail is powerful for it directly contradicts a great number of mindsets inherent in those who practice some form of silencing of women. Follow along.

The logical implication of the silencing tradition is that women cannot rebuke men, for this is exercising authority. Is this stance correct? As before, I agree that rebuking assumes authority, and disagree that a woman's rebuke is inherently invalid. We'll test these concepts here.

Continuing with King David and his appreciation for a women's council (an advisory group at the department of defense), we next look at the speech of one of his wives, Abigail.

Abigail's husband, Nabal, had treated David and his men poorly. David protected Nabal's belongings, and when requesting refreshments, Nabal rudely refused. David responds:

1 Samuel 25:13 Then David instructed his men, “Each of you strap on your sword!” So each one strapped on his sword, and David also strapped on his sword. About four hundred men followed David up, while two hundred stayed behind with the equipment.

Then Abigail, without consulting with her "head" or "authority", summoned refreshments for David's men, against Nabal's wishes.

1 Samuel 25:18 So Abigail quickly took two hundred loaves of bread, two containers of wine, five prepared sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred bunches of raisins, and two hundred lumps of pressed figs. She loaded them on donkeys and said to her servants, “Go on ahead of me. I will come after you.” **But she did not tell her husband Nabal.**

a. **confrontation**
Abigail understands that David is irate, and is coming to even the score. So she approaches David to correct him by saying:

1 Samuel 25:26 Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, because the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand ...  
1 Samuel 25:31 Your conscience will not be overwhelmed with guilt for having poured out innocent blood and for having taken matters into your own hands. When the LORD has granted my lord success, please remember your servant."

By Abigail's own admission (the reader is invited to read the rest of text surrounding the quoted verse above), she knows she is rebuking not just any man, but the future king of Israel. As far as she is concerned, David is the king of Israel. And not only does she rebuke the king, she does it in front of all of his followers, in the open assembly of his troops!

A "word of correction" is a word of authority from the corrector to the corrected. Correcting is part and parcel to the exercising of authority. Correcting is what authorities do! She corrected the future head Corrector! In this case, it is clear that Abigail took it upon herself to exercise authority over David, the king.

How did David, the man after God's own heart, respond?

1 Samuel 25:32-34 Then David said to Abigail, “Praised be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me! Praised be your good judgment! May you yourself be rewarded for having prevented me this day from shedding blood and taking matters into my own hands! Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives— he who has prevented me from harming you—if you had not come so quickly to meet me, by morning’s light not even one male belonging to Nabal would have remained alive!”

David has the humility to understand that God sends women to correct men. Here, the male was on the wrong track, the woman perceived it, the woman corrected the man, the man submitted to this correction.

Abigail understood God's plan for David better than David. David made his decision under the influence of emotions when he decided to draw his sword.

1 Samuel 25:21-22 Now David had been thinking, “In vain I guarded everything that belonged to this man in the desert. I didn’t take anything from him. But he has repaid my good with evil. God will severely punish David, if I leave alive until morning even one male from all those who belong to him!”

Abigail set him straight by reminding him of God's vision for his life. She was the rational one.

b. wisdom

David very clearly praises Abigail’s judgement in keeping him from spilling innocent blood. He praised her, and then he married her as the opportunity presented itself, knowing full well, by her very own tes-
timony, that she had disobeyed her previous husband. Why? Because of her wisdom, and one other thing very important to men.

1 Samuel 25:3 The man’s name was Nabal, and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was both wise and beautiful, but the man was harsh and his deeds were evil.

Proverbs 31:26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

David knows full well that a woman having wisdom is of greater worth than precious metals & rubies; an outgrowth of wisdom is rebuke and correction. Wisdom says, "There is a better way!" Contrast the humility of David to the pride of Nabal.

1 Samuel 25:17 Now be aware of this, and see what you can do. For disaster has been planned for our lord and his entire household. He is such a wicked person that no one tells him anything!”

Nabal’s pride makes him a fool. He has literally silenced every person (males and females alike) around him by ignoring them. At this point, Abigail is in a tough spot. She is married to a man who will not listen to rebuke, and certainly not a rebuke from a woman. He is described as "wicked" for his inability to listen.

Proverbs 17:10 A rebuke makes a greater impression on a discerning person than a hundred blows on a fool.

Proverbs 23:9 Do not speak in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words.

In this story, who was wise and who was the fool? Who exhibited humility and who exhibited pride? Who was thinking straight, and who was not? Who listened to the word of the wise woman, and who did not? Fools reject wisdom. The discerning seek it out.

c. conclusion

Wisdom, by its nature, exercises authority. The silencing doctrine, to keep its theory, must claim that women should either (1) not have wisdom, or (2) conceal the wisdom from the assembly/man she is commissioned to uplift or (3) reveal the wisdom to a male for the male to pass on. We have no Biblical example or admonition for any of these three, and therefore we question them highly. But, on the other side, we do have examples of and admonition for (1) women having wisdom, (2) women expressing wisdom to a male, and (3) raising her voice in the assembly/crowd.

Abigail was a bonafide helpmate in that she corrected her future husband. She was praised and rewarded for it; she became queen of Israel. Silencing wisdom is a grave mistake. Godly women speak up.

Taking this thought further to the assembly of the saints ...
Does it make sense to allow women to speak wisdom in non-assemblies (however one wants to define "non-assembly"), but not allow women to speak wisdom in assemblies, where it promises the most impact? Does God intend to keep us stupid?

James 1:5 But if anyone is deficient in wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without reprimand, and it will be given to him.

We can never have too much wisdom in the "Official Assembly". Let wisdom speak!

Proverbs 1:20 Wisdom calls out in the street, she (notice the gender) shouts loudly in the plazas;
Proverbs 4:6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will guard you.
Proverbs 9:1 Wisdom has built her house; she has carved out its seven pillars.

These are the blessings that follow when "she" speaks, but only if we do not forsake her. Do we really want to keep these blessings out of the assembly by keeping wisdom silent?

3. Deborah the judge and prophetess

The silencing teaching also alleges that women never have authority over men. The women stay at home to be good child-bearers. God always leads through the husband. Is this right?

Judges 4:4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.

Deborah, a woman, is a prophetess and judge in Israel at this time. And she has a husband by the name of Lappidoth. She had civil and religious authority over men.

Judges 4:6-7 She summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali. She said to him, "Is it not true that the LORD God of Israel is commanding you? Go, march to Mount Tabor! Take with you ten thousand men from Naphtali and Zebulun! I will bring Sisera, the general of Jabin’s army, to you at the Kishon River, along with his chariots and huge army. I will hand him over to you."

Deborah gives direction to Barak in a prophesy from the Lord.

Judges 4:8-9 Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go. But if you do not go with me, I will not go.” She said, “I will indeed go with you. But you will not gain fame on the expedition you are undertaking, for the LORD will turn Sisera over to a woman.” Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Barak, instead of following the woman's instruction as given, puts a prerequisite on following her orders. Due to the man's disobedience to the woman's direction, some of his "fame" was removed. This was the punishment for disregarding the woman's word.
The issue is, war was then fought hand-to-hand. Men are on average 50% stronger than women. A soldier losing to a woman is shame on stilts. Today, the gun is the great equalizer. A woman can aim and pull a trigger as readily as a man.

Judges 5:7 Warriors were scarce, they were scarce in Israel, until you arose, Deborah, until you arose as a motherly protector in Israel.

Mirroring David’s thoughts on women, we read that Deborah is considered a warrior for her leadership in the war.

Deborah is, in her capacity, a spiritual leader as a prophetess, a civil leader as a judge and a military leader as a general. It follows that if a woman has the capacity to be a leader in one (say, government and military), she can be a leader in the other (say, Church).

4. Esther the queen

Esther is a second woman civil leader, who also led spiritually by commanding a special fast for those who feared the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. According to the silencer teaching, this is illegal and degrading to men.

Esther 4:15-17 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: “Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa and fast in my behalf. Don’t eat and don’t drink for three days, night or day. My female attendants and I will also fast in the same way. Afterward I will go to the king, even though it violates the law. If I perish, I perish!” So Mordecai set out to do everything that Esther had instructed him.

The word of the woman was godly wisdom and instruction for the entire city of Susa; a larger assembly is difficult to imagine. In a more important issue to lead is also difficult to imagine; the future of the Hebrew Nation is at stake. Her authority was respected, her instruction was followed, her nation was saved.

Esther 7:6 Esther replied, “The oppressor and enemy is this evil Haman!”

Esther accuses, rightfully so, a man of wrong doing. Notice that she is speaking in the assembly. This act requires judgment, knowing right and wrong. This proves that women can rebuke, rebuking even unto to civil penalties resulting in the death of the accused.

5. Isaiah 3

The Hebrew word for "women" and "creditors" is very similar. There is a debate as to which word is correct. Even so ...

Isaiah 3:12 Oppressors treat my people cruelly; creditors (often translated as "women") rule over them. My people’s leaders mislead them; they give you confusing directions.

This text is sometimes used to show that every woman in authority is a disgrace. But what about:

Isaiah 3:4 The LORD says, “I will make youths their officials; malicious young men will rule over them.
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Is every young man malicious? Does every woman rule with evil, resulting in misleading and confusion?

The context of Isaiah 3 demands that the Lord is punishing the people for their sinful ways. Looking back at verse 12 we find that "My people’s leaders mislead them; they give you confusing directions."

Is this statement about women reflective of Sarah (the name means "Princess Ruler"), of David’s council of women, of Deborah, of Ester, of Abigail? Did God not use these women to lead them in the way the people should go, out of confusion and into peace?

A woman leader is not equivalent to disgrace. Sarah was used to keep Abraham going in the right direction ensuring the rise of Israel as a nation; David’s women helped him win wars; Deborah judged with wisdom, called the men to victory in war, lifting Israel out of confusion and chaos and oppression; Ester uncovered the misleading plans of an evil man bent on Israel’s destruction, handing her people a great military victory over their enemies; Abigail kept David from wrongdoing.

6. Conclusion

Whatever defect proposed as a reason to keep women from becoming leaders apparently does not prevent God from making them leaders. We also see in history that as leaders, the women spoke, and indeed in important matters, even on national security. It does strike us a odd that God would move women to speak in matters of national security, but keep them silent in the Church assembly. Perhaps we should revisit 1 Timothy 2 in in context and in entirety?

Before we go there, we have many historical accounts to review that show how God has used women to be leaders, and used their voice to move families and nations. The historical record we have examined till now is perfectly in line with the commission of women to be rulers as decreed in the creation story, which we shall investigate next.

D. Women and Jesus

If the silence view of women is correct, one would think that Jesus would act in such a way to confirm it. What would come of this view if Jesus did not?

1. The healed woman I

In some sincerer groups, women are allowed to give a testimony, in others they may if and only if she has a "covering" (some explicit male authorization), and in others, no woman’s voice shall be heard, supposedly according to 1 Corinthians 14. What does Jesus think about all this?

   Luke 8:47 When the woman saw that she could not escape notice, she came trembling and fell down before him. In the presence of all the people, she explained why she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed.

The woman testifies to the greatness of God, without being prompted by Jesus. Modern day silence customs wish that Jesus had quieted her. From the "Revised Silence Version" we read:
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Luke 8:48 Then he said to her, “Silence, no women are allowed to give a testimony to God's greatness during ministry time!”

But Jesus will have none of it. There is no rebuke in his tone. If there is a godly principle that women should remain silent in the assembly, Jesus is not aware of it.

Luke 8:48 Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

She is not given a rebuke for her disruptive behavior of speaking in the presence of all the people. On the contrary, she is given a reward. This story shows that women give testimonies without any male authorization.

2. The blessed woman

Jesus is again in the presence of a "disruptive" woman. According to the silence teaching, the voice of a woman is disruption; this on account of the sexual plumbing of the body from which the voice emanated.

Luke 11:27 As he said these things, a woman in the crowd spoke out to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you nursed!”

The silencers are waiting in hope that Jesus might get his theology right. Hopefully now he will put this woman in her place!

Luke 11:28 But he replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!”

The chance to extoll the virtues of the silent woman is again missed. Rather, he uses the opportunity to point the crowd to hearing and obeying.

3. The healed woman II

As a reminder, the word for silence in reference to the women in 1 Corinthians 14 is "complete silence". This requires no speaking, no singing. One could infer that it requires no instruments, no shuffling of the feet. With the next historical record, we ask if Jesus will ever get it right. We give him one more chance.

Luke 13:10-12 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and a woman was there who had been disabled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten herself up completely. When Jesus saw her, he called her to him and said, “Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.” Then he placed his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Instead of being silent, we have another disruptive woman praising God, in the synagogue on the Sabbath no less! When will this chaos come to an end? The women are completely out of control! Praising God in the assembly after being healed. She is obviously not very considerate of the mens' authority!
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Continuing with the historical account we read:

Luke 13:14 But the president of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the crowd, “There are six days on which work should be done! So come and be healed on those days, and not on the Sabbath day.”

You see, the religious establishment, embodied in the president of the synagogue, wanted to keep Jesus from using his gifts, for the people were being edified. Jesus was drawing attention away from the established religious order. Prestige and attention was shifted from the religious powers-that-be to the Son of God. In reaction, they twisted the law of God to try to silence Jesus. The religious were not concerned about the welfare of the sheep, they were concerned about their standing, their power, their authority. All competitors for attention and prestige must be silenced.

4. Praise the Lord

Since we are on the subject of praising the Lord ...

Some silence groups demand that women not sing or praise God in the assembly. We know that Jesus taught to "hear and obey" above. We also saw above that he did not stop the woman from praising in the assembly. Why not? Maybe because there is a command to women to praise God?

Psalms 103:21 Praise the LORD, all you warriors of his, you servants of his who carry out his desires!

Presumably, women are servants who carry out his desires. Or should we maintain that women should not carry out his desires so that they then are not required to sing his praise? We have already seen that women are soldiers. Should now women not be soldiers?

Psalms 103:22 Praise the LORD, all that he has made, in all the regions of his kingdom!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

Presumably, women belong to the group, "all that he has made" (and are somewhere within one of the regions of his kingdom). At least, this is what I understand from Genesis 1 and 2. Maybe the silencing teaching doesn't see it this way?

Luke 19:39-40 But some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher,rebuke your disciples.” He answered, “I tell you, if they keep silent, the very stones will cry out!”

I point out this verse for some silence groups state that women praise God "in silence". This statement is completely unfounded. It serves only as a weak attempt to hide the silence doctrine from common sense scrutiny. The act of praising requires speaking and making noise. Presumably, praising God allows the playing of instruments, even those instruments that did not exist at 1,000 BC. Those silencing woman praising in the assembly are on the wrong side of this verse. By their own testimony, they are Pharisees. God demands praise. Those silencing women's praise are not in God's favor.

Silencing women's praise is one of the sad errors of this silence doctrine. The tree is judged by its fruit. Could the fruit be more obvious?
Mary gives instruction to the apostles

The topic is women leading and giving spiritual instruction to men. Some men claim, this is impossible, ungodly, and so on. I wonder if the angels are aware of these teachings.

Matthew 28:5-7 But the angel said to the women (Mary Magdalene and the other Mary), “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. (a) He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and (b) tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, (c) he is going before you to Galilee; there (d) you will see him. See, I have told you.”

The women were given (a) a word of knowledge, (b) a prophecy, and (c) commanded to speak to the assembly (of men) this word of knowledge. Furthermore, the women are (d) to give the men instructions to go to Galilee. Those holding to the silence teaching know more than the angels! Do they know more than Jesus?

Matthew 28:10 Then Jesus said to them (the women), “Do not be afraid; go and (b) tell my brothers (in the assembly) to go to Galilee, and (a) there they will see me.”

Three verse later, the word of (a) knowledge, prophecy and (b) instruction for the men through the voice of the women are confirmed. Jesus is very clearly giving women a place of authority over men (apostles, no less) in this matter. Now we have the solid proof - those holding to the silence doctrine do know more than Jesus!

1 Corinthians 9:1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

These women were the first to see the Lord, and the first to testify about his being risen. They were then arguably the first apostles. They were then apostles to the "12" apostles. They were, of course, silent apostles! We hope the reader realizes that when Jesus gives a woman the task to instruct men, that Jesus expects the woman to do so. Men should not usurp authority over Jesus!

6. Woman in Revelations

And yet another story of a woman prophesying publicly:

Revelation 2:20 But I have this against you (church in Thyatira): You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and by her teaching deceives my servants...

Jesus is speaking against Thyatira the church and Jezebel the prophetess. He faults Jezebel not because she is prophesying and teaching others (among which are men), but because she is deceiving them with false prophecy and teaching.

Again, Jesus has not authorized or encouraged the silencing of women.
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7. Conclusion

If women keeping silent in the assembly is essential for proper order, Jesus doesn't know anything about it.

E. Women firsts

Being the first to do something is leadership, by definition, for others follow. We point out here where women have gone where no man had gone before.

1. First evangelist

John 4:25-26 The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (the one called Christ); “whenever he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus said to her, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.”

The woman at the well is the first person where Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah. And by her speech, we know she knew about him, although she is a sinner. And he responded to her faith, regardless of the fact that she was a sinner.

John 4:28-30 Then the woman left her water jar, went off into the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Surely he can’t be the Messiah, can he?” So they left the town and began coming to him.

She evangelized in the town; using sign language of course, for she is not allowed to talk about religious topics to men! And the results were ...

John 4:39-42 Now many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the report of the woman who testified, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they began asking him to stay with them. He stayed there two days, and because of his word many more believed. They said to the woman, “No longer do we believe because of your words, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this one really is the Savior of the world.”

The story speaks for itself concerning the "silence the women" teaching. This woman was the very first evangelist. Evangelists speak in the public, among the crowds were men. Evangelists exercise authority. Evangelists are leaders.

2. First to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah via revelation

John 11:27 Lord, I (Martha) believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.

The first one having the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah was a woman. The greatest and most important revelation in the universe was first testified by a woman. Men followed after.
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Note: one could possibly count Elisabeth as the first. See quote of Luke 1:40-45 in Mary's voice on page 66.

3. **First (and only) to prepare Jesus for the cross**

   John 12:3-7 Then Mary took three quarters of a pound of expensive aromatic oil from pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus. She then wiped his feet dry with her hair. (Now the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfumed oil.) But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was going to betray him) said, “Why wasn't this oil sold for three hundred silver coins and the money given to the poor?” (Now Judas said this not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money box, he used to steal what was put into it.) “Leave her (Mary) alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

   A female made the prophetic act, not a male, for his burial. This is the salvation of "mandkind" we are talking about. But Judas did not want to accept it, for he could not accept it. He was wrong, the woman was right. This woman's leadership in this matter is confronted by religious (twisting of laws justifying) persecution motivated by personal gain.

4. **First to testify to Jesus resurrection**

   Matthew 28:10 Then Jesus said to them (the women), “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers (the assembly) to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

   We have already seen this verse in our women's study. But it bears repeating. If we say that apostles are those who have seen Jesus, and told by Jesus to testify of him, then these women were the first apostles. The men followed.

   What makes this first all the more "odd" is that a woman's testimony in this age was worthless in the courts. Man gives women's testimony zero worth, but God holds a different opinion. The zero worth opinion is prevalent in some circles today.

5. **First listed as one to condemn**

   Luke 11:31 The **queen of the South** will rise up at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon—and now, something greater than Solomon is here!

   Men did not listen to the wisdom of Jesus. A woman traveled the world to hear the wisdom of Solomon. For this, she is the first person listed as one who will condemn at the judgement. She, a civil authority over men, will continue to act as judge in the afterlife.

   Note that even though she was neither jew nor christian, she is saved. She is saved because she came from the ends of the earth to hear wisdom. Also note that she is referred to as "she". This implies that there is gender after the resurrection.
6. **Conclusion**

As stated in the beginning, being first to act is leadership. Women are leaders.

**F. Ministry in General**

The functions of ministry are described in these passages to follow. It terms of women's functioning in the Church, pay close attention to the concepts of unity, oneness; and its antithesis, division. Also pay attention to the fact that the prerequisite for the spiritual gifts is not being a male, but rather being part of the Body. Finally note that the operation of the spiritual gifts is proportional to the level of unity.

1. **Ephesians 4**

Paul introduces the giftings, ministries, graces, functions with ..

Ephesians 4:3-6 making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Notice the "oneness". This is a central theme in the gifting teachings (Ephesians 4, Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12).

Ephesians 4:7-8 But to each one of us (hemon, males and females) grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he captured captives; he gave gifts to men (antropopos, human beings)."

Paul contrasts the oneness with diversity: the different forms of gifts are given inside the one Body.

Note very well that the gifts are given to "human beings"; not to the Jew, not to the Free, not to the Male. Specifically, the prerequisite of receiving a gifting is being being a part of the Body; not being a part of the Body and being a male.

Further we read ...

Ephesians 4:11 It was he (Jesus) who gave some (male and female) ...

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Teachers
- Pastors
- Evangelists

Again, those "some" who were given as Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Pastors and Evangelists include males and females in the Body. We have no indication that a portion of the "some" are reserved for the Jew, or the Free or the Male.
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For what reason are these giftings given?

Ephesians 4:12-13 to equip the saints (male and female) for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ (in which both males and females abide), 13 until we all (pas, everyone, male and female) attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God — a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ’s full stature.

Follow the logic: the gifts equip the saints with the end game being unity and maturity and stature.

What happens if one category of people - say, slaves, or Greeks or women - are singled out as limited in their ability to function in the Spirit? The Church Body falls apart. The result of disallowing women to function is disunity in the faith, immaturity and failing to reach the measure of Christ’s full stature.

Ephesians 4:16 From him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament (the male and female variants). As each one (the supporting ligament) does its part, the body grows in love.

Both males and females are supporting ligaments. No ligaments (that is, functions in the Body) have been reserved for the Jews only, the free only, or the males only. Without all functioning, there is no being built together, and the body does not grow.

Ephesians 4:17-32, in view of the gifts just mentioned, teaches us about renewing the mind, which is a parallel to what we read in Romans 12 in the introduction to the gifts listed there. Grieving the Holy Spirit, which certainly throws a cold towel over the manifestations, is mentioned.

Ephesians 5:1-18a teaches about the way we should live in view of how we live with a renewed mind.

Paul in Ephesians 5:18b returns to the gifts of the spirit in the assembly, and how the gifts work.

Ephesians 5:18b-21 but be filled by the Spirit, 19 speaking (males and females) to one another (males and females) in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for each other (males and females) in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 and submitting to one another (males and females) out of reverence for Christ.

Remember, "Christ" is not Jesus’ last name, but rather means "the anointed one". Verse 21 plainly says that we (males and females) are to submit to one another (males and females) out of reference for the anointing.

And if the anointed is a Jew, a Greek, a Free person, a Slave, a Male or a Female, we are to submit to him or her.

Let us go back to when the tabernacle (the meeting place between God and Israel; it was a mobile temple) was built. We find that the women are active in the construction of the transportable temple.

Exodus 35:5 “Take an offering for the LORD. Let everyone (men and women) who has a willing heart bring an offering to the LORD: gold, silver, bronze,
Exodus 35:10 Every skilled person (men and women) among you is to come and make (build the tabernacle) all that the LORD has commanded:
Exodus 35:22 They came, men and women alike, all who had willing hearts. They brought brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments, all kinds of gold jewelry, and everyone came who waved a wave offering of gold to the LORD.

This reads a lot like

1 Corinthians 14:26 What should you do then, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each one (male and female) has a song, has a lesson, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all these things be done for the strengthening of the church.

The Greek word for "brothers and sisters" appears in 1 Corinthians 1:10 and 1 Corinthians 1:11.

1 Corinthians 1:10 I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to agree together, to end your divisions, and to be united by the same mind and purpose.
1 Corinthians 1:11 For members of Chloe’s household have made it clear to me, my brothers and sisters, that there are quarrels among you.

We mention these other scriptures to establish a pattern. Many translations use "brothers" in these locations. However, the Greek can mean "brothers and sisters"; and the two verses in chapter 1 certainly require "brothers and sisters", unless we mean that the sisters should be free to cause divisions and initiate quarrels.

The point being is that everyone built the tabernacle. "Everyone" includes men and women. In the verses below, we obtain more detail in the women's part in building the tabernacle.

Exodus 35:25-26 Every woman who was skilled spun with her hands and brought what she had spun, blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, or fine linen, and all the women whose heart stirred them to action and who were skilled spun goats’ hair.
Exodus 35:29 The Israelites brought a freewill offering to the LORD, every man and woman whose heart was willing to bring materials for all the work (building of the tabernacle) that the LORD through Moses had commanded them to do.
Exodus 36:6 Moses instructed them to take his message throughout the camp, saying, “Let no man or woman do any more work for the offering for the sanctuary.” So the people were restrained from bringing any more.

All persons, male and female, had something to give in the way of material and in the way of skilled labor.

From chapter 36 we know that the main components of the tent of meeting were frames and curtains. From chapter 35 we know the women spun and wove. The curtains, which were spun and woven by the women, was the outer skin of the tent of meeting. Without the curtains, all one had was a bare frame
structure. The structure was essentially naked. The tabernacle would not have been built fully without the material and the skill of the women.

The women also wove the garment worn by the priests. Without the women, the priests would have been naked.

This teamwork is the foreshadowing to the building of the Church. Until the women get involved, the tabernacle is incomplete, naked. The women's work literally covered the temple and the priests.

The women were visibly and actively involved just as much as the men, not as spectators watching silently. The women were not praying in silence that the goat hair be delivered on time or for it to be woven together in the correct dimensions. They were doing it. Skilled construction workers watching others do the work in silence get thrown off the job.

Exodus 36:18 He made fifty bronze clasps to join the tent together so that it might be a unit.

And this is the goal: that we are all built together as separate parts to become one unit.

Notice in Exodus 36 the repeated use of "He made ..." "He" is the coordinator of the construction project. The "He that is building ..."

Ephesians 2:20 because you have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

Matthew 16:18 ... I will build my church ...

Jesus is the project manager on this construction job. He chose to use men and women to actively participate in the physical temple, and he has chosen men and women to actively participate in the spiritual temple.

And for a final note, we quote:

Exodus 38:8 He made the large basin of bronze and its pedestal of bronze from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

No one got to the tent of meeting (where the people met God) without getting past the women first.

2. Colossians 3

Colossians 3:11-15 Here there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if someone happens to have a complaint against anyone else. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also forgive others. 14 And to all these virtues add love, which is the perfect
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bond. 15 Let the peace of Christ be in control in your heart (for you were in fact called as one body to this peace), and be thankful.

Colossians 3:16-17 (exhortation to makes and females) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, (exhortation to males and females) teaching and exhorting one another (males and females) with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you (males and females) do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, (exhortation to males and females) giving thanks to God the Father through him.

First we point out that Ephesians 5 and 6 and Colossians 3 are parallel texts. Both start with the relationships in the spiritual plane, then move into the relationships in the natural plane. Paul points out the dissimilarities between the two planes.

Verse 11 above introduces the concept that in the spirit level, there are no Greeks or Jews, or other fleshly divisions (which include gender, see parallel discussion in Galatians 3:28). Then the text provides instruction for Body life. Congregation interaction is specifically discussed in verse 16. Verses 18 and onward cover the relationships between husband and wife, between parents and children, between master and slave (just as in Ephesians 6).

Built into the discussion of "official" congregational meetings is that women teach and exhort men. This is the most natural way to read it. There is no reason to cut this meaning out of the text. No one would argue that the word of Christ should dwell in the hearts of males only. And it is inconsistent interpretation of scripture to assume that Paul is in every case writing about males and females, except when referencing the speaking activities such as teaching, exhorting, singing, etc.

Contrast the typical silencing teaching that the spiritual submission between man and woman is the exact same as between husband and wife; that is, the husband and wife submission structure is the physical version of the Church spiritual version. In a sense, they are correct, for both husband and wife submit to both. However, they do not see the submission in both directions. In their view, the man does not submit to the wife in the natural, and therefore the man does not submit to woman in the spiritual (all the while forgetting, there is no male or female in the spiritual).

Regardless of that view, Ephesians and Colossians are in agreement that men and women submit to each other in the spirit. And as noted elsewhere, we have no scripture indicating that a man/husband shall never submit to a woman/wife.

The word of Christ dwelling richly in us requires teaching, exhorting, wisdom, psalms, hymns, songs; and that with grace: Greeks to Jews, Jews to Greeks, Masters to Slaves, Slaves to Masters, Men to Women, Women to Men. This is how the congregation is supposed to operate.

3. Romans 12

Romans 12:3 For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you (pas, all) not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, but to think with sober discernment, as God has distributed to each of you (hekastos, male and female) a measure of faith.
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Thinking "higher than one ought" certainly includes "thinking of others as more lowly than one ought". Telling others, for whatever reason, that they cannot function based upon some fleshly (skin color, education, gender, etc.) reason falls into this category. The measure of faith according to Romans 12 given to males and females include:

• Ministry (diakonia, or service)
• Prophecy
• Teaching
• Ruling (elders rule in accordance to 1 Tim 3:3-5 and 5:17)
• Giving
• Exhortation
• Showing mercy

Note that some translations insert "he that" for this ministries. The "he" is non existent in the original text. Some translators, understanding this, insert "let us" instead, or other such construction.

The point of this text is is this: every one of these measures of faith is given to both males and females, Jew and Greek, Free and Slave. There are no limitations prescribed. The only prerequisite for any of these measures of faith is being part of the Body, to which female christians belong.

4. 1 Corinthians 12 part A

1 Corinthians 12:7 To each person (hekastos, male and female) the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of all (females and males).

• Wisdom
• Prophecy
• Knowledge
• Miracles
• Healing
• Faith
• Discernment
• Tongues
• Interpretation

Remaining consistent in the message, Paul includes females those who express the manifestations of the spirit described in the list above. There is no grammatical reason to exclude women from "hekastos". Let us continue ...

1 Corinthians 12:13-14 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. **Whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free**, we were all made to drink of the **one Spirit**. For in fact the body is not a single member, but many.

The Jew is raised in the tradition of "You, my sweet little Johnny and Sally, are God's favored nation. We have the Creator of all things as our God, He works through and for us. The non-Jews simply don't
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have it." And now, the Jew is supposed to submit to the working of God through these non-Jews? How many non-Jew prophetic books made it into the Jewish Holy Scriptures? The overarching mentality is that God works through Jews, not through Greeks. The non-Jews don't have anything to say to the Jews. Every self-respecting Jew knows this to be true!

It goes on. We can hear the Jews' argument in our ears, echoing after 2,000 years: "the first 12 Apostles were Jews. This proves that only Jews can be in leadership positions!"

The new paradigm turns the Jew's worldview on its head. Paul had his hands full in dealing with the division that would naturally arise.

The Free own Slaves, and the Slaves submit to the Free. "Dear Slave, go wash my clothes, go cook my dinner, go feed the cows." This was their life - day in and day out. And now, the Free are supposed to submit to the Slaves when God chooses the Slave for a manifestation of God's gifting, perhaps as an "Elder"? I am sure it was psychologically difficult because it could have been humiliating. "Dear Master, this is what the Lord is teaching you through my prophetic ministry." What?!

The Slaves had their share of struggles as well. In Christ, they are encouraged to take a leadership position over the Master. "Is my master going to take revenge against me?" and "I am just a worthless Slave; the Spirit cannot work through me." are issues that rolled around in the Slave's head. Again, Paul had to do some hand holding to get the Free humble enough to submit to the Slave, and the Slave bold enough to exercise his rightful place for the benefit of the Unity in Spirit.

Imagine the dynamic where a longtime Christian Slave is then greeted by his Master, a new Christian. The Slave is an Elder, and the Master is a Baby Christian. Makes for an odd situation, does it not! Every master knows that the master has the leadership authority gifts, and not the slaves! And what if the slaves took this spiritual truth as a reason to become free from their master? Is it any wonder Paul reminds Slaves to obey their masters in Ephesians 6:5? As inserting the natural relationships into the spiritual can cause problems, inserting the spiritual into the natural relationships can cause problems.

Inherent in the silencing doctrine is the infusion of the natural order into the spiritual order, in-spite of the fact Paul vehemently argues against it!

The author of the letter to the Corinthians is pointing out that there are no categorizations or limitations on who gets what gifting, and who drinks of the one Spirit. As examples of categorizations, the Apostle provides "Jew or Greek", "Slave or Free". One suspects strongly that the author has the same mind about "Black or White", "Educated or Uneducated", "Young or Old" and certainly "Male or Female. We don't have to speculate, for we read here ...

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

Colossians 3:11 Here there is neither **Greek nor Jew**, **circumcised or uncircumcised**, **barbarian, Scythian, slave or free**, but Christ is all and in all.
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Paul does not mention Black nor White, Educated nor Uneducated Young nor Old; does anyone doubt that if asked, he would include these as well? Would someone cry "unbiblical"?

The Pauline text is straight forward: either we are one in Christ, or we are not. Traditions and cultures, especially the Jews influenced by the Talmud, would have a very difficult time accepting the woman as an equal in Christ.

The Talmud, has a view of women very much like the Hindi and Muslim religions (which indicates they are likely taught by the same spirit). All three philosophies reduce women to a little better than the animals, put them down as not being able to think straight, teaches that they are easily deceived, teaches that they are the source of all evil, and all in some way teach them to be mute, with beatings if necessary. Paul is working against the traditions of man, a tradition of the male lifting himself up over his female counterpart.

Those who see women as statically "under the man", "being their head", "being their covering" have a hard time in finding the unity of the Spirit. But rise above they must ...

Another similar scripture is here:

Colossians 3:1-11 Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ... since you ... have been clothed with the new man that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it. Here there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all.

Let us have our minds set on things that are above; i.e., there is no Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, or male nor female. Anything else is thinking from below.

The Spirit is not a respecter of persons: God is not limited in moving on or through a person on account of their heritage, government mandated status of freedom, citizenship, and certainly not testosterone levels.

Remember, a core concept undergirding the giftings is "oneness in Christ". The giftings work to bring unity in Christ. This is made clear in the gifting lectures found in Ephesians 4, Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12.

In both 1 Corinthians 12 and in Galatians 4, Paul utilizes the phrases "Jew nor Greek" and "Slave nor Free" to show examples of division, the antithesis of unity. In Galatians 4 for good measure Paul adds, "Male nor Female" as additional example division, the antithesis of unity. This is God’s order.

The point Paul is making is that if there is "male and female in the Body", there is no "oneness in Christ". But, and this is important, the giftings bring about oneness in Christ. The result of the male vs. fe-
male division is de facto disunity. And where the giftings do not work in harmony, the Body is not built, and maturity is not achieved per Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 5:22 reminds wives to submit to their husbands just after Ephesians 5:21 indicating the priority of the submission teaching, all submit to all. What if wives decided that, "In the Spirit, the male submits to me, so I don't have to submit anymore."? This thinking, based upon the "male vs. female" category, is wrong, for there are no males and females in the Spirit. Paul is making sure all the different arrangements keep in their place.

Black vs. white, young vs. old, educated vs. non-educated, clergy vs. laity, ordained vs. un-ordained, us vs. them, etc.: this all promotes the concept that there exists a preferred group in God's eyes. The goal is to make a hierarchy, where some are closer to God than others, and otherwise become the mediators between God and the "lesser-christians".

The devil is not particular as to why we might divide. Whether in the name of skin color, age, education, heritage or gender, the result is the same: an immature group of people that he can easily defeat.

Follow us as we continue after Galatians 3:28.

Galatians 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to the promise.

The "promise" and the "inheritance" is for women too.

Belonging to Christ is a result of having left the guardianship of the law and entering by faith into sonship (and daughtership) of God, and becoming descendants of Abraham, heirs to the promise (see Galatians 3:23-26).

One of the manifestations of the "promise of becoming one" is logically the "promise of giftings, ministries and graces" per Ephesians 4, Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. Since there are no "males" or "females" in the Body ~ as explicitly stated in Galatians 3 ~ there are no limitations on what gift a female may receive or be.

Faith in Christ → Become One with Christ → divisions based upon gender melt away →

the promise of receiving a gifting and spiritual functioning is just as valid for women as for men

In fact, dividing the Church between men and women is the very division that Paul says not to have!

1 Corinthians 12:24-25 but our presentable members do not need this. Instead, God has blended together the body, giving greater honor to the lesser member, so that there may be no division in the body, but the members may have mutual concern for one another.

The whole point of blending Jew and Greek, Free and Slave, Male and Female was so that there was no division.

There are other means of division:
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1 Corinthians 1:12-13 Now I mean this, that each of you is saying, “I am with Paul,” or “I am with Apollos,” or “I am with Cephas,” or “I am with Christ.” 13 Is Christ divided? Paul wasn’t crucified for you, was he? Or were you in fact baptized in the name of Paul?

One sees that the Apostles continually battled against divisions. Circumcising, eating meat sacrificed to idols, individuals wanting to be first, etc. Galatians 3 indicates that Paul was aware of the "male vs. female" division. There is nothing new under the sun.

Silencing women, or otherwise limiting their functioning, is the perfect example of "un-blending" the body so that there is division in the Body. The author of 1 Corinthians is emphasizing that the Body is not divided. Jew and Greek is division. Slave and free is division. Male and female is division. God is interested in unity, oneness, not in disunity and division.

The body cannot function correctly unless the divisions cease.

5. 1 Corinthians 12 part B

1 Corinthians 12:27-28 Now you are Christ’s body, and each of you (male and female) is a member of it. And God has placed in the Church ...

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Teachers
- Miracle Workers
- Healers
- Helpers
- Governments
- Tongues

It is a re-occurring theme: the only prerequisite to being placed in the Church in these different functions is belong to Christ. No mention of being a male is found.

Interestingly enough, 1 Corinthians 12:31 concludes the giftings lecture by telling us to "earnestly desire the greater gifts". This admonition is for females as well; no qualifications are given. Shall we tell the sisters to not earnestly desire the greater gifts?

6. Genesis to Revelations

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it!

The disgust God has toward homosexuality is rooted in the fact that it is a direct contradiction to the God's first blessing! Homosexuals have no chance of being fruitful and multiplying. But being fruitful and multiplying is only half the blessing. The other half of God's first blessing is that male and female co-rule together in as equals in authority: one gender is not more important than the other. In as much as it is impossible to be fruitful and multiply without unity between male and female, it is also impossi-
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...ble to exercise authority without the same unity. One suspects that God hates the division of authority as much as He hates homosexuality!

Revelations 2:6 But you (Church in Ephesus) do have this going for you: You hate what the Nicolaitans practice – practices I also hate.

We should pay attention to what Jesus hates. We certainly don't want to be on the wrong side of it! So what is the Nicolaitan practice?

From Greek we know that "Niko" means to rule, to dominate. "Laos" refers to the laity. The Nicolaitan relationship is based upon the philosophy that some having spiritual authority while others do not: clergy vs. laity. It creates a static hierarchy. This concept rests upon the categorization of the body (some are placed with giftings, where others are not).

And limiting females is Nicolaitan practice: "we males have authority that females do not have!" God hates the separating out of women as having less authority than men.

Some would have us believe that the authority, after having been expelled from the Garden of Eden, was transferred from woman to man. No scripture is provided for this, "And now that you two have been expelled, I, God, now transfer authority from woman to man."

For one, this would mean that males have been blessed with more authority on account of his disobedience. This is absurd.

Second, we do well to keep in mind that males cannot procreate without females just because we are no longer in Eden. In the same way, God did not say, "And now that you two have been expelled, males have been blessed with the ability to multiply without the females". Males still cannot rule without females.

One of the core concepts in the believer's life is the exercise of authority over what is wrong around us: specifically sin in our lives, demonic activity, poverty, sickness and the rest. When our authority is not in line with God (as spelled out in Genesis 1), then the devil has already defeated us. Can one now see why there is such an attack on females such that they do not exercise the God-given authority in them?

7. **Thinking higher than we ought**

Romans 12:3 For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you (males and females) not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, but to think with sober discernment, as God has distributed to each of you a measure of faith.

If a Jew were to think he had access to gifts where a Greek did not, would he be thinking too much of himself? If a free person were to think he could have gifts that a slave could not, would he be thinking too much of himself? If a male were to think he had a special place where women could not move, would he be thinking too much of himself?

It seems prudent to me that sober judgement for the Jew, the Free and the Male would be to not raise themselves above others.
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8. **Thinking as high as we ought**

One of the typical thoughts in the women silencing mentality is that the relationship between man and woman is like the relationship between Jesus and the Church: i.e. one is God over the other. There is a strong emphasis on this verse that leads into the head-covering discussion:

1 Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

a. **Head-coverings**

For those of us in the western world, the whole discussion of head-coverings comes across as foreign. How in the world did a discussion of women wearing napkins (often, this is what it looks like) on their head get into the Bible half way through the New Testament, when we have no previous mention of such a thing anywhere? There is no Biblical precedent for God demanding women to wear head-coverings, and suddenly in 1 Corinthians 11 there is, or so it seems.

The strange nature of the discourse continues when in the beginning, it appears as if Paul argues for it, but in the end it appears that Paul argues against it. Is Paul confused?

Those promoting head-coverings for women assume that 1 Corinthians 11:3-10 is Paul's opinion of proper man-woman relations, and head-coverings. However, if we pay close attention, we find that Paul is actually presenting their argument point by point, and then he contradicts their argument point by point.

In any case, it is clear from context that 1 Corinthians 11:3 is not giving a full and complete definition of the roles between men and women, husbands and wives, but rather introducing the problematic of the head-covering. We concede that there is a headship relationship between husband and wife if only for the reason that a similar statement in made in Ephesians 5:22-24. However, we note that this is not the all-encompassing description of that relationship.

One of the keys to unraveling the head-covering mystery is realizing that Paul is in no way concerned about outward appearances, unless it is a stumbling block to others. A review of all of his writings confirms this. That being the case, it appears as highly unlikely that Paul is arguing that women have to wear head-coverings, which is decidedly an outward appearance. There is something else at play. Let us look deeper.

We note that Paul, when handling topics, begins by describing their issue, or their view of the issue. This is standard practice in positive communication: (1) this what I understand as your issue, (2) this is my response. What if 1 Corinthians 11 follows the same pattern? If so, the dividing line between reviewing the Corinthian argument and Paul's response is verse 11.

Historically, the head-covering was a tradition enforced by those persuaded by the oral law, the same oral law that Jesus spoke ill of:
Matthew 15:2-3 “Why do your (Jesus') disciples disobey the tradition of the elders? For they don’t wash their hands when they eat.” He (Jesus) answered them, “And why do you disobey the commandment of God because of your tradition? Matthew 15:6 he does not need to honor his father.’ You have nullified the word of God on account of your tradition.

Mark 7:3-5 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they perform a ritual washing, holding fast to the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. They hold fast to many other traditions: the washing of cups, pots, kettles, and dining couches.) The Pharisees and the experts in the law asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with unwashed hands?”

The Jews holding to the oral law were very concerned about outward things, such as the washing of hands, circumcision, and head-coverings, while God and Paul are very concerned about the state of the heart and the commandments of God.

Mark 7:8-9 Having no regard for the command of God, you hold fast to human tradition.” He also said to them, “You neatly reject the commandment of God in order to set up your tradition.

Mark 7:13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like this.”

It stands to reason that there were women in the Church of Corinthians married to Jews of the "head-covering" persuasion. The question is, what does the Corinthian Church do about this oral law influence?

To better understand the issues, we also mention this: in the oral law, the man/husband was considered God to the woman/wife, just as God is considered God to the man. In the oral law, the head-covering was an physical symbol that the wife has, as her authority, her husband. The head-covering was /is also a symbol for disgrace of having sinned against God. But that symbolism does not seem to be a part of the discussion here.

A woman not covering her head in public was considered the same as having committed adultery, and this was grounds for divorce. At the conclusion of a divorce on account of adultery, the head of the woman was shaven, to her shame for all to see.

This may all sound a bit strange. However consider that there are groups of Jews today where the hair of the woman is considered provocative, that is sexual stimulating. These women are not allowed to let another man see their hair. These shave their heads and give the hair to the husbands, and wear wigs. The hair the other men see is not their hair; thus the problem of provoking other men is solved.

With that historical background, let us review verses 3 to 16.
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- Verse 3: Paul describes the root of the head-covering problem. Messianic Christians influenced by the oral law claim that husbands are statically over women as God is statically over Jesus and Jesus is statically over the Church.
- Verses 4 - 5: Paul details the oral law implications of the husband being statically over the wife with respect to the head-covering. Men are not allowed to cover their heads, while women must.
- Verse 6a: Paul describes what women should do according to the oral law who do not cover their hair, that is, shave it off
- Verse 6b: Since that is the case, thus the argument goes, the woman should wear the covering.
- Verse 7 - 9: Paul details some of the supporting arguments for the husband being statically over the wife:
  - Verse 7: the woman has less glory than man, her glory is dependent upon man, and her glory comes through the man. The woman’s glory can therefore be covered, while the man’s glory shall not be covered
  - Verse 8: woman came from man; i.e. she is under his authority
  - Verse 9: woman was created for the sake of man; i.e. man is more important than woman, and is independent of her
- Verse 10: concludes the logic of the oral law, that is, a wife/woman must have a covering on her head. Apparently, the angels have something to do with head-coverings as well in the eyes of the oral law, although this is not detailed as to why.

After describing the predicament the oral law creates for the woman, Paul provides his contradicting response. The "In any case ..." at verse 11 is a literary phrase used to mean, "Well, we heard that side of the story, but have you ever considered ...". Paul contradicts the oral law's view of men, women and head-coverings in verses 11-16 with common sense.

- Verse 11a: First, Paul contradicts the foundation of the problem, that is the fallacy of the static hierarchy. Paul mentions the phrase "in the Lord", which reminds the reader of the meaninglessness of gender in spiritual settings. Therefore, there is no spiritual hierarchy based upon gender.
- Verse 11b-12a: Paul notes that on the natural plane, man is dependent on woman. By their own logic, if in fact men are borne of woman, then all men are dependent on woman, men have women as their authority and covering, and they should wear a veil as an outward symbol of that!
- Verse 12b: Paul highlights the equality of husband and wife, man and woman by noting that in the end, all things come from God. The static hierarchy, upon which the head-covering argument rests, has been contradicted now a third time. The Corinthians can now safely put the head-coverings away.
- Verse 13: After removing the foundation of their argument, Paul provokes the Corinthians with a reference to "judging". Paul just told them in 1 Corinthians 6:3 "Do you not know that we will judge..."
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*angels? Why not ordinary matters!" Angels are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:10 on the head-covering topic. Between the lines the rhetorical question is, "Why are you so caught up in these silly oral law discussions? Are you not mature enough to handle these ordinary matters? And angels are an argument for women wearing head-coverings how? And we are to make women wear head-coverings on account of angels even though these same women will judge them?"

• Verse 14 - 15a: Paul contradicts the oral law's view about the woman's glory saying that woman has her own glory, and that this glory is direct from God, built in, and the glory is specifically not through the man. Furthermore, if a man has the same long hair, it is a disgrace for him. Summary: not only does the woman have glory independent of man, but this glory is a glory the man cannot have!

• We also note from Genesis 1:26 that man and woman were made in God's likeness, in God's image. Whatever glory man received through God's creation, woman received as well. We have no precedent in the Bible that women have a lesser glory than man.

• Verse 15b: Paul then points out the obvious to the Corinthians who are not yet capable of judging ordinary matters, much less matters concerning angels: this glorious hair, which happens to be on her head, is already a covering! In between the lines Paul is asking the rhetorical question, "Why add a second covering?", "Why cover her glory with a covering?", and quite possibly, "Why don't you get it?"

• I do not believe that Paul is arguing that man cannot have long hair, or women cannot have short hair. Paul is well aware of the Nazarite vow, which requires letting the hair grow long, and then shaving it all off, a practice that both men and women did: meaning, they both had long hair and shaven heads. Furthermore, we have a few examples in the Bible where men not only did not cut their hair, but were not allowed to! This obviously resulted in long hair: Samson and Samuel come to mind.

• Verse 16: Paul concludes, if anyone wants to argue against common sense, he doesn't have time for it, and, by the way, we have no head-covering practice, and neither do the Churches of God! This references back to verse 2 where Paul introduces the concepts of the traditions that he passed on to them, contrasting the traditions of the oral law.

In a fashion reminiscent of how Paul handles the eating of meat sacrificed to idols (three chapters prior to this discussion in 1 Corinthians 8:1-10), Paul simply states that a woman's hair is her covering, and that is sufficient; however, if not covering her hair is going to get her divorced and shaven (per the oral law), then by all means the woman should wear it, and no one should give her a hard time about it.

In any case, regardless of the fact that Paul is not stating that man is the God of woman, but rather argues that they are on equal planes, we inspect a few verses to find out what the relationship of man to woman is via a better understanding of the relationship between Jesus and the Church.

Matthew 20:28 ... the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
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If the woman’s job is to submit, then it is man’s job to serve, and to give up his life. It has been my experience that those men who vehemently demand submission from their wives, at the same time do not - to the same degree - demand from themselves that they serve their wives, or give up their lives for their wives. Quite the opposite is routinely the case.

One wonders, if the wives were to remind these husbands as often about serving and laying down their lives as often as the husbands remind their wives about submitting, how that would go over? The women would be accused of not submitting of course!

Hitting the submission responsibility hard, while lightly mentioning the reciprocal serving and laying down is inconsistent teaching, and is likely followed up a hypocritical lifestyle.

The husband with a balanced understanding will teach his family that the husband is to serve and lay down his life at least as often and at least as strongly as he teaches that the woman should submit. Better than that, he will live it out in practical ways, and in ways acceptable to the wife. Certainly, if the man determines when the woman is submitting, the wife then determines on her own account when she is being served. Anything else is inconsistent and hypocritical.

Granted, there is no absolute proof that verses that verses 3-10 are the views of the Corinthians only, but Paul's views as well, then there is no absolute proof that they are. In the case that verses 3-10 are Paul's views, he balances them out in verses 11-16, and the end result of the analysis stands as before. In every case, it is clear that Paul is moving the Corinthians from a false one-sided view of women being under men and therefore they must wear head coverings to a more balanced view of equality such that they do not.

b. The parallel to Jesus and the Church

The silencing doctrine incorporates the thought that man has authority greater than and over the woman; for Jesus has authority over the Church, and man’s authority over the woman parallels this. Simply accepting that the parallel argument is true, we find:

Matthew 20:25 But Jesus called them and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions use their authority over them.

When some men talk about submission, what they are really demanding is 'lording over'. In contrast to that authority/rulership relationship, we have:

Matthew 10:1 Jesus called his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits so they could cast them out and heal every kind of disease and sickness.

Jesus gave his Church His authority. Now, according to the silencing doctrine, if in fact the authority relationship between men and women is parallel to the authority relationship between Jesus and the Church, then men should give their authority to women, so that the women can do the exact same things as the man!
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The amazing thing to consider here is that this is the same constellation as when God made man and woman in the Garden of Eden: God gave both authority to rule over the earth. There was no hierarchy!

Ephesians 2:6 and he raised us (male and female) up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

Note the past tense: God has raised up the members of the Church to be seated (on thrones) with Him in the heavenly places in Jesus. If we are in Christ, and Christ is on the throne, then we are on the throne.

We emphasize this point as the silencing doctrine typically argues that man is above woman in a hierarchy. They will concede that man and women were created to be equal in authority, but claim that at the fall, that arrangement changed; the argument incorrectly interprets God’s simple statement as to consequence of the fallen nature of the relationship, and the problems it will bring, as if it were a command to be followed. Even if women were below men in a hierarchy due per decree at the fall, now we are in a situation where all are equal in Christ per Ephesians 2:6 and a myriad of other scriptures already covered.

In repeating ourselves, the Church is raised to the same authority level as Jesus. What does that say about the man/husband and woman/wife relationship if the one parallels the other? Is it not the man's job to raise up the woman to be equal with him?

We should be thinking as high as we ought. Let us not consider the fleshly teachings of the oral law, about men over women, but we should rather consider us as without gender, without nationality, without heritage, raised up equally high, in and with Him on His throne.

Last but not least, we leave this section with:

Matthew 8:9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to this one, ‘Go’ and he goes, and to another ‘Come’ and he comes, and to my slave ‘Do this’ and he does it.”

Man is to ensure that the woman is given, and exercises, authority. If he does not do this, he is not Christ-like. And, authority speaks. Those who do not speak do not have authority. Muting women destroys their God-given authority. The Christ-like man will give and encourage women to not only speak, but speak with authority. Not only that:

Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard this he was amazed and said to those who followed him, “I tell you the truth, I have not found such faith in anyone in Israel!

The story is about Jesus being able to speak with authority. But this authority has been given to His Bride, women included. Speaking with authority is not only a woman's right, but her calling. A godly woman speaks with authority. This is a good time to remember our discussion of the Hebrew term 'ezer (Strong's 5828). The warrior woman certainly speaks with authority.
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9. Conclusion

It is a very odd argument indeed to recognize that in the unity of Christ there is no male or female, and in unity of Christ are found the various expression and manifestations of the Spirit, and then claim males and females have different expressions and manifestations on account of their gender.

The author of the gifting lectures has not made separate lists of individuals that can have, or be, certain gifts. There is not one list for males and another list for females. There is not one list for Jews and another for Greeks. There is not one list for free men and another for slaves.

As long as there is a "You cannot do ABC because you are XYZ." limitations, the body will never reach maturity.

The body accepts the black and the white, the Jew and the Greek, the educated and the uneducated, the young and the old, the circumcised and uncircumcised, and of course the male and the female. All these are blended together such that categories become meaningless, having no effect. And all these individuals are given gifts, without respect to any man-made category. When categories are eliminated, unity can be achieved, along with maturity, and the equipping to do every good work.

G. Praying

Often one hears that the woman can pray in the congregation, but not voiced, that is, think in her head. However ...

Luke 11:1-2 Now Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” So he said to them, “When you pray, say:

When specifically asked how to pray, the very first instruction is "say". Jesus did not instruct us to "think". And, it is understood that this teaching is for all believers, male and female alike. Therefore, females shall "say".

Matthew 17:20 He told them, “It was because of your little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; nothing will be impossible for you.”

In another teaching on prayer and faith, we find Jesus again speaking of "say", and not of "think". If we want to see the mountains moved, then we have to "say", not "think".

The point being, one of the typical outgrowths of keeping the women silent is that they are then not allowed to pray in the congregations according to how Jesus taught. This is a banner example of nullifying the word of God with man's traditions.

Mark 7:13 ‘Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like this.”

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In order to keep the silencing tradition alive, we have to then believe that women are not allowed to pray as Jesus commanded in the congregations, but they should when not in the congregation. But prayer is a core portion of coming together.

If women are not allowed to pray in a particular congregation as Jesus taught, then they should find a congregation where they can follow the Lord's instruction.

H. Women in ministry: prophecy

In this section we look at women who functioned as prophets.

Ephesians 2:20 because you (church body) have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

Prophets form the foundation of the church, and they necessarily minister in public. Women can be prophets. Women form the foundation of the church. All prophets, while they are prophesying, exercise authority over the listener, among which are men. Are we to believe those who form the foundation of the church do not speak in the church?

First we see if God can use animals to speak to men.

1. Donkeys and women

What shall God use to speak to men when they are hard of hearing?

Numbers 22:28-29 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?” And Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have made a fool of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you.”

If God can rebuke through a donkey in a word of knowledge (the donkey had spiritual eyes the man did not have), then he can do so through a woman. Why would it be impossible for God to give a women a word of knowledge to a man? Are women of such a lower class than donkeys that they are not allowed to rebuke a man for doing wrong? Does the passing along of a message from God through a woman make the message unworthy?

A message is understood as true, accepted as true, and acted upon as true, if and only if it is true. The point is, the origin of the message is important, not the vessel through which the message is sent; be it man, woman, animal or a sign in the heavens.

Silencing the messenger is silencing the one who sent the message. And that is what is a stake.

2. Miriam the prophetess

Again we revisit woman prophesy in public.
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Exodus 15:20-21 Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a hand-drum in her hand, and all the women went out after her with hand-drums and with dances. Miriam sang in response to them, “Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.”

Did Miriam play the drum and sing in a closet, or amongst the people (including men)? And we should silence women from singing praises to God? And why may I ask? Because they are disturbing the assembly?

Luke 19:40 He answered, “I tell you, if they (the crowds) keep silent (as opposed to praising), the very stones will cry out!”

Keeping silent is seen as negative in this light.

3. **Huldah the prophetess**

The silencing teaching claims that women cannot lead, cannot correct and cannot speak to the assembly. This view becomes more untenable with every passing scripture reference. The teaching does not hold up to scrutiny. Continuing to plow through the Word to divine truth, we read:

2 Kings 22:14 So Hilkia the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asai-ah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shullam ...

2 Kings 23:1-2 Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. And the king went up to the house of the LORD, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great.

2 Chronicles 34:22 So Hilkiah and those whom the king had sent went to Huldah the prophetess ...

2 Chronicles 34:29-30 Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites, all the people both great and small.

A word of rebuke and impending punishment from the Lord came to the entire nation through a woman, even though she had a husband. The husband did not authorize it, the husband did not cover it, but most importantly, he did not stop it. She spoke authoritatively to the nation. The idea that women have nothing important to say in larger assemblies is contrary to this historical account.

Between the nation and her were the elders. The elders, heard and then carried her message to the rest of the kingdom. The elders then represented her. She was then the head and source in this message.

This text becomes more important when we realize that male prophets were alive then, but were not used for the kingdom shaking message. What would have happened to the nation if the peoples would have ignored the word of the Lord on account of the vessel used? "The word came from a woman, we can safely ignore it, it has no worth."
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4. **Hannah's Prayer**

Depending on the extremity of the silencing doctrine, some women are not allowed to pray aloud. They can pray, but silently to the Lord.

1 Samuel 1:28b 2:1a Then they (Eli and Hannah) worshiped the LORD there. Hannah prayed, ...

The context of the story requires that the worship prayer was done aloud in the presence of the high priest, Eli, at the Lord's temple. There exists no law that would require a woman to worship or pray silently. The fact that this worship prayer is recorded is testimony that the author of 1 Samuel 2 heard it.

The worship prayer also has prophesy and teaching components. Men, at least those who are humble enough, stand to learn from it. Men, who have lifted themselves above women, presumably in pride, cannot listen to the woman's prophecy/teaching/worship prayer. They must remove this text out of the Bible, thereby altering it.

The honest student of the Bible is justified in asking if the doctrine requiring the removal of select scriptures in order to stand might possibly be in error.

5. **The false prophetesses**

All scripture regarding the forum of prophecy, whether in theory (teaching) or in practice (historical record), shows that prophecy is a public function. The silence doctrine contradicts this by saying that women prophets are not allowed to prophesy in public.

Ezekiel 13:16-17 those prophets of Israel who would prophesy about Jerusalem and would see visions of peace for it, when there was no peace,” declares the sovereign LORD. “As for you, son of man, turn toward the daughters of your people who are prophesying from their imagination. Prophesy against them.

The Lord is rebuking, not that the women prophesied, but that they prophesied from their own imaginations. All prophets, even the female versions, prophesy in public. There is no such thing as hidden prophecy; for you might as well not speak it out!

6. **Anna the prophetess**

Almost kicking a dead horse, we once again show that women prophesy in public. This is a good time to introduce the thought that prophesy is a method of teaching. Can a woman teach a man?

Luke 2:36-38 And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour (birth of Jesus) she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.
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Those who were waiting for the redemption of the Jerusalem were in the temple, and among them were men. The temple is a place of assembly. This woman spoke openly in the assembly as a prophetess, teaching them about the times in which they lived. We have no evidence that the priests had any issue with this.

They did not listen all the same. People often have excuses as to why they cannot listen to the word of the Lord.

7. Mary's voice

Is the voice of a woman shameful, lewd? Has no man been taught by this woman?

Luke 1:40-45 and entered Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She exclaimed with a loud voice, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child in your womb! And who am I that the mother of my Lord should come and visit me! For the instant the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that what was spoken to her by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

First, John the baptist reacts to the voice of a woman. This shows that in the innocent, unbiased state, man can accept a woman’s voice. The frequency range generated by a woman’s vocal instrument is no reason to reject the content of the message, according to John the Baptist.

Second, any man who has read and learned something from this text, has learned something from a woman. So, what is the difference in teaching via written text or via the verbal word?

8. Mary's prophecy and teaching

Luke 1:46-55 And Mary said, “My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has begun to rejoice in God my Savior, because he has looked upon the humble state of his servant. For from now on all generations will call me blessed, because he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name; from generation to generation he is merciful to those who fear him. He has demonstrated power with his arm; he has scattered those whose pride wells up from the sheer arrogance of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up those of lowly position; he has filled the hungry with good things, and has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Mary is prophesying and teaching. Can we accept that a woman is prophesying and teaching through this writing? Again we ask, what difference does it make if a woman communicates with a pen and paper or her voice?
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The apostle Luke apparently held no issue against women teaching. Otherwise he would not have recorded this text.

Some wish us to believe that women can only teach in small groups on unimportant topics. But here we have an example of a women teaching the entire body of Christ (generations past, present and future) via prophecy about the Lord. God thought that a woman could handle the responsibility of prophesying about the savior of the world.

9. Pentecost

We revisit the idea that silencing groups believe women prophets cannot speak publicly. We add that according to the silence doctrine, women cannot pray in the assembly; for this entails speaking and spiritual leadership. Again, we look at scripture.

Acts 1:14-15 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. At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together),

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

Acts 2:14 Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.

Acts 2:17-18 ‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy. Quote from Joel 2:28-32.

The very first line of the very first verse declares that all, including women, were praying together.

Some might say that the women prayed quietly. But,

Matthew 6:7 When you pray, do not babble repetitiously like the Gentiles, because they think that by their many words they will be heard.

and

Luke 11:2 So he said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, may your name be honored; may your kingdom come.

and

Mark 11:22-24 Jesus said to them, “Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, if someone says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. For this reason I tell you, whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.
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Praying is specifically associated with vocal sound. The burden of proof is on those purporting the silencing teaching that prayer is "silent" for anyone. We have no indication that prayer should be in the case of the woman "silent, between the woman and God only". This rule is found nowhere in scripture. It is only found in the traditions of men.

And back to the story in Acts: God answered the prayer, so God has no problems with it. This begs the question: why do some men have problems with women praying in a group?

What about women prophesying in the closet, where no man's ear can hear it? Why a man's ear would defile the message, we don't know. But alas, the tongues of fire fell on the women just as they did on the men! And when the Holy Spirit falls on a woman, allow no man to command her to keep silent!

It is clear from this scripture that women prophesy, a gift that requires speaking in a public environment. This scripture is in the context of speaking in an open assembly where men are listening. One is forced to conclude from this historical account that women speak openly in the assembly.

Some men want to teach that women can only speak in "unserious" meetings. The above teaches the opposite. The women were prophesying during pentecost. Meetings don't get much more serious that that!

Incidentally, Peter equates speaking in tongues with prophecy.

10. Women prophesy in the assembly

1 Corinthians 11:4-5 Every man (male) who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife/woman (female) who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love and be eager for the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:3-4 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

1 Corinthians 14:5 I wish you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets so that the church may be strengthened.

By definition, prophesy is spoken word to the people for the edification of the church according to 1 Corinthians 14:3-4. Women prophesy according to 1 Corinthians 11:5. Therefore, women speak in the assembly. This is straight forward and simple. There is no indication that women prophets can only prophesy in the privacy of their closets or only among women!

A similar verse is here:

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you [su] richly, teaching and exhorting one another [heautou] with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God.
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The Greek words [su] and [heautou] are decidedly genderless. The assembly is not a spectator sport. The building of the church requires all hands on deck, including the females version. Or, are we to believe that the woman in these situations must take the man off to the side, teach him the spiritual song, who then voices it into the congregation? Does this "logic" make any sense whatsoever?

Hebrews 10:24 And let us take thought of how to spur one another on to love and good works,

Are we not to perform this in the assembly? Is this verse for men only?

The assembly cannot be effectively or optimally strengthened without women prophesying in the assembly. We must not weaken the church by forbidding half of the congregation from edifying the church.

11. All should prophesy

What was Moses' attitude towards prophecy?

Numbers 11:27-29 And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!” Joshua son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his choice young men, said, “My lord Moses, stop them!” Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for me? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!”

Reminiscent of the prophecy in Joel and of the words of Paul, Moses desires that all (male and female) prophesy. And where does one prophesy if not in the camp?

The idea that women can prophesy, but only alone, is preposterous. How is the church to be edified if no one hears it?

It should not escape the reader's attention that someone is attempting to silence prophecy. It has always been a prime directive out of the camp of the enemy to silence those who operate in such an edifying gift. Even Joshua fell for the trick. In our time, the elect continue to be deceived.

"Are you jealous for me?" This sentence is very revealing. The point is, those who want to silence the "unworthy" are afraid of the spiritual spot light shining on "them" as opposed to on the "chosen one". "Jealously" and "being first" is a powerful motivator that shuts down the gifts of the spirit working in others.

Furthermore, look at verses 16-17 and 25:

Numbers 11:16 The LORD said to Moses, “Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know are elders of the people and officials over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting; let them take their position there with you. Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take part of the spirit that is on you, and will put it on them, and they will bear some of the burden of the people with you, so that you do not bear it all by yourself.
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Numbers 11:25 And the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to them, and he took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it on the seventy elders. **When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied**, but did not do so again.

The prophetic gift carries the weight of the assembly. The enemy has an agenda: make the assembly weak. One surefire way to accomplish this is to con half those who are supposed to be carrying the assembly with their verbal gift into remaining silent. The enemy works to deceive us. And deceive us he has!

To demand that women not speak in the assembly is to demand that the Holy Spirit not rest on them!

Ephesians 2:20 because you have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

To demand that women not speak in the assembly is to remove half the foundation of the body. Those propagating the silencing of women are working against the building of the church! And this is what is at stake.

John 6:63 The Spirit is the one who gives life; human nature is of no help! The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Jesus speaks through women, and this speaking gives life. Let us never forget, God is not a God of order, but of peace! God speaks through her! Keeping the women silent forbids life from entering the assembly, life that God wants to give.

Being on the wrong side of God’s plan ensures the Church not be built.

12. **Speak out**

Amos 3:7 Certainly the sovereign LORD does nothing without first revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

Are we supposed to believe that the prophets are to keep this information to themselves? The women must speak out!

13. **Other utterance gifts for women and men**

Let us take a second example for the Greek form of "brothers" again.

1 Corinthians 8:12-13 Thus, sinning against your brothers [adelphos] and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

It is clear that the term rendered as "brother" is in reference to male and female. It is unreasonable to claim that wounding the conscience of sisters is tolerated. Keeping this precedence in mind, let us move forward.

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1 Corinthians 12:1-11 The original Greek pronouns incorporate male and female in all the gifts, many of which are decidedly speaking oriented: words of knowledge, words of wisdom, prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues. Pronouns used: brothers (siblings, incorporating male and female in Greek), you, one, to each, to another, each one individually.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31 This section emphasizes that the body has many members, and is made of all believers (male and female), and all have a function. If any of these functions are hampered, the body is crippled. The gifts discussed in the previous and succeeding passages are to be utilized in the church, for the church, by the church. Pronouns used: all members of the body, member, all, together.

1 Corinthians 14:1-25 This section details the function of some of the gifts. The gifts are open to male and female according to the Greek. Pronouns used: one, you (speaking to the entire church, including women), your, someone, all, brothers (brothers and sisters in Greek).

In a specific example, Paul wants all to speak in tongues. All includes women. Speaking in tongues includes speaking. Paul has the assembly, men and women, in view.

1 Corinthians 14:26 What then, brothers (male and female in Greek, according to convention in the letter to the Corinthians)? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.

These are all speaking gifts that bring the word. "Brothers" specifically includes males and females as siblings in a family. There is not the faintest trace of evidence in these many verses that any of these gifts are reserved for males only.

The odd situation those silencing women have to explain is why speaking gifts are not allowed for women, but other gifts are. It comes across as self-contradictory to claim God is able to work some gifts through women, but other gifts he is not. Whatever logic or reason purported to make women unusable vessels for one particular gift would surely make its effect on all gifts, making women completely useless.

Note that all gifts require that the beneficiary of said gift submit to the one operating in the gift.

Ephesians 5:21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (the term "Christ" is the Greek word for "anointing").

Any gifts/anointing working through a woman necessitate that the served submit to the woman. Again, "one to another" does not exclude females. All gifts, even the non-speaking ones, require that men submit to women when the anointing is at work.

As a final note: the utterance gifts (words of knowledge, words of wisdom, tongues, interpretation of tongues) are very similar to prophecy in that they are a direct message from God. They function in the same way, and in many instances, if not all, have the same purpose. They could easily be subcategories of prophecy. It stands to reason that the subcategories of prophecy be treated the same as prophecy itself. This means that women are explicitly invited to use these sub-prophecy gifts in the assembly since they are invited to prophesy in the assembly.
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14. Teaching and prophecy

Teaching and prophecy are fundamentally the same. Both impart new information, both admonish, both give instructions to follow, both rebuke and correct. If one allows women to prophesy, then one must also allow teaching. The small difference between the two is that the "teaching" emanates of the scripture, and "prophecy" emanates of the Spirit. But scripture comes from the Spirit. In the end, both come from the Spirit, but teaching makes a "pitstop" as codified in the written word. Outside of this, they are in essence the same.

If we are fearful of the message becoming defiled on account of the female vessel, then we should be more concerned about prophecy than teaching, for teaching can more easily be objectively validated. This is to say, it is much easier for a church to error in weighing prophecy than in weighing teaching.

And why would a teaching, which is prepared in advance, not be allowed, but a prophecy, which is spontaneous, be allowed? Again, it seems that thinking through the teaching would prevent the errors that might occur in a prophecy. Those who want to silence women have no answer for this question.

We note a last similarity between teaching and prophecy here: both are authoritative in nature. Both expect the listener to act in a way consistent with the message. If the deciding factor is authority, we must either accept both teaching and prophecy (and all other forms of authority inherent in the gifts), or we must accept neither.

Besides, are women allowed to speak about anything in the assembly as long as it is not the Word of God? This view comes across as very perverted. Is it the goal of the silence teaching to prevent us from hearing God's Word?

This commentary about teaching and prophecy is aimed at the silence doctrine interpretation of 1 Timothy 2. Later in this study we will look into these verses misused to mean that women are not allowed to teach men (due to the usurping of authority). The historical records presented in this study give the balanced person pause prior to accepting this teaching wholesale.

1 Corinthians 14:31 For you can all prophesy one after another, so all can learn and be encouraged.

Please note that the effect of "prophesy" is "so all can learn". Prophecy is qualified and certified to be an acceptables method of teaching!

15. Is it the messenger, or the message?

It is a common tactic to reject a godly message on account of the vessel by which the message was delivered.

Luke 7:31-32 “Therefore,” said the Lord, “how can I describe the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces, calling to one another, ‘We made happy music, but you wouldn’t dance! We made sad music, but you wouldn’t cry!’
Luke 7:33-34 For John has come not eating bread and not drinking wine; and you say, ‘He has a demon!’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking; and you say, ‘Aha! A glutton and a drunkard! A friend of tax-collectors and sinners!’

The point made is that the Lord has proven that the message is not accepted under the cover of defaming the good character of the message bearer. In fact, bad-mouthing the message bearer is an excuse for rejecting the message. Could the defaming and bad-mouthing of women speaking the messages of God in the assemblies have its roots in simply not wanting to hear what God has to say?

God uses women to speak his word into the assemblies. The question is not whether women are allowed to speak, but if we are willing to listen!

16. Stoning the prophets

Women prophets should not be overly surprised at the silencing teaching. Silencing the prophets is old practice.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would have none of it!

The religious establishment does not like prophets and messengers of God. These messengers take the focus off of them and put the focus onto God. So the religious silenced them by killing them. And killed them by silencing them. Ask any woman who has come out of that oppression. They will tell you they felt like they were being suffocated.

2 Chronicles 24:19 The LORD sent prophets among them to lead them back to him. They warned the people, but they would not pay attention.

Silencing is a proven technique to not pay attention.

17. Daughters of prophecy

There is no scripture that says women cannot prophesy in the company of men.

Acts 21:9 He (Philip) had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

There is nothing we know about these four, but this is a good time to point out that women were under stress as evangelists and prophets. These jobs are not for wimps. Such are routinely mistreated and abused. The abuse has not stopped! This leads one to discount the theory that women are too weak to hold a position of authority. We reject the idea that women can be expected to hold up to abuse as a prisoner (as we shall see), while at the same time not be able to hold up to the rigors of eldership or other leadership.
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18. conclusion

Women were prophets. Prophets proclaim the word of the Lord in the assembly. Women speak prophecy in the assembly.

I. Women in ministry: teachers

In this section we point out teaching women.

1. Priscilla the teacher and co-worker

Here we state a fact. There is no scripture that disallows a woman to teach. We will look at 1 Timothy 2 later to uncover what is truly being said.

Acts 18:26 He (Apollos the Jew) began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they (including Priscilla) took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Taking the evidence for what it says, we know that Priscilla was the head teacher. The fact that the woman was named first indicates that Priscilla was the more active. Note that she taught "the way of God more accurately" to a man who was already eloquent and competent in the scriptures, and who after the training via Priscilla, "powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ". She taught theological authority over the man.

Acts 18:28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Apparently, Priscilla performed admirably at teaching a man. A tree is known by the fruit. Some don't like the fruit based upon the tree's gender. So they bury it under silence.

Acts 18:27 When Apollos wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers [adelphos] encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he assisted greatly those who had believed by grace,

We presume that Priscilla was one of the ones writing the letter of recommendation; it would only be natural for his instructor to do so.

2 Timothy 4:19 Greetings to Prisca and Aquila and the family of Onesiphorus.

Again, Prisca (shortened form of Pricilla) comes first.

When Paul recommends Prisca, he is not referring to their joint tentmaking company, but to their work in the gospel. We look at how Paul recommends Prisca, and compare that to how Paul recommends others.

Romans 16:3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,
Romans 16:21 Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my compatriots.
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2 Corinthians 8:23 If there is any question about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; if there is any question about our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.

Philippians 2:25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Philemon 1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer,

The same Greek phrase for fellow worker is used for all five instances. This means he holds Priscilla in the same regard as the other four; they did the same type of work, and they had similar responsibilities.

Philippians 2:19-22 Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be encouraged by hearing news about you. For there is no one here like him who will readily demonstrate his deep concern for you. Others are busy with their own concerns, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know his qualifications, that like a son working with his father, he served with me in advancing the gospel.

Titus 1:4-5 To Titus, my genuine son in a common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior! The reason I left you in Crete was to set in order the remaining matters and to appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

Paul expounds on the character of two of the four above, and their mission. This is what Paul, by extension, thinks of Prisca. A difference is set, however. Paul does not refer to Priscilla and Aquila as daughter and son, for they were in Christ first.

We can say then, that whatever leadership and respect Titus and Timothy had in the churches, Priscilla presumably had the same, for she is presented in the same manner as the men!

2. **Women teachers in 2 Timothy 2**

2 Timothy 2:2 And entrust what you heard me say in the presence of many others as witnesses to faithful people [anthropos] who will be competent to teach others as well.

[anthropos] is generic, referring to both men and women. Timothy is commanded to entrust truth to faithful men and women, who will teach others. Paul never mentions that the "others" taught cannot be men. It is only natural to assume that "others" includes men and women.

3. **Women teachers in 1 Corinthians 14**

1 Corinthians 14:26 What should you do then, brothers and sisters [adelphoi]? When you come together, each one has a song, has a lesson, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all these things be done for the strengthening of the church.

[adelphoi] is the technical Greek term for "brothers and sisters". [adephos] is technically "brothers" only, but used as "brothers and sisters", as shown above.

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The "has a lesson" above indicates giving a teaching, which specifically includes "brothers and sisters". The teaching is in the assembly, where men also are. The sisters teach the brothers.

4. **Women teachers in Hebrews 5**

   Hebrews 5:12 For though you should in fact be teachers by this time, you need someone to teach you the beginning elements of God's utterances. You have gone back to needing milk, not solid food.

   "You" in "you should be teachers" is not explicitly given in the Greek. There is no reason to believe that women are excluded from teaching by this verse.

**J. Women in ministry: master of the house church**

[oikodespoteo] means "to be the head of (i.e. rule) a family", "guide of the house". This word is the combination of two words. [oiko] means "house", and can mean by implication "family". [despoteo] means "ruler", "master" (female). [despotes] is "master" (male).

   Matthew 10:25 It is enough for the disciple to become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house [oikodespotes] 'Beelzebul,' how much more will they defame the members of his household!

   Matthew 13:52 Then he said to them, “Therefore every expert in the law who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house [oikodespotes] who brings out of his treasure what is new and old.”

   Matthew 24:43 But understand this: If the owner of the house [oikodespotes] had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have been alert and would not have let his house be broken into.

What is clear is that the [oikodespotes] determines what goes on in the house. Teachers of the kingdom ("expert in the law" in verse 52) are masters of the house!

   1 Timothy 5:14 So I want younger women to marry, raise children, and manage a household [oikodespoteo], in order to give the adversary no opportunity to vilify us.

By this very verse, honorable women are masters and rulers of their own home [oikodespoteo], just like the experts of the law. This requires that when the church met in their house, the women were in a position of authority. We hereby think that the ruler of the house did not sit silent in the assembly.

1. **The elect lady**

Did the authors of the New Testament ever write to women? On at least two occasions. Here is one.

   2 John 1 From the elder, to an elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth (and not I alone, but also all those who know the truth),
John is writing to an "elect" woman, and her children. She is raising her children in the Lord. She is then a person in authority over her children. And she did this in silence! This is quite a feat!

[kuria] rendered "lady" is the female version of [kurios], which means "supremacy", "supreme in authority", (as noun) "controller" and by implication "master". She sounds like someone who might be silenced in her own meetings, in her own house, doesn’t it?

2 John 7:10 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, people who do not confess Jesus as Christ coming in the flesh. This person is the deceiver and the antichrist! Watch out, so that you do not lose the things we have worked for, but receive a full reward. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house and do not give him any greeting,

John the elder is concerned about false teachings. He advises the elect lady not to accept those who espouse untruths into her house (where the church presumably met). The filtering of truth and falsehood is by its nature a leadership function. If John felt that some other person was the true "gatekeeper of truth" for this fellowship, then John would have written to that person instead of to the elect lady. John hereby affirms she has a leadership function.

2 John 12 Though I have many other things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink, but I hope to come visit you and speak face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

John has other things to say, but wishes to say these in person. So why write the letter? John feels the pressing need for the gatekeeper to be warned as soon as possible so that she can protect the flock from deceit. This activity certainly falls in the lap of the eldership.

2 John 13 The children of your elect sister greet you.

Apparently, this elect lady has a sister, who in turn has children to raise. The elect sister is then likewise a leader for her flock.

The silencer teaching wants us to believe that women are only house-makers. These verse paint quite a different story.

2. Mary, mother of John Mark

There is no scripture that says a woman may not pray in the company of men. We have already seen that women do pray among men in Acts 1.

Acts 12:5 So Peter was kept in prison, but those in the church were earnestly praying to God for him.

Acts 12:12 When Peter realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered together and were praying.
Herod imprisons Peter, whereupon "those in the church" prayed for him. Upon Peter's miraculous release, he proceeds to the house of Mary, where they were praying. Are we to believe that Mary was not praying in her own house (as the master and ruler of the house) because other men were there?

3. **Nympha the house church leader**

   Colossians 4:15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters who are in Laodicea and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house.

While the text does not indicate Nympha was the leader of that group, it stands to reason that the owner of the house has authority in it. The fact that she was remembered by Paul, and she was called by name lends credit to believing she had some leadership role. It is hard to imagine that Paul simply rattled off a few names arbitrarily as they came to mind.

Furthermore, if a man were leading the group, then Paul would have surely written, in order to suspend confusion and offense, "Give my greetings to Bob who leads the church in the house of Nymphia." Not mentioning the true leader "Bob" while mentioning a "lowly" woman would have been a huge offense to the man-centered culture, and caused problems in the house. Paul is certainly aware of such dynamics.

It is only natural and reasonable to claim Nympha was a leader in her house group, and spoke there.

4. **Lydia and her Household**

   Acts 16:13-15 and on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

We know Lydia was the business and spiritual leader of her household on account of the context.

5. **Conclusion**

Women were leaders in their homes where the churches met. As such, they spoke during the assembly. Claiming that the "house master" was silent in her own house has no basis in the historical accounts.

K. **Women in ministry: elders**

In this section we point out women elders in the Bible. One of the typical arguments against women as elders runs like this:

    1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,
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"The overseer must have a wife, and a woman cannot be married to a woman, voilà, the overseer cannot be a woman." This tack is better understood as religious humor, not as true exposition. It is clear that the writer is limiting his discussion to male elders, and therefore it is natural that he only mentions wives.

The serious student will expand on the data to come to a better founded solution.

1. Phoebe the deacon and elder

There exists no scripture that forbids women to be deacons or elders. The silence teaching want us to believe there is, but they cannot reference scripture for it. On the contrary, we submit this:

Romans 16:1-2 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant [diakonos] of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron [prostatis] of many and of myself as well.

Paul tells the Romans to assist Phoebe, a woman, in whatever she needs. She is given a leadership position to ask what she will. Translators have a tendency to demote her to "servant", although the Greek uses the male version of deacon, "diakonia" which indicates an official title. "of the church at Cenchreae" again affirms an official acknowledgement of her position. [diakonia] is a minister. So Phoebe is a minister. Phoebe carried the letter from Paul to the Romans according to some manuscripts.

Romans 16:27b Written to the Romans from Corinthus, and sent by Phoebe servant of the church at Cenchrea.

1 Timothy 3 lists the qualifications for elders and deacons. Even though the deacon discussion is geared for men, it is clear from Romans 16:1 that women can be deacons as well. Since that is the case, it stands to reason that women can be elders as well. We approach women elders in depth later.

1 Timothy 4:6 By pointing out such things to the brothers and sisters, you (Timothy) will be a good servant [diakonos] of Christ Jesus, having nourished yourself on the words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

1 Corinthians 3:5 What is Apollos, really? Or what is Paul? Servants [diakonos] through whom you came to believe, and each of us in the ministry the Lord gave us.

Philippians 1:1 From Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons [diakonos].

Colossians 1:23 if indeed you remain in the faith, established and firm, without shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This gospel has also been preached in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become its servant [diakonos].

Timothy, Apollos and Paul were all deacons/ministers. Were they all cooks and dishwashers? Those claiming the silencing teaching must claim this to be consistent with the Greek language.
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The Greek word [prostatis] is of greater interest. [prostatis] occurs once in the New Testament. One has to go outside of the New Testament to confirm its meaning. [prostatis] does not mean "helper". It means "one who stands in front", "ruler", "patron". This would be the same as a bishop/elder. The verb form of [prostatis] is found 1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 12. [proistemi] means to "rule", and is translated as "manage". It is an expression of authority. Paul has high respect for Phoebe and puts her in that class; elders. Paul states, "she has been a patron of many and of myself as well". Paul is writing that in some meaningful way, she discipled him, and others, like an elder would one of the flock.

1 Thessalonians 5:12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who labor among you and preside over [proistemi] you in the Lord and admonish you,
1 Timothy 3:4 He (the elder) must manage [proistemi] his own household well and keep his children in control without losing his dignity.
1 Timothy 5:17 Elders who provide effective leadership [proistemi] must be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching.

In the above text, [proistemi], a direct relative to [prostatis], is translated as "preside over", "manage" and "leadership" when men and elders are in view. This verb is also directly related to the elder. The translators, biased against women, do Phoebe a disservice by making her a mere "helper". She is no such thing. The fact of the matter is that Phoebe is in the same box as the elders.

It would be very strange indeed to demand that a deacon/elder would remain silent during an assembly.

2. Women elders in Titus 2

There exists no scripture that forbids women to be elders. The word in the Greek [presbutis] rendered as "older women" in Titus 2:3 would be equally accurately rendered "women elders". There is no reason, from the Greek, not to translate in this way. The Greek word for "woman elder" comes from the verb [proistemi], which means to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, or (by implication) to practise: maintain, be over, rule. It is more natural to render [presbutis] as "woman elder". To do otherwise requires the existence of evidence that "older women" is meant. To determine which rendering is more reasonable, we compare the "female elder" of Titus 2 to the "male elder" of 1 Timothy 3. We have numbered the qualities of the "women elders" for reference.

Titus 2:3-5 Older women (or Women elders) likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are (1) holy, (2) not slandering, not (3) slaves to excessive drinking, but (4) teaching what is good. In this way they will (5) train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be self-controlled, pure, fulfilling their duties at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, (6) so that the message of God may not be discredited.

Note that the "women elders" are given the same criteria as the the "bishop/overseer" below [Bishop [episkopos]. Although this is a different Greek word from Elder [presbuteros], they are thought to be effectively the same person]. As a reference, we match the numbers below with the numbers above to
prove the parallels between the male and female elders. There is only a slight variation to account for husband and wife.

1 Timothy 3:2-4 The overseer then must be (1) above reproach, the (5) husband of one wife, (1) temperate, (1) self-controlled, (1) respectable, (2) hospitable, an (4) able teacher, not a (3) drunkard, (2) not violent, but (2) gentle, (2) not contentious, free from the love of money. He must (5) manage his own household well and keep his children in control without losing his dignity.

1 Timothy 3:7 And he must be (6) well thought of by those outside the faith, so that he may not fall into disgrace and be caught by the devil’s trap.

1 Timothy 5:17 Elders who provide effective leadership must be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in (4) speaking and teaching.

Are we to believe that a "woman elder", who fulfills the exact same qualification of the "man elder", is then not an elder on account of her sexual plumbing? If the inconsistent "men elders" and "old women" rendering is allowed, why not "old men" and "women elders"? If we translated in this manner, we could easily prove from the Bible that there are no male elders!

Using our "humor" exposition above, we can say that the the elder must love her husbands, and since men cannot have husbands, there are no male elders ...

In Titus 2 and 1 Timothy 3, Paul is giving us the qualities of an elder for both man and woman. It is only natural that Titus 2:3 be rendered with "women elders". Only a preconceived bias would provide the rendering of the term otherwise.

1 Timothy 3:11 Likewise also their wives [gunaikas] must be dignified, not slanderous, temperate, faithful in every respect.

One could equally translate [gunaikas] to mean women. "their" has been added by translators (without justification?). Some translations render this "Women must likewise be...". In the middle of this text (concerning deacons and elders), this would be a list of qualities required to be a woman deacon or elder. This interpretation must be allowed from the Greek.

Concluding, it would be very strange indeed to demand that an elder remain silent during an assembly. Notwithstanding the silencing interpretation of 1 Timothy 2 concerning women, we can know that women speak and teach in the assembly.

Finally, what does "fulfilling their duties at home" mean? Since churches met in homes, and women are spiritual beings with spiritual gifts, they are to exercise those gifts for the edification of the church in the home. Not allowing them to speak is effectively not allowing them to fulfill their duties at home.

It is far from us to argue that women can exercise spiritual gifts outside of the home. The key ingredient is that the assembly is taking place in the name of Christ. The Spirit of God is not limited to geographic location.
Kings 20:28 The prophet visited the king of Israel and said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Because the Syrians said, “The LORD is a god of the mountains and not a god of the valleys,” I will hand over to you this entire huge army. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’”

3. Women elders in 1 Timothy 5

The female rendering for elders (women elders) occurs again in 1 Timothy 5, but is written differently. [presbutteros], the male version of "men elders" is used in conjunction with [meter], which means "mother". So Paul turns the male elder into a woman elder. Here is the standard translation:

1 Timothy 5:1-2 Do not address an older man harshly but appeal to him as a father. **Speak to** younger men as brothers, **older women as mothers**, and younger women as sisters - with complete purity.

And for a second time, there is no reason from the Greek to prefer "older women" over "women elders". Let us again look at scripture to uncover which translation better fits.

1 Timothy 5:20 Those (referring to elders, just after talking about elders who teach) guilty of sin must be rebuked before all, as a warning to the rest.

Timothy has a tough job.

1 Timothy 4:11 Command and teach these things.

"Command and teach these things" to whom? Timothy is to confront elders and those promoting false teachings. Some of the false teachings originated with the elders. I would have to quote almost the entire book of 1 Timothy to show all the evidence that this is the case. The reader is open to reading the entire book to get a feel for the atmosphere in which the text was written.

It is clear in Pauls' writings that Timothy would rather leave town than deal with this. Paul is gently encouraging and forcefully directing him to stay the course.

1 Timothy 1:18 -20 **I put this charge before you**, Timothy my child, in keeping with the prophecies once spoken about you, in order that with such encouragement you may
fight the good fight. To do this you must hold firmly to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck in regard to the faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

The fight in Ephesus is getting so severe that Paul feels he must hand two persons over to Satan. These are strong words. "Yes Timothy, the situation is very bad, but it is your calling to stick it out."

Paul gives Timothy hope in fulfilling his "mission impossible" with the words penned in the epistle. In order to save others from shipwreck, some of whom are elders and teachers, Paul gives some common sense advice for rebuking them:

1 Timothy 5:1-2 Do not address a male elder harshly but appeal to him as a father. Speak to younger men as brothers, women elders as mothers, and younger women as sisters—with complete purity.

The entire epistle concerns elders and Timothy's task to bring them back into truth. It is quite odd to insert "older man" and "older women" when these translations do not fit the spirit of the letter to Timothy. It is preferable to accept the natural translation of "male elder" and "women elders".

In both instances of "women elders", the translators fight against the natural flow of the discussion by rendering "older women". Is this perhaps due to bias?

Incidentally, on an evangelism strategy note, Paul knows that Ephesus is a jewel of a city. At the time, Ephesus was a major trading hub of the known world - it imported and exported goods around the world. It was the New York of its time. He knows that if this city can be won for Christ, it will import and export the Gospel to the known world. I believe this is why he desperately wanted to win this city.

4. Chloe of Corinth

Who is Chloe? Paul wrote her a letter destined to be understood by the whole church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 1:10-11 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.

Applying a sanity check to the verse above, I cannot imagine Paul saying that men should be in agreement, but the women may continue in discord. "brothers" then can mean "brothers and sisters". The plural Greek word "adelphoi" (translated "brothers") refers to siblings in a family. It is odd to use the term "siblings" in modern English, so the translators use "brothers". The same issue arises with the term "men" in biblical text. Sometimes it means "mankind", but the modern usage of English often demands "men". Readers of the English text would do well to notice the difference between English renderings and the authors intent.

The term "brothers" can cause confusion where the reader may wrongly think the writer is referring to males only. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, adelphoi may refer either to men, or to
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both men and women who are siblings (brothers and sisters) in God's family, that is the church; see also verses 26. It is clear that Paul is speaking to the entire church, where both men and women are members. He is speaking to all genders inclusively.

Paul, adhering to standard Greek, sets a precedent that "adelphoi" refers to males and females for this epistle. The reader is welcome to identify other locations in the epistle to verify for himself that its use refers to males and females.

a. What do we know from these two verses?

What can we determine to be historically accurate from these two verses?

• "Brothers" (adelphoi) is a term that incorporates male and female
• Paul has heard that there were disagreements, quarrelings and divisions in the Corinth church
• Paul heard this from individuals associated with, and belonging to, Chloe
• Chloe sent a delegation to Paul with a letter:
  • as a report to Paul as to the happenings in the church
  • with questions for him to answer
  • as an appeal to settle disputes
• Chloe is a name for a female, she is a woman

We also know that the topics raised by Chloe and her delegation were important enough to be included in the finalized New Testament. This requires then that these are important church matters, handled at the elder and apostle level.

For our discussion about women's place in the assembly, we have two options with regards to Chloe: she either has leadership status, or she has none. Let us try to be reasonable in answering this question, without bias against women.

b. What can be surmise by deduction from these two verses?

To investigate which is the more likely, we ask the question, what can we reasonably say to be true based on these facts stated above? What are the things not said in the two verses, but necessarily implied? To remain objective let us try to imagine that Chloe is not a woman. Let us simply refer to her as the "instigator of 1 Corinthians".

The instigator wrote the instigating letter, or at the very least co-wrote it. Are those who write letters to Paul in places of authority, or not? Does Paul respond to just anyone that shows up on his doorstep to complain about happenings back at their home church?

The instigator sent a delegation to the apostle Paul. The sender is always greater than those sent. A delegation faithfully carries the message from the delegator. In a sense, the delegation were ambassadors. Is the delegator of ambassadors someone in authority?
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The instigator is acting as a representative and liaison between the church and the apostle. Is this not the place of a leader, maybe even a special one? Does just anyone act as liaison between the church and the apostle?

Does it make sense that Sally the sheep woke up one lazy morning and decided to write a letter to the apostle Paul in the name of the church about the sorry state of the division, without the leadership's consent? And Paul kindly responds to this out-of-control person, Sally the sheep?

By this evidence, it is quite natural that Chloe, the woman, is a leader in church at Corinth, and is taking an active role in discussions in the assembly about serious topics.

Fact: Paul, in his reply to her letter, never questions her place as a representative of the church. If Paul had an issue with her having some leadership position, he had the obligation to rebuke her. Paul's lack of rebuke tacitly accepts her place in the church. If Paul did not agree with Chloe as a representative of the church, he should have written something like this:

1. Do you, Chloe, not know you are to be silent and learn at home. Chloe, you are a poor example to the younger women in the congregation.
2. You silly Corinthians, why have you sent this woman to me; for I am an apostle. Is there not a man among you to represent the church? I say this to your shame. Worse yet, you sent the delegation of a woman to me. Who do you think I am to be treated like this? Where is the order in the church? No wonder there are divisions among you.

Such phrases are noticeably absent.

In the end, if she looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and walks like a duck, then she is a duck. Thus, we can safely surmise that Chloe, the woman, is an authority figure in the church.

c. Chloe's Position

After showing that it is natural to accept Chloe as a leader in the church, the next question is, how much leadership did she have?

Paul references Chloe's Letter:

1 Corinthians 7:1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

Chloe, a woman, is discussing the intimate life habits of other believers in the church. What topic could topple the family faster than this if handled incorrectly? An all male review would have been particularly one-sided. A woman's viewpoint on the matter would be balanced.

1 Corinthians 8:1 Now concerning food offered to idols.

Chloe is now involved in discussing the eating habits of the church, and possible connections to idolatry. Steadfastness in the faith for some believers are at stake.
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1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers [adelphos] (technically male only, but understood as "brothers and sisters", and is sometimes rendered as such in some translations, or alternatively as "fellow christians".), I do not want you to be uninformed.

Is it reasonable that these discussions were rumbling in the church below the surface, the elders heard about it, but decided to let the sheep figure it out by themselves? And then let Sally the sheep handle it on her own with Paul? Absolutely not! The only plausible explanation is that Chloe is not "Sally the sheep", but rather a mature sister rubbing shoulders with the eldership. She may very well have been an elder herself. The evidence points in that direction. These topics are so serious, the church would demand that an elder represent the church and present the issue to the apostle Paul for a decision. That is not all. They would not appoint just any elder, but a foremost elder!

We wish to point out that the original Greek does not contain punctuation (quotes, commas, question marks, periods, etc.). This was to save space in a time where paper was very costly. Modern translators must make an educated guess as to where punctuation occurs. Sometimes this is easier said than done to get it right.

For the record, there are other texts from 1 Corinthians that are understood as quotes in some translations (as identified by the juxtaposed contradictory statements made):

1 Corinthians 6:12-13 “All things are lawful for me”– but [contradiction] not everything is beneficial. “All things are lawful for me”–but I will not be controlled by anything. “Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both.” The body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

1 Corinthians 10:23 “Everything is lawful,” but [contradiction] not everything is beneficial. “Everything is lawful,” but not everything builds others up.

Paul uses juxtaposed contradictory statements; that is the placement of "Paul quotes text from Chloe's letter" then directly thereafter states "Paul's response in his own letter". This will become important later in this study. Common sense dictates that Paul is referencing an idea posed in Chloe's letter.

Below, the author is indicating that he is referencing something in the letter to him. We only point out that Paul is directly referencing Chloe's letter to Paul.

1 Corinthians 7:25 With regard to the question about people who have never married (Chloe has a question about those who have never married), I have no command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one shown mercy by the Lord to be trustworthy.

1 Corinthians 9:1-3 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you, for you are the confirming sign of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who examine me (Chloe has indicated in her letter that some in the church are examining him [challenging his position as apostle]).

d. Stephanus
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1 Corinthians 16:15-16 Now, brothers and sisters, you know about the household of Stephanus, that as the first converts of Achaia, they devoted themselves to ministry for the saints. I urge you also to submit to people like this, and to everyone who cooperates in the work and labors hard.

In the exact same town where Chloe lives, we have the household of Stephanus. Both Chloe and Stephanus have meetings held in their homes. Now, the one who opens their home as a meeting place has, by this very act, a leadership position on account of their ownership of the house; remember the term [oikodespotao]. Furthermore, those who open their house are in some sense working and laboring. "I urge you also to submit to people like this." If, in fact, women were not allowed to be leaders, it would have been prudent to not allow churches to meet in homes owned by women, for that would provide the wrong signal.

e. Conclusion

We quote Paul's quotations of Chloe's letter to prove this point: these are eldership discussions, not menial chats about cooking and cleaning. This establishes that she was in some way a leader in the church. It is hard to argue that she was acting as a secretary, for in this case the boss would have been referenced in the epistle, not Chloe, just as Paul did not call out by name "those of Chloe". The letter came from Chloe (not through Chloe) as one of the representatives of the church in Corinth.

For good measure we note that if a man had written the letter to Paul, that fact would be used as conclusive proof that only men hold positions of authority. But what is good of the goose is also good for the gander.

Chloe is having these discussions, and this proves that she is speaking in the church. It is not reasonable that she is the one contacting Paul on these issues all the while silently witnessing the Corinth discussion at the elder's meeting. Presumably, she received the letter back from Paul as delivered by her group, and then she relayed the information back to the church. In this capacity, she is then acting as a spokesperson, representative and liaison for the church.

For good measure we conclude with this: if she as a woman is not authorized to talk, she shall not be authorized to write! If she has a question, she should ask her husband and learn in silence!

L. Women in ministry: miscellaneous

Some women held official titles, just like the men. Some women did work that assumes a title, just like the men. We look at women according to their titles and the work that they did. By this point in the study, it should not be a surprise to the reader that women did everything men did.

It is said that women cannot be leaders because they cannot bear the weight. What might the following say about women and their ability to withstand pressure?

Acts 8:3 But Saul was trying to destroy the church; entering one house after another, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.
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Acts 9:2 and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, either men or women, he could bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Acts 22:4 persecuted this Way even to the point of death, tying up both men and women and putting them in prison,

On three occasions, Luke emphasizes that women were thrown in prison. People are thrown in prison under persecution if and only if they are causing public problems. And also perhaps for cooking and washing dishes?

These women were an open threat to the Jewish religion. Let us perform a reality check: those who are leaders in a movement are targeted for persecution, not the cooks and dishwashers. This means that Paul equated women with leaders. The claim that Paul persecuted women "even to the point of death" whose service was limited to silence and menial tasks is nothing short of ludicrous. Christians are persecuted for what they say, not for what they do not say! The fact that women are persecuted publicly strongly suggests that they did speak publicly.

I. No gender in Christ

What does gender have to do with it anyway?

Galatians 3:25-29 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Assemblies are by their very nature made up of those who are baptized into Christ. They are gathered because they are baptized into Christ, and not according to any other commonality. In this framework then, being male or female has no bearing on the assembly. The operation of spiritual gifts, including the speaking gifts, are by their nature associated with being baptized into Christ. Therefore, they cannot possibly be affected by gender among those baptized into Christ, for there is no gender among those baptized into Christ.

Romans 8:13 (for if you live according to the flesh, you will die), but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.

This verse is concerning a different topic. However, the concepts are applicable. Making governing rules according to the flesh (and the separation between men and women certainly falls into this category) ends in death. However, allowing the Holy Spirit to move through women as spiritual beings, brings life.
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2. Women priests

The silence doctrine claims that women are not allowed to serve in public ministry. Let us compare that claim against the Word.

Exodus 38:8 He made the large basin of bronze and its pedestal of bronze from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

Women served at the entrance. The entrance is where everyone who enters must pass; everyone saw them. The "gate" is a position of authority. Those standing guard at the gate determine who is allowed in. Those who serve at the tent of meeting were priests, having religious authority. The women shared authority with the men.

In a sorry state of affairs, we have a confirmation that the women stood guard at the gate.

1 Samuel 2:22 Now Eli was very old when he heard about everything that his sons used to do to all the people of Israel and how they used to have sex with the women who were stationed at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

We can know that the silence doctrine is wrong. Women do, in fact, minister in the public eye.

3. Euodia and Syntyche the evangelists

Philippians 4:2-3 I appeal to Euodia and to Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I say also to you, true companion, help them. They have struggled together in the gospel ministry along with me and Clement and my other coworkers, whose names are in the book of life.

Specifically Paul writes that these two women struggled together in the gospel ministry along with him and Clement (male) and his other coworkers. [sunathleo] is defined as "to wrestle in company with". The women were doing the same work as Clement the male coworker [synergoi]. Notice they were alongside, not behind, Paul. We have to be ready to unload the fables that women were in the back room cooking potatoes.

4. Junia the apostle

There is no scripture that says a woman cannot be an apostle. The silencing teaching will fight against admitting that a woman could be an apostle. Women have no authority, they are too fragile, they cannot handle it. They should also be limited to cooking and washing dishes. This is their "service" for the Lord. Let us read.

Romans 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

Note that the Greek sometimes renders the same text as:

Romans 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to/by the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.
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The word rendered as "among" is [en], "by" is [para] or [pros] in the Greek. [episemos] is "remarkable", "eminent". "Among the", the phrase in the text is [en tois], and occurs in other locations in scripture.

Everywhere [en tois] is rendered as "among the/those", except where it would indicate a woman apostle by certain translators (about half). Could this be a bias against women authority in the church?

Acts 15:12 The whole group kept quiet [sigao] and listened to Barnabas and Paul while they explained all the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the [en tois] Gentiles through them.

1 Corinthians 2:6 Now we do speak wisdom among the [en tois] mature, but not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are perishing.

1 Corinthians 5:1 It is actually reported that sexual immorality exists among you, the kind of immorality that is not permitted even among the [en tois] Gentiles, so that someone is cohabiting with his father's wife.

Galatians 2:2 I went there because of a revelation and presented to them the gospel that I preach among the [en tois] Gentiles.

I am using a lot of paper space quoting all these verse not to waste trees, but to make a point. [en tois] means "among the/those"; as long as women are not involved!

One thing is certain, she had a good reputation. Junia made such a ruckus so as to be thrown in prison. Is it plausible that women only did "behind the scenes" work for which they were tossed into prison? So much for the theory that women cannot handle the pressure.

Notes:

There are some who claim Junia is actually a man. The problem with this claim is that there are 0 instances of using that name as a man in Greek texts of that time period, and 250 are found used for a woman in Rome alone (Bernadette Brooten, "Junia" Women in Scripture (2000)).

Others claim that [en] means "by". The text is then rendered as "well respected by the apostles".

But ...

Galatians 2:6-9 But from those who were influential (whatever they were makes no difference to me; God shows no favoritism between people)—those influential leaders added nothing to my message. On the contrary, when they saw that I was entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised just as Peter was to the circumcised (for he who empowered Peter for his apostleship to the circumcised also empowered me for my apostleship to the Gentiles) and when James, Cephas, and John, who had a reputation as pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we would go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

This text by Paul would seem to directly contradict "well respected by the apostles". Influential leaders mean nothing to Paul. It would seem strange that Paul would appeal to exactly that. And again, "by" is
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given by [para] or [pros] in Greek. If Paul meant "by", he would have used [para] or [pros]. So this rendering is unnatural, and should be rejected.

5. conclusion

We know from the record that women held official leadership titles. We know that women did the work of those having official titles. We know that women were leaders in the early church.

M. Closing Comments

Is it true that women cannot have a voice in the assembly? Do we have any shred of evidence suggesting that anyone at anytime practiced the silencing of women for any "official assembly" in the Bible, or the forbidding a leadership role? After searching through scriptures for every act of woman recorded, not only can we not find a single scripture showing the practice of it, we find a plethora of evidence to the contrary. The spirit in which the women acted in the historical record stands in stark contrast to the teaching that women remain silent.

If the silencing teaching were anywhere near as important as some claim, why can we find no record, anywhere, of its application? Because the practice does not exist in scripture. After reviewing the historical record, faith in the silencing teaching should be brought into question in the minds of all readers.

We made the assertion in the beginning that the picture painted by the historical record of the godly woman does not allow us to properly place her in the silence box. We ask the reader to contemplate the following after reading the historical "Acts of the Women": is it reasonable that the godly woman sits mute in the congregation? with a napkin on her head? (no offense intended).

We have three last scriptures to cover before we discuss 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, upon which the silencing doctrine rests. We hope the reader is ready for a critical look at these above mentioned texts in light of the historical record.

Looking at the Bible as our guide, we wonder if this tradition of silencing has merit.

Numbers 27:1-2 Then the daughters of Zelophehad son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh of the families of Manasseh, the son Joseph came forward. Now these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. And they stood before Moses and Eleazar the priest and the leaders of the whole assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting and said,

Numbers 27:3-5 “Our father died in the wilderness, although he was not part of the company of those that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but he died for his own sin, and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be lost from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among the relatives of our father.”

The daughters lay their claim to land, speaking in the assembly. Present were Moses, Eleazar and the leaders (among which were presumably men of standing). According to the law of God, the women
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should not receive any land. The women say they are being slighted by this law of God. They say the judgement of the men based upon the law of God is wrong. They are voicing their correction of the poor judgment of the men, and indeed in the open assembly! Some might be hoping that Moses would tell them to hold their peace in the assembly, for they are women and as such are not allowed to exercise authority over men. Let us see:

Numbers 27:5-7 So Moses brought their case before the LORD. The LORD said to Moses: “The daughters of Zelophehad have a valid claim. You must indeed give them possession of an inheritance among their father’s relatives, and you must transfer the inheritance of their father to them.

Quite the contrary: Moses takes their claim to the Lord, who in turn agrees. It should be clear that women are allowed to speak in the assembly of leaders, and they are allowed to contradict conventional wisdom, even when rooted in law/scripture. In this case, they are in the right.

Next we realize that silencing women is the equivalent of wasting spiritual talents. When we understand this, we are led to the following verse.

Matthew 25:25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’

Matthew 25:29 For the one who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

In the above story, the one who owned and buried the talent was punished. Pushing women to bury their talents is not God's order.

All these scriptures show unequivocally God's version of women's role.

- women speak openly in the assembly
- women exercise authority over men
- women teach men
- women lead men
- women prophesy to men

It is without contention that if God gives a word to a woman, he expects it to be spoken out, and indeed in the assembly if that is the target audience. God also expects the listeners (including males) to treat his word with respect. In not a single instance in the Bible is there the slightest hint that God, or that other persons of repute, disapproved of women doing these things on the sole account of being a woman.

Ephesians 4:11-12 It was he who gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ,

According to the inspired scriptures, there are examples of women as apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, elders, deacons and civil authorities. So this leaves us with only the "pastor" remaining. Is it really
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a stretch that women could also function as pastors as well? Pastors, by the nature of their work in connecting with others, must have a high emotional intelligence. This plays into a woman's strength.

Somehow or another these women exercise authority, authority in the spirit. After perusing the evidence of the historical record, we should simply accept God's order on women's leadership place in the Kingdom of God.

Common sense dictates in the plethora of plainly spoken, straight forward evidence that women do speak in the assembly. 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 should be investigated keeping in mind the mass of evidence found in the historical record.

Acts 13:50 But the Jews incited the **God-fearing women of high social standing** and the prominent men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and threw them out of their region.

Women here are noted as having sway over the public. Were they silent in the assemblies or in public? Of course not. The silent do not hold sway over anyone. The goal/result of silencing is to make sure the silenced have no influence!

Of importance to note what is not written: Luke does not indicate that there was a problem because the women had sway in the city. We only know that the women had sway. Compare: the apostles were run out of a lot of towns on account of men. Do we argue that the city did not receive the word because the men were out of God's order by speaking in the assembly?

Acts 17:4 Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large group of God-fearing Greeks and **quite a few prominent women**.

Acts 17:12 Therefore many of them believed, along with **quite a few prominent Greek women** and men.

It is difficult to be "prominent" and silent. "Prominent" implies, "seen", "important", "influence", "respected", and of course "heard". How does one be prominent by being mute?

With that, did the apostles then teach the prominent to "be silent"? I doubt it. Any prominent person with a healthy sense of self-respect would walk right back out the door! We need more prominent women in the church! We also need men who are willing to perceive the grace in operation, and ensuring that place is given for the expression of that operation.

The author, the apostle Luke, had no issue with listing the women first in verse 12. Luke, the apostle, had no issue with prominent, god-fearing women with high social standing.

After listing so great a host of women witnesses, let us weigh the contentious verses in light of the historical record.
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IV. 1 Corinthians 14 in Detail

After examining the historical record, we review the first contentious verse. But first we point this out:

2 Timothy 4:13 When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.

Do we all contact our favorite travel agent, make plans to travel to Troas, attempt to track down Carpus, and ask for the "books, especially the parchments"? I hope not. We understand that this text is not written for us to blindly follow, but rather must be understood in the context of to whom it was written.

We have to approach 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 with the same amount of common sense: to whom is the writer speaking? into what situation is the author speaking? what started the discussion? what are the specific issues addressed? how would the receiver of the message understand the message? what does this have to do with me?

Some may approach 2 Timothy 4, 1 Corinthians 14 or 1 Timothy 2 with the strict mechanical interpretation method, broached as "it says what it means and it means what it says", "it is true regardless of any historical context or culture" or "we obey it whether we having any understanding about it". Where this is the case, we might find people getting on planes for Troas, silencing women, and not allowing women to teach men. But, before we book that ticket for Troas ... can we think about it a little?

Those who ask the deeper questions posed above, do not get on planes for Troas, they don't silence women, and they don't forbid anointed, godly women to teach men.

Let us begin looking at these verses and asking the deeper questions.

1 Corinthians 14:33-35 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. "As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church."

Paul has now contradicted not only himself, but also the myriad of historical records found in scripture. Moreover, there are a few statements that come across as very strange. These attract our attention and encourage us to dig deeper.

The Greek word for silence [sigao] means absolute and complete vocal silence. This is in contrast to the silence [hesuchia] found in 1 Timothy 2. [hesuchia] indicates not making a disturbance, while allowing for vocal sounds. Is it truly reasonable that Paul is advocating that women in the assembly make absolutely no vocal sound at all? If so, what advantage does the assembly have from this? No speaking, no singing, and perhaps no rumpling of clothes, or no shuffling of feet. Is this a sign of spirituality, or of bondage? The women might as well not be there. If they have no input, they have no impact on the edification of the church. This alone is enough to raise a red flag.
There can be no question: Paul is not advocating complete silence, if only in light of the historical record for women. It is quite extreme to maintain that women are not allowed to make even a slight noise in the assembly.

Second, what are women to do who are not married? Are they to remain ignorant? Likewise, what about women married to husbands hostile to the gospel? What kind of answer will they get from him?

Third, [aischros] means shameful, i.e. base (specially, venal), filthy. This seems rather extreme. Does Paul find a woman's voice disgusting for some reason? Does this sound like Paul?

Fourthly and lastly, there is no quote given to indicate what the law is. This is very odd on two counts. One, there is nothing in the law of God that even remotely forbids women to speak in the assembly. Two, this writing style is not in agreement with the precedent set in 1 Corinthians. See the list below.

1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will thwart the cleverness of the intelligent.”
1 Corinthians 1:31 so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”
1 Corinthians 2:9 But just as it is written, “Things that no eye has seen, or ear heard, or mind imagined, are the things God has prepared for those who love him.”
1 Corinthians 3:19 For the wisdom of this age is foolishness with God. As it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness.”
1 Corinthians 10:7 So do not be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.”
1 Corinthians 15:45 So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living person”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

In six out of six times, Paul starts with the reference statement "also it is written" and then follows with the scripture. In 1 Corinthians 14:34, not only is the reference statement different as in "as the Law also says", the scripture is also missing. It cannot be stated more emphatically: there is no law that states that women must be silent, much less that women must be silent in a religious assembly. Maybe this is why Paul did not quote anything. There is nothing to quote (at least from scripture)! So what is Paul getting at?

From these points we know we have to pay closer attention to the language in order to decipher what Paul is intending to say when he penned these words.

A. Optional Explanations for the Internal Contradiction

There are many alternatives to handling this apparent contradiction. We show here the 4 more widespread options. We handle them here, including their problems when present.
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1. **Paul is self-contradictory**

Paul is simply self-contradictory. This explanation does not seem likely. Paul is not a scripture ignoramus that he would make such a simple mistake. We reject this explanation, for it does not fit what we know to be true about Paul.

2. **Paul is qualifying the use of the speaking gifts**

This view finds the widest acceptance among silencing groups. Essentially, it states that Paul is qualifying the speaking gifts for women. However ...

Paul gives no direct explanation as to why women are supposedly not suitable for speaking gifts, but are suitable for other gifts. A thorough answer to "and now concerning spiritual gifts, I do not want you to be ignorant", would surely demand such a discussion. Note that there exist theories using indirect explanations, but it is very difficult to prove that these connections are in fact valid. In any case, the nature of the topic demands a direct explanation, not leaving us to our own guesses, especially when the historical record proves the opposite. Historical precedent trumps guessed explanations.

Some claim that Paul is referring to Genesis 3:16 as "the law". Besides this being pure conjecture, there is nothing in this Genesis 3 that has anything to do with woman silencing, and there is nothing here that has the faintest hint of having anything to do with meetings in the name of Christ. The fact that this is the best the silence doctrine can propose makes the argument weak.

Remember in the beginning of the section where Paul refers to scripture using the phrase "as it is written" and follows with the scripture? He does not use this structure here because there is no scripture to quote!

Paul gives no explanation regarding what constitutes an assembly. The critique above concerning ambiguity applies. Also, Paul desires order. Order cannot be kept until this issue is settled. If we were to group all those adhering to a silencing teaching in a room and ask them to come to consensus based upon the Bible, they could not. The more liberal would label the fundamentalists as "extreme", and the fundamentalists would label the liberal as "chaotic".

If Paul is qualifying the speaking gifts, Paul should have left hints along the way, grammatical or straightforward-wise. This would have been easy to do, and necessary to avoid confusion, in keeping with his own admission, "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace".

Paul should have used Greek male-only pronouns in conjunction with the speaking gifts. But he did not; he used all-inclusive terms/pronouns. Paul should have said, "There are two categories of gifts, some are for all, and some are for men only." An instruction like this would certainly serve to keep the order if in fact some gifts are reserved for men only.

In the end, the qualification argument is not really an option, since the explanation fits neither the historical record, nor his discussion in chapters 11 - 14. This explanation, upon analysis, must be filed as a subcategory of the self-contradiction.
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His teaching on women engaging in prophecy, a speaking gift utilized in the assembly, is then contradicted directly. There is no way to reconcile this. Similarly, Paul is in conflict with a vast array of examples in the Bible clearly showing that women operate in the speaking gifts in the assembly. There is no way to reconcile this.

We reject this explanation, for it does not fit what we know to be true via the mass of evidence about women's role in the Bible.

3. **Paul is qualifying the weighing of prophecy, but not speaking gifts in general**

This view argues that women are inherently not good at judging between false and true prophecies. This explanation is an improvement for (1) it accepts the fact that Paul has clearly written that men and women have speaking gifts in the assembly, and (2) it is in alignment with the historical record. Nevertheless, this explanation too has shortcomings.

Anyone who prophesies must in some capacity be able to weigh and judge whether his/her own prophecy is from the Lord. Otherwise he/she simply spouts out whatever enters his/her head. The gift of prophecy assumes, and must come with, the ability to weigh it. This the exact opposite of the spirit of 1 Corinthians 14 in terms of testing the prophecy and keeping the order. The entire chapter speaks of order and peace in practical terms.

If we acknowledge that all prophets must in some capacity weigh their own prophecies before they are uttered, and we must demand that they do in the interest of truth and order, is it then too much to ask that they use this same capacity to judge other prophecies?

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

Logic dictates we must reject this explanation, for it does not fit what we know about the prophetic gift and the necessity of the prophet to be able to weigh it.

4. **Paul is quoting the letter he received from Chloe, and then negates it**

By negating the "law of silence" quote, Paul indicates that he has answered the "women silencing" question in the previous discussions on spiritual gifts. Chloe tabled a theory for consideration as how women should behave in the assembly, that is "must women be silent in the congregation? Some say women can speak, some say women must remain silent. Dear Paul, what do you say about it?"

Paul, while discussing spiritual gifts, starting in 1 Corinthians 11, just proved the theory as wrong, disastrous, and has shown why. His train of thought is summarized as such:

1. women prophecy, and thus speak in the church
2. all believers, including women, receive gifts for the church, among others, speaking gifts
3. if the gifts are not exercised, because the hand says to the foot, "I have no need of you", the body is paralyzed and is ineffective; so do not discourage the working of the gifts, especially the speaking gifts
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Looking at this "negation" explanation in detail, we note:

This explanation must be allowed as possible, for Paul quotes Chloe in other parts of the letter to the Corinthians. Paul set this precedent in preceding chapters of his letter to her.

Remember, Paul references "the law". However, there is no direct mosaic law that commands women to remain silent in the assembly. None, zero, zilch. Paul knows there are no direct laws forbidding a woman to speak in the assembly.

Titus 1:14 and not pay attention to Jewish myths and commands of people who reject the truth.

At the same time, the followers of the Talmud hold to the "silencing of women" opinion. There were some Jews who held to this law. There were no doubt people that came from that pursasion in the group. Paul head-buttled with these continually: circumcision, sabbath, legalism, head coverings, and now women silencing. According to this law, women are forbidden to speak in the synagogue, and it designates the speech of a woman to be shameful. According to the Talmud, women are inferior beings, let them be submissive. Women are the property of their husbands.

Consider the first word in 1 Corinthians 14:36 rendered as "or" or "what?" in English translations: in Greek, this word can have multiple functions: (a) a negative disclaimer/disjunctive particle (highlighted marker between mutually exclusive ideas), (b) a comparative particle (than), (c) a delineator list particle (or, either, etc.), (d) a reinforcer/repetitive particle. For the negative disclaimer/disjunctive particle, one would say in English, "What? Are you nuts?" With this word he openly discredits the previous text. This shows Paul is not in agreement with it.

STRONGS NT 2228 (ἤ [pronounced 'ay', 'é'], a disjunctive conjunction): to distinguish things or thoughts which either mutually exclude each other (the negative disclaimer), or one of which can take the place of the other (the reinforcer). Can we find another clear cut example of this negative disclaimer in operation? Yes, in 1 Corinthians 11.

1 Corinthians 11:21-22 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or [ἤ] do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

It is uncontroversial: in 1 Corinthians 11:22 Paul is calling attention to (highlighting), and negating, the previous customs. This is the negative disclaimer/disjunctive particle in action. Paul uses the exact same sentence structure (rhetorical questions) and [ἤ] particle in 1 Corinthians 14:36. There, Paul calls attention to (highlights), and negates the custom of, the text just previous to it, namely the "law of silence".

Paul's literary structure is the same for both verses: [statement to be discredited] [ἤ] [a series of rhetorical questions]. If one accepts this construction in 1 Corinthians 11:22, then it must be accepted in 1 Corinthians 14:36.
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Before we call this an open and shut case, we show examples of the various uses for [ṇ] to confirm we have correctly identified which type of particle we are dealing with:

Matthew 18:8 If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or [ṇ] lame, [reinforcer/repetition, not contradiction]
Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters. For (either) [ṇ] you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. [delineator list, with contrast]
Matthew 18:20 For where two or [ṇ] three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. [delineator list, not contradiction]
Matthew 19:24 And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than [ṇ] for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. [comparison, with contrast]

The context of 1 Corinthians 11:22 and 1 Corinthians 14:36 dictates that the particle [ṇ] is of the negation type, not the others. Here is the scripture with editor notes in light of the negative particle:

1 Corinthians 11:1 - 14:33 Paul encourages males and females to engage in speaking gifts in the assembly, and specifically points out that women prophesy, which is a public speaking gift for the church.
1 Corinthians 14:34-35 The women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.
1 Corinthians 14:36-38 What!? [ṇ] [Paul disclaims the preceding statement concerning the silencing of women] Was it from you that the word of God came? What!? [ṇ] [a second time for emphasis, Paul disclaims the preceding statement concerning the silencing of women] are you the only ones it has reached? {The "word of God" has to do with either prophecy or the command of God. Here, Paul questions the silencing of women presented as a law in the letter to Paul, and then he thoroughly rejects the "law" in this rhetorical sentence structure, just as in 1 Corinthians 11:22.] If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing {that all have some spiritual gift to operate, including utterance gifts, and this includes the women. Forbidding the women’s role in using speaking gifts is the hand saying to the foot, "I have no need of you."} to you are a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.
1 Corinthians 14:39-40 So, my brothers {male and female in Greek per convention in this epistle}, earnestly desire to prophesy {spoken in the assembly, and performed by women, per Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14}, and do not forbid {contradicts the "law" to forbid speaking} speaking in tongues. But all things should be done decently and in order {Men and women, not just men. There is no order if half the assembly is paralyzed. Does a paralyzed person move orderly, or disorderly?}. 

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B. **Earnestly**

1 Corinthians 12:27-28 Now you (male and female) are Christ’s body, and each of you (male and female) is a member of it. And God has placed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, gifts of healing, helps, gifts of leadership, different kinds of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:29-31 Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all perform miracles, do they? Not all have gifts of healing, do they? Not all speak in tongues, do they? Not all interpret, do they? But you (male and female) should be eager for the greater gifts. And now I will show you (male and female) a way that is beyond comparison.

Again, Paul incorporates all believers, male and female, to be eager for the greater gifts, and lists them above. Women are used in all these functions.

1 Corinthians 14:1 (speaking to males and females) Pursue love and be eager for the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

It is clear that the spiritual gifts require speaking in the assembly. Are women to pursue love, but not be eager for spiritual gifts? Or should women pursue neither?

C. **The implausible option**

Alleging that verses 36-38 are Paul’s commands for women to remain silent conflicts with

1. his knowledge that there are no laws forbidding women to speak,
2. his knowledge of the women recorded in the historical books found in the Old Testament, and of their activities in the early Church,
3. his negative disclaimer [ἤ],
4. his specific use of gender neutral pronouns in reference to those who operate in spiritual gifts, including the utterance gifts,
5. his lack of clear explanation as to what constitutes an assembly in the preservation of order and peace
6. his lack of clear explanation as to why women defile, or are otherwise fit for some gifts, but not other gifts.

For these reasons, we should reject the idea that Paul’s intention is to have women remain utterly silent in the meetings.

D. **The most plausible option**

Paul, in 1 Corinthians, answers these questions posed by Chloe: physical intimacy; food sacrificed to idols; spiritual gifts and their operation/order in the Church; women speaking in Church. Paul answers the first two questions individually. Paul answers the last two questions at the same time. In his handling of the third question, he claims that women speak in the church under the spirit of prophecy, and
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other utterance gifts (which are very similar to prophecy, and could be categorized as subsets of prophecy). Paul then answers the fourth question, the law of silence, by reminding the reader that he just answered this question in his answer to the previous question on account of the fact that women operate in speaking gifts in the assembly. Built into his rhetorical technique is, "How can it be that women speak in the church via spiritual gifts, but are not allowed to speak? Are you guys nuts?"

In Chapters 11-14, Paul firmly establishes that women are allowed to speak, and encourages them to do so in the assembly. The evidence suggests that Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is quoting a portion of the letter that he received from Chloe, who is in turn quoting the Talmud (a man-made Jewish law) that has a very low opinion of women, very much like the Koran. Both the Talmud and the Koran are used as an excuse to abuse women, and shut them up. There is an oppressive spirit behind this teaching that targets women to keep them silent. This could be revenge for the enmity created between the woman and the snake. No wonder Paul then forcefully negates the quote in 1 Corinthians 14:36-38. He then confirms that prophecy, a speaking gift for the edification of the church, is for females by using a gender neutral "brothers" in 1 Corinthians 14:39.

The proper order for the utilization and expression of the gifts of the spirit is that women take part in them. Without this order, there is then "quiet disorder", for half of God's people are wrongfully silenced. By silencing women, the fullness of Christ cannot be reached.

Ephesians 4:12-13 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

The church will never reach its full glory until all serve in the church with the gifts given to them. This includes women using utterance gifts. The hand shall not say of the foot, "I have no need of you!"
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V. 1 Timothy 2 in Detail

It is difficult to handle 1 Corinthians 14 without touching on 1 Timothy 2:11-15. This section of text is typically used as a confirmation and explanation as to the why for the "law of silence".

We presume that Paul does not contradict his own text in 1 Corinthians 11:14 with the 1 Timothy 2. We also assume he does not desire to contradict the myriad of examples of women speaking authoritatively to men, including teaching them.

There are three different ways to approach the text, each providing two explanations from the pure grammatical standpoint. In the back of our minds, we should be asking ourselves, "Why did Paul pen these words?".

For the first approach: What is the extent of the application of this text? For how many situations is the text valid? The two explanations are (1) Paul is providing an "all-encompassing", always true in every situation, instruction on women teaching in the Church, and (2) Paul is providing guidance that was specific to this group's specific issues, guidance that would be different under different circumstances.

A second way to approach this mystery is to ask the question, where is the emphasis of the text? Is the text to be understood as, (1) Paul does not want a woman to teach a man, because that is de facto dominating the man or (2) Paul does not want a woman to teach in a dominating, bossy way, but would allow a woman with a humble spirit to teach a man?

A third approach is to look at this is the text as follows: (1) all women have a permanent, irreparable defect such that they can only engage men with the goal of dominating them, or (2) these women in 1 Timothy 2 had an issue with dominating men, and Paul called them to the carpet; otherwise, Paul never would have written anything about women teaching men.

All approaches are engaging at the same issue from different viewpoints.

2 Timothy 4:13 When you come, bring with you the cloak I left in Troas with Carpas and the scrolls, especially the parchments.

It is quite obvious that this verse is situational in nature. The key question in our discussion of 1 Timothy 2 is whether the text is all-inclusive, or is it situational?

Straight from the grammar and text, one cannot argue one option over another. One has to consider the context and other scriptures pertaining to women (such as, the historical account) to determine which option better fits. The silencing doctrine takes the first option in the above three methods of approaching the text: God's word transcends all cultures and situations.

Does 2 Timothy 4:13 transcend all cultures and situations? Should every Christian jump on a plane to pick up the scroll Paul left in Troas? I have never heard any reason to justify why 1 Timothy 2 is to be understood as all-encompassing, culture transcending.

With that, before we get into the apparent silencing command, we look at the scriptures in context for clues as to whether the first approach is relevant and valid. In the interest of consistency, we must ap-
approach all the verses in the context in the same way. Either all must be regarded in light of (1), or of (2), but not (1) for some and (2) for others.

1 Corinthians 8 speaks about food, idols and weak and strong faith. It is in-controversial that Paul allows the eating of sacrificed food for some, but not for others. To one group he gives this command, to the other group he gives the opposite command. Allowing those who's faith is weak to eat the sacrificed meat would be wrong, just as disallowing those who's faith is strong not to eat would be wrong. Just because Paul writes to someone is not in itself proof that that suggestion is valid for every situation.

What if the same situation applied in 1 Timothy 2? Is it possible to prove that approach (2) is incorrect? Or is it possible to provide evidence that approach (2) is indeed preferable to approach (1)? Let us begin.

A. Absolute, or situational commands

1 Timothy 5:9 No widow should be put on the list unless she is at least sixty years old, was the wife of one husband,

Why pick the age 60? Was this in light of the life expectancy for women in that time period? Are the sexual urges impacted by that? Are these desires not also impacted by an individual's health? There are some women today at age 50 who can barely walk. Are they thinking about seducing a man? Would Paul use a different age today? Might he even suggest some non-age standard today? Thus, we know Paul is giving guidance according to the situation of the day.

1 Timothy 6:1-2 Those who are under the yoke as slaves must regard their own masters as deserving of full respect. This will prevent the name of God and Christian teaching from being discredited. But those who have believing masters must not show them less respect because they are brothers. Instead they are to serve all the more, because those who benefit from their service are believers and dearly loved. Teach them and exhort them about these things.

Is Paul advocating slavery? Yes or no? The cultural norm in that age demanded slavery. Advocating freedom for slaves would have been a respectable endeavor, but would have hindered the advancement of the cross. Paul took the lesser of two evils, and made the best out of the situation.

Most living at the time of this writing do not tolerate explicit slavery. So what does this verse have to say to us? Not a lot.

We have shown that Paul issues commands based upon situation, commands that would change if the situation would warrant. Might the silencing command be the same? Note that we have shown two examples in 1 Timothy, the same epistle containing the woman silencing verse in question. We must allow this "situational impact" explanation as an option based upon these observations.

We now investigate the text around the contentious verses to look for clues as to whether Paul is making a blanket statement, or is referring to a specific situation. The context starts in chapter 2 verse 8 and ends in chapter 2 verse 15.
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B. Hands held high

Timothy 2:8 So I want the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without anger or dispute.

Question: is Paul advancing an all-encompassing teaching that all men in every place at all times when they pray do so with hands lifted up? And if the hands are down, these men are out of God's order? Remember, Paul explicitly writes, "in every place".

Going back to what we said earlier, some may interpret this mechanically, as in "It says what it means and it means what it says", "it is true regardless of any historical context or culture" or "we obey it whether we having any understanding at all about it or not". Before we get on the plane for Troas looking for books and parchments, and before we tell every man that they are allowed to pray if and only if they have their hands up, and the Church will never reach its potential if we allow disorder in the congregation ...

In the interest of consistency, if Paul is not advancing an all-encompassing teaching as to the proper place of men for order in the assembly in terms of the raised hands during prayer, then it stands to reason that Paul is likewise not advancing an all-encompassing teaching as to the proper order of women in the assembly.

If women must be silent in the assembly, then the men have to pray with their hands in the air, otherwise, the men are out of God's order. I have yet to see or hear of a group practicing the silencing of women that is consistent by making the men pray with hands held up high. Why the inconsistency?

Regardless of the plain straight forward interpretation of Paul's writing, we can neither disregard the heart of God, nor common sense. Paul is simply speaking a word to the men's particular situation, a word that is not to be applied to any and every consideration. Surely a man can pray "in God's order" while having his hands down, folded or in some other position. Surely, the "heart" of the man is the important aspect of prayer, not the position of the hands.

C. Salvation through childbirth, part 1

1 Timothy 2:15 But she will be delivered/saved through childbearing, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

Is Paul really advancing an all-encompassing new teaching as to how women are saved? Those women who are childless have no chance of salvation? Is this God's order? If we take the text literally, this is the conclusion.

If "it means what it says and says what it means", or "this is true regardless of time, place or culture", then Paul has just introduced another gospel.

If women are to remain silent, according to the consistency principle, then they cannot be saved outside of having children. Is this Paul's opinion on the subject?
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However, I believe it well understood that Paul is decidedly not advancing a new all-encompassing teaching on salvation for women. He is simply speaking a word to these particular woman who had an issue with childbirth (to be handled in part 2), a word that is not to be blindly applied to any and every condition, that is, for other women who do not have this problem.

D. Ornaments

1 Timothy 2:9-10 Likewise the women are to dress in suitable apparel, with modesty and self-control. Their adornment must not be with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothing, but with good deeds, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God.

On the face of it, it seems Paul is making an absolute law against the wearing of adornments. But...

Ezekiel 16:1-8 The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her abominable practices and say, ‘This is what the sovereign LORD says to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. As for your birth, on the day you were born your umbilical cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water; you were certainly not rubbed down with salt, nor wrapped with blankets. No eye took pity on you to do even one of these things for you to spare you; you were thrown out into the open field because you were detested on the day you were born. “I passed by you and saw you kicking around helplessly in your blood. I said to you as you lay there in your blood, “Live!” I said to you as you lay there in your blood, “Live!” I made you plentiful like sprouts in a field; you grew tall and came of age so that you could wear jewelry. Your breasts had formed and your hair had grown, but you were still naked and bare. “Then I passed by you and watched you, noticing that you had reached the age for love. I spread my cloak over you and covered your nakedness. I swore a solemn oath to you and entered into a marriage covenant with you, declares the sovereign LORD, and you became mine.

Ezekiel 16:9-14 “Then I bathed you in water, washed the blood off you, and anointed you with fragrant oil. I dressed you in embroidered clothing and put fine leather sandals on your feet. I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk. I adorned you with jewelry. I put bracelets on your hands and a necklace around your neck. I put a ring in your nose, earrings on your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. You were adorned with gold and silver, while your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidery. You ate the finest flour, honey, and olive oil. You became extremely beautiful and attained the position of royalty. Your fame spread among the nations because of your beauty; your beauty was perfect because of the splendor (jewelry) which I bestowed on you, declares the sovereign LORD.

It must be clear from this text that it is God’s desire for women to wear jewelry. It perfects their beauty. The text continues to say that Israel trusted in her beauty, and this caused her to fall. However, it is God's will that his bride be adorned, and at the same time remain humble, knowing that God made her
beautiful. God uses physical beauty to explain spiritual beauty. If one argues against the physical beauty, he at the same time argues against spiritual beauty. The key is to understand that the woman should not trust in ornaments, but in God. And this spirit comes through in the 1 Timothy 2:9-10.

Exodus 12:35-36 Now the Israelites had done as Moses told them—they had requested from the Egyptians silver and gold items and clothing. The LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and they gave them whatever they wanted, and so they plundered Egypt.

I can assure the reader that there were adornments of gold specifically for women in that plundering, a plundering that God favored.

Genesis 24:22 After the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels and gave them to her.

Genesis 24:52-53 When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed down to the ground before the LORD. Then he brought out gold, silver jewelry, and clothing and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave valuable gifts to her brother and to her mother.

Abraham, the father of faith, provided jewelry for his son’s bride. It is clear to the most casual reader that the jewelry is ‘good’, not evil. It was worn, not hidden in a wooden box. Abraham did not believe that women were not allowed to wear jewelry or nice clothing. Neither should we.

Esther 2:17 And the king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she met with his loving approval more than all the other young women. So he placed the royal high turban on her head and appointed her queen in place of Vashti.

Esther, certainly a godly woman, wore head ornaments. It would be hard to fathom that she did not where jewelry. Lastly:

Isaiah 3:16 The LORD says, “The women of Zion are proud. They walk with their heads high and flirt with their eyes. They skip along and the jewelry on their ankles jingles. So the sovereign master will afflict the foreheads of Zion’s women with skin diseases, the LORD will make the front of their heads bald.”

Isaiah 3:18-23 At that time the sovereign master will remove their beautiful ankle jewelry, neck ornaments, crescent shaped ornaments, earrings, bracelets, veils, headdresses, ankle ornaments, sashes, sachets, amulets, rings, nose rings, festive dresses, robes, shawls, purses, garments, vests, head coverings, and gowns.

Isaiah 3:24 A putrid stench will replace the smell of spices, a rope will replace a belt, baldness will replace braided locks of hair, a sackcloth garment will replace a fine robe, and a prisoner’s brand will replace beauty.

The problem is not jewelry, but rather pride in self and beauty.
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Now, with that history behind us, if the women are to remain silent, then consistency demands that they should wear no jewelry whatsoever, not even a wedding ring. Is this really what Paul is after?

However, in light of the historical record, God is not against a women making herself beautiful with gold and silver as long as God remains first in their lives. Paul is well aware of these facts. It is hard to imagine that Paul is making a rule that a woman shall never ever wear any type of ornament at all. Even though the absolute literal interpretation demands this, context and the historical record rejects it.

Common sense dictates that these women spoken of in 1 Timothy 2 were out-of-control just like the analogy found in Ezekiel 16. Paul is only reiterating what we know from Ezekiel 16. Paul is certainly not arguing that a woman should wear no jewelry.

E. Summary

The context comes as a whole. Either the entire context must be interpreted as literal, or as situational; either as all-encompassing, or speaking into the lives of real people having specific issues, nudging them toward where they should be.

In conclusion, we know that the spirit of Paul's writing in this passage is not to advance all-inclusive new teachings about the positions of men's hands during prayer, to deny women a natural, god-given affection to wearing jewelry, or to assert that only women with children can be saved. It is rather a teaching that is specifically directed to these particular men and women.

The reasonable reader will understand that men can pray with their hands down, women can wear ornaments provided it does not get out of hand, and women are not literally "saved" in childbirth. The reader will also understand the other verses pertaining to women in the same spirit.

I do not see any group where men are forced to pray with their hands up in keeping with God's order. Why not? Are literal translations only valid when applied to women, but not when applied to men? Even though the verses are juxtaposed? Consistency in interpretation demands that we treat all verses the same. If three statements are understood in light of common sense and the rest of the Bible - that is, the statements are directed to a particular group in a particular setting - the fourth must be interpreted as such too! If the women are silent and the men pray with their hands down, we have inconsistency in our midst.

Back to the verse under consideration: is Paul really saying that a woman can never, ever teach a man, or never, ever exercise property spiritual authority with grace over a man? Such a view seems extreme. Let us examine the context more closely in the following sections. The literal translation is in complete contradiction to the historical record as described in section "Women in the historical record".

F. Teaching and authority

This is the pivot point of this document. The superficial question is, is this text an all-encompassing teaching on women, or is the teaching concerning a specific situation. The more fundamental question
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is however, is it possible for a woman to move in the spirit without dominating a man. Read that again. This is the pivot point for the entire silencing discussion.

Either the woman has a built-in, irreparable defect, such that whenever she engages man, she desires to bully him.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 A woman must learn quietly with all submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. She must remain quiet.

Let's begin with a few comments on the text, keeping in mind the previous section. An introductory comment is that Paul is addressing learning and teaching in the church. This makes sense, as these activities are complementary. For every teacher there is a learner. Odd is that this advice can equally apply to men.

If approaching the issue from the "all-encompassing teaching viewpoint", at first glance, it does not make sense that Paul does not address men. If these verses are "all-encompassing", then Paul is, by exclusion, indicating that men can learn while disturbing the audience, and they can dominate over others while teaching. If these verses were meant to be "all-encompassing", it would be much more natural to write that "All must learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not allow any one to teach in an overly authoritative way'. This statement will make more sense as we review the detailed meaning of the Greek word rendered here as "exercise authority".

Continuing on, we remind the reader that there exists no other verse that could be construed to indicate that a woman teaching or exercising authority over a man is a sin.

Deuteronomy 17:6 At the testimony of two or three witnesses they must be executed. They cannot be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

John 8:16-18 But if I judge, my evaluation is accurate, because I am not alone when I judge, but I and the Father who sent me do so together. It is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I testify about myself and the Father who sent me testifies about me.”

May I suggest that we demand a few witnesses before we disallow the women to teach?

I. learning in quiteness

First, Paul contradicts a wisdom of that age that forbids women to learn. He liberates them by saying they should learn, and learn in submissiveness. Learning can only occur in submissiveness, whether by male or female, so this cannot be seen as a limiting statement on women only.

That is to say, should men not learn in submissiveness? If men were learning in "non-submissiveness", would Paul have let it slide? Surely the fact that Paul did not mention men indicates that men were not causing problems. This in turn indicates we are dealing with a specific situation where women are being distracting. Women were not learning in submission. Men were.
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A word on submissiveness: "submissive" does not imply blind obedience, servitude or slavery. It does not connote a mentality of "I will obey your every wish". "Submissive" simply means honoring the wishes of another more than of self.

Acts 17:11 Now the people here (Berea) were of nobler character than the ones in Thessalonica; they eagerly welcomed the message, checking the law every day to see if the things Paul was saying were true.

The noble woman will not blindly accept any teaching (whether from a female or male), but verify for herself whether the teaching stands up to scrutiny.

Paul, contradicting the standard practice of some cultures that women shall not learn, is in line with his opening remarks of chapter 2 about praying for civil authorities. Remember, the Jews in the synagogues were praying for the destruction of the foreign governments so that they could again rule sovereignly. Paul contradicts common wisdom by saying they should pray that government does the right thing, and puts government in a good light.

2. Paul's command, not the Lord's

Second, Paul makes clear that the command to silence women comes from him; it is not a command of the Lord. This fact lends credence to the idea that this command is not a general truth applicable to every situation.

It comes across as strange that Paul would liberate the woman, and then just after, put them under bondage by placing a gag around their mouth.

3. Verb Tense

The tense used in this text is in the present active indicative tense (happening right now in this instance/situation), not the imperative tense (command). This is further evidence that we are dealing with a situation, not with a blanket command.

4. quiet

The Greek word "hesuchia" translated as "quietly" and "quiet" appears also in

1 Timothy 2:2 even for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet [hesuchia] life in all godliness and dignity.

1 Timothy 2:11 A woman must learn quietly [hesuchia] with all submissiveness.

2 Thessalonians 3:12 Now such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly [hesuchia] and so provide their own food to eat.

"Quiet" does not mean making absolutely no sound. It means to not make distracting noise, or to not disturb. This is in contrast to the "silence" [sigao] in 1 Corinthians 14. Taking 1 Timothy 2:12 at face value, women are allowed to make noise as long as the noise is not distracting.
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We would assume that if men were disturbing, Paul would have said, "Dear males, don't make distractive noises while someone is teaching. Learn in submission and quietness." This "do not disturb during teaching" command certainly applies to males equally, even though Paul does not mention men. This again lends credit to the idea that this command is situational. Women were disturbing, men were not.

5. **exercise authority**

One of the keys to unwinding the meaning of 1 Timothy 2:12 is understanding the Greek term often rendered as "usurp authority". This phrase has no real meaning in English. Ask yourself when you use, or hear someone use, this term outside of discussion about this verse. The chances are never. Terms have meaning in conjunction with other terms. If we only have one context in which a phrase or term is used, we have no way to verify our understanding of it.

To rectify the confusion, leading to misinterpretation, we take a closer look at the Greek, which reveals to us the intent of the author.

The standard Greek word for exercising authority in the negative sense is [katakurieuo].

Matthew 20:25 But Jesus called them and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them [katakurieuo], and those in high positions use their authority over them.

1 Peter 5:2 Give a shepherd’s care to God’s flock among you, exercising oversight not merely as a duty but willingly under God’s direction, not for shameful profit but eagerly. And do not lord it over [katakurieuo] those entrusted to you, but be examples to the flock.

The general Greek term for authority in the normal sense is [exousia].

Matthew 7:29 because he taught them like one who had authority [exousia], not like their experts in the law.

Matthew 8:9 For I too am a man under authority [exousia], with soldiers under me, I say to this one, ‘Go’ and he goes, and to another ‘Come’ and he comes, and to my slave ‘Do this’ and he does it.”

Mark 11:28 and said, “By what authority [exousia] are you doing these things? Or who gave you this authority [exousia] to do these things?”

Titus 2:15 So communicate these things with the sort of exhortation or rebuke that carries full authority [exousia]. Don’t let anyone look down on you.

Jesus spoke with authority. Titus was to communicate with authority. Now we return to 1 Timothy 2:12.

The Greek word often rendered as "usurp authority" [authenteō] is not the typical word used for "authority". The meaning for [authenteō] comes from the context of extra-biblical writings, for this work finds its only appearance in the New Testament once. Therefore, Paul was saying something special. [authenteō] carries the idea of "dictate", "give orders", "domineer", "boss around", "bark at" and "manipulate". Some
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translations render this "exercise authority", which in no way captures the spirit of "taking authority by force with a bad attitude". One may easily identify "exercise authority" as in the standard, run-of-the-mill authority present in the expression of the gifts of the spirit. But, no other understanding of [authenteō] could be further from the truth. And this is one of the core misunderstandings that leads some to silence women, or argue that they cannot handle authority, or they cannot teach men.

Let us continue:

3 John 9 I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not acknowledge us.

2 Corinthians 1:24 I do not mean that we rule over your faith, but we are workers with you for your joy, because by faith you stand firm.

It should be clear from this text that men should not dominate others either! Therefore, the verse speaking about women not engaging in [authenteō] cannot be considered a woman only command. Since men were not mentioned, we can surmise the command as situational. Women were overbearing, lording and barking, men were not.

We know that teaching does not automatically require "authority" in the negative [authenteō] sense indicated above. In matters of practicality, the teacher does not "assume authority", but rather the listener "submits". Without submission, there is no means for the student to learn. Any teaching under "forcefully taken authority" is wrong, whether by man or woman. Good teaching is only possible when the student submits willingly.

Ephesians 5:18b-21 ... but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (the anointing).

Hence, the service rendered by the anointed can only be received if the benefactor submits. Effective teaching is a function of the active submission by the student, and decidedly not the assumption of authority by the teacher.

Lastly, the examples in the Bible of rebuking, teaching, prophesying, etc. assume a positive [exousia] authority, authority to raise the submitter up. Drawing from the historical record shown in this study, we know that women, at times, exercise [exousia] authority over men, rebuke and teach men. There is no denying this. Therefore, Paul is not saying that women cannot teach because "teaching implies authority, and women have none". This apparent contradiction is handled by looking at the Greek text.

The Greek structure allows for a different translation of 1 Timothy 2:12. The two verbs "to teach" and "exercise authority in a bossy way" can work together as one single idea. This structure is also utilized in Hebrew. The text could just as well read in English,

1 Timothy 2:12 I do not allow a woman to teach a man in a dominating or controlling manner.
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Some translations read this way. One cannot tell from the Greek alone which accurately conveys the thoughts Paul had in mind. But, we are not without help. Since this translation does not contradict women's role as recorded in history, and the more prevalent variant rendering of this text does, this is the preferred translation.

If 1 Timothy 2:12 were to read as such...

I do not allow a man to teach a woman, or to exercise authority over a woman.

No man would interpret this as to mean "Men are not allowed to teach women for that would exercise undue authority over them". Ever single man would point out the fact that the Greek for exercise authority means "to dominate", and therefore the author means that men should not teach women in a dominating fashion, and obviously, the Church in Ephesus was having problems. They would point out that there are zero indications that man cannot teach women elsewhere in the Bible, point out that we have no list that show women get some functions that men do not get, etc. Every man on the planet would interpret the words perfectly in line with my version above.

Colossians 3:16 (to makes and females) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, (to males and females) teaching and exhorting one another (males and females) with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God.

We return to a verse we have seen before. The teaching and exhorting are with grace, not domination. If the women at Ephesus had been operating in grace, Paul never would have penned the text instructing the obnoxious women to get back into the spirit.

We realize then that Paul is not forbidding women to teach outright with the reasoning that this act necessitates [authenteō], the "usurping of authority over a man". Paul is correcting a behavior where women were teaching in a [authenteō] "lording over the student" tone. We can be sure that he would have given the exact same instruction to men if men were engaging in [authenteō]; for the gifts of the spirit are for ministering to others, not for an means and excuse to dominate them.

Furthermore, not allowing women to minister to men is [authenteō] "usurping authority" over the women. Paul would not approve.

6. the irreparable defect

We have to highlight an important implication in the silencing doctrine. If in fact Paul is saying that women cannot teach men because they have an irreparable defect that causes them to want to dominate men, then:

1. The work of Jesus at the cross was not good enough to wash away this particular sin in the female; but his work was good enough to wash away the same sin in male. This in turn implies that the woman cannot be saved, since she is still in sin.

2. It is out of nature for Paul, who always speaks against the sin of domination, and instructs us to stop it, would in this case, not do so. Instead, his solution, according to the silencing doctrine, is to avoid situations where the sin would come out while leaving the sin in place. Paul is a person who
likes to get to the root of issues, to pull them out; he is not someone that would be satisfied with a cheap paper-over solution. In any case, this solution, should it be one, is short lived, for ...

3. If in fact this irreparable defect causing women to dominate men is in women, then women should not be allowed to have any interaction at all with men, for the women will then always try to dominate them given the chance; for, it is not clear why this domination defect would only come out in a teaching setting, but not in a prophecy setting, or in a marriage setting, or in a homeschooling setting, or etc. This requires then that men should not marry women, for the women are absolutely, positively incapable of submitting to them. The implications are further that the husband can only look forward to hell on earth: dominated, bossed around, kicked down, barked at and even murdered, for this is what the term "usurp authority" in the Greek means.

It is quite obvious that Jesus' work at the cross did not leave any particular sin in women un-cleansed, it is quite obvious that Paul would instruct women who were dominating men to stop (and it is our stance that this is exactly what Paul did!), and it is quite obvious that the godly women can and do refrain from dominating men in teaching settings (and other settings).

G. The reason given

1 Timothy 2:13-14 For Adam was formed first and then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, because she was fully deceived, fell into transgression.

A wide-spread interpretation is that "Adam being formed before Eve" conveys a static authority role of man over women, and "Eve being deceived while Adam was not" shows that woman is not capable of discerning truth.

Another associated assumption is that teaching is by its nature an authoritative "office". I take issue with this "office", for this claims a static authority structure. This static authority relationship requires that women are not allowed to do things where they would be in authority over men. Women would then be in a static authority over men.

However, the Church does not have people that fill "offices", but does have people that act as "functions". One is static, the other is dynamic. A powerful Church is dynamic.

Thus, as the argument goes, women are not allowed to teach men on two counts: (1) teaching would constitute authority over man, and (2) women are too confused and deceived to present a teaching.

Before diving into this, we reiterate that the authority in the context is expressly of the negative sort, not the positive sort. Noting this, the argument that women shall not have authority (including the positive sort) over a man falls flat. Nonetheless, we research this in detail in the following paragraphs.
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1. *deception vs. rebellion*

In order to instill balance into this discussion, we remind the reader that Adam sinned in rebellion, but Eve did not. What is the greater problem? Being thoroughly confused leading to disobedience, or willfully disobeying God?

Since Adam sinned out of rebellion against God's authority, and Eve did not, how much more should Adam have his authority reduced in relation to Eve? And teaching requires authority. If in fact women are not allowed to teach men because they sinned out of ignorance, how much more should men not be allowed to teach women because Adam sinned out of rebellion against authority?

Eve added to God's command. It was not clear to her what the command was. And how did the confusion in Eve occur? Did Adam fail to teach Eve correctly? If Adam did not teach well, do not his male descendants carry the same teaching defect, thereby disqualifying themselves from teaching functions? Perhaps the males should remain silent! And that conclusion is consistent with the silencer's very own logic!

In view of these things, what does being thoroughly deceived have to do with women not having authority? We don't know. Paul and Timothy are having a discussion that assumes knowledge of specific happenings, as we shall detail later.

Moving on, we show the extent of the male defect here:

Romans 5:17 For if, by the transgression of the one man (Adam), death reigned through the one,

Death does not reign through the woman. Sin is passed to the next generation through the seed of man, not the egg of woman. Surely then the defect of sin is stronger in man than in woman. For this reason, Jesus was born via the egg of a woman, not the seed of a man. If woman is not allowed to speak in authority due to her defect, how much more shall man not speak noting that he has a greater defect!

Furthermore, when Adam and Eve were approached, Adam blamed Eve and God, while Eve at least took partial responsibility. If all of Eve's descendants are defective for only being partially honest with her sin, what shall we say of Adam's descendants, who simply pass along the blame? Which one is better to carry authority, the one who abdicates all responsibility, or the one who accepts at least some of it?

2. *order of formation*

Again, as mentioned in the beginning of this study, the order of formation has no bearing on authority. Otherwise plants and animals rule over man, which is a direct contradiction of what God said to the first Adam.

Furthermore, one could argue that since God gave Adam authority over the preceding created things, this shows that the later creation has power over the previous. This then indicates that woman, as the last "creature" created, should have authority over man. Of course, this not what the silencers are trying to claim with the "God's creative order" theory. Nonetheless, the silencing logic dictates exactly that.
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Also, we must not forget: man and women were created as one to rule together over the earth. The authority via order argument by-passes the overarching heart of God entirely, and the historical record of creation.

3. order of transgression

The silence teaching often back-ends the story to tell us that Satan went to Eve first to have her usurp authority over Adam. This is pure conjecture. There is nothing in the scriptures to validate this.

Eve was given half authority over the earth. Eve speaking with Satan in no way usurped authority, for she had her own authority. If Satan had approached Adam first, what would the silence doctrine say? Would they not use this as proof that even Satan had to approach the first "authority" first? Or would they argue that Adam was usurping authority over Eve?

4. static authority

Ephesians 5:21b ... submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (the anointing).

While I agree that women should never stand in static authority over men, I would also likewise agree that men should never stand in static authority over women! Submitting one to another assumes a dynamic submission. A teacher under anointing has authority only in the time he is teaching. Once he is done, the act of submission is complete. When the former student then begins to teach, the former teacher becomes the student, and the submitting is carried out in the opposite direction (to one another). This example is the practical expression of Ephesians 5:21b.

The silencing position assumes that male leadership demands the non-expression of woman leadership. As we can see from the creation account, this assumption is patently faulty. There is no basis for it.

We conclude that there is nothing in verses 1 Timothy 2:13-14 that has anything to do with authority. One has to understand that culture and that time to understand what Paul is writing to those living in that culture and in that time. This statement seems common sensical, but bears stating in this discussion.

5. confusion

Are women so confused that they cannot think straight? This is often attributed to woman's emotional component. Often, in the silencer doctrine, this opinion defines who a woman is, how she thinks (or more accurately, why she cannot think), and the actions she takes. The man, being rational, is not so quick to be duped, and so the story goes.

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his treachery, your minds (speaking to the entire congregation, including men) may be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.
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Paul himself states that men can be deceived in the same way as Eve! Whatever teaching and authority implications man may wish to apply to the female on account of Eve being deceived, he should also place upon himself!

Matthew 7:3 Why do you see the speck in your brother’s (sister's) eye, but fail to see the beam of wood in your own?

The references above should go a long way in clearing up the issue. But there is more.

Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree produced fruit that was good for food, was attractive to the eye, and was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of it to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.

Is Eve emotional here? No. She is making a logical choice based upon the evidence: "good for food, attractive to the eye, it will make me wise." The logic met its end when it came to simply believing what God had said about eating the fruit. Even though Eve's "emotions" have in no way been implied as causing the deception of Eve in the scriptures, and Adam's "logic" has in no way been shown to protect him from rebellion, that has not stopped silencing groups from claiming it is so!

As stated before, it is speculation that Adam did not fulfill his duty to properly train Eve. By all accounts, Adam was standing next to Eve during the deception, and did not intervene. Adam is then culpable in Eve's fall on two counts. One complaint about men is that they "do not communicate", or they "do not communicate well". At least half the world's population thinks this is so. Do we now say that men are not allowed to teach women because it is well known that men do not communicate well?

Looking at these claims further, first we note that neither logic nor emotions lead to "absolute truth". There are emotional truths, rational truths and spiritual truths. Emotions cannot calculate 1+1. Logic cannot appreciate "joy" or "hope". Satan manipulates both logic and emotions to lead us astray. To claim that one is more reliable than the other at leading to truth is spurious. Logic is only as good as the information known. Our knowledge is highly limited compared to what Satan knows. He leverages our lack of knowledge, combined with our pride in thinking we do know something, to lead us astray.

If woman is not allowed to teach because we have proof she has been lead astray, do we apply the same standard to men when we identify one example of a man having been led astray?

And, if women are simply confused and cannot think straight, should we allow them to teach in our schools? Raise the next generation?

a. commandments and wisdom

How do we guard ourselves from becoming beguiled by our enemy?

Psalms 119:98 Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for I am always aware of them.

We point out that the author of this Psalm does not identify logic or emotion in making him wiser than his enemy. He states that the commandments do.
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Genesis 2:16-17 Then the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat fruit from every tree of the orchard, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will surely die.”

Genesis 3:1-3 Now the serpent was more shrewd than any of the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Is it really true that God said, ‘You must not eat from any tree of the orchard’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit from the trees of the orchard; but concerning the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the orchard God said, ‘You must not eat from it, and you must not touch it, or else you will die.’”

Eve was confused. She added "and you must not touch it". But note, this confusion has nothing to do with an emotional state. This deception is founded on, perhaps, poor communication between Adam and Eve. It would seem that the responsibility would fall on Adam to ensure that Eve understood since he was the "teacher" and she was the "student". This infers that Adam, and by extension men, are poor teachers. Perhaps men should not be allowed to teach?

Some believe God extended the law for Eve to include "do not touch the fruit". This does not seem plausible, for (1) we have no record of that extension and (2) how many pairs of laws can we point to that are different between man and woman? Men cannot steal, but women can a little bit? Men cannot lie, by women can a little bit?

Eve was confused about the commandments. Maybe God's law did not "feel right emotionally", or maybe she could not "logically rationalize" what touching or eating a fruit had to do with knowing good and evil. We can argue about it till the cows come home. The fact is, she did not know the commandments.

She was deceived not because she was "emotional", or showed a lack of "rationalization skills", but because she did not take into account God's commands, commandments that would have made her wiser than her enemy.

b. God gets emotional

Might God make irrational decisions based on emotions?

Genesis 6:5-7 But the LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind had become great on the earth. Every inclination of the thoughts of their minds was only evil all the time. The LORD regretted [“to experience emotional pain or weakness,” “to feel regret,” often concerning a past action] that he had made humankind on the earth, and he was highly offended. So the LORD said, “I will wipe humankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—everything from humankind to animals, including creatures that move on the ground and birds of the air, for I regret that I have made them.”

God’s decision to annihilate mankind was in an emotional state: regret and offense. Was the decision incorrect?
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There are countless examples of God pronouncing judgement and destruction in his "fiery wrath". Was God not thinking straight?

c. **Sarah and the slave girl**

   Genesis 21:10-12a So she (Sarah) said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.”

   It is difficult to hear the tone in the text, but it is hard to imagine that Sarah was not fired up during this exchange. Here, Sarah commanded Abraham to cast out the slave girl and her son. This decision was laden with emotion. Was the decision incorrect? Did Abraham tell Sarah to get a hold of her emotions? Did God tell her to stop being so irrational?

6. **training**

   Titus 2:4 In this way they (women elders) will train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children,

   This verb "to train" [sōphonizo] denotes teaching in the sense of bringing people to their senses, showing what sound thinking is. From this verse it follows that women have the capacity to not only teach, but to teach "sound thinking". Before one can teach "sound thinking", one must exercise "sound thinking". Furthermore, the younger women are to learn, and they are expected, to exercise "sound thinking". There is no evidence that women are too "emotional", too "confused" or otherwise so defective that they are not capable of teaching.

   Biology dictates that women work in the home (noting exceptions to the contrary, which is fine), and men outside of the home. Those who work in the home raise the children. The raising of children sets the stage, good or bad, for the next generation. This work is much more valuable than any work done outside of the home. This proves that women were built for tremendous responsibilities. With responsibility comes authority.

   Are we to believe that women can teach sound thinking to younger women, but not to men? Are there no men in the universe that could use some training like this? Does a woman's capacity to train suddenly go blank when standing in front of men?

7. **Satan approached Eve first**

   An argument runs like this: Paul is referencing the fact that Satan approached Eve first, therefore undercutting Adam's supposed authority, and "look at the result when that happens".

   For one, we don't know if Adam would have fared better. Two, as already mentioned, the text surrounding the deception implies Adam was with her during the deception. Three, Eve was full partner in authority over the earth. If Satan would have approached Adam first, Satan would have been undercutting Eve's authority by the same logic.
8. **emotions and leadership**

We continue analyzing the assault of God's design of women, a design that makes them special, a design that fills out what man does not have. Men claim that this design makes them defective for leadership. The females cannot take the pressure!

I beg to differ. Emotions are a critical component in leadership. Without which, the family, church and organization becomes dry, stale and dead.

a. Eve was given rulership over the earth, as was Adam. How is it that God makes woman with a "leadership defect", but then makes her co-leader over the whole earth?

b. If God thought emotions were bad for leadership, God would not have made Eve co-ruler of the world. However, the opposite is true. God made Eve with emotions for this is a necessary ingredient for leadership.

c. God has and rules with emotion, as shown above.

d. Sarah commanded Abraham, the father of faith, with emotion, as shown above.

e. The name "Sarah" means "princess ruler". Every time Abraham called her name, he confirmed that she was a "princess ruler". God gave her this name. Does God give a woman the name and title "ruler" while at the same time designing her is such a way that she cannot handle authority?

f. Children are best raised by mom and dad. An emotional only, or a logic only leadership/raising in the family results is children who are unbalanced. The church is like a family. The newborn believers require both logic and emotions. By the silence position's own admission, women are more suitable for emotional expression, and understanding emotions, than men.

g. Studies show that those who are "emotionally intelligent" make better decisions. Numerous management books are available that highlight the importance of "emotional skills" in leadership, and how to develop them. Some companies require a high "emotional intelligence" score on tests prior to offering leadership positions.

h. Matthew 3:17 and a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; I am well pleased with him.” God made the most important comment he could to his Son. God here is in a leadership position as Father. Did the Father love His Son with logic, or emotion?

i. If women are handicapped in leadership due to emotions, they are then not capable of running a business successfully as in Proverbs 31. Do we cut out this chapter of the Bible?

j. Romans 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. If a woman is tough enough to handle the pressure of prison, she can handle the pressure of leadership.

k. Church history teaches us that women were martyrs. If they can do this, they can lead.

l. Matthew 22:37 Jesus said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." Assuming we lead while loving the Lord, our leading must be accompanied with emotion. The reader can decide for himself whether the emotions are found in the heart, or the soul, or both.

A logic dominated leadership is destined for suboptimal performance because it neglects a critical component of leadership: the emotion. All studies on persuasion show that people follow emotions more
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readily than logic. People are influenced more by love than by tables and calculations. Keeping women (typically more in tune with emotions than men) out of leadership is a huge mistake, leading to imbalanced, ineffectual leadership.

9. the voice of a child

Matthew 18:3 and said, “I tell you the truth, unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven!

Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

We must become children. Do children understand the Kingdom via cold hard logic?

10. atonement

On a final note, what effect does the work of the cross have on woman's state? Does the defect of rebellion and poor teaching skills remain in man after his salvation such that he cannot and shall not teach women? If the man is cured, is the woman not?

The silencing teaching assumes that the woman's salvation is of a lower state, not quite cleansed of her sinful nature; at least not as much as man is cleansed. They are not capable of being led by the spirit.

Romans 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons (and daughters) of God.

11. conclusion

The word "for" reveals that the writer is indicating the reason for the previous statement.

1 Timothy 2:13-14 For Adam was formed first and then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, because she was fully deceived, fell into transgression.

Paul is explaining why he said what he just said: "women shall not teach men in a dominating fashion". The explanation is difficult to comprehend provided one is not aware of the backdrop of the discussion. Paul opens more questions than he answers. What does the chronology of the formation or who was deceived have anything to do with women not teaching in a dominating fashion? If the woman was formed first, and/or Adam were deceived, would woman then have the authorization to teach men in a dominating fashion?

Without the backdrop of the discussion, it is unclear to what Paul is referring. Paul is discussing a topic that only he and the addressee understand completely. There is some specific situation Paul is speaking into, of which we have no knowledge. The command in verse 12 is then situational. At the same time, we strongly suspect that there is no situation where a woman should dominate a man during a teaching. So the command is generally true even though he is speaking to a specific situation.

One straightforward explanation would be that women were teaching men in a disrespectful way. In response, Paul makes the women aware that Adam came first (you women believe you are first in line?
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think again), and that Eve was deceived (your arrogance in your behavior shows that you think too highly of yourselves).

H. Salvation through childbirth, part 2

1 Timothy 2:15 But she will be delivered through childbearing, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

The Greek has a definite article in front of "childbearing". This then lends credence to the claim that this "childbearing" is in reference to the birth of Jesus. Then the passage makes sense in and of itself. Otherwise, it appears that women, who do not have children, cannot be saved.

Another explanation is to note that the Greek rendering of "delivered" [sozo] is not necessarily spiritual, but physical. It simply states that a woman will not be physically harmed in childbirth provided she continues in the faith, because God will help her.

Even so, this text is confusing in this context. What do salvation and childbirth (whichever explanation) have to do with the advice that women learn and teach with humility in the church? Again, Timothy and Paul understand this text, but since we do not know the context of the situation, we cannot really understand what Paul is getting at. Paul is speaking into a specific situation.

I. Historical context

Timothy was in Ephesus when he received his letter. After showing that the text is referring to a particular situation in Ephesus unknown to us, we now turn our attention to the culture of that time, specifically the Artemis religion.


In Acts 19:1, Paul returns to Ephesus. He began again, as before, speaking to the Jews in the synagogue. At some point, the Jews hardened their hearts, and so he meets followers of Christ in a different location. This went on for about 2 years.

Acts 19:18-19 Many of those who had believed came forward, confessing and making their deeds known. Large numbers of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them up in the presence of everyone. When the value of the books was added up, it was found to total fifty thousand silver coins.

Magic always has some "control over others" aspect. Since Artemis was a woman-centered religion, we presume that most of the books came from the women.

In Acts 19:24, Paul is confronted by a Demetrius, who makes his living by selling models of the goddess Artemis. Demetrius appeals to the greed of his fellow Artemis-based business owners by pointing out the money lost on account of the people turning away from the Artemis religion. A massive uproar takes place "having become full of wrath, were crying out, saying, 'Great is the Artemis of the Eph-
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esians!", whereupon the civil authorities bring the crowd to rest. This might explain this text to Timothy in Ephesus:

1 Timothy 6:9-11 Those who long to be rich, however, stumble into temptation and a trap and many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils. Some people in reaching for it have strayed from the faith and stabbed themselves with many pains. But you, as a person dedicated to God, keep away from all that. Instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness.

In Acts 20:1, Paul departs.

In Acts 20:27, Paul calls the elders of Ephesus to him. He affirms their eldership as acknowledged by the Holy Spirit, and warns them about wolves in sheep's clothing from among the elders, who will teach lies, in order to gain followers of themselves (gain dominion over). Paul then reminds them that he said this to them during his 3 years stay.

Now we turn to the letter to Timothy.

1 Timothy 1:3-7 As I urged you when I was leaving for Macedonia, stay on in Ephesus to instruct certain people not to spread false teachings, nor to occupy themselves with myths and interminable (endless) genealogies [who was born first?]. Such things promote useless speculations rather than God's redemptive plan [salvation?] that operates by faith. But the aim of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. Some have strayed from these and turned away to empty discussion. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not understand what they are saying or the things they insist on so confidently.

What can we surmise from this text? Timothy did not want to stay in Ephesus. He had been wanting to leave for quite a while. There were certain people there who spread false teachings, occupied themselves with myths and interminable genealogical discussions. They promoted speculation instead of God's redemptive plan through faith. They are not teaching with a pure heart, a good conscience or a sincere faith. Empty discussions are the result. They think they know the law, but do not (it is hard to tell if Paul is referring to the Mosaic law, or the Talmudic law). Paul tells Timothy that his job is to fix this mess. And those he is to correct, are elders and teachers, that is those in some form of authority. No wonder Timothy wants to leave.

And what about the Artemis religion? Legend at the time of Paul's writing held that Ephesus, including its religion, was founded by the Amazons. The Amazons are a mythical, fictitious race of women who dominated men. These women were superior to men; and this is how the Ephesian women lived. Their military exploits over men's armies were revered. The defeated men, who were attractive, were used as sexual slaves. The ensuing male babies were killed or raised as "sperm banks." Artemis was known as the "Queen of Heaven" and the "Huntress". The religion was one of female domination, whereas the priests were virgin women. The women taught the oracles of Artemis to the men. That is, spiritual truths came only through women. Virginity was rewarded, and sexual relations were punished via death during child
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bearing. One statue of Artemis shows her hair style reaching such a height that it consumes one third of the height of the statue. The Greek goddess Diana is the equivalent of Artemis. She is described as the daughter of Zeus and Leto, and the twin sister of Apollo, whereas Diana the female was born first, who then assisted the birth of Apollo the male.

The men and women in the Church in Ephesus came out of this culture. The "cultural impact" did not evaporate upon turning to Christ, but they drug it with them into the church.

If the women had a habit of wanting to be like the Queen of Heaven, would they not bind their hair in obnoxious styles? If women were the sole oracles of godly wisdom, would they not have a problem with learning in silence? If the women and men were accustomed to women domination of men, would the women not seek to continue to do so, with the men naturally play along, especially when teaching? Would the women not claim by genealogies that since the sister was born before her brother, woman is superior? (How pagan is that, to claim superiority based upon order of formation!) Since women thought they were the source of truth and knowledge, would they not think they somehow were less deceived than men? Since childbearing was punished by Artemis, would not the women need encouragement in this area? Would not the dominated men need encouragement to step out, be seen, and lift their hands in the congregations?

Taking these facts into account, it is crystal clear what Paul is writing about in these passages about women. The women were dragging their bad habits into the Church, and Paul spoke specifically to those bad habits. Paul decidedly did not introduce any all-encompassing rules limiting women's functioning in the Church.

Our understanding of 1 Timothy 2 is consistent with:

Colossians 3:11 Here there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all.

Colossians 3:16 (exhortation to Greeks and Jews, Masters and Slaves, Males and Females) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, (exhortation to Greeks and Jews, Masters and Slaves, Males and Females) teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God.

All congregational interaction includes the spiritual functioning, which must be accompanied with grace in our hearts. Incidentally, the functionings are referred to as graces given in Ephesians 4:7: "to each one of us grace is given ..." The functioning must occur with the spirit of Grace and Giving, otherwise, domination is the result.

Paul is not arguing in 1 Timothy 2:12 that women are incapable of functioning (teaching men) in grace and giving, but rather he is stating that he does not suffer a woman to function (teach men) without grace or giving.
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J. Crowns and Glory

Proverbs 12:4 A noble wife is the crown of her husband, but the wife who acts shameful-
ly is like rottenness in his bones.
1 Corinthians 11:7b ... But the woman is the glory of the man.

Crowns and glories represent and impart kingship, power, authority. A king without his crown or his glory is not recognized as king, or having one having the authority to speak like a king. In this sense, the woman imparts and signifies authority to speak as an authority. These verses turn the silencing teaching on its head.

What is also of interesting note is that the woman, as a crown, then sits on the head of the man, and covers it. The woman is the man's head covering. She is given to him as a head covering. Without the woman, the man is uncovered, and his authority to speak is absent.

It would seem odd that the person that imparts the authority to speak would herself not be allowed to speak. The 'impartee' is greater than the imparted. In this case, the woman can only allow the man to speak with authority if and only if the woman has authority to speak.

In reality, the authority is bilateral, as can be seen in other verses. This aligns with the first scripture in the Bible about Man and Woman, that they both are given authority jointly to rule the earth.

This contradicts a common interpretation of the English text found in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

K. Conclusion

This document was written for those willing to question inherited traditions and conventions by bibli-
ical scrutiny. It was also written for those who in their hearts believed that silencing women was wrong, but did not know what to think about 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2. We hope the discussions pre-
sented here have caused the reader to rethink these verses in general, and to consider the historical record in particular.

There is a difference between enduring principles and their application in situation. The enduring prin-
ciple in these teachings is humility, which is the opposite of attempting to draw attention to, or other-
wise lifting one's self. The women addressed in 1 Timothy 2 were acting in ways incompatible with the virtue humility.

We know in general that Paul gives commands that are situationally bound in his letters. We know specifically that he did so in 1 Timothy on account of clear examples. We realize the verses surrounding the woman silencing command are speaking to a specific situation heavily influenced by the enduring and prevailing habits of these women dominating men, habits in turn inspired by the region's culture. Paul is trying to bring balance to the situation. Presumably, Timothy sent word to Paul that looked a lot like this:

• The men come to church angry, and they fight with each other - see 1 Timothy 2:8
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- The women come to church decked in gold and clothed in flashy dress, calling attention to themselves
- The women make distracting noises and disturb during teaching ministry
- And when the women teach men, they do so with arrogance with a tone of domination
- The women are afraid of giving birth

Paul's response to these specific concerns shall not be confused with a universal rule.

We end with this comment: those who teach that Paul is making a blanket command for all time should provide some convincing evidence that this is truly the case.
Final Words

The Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. forbade women in leadership roles. This law did not have its intended effect, since additional legislation and enforcement was necessary above and beyond this law. Excommunication and burning at the stake were forms of punishment to enforce silence. Their argument was that women were sin personified. This is in keeping with the Talmud.

By the end of the 5th century, women were regulated to becoming nuns. Between the 12th and 17th century, the hunt for witches ran rampant. Inherent in the "voiceless woman" teaching is that the woman is less than man, defective, unusable. She should be treated as such. Whatever is good enough for a farm animal is good enough for woman. The further one takes that path, the more the true colors shine through.

This "war against women" has raged in various church organizations since this time. Burning at the stake is not common these days, but other forms of abuse are required to ensure women take their "proper place". These women are abused in the sense that their rightful position is barred. They are not allowed to use their spiritual gifts as God intended. They are invited to sit in a little box, and told they are free. It must be clear to even a child that women have an emotional need to speak. Speaking is not sin, nor is it vile or lewd. This is how God built them. Not allowing their expression stunts their growth, makes them hard. And it is not God's order at all.

The 325 A.D. laws only provide evidence that women were leaders in the early church, otherwise, there would be no reason to ban them! A book by Karen Jo Toresen mentions archeological finds showing that women were elders/bishops in Rome, Egypt, Sicily and Greece. The Bible and extra-Biblical sources testify to one fact: women voiced the Word of the Living God in the assemblies! If we continue to fight against God's design, we should not be surprised to find our assemblies full of weakness. God will resist us.

Note that the Church had a tremendous impact on the earth up until 300 AD. After that, the Church has by far lost its salt. Maybe, just maybe, this is because the Church has been put to sleep with doctrines that take the vast majority of the believers out of active roles and put in passive roles.
VII. Appendix

A. The spirit of silence

We note for the reader that the "silence the woman" teaching is perfectly in line with the attitude towards women found in some sectors of Judaism (the Talmud), in the Orthodox Catholic Church, the Koran and the Hindi religions. All versions regulate women to a faulty being, full of error, sin incarnate. Women are to be closely watched for the case she may do something stupid. One way to limit the damage is to keep them covered (veiled) and keep them silent. The same spirit that wants to destroy the woman via these religions is also behind the "christian" version of the same. The teachings are at their core identical. The author of the teachings in the different religions is one and the same. The christian version of oppression might sound a little nicer, but the devil will take what we give him and make the best out of it.

B. Talmud quotes

- Out of respect to the congregation, a woman should not herself read in the law.
- It is a matter of shame for a woman to let her voice be heard among men
- The voice of a woman is filthy nakedness

REFERENCES

C. The 10 Talmud curses against women

This is the Talmudic list of curses against women on account of the fall.

"greatly multiply" refers to

1. the menstruation cycle
2. thy sorrow in rearing children
3. thy conception
4. in sorrow shall you bear children
5. thy desire shall be for your husband (with strong sexual connotation)
6. he shall rule over thee
7. she is wrapped up like a mourner
8. does not appear in public without her head covered
9. is restricted to one husband, while he may have many wives
10. is confined to the house as to a prison

REFERENCES

This is the teaching that instigated the "silencing of women" and the "wearing of veils" we read about in 1 Corinthians. Those that hold to some of these views should simply adhere to the full set. The truth of the matter is that once one accepts the spirit that teaches one of these, that same spirit will slowly but surely, generation after generation, insert the rest. But Paul says we should ignore these.

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Titus 1:9-10 He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, so that he will be able to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and correct those who speak against it. For there are many rebellious people, idle talkers, and deceivers, especially those with Jewish connections,

Titus 1:14 and **not pay attention to Jewish myths** and commands of people who reject the truth.

Wise words indeed.

**D. Diverse Silence Teaching Claims**

These claims are sometimes made from personal experience.

1. **ALL churches are chaotic where women have a voice**

   Disagree. Is this always the case? We have seen many church bodies where there was no chaos when women had voices.

2. **Men withdraw in ALL churches where women have a voice.**

   Disagree. We have seen many church bodies where men did not withdraw when women had voices. On the contrary, men are encouraged to "get with the program" when the sisters act.

3. **Submission problems ensue at ALL homes where the woman has a voice in the church.**

   Disagree. See above. We have seen chaos in homes where the women were not even in the church. Priscilla and Aquila are "living" proof that the claim is wrong. A husband who understands his wife's calling will encourage her to speak in her calling's anointing. E.

**Eighteen Questions**

Those who have been exposed to the silencing doctrine will understand what I am getting at in this next paragraph. If not, this section may not be understandable. The silencing doctrine has many mindsets and supporting arguments required to justify it and to provide guidance in applying it. We question the validity of those here by asking for biblical reference:

1. Where in the Bible do we read that women are emotional?
2. Does the fact that Eve was deceived in the garden mean that every women also tends to be deceived more so than man? Compare with 1 Corinthians 2:16b But we have the mind of Christ.
3. Does the fact that Adam was not deceived in the garden mean that every man is less easily deceived than woman?
4. Where do we read in the Bible that women are more likely to be deceived than men?
5. Where do we read that the male logic is more likely to uncover truth?
6. Where do we read that women speaking to men automatically assumes an improper authority over men?
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7. Where do we read that a man shall never submit to a woman?
8. Where do we read that a woman cannot minister to a man?
9. Where do we read that a woman can never lead a man?
10. Where do we read that it is dangerous for a woman to have a voice in the assembly?
11. What scripture teaches that women cannot handle the pressures of leadership?
12. If a woman is capable of exercising one ministry, why can she not exercise the another?
13. If a woman is incapable of exercising one ministry, how can she then exercise the other?
14. Where do we read a list of functions and ministries that are off-limits to women, but available to men?
15. Where is it defined when women can have a voice and when not?
16. Where is it defined when women can use their ministry gifts and where not?
17. Out of 31,102 verses covering the old and new testaments, not a single one provides a historical record of women being silent in a religious setting. If the silencing of women is so critical to the proper functioning of God's family, why can we not find one single historical instance or example of it being practiced?
18. If the silencing of women is so critical to the proper functioning of the Church, why is Jesus completely silent on the subject? Why do some groups put so much emphasis on a doctrine that Jesus does not mention one single time?

Traditions, culture and upbringing may cause one to think that all/some of the above questions can be answered with scripture. After quickly noting that no direct, explicit verse can be cited, one might be inclined to propose scriptures that imply answers to the questions, or at least allow one to deduce answers to the questions. But alas, after deeper consideration of the typical proposals, we will find that the proposed verses do not support the silencing tradition.

The philosophies purporting man superiority and/or women inferiority are often cited as if they were biblical in-spite of the fact that there is no chapter and verse for them. The reader should note: once these philosophies explaining "why women should remain silent" and "this is how we apply the doctrine" are shown as extra-biblical, the entire doctrine appears untenable, for it becomes unworkable (how do we apply it? and why?).