

The Importance of Context



**By
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THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

From a talk given

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WHEN I HEAR OR READ THE WORD “CLEARLY” OR THE PHRASE, “The Bible clearly says”, alarm bells start to ring. My immediate thoughts are something like, “The guy must be out of context”, or “He has got something wrong”. My experience tells me this. Usually many problems in understanding the Bible stem from taking something out of context. It is so easy for any of us to get something wrong, and yet to think we are right when we ourselves are actually taking a matter out of context.

Few people really understand what context is and what the consequences are of misapplying or changing contexts in the Bible. From my observations, misuse of context happens both within Identity and outside of Identity. It happens often! The consequences are either wrong doctrine or wrong practice. Many people completely misunderstand the application of "context". Where their mistake occurs is thinking that what applies to one context applies to a differing context as well. Doing this is a major cause of doctrinal conflict, and thus projects into our actions.

Most of us will have heard about a person who is supposed to have stuck a pin in a Bible and is supposed to have read, “Judas went and hanged himself”, and then stuck in the pin again and read, “Go thou and do likewise”. This might sound a bit corny, but in sermons and in writings this activity is an ongoing reality. Yes, it does happen; and of course, the consequences may be just as unreasonable and wrong.

This matter of context can be best be illustrated by means of examples. In this paper, we can look three context areas in a general sense and then at one in detail:

1. Israel in God's favour and Israel under punishment.
2. Divorce and Remarriage.
3. The Misuse of Words.
4. The Role of Women in the Assembly.

1. ISRAEL UNDER GOD'S FAVOUR AND ISRAEL UNDER PUNISHMENT

Presently Israel is found to be in a quite different position than it was in the days following the Exodus when the nation as a whole was not under God's judgment. Today, God is punishing Israel as a whole for its transgressions against the Law of God and this is prophesied to continue all the time Israel is outside of the Promised Land. Part of the judgment is for Israelites to be over-run with foreigners; this is part of the meaning of "scattered amongst" where God said Israel would be so scattered because of their transgression of God's Law. This is a fact there is much prophecy about. Now, this is the point; can fighting against God's judgment with racial hatred be construed as fighting against God? In the current captivity position, our prime mission as individuals is to present the Gospel to God's people, with ourselves being in a repentant state.

These two positions, (favour and disfavour) present us with two differing contexts.

1) Context A. Israel in God's favour -(before being cast out of the Promised Land).

2) Context B. Israel under God's judgment -(after being cast out of the Promised Land).

There are two points here before proceeding further:

In this, we are not referring to valid self defence where taking up a "sword" is demanded.

In Psalm 139:21, "Do not I hate them, **O LORD**, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect

hatred: I count them mine enemies", the "wicked" here are God's people and not foreigners. (The particular word used for "wicked" is frequently used of Israelites).

If it can be received, the New Testament tells us how to act in the Context B situation. It has much to say about how we must speak, present ourselves and of our attitudes whilst in captivity. One passage in the Book of Titus says, "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men" is indeed hard to do, especially if we have behaved differently all our lives, but it is God's demand of us in our captivity situation.

All I have time to say about this particular context area is that Phineas Priesthood-type activity is to be confined to context A, and is "everlasting" only under that context. The mixing of contexts mistakenly influences many Identity people to subscribe to what is typified by skin-head-type-thinking attitudes.

2. DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

There are five contexts involved:

- Marriage between two believers where there is no fornication involved.
- Marriage between two believers where there is fornication involved.
- Marriage between one believer and an unbeliever.
- A pre-marriage contract to become married (such as Joseph and Mary).

5. Marriage between two unbelievers.

Without separation of these contexts, the subject becomes so impossibly complex that it cannot ever be resolved.

The first two are the subject of Mark 10:2-12 and Matthew 19:4-9 .

Mark 10:2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, what did Moses command you?

And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Matthew 19:4-9 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

The third is the subject of 1 Cor. 7:13-15

1 Cor 7:13-15 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

The fourth is the subject of a pre-marriage espousal as in Matthew 1:18-23.

Matt 1:18-23 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord Had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

The fifth context is not covered in the same way because God's face is set against them. Because both are unbelievers, they were not married in the sight of God. There was no marriage covenant made. Marriage is expressed in Malachi as a covenant. A covenant is a witnessed agreement. There are folk who believe that a sexual act on its own constitutes marriage, but that is not so.

3. WORD MISUSE.

So far we have only viewed two types of context abuse. Other context misuses involve the wrong meanings placed upon words. One of these words is “The Law” or “The Torah”. The word “torah” is loosely and commonly described as being the five first books of the Bible.

In English usage, the phrase “The Law” represents a summation of many differing kinds of laws, some of which may bear no relationship to other kinds of laws. For instance we have taxation laws that may have no relationship to legal torts. We have maritime law that may have no reference to divorce laws. We have a car driving code that bears no relationship to the laws about flying aircraft. Thus we can see that “the Law” (as a whole) has many components.

Likewise it is the same with “the torah”. The “torah” comprises “statutes”, “judgments”, “ordinances”, “commandments”, “precepts”, “charges”, and so on. Any one component is not the same as the others. The sum of all of them is the “torah”. Then there is another division into moral law, civil law and religious law. Religious law is not all the same as moral law. Civil law is not the same as moral or religious law.

So then, when we read in the New Testament any reference to “The Law”, the word “nomos” is used in a similar way as “torah” is. “Nomos” is translates as “law” 195 times in the KJV.

How we know what component of the total “nomos” is being spoken about is determined by the context. Let me illustrate.

We will consider one particular context that gives great difficulty to some people. This is:

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. for verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled”.

There are those that say every jot and tittle of the “Torah” is still in place in its original form. This of course would have to include the law of sacrifices Jesus has already satisfied, so this is not still in place, is it? This view would have to ignore what we read in:

Heb 7:12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. A change is a change from the original.

What do we now do about this? We can look for context within this “Sermon On The Mount”. This commences with the beatitudes, the first being, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”. The whole sermon is about attitudes, human relationships, and interactions with God. These give the context and Jesus said at the end, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock”-(Matt. 7:24).

Jesus used the words, “These things”! What is different between “these things” and the “Torah”? What then about “every jot and tittle” about? This is every jot and tittle of the present context or whatever context is being in place!

Jesus said He came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil. So what is “the law and the prophets” in regard to attitudes and relationships? Jesus tells us:

Matthew 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law (nomos) and the prophets.

Matt 22:36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

What we have to note here is that the word for "law" in these passages is not "nomos"; it is "entole" - (Strong's 1785). This is the same word as is used in:

Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

The word "nomos" as it relates to "torah" is not found here. So it does not say, "Blessed are they that do his torah", does it?

Did Jesus change the Law? In one sense He did; He made it into a matter of the heart. He made it tougher. He said a thought was the same as having done the action. Jesus quoted "Torah" passages and then qualified them. He showed what "fulfilled" means. Listen to the "Ye have heard" and the "But I say unto you" that Jesus spoke as we see in the following verses.

Matt 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matt 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Matt 5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say

unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Matt 5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; Jesus said, "But I say unto you" fifteen times in that form.

When we read the "Torah" without this change Jesus made, we are "in the letter". This "kills" we are told. We must now read and do the Law in the "fulfilled" form. This is the context in which we must read Moses and the Prophets. Jesus said about this:

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

And as Paul said,

Romans 7:6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

When Paul says, "We are delivered from the Law", he is not saying that the Law is deleted; he is saying that it is to be obeyed in the "fulfilled" form. This is the context. Here we find the essence of all the supposed conflict between Paul and Jesus. Many are viewing the Apostle Paul in "the oldness of the letter" and not in "newness of spirit" as qualified by the words of Jesus. Thus they are creating a non-existent conflict.

This conflict is because these implacable people are missing out something. This shows them as being hypocrites. When they demand that every jot and tittle of the Law is still in place, they are actually denying part of the Law themselves, namely the quality of mercy. The word

“mercy” is found over two hundred times in the Old Testament pages. Jesus called this the “weightier” matter or part of the Law.

Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Context then must take into account a balance found that is inclusive of these weightier matters.

4. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE ASSEMBLY

I believe that if you take heed you can understand and apply what I have to say because understanding will help and edify you all. I have spent much time on email debates internationally and in analysing responses, I have learned much about this subject, as well as many other topics.

Now, to make a start, let us together examine the context of two passages that involve the role of women in the assembly. This is a topical subject, and is an issue that comes to the forefront year after year.

Firstly, let us read these two verses:

1 Cor 14:34-35 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

1 Tim 2:9-11 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in

silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man (husband), but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

The immediate view to most people is that women must always be tight lipped in an assembly. Control-freak Pastors use this as a direct power base. They say, “See, women are not even to speak in the assembly, the Bible clearly says this”. I said earlier that usually when I hear someone say the word “clearly” I am watchful because a person who speaks that way is usually speaking out of context. Such people have not done any digging for treasure. Do we remember the Parable of the treasure hid in a field? We do not find the treasures of God sitting on the surface for us to trip over. We have to do some digging.

As Paul writes,

1 Cor 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”.

So let us do a bit of digging for treasure and see if we can hit the jackpot on this issue!

In both verses, the subject is “women” and both contain the word “learn”. The two phrases are, “if they will learn anything” and “let the women learn”. This does not apply to men! When we look closely we find this fact that some Scriptures apply to men, and some to women. Thus these two passages are about women speaking in order to learn something. In both verses the word “learn” is the same Greek word “man-than'-o” which is about understanding as well as learning. So obviously, women can both learn and understand.

The next question is, “Is it about all women of all ages, married or single?” In both verses the word for “women” is “goo-nay” (or “wife”). Young’s concordance indicates that the word is translated 92 times as “wife” and 129 times as “woman”. When some people see something like this they jump upon their hobby horse and say that, because the word is translated more often a “women”, then it must refer to all women! Oh yes, even Pastors can do this sort of thing and use this sort of wrong logic.

So are we talking about “wives” or are we talking about all “women?” Context will determine which is right, as we shall see.

OK, the word for “husband” and “man” in both verses is “aner” which means “husband”. There is another application in a difference sense where Jesus is termed “aner” but we can let that be for now. The word is actually translated as “husband” in one of the two verses, but not in the other where it is translated as “man”. We will come to see that the context is in a husband-wife relationship context only. Those with a little knowledge of language know that the word for “man” here is NOT the generic term for “man” = “anthropos”. So the passages do not involve men in general; they involve husbands.

Now regarding this matter of context, we see mention of Adam and Eve relationship mentioned in the second verse. OK someone might argue that it still means every woman because these two were the only couple in the garden. Let that be for the moment whilst we look further to see that this is not so.

In both verses Scripture refine the “women” concerned down married women with husbands. We can see this in the second verse where it talks about the wife being saved in childbirth. A single woman does not properly have a husband to have children with so it cannot refer to single women,. There is no evidence that these two passages refer to single women, even in a future potential manner. There is no evidence they apply to widows.

It is common enough for a protagonist to bring in another passage from a different context to back up their contention. This is what the dirty tricks brigade do who try to fool the simple minded. We will not go into that

trick yet. Instead, we will stick with just these two passages, because another passage in a different context might influence our thinking adversely.

Now that we have looked at some things in common in these verses, we can consider some of the differences. We find the major difference in the word “silence” which involves one single word in English, but two different words with different meanings in the Greek in the two verses. This effectively makes a context change in the second passage about married women opening their mouths or not in public meetings.

In the 1 Corinthians 14 passage, the word translated as “silence” is Strongs 4601 “see-gah-o” to which he assigns the meaning as being, “to keep silence, hold one's peace, to be kept in silence, be concealed”. To get a feel for the use of words we need to compare Scripture with Scripture. Let us do that with the word see-gah-o.

Luke 9:36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

Luke 20:26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

Acts 12:17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.

Acts 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

1 Cor. 14:28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

1 Cor. 14:29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

Rom 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.

Now we have read seven verses in which the particular Greek word appears. None of these infers a concept of never speaking. If we want to be so irrational as some people are we could say that 1 Cor. 14:28 contains the phrase “Let him keep silent in the church and let him speak” and then claim that this is contradictory!

What do we see in these verses? Well, the major translation is “held their peace”. The words “held” and “peace” are the same word “sigao”. When we go back to the original verse about women being silent in the churches or assemblies, the verb ‘keep silence’ is present in tense, and “to speak” is also present in tense. Overall, the thrust of this verse is about being silent in certain conditions or situations. We will come back to this after looking at the second verse.

1 Tim 2:9-11 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls or costly array; But that (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Let the woman learn in silence with al subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness withsobriety.

The key phrase we are considering is “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection”. Here the word “silence” is quite a different word to “silence” as found in the 1 Cor. 14:34 passage. The word is Strong’s 2271, (hay-soo-khee'-ah) to which Strong assigns the meaning as being “stillness, that is, desistance from bustle or language: - quietness”. It is the feminine form of Strong’s 2272 meaning “still (undisturbed, undisturbing): - peaceable, quiet”. As we did with the other 1st Corinthians’ verse, we can look at how this word is translated in other places, that is, we can look at other places where we find the word in Greek.

2 Thess 3:11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

This time we have only one or two verses we can look at comparative translations. Strong gives the following information for “silence” in this passage:

Quietness

(2) description of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officiously meddle with the affairs of others.

Note that is a noun here, whereas in the 1 Cor. 14 passage the word “silence” in “keep silence” is a verb. This fact again shows that the two words translated as “silence” are not the same.

This latter feminine noun originates from Strong’s 2272. Now we can look at Strong’s 2722 passages.

1 Tim 2:2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

1 Peter 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Although our translators were inconsistent in the way they translated words, we can easily see the difference between “silence” as in the first passage and “silence” as in the second passage. The first is about wives not speaking in certain circumstances, whereas the second is about the attitude of wives towards their husbands, in their speech. An important point here is that in both passages, the context is that of a woman and her husband. Any extension to women in general is changing the context and thus has no validity. To do this is totally misleading.

But some people keep wanting to argue that it must mean “all women” because most translations translate *gune* as “women” and not “wives”! But wives are always women!

In the light of these different words for “silence” we can re-appraise the application of these two verses. We will read the first verse again,

1 Cor 14:34-35 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

"Asking their husbands at home" shows that the context is confined to the husband-wife relationship. Here, as has been pointed out, the context is that of husbands and wives in the assemblies. Historically, husbands and wives sat on opposite sides of the meeting place, and Paul prohibited wives from calling out to their husbands to ask questions, but to wait until they were at home to do it. This passage is prefixed with “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” and thus

we see that it would be shameful for wives to so “speak” in the church situation because this would be confusing and disturbing to the speaker as well as to all others there. The verse is absolutely only in the context of a husband and his wife.

“AS ALSO SAITH THE LAW”

We have in the 1 Cor. 14 verse the phrase, “as also saith the Law”. Some men say this means that all women are to be subject to all men, but they cannot produce any place in the Law of God saying this. Even in the first mention in:

Gen 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. - this is confined to a wife being subject to her (own) husband. It shows the order God has established.

This order is exactly the same as what we find in the New Testament.

Ephesians 5:22 “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord”.

There is nothing said about wives being subject to other men’s’ husbands. Peter puts it this way:

1 Peter 3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

“Amazement” in this verse has to do with “terror”. This is not to be the result of a wife being terrorized! Then Peter continues:

1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife,

as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that Your prayers be not hindered.

Finally Peter instructs us in the next verse to have the same attitude towards every believer:

1 Peter 7:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

Asking husbands questions is where wives are required to be silent in the assembly and this limitation only is what is determined by the context. Thus Paul details the objective of the exercise which is to maintain quietness and order an assembly.

Now we can compare the second passage and see if it means that women should not speak in the assembly. Let us read the verses again.

1 Tim 2:9-11 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

The essence of this passage can be seen in the word “silence”. We have seen that it carries the sense of “stillness, desistance from bustle or language, quietness, still, undisturbed, undisturbing, peaceable, and quiet”. It is about a wife’s attitude, behaviour, manner of attire and her relationship with her (own) husband. This is about the manner of speaking and her deportment, rather than not speaking at all.

The latter part of this quotation has reference to Eve being deceived. This provides an indication as to why women are not to teach husbands, and the indication is that women are more easily deceived than men. We can all see how many cults were started by women. The woman said: “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat”. Adam received the fruit from the hand of his wife; he knew he was transgressing, he was not deceived; however, she led the way, and in consequence of this she was subjected to the domination of her husband: “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee”- Gen. 3:16. In God’s order He has subjected the wife, expressly, to the government of her husband.

This husband / wife context continues to the end of this 1 Timothy chapter where we read about the wife being saved in childbirth “if they continue in faith and charity”. This shows that the context is still about the husband and wife relationship where a wife is not to teach her husband. Thus it says nothing here about any other woman usurping authority over other woman’s husband. Note here that we are talking about this one verse only. It says nothing about women never speaking! In this first assembly (Adam and Eve) with God present, Eve did some speaking!

In the group email discussions I have pointed out some of these factors, and have found some refusal to accept the context of these two passages. One email read, “I know what the Bible says, and what I have written about my views stand.—Here, you too have gone a field, and stretched the entire issuewordsmithing again”. "Wordsmithing" to them must mean "changing what I have said"! This speaks volumes as to how some Identity leaders refuse to consider these verses in their context, saying that context and word examination is word-smithing. It is a typical position where a person can become bound by the words of their mouths and can never break these bonds.

There have been some emails about whether the word “women” includes foreign women. This shows how we can wander away from context into fruitless discussions. Foreign women would not be permitted in Israelite assemblies so we can rule that out. Whatever could foreign women have to do with the husbands and wives context?

Similarly I have been asked, “In which context would it be acceptable for a woman to have authority over a man?” Now see how this is a loaded question to try to extend the context of 1 Cor. 14:34 from that of husbands and wives. We will come to look at the answer to this question from a differing context.

Emails have told me how wrong I am and that it is “clearly written” that all females must never ever take authority over males. I asked some simple questions about this, such as:

Is there an age or other limit on the following?

Eph. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. Obedience by a male child to his mother is a command.

Prov. 15:20, "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother" Which says nothing about a woman having authority over a MAN.

Prov 31:1 the words of king lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.

This is about a mother teaching a male child. Ironically, one of the things that King Lemuel’s mother taught him was: “give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.” This has nothing to do with a mother usurping a husband’s authority.

Those that argue so much about women never speaking in an assembly and about women not taking authority over a man change the phrase "authority over the husband" to “authority over all men”. They have not done their homework and determined that the word for “man” is “aner” or “husband” and is not all men in general.

It is appropriate here to raise another issue about men and woman. In 1 Cor. 12:7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal", some might ask, "What about the women?" The word for "man" here is Strongs 1538 "hekastos" which is used in an all-encompassing way inclusive of women. At Pentecost the women were present, were they not? As soon as we mix up words, such as the different words for "man", e.g. "anthropos", "aner" and "hekastos" we are inventing new contexts and thus are effectively adding to the Word of God. Sadly, there are Identity leaders who do that and who just do not want to know about their error.

When we come to 1 Tim. 2:12, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence", as has been shown the word for "man" here is "aner" = husband. But this is not acceptable to so many both in Identity and in some denominational churches. That is, they will not accept the "it is written". There are differing words for "teach" but "didasko" here, according to Strongs 1321 is:
to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them,

- to deliver didactic discourses
- to be a teacher
- to discharge the office of a teacher,
- to conduct one's self as a teacher
- to teach one
- to impart instruction
- to instil doctrine into one the thing taught or enjoined
- to explain or expound a thing.

These all refer to the relationship between a husband and a wife because this is the sole context.

This does not mean from a common-sense viewpoint that, as wives think differently from husbands; their input is needed in both structural and spiritual decisions in the home environment. Women have needs and the husband has to love his wife as he loves his own body, and therefore the husband must consider his wife always. But there is no place for role reversals within this context.

Let us see some things women did outside of the husband-wife relationship.

- The witness of a woman moved a city (John 4:30)
- Women carried the first message from the tomb.
- Women hosted prayer meetings (Acts 12:12)
- Women were the first hearers of the gospel in Athens (Acts 16:13)
- Women received special mention and honour (Phil. 4:3)
- Older women to teach the younger (Titus 2:3)
- Women to have the right to choose a husband (I Cor 7:2)
- A married woman can sanctify her unsaved husband (I Cor 7:13)
- A woman (as well as men) can care for widows (I Tim 5:16)

There are many differences between men and women, right from conception. Today these differences are commonly ignored by unbelievers and by supposed believers who are conforming to this world.

Under Mosaic Law, ritual cleansing after childbirth was different being a total of forty days for a male child, and eighty days for a female child (Lev. 12:2-5). This too is all in the context of marriage. In the Levitical order, women could have no priestly roles. When the temple worship was established, there was the Court of the women established. At the time of Jesus, we find Anna prophesying in the temple. She was not keeping “silence” there in the not -speaking sense, was she? Likewise, today women can do the same. But a wife cannot become a bishop or an elder in an assembly because she cannot qualify as being the “husband of one wife”.

The matter of Deborah as a judge of Israel has been raised in emails. It is claimed that she usurped authority over men. This issue of course was raised by men who refuse the husband/wife context limitation of what we have examined so far. Of Deborah we read:

Judges 4:4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Rama and Bethel in Mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

It is the God of Israel who appoints and anoints the prophets of Israel. Why did the Children of Israel come to her for judgment? It is because God-given authority is recognized by God's people.

1 Sam 3:20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the **LORD**.

The next chapter of Judges tells us that all the leaders of all the tribes of Israel supported Deborah who said she "arose as a mother in Israel". What does "arose" mean? Strongs 09695 gives this as "Stood up 240, arise 211, raise 47, establish 27, stand 27, perform 25, confirm 9, again 5, set 5, stablish 3, surely 3, continue 3, sure 2, abide 1, accomplish 1, She then instructed Barak,"Lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam". Was this not taking authority over a man and instructing him? But this man was not her husband, and it was Deborah who was doing the speaking, not God.



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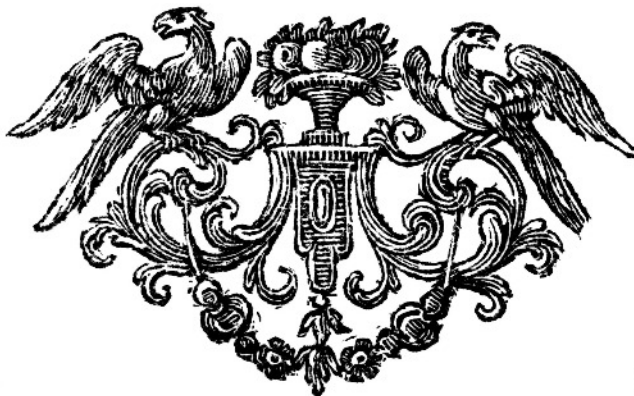
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