

Gender Roles: Ordained order of mankind towards the Creator

To promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie ... is repugnant to nature, ... a thing most contrarious to his reueled will and approued ordinance, and finallie it is the subuersion of good order, of all equitie and iustice —John Knox¹

INTRODUCTION

The issue of women ordination in particular and women ministry in general is a hotly debated issue since the 1950s. With the rise of Feminism in the general culture, the Feminist movement has also impacted even professing Evangelical and Reformed churches.² Numerous articles and books have been written on this issue, and it has generated controversy in churches and denominations.³ With the splitting of Evangelicalism into approximately two camps on the issue of women in the

¹ John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558). Cited 11 Apr 2012. Online: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/9660/9660-h/9660-h.htm>

² Mary A. Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1992). See especially chapter 18 entitled Biblical Feminism (pp. 205-17) where the evolution of so-called “biblical feminism” or Egalitarianism is described.

³ The amount of literature on the issue is too much to cover. Some representative volumes on the subject can be seen in John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991, 2006); Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2004); Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel*. On the Egalitarian side we have Ronald W. Pierce et al., eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005); Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *Women, Men, and the Bible* (rev. ed.; New York, N.Y.: Crossroad Publishing, 1988). A sample bibliography of works related to the issue up till 1995 can be seen in “Egalitarian/ Complementarian Bibliography,” *CBMW News* 2 (November 1995): 12. Also, two main organizations have been formed to promote the two main views on the issue of gender: *Christians for Biblical Equality* (CBE) and the *Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (CBMW).

Apart from the liberal denominations who readily embrace women ordination, Evangelical and Reformed denominations have been more resistant to Feminism. Perhaps the denomination that has seen the most controversy over women ordination has been the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), of which the synod in June 1995 passed a “virtually irreversible proposal which authorizes the ordination of women to the church’s highest offices.” [“CRC Reverses Decision... Again,” *CBMW News* 1 (August 1995): 5]. Within the PCA, progressives like Tim Keller have promoted the idea of “commissioning” but not ordaining deaconesses [Tim Keller, “The Case for Commissioning (Not Ordaining) Deaconesses,” *byFaith* Issue 21 (August 2008). N.p. Online: <http://byfaithonline.com/page/in-the-church/the-case-for-commissioning-not-ordaining-deaconesses>], a practice which seemed to me to have the same appeal and force of argumentation as differentiating between worship (*latría*) and veneration (*dulia*).

church, namely Egalitarians (“Biblical Feminists”) and Complementarians, accusations and counter-accusations have been made regarding the compromises and distortions of biblical teachings done by the other camp.⁴ Recently, egalitarian theologian William David Spencer has formulated a document entitled “An Evangelical Statement on the Trinity,” in which he accuses Complementarians of embracing Subordinationism in order to prop up their belief in the submission of wives to their husbands.⁵ Such a charge has been made before, and it is easily refuted.⁶

There are various passages in the Bible that Egalitarians and Complementarians dispute over, of which one of them is 1 Tim. 2:8-15. As expected, the interpretation of this passage has been hotly contested. What does this passage actually teach? Before we look into the passage, let us briefly survey how it has been interpreted historically.

HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

⁴ Wayne Grudem for example states that “a clear connection can be seen between theological liberalism and the endorsement of women’s ordination” [Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2006), 23]. On the other hand, Egalitarian Carolyn Holderread Heggen accuses the Complementarian position (which she calls “patriarchy”) as being behind domestic abuse of the wife in the family. [Carolyn Holderread Heggen, “Religious Beliefs and Abuse,” in *Women, Abuse, and the Bible: How Scripture Can Be Used to Hurt or Heal*, (ed. Catherine Clark Kroeger and James R. Beck; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1996), 18]

⁵ William David Spencer, “An Evangelical Statement on the Trinity,” n.p. [cited 11 Apr 2012].

Online: <http://www.trinitystatement.com/wp-content/files/AN%20EVANGELICAL%20%20STATEMENT%20ON%20THE%20TRINITY,%20Dec,%202011.pdf>.

⁶ The charge has been made by Kevin Giles [Kevin Giles, “The Subordination of Christ and the Subordination of Women,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 334-52]. Grudem has aptly answered the same charge in chapter 27 of his book *Evangelical Feminism* (pp. 207-14). I have also written a short reply to the so-called “Evangelical Statement on the Trinity” where I show that the egalitarians distort the writings of Athanasius and the Athanasian Creed with their view moving towards what I term “hypothetical patripassionism.” [Daniel H. Chew, “A Response to ‘An Evangelical Statement on the Trinity,’” Cited 11 Apr 2012. Online: <http://puritanreformed.net/Papers/ResponseEvangelicalStatementTrinity.pdf>]

Among the Church Fathers, Chrysostom has written a homily dealing with the whole of First Timothy, while Tertullian dealt with our passage in his work “On the Veiling of Virgins.” In that work, Tertullian interpreted our passage in verse 11 as teaching

It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church; but neither (is it permitted her) to teach, not to baptize, not to offer, nor to claim to herself a lot in any manly function, not to say (in any) sacerdotal office.⁷

In another of his works, *On the Apparel of Women*, while not directly interacting with our passage, Tertullian states that modesty in apparel is becoming to women “in memory of the introduction of sin into the world through a woman.”⁸ Some refinements in dress and personal appearance are lawful and some are unlawful.⁹ Women are counseled to “submit your head to your husbands, and you will be enough adorned... Clothe yourselves with the silk of uprightness, the fine linen of holiness, the purple of modesty.”¹⁰

Chrysostom addresses our texts in two parts. In Homily VIII dealing with verses 8-10, he states that it calls us all to pray “without wrath and doubting,” and women are to dress in attire that is modest and “covers them completely, and decently, not with superfluous ornaments.”¹¹ In Homily IX dealing with verses 11-15, he states that the verse speaks of the “quietness, of propriety, of modesty” of women whom Paul “wished them not to speak in the church” and not to teach, for “they will show submission by their silence.”¹² Chrysostom also mentions the reason for this as being based on the fact of creation and therefore “the male sex enjoyed the highest honor”.¹³

⁷ Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins*, 9 (ANF 4:33)

⁸ Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women*, 1.1 (ANF 4:14)

⁹ Tertullian, *Apparel*, 2.5 (ANF 4:20)

¹⁰ Tertullian, *Apparel*, 2.13 (ANF 4:25)

¹¹ Chrysostom, *Homily VIII: 1 Timothy ii. 8-10* (NPNF¹ 13: 433)

¹² Chrysostom, *Homily IX: 1 Timothy ii. 11-15* (NPNF¹ 13: 435)

¹³ Chrysostom, *Homily IX* (NPNF¹ 13: 435)

Progressing through time, the Reformer John Calvin similarly sees this passage as consisting of two parts. Verses 8-10 commands both men and women to pray, and women are to be “visible in chaste and becoming dress.”¹⁴ In verses 11-15, Calvin argues that women are to be excluded from the office of teaching, and that due to the creation order.¹⁵

THESIS

Having seen how the text has been historically interpreted, we would now progress to an analysis of the text itself. It is my thesis that the passage teaches gender roles as the order (τάξις) God has ordained from Creation for His glory. The text can be broken up into two sections both teaching the same truth: Verses 8-10 speaks of proper presentation as reflective of God’s ordained order, while verses 11-15 focuses on proper responsibilities as reflective of that same order.

PROLEGOMENON — AUTHORSHIP OF FIRST TIMOTHY

There have been disputes over the authorship of First Timothy. This would affect how we deal with our text, as if it is a later collation, it may be considered non-authoritative and any exegesis of the text would be done differently, with some texts judged to as having less weight than others. The arguments against non-Pauline authorship however are flawed, being based upon differences in style, vocabulary and statistical analysis, as if one person cannot alter his style and vocabulary depending on the occasion.¹⁶ Statistical analyses have been found to give differing results when the parameters were slightly altered, thus giving us evidence for the truth of the maxim “garbage in, garbage out.”¹⁷

¹⁴ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Calvin’s Commentaries; Eds. David W Torrance and Thomas F Torrance; Trans. T.H.L. Parker; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948), 63-7

¹⁵ Calvin, *Commentaries*, 67-8

¹⁶ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2000), cxvi. This is not to mention that it “does not allow for the influence of coauthors and secretaries” by Paul [E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 145]

¹⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), cxvi - cxvii

Since there is no reason why we should not embrace Pauline authorship, we can adopt Pauline authorship as a matter of first principles.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

More importantly for us to consider is the historical life-context in which our text is situated.¹⁸ The passage contains commands by Paul to Timothy, a pastor in the Church of Ephesus.¹⁹ The main question we have to deal with here is whether Paul was reacting against a real or perceived problem in the Ephesian church, which would change our perception of why Paul wrote and gave the commands he did. That the life setting of our text is very important to our understanding of them can be seen in one argument by egalitarians that the prohibition by women to teach is local to Ephesus and not universal to the whole church, since the Ephesian women were “influenced by the cult of Artemis.”²⁰ Since Paul’s commands were given to correct a real local problem in the Ephesian Church, the argument is made that it is not binding on the whole church today.

The main historical point of contention comes about as to whether there was a problem with false teachers being present among Ephesian Christian women, or that the Ephesian women were uneducated. Even if either of these theses is established, the next question to be asked is to whether Paul’s command would be contingent in light of the fact, if proven, that it was written to deal with

¹⁸ In this section, I presuppose the usage of grammatical historical hermeneutics to interpret the text. Such would automatically discount other hermeneutical methods like the feminist method of reading the text through the lenses of women’s experiences [Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Feminist Interpretation: A Method of Correlation,” in Letty M. Russell, ed., *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster Press, 1985), 112-24], as being not truly reading meaning out from the text but using a framework not derived from Scripture to re-interpret, read into, it (Eisegesis)

¹⁹ 1 Tim 1: 1, 3. See also Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), lvi – lvii.

²⁰ Linda L. Belleville, “Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” in Pierce et al., *Equality*, 219

such a real problem. With regards to the second question, the answer is no, for occasion does not necessarily imply local applicability.²¹ But let us look at the first question now.

There are basically two approaches to approximating the question of the life-setting of Ephesus. The first method is to attempt to read it from the text of First Timothy itself, while the second method is to argue from what is known and discovered about ancient culture, especially that of Ephesus in the first century AD, and these two methods are not mutually exclusive.

The first method can be seen in William D. Mounce's commentary on the Pastoral Epistles. In the section entitled "The Ephesian Heresy," Mounce argued based upon various verses in First and Second Timothy and Titus that there were various heretical Jewish, Proto-Gnostic, Hellenistic and other elements that Paul was attacking in the Pastoral Epistles.²²

The problem with Mounce's method is that it assumes that we can discern an error which Paul is addressing from a command Paul gives or a doctrine he mentions in the letter. There is no consideration that some of them may be reminders and some of them may be part of a larger argument to deal with another issue. For example, Mounce used 1 Tim. 1:9 to claim that here we see that part of the Ephesian heresy contained Stoic elements, whereas the passage of 1 Tim. 1: 9-11 may simply be a statement of the virtue of the law restated by Paul as a basis for the command directed to Timothy to use the law to rebuke the false teachers mentioned in verses 3 to 7.²³

²¹ "The fact that a particular teaching was occasioned by local circumstances does not per se negate the normative nature of such a teaching. Paul's teaching that 'a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ' (Gal. 2:16) is not regarded as lacking universal validity because it was occasioned by a specific Judaizing heresy which attracted the Galatians." [Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Biblical Perspectives, 1987), 146]

²² Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), lxxix- lxxvi. Linda Belleville argues along a similar vein also in Belleville, "Teaching the Usurping Authority," in Pierce, *Equality*, 207

²³ Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), lxxi

The second method is seen in for example I. Howard Marshall's commentary, where he argued for a combination of Jewish, Christian (Judaizing) and ascetic elements at Ephesus.²⁴ Arguing along these lines are many egalitarians like Gilbert Bilezikian who contended that uneducated women in Ephesus were in mind in our text.²⁵ Others argued for women teaching false doctrine in Ephesus, or even a Gnostic heresy in Ephesus, all of which Wayne Grudem has shown to be without any basis at all.²⁶

Both of these methods therefore do not support any significant and unique "Ephesian heresy" among the women which Paul was attempting to refute. No doubt there were certain problems like that of the false teachers Paul warned against in 1 Tim. 1:3-7, but examining the historical context does not seem to warrant any presence of a problem behind Paul's commands in our text, which would necessitate postulating a different historical background for reading it.

ANALYZING THE PERICOPE

We will now turn to our text proper. On the proper delineation of our pericope, Mounce notes rightly that verse 9 is dependent on verse 8 as "it does not contain a finite verbal form."²⁷ Furthermore, Mounce shows a parallel between the phrase Παρακαλῶ οὖν in verse 1 and the phrase Βούλομαι οὖν in verse 8, therefore arguing that verse 8 has begun a new section; a new line of thought.²⁸ The next break at verse 11 is "more substantial, grammatically and contextually."²⁹ Traditional biblical

²⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; New York, N.Y.: T&T Clark, 1999, 2004), 51

²⁵ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says About a Woman's Place in Church and Family*, (2nd Ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1965), 180-1. As cited in Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: Path*, 171-2.

²⁶ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: Path*, 171-91. Against the idea of women teachers being mentioned in 2 Tim. 3:6-7, Grudem states that "the passage does not say that the women were *doing the false teaching*; it simple says they were being led astray" (Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: Path*, 183)

²⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), 103-4

²⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), 104

²⁹ Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), 104

exegetes like Chrysostom and Calvin are therefore right in seeing the section division of verses 8-10, and 11-15.

Analyzing Paul's argument in our pericope will show us Paul's logical line of thought, which can be seen in Figure 1. With this, we will now go into detail into the text to understand its meaning, paying particular attention to particular words where necessary to understand what Paul is teaching there.

MODESTY AND PRESENTATION

Verses 8-10 make up the first part of our pericope. These verses deal with the presentation of men and women especially in appearances. In verse 8, Paul desires that men pray in every place lifting up holy hands without wrath and dispute. The phrase "in every place" (ἐν παντί τόπῳ) refers to any and every gathering of Christians for worship and any other Christian activities, as the context of a prayer service with teaching (1 Tim. 2: 1, 12) makes clear.³⁰ The idea of lifting up holy hands (ὁσίους χεῖρας) without wrath and dispute on the other hand refers to the idea of ritual cleanliness, where wrath and dispute are the negative qualifiers whose presence are unbecoming of one who is ritually clean, of those having holy hands before God.³¹ Using the Jewish posture of prayer therefore, the picture being portrayed is that of men in worship and prayer functioning like priests (1 Peter 2:9) before God in the context of the church.

Verses 9 and 10 continue the flow of thought from verse 8.³² Using the word ὡσαύτως, a

³⁰ "The context suggest that Paul is thinking of every place in the world where Christian worship." [Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), 107]

³¹ Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), 108. BDAG defines ὁσίος as a state of being "without fault relative to deity" as pertaining to human beings, and as used in the Greco-Roman world as those pure for the service of deity and wary of ritual pollution.

³² For verse 9, the καὶ placed within square brackets in the text is omitted in \aleph^* , A, H, P and some minuscules. It is however found in \aleph^2 , D*, F, G. Another variant καὶ τάς is seen in Ψ and Majority Text, which has little attestation. Probably the better of the two readings is the one with the καὶ. The

⁸Therefore, I desire men

to pray in every place lifting up holy hands

without anger and dispute

⁹Likewise [I desire] the women

to adorn themselves in respectable attire with modesty and self-control,

not with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothing

¹⁰but [these things] which are fitting for the women who promise godliness,
through good works

¹¹Let a woman

learn in silence in all submissiveness

¹²I do

not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man,

but [she is] to be in silence

¹³For

Adam was made first, then Eve

¹⁴and

Adam was not deceived but the woman who was deceived fully
and has become a transgressor.

¹⁵But

she will be saved through child-bearing,

if they remain in faith and love and sanctification with self-control

Figure 1: Logical Diagram of Paul's argument in 1 Tim. 2:8-15

meaning however is not affected whichever of these two readings are chosen. After *ἐν πλέγμασιν*, D², H, Ψ and Majority Text have *ἢ* instead of *καί*. The conjunction is missing altogether in P and 33. The chosen reading is supported by *ⲁ*, A, D*, F, G and thus has better attestation.

correlation is drawn between Paul's desire for men to lift up holy hands and his desire for women to wear modest apparel. Just as men in the posture of raised holy hands present themselves holy before the Lord, so likewise women who are modest present themselves holy before the Lord.

The manners of such modesty are both positively and negatively stated. Positively and firstly, women's clothing are to be respectable (ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ). Marshall states that the adjective "κόσμιος, -ον" is "especially used by philosophers to convey the sense of orderliness, discipline and decorum, and is the opposite of license."³³ Likewise, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT) states that the concept "always contains the idea of control of the body and its movements and impulses."³⁴ The focus therefore is for the dressing is to be proper and not licentious.

Secondly, Paul commanded their adornment to be done "with modesty and self-control" (μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης). Such denotes the idea of having a proper attitude of reverence and feeling of honor for oneself (αἰδώς) and observing proper measure and set laws (σωφροσύνη).³⁵ The focus here is on conforming to a fixed order and norm of that which is proper as to the very nature of things.³⁶

³³ Marshall, *Pastoral* (ICC), 448

³⁴ H. Sasse, "κόσμιος," *TDNT* 3:895-6

³⁵ R. Bultmann, "αἰδώς," *TDNT* 1:169-71; U. Luck, "σώφρων, σωφρονέω, σωφροσύνη," *TDNT* 7: 1097-1104.

³⁶ Mounce here is therefore wrong when he writes: "αἰδοῦς, 'modesty,' and σωφροσύνης, 'moderation,' both carry sexual connotation" [Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), 109]. Marshall is also wrong when he claims that the phrase "carries the discussion from mere appearance to the place of attitudes determined by faith," asking us to compare it with a similar context in 1 Peter 3:4 [Marshall, *Pastoral* (ICC), 448]. But similar context does not necessarily imply same meaning. The teaching of Paul here is not about attitudes but rather outward conformity to what is proper to the very nature of things. On another issue, both Mounce [*Pastoral*, (WBC 46), 108] and Marshall [*Pastoral*, [ICC], 447] claim that this instruction was given because the women were not dressing modestly, but this claim cannot be proven.

Paul followed by giving a positive and negative command and example of how such adornment is to be like. The principle of the negative command not to adorn with “braided hair, gold, pearls or expansive clothing” is contrasted with the positive command to adorn with good works. Physical beauty is ephemeral and of less importance before God.

Placed in the larger context, the whole issue is one of order. God has ordained men to present themselves holy analogous to the conduct of the Old Testament priests. Women on the other hand present holiness before God through the modesty which God has ordained proper to the very nature of how things are as He has ordained them to be. The issue here is not whether women should pray, since other passages do tell us they do (c.f. 1 Sam. 1:10; 1 Cor. 11:5). Rather, the issue here is the nature of presentation before God. Only men were priests in the Old Testament, and therefore the example of men in prayer with holy hands is used for Christian men. Similarly, the issue of modesty is not limited to women, as if men could be immodest, but that the two examples given are meant to teach the general principle that our presentation before God ought to be holy and proper, in line with God’s ordained order of how things are supposed to be.

Before we continue, an objection has been raised that we should translate the terms ἀνὴρ and γυνή as “husband” and “wife” respectively, instead of the generic “man” and “women.”³⁷ The traditional interpretation of “man” and “woman” however is to be preferred because it is inconceivable that only married men are to pray “without anger and dispute” while single men can pray with anger and dispute, and that single women can dress immodestly, but married women cannot.³⁸

TEACHING AND ἈΥΘΕΝΤΕΙΝ

³⁷ Gordon P. Hugenberger, “Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey of Approaches to 1 Tim. 2:8-15,” *JETS* 35/3 (September 1992): 341-360

³⁸ Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), 112

Perhaps the most controversial part of our pericope is found in verses 11 to 15. Verse 11 gives Paul's command that women should learn in silence. Verse 12 has Paul prohibiting a woman to teach or "have authority over" a man. Verses 13 to 14 provide us Paul's stated reason why this is the case—the order of Creation and Fall, while verse 15 gives us an enigmatic sentence on childbearing.³⁹

The first question to consider is why there is a shift to the singular from the plural nouns in verses 8-10. A reason could be that Paul is stating a principle here, a theory which is bolstered by beginning verse 11 with the anarthrous noun γυνή.⁴⁰ Paul therefore seems to be positing a general principle here, not a command for a mere local application.

There are three main flash points in this text which we shall look at: the meaning of ἀθεντεῖν, Paul's argument from creation, and the issue of childbearing. We shall look at these succinctly.

Following Paul's logical line of argument, it can be seen that Paul contrasts the idea of teaching or exercising authority over men with the motif of "being in silence" (verse 12), which from verse 11 means "learning in silence in all submissiveness."⁴¹ There therefore seems to be a contrast between "having authority over" (ἀθεντεῖν) and being "in all submissiveness."

Egalitarians attempt to reject this interpretation of the text by interpreting ἀθεντεῖν, a *hapax legomenon*, in various ways that hint of despotism. Linda L. Belleville argues that ἀθεντεῖν should be translated "as 'to dominate' rather than 'to exercise authority over,' citing the tradition of the Old Latin, Vulgate, Geneva up to the KJV translation, where the KJV has translated it as "usurp authority

³⁹ In verse 14, a textual variant substituting ἐξαπατηθεῖσα with ἀπατηθεῖσα can be found in κ^2 , D² and the Majority Text. The chosen reading has the support of κ^* , A, D*, F, G, P, Ψ and thus has better attestation. The meaning however is essentially unchanged regardless.

⁴⁰ Mounce, *Pastoral* (WBC 46), 118; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 254

⁴¹ The use of the strong adversative ἄλλά indicates that Paul intends that being in silence is in sharp contrast to "teaching and exercising authority over men" (BDAG).

over,” as support.⁴² From the cognate noun ἀθέντης which she argued refers to “the perpetrator of a murder committed by others” by the first century AD, Belleville then looks at the various uses of the verb ἀθεντέω and states that they are witnesses to “the continuing use of *authenteō* to mean ‘to hold sway over, to dominate.’”⁴³ On the other hand, Catherine C. Kroeger had argued that the verb means “to engage in fertility practices with,” an assertion however refuted by Carroll D. Osburn who asserts it merely means “to domineer.”⁴⁴ Thus, as David M. Scholer summarized for many egalitarians, “the evidence is in and it clearly establishes *authentein* as a negative term, indicating violence and inappropriate behavior.”⁴⁵ Yet another egalitarian interpretation has ἀθεντεῖν as meaning “proclaim oneself author of a man.”⁴⁶

In response, Wayne Grudem claimed that the “most complete study of this word shows that its meaning is primarily neutral, ‘to exercise authority over’” and that “several earlier studies were flawed by mixing with the verb examples of two different nouns with the same spelling.”⁴⁷ He also claimed that “the grammatical structure of 1 Timothy 2:12 rules out any negative meaning.”⁴⁸

Putting all these together, it seems that ἀθεντεῖν seems to be neutral in meaning. At the same time, Paul is likely playing on the word with its similarity to the noun ἀθέντης. The notion of women exercising authority over men is analogous to despotism, as it violates God’s ordained order. Such is apparent when we consider Paul’s basis for prohibition. Lastly, as Piper and Grudem has argued,

⁴² Belleville, “Teaching the Usurping Authority,” in Pierce, *Equality*, 209-10

⁴³ Belleville, “Teaching the Usurping Authority,” in Pierce, *Equality*, 212-3, 216

⁴⁴ Catherine C. Kroeger, “Ancient Heresies and a Strange Greek Verb,” *The Reformed Journal* 29 (March 1979), 14; Carroll D. Osburn, “ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ (1 Timothy 2:12),” *Restoration Quarterly* 25 (1982): 1-12

⁴⁵ David M. Scholer, “The Evangelical Debate over Biblical ‘Headship,’” in Kroeger and Beck, *Women*, 50

⁴⁶ Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-14 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1992), 103.

⁴⁷ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: Path*, 202

⁴⁸ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: Path*, 203

against the view that the two verbs (διδάσκειν and ἀθηντεῖν) should be taken together in a hendiadys, the two activities are “nonetheless distinct” as οὐδὲ “does not usually join together words that restate the same thing or that are mutually interpreting” and therefore women are prohibited from teaching regardless of the meaning of ἀθηντεῖν taken.⁴⁹

CREATION ORDER AND GENDER ROLES

The ground for Paul’s command that women are not to teach or exercise authority over men is stated by Paul to be the creation order. Just as firstly, Adam was created before Eve, and secondly, Eve was the one deceived not Adam, so therefore women are not to teach or have authority over men.

This reason has been disputed by many. The feminist Virginia Ramey Mollenkott discounts this by arguing that Genesis 2 is “poetic narrative,” not literal and therefore mere “*descriptions* of first century customs applied to specific situations in local churches.”⁵⁰ Mary Hayter on the other hand claims that Paul was “counseling compromise and acquiescence with Jewish understanding of Old Testament teaching about woman’s status and function.”⁵¹ Royce Gordon Gruenler thinks that the creation episode is used by Paul because the woman “refused to confer with her husband regarding the serpent’s redefinition of God’s Word,” while Ronald W. Pierce argues that Paul is reminding women to “wait on God’s timing to accomplish his redemptive purposes.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Piper and Grudem, *Recovering*, 187

⁵⁰ Mollenkott, *Women*, 83-4. Emphasis original.

⁵¹ Mary Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ: The Use and Abuse of the Bible in the Debate about Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: 1987), 142

⁵² Royce Gordon Gruenler, “The Mission-Lifestyle Setting of 1 Tim. 2:8-15,” *JETS* 41/2 (June 1998), 220-1; Ronald W. Pierce, “Evangelicals and Gender Roles in the 1990s: 1 Tim 2:8-15: A Test Case,” *JETS* 36/3 (September 1993): 351

We can discount Mollekott's view as contrary to what Scripture claims for itself—that Genesis 1-2 are historical narratives intended to be read as such.⁵³ The various egalitarian interpretations either use some sort of progressive hermeneutic that contains the modernist arrogance that modern men are more enlightened now, and/ or they do not actually interact with what Paul is saying. We note here that Paul gave as reasons the order of creation and the identity of the woman, Eve, being deceived. Paul is therefore using these examples typologically to refer to God's ordained order. Just as Adam was created first before Eve (Adam first in order- *τάξις*), and Eve was deceived ("first" in order, negatively), so likewise there is an order (*τάξις*) of things in which God has given men the priority in order or *τάξις*. Paul's argument therefore is a typological argument stating that his commands are what they are because they are grounded in God's ordained order in Creation and the Fall. It is true that the second reason is based upon the Fall, but since the first reason given by Paul is from Creation when men and women were sinless, the ordering priority of men over women is not a consequence of the Fall, but rather the Fall merely reinforces it in a more severe manner.⁵⁴

Lastly, we deal with the issue of childbearing in verse 15. If as I have contended the plural changes to the singular in verse 11 to mark the presence of a general principle, I would contend that the subsequent shift back to the plural moves the text from the general principle back to Paul's application. Following from verses 13 and 14 which speak about the creation episode, the first part of verse 15 brings us back to the protoevangel mentioned in creation in Gen. 3: 15. God in the middle of the curse

⁵³ Stephen W. Boyd, "Evidence for an Historical Reading of Genesis 1:1-2:3," in Larry Vardiman, Andrew Snelling, and Eugene F. Chaffin, *Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth: A Young-Earth Creationist Research Initiative*, Volume 2 (El Cajon, Calif.: Institute for Creation Research, 2005), 631-734

⁵⁴ Such a reinforcement is seen in the curse placed upon women that God said that her desire will be for or against her husband (אִשָּׁה אֶת־אִישָׁ תִשְׁוָקָתָד וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל־בָּךְ – Gen. 3:16ff), a phrase which refers to a struggle to dominate her husband which then lead to harsher ruling by her husband [Susan T. Foh, "What is the Woman's Desire?," *WTJ* 37/3 (1975): 376-83]

upon Eve proclaimed the Gospel of her salvation, and thus verse 15 speaks about salvation through the childbearing of the “seed of the woman.” Shifting from the singular to the plural, Paul then applies it to women in particular. Instead of “teaching” and “having authority over men,” women are “to remain in faith, love and sanctification with self-control.”

In contrast to this, Gruenler argued that verse 15 teaches that women are to “assume responsibility for producing good seed, both physically and spiritually, in children and converts.”⁵⁵ David R. Kimberly states that Paul intended to “restore this womanly vocation to its rightful place in contrast to the manner in which it was depreciated in gnostic circles.”⁵⁶ Contrary to Kimberly, there is no proof of any gnostic ideas floating around in Ephesus, and both of them do not do justice to the switch from the singular to the plural within the verse itself. Kimberly’s assertion that such a rendering is “grammatically strained” is itself a non sequitor.⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have seen what the text teaches us regarding Paul’s commands based upon God’s ordained order (τάξις) of how things ought to be. In the first part of our pericope, men are to lift up holy hands in prayer analogous to Old Testament priests presenting themselves holy to God. Likewise, women are to dress modestly as their manner of presenting themselves holy to God. In the second part, Paul prohibited women from teaching and having authority over men so that God’s ordained order is preserved in the actions and responsibilities of Christians in the church. Rather, women are to fulfill their ordained roles of which the main one is to “remain in faith and love and sanctification with self-control.” Through all these, God will be glorified as His people live their lives

⁵⁵ Gruenler, “Setting,” 238

⁵⁶ David R. Kimberly, “1 Tim 2:15: A Possible Understanding of a Difficult Text,” *JETS* 35/4 (December 1992), 486

⁵⁷ Kimberly, “Possible,” 484

in a way that function as a witness for Him, not as the world in rebellion lives, but in obedience to Christ in the seemingly unfair (to modern people) gender roles ordained by God.

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