

An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15

A Dialogue with Scholarship

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As the third edition of this book and essay is published,¹ it seems that fundamentally new arguments regarding the role of women in the church are not being disseminated.² Hence, the content of this chapter has not changed substantially. This is not to say that no new work has been done on individual issues such as the Ephesian background, the meaning of the word *authentēin*, or the syntax of 1 Timothy 2:12. In fact, the preceding chapters take careful note of such developments, and the authors contribute fresh scholarship by examining the relevant primary evidence. In such cases, I have updated the discussion to include recent publications and research and have revised the chapter as necessary to take into account the current state of scholarship.³

When I first began studying this issue in earnest, I wanted to believe that Scripture places no limitations on women in ministry and that every ministry position is open to them. As a student, I read many articles on the question, hoping that I could be convinced exegetically that all ministry offices should be opened to women. Upon reading the articles, though, I remained unconvinced intellectually and exegetically that the *new* interpretations of the controversial passages were plausible. Indeed, reading the egalitarian interpretations persuaded me that the complementarian view was true, since the former involved unlikely interpretations of the so-called problem passages. I remember saying to a friend who is a New Testament scholar, “I would like to believe the position you hold. But it seems as if you have to leap over the evidence of the text to espouse such a position.” He replied, “Tom, you are right. Take that leap. Take that leap.” Leaping over the evidence is precisely what I am unwilling to do. Thus, I remain unconvinced intellectually and exegetically that the egalitarian position is tenable.

The complementarian position seems unloving and discriminatory to many, and the general atmosphere of our society encourages people to liberate themselves from traditional

views. American culture often lauds those who discard conventional positions and brands those who advocate new positions as courageous, creative, and thoughtful.⁴ On the other hand, those who hold the complementarian view may be thought of as contentious, narrow, and perhaps even psychologically hampered. These latter qualities are doubtless true of some who support the complementarian view, and yet it does not follow that the complementarian view is thereby falsified. The truth or falsity of both views must be established by an intensive exegesis of the biblical text.

Even though many are inclined to assume that the egalitarian position is correct, I will argue in this essay that interpretations of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 in defense of the egalitarian position fail to persuade exegetically.⁵ The burden of my essay is to interact with such research and to set forth reasons for questioning its validity.⁶ Scholars who embrace the feminist position and argue that the author of 1 Timothy 2 was wrong or inconsistent are more exegetically straightforward and more intellectually convincing than those who contend that Paul did not actually intend to restrict women teaching men in 1 Timothy 2.⁷

The Life Setting for the Text

One of the central planks for the egalitarian view is the occasional nature of 1 Timothy. Too often, they argue, scholars have seen 1 Timothy as a manual of church structure, so that they understand the directives given as permanently binding on all churches.⁸ What scholars have not sufficiently appreciated, egalitarians contend, is that the Pastoral Epistles addressed specific situations, particularly the false teaching imperiling the churches.⁹ Thus, egalitarians maintain, we should not understand the letters as timeless marching orders for the church but must interpret them in light of the specific circumstances that occasioned them.

The emphasis on the specific situation and occasion of the letters is salutary. The Pastoral Epistles are not doctrinal treatises that float free from the circumstances that called them forth. In the case of 1 Timothy, Paul clearly wrote the letter, at least in part, to counteract false teaching (1:3–11, 18–20; 4:1–10; 5:11–15; 6:3–10, 20–21). Indeed, the transition between 1 Timothy 1:18–20 and 2:1 indicated by “therefore” (οὖν) shows that the following instructions relate to the charge to resist false teaching (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3, 18).¹⁰ The letter is designed to correct the abuses that heretics introduced into the community.

Nevertheless, caution should be exercised in explaining the nature of 1 Timothy. Even though the presence of heresy looms large, it does not follow that the false teaching explains every feature of the letter. Paul probably included some material for general purposes that did not address the deviant teaching directly. We could easily fall into the error of overemphasizing the ad hoc character of 1 Timothy.¹¹ After Paul had functioned as a missionary and church planter for so many years, he likely had a general vision of how churches should be structured.¹² Hence, his instructions were not entirely situational but reflected the pattern of governance that he expected to exist in his churches.¹³

Even if Paul wrote 1 Timothy entirely to address specific circumstances (which is

doubtful), it would not logically follow from the occasional nature of the letter that 1 Timothy has no application to the church today. It would be a mistake to argue as follows:¹⁴

1. Paul wrote 1 Timothy to counteract a specific situation in the life of the church.
2. Nothing written to a specific situation is normative for the church today.
3. Therefore, 1 Timothy contains no directives for the church today.

If we were to claim that documents written to specific situations do not apply to the church today, then much of the New Testament would not be applicable to us, since many New Testament books were addressed to particular communities facing special circumstances. Universal principles are tucked into books written in response to specific circumstances.

Of course, careful scholars who favor the egalitarian view do not argue that the directives in 1 Timothy are inapplicable merely because of the life situation that called them forth. They rightly insist that the life setting of the letter must inform our interpretation and application of specific passages. Thus, we must probe to see whether Paul's admonitions to women in 1 Timothy 2:9–15 are temporary directives in response to the impact of the false teachers. Can we show that Paul prohibited women from teaching or exercising authority over men solely on the ground of the false teaching afflicting the Ephesian church? There is little doubt that the heretics had influence on the women in the community (cf. 1 Tim. 5:11–15; 2 Tim. 3:6–7), and it is possible that the issues of women's adornment and teaching arose as a consequence of the adversaries' leverage.¹⁵ Yet merely saying that Paul proscribed women from teaching men because of the impact the false teachers had on women does not establish the egalitarian view. Instead, Paul may have responded to these specific problems with a general principle that is universally applicable. Whether he does in fact appeal to a universal principle and what that principle is must be established by an interpretation of the verses in question.

Naturally, if one could show that Paul prohibited women from teaching or exercising authority over men solely on the grounds of the false teaching and its specific features, that would greatly strengthen the egalitarian position.¹⁶ For instance, Richard and Catherine Kroeger see the heresy as an amalgamation of Jewish-gnostic traditions and Ephesian devotion to Artemis.¹⁷ The false teachers, they argue, proclaimed that Eve held priority over Adam and enlightened Adam with her teaching.¹⁸ In 1 Timothy, then, Paul described Adam as created first and Eve as deceived to counterbalance the adversaries' exaltation of Eve. If this reconstruction is accurate, it enhances the thesis that Paul's instruction contains temporary restraints on women.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the Kroegers' reconstruction contains many methodological errors. Historians generally view gnosticism as developing in the second century AD, and while the Kroegers describe the heresy in first-century Ephesus as "proto-gnostic," they consistently appeal to later sources to establish the contours of the heresy.²⁰ The lack of historical rigor is evident.²¹ They have not grasped how one should apply the historical method in discerning the nature of false teaching in the Pauline letters.²²

The work of Sharon Gritz is more restrained and sober than that of the Kroegers, though

her conclusions are similar to theirs.²³ She posits that Paul restricted women from teaching men because of the infiltration of the cult of the mother goddess, Artemis, in Ephesus.²⁴ Even if her case were established, this would hardly prove that Paul limited his restriction on women to the particular situation, for he could have been giving a universal principle that was precipitated by special circumstances. The central weakness of Gritz's work, however, is that she fails to provide an in-depth argument for the influence of the Artemis cult in 1 Timothy.²⁵ She records the presence of such a cult in Ephesus and then simply assumes that it functions as the background to the letter. However, to say that sexual impurity (1 Tim. 5:11–14) and greed (1 Tim. 6:3–5) are signs of the Artemis cult is unpersuasive.²⁶ Many religious and nonreligious movements are plagued with these problems. Gritz needs to show that the devotion to myths and genealogies (1 Tim. 1:3–4), the Jewish law (1 Tim. 1:6–11), asceticism (1 Tim. 4:3–4), and knowledge (1 Tim. 6:20–21) indicate that the problem specifically concerned the Artemis cult.²⁷ Furthermore, Steven Baugh's essay in this volume disproves the notion that Artemis worship signified an early form of feminism, and thus Gritz's reconstruction of the situation doesn't accord with the extant evidence on ancient Ephesus.

Many scholars who reconstruct the situation behind the Pastorals should pay greater heed to the fragmentary nature of the evidence.²⁸ Robert Karris observes that "it seems extremely difficult to infer from the polemic the nature of the opponents' teaching."²⁹ He concludes that "the author of the Pastorals is quite tight-lipped about the teachings of his opponents."³⁰ Karris is probably too pessimistic about our ability to delineate the heresy, but some scholars are far too confident about their ability to reconstruct the life setting in some detail.

A more promising and cautious approach has been proposed by Philip Towner.³¹ He suggests that the problem in the Pastoral Epistles was a form of overrealized eschatology, analogous in many respects to a similar phenomenon in 1 Corinthians.³² The belief that the resurrection had already occurred (2 Tim. 2:18; cf. 1 Tim. 1:20) was not a denial of resurrection altogether, but it does signal that the opponents believed in a spiritual resurrection with Christ.³³ Such an overrealized eschatology could also explain their food prohibitions and dim view of marriage (1 Tim. 4:1–3).³⁴ Perhaps it could also account for the emancipation of women from previous norms (1 Tim. 2:9–15; cf. 1 Cor. 11:2–16; 14:33b–36). Towner's reconstruction is only a possibility. While it leaves some questions unanswered, it has the virtue of not depending on second-century evidence.³⁵ In addition, to describe the nature of the false teaching, he gleans evidence from within the Pastoral Epistles themselves. By contrast, those who see the Artemis cult as prominent appeal to a movement not mentioned or even clearly implied in the Pastoral Epistles.

Bruce Winter has suggested that a new kind of woman was emerging in the Roman empire of the first century, and these kinds of women disrupted the gender status quo.³⁶ Towner also picks up on this idea in arguing for an egalitarian reading.³⁷ But Towner's appropriation of Winter doesn't clearly lead to an egalitarian conclusion, for Winter himself supports a complementarian understanding of the text, and thus it is quite surprising that Towner relies

so heavily on Winter to support his egalitarian interpretation.³⁸ Towner actually indicates the weakness of his case, admitting that the evidence for women engaging in all aspects of ministry “is sparse,”³⁹ “slender,” and “fragmentary,”⁴⁰ but he then goes on to argue that it is “inescapable” that women taught in “public settings.”⁴¹ Towner ultimately goes beyond his own strictures and cautions in contending for women teachers in Ephesus. I have already noted that even if Winter’s reading of the background were correct, it doesn’t clearly or necessarily lead to egalitarianism. In addition, Alicia Batten raises questions about some elements of Winter’s view, for the new woman posited by Winter isn’t as clearly evident as he claims since Paul’s advice on modesty and the domestic sphere reflect typical ethical exhortations in the Greco-Roman world.⁴²

Whatever the specific features of the heresy, we lack any firm evidence that the priority or superiority of Eve played any part in the false teaching. Nor is it clear that 1 Timothy 5:13 demonstrates that women were *teaching* the heresy.⁴³ Paul does not say there that “they were *teaching* things that were not fitting,” but that “they were *speaking* things that were not fitting.”⁴⁴ While Paul uses *teaching* and *speaking* synonymously in at least one instance in the Pastorals (Titus 2:1, 15), it is unclear in this context that Paul responds to women spreading false teaching. In other texts, Paul directly addresses false teaching (e.g., 1 Tim. 1:3–11; 4:1–5; 6:3–10), but the false teachers specifically named in the Pastorals are all men (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17–18; cf. 2 Tim. 4:14), and women are portrayed as being influenced by the heresy (1 Tim. 5:11–15; 2 Tim. 3:5–9) rather than as being its purveyors.⁴⁵ Towner is probably correct in concluding that an emancipation movement among women was a side effect rather than a specific goal of the agitators’ teaching.⁴⁶

Now it is certainly possible, even if 1 Timothy 5:13 doesn’t point in this direction, that some women began to engage in teaching because they had fallen prey to an overrealized eschatology.⁴⁷ If so, they may have believed that the resurrection had already occurred (2 Tim. 2:18) and thus that the distinctions between men and women were erased since the new age had dawned. Still, the suggestion that women were prohibited from teaching because they were mainly responsible for the false teaching cannot be clearly substantiated from the text. Paul almost certainly issued the prohibition against women teaching because some women had indeed begun to teach men, but it isn’t clear from the text that the women who were teaching were spreading the heresy.

Even if some women were spreading the heresy (which remains uncertain), we still need to explain why Paul proscribes only women from teaching. Since men are specifically named as purveyors of the heresy, would it not make more sense if Paul forbade all false teaching by both men and women? In this thinking, a prohibition against women alone seems to be reasonable only if *all* the women in Ephesus were duped by the false teaching and *all* the women sought to perpetrate it. This latter state of affairs is quite unlikely, for as Baugh shows in his essay, the notion that all the women in Ephesus were uneducated does not accord with the evidence. The description of women’s attire in 1 Timothy 2:9 suggests the presence of some well-to-do women in the church, who would have had greater access to education.

Also, it is likely that Priscilla was still in Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:19), and we know she was educated (Acts 18:26).⁴⁸

A Word on the Near Context

The first chapter of 1 Timothy demonstrates that the letter is in part a response to false teaching.⁴⁹ In 2:1–7 Paul emphasizes that God desires all, including kings and other governing authorities, to be saved. Perhaps the adversaries used their myths and genealogies to argue that salvation was impossible for some people. Thus, Paul asserts his apostolic authority (2:7) to emphasize God’s intention in sending Christ as a ransom for all. Therefore, he enjoins believers to pray for the salvation of all.

A new section opens with v. 8, but the word “therefore” (οὖν) shows an intimate connection with vv. 1–7. The link between the two sections is strengthened when we observe that Paul calls on the men to pray (v. 8), presumably for the salvation of all those referred to in vv. 1–7.⁵⁰ Perhaps the anger and disputing that Paul forbids in v. 8 were precipitated by the teaching of the agitators, which caused the church to veer away from its purpose of praying for the salvation of unbelievers.⁵¹ Unfortunately, we lack sufficient information to know what caused the disputations. The words “I want” (βούλομαι) do not merely express Paul’s personal preference for prayer and the avoidance of anger. Indeed, they immediately follow v. 7, which is a defense of Paul’s apostolic authority. Thus, they express an authoritative command to pray.⁵²

When Paul calls on men to pray “in every place” (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ), he is probably referring to house churches.⁵³ Thus, the directives here relate generically to a public church meeting where believers are gathered together.⁵⁴ The words “in every place” refer to all churches everywhere, not just those in Ephesus (cf. Mal. 1:11; 1 Cor. 1:2).⁵⁵ In any case, whether the reference is to house churches in Ephesus or to all churches everywhere, a public worship context is likely.⁵⁶ The public nature of the praying in v. 8 holds significance for vv. 9–15, which are also directed to public assemblies. We see this clearly in vv. 11–12, where women are prohibited from teaching or exercising authority over men. But George Knight questions whether vv. 9–10 are limited to public meetings since wearing appropriate clothing and good works are necessary at all times, not just in worship services.⁵⁷ Knight rightly observes that proper clothing and good works extend beyond worship services, while Paul’s exhortations on suitable attire probably stem from women wearing indecorous adornment at public meetings.⁵⁸ Thus the general call to engage in good works is probably occasioned by the specific problem of women focusing improperly on attire in the gatherings of the community, even though Paul expects the good works to extend beyond church meetings. If the above observations are correct, there is no need to view vv. 9–10 as a shift away from public worship.⁵⁹

Women’s Adornment (1 Tim. 2:9–10)

The text is ambiguous regarding the connection between vv. 8 and 9. Is Paul saying, “Likewise I want the women to pray with respectable adornment,” or, “Likewise I want the women to adorn themselves with respectable adornment”? Some scholars favor the idea that the infinitive “to pray” (προσεύχασθαι) follows the implied verb “I want.”⁶⁰ In support of this view is the “likewise” (ὡσαύτως) linking vv. 8 and 9. Just as Paul wants the men to pray in a certain manner (“lifting up holy hands without wrath and disputing”), so too he wants the women to pray with respectable department. More likely, however, the infinitive “to adorn” (κοσμεῖν) completes the implied verb “I want.”⁶¹ The word “likewise” is a loose transition and does not indicate that the exact same activities are in mind (cf. 1 Tim. 3:8, 11; 5:25; Titus 2:3, 6). The connection between v. 8 and vv. 9–15, then, is as follows: In v. 8, Paul considers the problem men have when gathered for public worship (anger and disputing in prayer), while in vv. 9–15, he addresses two issues that have cropped up with the women in public gatherings (adornment and teaching men). One should not conclude from the calls to men to pray and to women to adorn themselves properly that only men should pray in worship.⁶² First Corinthians 11:5 clarifies that women are allowed to participate by praying in public meetings.⁶³

What is meant by the word γυναῖκας in v. 9 and throughout the rest of this passage? Does it refer to women in general or more specifically to wives? If it refers to wives both here and in subsequent verses, then the passage does not necessarily forbid women from teaching publicly in church. It merely prohibits them from teaching and exercising authority over their husbands. The idea that 1 Timothy 2 refers to wives rather than to women in general has been argued at some length by Gordon Hugenberger.⁶⁴ He notes that 1 Peter 3:1–7 is quite similar to 1 Timothy 2:9–15, and the former refers to husbands and wives. Appropriate dress for women (v. 9), good works (v. 10), and childrearing (v. 15) apply outside worship contexts. Also, the phrase “every place” does not refer to public meetings in 1 Corinthians 1:2 and 1 Thessalonians 1:8, just as lifting one’s hands in prayer does not demand a public context. Thus, Paul does not necessarily have public worship in view. In addition, elsewhere in Paul the terms γυνή and ἀνὴρ usually refer to wives and husbands, not to women and men in general. Further, he asserts that the parallels between Titus 2:4–5 and 1 Peter 3:1–7 are crucial for establishing the referent in 1 Timothy 2. In fact, Hugenberger thinks that the extensive verbal and conceptual parallels between 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Peter 3 “must be determinative for our exegesis” of 1 Timothy 2.⁶⁵ He believes it unthinkable that 1 Timothy would not address the family.

The burden of Hugenberger’s argument rests on parallel texts, which allegedly show that Paul refers to husbands and wives in 1 Timothy 2:8–15. He especially leans on the parallels between 1 Timothy 2:8–15 and 1 Peter 3:1–7, seeing the latter as “determinative” for the meaning of the former. However, despite some impressive parallels, the texts hardly correspond in every respect. For instance, the 1 Peter text refers, in part, to *nonbelieving* husbands (3:1).⁶⁶ And in 1 Peter 3:7 husbands receive instructions concerning their specific

responsibilities to their wives (cf. Eph. 5:25–30, 33; Col. 3:19), while 1 Timothy 2 lacks any admonition to husbands regarding their relationship with their wives. Finally, it is obvious that Peter has husbands and wives in view in 1 Peter 3 since he says wives should be subject to *their own* (ἰδίος) husbands (v. 1; cf. v. 5). It is precisely this kind of clarifying evidence that 1 Timothy 2:8–15 lacks, which is why most scholars detect a reference to men and women in general.

It is hardly impressive to say that elsewhere γυνή and ἀνὴρ refer to husbands and wives when the contexts of those texts plainly indicate a reference to husbands and wives and when such passages are not even debated with respect to this issue.⁶⁷ By way of contrast, the lack of such contextual qualifications in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 shows that Paul is referring not just to husbands and wives but also to men and women in general.⁶⁸ In Colossians 3:18–19, Paul could conceivably be referring to men and women in general, but the context (the next passage deals with relations between parents and children, 3:20–21) and the call to “love your wives” (3:19) reveal that he has husbands and wives in view. The very lack of such specificity in 1 Timothy 2:8–15 has rightly led most commentators to see a reference to men and women in general. Hugenerberger demands that the Pauline (and Petrine) usage elsewhere must obtain here, but he fails to notice the significant contextual differences between these other texts and 1 Timothy 2 and ends up imposing these other texts onto the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2.⁶⁹

Hugenerberger fittingly observes that appropriate dress, good works, and childrearing (better, childbearing) apply generally. And yet this recognition calls into question his thesis that Paul is addressing only wives, for it is quite improbable that Paul would be concerned about the adornment of wives but not the dress of single women.⁷⁰ Issues of adornment were probably occasioned by dress at public worship, even if they extended beyond that sphere. While Hugenerberger cites parallel texts to question the worship context here, his thesis is improbable if “in every place” (v. 8) refers to public meetings. What makes a public worship context likely is not only the words “in every place” but also the activities occurring there: prayer (v. 8) and teaching (vv. 11–12).

The flow of thought of 1 Timothy as a whole commends a public setting. False teachers are threatening the church, and Paul charges Timothy to stem the tide of their influence. First Timothy 2:8–15 is followed by an exhortation to appoint overseers and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1–13), two offices that relate to public ministry in the church. The apostle’s instructions are designed to make the church a bulwark against the false teaching (1 Tim. 3:14–15). Indeed, Paul immediately returns to the threat of false teaching and the need to resist it in 1 Timothy 4.⁷¹ It seems improbable, contrary to Hugenerberger, that Paul would insert teaching on husbands and wives at home in the midst of his polemic against false teachers.⁷² I conclude with most commentators that a reference to husbands and wives in 1 Timothy 2:8–15 is quite improbable.⁷³ Instead, Paul gives instructions regarding proper behavior for men and women in public meetings of the church.

Coming back to the larger issue of women's adornment, advocates of the egalitarian view often raise this question in discussions about the legitimacy of women teaching men. For example, Alvera Mickelsen says, "Those who believe that verse 12 forever bars all women of all time from teaching or having authority over men usually ignore the commands in the other six verses in this section. This is a classic case of 'selective literalism.' If this passage is universal for all Christian women of all time, then no woman should ever wear pearls or gold (including wedding rings) or have braided hair or expensive clothing."⁷⁴ David Scholer argues that in the culture of Paul's day, proper adornment for women was linked to submission to husbands.⁷⁵ He insists that women's adornment (vv. 9–10) must be applied in the same way as the prohibitions against women teaching (vv. 11–12).⁷⁶ One cannot legitimately claim that teaching prohibitions are normative whereas women's adornment is culturally relative. Those who prohibit women from teaching men should, to be consistent, also forbid women from wearing any jewelry. Neither can they escape, he reasons, by saying that submission is the principle that undergirds the wearing of appropriate attire, so that the wearing of jewelry is permitted as long as one has a submissive spirit. This passage inextricably links suitable adornment and submission, so that one cannot surrender the former and maintain the latter. Scholer concludes that a careful interpretation of the text in its historical-cultural setting neither proscribes a woman from wearing jewelry nor from teaching men, but that those who uphold the complementarian view have inconsistently enforced the proscription on teaching men while ignoring the verses on proper adornment.⁷⁷

These scholars raise crucial questions that I will address in my explanation of these verses. We begin, though, by noting what the verses actually say. Paul calls upon the women to "adorn themselves with respectable deportment" (v. 9). The word *καταστολή* ("deportment") probably refers to both suitable clothing and suitable behavior.⁷⁸ The rest of verses 9–10 elaborates on proper deportment. It consists of modesty and discretion with respect to dress instead of enticing and ostentatious clothing. Immodest attire that reflects a lack of mature judgment includes braided hair, gold, pearls, and expensive clothing. Women who profess godliness should focus on good works rather than outward adornment.

Precisely what is Paul's intention here? Scholer and others rightly conclude that a proscription of all jewelry solely on the basis of these verses falls into the error of excessive literalism. We should not rule out too quickly, though, the possibility that we have ignored these verses because they indict our culture.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, we have an important clue to Paul's intention in the words "expensive clothing" (*ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ*).⁸⁰ The proscription is not against the wearing of clothing but luxurious adornment, an excessive devotion to beautiful and splendid attire.⁸¹ As Baugh shows in his essay in this volume, Greco-Roman moralists of Paul's day commonly echoed his words about women's adornment, for they criticized luxurious and seductive attire.⁸² Indeed, they shared Paul's emphasis on "modesty" (*σωφροσύνη*). First Peter 3:3 supports this interpretation, a similar text that, if read literally, prohibits all wearing of clothing, which is scarcely Peter's intention.

Peter's words on attire help us understand Paul's instructions on braids, gold, and pearls. Paul's purpose is not to ban these altogether but to warn against expensive and extravagant preoccupation with one's appearance. James Hurley suggests that the command is directed against the elaborate hairstyles worn by fashionable women and wealthy courtesans.⁸³ Probably Paul was indicting the plaiting of hair with gold since braiding hair was common, enhancing the thesis that what is being forbidden is an excessive devotion to outward adornment.⁸⁴ In the Greco-Roman world, writers commonly issued polemics against ostentation of wealth.⁸⁵ Even Judaism did not absolutely forbid the wearing of jewelry.⁸⁶ In conclusion, the text does not rule out all wearing of jewelry by women but forbids ostentation and luxury in adornment.⁸⁷

It is likely as well that these words on adornment contain a polemic against seductive and enticing clothing.⁸⁸ This connotation is suggested by the words "modesty and discretion" (αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης, v. 9).⁸⁹ In both Jewish and Greco-Roman literature, sexual seductiveness is linked with extravagant adornment.⁹⁰ Thus, we can draw two principles from these verses: Paul is prohibiting not only extravagant and ostentatious adornment but also clothing that is seductive and enticing.⁹¹ These words are still relevant in our culture, for materialism and sexually seductive attire plague us as well.

As we have already noted, some scholars argue that suitable clothing was linked with submission to one's husband in Paul's day. Scholer, in particular, cites a number of texts to support this view.⁹² Nonetheless, that these two themes are wedded to the extent that Scholer argues is unpersuasive. In 1 Peter 3:1–6, for instance, the two themes stand side by side, but it goes beyond the evidence of the text to say that submission is expressed by one's attire. And the other texts that Scholer cites specify the vice of unchastity with regard to women, not insubordination or lack of submission.⁹³ For them, the wife's devotion to and honor of her husband probably relate to faithfulness to the marriage bed rather than submission.⁹⁴ In any case, 1 Timothy 2:9–10 says not even a word about lack of submission, and while v. 11 mentions submissiveness, it doesn't link submission with attire. Thus reading this theme into the verses on adornment is questionable.

Scholer's conclusion that a principial application of 1 Timothy 2 would be illegitimate remains unconvincing. We rightly apply the principle in other biblical texts without requiring that Christians adopt the literal practice Paul used to communicate the principle in his day. For instance, we are not *required* to drink wine for stomachaches today (1 Tim. 5:23), but the principle behind Paul's admonition still applies to us, which means we should use an antacid or some other medicine when suffering from stomach problems. So, too, in American culture we do not typically express our affection with a holy kiss (1 Cor. 16:20). We should not conclude from this that we *must* greet one another with a holy kiss. Nor should we argue that if we do not literally practice the holy kiss, then this verse does not apply to us. The verse teaches the principle that we should greet one another with warm affection, and in our culture, this may be expressed by a handshake or hug. The admonitions in vv. 9–10 contain

the principle that women should not dress ostentatiously or seductively. The intention of the text is not to ban the wearing of all jewelry. This raises, of course, the question as to how the principle in vv. 11–12 should be applied today. Perhaps women can teach men today without violating the principle undergirding these verses. Such an application of this passage is certainly possible, and thus we must interpret it carefully to identify the timeless principle present in these verses.

Should a Woman Teach or Exercise Authority over a Man? (1 Tim. 2:11–12)

Scholars debate virtually every word in vv. 11–12. Thus, I will attempt to construct my argument piece by piece, although it is impossible to interpret the parts without appealing to the whole, and so I must broach other issues in the midst of analyzing individual elements. Verse 11 is translated as follows: “A woman should learn quietly with all submission.” The alternation from the plural “women” in vv. 9–10 to the singular “woman” in vv. 11–12 reveals that the latter is generic and includes all women. We see the reverse shift from the third person singular to the third person plural in v. 15.

Paul enjoins all women to learn (μανθανέτω). Scholars have often pointed out that this injunction represents an advance over some traditions in Judaism that forbade women from learning.⁹⁵ The exhortation implies a belief in the intellectual capability of women and their ability to profit from instruction and education. Certainly those of the complementarian position should encourage women to grow in their knowledge of the Scriptures and even to study the Bible academically if the Lord calls them to do such. Philip Payne takes this point in other directions, noting that the injunction for women to learn is the only command in this text.⁹⁶ However, when we analyze the verb “I permit” (ἐπιτρέπω), it will be argued that this observation is linguistically naïve, even if it is rhetorically impressive. Still, many aver that the injunction to learn implies that the women could teach after they learn. Therefore, it is claimed that the only reason for the prohibition on women teachers was lack of education or the influence of the false teachers.⁹⁷

Several things need to be said in response to the above observations. Even though egalitarians rightly detect a commendation of women learning in v. 11, their exegesis obscures the thrust of the command by abstracting the imperative verb from the rest of the sentence. Paul does not merely say, “Women must learn!” He says, “Women must learn quietly and with all submission.” The command focuses not on women learning but on the *manner* and *mode* of their learning, that is, quietly and with all submissiveness.⁹⁸ An illustration might help. If I were to say to my son, “You must drive the car carefully and wisely,” the sentence assumes that driving the car is permissible and suitable for my son. Nevertheless, my instruction focuses not on permission to drive the car but on the *manner* in which he drives it. Similarly, Paul undoubtedly commends women to learn, and yet his central concern is the manner in which they learn.

Neither is it convincing to say that permission to learn implies that women can teach once

they have sufficient learning.⁹⁹ Such exegesis overlooks what we have just pointed out, that the command concentrates not on the fact that women should learn but on the manner in which they should do so. Moreover, Paul could easily have said in v. 12, “But I do not permit a woman to teach a man until she is sufficiently educated.” Instead, v. 12 says that women should not teach or exercise authority over men. Egalitarians imply from the injunction to learn a permission to teach, but v. 12 prohibits this very activity.¹⁰⁰

We must consider the two adverbial phrases in v. 12 regarding the mode in which women are to learn. First, Paul says they should learn “quietly” (ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ). Most scholars today argue that this word does not actually mean “silence” here but refers to a quiet demeanor and spirit that is peaceable instead of argumentative.¹⁰¹ The use of the same word in 1 Timothy 2:2 supports this thesis, for there the context clearly implies not absolute silence but rather a gentle and quiet demeanor. The parallel text in 1 Peter 3:4 also inclines us in the same direction, since the “gentle and quiet spirit” of the wife in the home scarcely means absolute silence. In addition, if Paul wanted to communicate absolute silence, he could have used the noun σιγή (“silence”) rather than ἡσυχία (“quietness”). The resolution of this question is not of prime importance for the debate before us, for it does not drastically change the meaning of the text either way. Some prefer “silently” on the basis of the context of v. 12, which proscribes women from teaching and exercising authority over men, instead calling them to be ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ.¹⁰² It is argued that the most natural antonym to teaching in this context is “silence,” and the word group for ἡσυχία does bear the meaning “silence” in some texts (e.g., Luke 14:4; Acts 22:2). The question comes down to what the word means in this specific context, and it seems more likely that Paul refers to a quiet and nonrebellious spirit instead of absolute silence, for the primary issue is demeanor and attitude—one’s submissive spirit.¹⁰³

Second, women should learn ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ (“in all submission”). Probably the word “all” has an relative sense, meaning “with entire submissiveness.”¹⁰⁴ To what should the women submit? It has been suggested that women are to be submissive to God,¹⁰⁵ the congregation in general,¹⁰⁶ sound teaching,¹⁰⁷ the contemporary social structure,¹⁰⁸ or the women’s teachers.¹⁰⁹ We are aided in answering this question by the parallels between vv. 11 and 12. Verses 11 and 12 constitute an *inclusio*; v. 11 begins with “quietly,” and v. 12 concludes with “quietly.” The permission for women to “learn” is contrasted with the proscription for them “to teach,” while “all submissiveness” is paired with “not to exercise authority over a man.” The submission in view, then, is likely to men, since v. 12 bans women from exercising authority over men. Yet the context of v. 12 (more on this below) suggests that the submission of all women to all men is not in view, for not all men taught and had authority when the church gathered. Thus, we should not separate submission to what is taught from submission to those who taught it. Women were—with entire submissiveness—to learn from the men (pastors and elders) who had authority in the church and manifested that authority through their teaching.¹¹⁰

The δέ introducing v. 12 is a development marker that clarifies more precisely the command in v. 11.¹¹¹ The two verses are closely tied together and perhaps even chiasmic.¹¹² At the very least, we find an *inclusio* here, with the phrase ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ (“quietly”) introducing v. 11 and concluding v. 12. “Women should learn quietly” (ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω, v. 11) but are not permitted “to teach” (διδάσκειν, v. 12).¹¹³ They are to learn “in all submission” (ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ, v. 11) but are not “to exercise authority over a man” (αὐθεντεῖν ἄνδρός, v. 12). These correspondences and antitheses between vv. 11 and 12 undermine Andrew Perriman’s view that v. 12 is parenthetical.¹¹⁴ Verse 12 follows on the heels of v. 11 and clarifies its meaning.

The verb “I do not permit” (ἐπιτρέπω, v. 12) has been the subject of controversy. It is often said that the verb reflects only a temporary prohibition. Appealing to the verbal form as a first singular present active indicative, scholars conclude that Paul is not permitting women to teach or exercise authority over men *for a restricted period of time*.¹¹⁵ Some also claim that the intrinsic meaning of ἐπιτρέπω demonstrates its temporary nature, for the verb never indicates elsewhere a universally applicable command. Indeed, as noted above, some even capitalize on the indicative form and state that the only imperative in the text is in v. 11.

This latter point should be taken up first, for it is misleading and betrays a wooden view of Greek by implying that one can only have commands if the imperative mood is used. On the contrary, Paul often uses present indicatives in cases where the context reveals that he intends a command. For instance, in 1 Timothy 2:1 the call to pray for all people is introduced by a present indicative (παρακαλῶ, “I exhort”; cf. Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 4:2; 2 Tim. 1:6). So, too, Paul introduces the directive for men to pray without wrath and disputing using a present indicative (βούλομαι, “I want,” 1 Tim. 2:8; cf. 1 Tim. 5:14; Titus 3:8). The assertion that v. 11 contains the only command in the text, therefore, should be firmly rejected.¹¹⁶

But does the present tense reflect a temporary prohibition, or is it merely Paul’s personal opinion? Once again, the answer is negative on both counts.¹¹⁷ Paul gives numerous injunctions in the first singular present active indicative that are universal commands. For instance, he introduces the command to present one’s body to God as a living and holy sacrifice with a first singular present active indicative (παρακαλῶ, “I exhort,” Rom. 12:1), and this command obviously applies universally. In many other instances, such universal commands exist with present active indicatives in the first person (e.g., Rom. 15:30; 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; 4:16; 7:10; 2 Cor. 10:1; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 4:2; 1 Thess. 4:1, 10; 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 12; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8; 5:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; Titus 3:8). The point is not that the first person present active indicative form in 1 Timothy 2:12 *proves* that the command is universal and timeless. My point is more modest. Those who appeal to the form of the word as if it established the temporary nature of the prohibition exceed the evidence. The form does no such thing, and such a thesis must be established on other grounds.

More promising, at first glance, is the contention that ἐπιτρέπω intrinsically contains the

idea of a temporary limitation. That the verb may be constrained to a specific situation is obvious in a number of passages (Matt. 8:21; Mark 5:13; John 19:38; Acts 21:39, 40; 26:1; 27:3; 28:16). Nevertheless, this argument is again dubious. We plainly see the specificity of the situation in these passages not from the verb itself but from the context in which it occurs. For instance, in Matthew 8:21, a man asks Jesus for permission to bury his father before following Jesus, and we know that this request relates to a specific, time-constrained situation. But this reality scarcely arises from the verb ἐπιτρέπω itself; we know this because a person can bury his or her father only once.¹¹⁸ Other contexts do not necessarily limit ἐπιτρέπω to a specific situation (cf. 1 Cor. 14:34; 16:7; Heb. 6:3; Ignatius, *To the Ephesians* 10.3; *1 Clement* 1.3; *Ant.* 20.267).¹¹⁹ Neither the tense of the verb nor the verb's intrinsic meaning can determine whether what is permitted or forbidden is universal. Rather, the verb's context is decisive.

For example, if I say to my daughter, "You are not permitted to drive the car one hundred miles per hour," it is obvious (or should be!) that this is a universal prohibition. But if I say, "You are not permitted to go into the street," it is plain that this is a temporary restriction given to a two-year-old girl who is not yet able to handle herself safely in the street. The context, not the term *permitted*, determines the universal or temporary force of the prohibition. In conclusion, the mere presence of the word ἐπιτρέπω cannot be used to establish the temporary nature of the restriction, nor can it establish that we have a universal principle for all time.¹²⁰ Only the context can resolve that question, and v. 12 alone lacks sufficient evidence to answer it (though see the above-mentioned parallel wording in vv. 1 and 8). That said, I will argue below that v. 13 establishes the prohibition as universal.

Two things are forbidden for a woman: teaching and exercising authority over a man.¹²¹ The emphatic position of "to teach" at the beginning of v. 12 does not show that the verse is a parenthesis.¹²² Instead, Paul uses the placement of the verb to emphasize that although women are permitted to learn, they must not teach. Teaching here involves the authoritative and public transmission of tradition about Christ and the Scriptures (1 Cor. 12:28–29; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 3:16; James 3:1).¹²³ The rest of the Pastoral Epistles makes clear that the teaching in view is the public transmission of authoritative material (cf. 1 Tim. 4:13, 16; 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 2:7). The elders in particular are to labor in teaching (1 Tim. 5:17) so that they can refute the false teachers who advance heresy (1 Tim. 1:3, 10; 4:1; 6:3; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9, 11). It is crucial that the correct teaching and the apostolic deposit be passed on to the next generation (2 Tim. 1:12, 14; 2:2).

Paul probably gave the prohibition against women teaching because some women were teaching both men and women when the church assembled.¹²⁴ The object of the infinitive "to teach" (διδάσκειν) is "man" (ἄνδρός), indicating that women teaching men is what is forbidden.¹²⁵ Some argue that the distance between the two infinitives means that ἄνδρός is the object of ἀφέντεῖν but not also of διδάσκειν, yet they exaggerate this distance.¹²⁶ Those who advocate the egalitarian position point out that Timothy was taught by his mother

and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15); that Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos (Acts 18:26); that women are permitted to teach elsewhere (Titus 2:3); and that all believers are to teach one another (Col. 3:16).¹²⁷ But complementarians do not doubt that women can teach children or other women. In fact, Titus 2:3–4 speaks specifically of women teaching other women, and thus the appeal to women teaching in that passage hardly violates what Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:12. Neither does Priscilla and Aquila’s private teaching of Apollos contradict Paul’s teaching here, for that is profoundly different from the public and authoritative teaching in view in the Pastoral Epistles. Furthermore, Colossians 3:16 (cf. 1 Cor. 14:26) does not refer to authoritative public teaching¹²⁸ but to the informal mutual instruction that occurs among all the members of the body. Unfortunately, some churches ban women from doing even this, although it is plainly in accord with Scripture. Yet this mutual instruction differs significantly from the authoritative transmission of tradition that Paul has in mind in the Pastoral Epistles. Such authoritative teaching is typically a function of the elders/overseers (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17), and it is likely that Paul is thinking of them here.¹²⁹ Thus, women are proscribed from functioning as pastors/elders/overseers,¹³⁰ but Knight correctly observes that this verse also prohibits them from the public and authoritative teaching of men.¹³¹ Working this out in practice doesn’t mean that women are always prohibited from addressing a mixed audience of men and women. There are certainly contexts where this is appropriate.¹³² Women should not, however, ever serve as pastors and elders.

A more powerful objection against the complementarian position is the assertion that prophecy is just as authoritative as teaching (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20; 4:11).¹³³ Since it is clear that women in the early church could prophesy in the public assembly (Acts 2:17–18; 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:5), many conclude that they should also be permitted to teach. In response, Wayne Grudem has distinguished between prophecy and teaching, saying that the latter is based on the apostolic deposit for the church and is more authoritative. Prophecy involves spontaneous revelations in which truth is mixed with error so that leaders need to sift through the content of the prophecies.¹³⁴ According to Grudem, the nonauthoritative nature of New Testament prophecy explains why women can prophesy but not teach, and he rightly highlights how the nature of prophecy differs in some respects from teaching.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, Grudem is probably incorrect regarding the nonauthoritative character of New Testament prophecy, though that matter cannot be adjudicated here. In any case, the gifts of prophecy and teaching are still distinct.¹³⁶ Prophecy is more vertical in nature, while teaching is more horizontal. The former involves spontaneous revelation and in that sense is more charismatic; teaching unpacks the scriptural tradition and explicates what has already been revealed to hearers. Prophecy applies to specific situations and is less tied to the consciousness of the individual than teaching. Moreover, 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 shows that women with the prophetic gift should exercise it in such a way that they do not subvert male leadership.¹³⁷ This does not mean that the prophecies given by women are any less authoritative than those of men. It does signal that women can exercise the gift of prophecy without overturning male headship, whereas 1 Timothy 2:11–15 demonstrates that women

cannot regularly teach men without doing so.¹³⁸

Not only does Paul forbid women from teaching men, but he also says that they should “not exercise authority over” (ἀϋθεντεῖν) them. Scholars have vigorously debated the meaning of ἀϋθεντεῖν. The most likely rendering is “exercise authority.”¹³⁹ Henry Scott Baldwin argued in the first two editions of this book that the verb must be separated from the noun in constructing the definition of the term.¹⁴⁰ Al Wolters demonstrates in his very careful study in this volume that the meaning “exercise authority” is almost certainly correct. It is evident upon reading Wolters that many scholars bypass or distort the evidence in constructing a meaning for the infinitive. Moreover, the near context also suggests that ἀϋθεντεῖν means “exercise authority,” for it functions as the antonym to “all submissiveness” in v. 11.¹⁴¹ Catherine Kroeger proposed the interpretation “engage in fertility practices” for the verb in 1979,¹⁴² but the evidence for this meaning was virtually nonexistent, and her interpretation has not gained acceptance.¹⁴³ The Kroegers went on to suggest that the sentence should read, “I do not allow a woman to teach nor to proclaim herself the author or originator of a man.”¹⁴⁴ This suggestion is faring little better than the first and shows no signs of gaining any adherents.¹⁴⁵ Leland Wilshire’s 1988 study led most scholars to believe that he was adopting the meaning “exercise authority” as the most probable in 1 Timothy 2:12.¹⁴⁶ In a subsequent article, he complains that Paul Barnett wrongly read this conclusion out of his work.¹⁴⁷ If there is any deficiency here, it lies with Wilshire rather than Barnett, for a number of scholars have understood Wilshire’s 1988 article in this way.¹⁴⁸ In a later article Wilshire suggests that the meaning in 1 Timothy 2:12 is “instigate violence.”¹⁴⁹ This latter suggestion is flawed,¹⁵⁰ as Wolters shows in his article in this volume. In his latter study, Wilshire speculates that the problem with women was violence or conflict, but the text gives no indication that women were actually involved in such. Indeed, v. 8 says it was the men who were involved in arguing and disputation, whereas Wilshire concludes that the problem of disputing and arguing, which Paul limits to men in v. 8, was actually the main problem with the women! Wilshire’s view also fails to explain how the alleged prohibition against violence is related to teaching, and thus his proposal makes little sense in context. Perhaps I can be forgiven for thinking that the evidence actually leads to the conclusion Wilshire seemed to suggest in 1988. His preference for another translation led him to write an article that lacked the high quality of his 1988 piece.¹⁵¹

Some scholars have said that ἀϋθεντεῖν cannot mean “exercise authority” because Paul would have used the more common ἐξουσιάζειν (“to exercise authority”), κυριεύειν (“to exercise authority”), or ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν (“to have authority”) if he had wanted to communicate this idea.¹⁵² They claim that the hapax legomenon ἀϋθεντεῖν reveals that a distinct meaning is in view. This argument is not as convincing as it might appear. Αϋθεντεῖν and ἐξουσιάζειν have overlapping semantic fields. A review of Baldwin’s data shows that the two words are used synonymously in at least eight different contexts, and Wolters’s study points in the same direction. The expression “have authority” (ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν) does not

convey the same meaning as “exercise authority” since it focuses on possession of authority instead of use (cf. Rom. 9:21; 1 Cor. 7:37; 9:4, 5, 6; 11:10; 2 Thess. 3:9). And one might get the impression that Paul frequently uses the verbs ἐξουσιάζω and κυριεύω for “exercise authority,” but he uses the former only three times (1 Cor. 6:12; 7:4 [twice])¹⁵³ and the latter on only six occasions (Rom. 6:9, 14; 7:1; 14:9; 2 Cor. 1:24; 1 Tim. 6:15). The statistical significance of selecting ἀυθεντεῖν instead of ἐξουσιάζειν or κυριεύειν, therefore, is overrated.¹⁵⁴

Moreover, ἐξουσιάζω clearly has a negative sense in Luke 22:25 but a positive one in 1 Corinthians 7:4. Thus, one cannot say that Paul had to use this verb to indicate a positive use of authority. What indicates a positive or negative use of authority is the context.¹⁵⁵ The verb κυριεύω is hardly a better choice. When used of God or Christ, it has a positive meaning (Rom. 14:9; 1 Tim. 6:15), but elsewhere in Paul it bears a negative meaning (Rom. 6:9, 14; 7:1; 2 Cor. 1:24; cf. Luke 22:25). Neither ἐξουσιάζω nor κυριεύω necessarily conveys an intrinsic positive concept of exercising authority. The context determines whether the exercise of authority is positive or negative. Scholars can make too much, therefore, of a distinct verb being used in 1 Timothy 2:12. Surely, we need to investigate carefully the meaning of the term in extrabiblical literature, so we know the semantic range of the term. In doing so, Wolters shows that ἀυθεντέω has a positive meaning along the lines of “exercise authority” in extrabiblical literature. Nevertheless, in context, ἀυθεντεῖν could possibly have a negative meaning. We should not rule out the possibility that the context might incline us toward the meaning “domineer” or “play the tyrant” rather than “exercise authority.”¹⁵⁶ But we shall see shortly that the context constrains us to using the definition “exercise authority” in 1 Timothy 2.

The relationship between the two infinitives “to teach” and “to exercise authority” should also be explored. Philip Payne has argued that these two infinitives joined by the word “neither” (οὐδέ) communicate a single coherent idea.¹⁵⁷ Andreas Köstenberger, in a wide-ranging and impressive study of both biblical and extrabiblical literature, demonstrates that Payne’s database was too small and that he misinterpreted the evidence.¹⁵⁸ The two ideas are closely related, but Paul intends two distinct (albeit related) injunctions.¹⁵⁹ Women are forbidden both to teach and to exercise authority over men.¹⁶⁰ Köstenberger’s study also reveals that in constructions with οὐδέ, the two items proscribed are viewed either both negatively or both positively. Thus, the verse means either “I do not permit a woman to teach falsely or domineer over a man” or “I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man.” The latter option is demanded in the present passage, for the passage gives no evidence that the infinitive διδάσκειν should be rendered “to teach falsely.”¹⁶¹ If Paul had wanted to communicate that he was specifically prohibiting false teaching, he would have used ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖν (“to teach false doctrine”), a term he uses to convey this very idea in 1 Timothy 1:3 and 6:3. Alternatively, he would have given some other clear contextual clue (such as an object clause or an adverb) to indicate that the teaching in view was false

teaching.¹⁶² The verb διδάσκω (“I teach”) has a positive sense elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2).¹⁶³ The only exception is Titus 1:11, where the context clarifies that Paul is referring to false teaching.¹⁶⁴ But 1 Timothy 2 gives no indication that Paul is limiting his proscription to false teaching.¹⁶⁵ Thus the verse should be translated as follows: “But I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but [I want her] to be quiet.”

The Reason for the Prohibition (1 Tim. 2:13)

Why does Paul command women to learn quietly and submissively and forbid them from teaching or exercising authority over men? He provides the reason in 1 Timothy 2:13: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve.” The second creation account (Gen. 2:4–25) is clearly the text Paul has in mind, for there we find the narrative of Adam being created before Eve.¹⁶⁶ The use of the word πλάσσω (“form”; cf. Gen. 2:7, 8, 15, 19) instead of ποιέω (“make”; cf. Gen. 1:26–27) also indicates that Paul is referring to the second creation account in Genesis.¹⁶⁷ The proscription on women teaching men, then, stems not from the fall and cannot be ascribed to the curse. Paul appeals to the created order, the good and perfect world God made, to justify the ban on women teaching men.¹⁶⁸ Gordon Fee has recently seemed to suggest that Paul is not appealing to the created order here,¹⁶⁹ but his objections fly in the face of the clear meaning of the text. The created order is invoked; the question is whether this constitutes vv. 11–12 as a universal principle.

Those who adhere to the egalitarian position argue that the γάρ (“for”) introducing vv. 13–14 indicates not *reasons* why women should refrain from teaching but *illustrations* or *examples* of what happens when women falsely teach men.¹⁷⁰ This understanding of the γάρ is unconvincing. When Paul gives a command elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles, the γάρ that follows almost invariably states the reason for the command (1 Tim. 4:7–8, 16; 5:4, 11, 15, 18; 2 Tim. 1:6–7; 2:7, 16; 3:5–6; 4:3, 5–6, 9–10, 11, 15; Titus 3:1–3, 9, 12).¹⁷¹ So, too, Paul gives a command in vv. 11–12 and then enunciates the reasons for the command in vv. 13–14.¹⁷² Frankly, this is just what we would expect, since even in ordinary speech, reasons often follow commands. The implausibility of the egalitarian view is sealed when we hear how v. 13 is supposed to function as an example. Alan Padgett interprets the verse in a highly allegorical manner to yield an illustrative sense, even though such an allegory is scarcely apparent in the text.¹⁷³ Padgett says that the text is typological; Eve functions as a type of the rich Ephesian women and Adam as a type of the teachers. Thus, the teachers, like Adam, are formed first in the spiritual sense of being older in the faith and possessing a more accurate understanding of the Old Testament. While certainly a creative reading of the text, it does not qualify as plausible exegesis. Rather, such an approach is reminiscent of Philo’s allegories on the Old Testament.¹⁷⁴

The complementarian view has the virtue of adopting the simplest reading of the text.¹⁷⁵ Paul maintains that the Genesis narrative gives a reason why women should not teach men:

Adam was created first and then Eve. In other words, when Paul read Genesis 2, he concluded that the order in which God created Adam and Eve signaled an important difference in the role of men and women. Thus, he inferred from the order of creation in Genesis 2 that women should not teach or exercise authority over men. It is customary nowadays for egalitarian scholars to claim that appeals to Genesis cannot justify a distinction between the roles of men and women.¹⁷⁶ But many remain unpersuaded by their exegesis because it seems quite apparent both from 1 Timothy 2:13 and 1 Corinthians 11:8–9 that Paul interpreted Genesis 2 to posit role differences between men and women.¹⁷⁷ A difference in role or function in no way implies that women are inferior to men.¹⁷⁸ Even the Son submits to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28), and yet he is equal to the Father in essence, dignity, and personhood.¹⁷⁹ It is a modern, democratic, Western notion that diverse functions suggest distinctions in worth between men and women. Paul believed that men and women were equal in personhood, dignity, and value but also taught that women had distinct roles from men.

Egalitarians fail to provide a convincing explanation for v. 13.¹⁸⁰ For example, Mary Evans says that the relevance of v. 13 for v. 12 is unclear and that v. 13 merely introduces the next verse about Eve.¹⁸¹ Gordon Fee asserts that the verse is not central to Paul's argument.¹⁸² Timothy Harris says that the verse "is difficult to understand on any reading."¹⁸³ Craig Keener thinks that the argument here is hard to fathom.¹⁸⁴ David Scholer protests that the text is unclear and that Paul cites selectively from Genesis.¹⁸⁵ Stephen Motyer says that if we accept the complementarian position of vv. 13–14, we nullify logic and justice.¹⁸⁶ It seems that obscurity is in the eye of the beholder, for the church has historically deemed the thrust of the verse quite clear. The creation of Adam first gives a reason why men should be the authoritative teachers in the church.¹⁸⁷ Egalitarians often say that the argument from the order of creation falters because it would also imply that animals have authority over humans since they were created first.¹⁸⁸ This objection is not compelling. For it is obvious in Genesis that only human beings are created in God's image (Gen. 1:26–27) and that they are distinct from animals. Paul, as a careful reader of the Hebrew narrative, under the inspiration of the Spirit, detected significance in the order of creation for the roles of men and women. James Hurley notes that the reasoning would not have been obscure to people of Paul's time, for they were quite familiar with primogeniture.¹⁸⁹

William Webb protests, however, that arguments from primogeniture are flawed.¹⁹⁰ In Scripture, God often overrides the principle of primogeniture (e.g., choosing Jacob instead of Esau), and hence primogeniture cannot be a transcultural principle. Indeed, according to Webb, primogeniture is tied to ancient agricultural societies, and we must not impose the agrarian culture of the past onto contemporary cultures. Webb suggests that the intimations of patriarchy in the garden represent not a God-ordained order but a literary foreshadowing of the curse. As such, the writer accommodates himself to the readers by describing the social conditions that existed in Moses's day as if such conditions were actually present in paradise.

Webb's criticisms of appealing to primogeniture are not compelling, for he misunderstands

the position. In referring to primogeniture, complementarian scholars are scarcely suggesting that the cultural practice of primogeniture should be enforced today, nor do they think that Paul is endorsing primogeniture per se. Nor would they deny the many examples from the Old Testament, adduced by Webb, in which God overturned primogeniture. Instead, they appeal to primogeniture to explain that Paul's readers would have easily understood the notion of the firstborn having authority. When Paul said that women should not teach because Adam was created first, the readers of 1 Timothy would not have scratched their heads with perplexity and amazement. To the original readers, the priority of Adam in creation would naturally have suggested his authority over Eve. Paul does not endorse primogeniture per se in 1 Timothy 2:13; he appeals to the creation of Adam first in explaining why women should not teach men.

For Webb to convince, he needs to explain why Paul refers to God creating Adam first in writing a letter to the city of Ephesus (not simply to an agricultural community). Paul's prohibition of women teaching or exercising authority has nothing to do with the cultural limitations of primogeniture that Webb mentions: land-based cultures, elderly parents, large families, age, sibling rivalry, parental death, and survival/success of lineage. But Paul does maintain that Adam being created first—not all other dimensions of primogeniture mentioned in the Old Testament!—supports the notion that men rather than women are to teach and exercise authority. At the end of the day, Webb does not take seriously what Paul states as his argument.

Even more troubling is Webb's claim that the Genesis account contains "whispers of patriarchy" because the writer of Genesis accommodates what he says to the patriarchal society in which he lives.¹⁹¹ Webb thereby concedes that patriarchy is present in the creation account, but he attempts to explain it away as accommodation. The creation narrative is hardly comparable to biblical writers who use the language and culture of their own day in prophesying about the future, as Webb suggests. Webb's position implies that the biblical writers distorted the true nature of paradise since they suggested that it was patriarchal, when in fact, according to Webb, it was not. Webb's "whispers of patriarchy" in paradise and his attempt to explain such as accommodation illustrate his commitment to sustain an egalitarian reading of the text, even at the cost of finding fault in paradise.¹⁹²

Even egalitarians acknowledge that role differences were common in ancient societies. The original readers would have understood Paul, then, to be defending such role differences and to be doing so on the basis of the created order. In other words, Paul thought such differences were good and proper and not the result of sin or the fall. Scholer's observation that Paul cites Genesis selectively is irrelevant.¹⁹³ Douglas Moo rightly observes that the Old Testament is *always* cited selectively.¹⁹⁴ The question is how the citation fits into the flow of the argument in which it is used.

Some scholars contend that Paul's interpretation here is forced and illogical.¹⁹⁵ This position at least has the virtue of understanding the Pauline intention and meaning, even though his argument is rejected as inferior. My purpose is not to engage in an apologetic for

the Pauline position here; it should simply be noted that evangelicals have a higher view of biblical authority than these scholars. We should note, however, that these scholars agree exegetically with the complementarian position, even though, because of their philosophical commitments, they perceive that this passage contradicts Pauline teaching elsewhere.

Many scholars suggest that the reason women could not teach men or exercise authority over them is because the women were promulgating the heresy Paul addresses in this letter or were uneducated.¹⁹⁶ This theory cannot be exegetically validated because it reads something into the text that is not present there. Paul could easily have said that the women were prohibited from teaching and exercising authority over men because they were spreading the heresy or were uneducated.¹⁹⁷ Yet he does not breathe a word about these matters.¹⁹⁸ And Baugh, in his essay in this volume, reveals the flaws in the notion that women in Ephesus were uneducated. In any case, Paul appeals to the created order. Those scholars who posit that false teaching or lack of education stimulated the prohibition ignore the reason the text actually gives (the created order) and insert something absent from the text (false teaching and lack of education) to explain the proscription. I do not deny that women were influenced by the false teaching (1 Tim. 5:11–15; 2 Tim. 3:6–9), and it is even possible (though far from certain) that some of the women were teaching the heresy.¹⁹⁹ But Paul doesn't ground his prohibition in women teaching falsely. If both men and women were involved in the heresy (and we know that men were certainly involved), why does Paul forbid only the women from teaching men?²⁰⁰ If the reason for the limitation was participation in the heresy or lack of education, then we would expect Paul, as a good egalitarian, to prohibit all men and women who were spreading the heresy or who were uneducated from teaching. This point is particularly important because we know without a doubt from the Pastoral Epistles that men were spreading the heresy (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17–18; 3:5–9), and obviously the men teaching falsely were not allowed to teach. On the other hand, Paul forbids women in general from teaching. As Don Carson says about another text, the Pauline limitation on women would be sensible only if “*all* the women and *only* women . . . were duped—which perhaps I may be excused for finding hard to believe.”²⁰¹

Philip Towner says the real point of the passage is that one must adapt to societal norms and institutions.²⁰² Once again, though, he leaps over the argument Paul gives to provide one not stated in the text. Towner's view is attractive, yet Paul's appeal to creation shows that he is not simply associating the proscription with societal norms but is rooting it in the created order. Richard Longenecker avers that redemption transcends creation, and thus creational norms are not necessarily binding.²⁰³ Again, this would neatly solve the problem, but it stumbles on the stubborn fact that Paul himself apparently did not believe that redemption in Christ overturned the created order. We must bypass Paul, then, to say that redemption transcends creation in the relationship between men and women. Those who erase the distinction in roles between men and women in the present age are probably guilty of falling prey to a form of overrealized eschatology, for the creation order established with reference to men and women will be terminated in the coming age (cf. Matt. 22:30).

Others protest that complementarians are selective in what they accept as universally valid.²⁰⁴ We do not, for instance, command all younger widows to marry (1 Tim. 5:14), and little is said today about the applicability of instructions regarding widows in 1 Timothy 5:3–16. We all have blind spots, and thus we need to beware of bracketing out texts that we find distasteful. Perhaps we have not been serious enough about applying 1 Timothy 5:3–16 to our culture. But if we have been avoiding the message of that passage, it does not logically follow that we can also jettison the prescriptions in 1 Timothy 2:9–15. Our responsibility in such a situation is to obey both texts. We cannot engage in a full exegesis of 1 Timothy 5:3–16 here, but one apparent principle in the text is that godly widows in financial need who can no longer support themselves need to be supported by the church. If widows in our churches need financial help, then the church should provide it. Bruce Waltke rightly observes that we must glean Paul’s authorial intent in his advice to younger widows (1 Tim. 5:11–15).²⁰⁵ He recommends marriage for the younger widows in order to restrict sexual sin (cf. 1 Cor. 7:9). One principle here is that believers should not pledge themselves to a life of celibacy without taking into account the strength of their sexual desires. Paul commends the single state (1 Corinthians 7), but even then he recognizes that sexual desires may be one indication that one should marry (vv. 2, 9). In any case, Paul grounds the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:12 in an appeal to creation, indicating that the command has universal validity.

Ronald Pierce, in dependence on Sherwood Lingenfelter, asserts that women are often banned from ministry on the basis of v. 13 because we assume that Paul is using Western logic when he is actually using “practical logic.”²⁰⁶ Lingenfelter says that Paul taps into the “generative core of beliefs” of his culture to justify his prohibition. But how does labeling this “practical logic” show that the prohibition is no longer applicable? If this also represents Paul’s “generative core of beliefs,” on what basis do we discard it today? Interestingly, Pierce slides from this observation to the thesis that Paul wanted women to practice humility and patience as they slowly moved from their lowly status to their new liberty in Christ.²⁰⁷ But Pierce reads this latter idea into the text, for it is hardly apparent from vv. 13–14 that Paul envisions a time when the restriction in v. 12 will be lifted.²⁰⁸

One might object, however, that not all commands rooted in creation are normative.²⁰⁹ Paul commends food and marriage as good since they are grounded in creation (1 Tim. 4:1–5), yet we know from 1 Corinthians 7 and from Romans 14–15 and 1 Corinthians 8–10 that in some situations he counsels believers to abstain from marriage and from certain foods. Does this not indicate that an appeal to creation is not necessarily normative? Actually, such an objection suffers from a subtle equivocation. What Paul argues in 1 Timothy 4:1–5 is that marriage and all foods are good, *not that one must get married and must eat all foods*. Thus, the fact that some believers are called to celibacy or should abstain from certain foods in particular situations hardly constitutes an exception to the argument from creation in 1 Timothy 4:1–5. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul continues to maintain that marriage is good and counters the idea that Christians must eschew marriage and sexual relations. Moreover, in Romans 14–15 and 1 Corinthians 8–10, those who abstain from certain foods are considered

to be weak in faith, and the strong must abstain occasionally so as not to offend the weak. What would violate the principle of 1 Timothy 4:1–5 is if one were to argue that Christians should always avoid marriage and certain foods because they were inherently defiling, and this is precisely what the false teachers in the Pastoral Epistles were saying.

Even if we were to accept the analogous argument from 1 Timothy 4:1–5, so that the argument from creation in 1 Timothy 2:11–13 admits exceptions, the conclusion egalitarians want to draw from the parallel does not follow logically. For at least in the case of 1 Timothy 4:1–5, the principle of the goodness of the created world stands. In contrast, in the case of 1 Timothy 2:13, egalitarians would have to argue that the prohibition of women teaching men is the exception, whereas the norm permits them to do so. In 1 Timothy 2, then, the appeal to the created order would justify *the exception*, not the rule. The parallel from 1 Timothy 4:1–5 falters on this analysis because in that text, the created order is invoked to support the *rule*, not the exception. In other words, Paul supports the idea that women cannot teach men by invoking the created order, and yet egalitarians who would use this argument do not say that women may in some exceptional circumstances teach men (analogous to the argument in 1 Tim. 4:1–5). Instead, they insist that prohibiting women from teaching men is the exception. The analogy from 1 Timothy 4:1–5, therefore, is turned around. And if women can usually teach men, we are left wondering why Paul even gives an argument from creation. In principle, one could argue similarly that the prohibitions against polygamy and homosexuality are exceptional, even though an argument from creation is used to support the commands (Matt. 19:4–6; Rom. 1:26–27). The fundamental problem with this suggestion, then, is that it appeals to alleged exceptions and provides no explanation as to why Paul gives an argument from creation.²¹⁰ This seems to be a clear case of evading the positive reason given for the prohibition.

Perhaps we can preserve the principle of the command in v. 12 without denying women the right to teach men. After all, it was argued that the principle underlying vv. 9–10 permits women to wear jewelry and clothing that is not seductive or ostentatious. However, the principle in v. 12 cannot be separated from the practice of teaching or exercising authority over men.²¹¹ There are some instances in which the principle and practice (e.g., polygamy and homosexuality) coalesce. This is one of those cases. Public teaching of men by women and the concomitant authority it gives them violate the principle of male leadership.

The Argument from the Woman Being Deceived (1 Tim. 2:14)

If v. 13 is a strong argument for the complementarian view, egalitarians claim that v. 14 is quite problematic for the complementarian position.²¹² For instance, Towner notes that the complementarian view would seem to lead to the conclusion that women are more easily deceived than men.²¹³ Bruce Barron says that the complementarian position cannot explain how Adam was not deceived, for he was as guilty as Eve.²¹⁴ And if Adam sinned rebelliously with his eyes wide open, and Eve sinned because she was deceived, then why would this qualify men to teach women? The more serious sin would be Adam's blatant rebellion, which

would thus lead us to expect that men would be disqualified from teaching.

Egalitarians believe they have a much more credible solution to the meaning of this verse. They argue that the reference to Eve's deception points either to women being responsible for the heresy in 1 Timothy or to the influence of false teachers on women who lacked education.²¹⁵ They suggest, for instance, that Adam knew of God's prohibition in the garden firsthand, while Eve only knew the command secondhand. Thus, Eve sinned because she was ignorant of God's command, and so too the women in Ephesus were being deceived by the false teachers and, in turn, were propagating the heresy. They could not teach until they were adequately educated.

Doubtless the verse is difficult, but I would like to suggest that defenders of the egalitarian view present a weaker interpretation of the text than defenders of the complementarian interpretation.²¹⁶ It cannot be stressed enough that v. 14 scarcely justifies the thesis that women were *teaching* the heresy, although it is certainly possible that Paul gave the prohibition because some women were teaching men.²¹⁷ Neither Genesis nor Paul suggests that Eve taught Adam. Instead, both texts affirm that she was deceived (cf. Gen. 3:13).²¹⁸ The texts emphasize what transpired in Eve's heart—deception—not that she wrongly taught Adam.²¹⁹ Verse 14, therefore, provides no clues that Paul forbade women from teaching because they were spreading the heresy. It only justifies the claim that the women of Ephesus—like Eve—were *influenced* by false teaching and thus fell into sin. At most, then, egalitarians can only reasonably argue that Paul prohibited the women in Ephesus from teaching because they were temporarily deceived by the false teachers; only later could they function as teachers by acquiring sound doctrine. But again, it must be emphasized that v. 14 does not provide any evidence that women were promulgating false teaching.

Neither does the appeal to the Genesis narrative in v. 14 support the idea that women were disallowed from teaching merely because they were duped by false teaching or were uneducated.²²⁰ If Eve was at a disadvantage in the temptation, as some egalitarians declare, because she received the commandment from God secondhand through Adam, then this implies that Adam somehow muddled God's command in giving it to Eve. If he gave it to her accurately and clearly, then we are back to the view that Eve (before the fall!) could not grasp what Adam clearly said, which would imply that she was intellectually inferior.²²¹ But if Adam bungled what God said, so that Eve was deceived by the Serpent, the argument of 1 Timothy 2:11–15 makes little sense in its historical context. For then Eve was deceived because Adam muddled God's instructions. And if Eve sinned because a man communicated God's command inaccurately, then why would Paul recommend here that men should teach women until the latter get their doctrine right? If a man teaching a woman got the human race into this predicament in the first place, Paul's appeal to Eve's being deceived would not fit the argument he is attempting to make in 1 Timothy 2.

What I am suggesting is that while egalitarians often charge that complementarians cannot handle v. 14, their position is actually much harder to defend. The verse cannot be used to say that women were teaching the heresy. Nor does it make sense to say that women were

deceived because they lacked knowledge. Such a view would pin the blame on Adam as a teacher, not Eve. If such were Paul's understanding of the events associated with the fall, his admonition that men should teach women (even temporarily) on the basis of the Genesis narrative would be incoherent.

Moreover, the author of Genesis is not suggesting that Eve stood at a disadvantage because she was ignorant of or poorly instructed in God's command (Gen. 3:2–3). What Genesis 3 indicates (and Paul is a careful interpreter of the account here in 1 Tim. 2:14) is that the Serpent deceived Eve, not Adam.²²² We should not read into the narrative that Eve had any disadvantage in terms of knowledge during the temptation. A person can be deceived because of lack of knowledge or education, but Genesis does not attribute Eve's deception to her being uneducated. Indeed, the idea that sin originated because of ignorance is a Platonic view, not a biblical one. The Serpent deceived Eve by promising her that she could function as a god, independent of the one true God (Gen. 3:4–6). Eve was deceived not because she had an intellectual deficiency but because of a moral failing.

In conclusion, egalitarians cannot provide an interpretation of v. 14 that makes sense of the contexts of both Genesis 2–3 and 1 Timothy 2:9–15. What we need to probe is the significance of this verse in the context of 1 Timothy 2. Some scholars, relying on parallels in Jewish tradition, suggest that Eve was sexually seduced by the Serpent.²²³ But this is unwarranted.²²⁴ The appeals to Jewish parallels are unpersuasive since the latter postdate the New Testament.²²⁵ And the word ἐξαπατάω (“I deceive”) elsewhere in Paul carries no hint of sexual seduction (cf. Rom. 7:11; 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Thess. 2:3). The parallel from 2 Corinthians 11:3 is particularly illuminating, for Paul fears that the entire church will fall prey to the same deception Eve did. His concern is scarcely that the whole church will fall into sexual sin.

Others argue that Paul aims to highlight that Adam sinned rebelliously with full knowledge, for the text says that “Adam was not deceived,” whereas Eve was deceived and committed transgression.²²⁶ The verse thereby signals that Adam was responsible as the leader and the religious teacher. This interpretation is surely a possibility, and it has the virtue of taking the words “Adam was not deceived” straightforwardly. Nevertheless, it is hard to see how this argument would function as a reason for men teaching women. An appeal to Adam sinning willfully and Eve sinning mistakenly (because she was deceived) would seem to argue against men teaching women, for at least the woman wanted to obey God, while Adam sinned deliberately.²²⁷ This view would be strengthened if the corollary were also drawn: Paul implies that women are more prone to deceit than men. Yet most of the modern adherents of this view are reluctant to draw this latter conclusion.²²⁸

Historically, interpreters commonly held that Paul is forbidding women from teaching because they are more liable to deception and more easily led astray than men are.²²⁹ This interpretation is usually dismissed out of hand today because it is so shocking to modern sensibilities. Our task, though, is to interpret texts according to the intention of the author,

and thus we must be careful not to reject an interpretation merely because it offends our sense of justice. For those who hold a high view of biblical authority, the text must reign over and correct what we think is “fair.” This interpretation, then, is possible and less speculative than those advanced by egalitarians. Still, we should reject this interpretation since it implies that women are ontologically and intellectually inferior. Others have also raised serious objections against this view.²³⁰ For example, since Paul commends women who teach other women and children elsewhere in the Pastorals (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15; Titus 2:3–4), it is unlikely that Paul would do so if women are prone to deceit by nature, for then their error would be passed on to children and other women. Moreover, if women are inherently more susceptible to deceit, it calls into question the goodness of God’s creation.

Paul Barnett intriguingly suggests that the point of the text is that not Adam but Eve was deceived first.²³¹ In this view, the word “first” (πρῶτος) is implicitly understood from v. 13. Timothy Harris objects that the text does not say that Eve was deceived first, and this weakens Barnett’s suggestion.²³² But the likelihood of Barnett’s proposal increases when we recall that Paul was writing to Timothy, who was quite familiar with his theology. Paul would be reminding Timothy that Eve transgressed first, and yet Adam was held responsible for the sin that was imputed to the whole human race (Rom. 5:12–19). By referring to Eve sinning first, Paul subtly reminds Timothy that Adam bore primary responsibility for sin entering the world (note that in Genesis 3 God approached Adam first after the sin), and this confluence of factors reveals the reality of male headship. In this scenario, then, v. 14 would function as a second argument for male leadership in teaching.²³³

We can supplement what Barnett says with the following notes.²³⁴ Paul emphasizes that it was Eve (not Adam) who was deceived *by the Serpent*. Thus, we need not conclude that Adam was undeceived in every respect. The notion that Adam sinned without deceit is hard to understand, for it seems that all sin involves deceit. Do people sin with their eyes wide open, fully understanding the nature and consequences of their sin? Paul’s purpose is more restricted here. He wants to focus on the fact that the Serpent approached and deceived Eve, not Adam. The significance of the Serpent targeting Eve is magnified when we observe that Adam was apparently with Eve during the temptation (Gen. 3:6).²³⁵ In approaching Eve, then, the Serpent subverted the pattern of male leadership and interacted only with the woman.²³⁶ Adam was present throughout and did not intervene. The Genesis temptation, therefore, stands as the prototype of what happens when male leadership is abrogated.²³⁷ Eve took the initiative in responding to the Serpent, and Adam let her do so.²³⁸ Thus, the appeal to Genesis 3 reminds readers of what happens when humans undermine God’s ordained pattern.²³⁹

Women Being Saved through Childbirth (1 Tim. 2:15)

Verse 15 reads, “But she shall be saved through childbirth, if they remain in faith and love and sanctification along with discretion.” Susan Foh’s opinion that the verse is “a puzzle and

a sort of non sequitur” is unsatisfying, for the verse functions as the conclusion to the paragraph and must be integrated with the rest of the argument.²⁴⁰ On the other hand, some scholars think that this verse is climactic, the key to the whole text.²⁴¹ This latter opinion goes to the other extreme.²⁴² It is better to take the verse as providing a qualification to v. 14 and as rounding out the argument.²⁴³

Many questions emerge from this verse.²⁴⁴ What is the subject of the verbs σωθήσεται (“she shall be saved”) and μείνωσιν (“they remain”)? Does the verb σωθήσεται refer to spiritual salvation, spiritual preservation, or physical preservation through childbirth? To what does the noun τεκνογονία (“childbirth”) refer: the birth of Christ, bearing children, or rearing children?²⁴⁵ What is the precise meaning in this context of the preposition διὰ? Does this text teach salvation by works? How does it fit with the rest of the paragraph?

We will begin by examining the meaning of the verb σωθήσεται. Some understand it to mean “preserve,” so that the verse says that women shall be preserved safely through childbirth.²⁴⁶ Craig Keener defends this interpretation by appealing to parallels in Greco-Roman literature, where women often prayed for safety in childbirth; the verb σώζω (“save”) most commonly bears the idea of physical preservation.²⁴⁷ More recently, Moyer Hubbard provides an intriguing and well-argued defense of this interpretation.²⁴⁸ Still, this reading should be rejected for at least two reasons. The fact that Christian women have often died in childbirth raises serious questions about this interpretation.²⁴⁹ More important, σώζω always has the meaning of spiritual salvation in the Pastoral Epistles (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 2:4; 4:16; 2 Tim. 1:9; 4:18; Titus 3:5) and the other Pauline writings.²⁵⁰ Keener commits the error of giving more weight to the meaning of the term in extrabiblical writings than to its meaning in Paul’s writings. In addition, since σώζω always refers to eschatological salvation in Paul, it is not compelling to say that women “are saved” from the error of usurping authority over men by keeping to their proper function.²⁵¹ Once again, scholars are supplying a definition for σώζω that does not accord with Pauline usage. In addition, v. 12 is too far from v. 15 for this latter interpretation to be plausible.²⁵² Therefore, we cannot simply sweep aside the difficulty of this verse by finding a different meaning for σώζω; the verse does say that a woman will be spiritually saved through bearing children.²⁵³

Perhaps we can explain the biting edge of this verse by investigating the meaning of the word τεκνογονίας. In the history of the church, interpreters commonly detected a reference to the birth of Christ.²⁵⁴ Supporters of this reading invoke the near context, which qualifies the reference to the deceit and transgression of Eve (v. 14) with the promise that she will be saved by the childbirth, that is, the birth of Christ. Since Paul has just cited Genesis 3 in 1 Tim. 2:14, it is argued that he would naturally have turned to the promise of salvation through the seed promised in Genesis 3:15. The singular “she” could be ascribed to Eve as the representative of all women or to Mary, who gave birth to the Messiah. Proponents also cite the definite article τῆς (“the”) preceding τεκνογονίας to defend the idea that Paul was thinking of the birth of Christ.²⁵⁵

To say that the salvation in this passage comes through the birth of Christ would certainly remove the unpalatable flavor of this verse. This view, unfortunately, is quite improbable. Anthony Hanson says that it “is more romantic than convincing.”²⁵⁶ Donald Guthrie trenchantly observes that Paul “could hardly have chosen a more obscure or ambiguous way of saying it.”²⁵⁷ One must also slide from seeing the subject of σωθήσεται as Eve to Mary, but to read the latter into the verse is highly arbitrary.²⁵⁸ Moreover, even if we accept Mary as the subject, the meaning still poses problems. Mary was not saved by virtue of giving birth to Jesus, nor does Paul elsewhere say that salvation comes through the incarnation. The noun τεκνογονία emphasizes the actual giving birth to a child, not the result or effect of childbirth.²⁵⁹ Those who posit a reference to Jesus’s birth have subtly introduced the notion that salvation is secured as a *result* of giving birth to him, whereas the text speaks not of the result of birth but of the actual birthing process. Furthermore, the presence of the article cannot sustain a defense of the christological interpretation. The article is notoriously perplexing in Greek since it has a wide range of uses and is thereby difficult to categorize definitively. Thus, we should be wary of concluding that the presence of the article indicates particular reference to Christ’s birth.²⁶⁰ The article is probably generic in any case.²⁶¹ A reference to the birth of Christ, although immensely attractive, must be rejected. Neither is it persuasive to see in the word τεκνογονία the idea of rearing children.²⁶² The word τεκνοτροφέω (“I bring up children”) was available, and Paul used it in 1 Timothy 5:10 to communicate this idea, while by contrast he used the verbal form τεκνογονέω (“I bear children”) in 1 Timothy 5:14 for the bearing of children.²⁶³

The significance of διὰ is also a matter of debate. E. F. Scott tried to soften the scandal of the verse by saying that a woman shall be saved “in spite of” or “even though” having children.²⁶⁴ He excludes any notion of women being saved “through” having children. Unfortunately, this interpretation violates the semantic range of διὰ, and thus Scott’s proposal has been consistently rejected.²⁶⁵ Neither is it persuasive to see διὰ referring to attendant circumstances, so that women will be saved “in the experience” of childbirth.²⁶⁶ This interpretation is dictated by theology rather than syntax.²⁶⁷ Probably Paul intends the common instrumental sense of διὰ here (cf. Titus 3:5).²⁶⁸ Shortly, I shall take up how this fits with Paul’s theology of salvation.

Who is the subject of the verbs σωθήσεται and μείνωσιν, and why does the tense switch from the singular to the plural? As argued above, we can eliminate the options that Eve or Mary is the subject of σωθήσεται. The context clarifies that nonbelievers are excluded, for they will not be spiritually saved. Thus, the implied subject refers to the Christian women of Ephesus and by extension to all Christian women everywhere.²⁶⁹ The switch from the third singular to the third plural is admittedly awkward.²⁷⁰ Thus, some have suggested that the third plural refers to the children of the women or to husbands and wives.²⁷¹ It is too jarring, though, to detect a sudden reference to children or husbands here. Instead, the third singular at the beginning of the sentence refers to women generically, and thus Paul shifts to “women”

plural in the latter half of the verse.²⁷² This explanation fits with the structure of the passage as a whole, where Paul begins by speaking of women in the plural (vv. 9–10), shifts to the singular (vv. 11–15a), and then reverts to the plural.²⁷³ We may also account for the singular in v. 15a by the reference to Eve in vv. 13–14, for the latter is understood as representative of all Christian women.

The discussion so far has simply established that the verse says what it appears to say on first glance, and thus the theological and contextual questions posed earlier remain.²⁷⁴ If women are saved by bearing children, then does this not amount to salvation by works and contradict Pauline theology?²⁷⁵ Understanding the historical situation will aid us in answering this question. The false teachers, in trumpeting an overrealized eschatology, prohibited marriage and certain foods (1 Tim. 4:1–5). If they banned marriage, then they probably also criticized bearing children.²⁷⁶ Paul selected childbearing, then, as a specific response to the shafts from the false teachers. Referring to childbearing is also appropriate because it represents the fulfillment of the woman’s domestic role as a mother in distinction from the man.²⁷⁷ Paul, then, probably highlighted childbearing by synecdoche as representing the appropriate role for women. This interpretation rounds out the passage because a woman should not violate her role by teaching or exercising authority over a man; instead, she should take her proper role as a mother of children. One could argue that the reference to women bearing children is culturally limited to the domestic and maternal roles of Paul’s day.²⁷⁸ More likely, Paul saw in the woman’s function of giving birth a divinely intended and ongoing difference of function between men and women.

This does not mean that all women must have children in order to be saved.²⁷⁹ Though the underlying principle is timeless, Paul is hardly attempting to be comprehensive here. He has elsewhere commended the single state (1 Corinthians 7). He selects childbearing because it is the most notable example of the divinely intended difference in roles between men and women and because many women throughout history have had children. Thus, Paul generalizes from the experience of women by using a representative example of women maintaining their proper role. To select childbearing again indicates that the argument is transcultural, for childbearing is not limited to a particular culture but is a permanent and ongoing difference between men and women. The fact that God has ordained that women and only women bear children signifies that the differences in roles between men and women are rooted in the created order.

When Paul says that women will be saved by childbearing, he means, therefore, that they will be saved by adhering to their ordained role.²⁸⁰ Such a statement is apt to be misunderstood (and often has been), and thus a further comment is needed. Paul says that women will be saved “if they remain in faith and love and sanctification along with discretion.” Thereby Paul shows that it is insufficient for salvation for Christian women merely to bear children; they must also persevere in faith, love, holiness, and presumably other virtues.²⁸¹ The reference to “discretion” (σωφροσύνης) harkens back to the same word

in v. 9 and also functions to tie the entire text together.²⁸² Paul does not imply that all women must bear children to be saved (cf. v. 10). His purpose is to say that women will not be saved if they do not practice good works. One indication that women are doing good works is if they do not reject bearing children as evil but bear children in accord with their proper role.

Many will object that this boils down to salvation by works and contradicts Pauline theology. A contradiction with Pauline theology would only exist, though, if the text were claiming that one must do these good works in order to *earn or merit* salvation or that works constitute the ground of one's salvation. Elsewhere Paul insists that good works are necessary for salvation (e.g., Rom. 2:6–10, 26–29; 1 Cor. 6:9–11; Gal. 5:21).²⁸³ Paul is not asserting in 1 Timothy 2:15 that women *merit* salvation by bearing children and doing other good works. He has already clarified that salvation is by God's mercy and grace (cf. 1 Tim. 1:12–17). Paul uses the term σωθήσεται rather loosely here, without specifying in what sense women are saved by childbearing and doing other good works. Since Paul often argues elsewhere that salvation is gained not on the basis of our works (e.g., Rom. 3:19–4:25; Gal. 2:16–3:14; 2 Tim. 1:9–11; Titus 2:11–14; 3:4–7), I think it is fair to understand the virtues described here as a result of new life in Christ.²⁸⁴ Any good works of the Christian, of course, are not the ultimate basis of salvation, for the ultimate basis of salvation is only the righteousness of Christ granted to us.

The same problem arises in 1 Timothy 4:11–16.²⁸⁵ There Paul exhorts Timothy to live a godly life—“be an example for believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (v. 12)—and to keep instructing believers in the truth of the gospel. Paul sums up these instructions to Timothy in v. 16a: “Pay heed to yourself and to your teaching; remain in them.” In other words, Timothy is to keep practicing the virtues specified in v. 12 and to continue instructing the church. In v. 16b Paul supplies a reason as to why Timothy should be virtuous and keep teaching: “For by doing this, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” Once again Paul uses the verb σώζω with reference to spiritual salvation. Paul certainly does not mean that Timothy and his hearers will be “physically preserved” if they live godly lives and continue in godly instruction. One could protest that Paul is teaching salvation by meritorious works here, since he says that Timothy and his hearers will be saved *if* they live godly lives and continue in right instruction. But this would be a mistake. What Paul means is that abiding in godly virtues and obeying apostolic instruction are necessary for salvation; they are necessary because they function as the evidence of new life in Christ. Those who fall away have no assurance that they belong to the redeemed community (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24–10:22). Indeed, the New Testament often teaches the necessity of doing good works or persevering to the end in order to realize salvation (cf., e.g., Heb. 2:1–4; 3:7–19; 5:11–6:12; 10:26–31; 12:25–29; James 2:14–26; 2 Pet. 1:5–11; 1 John 2:3–6).²⁸⁶

The parallel text in 1 Timothy 4:11–16 indicates that it is too simplistic to wave aside the reference to salvation by bearing children as salvation by meritorious works. Upon examining the context and historical situation carefully, we see that Paul selected

childbearing because of his deep concern over the false teachers who denigrated marriage and the maternal role of women. He added other virtues in the conditional clause to prevent misunderstanding. The genuineness of salvation is evidenced not by childbirth alone but by a woman living a godly life and conforming to her God-ordained role. These good works are necessary to obtain eschatological salvation.

Conclusion

I can scarcely claim that I have given the definitive and final interpretation of this passage. I would argue, however, that 1 Timothy 2:9–15 yields a coherent and comprehensible meaning. Paul has instructed women to adorn themselves appropriately with good works, not with ostentatious or seductive clothing. Moreover, women should not arrogate an official teaching role for themselves and serve as elders/pastors/overseers. They should learn submissively and quietly from the elders instead. Women are prohibited from teaching or exercising authority because of the creation order. The creation of Adam before Eve signaled that men are to teach and exercise authority in the church. Moreover, the events in Genesis 3 confirm the necessity of male leadership. Eve, beguiled by the Serpent, took leadership in responding to the Serpent. Adam, although he was with Eve, failed to intervene and exercise proper leadership. Instead, he allowed Eve to respond improperly to the Serpent. Even though Eve was the first to sin, Paul assigned the responsibility for sin primarily to Adam (Rom. 5:12–19). Women, Paul reminds his readers, will experience eschatological salvation by adhering to their proper role, which is exemplified in giving birth to children. Of course, adhering to one's proper role is insufficient for salvation; women must also practice other Christian virtues in order to be saved.

Our problem with the text is in the main not exegetical but practical. What Paul says here is contrary to the thinking of the modern world. We are confronted here with a countercultural word from the Scriptures. This countercultural word should modify and correct both our thinking and our behavior. In the next chapter, we will explore the basis for applying Paul's teaching to our modern world. These are not idle topics, for the happiness and strength of the church today will be in direct proportion to our obedience to the biblical text.

¹I am especially grateful to Chuck Bumgardner and Aubrey Sequeira for their help in tracking down sources for the third edition of this essay. Also, unless otherwise indicated, the biblical text in this chapter represents my own translation.

²See, e.g., the work of Christian Haslebacher, "Die Bedeutung und hermeneutischen Implikationen der Verweise auf die Schöpfungsordnung und den Fall Evas in 1. Timotheus 2" (ThM thesis, University of South Africa, 2013). Haslebacher argues that Paul's prohibition against women teaching and exercising authority over men applies differently to today's circumstances than it did in the first-century Ephesian church. We must recognize, according to Haslebacher, that all the letters are occasional and directed to particular circumstances, and such is particularly true of 1 Timothy. Paul often refers to Old Testament events to speak to issues the churches were facing, and thus his Old Testament appeals do not necessarily make his teachings normative for us in the same way in our culture today. When we recognize the role of women in Scripture and the many ministries in which they were involved, says Haslebacher, the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2 stands out as contrary to the pattern. What Paul says here, then, is an exception to the way in which women typically acted or were treated in the early church. When we recognize the false teaching that the Ephesian church faced, we see that Paul gave these instructions because of the situation he was addressing. We shouldn't construe the directives given in 1 Tim. 2:11–15 as timeless words for Christians of all times and all places, and the text shouldn't be used to limit women in ministry today. By way of reply, I would suggest that Haslebacher fails to break new ground in his thesis and repeats common arguments, which will be shown in the remainder of this essay to be unconvincing.

³For recent work that supports the complementarian position, see James M. Hamilton Jr., “What Women Can Do in Ministry: Full Participation within Biblical Boundaries,” in *Women, Ministry, and the Gospel: Exploring New Paradigms*, ed. Mark Husbands and Timothy Larsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 32–52; Benjamin L. Merkle, “Paul’s Arguments from Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:8–9 and 1 Timothy 2:13–14: An Apparent Inconsistency Answered,” *JETS* 49, no. 3 (2006): 527–48; Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (2004; repr., Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); Andreas J. Köstenberger and Margaret E. Köstenberger, *God’s Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014); Benjamin Reaoch, *Women, Slaves, and the Gender Debate: A Complementarian Response to the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2012); Claire Smith, *God’s Good Design: What the Bible Really Says about Men and Women* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2012); Jonathan Parnell and Owen Strachan, eds., *Good: The Joy of Christian Manhood and Womanhood* (Minneapolis: Desiring God, 2014); Peter G. Bolt and Tony Payne, *Women, Sermons and the Bible: Essays Interacting with John Dickson’s Hearing Her Voice* (Sydney: Matthias Media, 2014); and Gerhard H. Visscher, “1 Timothy 2:12–15: Is Paul’s Injunction about Women Still Valid?,” in *Correctly Handling the Word of Truth: Reformed Hermeneutics Today*, ed. Mees te Velde and Gerhard H. Visscher (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 142–54, 168–70.

⁴For an example of a new reading, see Sarah Sumner, whose basic thesis is that we are unsure what 1 Timothy means, that we cannot take it at face value, and that the simplest interpretation leads to clearly unbiblical conclusions. *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 210, 212, 227, 248, 251, 256, 257. Certainly, the biblical text does present us with difficulties, but Sumner exaggerates them and seems to conclude that we cannot grasp what the verses mean. Her hermeneutical despair should not be embraced, for debates exist over the meaning of many verses in the New Testament (e.g., debates about justification have continued since the Reformation), and yet we still believe that the Scriptures can be understood. Her four claims on p. 212 can be taken as an example. She says that if we understand the text at face value, then (1) v. 15 teaches that women are saved by bearing children instead of by the death of Christ; (2) women should receive teaching without evaluating it; (3) women cannot wear gold wedding rings, but men can; and (4) men are to raise hands when they pray, but women cannot. The following observations apply to Sumner’s claims (I will expound on these comments in the remainder of this essay): (1) she fails to distinguish between cultural practices and principles; (2) the wording of v. 15 can be taken seriously without compromising the atoning death of Christ as the basis of salvation; (3) most of her examples contain *non sequiturs*. For example, when v. 11 speaks of women receiving teaching quietly, it scarcely follows logically that discernment and evaluation of such teaching is precluded. And a similar logical error appears in her view of raising hands—it doesn’t follow that women are forbidden to raise their hands simply because men are exhorted to do so.

⁵For a history of interpreting the text examined in this essay, see Daniel Doriani, “Appendix 1: History of the Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 213–67. Johnson also surveys the contribution of commentators on 1–2 Timothy, paying special attention to their view of 1 Tim. 2:9–15. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 20–54.

⁶In this essay, I interact mainly with evangelical feminists instead of radical feminists, for the latter tend to agree with my exegesis of 1 Tim. 2:11–15 but regard it as patriarchal. For the most notable contribution from the radical feminist position, see Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983). On feminist scholarship on Jesus, see especially Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger, *Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008). While Köstenberger focuses primarily on feminist scholarship on Jesus, much of her analysis of feminist exegesis and hermeneutics is relevant also for scholarship on Paul. See also the helpful essay by Philip H. Towner, “Feminist Approaches to the New Testament: With 1 Timothy 2:8–15 as a Test Case,” *Jian Dao* 7 (1997): 91–111. Towner briefly surveys and analyzes the views of radical and biblical feminists on the interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:8–15.

⁷Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 112–13, 119. See also Annette Bourland Huizenga, *Moral Education for Women in the Pastoral and Pythagorean Letters: Philosophers of the Household*, NovTSup 147 (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Korinna Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God: A Contextual Approach to Roles and Ministries in the Pastoral Epistles*, NTOA 103 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 217–18, 226–79; Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 208, 210; Raymond F. Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 74–75; Bridget Gilfillan Upton, “Can Stepmothers Be Saved? Another Look at 1 Timothy 2:8–15,” *Feminist Theology* 15, no. 2 (2007): 175–85. In a similar vein, Jouette Bassler does not regard what is said here as authoritative for today. See her “Adam, Eve, and the Pastor: The Use of Genesis 2–3 in the Pastoral Epistles,” in *Genesis 1–3 in the History of Exegesis: Intrigue in the Garden*, ed. Gregory A. Robbins, *Studies in Women and Religion* 27 (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1988), 43–65. Interestingly, Bassler also rejects the modern attempt to ameliorate what Paul says in order to make it fit with women in leadership in today’s world. She remarks, “This, however, involves reading twentieth-century sensibilities into the text, for a comprehensive prohibition of any leadership office seems clearly indicated by the words” (48–49). Benjamin Fiore rejects the writer’s teaching here as biased and advises not to follow his example. *The Pastoral Epistles: First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus*, SP 12 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007), 71. Zamfir and Verheyden travel the same path, arguing that a later writer claiming to be Paul in 1 Timothy clamped down on what Paul permitted women to do in 1 Corinthians 11. See Korinna Zamfir and Joseph Verheyden, “Text Critical and Intertextual Remarks on 1 Tim. 2:8–10,” *NovT* 50, no. 4 (2008): 376–406. For a similar reading in many respects, see Brian J. Capper, “To Keep Silent, Ask Husbands at Home, and Not to Have Authority over Men (1 Corinthians 14:33–36 and 1 Timothy 2:11–12): The Transition from Gathering in Private to Meeting in Public Space in Second-Generation Christianity and the Exclusion of Women from Leadership of the Public Assembly, Parts 1 and 2,” *TZ* 61, nos. 2 and 4 (2005): 113–31, 301–19. Clarence Boomsma argues that even though Paul’s exegesis of the Genesis text in 1 Timothy 2 is flawed inasmuch as it does not represent the intended meaning of the text of Genesis, it was appropriate for the particular situation addressed in 1 Timothy. Thus, he claims that even though Paul’s “argument from Genesis 2 is without support in the text,” one should not conclude that Paul was in error or uninspired. He “rightly” misinterpreted the text of Genesis in order to correct an abuse by the women addressed in 1 Timothy 2. Boomsma concludes, therefore, that 1 Tim. 2:11–15, rightly interpreted, does not prohibit women from serving in church office today. *Male and Female, One in Christ: New Testament Teaching on Women in Office* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 53–82; quotation on 58. It is hard to imagine how Paul’s argumentation in 1 Timothy 2 would convince the original recipients if Boomsma is correct. See the review by Albert Wolters, who critiques Boomsma’s thesis, showing that it squares neither with the text of 1 Tim. 2:11–15 nor with logic. *CTJ* 29, no. 1 (1994): 278–85.

⁸For an example of someone who rightly views the directives in 1 Timothy as universally binding, Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1980), 192.

⁹This view is commonplace now. See Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, NIBCNT (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 1–31; Fee, *Gospel and Spirit* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 54–55; Philip H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction*, JSNTSup 34 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989), 21–45; Sharon Hodgkin Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First*

Century (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 31–49, 105–16; Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11–15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), passim; Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, SNTSMS 59 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 118; Sariah Yau-wah Chan, “1 Timothy 2:13–15 in the Light of Views Concerning Eve and Childbirth in Early Judaism” (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2006), 269–70.

¹⁰So Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 60–61.

¹¹This mistake is found in Gordon D. Fee, “Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles, with Further Reflection on the Hermeneutics of *Ad Hoc* Documents,” *JETS* 28, no. 2 (1985): 141–51. See the response by George W. Knight III, “The Scriptures Were Written for Our Instruction,” *JETS* 39, no. 1 (1996): 3–13.

¹²Robert W. Wall argues that the evidence is insufficient to support the conclusion that the writer responds to women who were a problem in the church. “1 Timothy 2:9–15 Reconsidered (Again),” *BBR* 14, no. 1 (2004): 83n4.

¹³For further comments on this matter, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “1 and 2 Timothy and Titus,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 514n1, 530. Mounce maintains that while Paul’s remarks are directed to Ephesus, they are normative wherever the church worships. William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC (Nashville: Nelson, 2000), 107, 111–12. See also the essay that appeared in the first edition of the present work, T. David Gordon, “A Certain Kind of Letter: The Genre of 1 Timothy,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 53–63.

¹⁴Sumner seems to embrace this reasoning. *Men and Women in the Church*, 258.

¹⁵Contra Susan T. Foh, *Women and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979), 122–23.

¹⁶Zamfir argues that the author prohibits women from teaching by appealing to creation, not because women were spreading the false teaching. *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 232–33.

¹⁷Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, especially 42–43, 50–52, 59–66, 70–74, 105–13. Cf. also Mark D. Roberts, “Woman Shall Be Saved: A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:15,” *TSF Bulletin* 5, no. 2 (1981): 5; Ronald W. Pierce, “Evangelicals and Gender Roles in the 1990s: 1 Tim. 2:8–15: A Test Case,” *JETS* 36, no. 3 (1993): 347–48, 353.

¹⁸Sumner similarly suggests that v. 14 indicates that women may have been teaching the heresy, that they maintained that Eve was created first, that they believed Eve was enlightened, and that some worshiped the goddess in the church. *Men and Women in the Church*, 258, 260.

¹⁹For a refutation of the view that Ephesus was influenced by an early form of feminism, see S. M. Baugh’s essay in this volume and his essay in the two previous editions of this book as well (the essay in this volume is completely rewritten). For his essay in the second edition, see S. M. Baugh, “A Foreign World: Ephesus in the First Century,” in *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 13–38.

²⁰Bruce Barron makes the same mistake of reconstructing the heresy on the basis of second-century gnosticism. “Putting Women in Their Place: 1 Timothy 2 and Evangelical Views of Women in Church Leadership,” *JETS* 33, no. 4 (1990): 451–59. Barron reads into the text that Eve was the heroine for the false teachers (454), a claim that can only be substantiated by appealing to second-century writings. That this was a plank of the adversaries’ teaching is scarcely clear from 1 Timothy itself. Even if one sees the opponents as gnostic in some sense, Werner G. Kümmel rightly remarks, “There is then not the slightest occasion, just because the false teachers who are being opposed are Gnostics, to link them up with the great Gnostic systems of the second century.” *Introduction to the New Testament*, 17th ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 379. Collins likewise maintains that there is no evidence suggesting that Paul was responding to liberated or charismatic women. *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 70.

²¹For three critical reviews of the Kroegers’ work, see Robert W. Yarbrough, “*I Suffer Not a Woman: A Review Essay*,” *Presb* 18, no. 1 (1992): 25–33; Albert Wolters, Review of *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11–15 in Light of Ancient Evidence*, by Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *CTJ* 28, no. 1 (1993): 208–13; and S. M. Baugh, “The Apostle among the Amazons,” *WTJ* 56, no. 1 (1994): 153–71.

²²See, e.g., John M. G. Barclay, “Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case,” *JSNT* 31 (1987): 73–93; Jerry L. Sumney, *Identifying Paul’s Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians*, JSNTSup 40 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990); Sumney, “Studying Paul’s Opponents: Advances and Challenges,” in *Paul and His Opponents*, ed. Stanley E. Porter; Pauline Studies 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 7–58. Unfortunately, the Tidballs fall into this same error. They posit devotion to Artemis and appeal to other cultural realities to defend the notion that Paul’s advice is limited, claiming that we must interpret in light of the culture of the day instead of in a vacuum. Derek and Diane Tidball, *The Message of Women: Creation, Grace and Gender*, The Bible Speaks Today, Bible Themes (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012), 257–60. However, while we must interpret in light of the cultural setting, we must be sure that the alleged cultural setting doesn’t dwarf the message of the text. The problem with the Tidballs’ reading is that the background they posit cannot be verified (as Baugh shows in the several editions of this book; see note 19). Instead, they impose it upon the text to justify their interpretation. We must avoid allowing alleged backgrounds to squelch the line of the argument in the text.

²³Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 11–49, 105–16; cf. also Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 294–304; Linda L. Belleville, “1 Timothy” in *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, 17 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2009), 61–62; Belleville, “Exegetical Fallacies in Interpreting 1 Timothy 2:11–15,” *Priscilla Papers* 17, no. 3 (2003): 7; R. T. France, *Women in the Church’s Ministry: A Test-Case for Biblical Hermeneutics* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1995), 63.

²⁴In his essay in this volume, Baugh indicates that evidence is lacking to identify Artemis as a mother goddess. If she ever was identified as such, it occurred about a millennium before the New Testament was written and was forgotten by Paul’s day.

²⁵N. T. Wright suggests that Paul’s prohibition is due to the Artemis cult in Ephesus, and hence Paul gives these instructions because women were dominating men. According to Wright, Paul is egalitarian; he forbids men from dominating women and women from dominating men. The prohibition in 1 Tim. 2:12, then, isn’t a transcendent word for our culture today, and thus women may teach men and serve as leaders. N. T. Wright, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 19; Wright, “The Biblical Basis for Women’s Service in the Church,” *Priscilla Papers* 20, no. 4 (2004): 9; Wright, *Surprised by Scripture: Engaging Contemporary Issues* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014), 80–81. Wright’s fundamental approach is flawed, for as Baugh pointed out to me in a private email, it would be equally flawed to say that women dominated men in ancient Athens or Aphrodisias simply because the worship of Athena and Aphrodite dominated these cities respectively. For further discussion, Baugh’s essay in this book should again be consulted.

²⁶Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 114–16.

²⁷For a sensible and cautious description of the opponents, see I. Howard Marshall, in collaboration with Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 1999), 140–52; cf. also Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, lxix–lxxxvi. For a more recent essay where Marshall reiterates and expands his interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:9–15, see I. Howard Marshall, “Women in Ministry: A Further Look at 1 Timothy 2,” in *Women, Ministry, and the Gospel*, ed. Husbands and Larsen, 53–78.

²⁸So Douglas J. Moo, “What Does It Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority over Men? 1 Timothy 2:11–15,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 180–81.

²⁹Robert J. Karris, “The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles,” *JBL* 92, no. 4 (1973): 550.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 562. Incidentally, I do not find persuasive Karris’s own suggestion that the author used the typical polemic of philosophers against sophists.

³¹Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 21–45.

³²See Anthony C. Thiselton, “Realized Eschatology at Corinth,” *NTS* 24 (1978): 510–26.

³³For a similar suggestion, see William L. Lane, “1 Tim. iv.1–3: An Early Instance of Over-realized Eschatology?,” *NTS* 11, no. 2 (1965): 164–67.

³⁴Collins supports the notion that the Ephesians denigrated marriage. *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 65.

³⁵Depending on later evidence also mars J. Massyngberde Ford’s suggestion that the heresy was an early form of Montanism; see “A Note on Proto-Montanism in the Pastoral Epistles,” *NTS* 17, no. 3 (1970–71): 338–46.

³⁶Bruce W. Winter, “The ‘New’ Roman Wife and 1 Timothy 2:9–15: The Search for a *Sitz im Leben*,” *TynBul* 51, no. 2 (2000): 285–94.

³⁷Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: 2006), 195–97, 218–20, 222–24, 232, 234, 235.

³⁸Perhaps Towner is unaware that Winter is a complementarian.

³⁹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 218.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 219.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 220.

⁴²“I do not think, for example, that one needs to posit a ‘new woman’ behind the text of 1 Tim. 2:9–15 as Bruce Winter does. . . . Winter argues that ‘a new woman’ had arisen in the first century BCE, who neglected her household duties and engaged in illicit liaisons . . . and that 1 Timothy as well as several other texts from Pauline communities were reacting to her activities. It seems to me rather, that 1 Timothy is simply echoing the longstanding male emphasis upon female modesty and place in the domestic realm, in which children are supposed to be women’s true adornment.” Alicia J. Batten, “Neither Gold nor Braided Hair (1 Timothy 2:9; 1 Peter 3:3): Adornment, Gender and Honour in Antiquity,” *NTS* 55, no. 4 (2009): 497n73.

⁴³Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 125. Contra Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 55; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 118; Linda L. Belleville, “Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1 Timothy 2:11–15,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 207. Nor does the description of the heresy as “profane and old-womanish myths,” as Mark Roberts translates 1 Tim. 4:7, imply that the false teachers were women. Contra Roberts, “Woman Shall Be Saved,” 5.

⁴⁴The Greek word used is λαλέω, not διδάσκω.

⁴⁵Cf. Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 26, 39–40.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 39–40.

⁴⁷Cf. Philip H. Towner, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 75–76.

⁴⁸Marshall fails to see this point when he says that in this letter Paul also silenced the men who propagated the false teaching, and thus it makes sense that he applied the same injunction to women. “Women in Ministry: A Further Look at 1 Timothy 2,” 70. Such a reading fails to answer the vital question: why are *all* the women forbidden to teach? Surely, it wasn’t the case that the false teachers conned *all the women*.

⁴⁹Contra J. M. Holmes, *Text in a Whirlwind: A Critique of Four Exegetical Devices at 1 Timothy 2.9–15*, JSNTSup 196 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 117–39.

⁵⁰The contrast between ἄνδρας in v. 8 and γυναῖκες in v. 9 shows that the former refers to males only.

⁵¹Cf. Alan G. Padgett, “Wealthy Women at Ephesus: 1 Timothy 2:8–15 in Social Context,” *Int* 41, no. 1 (1987): 22.

⁵²So Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC 14 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957), 73–74; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1963), 65; Ceslas Spicq, *Saint Paul: Les Épîtres pastorales*, 4th ed., 2 vols., *EBib* (Paris: Gabalda, 1969), 371–72; Norbert Brox, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 4th ed., RNT (Regensburg: Pustet, 1969), 130; Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, trans. Philip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 75; Jürgen Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus*, EKKNT (Zürich: Benziger, 1988), 130; George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 128; Gottlob Schrenk, *TDNT*, 1:632.

⁵³Everett Ferguson, “Τόπος in 1 Timothy 2:8,” *ResQ* 33, no. 2 (1991): 65–73; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 70; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 128; Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 22; Douglas J. Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15: Meaning and Significance,” *TrinJ*, n.s. 1, no. 1 (1980): 62; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 119.

⁵⁴C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New Clarendon Bible (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 54; Robert D. Culver, “A Traditional View: Let Your Women Keep Silence,” in *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 34.

⁵⁵Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1936), 30; Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 123n19; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 205–6; Paul W. Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry (1 Timothy 2:11–15),” *EQ* 61 (1989): 225, 236; Stephen Motyer, “Expounding 1 Timothy 2:8–15,” *VE* 24 (1994): 92.

⁵⁶Marshall thinks the wording should not be limited to house churches. *Pastoral Epistles*, 444–50. See also Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 65–66.

⁵⁷Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 130–31; see also B. Ward Powers, *The Ministry of Women in the Church: Which Way Forward? The Case for the “Middle Ground” Interpretation of the New Testament* (Adelaide: S.P.C.K., 1996), 35–38, 42–53.

⁵⁸J. M. Holmes argues that a congregational context is not in view since many features of the text in 1 Timothy 2 cannot be restricted to a congregational context. For example, prayers for all (vv. 1–2), the prohibition against anger (v. 8), and the call for proper dress and good works (vv. 9–10) cannot be limited to congregational meetings. *Text in a Whirlwind*, 36–72. Holmes’s explanation fails to persuade, for while congregational meetings are primarily in view in passages such as vv. 8–15, arguably the instructions there extend beyond such meetings.

Finally, it is also possible that vv. 11–14 address congregational meetings and vv. 8–10 do not. Paul may move fluidly between what happens in gathered meetings and what happens in life outside a congregational context. What is most damaging to Holmes’s thesis is the reference to learning and teaching in vv. 11–12. Teaching in the Pastoral Epistles refers to the transmission of tradition in congregational contexts, not to informal sharing. See especially Claire S. Smith, *Pauline Communities as “Scholastic Communities”: A Study of the Vocabulary of “Teaching” in 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, WUNT, 2nd ser., 335 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 59–62; see also Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 224–26; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 455. Note also criticisms of Holmes’s view in Andreas Köstenberger’s book review, available online, *RBL*, January 28, 2001, http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/974_506.pdf. Holmes sustains her case from vv. 11–12 by saying that a congregational context is unnecessary, not required, and not demanded (74–75, 84–85, 87). But the question is not whether a congregational context is “required,” “demanded,” or “necessary.” The issue is whether such a context is most likely when

Paul refers to learning and teaching. We can be quite confident that teaching occurred when the church gathered. Hence, one of the fundamental planks of Holmes's view of the text remains unpersuasive.

⁵⁹Cf. Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 126; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 103; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 66; Moo, "1 Timothy 2:11–15," 63; Roloff, *Timotheus*, 132.

⁶⁰Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 55; Mary Evans, *Woman in the Bible: An Overview of All the Crucial Passages on Women's Roles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983), 101; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 126; Gottfried Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, THKNT (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1972), 65–66; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 102; David M. Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9–15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 200–201; Barnett, "Wives and Women's Ministry," 227–28; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 263n203.

⁶¹So Ulrike Wagoner, *Die Ordnung des "Houses Gottes": Der Ort von Frauen in der Ekklesiologie und Ethik der Pastoralbriefe*, WUNT, 2nd ser., 65 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1994), 73; Foh, *Women and the Word of God*, 122; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 132; Moo, "1 Timothy 2:11–15," 63; Roloff, *Timotheus*, 126; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 207; Brox, *Pastoralbriefe*, 132; Bassler, "Adam, Eve, and the Pastor," 48; Kenneth L. Cukrowski, "An Exegetical Note on the Ellipsis in 1 Timothy 2:9," in *Transmission and Reception: New Testament Text-Critical and Exegetical Studies*, ed. J. W. Childers and D. C. Parker, Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature, 3rd series, 4 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2006), 232–38.

⁶²Contra Culver, "Traditional View," 35; Clark, *Man and Woman*, 194.

⁶³Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 207–8; Walter L. Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 95.

⁶⁴Gordon P. Hugenberger, "Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey of Approaches to 1 Tim. 2:8–15," *JETS* 35, no. 3 (1992): 341–60. For a similar view, see Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 125, 131, 133, 135, 136, 140; N. J. Hommes, "Let Women Be Silent in Church," *CTJ* 4, no. 1 (1969): 13–14, 19–20. Cf. Barnett, "Wives and Women's Ministry," 232–33; Powers, *Ministry of Women in the Church*, 33–35. Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker maintain that vv. 9–10 refer to all women, but v. 11 shifts to wives. *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*, ECC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 218, 221. Collins argues that husbands are in view in v. 12 but does not comment on the identity of men and women in earlier verses. *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 69. Winter assumes that wives are in view in these verses but does not present evidence from the text of 1 Tim. 2:9–15 for his interpretation. The substance of Winter's article is not affected by whether Paul refers to women or wives. "The 'New' Roman Wife," 285–94.

⁶⁵Hugenberger, "Women in Church Office," 355.

⁶⁶So Timothy J. Harris, "Why Did Paul Mention Eve's Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett's Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2," *EQ* 62, no. 4 (1990): 336.

⁶⁷Some examples will illustrate how clear the evidence is: "the married woman" (ἡ ὑπανδρος γυνή, Rom. 7:2); "each man should have his own wife" (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα, 1 Cor. 7:2); "to the married" (τοῖς γεγαμηκόσιν, 1 Cor. 7:10); "if any brother has a wife" (ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει, 1 Cor. 7:12); "her husband" (ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς, 1 Cor. 7:39); "let them ask their own husbands at home" (τοὺς ἰδίους ἀνδρας, 1 Cor. 14:35); "I betrothed you to one husband" (ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ, 2 Cor. 11:2); "More are the children of the desolate one than of the one having a husband" (τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἀνδρα, Gal. 4:27); "wives being subject to their own husbands" (αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, Eph. 5:22); "husband of one wife" (μῖα γυναικὸς ἀνδρα, 1 Tim. 3:2; cf. 1 Tim. 3:12; 5:9; Titus 1:6); "Instruct the young women to be lovers of their husbands [φιλάνδρους], . . . being subject to their own husbands" (τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, Titus 2:5). I could cite more examples but have provided only a few so as not to unduly prolong the point.

⁶⁸It is possible to argue for a complementarian view and see husbands and wives in 1 Tim. 2:9–15. So John R. Master and Jonathan L. Master, "Who Is the 'Woman' in 1 Timothy 2?," *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry* 10 (2008/9): 3–21. They adduce evidence from Genesis and Philo in particular to buttress their case, but such evidence doesn't determine the issue, for the context of the text in question must be the primary consideration. They also think husbands and wives are in view in 1 Timothy 2 since Adam and Eve are mentioned and since Paul concludes by speaking of childbirth. We have insufficient space to examine the evidence here in detail, but I would suggest, as in the case made against Hugenberger above, that 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 11 lack the clues signifying a reference to husbands and wives. Referring to Adam and Eve is hardly decisive since they were the first man and woman. Yes, they were husband and wife, but 1 Timothy 2 discusses not their marital relationship, but the order of their creation and their fall into sin. Again, the context here focuses on what is proper in the gathered assembly, not how a husband and wife relate to one another. Nor does the reference to childbearing indicate that the passage refers to husbands and wives. Childbearing comes up because it signifies the role of women in distinction from men and because most women were mothers in the ancient world. It doesn't follow logically from this, however, that Paul is directing his instructions exclusively to husbands and wives. We need to remember that context is the primary criterion for determining the referent, and Paul speaks to what women are permitted to do when the church is gathered. He doesn't have one set of instructions on this score for married women and another for those who are unmarried. Zamfir rightly says that the instructions aren't limited to husbands and wives since the author addresses the community. *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 227–28.

⁶⁹Hugenberger is correct, strictly speaking, in saying that the Greek article or possessive pronoun is not necessary for a reference to husbands and wives. "Women in Church Office," 353. However, even though an article or possessive pronoun is not demanded, the lack of such and the generality of the context have persuaded most scholars that Paul is speaking of men and women in general. What Hugenberger fails to appreciate is that Paul provides no determinative clues (as he does in all his other texts referring to husbands and wives) that he intends husbands and wives here.

⁷⁰So Ben Wiebe, "Two Texts on Women (1 Tim 2:11–15; Gal 3:26–29): A Test of Interpretation," *HBT* 16, no. 1 (1994): 57; cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 107, 111–12; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 444, 452.

⁷¹If Paul wanted to discuss the relationship between husbands and wives, he probably would have linked it with his advice to slaves in 1 Tim. 6:1–2 (cf. Eph. 5:22–6:9; Col. 3:18–4:1).

⁷²In addition, Hugenberger's evidence is not decisive. While 1 Thess. 1:8 and 2 Cor. 2:14 have a wide reference, 1 Cor. 1:2 probably refers more narrowly, as Gordon D. Fee notes, to public Christian meetings. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 34. Ultimately, the context is decisive for the particular interpretation of the phrase.

⁷³E.g., Ronald Y. K. Fung, "Ministry in the New Testament," in *The Church in the Bible and in the World: An International Study*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 200–201; Moo, "1 Timothy 2:11–15," 63–64; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 212; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 119; Linda Belleville, "1 Timothy," 53, 58.

⁷⁴Alvera Mickelsen, "An Egalitarian View: There Is Neither Male nor Female in Christ," in *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. Clouse and Clouse, 201.

⁷⁵David Scholer, "Women's Adornment: Some Historical and Hermeneutical Observations on the New Testament Passages," *Daughters of Sarah* 6, no. 1 (1980): 3–6; Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9–15," 200–202; cf. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 57–58, 61; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 103–7.

⁷⁶So also Philip B. Payne, "Libertarian Women in Ephesus: A Response to Douglas J. Moo's Article, '1 Timothy 2:11–15: Meaning and Significance,'"

TrinJ, n.s. 2, no. 2 (1981): 189–90; Fee, “Reflections on Church Order,” 150.

⁷⁷For Scholer’s interpretation of the text as a whole, see “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 193–219.

⁷⁸So Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 45–46; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 126; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 74; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 133; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 63; Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 66; contra Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 31, who sees only a reference to dress.

⁷⁹Johnson remarks, “It is, indeed, unfortunate that the negative reaction by readers to the verses that follow also tends to color everything in this chapter, for Paul’s statements here have important implications not only for a Christian appreciation of simplicity in the face of cultures that define and value in terms of appearance (above all, in the case of women!), but also for a way of addressing the issues of economic and ecological oppression implicit (both then and now) in the production of luxurious clothing and adornment.” *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 204.

⁸⁰The Kroegers’ suggestion—based on a fresco in Pompeii of Dionysian worshipers disrobing—that the women in Ephesus may have been disrobing during worship is an example of mirror reading and parallelomania at its worst. *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 74–75.

⁸¹So Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 226, 228; Clark, *Man and Woman*, 194; Culver, “Traditional View,” 35; Susan T. Foh, “A Male Leadership View: The Head of the Woman Is the Man,” in *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. Clouse and Clouse, 80; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 127; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 75; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 103; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 135; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 182; Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus* (Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 94; Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 23; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 201–2; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 119–20.

⁸²This interpretation is borne out by the recent careful study by Annette Bourland Huizenga, “Epitomizing Virtue: Clothing the Christian Woman’s Body,” in *Christian Body, Christian Self: Concepts of Early Christian Personhood*, ed. Clare K. Rothschild and Trevor W. Thompson, WUNT 284 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 261–81.

⁸³James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 199.

⁸⁴So Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 105; cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 135; Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 67–68.

⁸⁵Juvenal, *Sat.*, 6.352–65, 457–73; Plutarch, *Mor.* 142A–B. Hence, Quinn and Wacker rightly remark that the sentiments expressed here were a commonplace in the Greco-Roman world. *First and Second Letters*, 219.

⁸⁶Gen. 24:22; Ex. 35:22; b. *Sabb.* 64b; Jos. Asen. 18.6. See Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 103–4.

⁸⁷Motyer suggests that Paul speaks against the self-assertiveness of women, but this isn’t evident in Paul’s words here. “Expounding 1 Timothy,” 94.

⁸⁸Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 449–50; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 114–15; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 103–6; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 135–36; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 182; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 201–2; Scholer, “Women’s Adornment,” 6; Oden, *First and Second Timothy*, 95; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 208; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 208–210; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 119–20. Gritz, without warrant, takes this as evidence of the influence of the Artemis cult. Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 126–27. Hoag claims that the evidence from the *Ephesiaca* by Xenophon of Ephesus shows that the Ephesian women were adorning themselves and braiding their hair for the sake of Artemis, and Paul calls upon them to transfer their loyalty to the one true God and dissociate themselves from Artemis in their dress. Gary G. Hoag, “Decorum and Deeds in 1 Timothy 2:9–10 in Light of *Ephesiaca* by Xenophon of Ephesus,” *ExAud* 27 (2011): 134–60. Space is lacking to treat Hoag’s view in detail, but the admonitions relative to dress given here, as noted above, were typical in the Greco-Roman world, and 1 Timothy gives no textual evidence that the Ephesians’ devotion to Artemis generated such rebukes. If the readers were descending into such paganism, it is astonishing that Paul doesn’t even mention it, which makes Hoag’s reading quite improbable. For further criticisms of Hoag’s view, see Lyn Nixon, “Response to Hoag,” *ExAud* 27 (2011): 161–68.

⁸⁹Some scholars limit the proscription to extravagance and see no indictment of sensuality: Holmes, *Text in a Whirlwind*, 65, 69; Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 200, 204; Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 363–65. But see Winter’s discussion of the evidence supporting a reference to sensuality. “The ‘New’ Roman Wife,” 285–94. Wall likewise maintains that σωφροσύνη is best rendered by the word “modesty.” “1 Timothy 2:9–15 Reconsidered,” 86n11.

⁹⁰T. Reu. 5.1–5; T. Jud. 12.3; T. Jos. 9.5; 1 En. 8.1–2; Jdt. 10:3–4; Rev. 17:4; 18:16. For citations from Greco-Roman literature, see Scholer, “Women’s Adornment,” 4–5.

⁹¹See Batten, “Adornment, Gender and Honour,” 484–501. Pierce strays from the text in suggesting that humility is enjoined here. His view that humility is the “primary focus” of not only this text but all the texts relating to leadership in 1 Timothy is mistaken. “Gender Roles,” 352. Although the women in Ephesus may have been conducting themselves in inappropriate ways because of pride, 1 Tim. 2:9–15 does not specifically pinpoint lack of humility as a problem. Nor does the passage on the appointment of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1–13) highlight pride as the central issue for leaders.

⁹²Scholer, “Women’s Adornment,” 3–6.

⁹³Cf. *ibid.*, 4–5.

⁹⁴I am not denying that these authors expected submission; I am only questioning whether this submission was regularly associated with adornment.

⁹⁵Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 229; Foh, *Women and the Word of God*, 124; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 128; Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 200; Oden, *First and Second Timothy*, 96; Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, SNTSMS 51 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 6–10; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 313–14n78. As Towner points out, this calls into question Jewett’s view that Paul’s instructions here simply reflect a rabbinic worldview (see note 7). Hugenberger wisely warns against overly simplistic versions of what the rabbis taught. “Women in Church Office,” 349. On this last point, see also Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 452; Quinn and Wacker, *First and Second Letters*, 215; Craig L. Blomberg, “Neither Hierarchalist nor Egalitarian: Gender Roles in Paul,” in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, ed. James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 332–33; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 214.

⁹⁶Philip B. Payne, “The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15: A Surrejoinder,” in *What Does the Scripture Teach about the Ordination of Women? Differing Views by Three New Testament Scholars* (Minneapolis: Evangelical Church of America, 1986), 96. More recently, Payne has nuanced this matter: “The one grammatical imperative in this passage is ‘let a woman learn in quietness and in all submission.’” *Man and Woman*, 314.

⁹⁷Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says about a Woman’s Place in Church and Family*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 136–39, 179–80; Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 101; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 107–8, 112; Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 24; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 314–17; Aída Besançon Spencer, “Eve at Ephesus: Should Women Be Ordained as Pastors according to the First Letter of Timothy 2:1–15?,” *JETS* 17, no. 4 (1974): 218–19.

⁹⁸So Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 201; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 64; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 263n207; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 119; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 453.

⁹⁹Rightly Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 118.

¹⁰⁰Cf. Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 184.

¹⁰¹Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 229; Clark, *Man and Woman*, 195; Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 101; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 84; Gritz, *Mother*

Goddess, 129; Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 69; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 108; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 314–15; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 120; Wiebe, “Two Texts on Women,” 58; Motyer, “Expounding 1 Timothy,” 93–95; Quinn and Wacker, *First and Second Letters*, 222; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 118–19; Holmes, *Text in a Whirlwind*, 76–77; Wagener, *Die Ordnung des “Hausess Gottes,”* 99.

¹⁰²So Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 226–27; Fung, “Ministry,” 197–98; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 139; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 64; Moo, “The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15: A Rejoinder,” *TrinJ*, n.s. 2, no. 2 (1981): 199; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 183.

¹⁰³In the first edition I argued that Paul had *silence* in mind, but it now seems to me that *quietness* is preferable.

¹⁰⁴Roloff, *Timotheus*, 135n125. Johnson rightly remarks that submission relates not only to attitude but to “a structural placement of one person below another.” *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 201.

¹⁰⁵Oden, *First and Second Timothy*, 97.

¹⁰⁶Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 101.

¹⁰⁷Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 130; Andrew C. Perriman, “What Eve Did, What Women Shouldn’t Do: The Meaning of ΑΥΘΗΝΤΕΩ in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *TynBul* 44, no. 1 (1993): 131.

¹⁰⁸Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 214.

¹⁰⁹Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 24.

¹¹⁰So Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 230; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 47; Fung, “Ministry,” 198; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 139; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 64; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 183; Roloff, *Timotheus*, 135; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 120; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 454.

¹¹¹Spencer’s view that the δέ is a signal to the church that the prohibition in v. 12 is temporary since it contradicts v. 11 is quite arbitrary. “Eve at Ephesus,” 219. Rightly Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 102.

¹¹²Cf. Fung, “Ministry,” 336n186; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 64; Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 228–29; Harris, “Eve’s Deception,” 340; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 120. I question whether there is a chiasm here because, if it was true chiasm, the idea of exercising authority should have preceded teaching in v. 12. Instead, the two verses are closely related, bound together with an *inclusio*. Another problem with seeing a chiasm is that the scholars cited above do not agree on the chiasmic arrangement.

¹¹³Roloff says that learning silently with all submissiveness (v. 11) is opposed to teaching in v. 12. *Timotheus*, 138.

¹¹⁴Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 129–30, 139–40. Perriman says that the shift from the imperative μανθανέτω to the indicative ἐπιτρέπω signals the parenthetic nature of v. 12. His argument falters because he fails to see that an indicative may introduce a command. Nor is there any evidence that Perriman has considered the close relationship between vv. 11 and 12 in his study. For a rejection of Perriman’s view, see also Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 121, and Köstenberger’s chapter in this volume.

¹¹⁵Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 138–39, 180; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 72; Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 83; Oden, *First and Second Timothy*, 97–98; Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 25; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 320–23; Roberts, “Woman Shall Be Saved,” 5; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 120–21; Wiebe, “Two Texts on Women,” 59; Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 109; Belleville, “1 Timothy,” 57.

¹¹⁶Rightly Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 106, 122–23; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 443, 454.

¹¹⁷See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 525–26; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 122–23; Blomberg, “Gender Roles in Paul,” 361; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 65; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 199–200; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 185; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 217.

¹¹⁸Most of the examples cited have the aorist tense, while 1 Tim. 2:12 has the present tense (cf. 1 Cor. 14:34). This fact should not be assigned too much weight, though, for scholars have too often said that the aorist tense refers to once-for-all action.

¹¹⁹Paul isn’t merely giving his personal opinion in v. 12, as Smith rightly observes. *Pauline Communities as “Scholastic Communities,”* 345–46.

¹²⁰Rightly Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 203n28.

¹²¹Holmes reads the aspect of the present infinitives to say that women cannot *continuously* teach or *continuously* exercise authority. Hence, women are allowed to teach, but they cannot teach too frequently or go on and on in their teaching. *Text in a Whirlwind*, 92–96. This understanding of the aspect of the infinitive is flawed, and Holmes fails to take into account other evidence in her analysis. Two examples of infinitives that follow the indicative παρακαλώ illustrate the point. When Paul exhorts the Romans to watch out for (σκοπεῖν) those causing dissension (Rom. 16:17), he hardly means, “Watch out frequently but not all the time for those creating such problems.” Paul exhorts Euodia and Syntyche to be in harmony (φρονεῖν) in the Lord (Phil. 4:2). This can scarcely mean that they should frequently but not always be in harmony (see also Phil. 1:12; 1 Tim. 2:1; Titus 3:8; 1 Pet. 2:11). It is possible, of course, that what is enjoined in the infinitive is limited in its application. But such a limitation is gleaned from the context, not the aspect of the infinitive. Holmes (30) cites Moisés Silva, who advises against making one’s interpretation “depend” on the aspect of a verbal form, but Holmes proceeds to ignore that advice, and the faulty conclusions she draws demonstrate that she should have heeded it.

¹²²Contra Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 130.

¹²³Contra Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 121. Rightly Fung, “Ministry,” 198; H. Greeven, “Propheten, Lehrer, Vorsteher bei Paulus: Zur Frage der ‘Ämter’ im Urchristentum,” *ZNW* 44, nos. 1–2 (1952–53): 19–23; Clark, *Man and Woman*, 196; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 65–66; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 185–86; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 215; Robert L. Saucy, “Women’s Prohibition to Teach Men: An Investigation into Its Meaning and Contemporary Application,” *JETS* 37, no. 1 (1994): 86–91; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 124–26; Blomberg, “Gender Roles in Paul,” 338. On the whole matter of teaching, instruction, and education, see the important work by Smith, *Pauline Communities as “Scholastic Communities.”* Hommes misunderstands the nature of teaching by comparing it to mutual discussion. “Let Women Be Silent,” 7–13. Chan, contrary to what is argued here, sees no authority in teaching. “1 Timothy 2:13–15,” 20, 272–74. Such a reading fails to see the role of elders and overseers and the importance of authoritative teaching in the Pastorals in general and in 1 Timothy in particular. Pierce argues that New Testament teaching was more authoritative, involving a master-discipleship role not practiced today. He observes, in contrast, that we understand teaching today as the imparting of information. “Gender Roles,” 349. This last observation reveals the weakness of much modern biblical teaching. More should be occurring than the impartation of information, since mind and heart should not be so rigidly separated. Pierce overplays the master-disciple dimension of the elder/overseer, but in any case, Paul believed that elders and overseers were *necessary* for the life of the churches in his day (cf. Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5–9). Elders as leaders in local churches were apparently common during New Testament times (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:14; 21:18; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1, 5). I see no reason not to have the same pattern today.

¹²⁴Rightly Foh, *Women and the Word of God*, 125; Foh, “Male Leadership View,” 81; Fung, “Ministry,” 198; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 140; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 201; Saucy, “Women’s Prohibition,” 79–97. As Holtz correctly observes, the object “man” shows that not all teaching or exercise of authority is prohibited. *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 69. Thus, Harris’s claim that this text gives no qualifications regarding women teaching is mistaken. “Eve’s Deception,”

342. The context also shows that public meetings are in view, and it is legitimate to consult (although not impose) other texts to construct the boundaries of the commands given here. Of course, how to apply this instruction in practical situations is not always easy. See Saucy, “Women’s Prohibition,” 79–97.

[125](#) ἄνδρός is the object of both infinitives. Rightly Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 123; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 142; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 202; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 186. Contra Payne, *Man and Woman*, 353–56; Fung, “Ministry,” 198–99. The singular ἄνδρός scarcely shows that a single man is in view, as Perriman and Payne claim. Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 142; Payne, “Interpretation,” 104. The word, like γυνή, is used generically.

[126](#) Mounce raises the possibility that women are prohibited only from teaching men who are overseers. But he proceeds to itemize a number of devastating objections against this notion: (1) the object specified in v. 12 is not “overseer” but “man”; (2) the object of submission in v. 11 does not require that ἄνδρός in v. 12 is equivalent to an overseer; (3) verses 13–14 address the relationship between males and females, not females and overseers. *Pastoral Epistles*, 124.

[127](#) Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 133–34; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 328–34; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 206–7; Belleville, “1 Timothy,” 57.

[128](#) Sumner fails to attend to the meaning of the verse in context, and so she objects that if we apply the verse today, women could not teach piano lessons to men, speak on the radio, or write books. *Men and Women in the Church*, 227, 241. The context, however, addresses the issue of the gathered church, not every conceivable interaction between men and women.

[129](#) Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 230–31; Clark, *Man and Woman*, 199; Foh, “Male Leadership View,” 81; Brox, *Pastoralbriefe*, 134; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 212. Contra Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 63; Harris, “Eve’s Deception,” 341. Harris says that the prohibition involves function, not merely office, and there is some truth to this. Nevertheless, 1 Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:9 suggest that elders had to have the ability to teach, although some invested more time in teaching than others (1 Tim. 5:17). Padgett argues that deacons functioned as teachers. “Wealthy Women,” 25. Contra Padgett, the evidence that those appointed in Acts 6 were deacons is uncertain. Even if they were, the text does not establish that teaching was a requirement for deacons. It is telling that being apt to teach, which is required for elders (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9), is not mentioned with respect to deacon qualifications. Further, just because some deacons teach, it doesn’t follow logically that all deacons are also therefore qualified to teach.

[130](#) The Tidballs argue that the appeal to the pastoral office made here is anachronistic. *Message of Women*, 264. That is a larger discussion (see also note 123). For a defense of the appeal to the pastoral office, see also Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner, eds., *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2014). Incidentally, what is said here doesn’t rest on the word “office.” The issue is that pastors/elders/overseers were appointed as leaders in churches. The Tidballs finally appeal to experience to defend their reading.

[131](#) Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 141–42. So also Craig S. Keener, “Women in Ministry: Another Egalitarian Perspective,” in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, ed. Beck and Blomberg (2001), 40–41, 53. Keener, however, thinks that this point demonstrates the weakness of the complementarian view.

[132](#) For discussion regarding practical application for today, see Saucy, “Women’s Prohibition,” 79–97. Walter Liefeld would contest the view defended here, for apparently he does not think that any leaders should be present in the church. “Women and the Nature of Ministry,” *JETS* 30, no. 1 (1987): 49–61; Liefeld, “A Plural Ministry View: Your Sons and Your Daughters Shall Prophecy,” in *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. Clouse and Clouse, 127–53. I cannot discuss this issue here, but based on Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22–23; 16:4; 20:17, 28; 21:18; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1–13; 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5–9; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1–5, it seems plain that the offices of elder/overseer and deacon existed in the early church. For critiques of Liefeld, see Culver, “Traditional View,” 154–59, and Foh, “Male Leadership View,” 162. For a defense of the importance of church office, see T. David Gordon, “‘Equipping’ Ministry in Ephesians 4?,” *JETS* 37, no. 1 (1994): 69–78.

[133](#) Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 63; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 132; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 328; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 207; James G. Sigountos and Myron Shank, “Public Roles for Women in the Pauline Church: A Reappraisal of the Evidence,” *JETS* 26, no. 3 (1983): 285–86; Belleville, “1 Timothy,” 57–58; Kevin Giles, “Women in the Church: A Rejoinder to Andreas Köstenberger,” *EQ* 73, no. 3 (2001): 230–31. For Giles’s review of the first edition of this book, see “A Critique of the ‘Novel’ Contemporary Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 Given in the Book, *Women in the Church: Parts 1 and 2*,” *EQ* 72, nos. 2–3 (2000): 151–67, 195–215; Giles, “Women in the Church: A Rejoinder to Andreas Köstenberger,” 225–43. For a convincing response to Giles, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “Women in the Church: A Response to Kevin Giles,” *EQ* 73, no. 3 (2001): 205–24.

[134](#) Wayne Grudem, “Prophecy—Yes, but Teaching—No: Paul’s Consistent Advocacy of Women’s Participation without Governing Authority,” *JETS* 30, no. 1 (1987): 11–23.

[135](#) I previously endorsed Grudem’s view. See Thomas R. Schreiner, “The Valuable Ministries of Women in the Context of Male Leadership,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem, 217.

[136](#) Cf. Smith, *Pauline Communities as “Scholastic Communities”*, 239–40, 252; Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 233; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 75; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 206–7; Gerhard Friedrich, *TDNT*, 6:854; Karl H. Rengstorf, *TDNT*, 2:158; Greeven, “Propheten,” 29–30; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 215. Sigountos and Shank disagree with this distinction, even though some of the evidence they adduce actually supports it. “Public Roles,” 285–86, 289–90. Their contention that teaching was disallowed for women in the Greco-Roman world for cultural reasons while prophecy was permissible is unpersuasive.

[137](#) See my “Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity: 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem, 124–39. Keener misunderstood my discussion on the nature of the Old Testament prophecy practiced by Deborah, Huldah, and other women. *Paul, Women and Wives*, 244–45. I didn’t argue that their prophecies were less authoritative but that they exercised their prophetic gift in such a way that they did not subvert male leadership. “Ministries of Women,” 216–17.

[138](#) See Köstenberger and Köstenberger, *God’s Design for Man and Woman*, 65–69, who argue that a prophet or prophetess’s authority rested in the word from God that he or she proclaimed rather than in a particular permanent political or religious office. Blomberg thinks that prophecy includes preaching, so that women can preach as long as they are under male authority. “Gender Roles in Paul,” 344–45. I understand 1 Tim. 2:12 to prohibit women from preaching or from functioning in any regular way as the teacher of men, but there are contexts in which it is appropriate for a woman to address both men and women. Prophecy involves the reception and communication of spontaneous revelations from God (1 Cor. 14:29–32), but preaching exposit what has been divinely preserved in Scripture.

[139](#) See Henry Scott Baldwin’s article in the first two editions of this volume. For the second edition of Baldwin’s article, see H. Scott Baldwin, “An Important Word: Ἀϋθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12,” in *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 39–51. Baldwin’s appendix on the term Ἀϋθεντέω in the first edition is also well worth consulting: “Appendix 2: Ἀϋθεντέω in Ancient Greek Literature,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 269–305. On Ἀϋθεντέω, see also George W. Knight III, “ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in Reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2.12,” *NTS* 30, no. 1 (1984): 143–57; Leland E. Wilshire, “The TLG Computer and Further Reference to ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ in 1 Timothy 2.12,” *NTS* 34, no. 1 (1988): 120–34; A. J. Panning, “ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΙΝ—A Word Study,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 78 (1981): 185–91; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 128; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 66–67; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 134; Barnett, “Wives and

Women's Ministry," 231–32; Padgett, "Wealthy Women," 25; Fung, "Ministry," 198.

¹⁴⁰See his essay in the first two editions of this book. See also David K. Huttar, "AYΘENTEIN in the Aeschylus Scholium," *JETS* 44, no. 4 (2001): 615–25; Al Wolters, "A Semantic Study of Ἀϋθεντης and Its Derivatives," *JGRChJ* 1 (2000): 145–75. See also Wolters, "Review of *I Suffer Not*," 211; Yarbrough, "Review," 28.

¹⁴¹Knight, "AYΘENTEΩ," 152.

¹⁴²Catherine C. Kroeger, "Ancient Heresies and a Strange Greek Verb," *Reformed Journal* 29, no. 3 (1979): 12–15.

¹⁴³Cf. Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 228–29, especially n56; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 134; Moo, "1 Timothy 2:11–15," 67; Carroll D. Osburn, "AYΘENTEΩ (1 Timothy 2:12)," *ResQ* 25, no. 1 (1982): 1–8; Panning, "AYΘENTEIN," 185–91; Chan, "1 Timothy 2:13–15," 274–89.

¹⁴⁴Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 103. Linda Belleville proposes a reading similar to the Kroegers' in some respects, but her analysis of the grammar is mistaken. She says that the two infinitives "to teach" and "to exercise authority" function as nouns, but she does not point out that they function as complementary infinitives to the verb phrase "I do not permit." Further, she argues that the verb "teach" modifies the noun "woman," but actually the noun "woman" functions as part of the object clause of the verb "permit" and as the subject of both infinitives in the object clause. Belleville ends up with two unusual proposals for the meaning of the verse: (1) "I do not permit a woman to teach in order to gain mastery over a man," and (2) "I do not permit a woman to teach with a view to dominating a man." She understands the Greek word οὐδέ to designate in the correlative clause a related purpose or goal. "Teaching and Usurping Authority," 217–19; cf. Belleville, "1 Timothy," 59–60. Such a reading is grammatically problematic and misunderstands the word οὐδέ, for introducing any notion of purpose here misconstrues the force of the correlative. Since Belleville demonstrates a misunderstanding of the syntax of 1 Tim. 2:12, her attempt to define the word ἀϋθεντεῖν must be judged as unconvincing.

¹⁴⁵For criticisms, see Perriman, "What Eve Did," 132–34; Leland E. Wilshire, "1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited: A Reply to Paul W. Barnett and Timothy J. Harris," *EQ* 65, no. 1 (1993): 54; Wolters, "Review of *I Suffer Not*," 210–11. Payne lists five different possible meanings for the verb, but the very variety of his proposals suggests the implausibility of his suggestions. In addition, most of his proposals assign a negative meaning to the infinitive "to teach," which I argue below is mistaken. "Interpretation," 108–10. More recently, he has argued that the term means "assume authority." Payne, *Man and Woman*, 361–97. For this reading, see also the NIV 2011. For convincing responses, see the essays by Al Wolters and Denny Burk in this volume.

¹⁴⁶Wilshire, "The TLG Computer," 120–34.

¹⁴⁷Wilshire, "1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited," 44.

¹⁴⁸For scholars who interpreted Wilshire thus, see Barnett, "Wives and Women's Ministry," 231–32; Moo, "What Does It Mean?," 497n18; Wolters, "Review of *I Suffer Not*," 211. Perriman rightly observes that the meaning "exercise authority" was the drift of Wilshire's essay despite his protests. "What Eve Did," 134–35. In his later article, Wilshire says that ἀϋθεντεῖν meant "authority" only in the second and third centuries. "1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited," 50. But in his previous article he said, "There are, however, a series of citations immediately before, during, and after the time of Paul where some sort of meaning connected with 'authority' is found for the word ἀϋθεντεῖω." Wilshire, "The TLG Computer," 130; emphasis mine. After I had written the above comments, Paul W. Barnett published an article in which he justifies his interpretation of the first Wilshire article along lines similar to what I have argued here. Barnett, "Authentein Once More: A Response to L. E. Wilshire," *EQ* 66 (1994): 159–62.

¹⁴⁹Wilshire, "1 Timothy 2:12 Revisited," 43–55.

¹⁵⁰So Perriman, "What Eve Did," 136; Barnett, "Response," 161–62.

¹⁵¹Perriman's own suggestion is that ἀϋθεντεῖν means the "active wielding of influence," which emphasizes the taking of authority. He compares this to Eve's actions influencing Adam with the result that he transgressed. So, too, women teachers who are uneducated should not take authoritative action because they will lead men into sin. "What Eve Did," 136–41. The problems with Perriman's analysis are numerous. His interpretation depends on v. 12 being parenthetical, which is dubious. Wolters points out that assuming or taking authority fits best with the aorist tense, but here Paul uses the present tense (see his essay in this volume). The context doesn't justify the nuance Perriman assigns to ἀϋθεντεῖν, for he does not adequately explain the correlation between "teach" and "exercise authority." Moreover, Köstenberger has shown that the activities conveyed by the two infinitives in v. 12 are to be construed positively in and of themselves—though, of course, Paul forbids them for women over men for the reasons given in vv. 13 and 14 (see his essay in this volume). Perriman imports into this text the idea that women were prohibited from teaching because of ignorance or lack of education, but the passage never states or implies either of these qualifications.

¹⁵²Perriman, "What Eve Did," 135; Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 84; Mickelsen, "Egalitarian View," 202; Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9–15," 205; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 216; Wiebe, "Two Texts on Women," 59–60; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 458; Belleville, "Teaching and Usurping Authority," 209–17.

¹⁵³So Moo, "What Does It Mean?," 186; cf. also Blomberg, "Gender Roles in Paul," 362.

¹⁵⁴Liefeld fails to consider this data in his commentary. *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 99.

¹⁵⁵Andreas J. Köstenberger observes that scholars on both sides have attempted to assign exclusive meanings to words—in the case of ἀϋθεντεῖν, either positive or negative—on the basis of extrabiblical literature. Köstenberger correctly comments that these studies are helpful in establishing the semantic range of a word, but they cannot definitively establish the meaning of a term in a specific context. "Gender Passages in the NT: Hermeneutical Fallacies Critiqued," *WTJ* 56, no. 2 (1994): 264–67.

¹⁵⁶In favor of "domineer," see Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 73; Harris, "Eve's Deception," 42; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 109; Osburn, "AYΘENTEΩ," 1–12; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 215–16; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 121–22; Boomsma, *Male and Female*, 71–72; Motyer, "Expounding 1 Timothy," 95–96; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 221.

¹⁵⁷Payne, *Man and Woman*, 348–53; cf. Boomsma, *Male and Female*, 72–73; Motyer, "Expounding 1 Timothy," 96; Belleville, "Teaching and Usurping Authority," 217–19; Tidball and Tidball, *Message of Women*, 252, 261. Even though Hurley and Saucy differ on the interpretation of the text, they affirm that these are not two distinct commands here. Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 201; Saucy, "Women's Prohibition," 90. Belleville thinks Paul forbids women from teaching in a dominating way. *1 Timothy*, 60. Zamfir also defends the notion that the two verbs convey the same idea, but contrary to Payne, she argues that teaching in general is prohibited since teaching was an office in the ancient world. *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 230–31.

¹⁵⁸See his chapter in this volume. See also Payne's study, which includes a response to Köstenberger. *Man and Woman*, 337–59. For a convincing response, see Andreas Köstenberger, "The Syntax of 1 Timothy 2:12: A Rejoinder to Philip B. Payne," *JBMW* 14, no. 2 (2009): 37–40. The conversation between Köstenberger and Payne continues, as we see in Köstenberger's chapter.

¹⁵⁹So also Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 131; Moo, "1 Timothy 2:11–15," 68; Fung, "Ministry," 199. Fung fails to convince with his suggestion that the phrase "nor is she to exercise authority over men" is parenthetical. The Kroegers offer the idea that οὐδέ and the words that follow may introduce the object of the infinitive διδάσκειν, but this suggestion is baseless, and they ultimately back away from it. *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 37–38, 79–80, 189–92. On this question, they did not pay heed to Walter L. Liefeld's remarks in his response to Catherine Kroeger in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera

Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 246.

¹⁶⁰Geer cites Köstenberger but misunderstands his essay and actually argues contrary to what Köstenberger says. See Thomas C. Geer Jr., “Admonitions to Women in 1 Tim. 2:8–15,” in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Carroll D. Osburn, vol. 1, 2nd printing, corrected (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 294.

¹⁶¹So also Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 134–35; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 128–30; Keener, “Women in Ministry,” 41.

¹⁶²Sumner, appealing to a book review by Padgett, maintains that 1 Tim. 6:3 and Titus 1:11 demonstrate the weakness of Köstenberger’s view. *Men and Women in the Church*, 253n21. But her note fails to acknowledge or show any awareness of the fact that Köstenberger demonstrated in his essay why these texts do not violate his thesis.

¹⁶³Witherington disagrees with Köstenberger, saying that context determines the meaning of “to teach” here and shows that it is negative. Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1–2 Timothy and 1–3 John*, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 228. But as noted earlier, the context gives no clear indication that the women were spreading the false teaching in contrast to the men.

¹⁶⁴Marshall agrees with Köstenberger that οὐδέ refers to two activities that should be interpreted either both positively or both negatively, but he concludes that both infinitives should be interpreted negatively. Women are not to teach men falsely or domineer over them. The context, he argues, reveals that improper teaching is in view, and he thus maintains that if the author had explicitly said that women could not teach falsely, then it would imply that men could teach false doctrine. *Pastoral Epistles*, 458–60; cf. also Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 223–24. In a more recent essay, however, Marshall demurs from what he said previously. “Women in Ministry: A Further Look at 1 Timothy 2,” 68. Contrary to Marshall, the context provides no clear evidence that the writer has false teaching by women in view. The verb διδάσκω, as pointed out earlier, has a positive meaning elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles. Marshall commits a non sequitur when he says that if the text stated that women could not teach false doctrine, then it would imply that men could. To the contrary, if I say, “Students must not drink poison,” we should hardly conclude that nonstudents are permitted to ingest poison. Marshall’s attempt to interpret both of the infinitives negatively fails, and hence it follows that both infinitives refer to positive activities in and of themselves, as Köstenberger argues.

¹⁶⁵Contra Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 60, 81; rightly Wolters, “Review of *I Suffer Not*,” 210. They still maintain this view even though Liefeld, himself an egalitarian, rightly protested in his response to Catherine Kroeger that διδάσκειν does not mean “to teach error.” In *Women, Authority and the Bible*, 245.

¹⁶⁶J. L. Houlden is mistaken, therefore, in saying that 1 Tim. 2:13 represents contemporary Jewish exegesis of Gen. 3:16–19. *The Pastoral Epistles: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, TPINT (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1976), 71. Paul appeals to Genesis 3 in v. 14, not v. 13.

¹⁶⁷Chan holds that Paul doesn’t mean the order in which Adam and Eve were created, instead restricting himself to the roles they played in creation, but this argument is scarcely clear and should be rejected. “1 Timothy 2:13–15,” 305–6.

¹⁶⁸So Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 234; Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 56; Clark, *Man and Woman*, 191; Culver, “Traditional View,” 36; Foh, *Women and the Word of God*, 127; Foh, “Male Leadership View,” 82; Fung, “Ministry,” 201; Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 205; Joachim Jeremias, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus: Der Brief an die Hebräer*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 19; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 142–43; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 68; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 203; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 190–91; Roloff, *Timotheus*, 138; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 131–32; Quinn and Wacker, *First and Second Letters*, 226.

¹⁶⁹Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 61–62.

¹⁷⁰Chan, “1 Timothy 2:13–15,” 289–97; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 136; Mickelsen, “Egalitarian View,” 203; Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 25; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 399–405; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 208; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 122.

¹⁷¹See especially the evidence Moo has marshaled in support of this thesis. “Rejoinder,” 202–3.

¹⁷²Contra Fee, *1 Timothy*, 73, evidence is lacking that the reasons provided in vv. 13–14 support vv. 9–10 as well as vv. 11–12.

¹⁷³Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 26–27; cf. Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 140. For a more restrained use of typology, see Wiebe, “Two Texts on Women,” 60–61. Spurgeon also reads the text typologically by drawing on the early chapters of Genesis, saying that, in Paul’s estimation, Adam and Eve would be restored in their relationship to one another and to God if they continue in faith, holiness, and sound judgment. See Andrew B. Spurgeon, “1 Timothy 2:13–15: Paul’s Retelling of Genesis 2:4–4:1,” *JETS* 56, no. 3 (2013): 543–56. Spurgeon’s reading is creative and fascinating, but it isn’t apparent that the subject of the third person plural in 1 Tim. 2:15 is Adam and Eve (see the discussion of v. 15 below). Most importantly, we lack any clear indication in 1 Timothy that Paul teaches that the relationship of Adam and Eve will be restored. The “if” clause in v. 15 is closely tied to the promise of salvation for the woman and doesn’t promise restoration for both Adam and Eve. I would suggest that Spurgeon imposes his interpretation of Genesis 2–4 on 1 Timothy instead of relying on the flow of the argument in 1 Tim. 2:9–15. For an interpretation that is similar to Spurgeon’s in some respects, especially in interpreting the text typologically and in seeing a reference to Eve in v. 15a and to Adam and Eve in v. 15b, see Jesse Scheumann’s unpublished paper, “Saved through the Childbirth of Christ (1 Tim 2:15): A Complementarian View of Eve’s Creation, Fall, and Redemption,” which he kindly sent to me.

¹⁷⁴Rightly Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 70–71. Holmes’s interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:13–15 is quite strained. She posits that vv. 13–15 represent Jewish tradition, seeing them as the faithful saying of 3:1. She also maintains that the γάρ in v. 13 is redundant. What Paul says about women in the previous verses, according to Holmes, reminds him of the faithful saying that is transmitted in vv. 13–15. *Text in a Whirlwind*, 250–99. Contra Holmes, it is unclear that vv. 13–15 contain the faithful saying. It is much more natural to see v. 13 as providing a reason for the injunction in v. 12, instead of seeing a redundant γάρ. Thus Blomberg rightly describes Holmes’s view as “tortuous.” “Gender Roles in Paul,” 365n151. See also the remarks of Köstenberger in his online review, *RBL*, January 28, 2001, http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/974_506.pdf.

¹⁷⁵Quinn and Wacker remark that the brevity of the words in v. 13 demonstrates that the truth presented here was both familiar and intelligible. *First and Second Letters*, 227.

¹⁷⁶E.g., Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 166–71; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 116; Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 18. Contra Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 240, Paul does not teach here that men are superior to women.

¹⁷⁷On 1 Cor. 11:8–9, see my comments in “Head Coverings,” 133–34.

¹⁷⁸Contra Robert Falconer, “1 Timothy 2:14–15: Interpretive Notes,” *JBL* 60, no. 4 (1941): 375; A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 73; Brox, *Pastoralbriefe*, 134–35; Spicq, *Épîtres pastorales*, 380; Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 70; Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 65; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 68.

¹⁷⁹For further discussion on this point, see Schreiner, “Head Coverings,” 128–30.

¹⁸⁰Towner admits that the egalitarian view faces “the daunting challenge of plausibility” but suggests that women’s role in spreading the false teaching determines the meaning. *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 228.

[181](#)Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 104.

[182](#)Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 58.

[183](#)Harris, "Eve's Deception," 343.

[184](#)Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 116.

[185](#)Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9–15," 208–13.

[186](#)Motyer, "Expounding 1 Timothy," 97–98. He finally resolves the issue by accepting the Kroegers' understanding of v. 13 (100).

[187](#)Marshall suggests that the author may have been responding to myths and genealogies claiming that the new age inaugurated by the resurrection made women equal to or dominant over men. In response, the author cited the text of Genesis. *Pastoral Epistles*, 463. Unfortunately, we have no evidence that such claims were being made.

[188](#)Cf., e.g., Jewett, *Male and Female*, 126–27.

[189](#)Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 207–8.

[190](#)William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 135–45.

[191](#)Ibid., 142–43.

[192](#)For further criticisms of Webb's approach, see Thomas R. Schreiner, "William J. Webb's *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*: A Review Article," *SBJT* 6, no. 1 (2002): 46–64; Wayne Grudem, "Should We Move beyond the New Testament to a Better Ethic? An Analysis of William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*," *JETS* 47, no. 2 (2004): 299–346. William Webb has responded to my review in "The Limits of a Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic: A Focused Response to T. R. Schreiner," *EQ* 75, no. 4 (2003): 327–42. See now the incisive critique of Webb by Reaoh, *Women, Slaves, and the Gender Debate*.

[193](#)Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9–15," 208–13.

[194](#)Moo, "What Does It Mean?," 498n32.

[195](#)Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 72; Jewett, *Male and Female*, 116, 126; Krijn A. van der Jagt, "Women Are Saved through Bearing Children (1 Timothy 2.11–15)," *BT* 39, no. 2 (1988): 205.

[196](#)Barron, "Women in Their Place," 455; Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 136–39; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 137–38; Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 113, 117, 120–25; Mickelsen, "Egalitarian View," 204; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 334–35; Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9–15," 218; Paul M. Zehr, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 2010), 70.

[197](#)Rightly Moo, "Rejoinder," 203; Moo, "What Does It Mean?," 193; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 134. Matthias Becker also strays from the text in seeing the prohibition in v. 12 as necessitated by the fall of woman into sin. "Ehe als Sanatorium: Plutarchs *Coniugalia Praecepta* und die Pastoralbriefe," *NovT* 52, no. 3 (2010): 262–63.

[198](#)Royce Gordon Gruenler argues that the subordination of women can be traced to the missionary situation in 1 Timothy. "The Mission-Lifestyle Setting of 1 Tim. 2:8–15," *JETS* 41, no. 2 (1998): 215–38. So also Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 114; Wall, "1 Timothy 2:9–15 Reconsidered," 83, 101; Towner, *Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 193; W. Hulitt Gloer and Perry L. Stepp, *Reading Paul's Letters to Individuals: A Literary and Theological Commentary on Paul's Letters to Philemon, Titus, and Timothy*, Reading the New Testament 10 (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2008), 61. These scholars do not provide an intensive exegesis of the text, nor do they persuasively demonstrate that the prohibition is due to mission. Once again, Paul could have easily communicated such an idea, but he says nothing about the prohibition arising from the mission of the church. Köstenberger remarks that such an interpretation wrongly imports Titus 2:4–10 and 1 Cor. 9:20 into the present context. "1 and 2 Timothy and Titus," 520. It is hardly convincing to say that we can assume that Paul issues the prohibition because of the missionary situation even if he doesn't mention it. Contra Marshall, "Women in Ministry: A Further Look at 1 Timothy 2," 61n26.

[199](#)Towner cautions that the evidence is insufficient to prove that women were teaching the heresy. *Goal of Our Instruction*, 39, 216.

[200](#)Rightly Moo, "Rejoinder," 203.

[201](#)D. A. Carson, "'Silent in the Churches': On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem, 147.

[202](#)Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 219, 221. For an argument that is similar in some respects, see Wiebe, "Two Texts on Women," 71–79.

[203](#)Richard N. Longenecker, *New Testament Social Ethics for Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 70–93.

[204](#)Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 77; Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 59–61; Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9–15," 214; France, *Women in the Church's Ministry*, 71–72.

[205](#)Bruce K. Waltke, "1 Timothy 2:8–15: Unique or Normative?," *Crux* 28 (1992): 26.

[206](#)Pierce, "Gender Roles," 350.

[207](#)Ibid., 350–51.

[208](#)Indeed, Pierce is actually the one who falls prey to "Western" ways of thinking, for his whole thesis depends on the view that Gal. 3:28 sits awkwardly with the restrictions in 1 Tim. 2:11–15. He finds this tension difficult because he has imbibed the modern democratic view of equality, which perceives any differences in function as a threat to equality. This egalitarian perspective differs remarkably from the biblical worldview, in which equality of personhood did not rule out differences in role and function.

[209](#)See here the argument of John Jefferson Davis, "First Timothy 2:12, the Ordination of Women, and Paul's Use of Creation Narratives," *Priscilla Papers* 23, no. 2 (2009): 5–10. Davis rightly shows that Paul applies the argument from creation in different ways, but it doesn't logically follow from this observation that the argument from creation in 1 Tim. 2:13 no longer applies today. In fact, as I explain above, when New Testament writers root admonitions in creation, the command stands as a transcendent norm that applies to all cultures and all times. Kevin Giles also rejects arguments from creation, but he fails to engage the texts exegetically. Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 170–79.

[210](#)John Stott argues that submission to authority is transcultural but teaching is a cultural expression of the principle that does not apply the same way in our culture. *Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 78–80. Köstenberger rightly responds that "v. 13 provides the rationale for vv. 11–12 in their entirety rather than only the submission-authority principle. Moreover, teaching and ruling functions are inseparable from submission-authority, as is made clear in the immediately following context when it is said that the overseer must be 'husband of one wife' (i.e., by implication male; 3:2) as well as 'able to teach' (3:2)." "1 and 2 Timothy and Titus," 520.

[211](#)So Moo, "What Does It Mean?," 191; Köstenberger, "Gender Passages," 270.

[212](#)Note, for example, how Fee says that Paul's real purpose in citing the Genesis narrative emerges here. *1 Timothy*, 74; *Gospel and Spirit*, 58; cf. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 123; Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 104. One wonders, then, why he bothered appealing to the order of

creation at all. Fung observes that if v. 13 is merely an introduction to the substantial argument, it could have easily been jettisoned. “Ministry,” 338n204.

[213](#)Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 217; Barron, “Women in Their Place,” 455.

[214](#)Barron, “Women in Their Place,” 455.

[215](#)Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 136–37; Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 139; Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 105; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 140; Harris, “Eve’s Deception,” 345, 347–50; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 117; Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 237–42; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 195–200, 210–11; Spencer, “Eve at Ephesus,” 219–20; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 458, 466–67; Belleville, “1 Timothy,” 61; Witherington, *Letters and Homilies*, 228–29; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 399–415. Of course, not every scholar here describes the situation in precisely the same way, but the common elements in their reconstructions are striking.

[216](#)Sumner wrongly implies that v. 14 more naturally supports the egalitarian view, and she does not interact with the problems I raised in the first edition of this book against such a claim. *Men and Women in the Church*, 256–57.

[217](#)Rightly Hugenberger, “Women in Church Office,” 349–50; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 217; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 189–90.

[218](#)The prepositional prefix in the term ἐξαπατάω could indicate that Eve was completely deceived, whereas the verb used in reference to Adam is simply ἀπατάω. More likely, though, the shift to ἐξαπατάω is stylistic, and no significance should be ascribed to the change. Cf. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 144; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 69. In support of this latter conclusion, Gen. 3:13 LXX uses the verb ἀπατάω.

[219](#)Mounce says that Eve could not have deceived Adam because Adam was with her during the temptation, according to Gen. 3:6. *Pastoral Epistles*, 141.

[220](#)Rightly Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 134, 139.

[221](#)Webb affirms the traditional interpretation that women were deceived as correct but argues that the passage does not apply in the same way today because women were deceived due “to a combination of factors such as upbringing, . . . age, experience, intelligence, education, development of critical thinking, economic conditions, and personality.” *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, 230. Webb’s view does not explain convincingly how such factors could apply to Eve in the garden. He also wrongly concludes that deceit is due to lack of education, when Scripture actually ties deception to human sin (cf. Rom. 7:11; 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:6; James 1:26). Webb strays from what Paul actually says, resorting to a multitude of explanations that Paul never mentioned or implied.

[222](#)Marshall thinks my interpretation is “a counsel of despair.” “Women in Ministry: A Further Look at 1 Timothy 2,” 70. But he misunderstands what I propose, for I don’t say Eve wasn’t deceived. The point is that she was deceived first by the Serpent.

[223](#)Wagener, *Die Ordnung des “Hauses Gottes,”* 105–06; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 48; Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 71–72; Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 70; Anthony Tyrell Hanson, “Eve’s Transgression: 1 Timothy 2.13–15,” in *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles* (London: SPCK, 1968), 65–77; Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 73; Roloff, *Timotheus*, 139; cf. Falconer, “Interpretive Notes,” 376.

[224](#)For a helpful survey of references to Eve in the Old Testament and Jewish literature, see Chan, “1 Timothy 2:13–15,” 55–195.

[225](#)Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 246–47; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 313–14n78; cf. Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 139; Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 123; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 142; Quinn and Wacker, *First and Second Letters*, 228.

[226](#)Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 139; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 77; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 143–44; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 204.

[227](#)Cf. Fung, “Ministry,” 201–2.

[228](#)An exception here is Clark, *Man and Woman*, 202–4. Cf. also Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 245–48.

[229](#)Jewett, *Male and Female*, 61; Clark, *Man and Woman*, 203–4; Culver, “Traditional View,” 36–37; Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 73 (but he says that this proves the letter is not Pauline); Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 71–72; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 68; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 70 (but he changed his mind on this point; see “Rejoinder,” 204); Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 208; Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 71–72. Daniel Doriani argues a variant of this view, maintaining that God made the sexes differently, so that men and women have different strengths and weaknesses; men are more inclined to doctrinal formulations and women to nurturing relationships. “A History of Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2,” 213–67, esp. 256–67. I accepted Doriani’s view in the first edition of this book. Thomas R. Schreiner, “An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15: A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 145–46. But it now seems to me that this view also strays from the text, even if one agrees that such differences exist between men and women. For criticisms of Doriani’s view, see Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 466; Blomberg, “Gender Roles in Paul,” 366n156.

[230](#)For arguments against the idea that women are more prone to deception, see Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 234; Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 104–5; Foh, *Women and the Word of God*, 127; Fung, “Ministry,” 201–2; Harris, “Eve’s Deception,” 346; Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 215; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 190; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 410–15.

[231](#)Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 234; cf. also Ann L. Bowman, “Women in Ministry: An Exegetical Study of 1 Timothy 2:11–15,” *BSac* 149, no. 594 (1992): 206.

[232](#)Harris, “Eve’s Deception,” 346.

[233](#)See Stephen H. Levinsohn, who discusses the use of conjunctive καί between 1 Tim. 2:13 and v. 14, where “it conjoins the two sentences that are introduced by γάρ. It is these sentences together that strengthen the previous verse.” *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 124; emphasis his.

Craig L. Blomberg intriguingly suggests that v. 14 should be read with v. 15 instead of functioning as a second reason for the injunction in v. 12. On this reading, Paul says that the woman will be saved even though Eve was initially deceived. “Not beyond What Is Written: A Review of Aída Spencer’s *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry*,” *CTR* 2 (Spring 1988): 414. This view has at least three weaknesses: (1) The καί in v. 14 naturally links v. 14 with v. 13. (2) The structure of v. 13 nicely parallels v. 14, for both verses compare and contrast Adam and Eve in an A-B-A'-B' pattern. (3) Blomberg’s view does not account well for the reference to Adam in v. 14; any reference to Adam is superfluous if the concern is only the salvation of women, but the reference to both Adam and Eve fits with the specific argument in v. 12 that women are not to teach men. In my view, Blomberg does not answer these objections convincingly in his “Gender Roles in Paul,” 367. Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 142.

[234](#)Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 74; Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 59; cf. Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 69. I realize Fee would not agree with the conclusions I draw from his observation.

[235](#)Rightly Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 210; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 125, 131, 141; see also Köstenberger, “1 and 2 Timothy and Titus,” 518–19.

[236](#)As Oden reports, the rabbis believed that the fall also included a reversal of the creation order, in that Eve took the leadership over Adam. *First and Second Timothy*, 100.

[237](#)For a suggestion that is similar in some respects, see Fung, “Ministry,” 202; Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 214–16; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 204.

[238](#)Wall maintains that Eve functions typologically, illustrating the experience of women who move from sin to salvation. Women who are freed from

their sin are no longer deceived or slaves of sin. Now such women can live modestly, and since they are freed from sin, they are qualified to teach. “1 Timothy 2:9–15 Reconsidered,” 81–103. Wall’s exegesis fails to convince. He mistakenly (see below) understands v. 15 as the climax of the paragraph (94). Moreover, it is quite unlikely that the subject of σωθήσεται in v. 15 is Eve (94). Paul would not use the future tense if Eve were the subject. The text focuses not on Eve but on the Christian women in Ephesus. Most important, even if we accept Wall’s view that Eve is the subject (which is quite doubtful), the notion that v. 15 ends up trumping the admonition in v. 12 is scarcely clear. We have no evidence in the text that the salvation and modesty of women relativize the command in v. 12. Wall ultimately appeals to the rest of the canon to support his view, but he mistakenly thinks that the private instruction given to Apollonia by Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:26) and the encouragement of women to prophesy (1 Cor. 11:5) contradict the complementarian interpretation of 1 Timothy 2 (99–100). He fails to see that 1 Tim. 2:12 refers to public and official teaching and that prophecy and teaching are two distinct gifts. In any case, the women who prophesy in 1 Cor. 11:2–16 are to do so in a manner that reflects submission to male headship. Wall’s exegesis is creative, but his creativity is the problem, for it is difficult to believe that the original readers could have understood the text in the way he suggests. Marshall also questions the viability of Wall’s interpretation. Marshall, “Women in Ministry: A Further Look at 1 Timothy 2,” 71n54.

²³⁹Cf. Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 190.

²⁴⁰Foh, *Women and the Word of God*, 128.

²⁴¹Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 118; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 196; France, *Women in the Church’s Ministry*, 60; Wall, “1 Timothy 2:9–15 Reconsidered,” 11.

²⁴²Rightly Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 143.

²⁴³Cf. Clark, *Man and Woman*, 207; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 141; Stanley E. Porter, “What Does It Mean to Be ‘Saved by Childbirth’ (1 Timothy 2.15)?,” *JSNT* 49 (1993): 93.

²⁴⁴Of course, the verse is difficult and debated. One should not conclude that the understanding of vv. 11–14 that I have argued for in this chapter pivots on the interpretation of v. 15 proposed below.

²⁴⁵For Jewish traditions on childbirth, see the helpful survey of Chan, “1 Timothy 2:13–15,” 196–254.

²⁴⁶NASB; Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 56–57; Barron, “Women in Their Place,” 457; Jewett, *Male and Female*, 60; Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 118–19.

²⁴⁷Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 118–19.

²⁴⁸Moyer Hubbard, “Kept Safe through Childbearing: Maternal Mortality, Justification by Faith, and the Social Setting of 1 Timothy 2:15,” *JETS* 55, no. 4 (2012): 743–62. See also Christopher Hutson, “‘Saved through Childbearing’: The Jewish Context of 1 Timothy,” *NovT* 56, no. 4 (2014): 392–410. Contra Hubbard (744n7), I would argue that all the Pauline texts he cites have to do with spiritual salvation, but space is lacking to defend that view here. I will also explain below how what Paul teaches here does not contradict salvation by grace.

²⁴⁹Cf. Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 106; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 141; Hilde Huizenga, “Women, Salvation, and the Birth of Christ: A Reexamination of 1 Timothy 2:15,” *Studia Biblica et theologica* 12, no. 1 (1982): 21; Oden, *First and Second Timothy*, 100. Hubbard takes the promise as proverbial, which leaves space for exceptions. “Kept Safe through Childbearing,” 758–59. Such a reading is possible, but it isn’t evident that the words here are proverbial, and they are more naturally taken as a promise.

²⁵⁰So Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 141; Fung, “Ministry,” 203; Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 72; David R. Kimberley, “1 Tim. 2:15: A Possible Understanding of a Difficult Text,” *JETS* 35, no. 4 (1992): 481–82; Krijn van der Jagt, “Women Are Saved through Bearing Children: A Sociological Approach to the Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2.15,” in *Issues in Bible Translation*, ed. Philip C. Stine, UBS Monograph Series 3 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 293; Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 31; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 71; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 192; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 418; Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 93–94; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 144–45; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 467; Zamfir, *Men and Women in the Household of God*, 260–61. Cf. Chan, “1 Timothy 2:13–15,” 313–22.

²⁵¹So S. Jebb, “A Suggested Interpretation of 1 Ti 2.15,” *ExpTim* 81, no. 7 (1970): 221–22; Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 222. Contra this interpretation, see Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 75; Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 74; Kimberley, “1 Tim. 2:15,” 482; Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 95; Roloff, *Timotheus*, 141.

²⁵²The same error is committed by Roberts, who adopts a nonsoteriological definition for σωζω. Roberts’s interpretation is even more arbitrary. He says that by giving birth to the Messiah (and continuing in the faith), women will be saved from their subordinate role and thus can be restored to teaching men. “Woman Shall Be Saved,” 6–7. There is no evidence, however, that Paul contemplated that the “saving” in v. 15 involved liberation from the injunctions in vv. 11–12! Nor is it persuasive to interpret childbearing allegorically in terms of producing virtues. So Kenneth L. Waters Sr., “Saved Through Childbearing: Virtues as Children in 1 Timothy 2:11–15,” *JBL* 123, no. 4 (2004): 703–35. Marshall rightly rejects this latter view. “Women in Ministry: A Further Look at 1 Timothy 2,” 71n54. See also Kenneth L. Waters, “Revisiting Virtues as Children: 1 Timothy 2:15 as Centerpiece for an Egalitarian Soteriology,” *LTQ* 42, no. 1 (2007): 37–49.

²⁵³Andreas J. Köstenberger suggests that the verb σωζω refers to spiritual preservation in this particular text (cf. NASB here and in 1 Tim. 4:16), not spiritual salvation. He argues that Paul has in mind protection from Satan and the deception he engenders. He cites a number of other texts in the Pastoral Epistles where protection from Satan is in view. “Ascertaining Women’s God-Ordained Roles: An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:15,” *BBR* 7 (1997): 107–44. It is possible that σωζω refers to spiritual preservation, but in my judgment, it is not very likely. Σωζω elsewhere in Paul signifies eschatological salvation, not merely preservation (Rom. 5:9, 10; 8:24; 9:27; 10:9, 13; 11:14, 26; 1 Cor. 1:18, 21; 3:15; 5:5; 7:16 [2x]; 9:22; 10:33; 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 2:5, 8; 1 Thess. 2:16; 2 Thess. 2:10). One could object that the way the term is used elsewhere does not determine its usage in a particular context. Such an observation is, of course, true. Still, the normal way Paul uses a term is the way we should understand it unless good contextual reasons suggest otherwise. When we examine the Pastorals, Paul clearly uses the term σωζω to designate spiritual salvation (1 Tim. 1:15; 2:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; 4:18). Indeed, in the Pastorals, Paul often uses the nouns σωτήρ (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:10; Titus 1:3, 4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6) and σωτηρία (2 Tim. 2:10; 3:15) to refer to spiritual salvation. While some scholars think that σωζω does not refer to spiritual salvation in 1 Tim. 2:15 and 4:16, I would argue that their primary objection is not lexical but theological, for in every other instance in Paul, the reference is to spiritual salvation, and in the Pastorals he emphasizes spiritual salvation with the nouns “Savior” and “salvation.” Many of these scholars worry that assigning such a definition in 1 Tim. 2:15 and 4:16 would contradict salvation by faith alone. But understanding spiritual salvation as eschatological fits with the future tense elsewhere in Paul (e.g., Rom. 5:9, 10; 2 Tim. 4:18). Nor is there any reason to think that what Paul says here contradicts what he says about salvation being by faith alone. Cf. Thomas R. Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday, *The Race Set before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001). We could still retain a part of Köstenberger’s view by saying that Paul has eschatological salvation in mind, and those duped by Satan will not be saved on the last day (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20; see also Eph. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:26). But even this point is not clearly supported in the text, for 1 Tim. 2:9–15 never names Satan explicitly (though Satan is implied in v. 14), and hence it is unclear that the salvation in view in v. 15 is deliverance from Satan. More likely, Paul intends salvation from sin in general. So also Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 147; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 469–70; Marshall, “Women in Ministry: A Further Look at

1 Timothy 2,” 71.

[254](#)For references in the early Fathers, see Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 90n8. Recent advocates of this view include Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 146–47; Lock, *Pastoral Epistles*, 33; Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 29; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 418–41; Roberts, “Woman Shall Be Saved,” 6–7; Spencer, “Eve at Ephesus,” 220; Oden, *First and Second Timothy*, 101–2; Huizenga, “Birth of Christ,” 17–26; Geer, “1 Tim. 2:8–15,” 298–99; Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy*, Titus, 102; Belleville, “1 Timothy,” 62–63.

[255](#)Huizenga, “Birth of Christ,” 22; Oden, *First and Second Timothy*, 102; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 417–41.

[256](#)Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 74.

[257](#)Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 78; cf. Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 107; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 75; Foh, *Women and the Word of God*, 128; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 141; Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 222; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 69; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 71; Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 92; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 469.

[258](#)Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 118; Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 92; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 48; Brox, *Pastoralbriefe*, 136.

[259](#)Cf. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 75.

[260](#)For a lucid discussion of the article, with warnings about misuse, see D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 79–84.

[261](#)See Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 92; Moo, “Rejoinder,” 206.

[262](#)Cf. Falconer, “Interpretive Notes,” 377; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 71–72; Brox, *Pastoralbriefe*, 136; Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 56–57; Jeremias, *Timotheus*, 19; Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 74; Spicq, *Épîtres pastorales*, 383–84.

[263](#)So Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 70–71; Huizenga, “Birth of Christ,” 18; Kimberley, “1 Tim. 2:15,” 482; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 426; Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 95–96.

[264](#)E. F. Scott, *The Pastoral Epistles* (New York: Harper & Bros., n.d.), 28.

[265](#)Cf. Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 107; Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 78; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 71; Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 96–97.

[266](#)Cf. Falconer, “Interpretive Notes,” 376; Roloff, *Timotheus*, 141–42; BDAG “διά” (A.3.c), 224; Moyer, “Kept Safe through Childbearing,” 756–57.

[267](#)So Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 97.

[268](#)So Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 97–98; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 48; van der Jagt, “Bearing Children: A Sociological Approach,” 292; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 72.

[269](#)See Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 101; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 48; Brox, *Pastoralbriefe*, 137; Moo, “1 Timothy 2:11–15,” 71; Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 76–77.

[270](#)But the idea that v. 15b stems from another source is unpersuasive, contra Falconer, “Interpretive Notes,” 378; Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 74; rightly Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 98.

[271](#)For a reference to children, see Houlden, *Pastoral Epistles*, 72–73; Jeremias, *Timotheus*, 19. Brox sees a reference to husbands and wives. *Pastoralbriefe*, 137.

[272](#)So Barrett, *Pastoral Epistles*, 57; Fung, “Ministry,” 204; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 144; Holtz, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 72; Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 98–99; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 196; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 221; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 471.

[273](#)The same shift occurs with “men.” Paul begins with ἄνδρας in v. 8 and shifts to ἀνδρός in v. 12. The latter is obviously generic.

[274](#)Pierce suggests that v. 15 promises “partial healing” for women in childbirth and gives “them hope that deliverance from the curse of male dominance is also possible.” “Gender Roles,” 351, 353. This is an unconvincing interpretation. It has already been argued that the verb σωθήσεται in the Pauline literature refers not to healing but to eschatological salvation. Thus, it does not refer to mitigating the pain of childbearing in this age. To say that the verse offers hope of deliverance from male dominance is puzzling, since nothing is said about that subject in the verse. It is certainly understandable that some would see the admonitions in these verses as having temporary validity, but one looks in vain anywhere in 1 Tim. 2:9–15 for any hint that the text is actually promising eventual deliverance from male dominance. Nowhere is male leadership criticized.

[275](#)So Barron, “Women in Their Place,” 457; Hanson, *Pastoral Epistles*, 74; Huizenga, “Birth of Christ,” 197–98; Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 221; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 145; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 426–27; Oden, *First and Second Timothy*, 100.

[276](#)Many scholars have rightly seen that the reference to childbirth was precipitated by the impact of the false teachers. See Barron, “Women in Their Place,” 457; Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 74–75; Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 59; Gritz, *Mother Goddess*, 143; Harris, “Eve’s Deception,” 350; Jeremias, *Timotheus*, 19; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 70; Kimberley, “1 Tim. 2:15,” 484–86; van der Jagt, “Bearing Children: A Sociological Approach,” 293–94; Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, 171–77; Moo, “What Does It Mean?,” 192; Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 28; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 197–98; Bassler, “Adam, Eve, and the Pastor,” 55–56; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 146. It should be noted that Barron, the Kroegers, and Kimberley unfortunately read gnosticism into the text from the second century AD.

[277](#)So Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 235; Clark, *Man and Woman*, 207; Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, 107; Falconer, “Interpretive Notes,” 377; Perriman, “What Eve Did,” 140–41; Hurley, *Man and Woman*, 222–23; Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 69; Padgett, “Wealthy Women,” 28; Roloff, *Timotheus*, 141; Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 197.

[278](#)E.g., Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9–15,” 197.

[279](#)Contra Huizenga, “Birth of Christ,” 18.

[280](#)Fung, “Ministry,” 204.

[281](#)For a careful analysis of the conditional clause used here, see Porter, “Saved by Childbirth,” 99–101.

[282](#)Cf. Barnett, “Wives and Women’s Ministry,” 235 (although the chiasm he detects is not clear to me). Collins says it is the “epitome of feminine virtue.” *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 77.

[283](#)For an investigation of this issue in more detail, see Thomas R. Schreiner, “Did Paul Believe in Justification by Works? Another Look at Romans 2,” *BBR* 3 (1993): 131–58; Schreiner, “Justification apart from and by Works: At the Final Judgment Works Will Confirm Justification,” in *The Role of Works at the Final Judgment*, ed. Alan P. Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 71–98.

[284](#)So Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 124.

[285](#)Witherington also notices the parallel, and he comments that those spoken of were already Christians. *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 124.

[286](#)For how this fits with Christian assurance, see Schreiner and Caneday, *Race Set before Us*; D. A. Carson, “Reflections on Christian Assurance,” *WTJ* 54, no. 1 (1992): 1–29.