

## Paul, Eve, and Women in the Church

Barry O'Dell

Throughout her history, the church for which Christ died has faced many challenges. Persecution, unfaithfulness of her members, and the rise of false teaching have all been present since the first century. Of the earliest errors addressed in the New Testament, the student of the Bible reads of Christians from a Jewish background who attempted to bind circumcision and the keeping of the Old Law on Gentile converts to Christ (Acts 15:1, 5). Of late, one of the errors being foisted upon Christ's church is a change in the role of women in the public assembly. While this discussion is not new within the church, it certainly has gained momentum in a culture that fails to comprehend the God-designed differences between males and females.

Here are some of the arguments made in favor of a more "gender inclusive" approach to the assembly of the church. "*Phoebe was a deaconess.*" This argument is based on a misrepresentation of the Greek term *διάκονος* (deacon) in Romans 16:1. A deacon must be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:12). That fact forever answers this line of argument. The Greek word simply means, "*a servant, an attendant.*" Many in the New Testament are called by that same term - including Jesus and Paul (Matt. 20:28; 1 Cor. 3:5) - yet they did not hold the position/function of a deacon in the church. Another attempt to justify a more "gender inclusive" assembly within churches of Christ is made by using Galatians 3:28 which states that in Christ there is neither male nor female. However, Paul's statement is simply that salvation in Christ is available to all equally - Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female. If one has been "baptized into Christ" they have put on Christ and they are children of the promise that extends all the way back to Abraham (Gen. 12:3). Galatians 3:28 is not dealing with the roles of men and women in the public assembly of the church. Finally, we are being told by those who seek a more "gender inclusive" public assembly, that 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 were *cultural* passages and only applied to a certain place and time. The rest of this article will address that concept.

### 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 - Cultural?

The quick, easy-to-see answer from both texts involve Paul's appeal to "*the law*" (1 Cor. 14:34) and creation itself (1 Tim. 2:13). 1 Corinthians 14 addresses

the disorder that was prevalent in the church of God at Corinth. Among other things, some women were evidently involved in disruption and confusion in the Corinthian assembly. Paul's instructions to restore decency and order to the assembly included that the women were to be "*under obedience*" (KJV) or "*submissive*" (NKJ). His apostolic commands were/are "*commandments of the Lord*" (14:37) and went all the way back to "*the law*" - a reference to Genesis 3:16. Paul's appeal to Corinth was not based on some temporary, cultural issue at Corinth - it was based on God's design from the beginning and that transcends any cultural happening in the first century.

The same is the case with 1 Timothy 2. While some falsely claim that this passage was addressing a local issue in Ephesus, the text indicates no such thing! A couple of things stand out clearly to reveal that Paul

**"Was Paul a misogynist?  
Was he anti-woman?"**

was not discussing a time/location limited subject. First, as in 1 Corinthians 14, his instruction regarding "men" and "women" goes back to Eden. It was founded

on (1) the order of creation and (2) the deception of the woman in the garden (1 Tim. 2:13-14). Second, Paul employed the Greek term (*τόπος*) in verse 8 that refers to location. His inspired instruction was that men (males) are to lead in *every location* or *place* (ASV) where Christian males and females are gathered together. Why? Was Paul a misogynist? Was he anti-woman? In our politically correct time that is what some claim. Or, was it because of the order of creation and the deception of Eve? Also important to notice is the "silence" of the woman. That term in verse 12 is the same term that Paul used in verse 2 that speaks of people living *peaceably*. His instruction does not forbid noise, but rather the usurpation by a female of the male's God-given role in "*every place*" where Christian men and women are together. When Paul wrote, "*I permit not a woman...*" in verse 12, he was an inspired apostle who was transmitting the Holy Spirit's message to his readers.

There is a major movement right now among churches of Christ to change God's design for the worship assembly. Several congregations and supposed "Christian" universities are at the forefront of this effort. God's people must know His will or die for a lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6)!

- God hates abortion (Pro. 6:16-17).
- Babies are not born lost in sin or totally depraved - they are pure and will be in heaven if they die or are murdered (2 Sam. 12:23; Eze. 18:20; 28:15; Matt. 18:3; 19:14).
- God must come before family (Matt. 10:34-39).
- God loves homosexuals, but hates homosexuality (Jn. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Jude 7).
- A marriage is only for an eligible man and an eligible woman (Matt. 19:3-9).
- A couple joined by God in marriage may only divorce for one reason - fornication (the spouse not guilty of fornication may put away the adulterer) (Matt. 5:32; 19:3-12).
- God is both good and severe (Rom. 11:22). *“God is love”* (1 Jn. 4:8); and *“God is a consuming fire”* (Heb. 12:28-29; cf. 10:31).
- Hell is just as real and enduring as heaven (Matt. 25:41, 46).
- We do not “have to” sin; we have a choice, for which we will be held accountable (Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 1 Jn. 2:1-6).
- If we say we know God and live in disobedience to Him, John said we are lying (1 Jn. 1:6; 2:3-4; 5:3).
- Refusing to faithfully assemble and worship God when able will cause one to miss heaven (Jn. 4:24; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-34; 16:2; Eph. 5:19-20; Heb. 10:23-31).
- If we show support for false teachers or false religions, we are partakers of their guilt (2 Jn. 10-11).
- Christ only built one church, and it still exists today (Dan. 2:44; Matt. 16:18-19, 28; Eph. 4:4; 5:23).
- The concept of denominationalism is against God’s will, and is therefore sinful (Jn. 17:17-23; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 1 Jn. 3:4).
- If one simply follows the Bible, he cannot be in a denomination (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:38-41,47; Rom. 16:16).
- Women are commanded by God to submit to their husbands (Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24, 33; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).
- Husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19).
- Women have their own role in the church, but are not allowed to take leadership or teach/preach over men (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:1-12; Titus 1:6).
- A saved child of God can fall from grace (Gal. 5:4; Heb. 3:1,12; 4:1,11; 10:23-31; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Rev. 22:19).
- Men must obey the law of their civil government, unless obeying a civil law will cause one to violate divine law (Acts 4:19; 5:29; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-15).
- Sound doctrine is essential for becoming saved and staying saved (Jn. 8:31-32; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:15-18).
- You cannot earn it, but you have responsibility towards your own salvation (Acts 2:38-41; Rom. 6:16-18; 1 Pet. 1:22; Heb. 5:9; 1 Jn. 1:6-9).
- In the Bible, there is no such thing as “the sinner’s prayer” for an alien sinner to become a saved child of God - prayer passages have been taken out of context to support a man-made doctrine.
- The phrase *“faith only”* is only found once in the Bible: *“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only”* (James 2:24; cf. Acts 10:35).
- Water baptism requires immersion (Jn. 3:23; Acts 8:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12).
- Water baptism is not for infants, who are sinless - it requires accountable sinners able to understand/believe the gospel, repent, and confess Christ (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:36-37).
- Jesus said water baptism is essential (Jn. 3:5; Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16).
- Paul said water baptism is essential (Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 5:26; Col. 2:11-13; cf. Acts 22:16).
- Peter said water baptism is essential (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:20-21).
- Baptism alone is no more valid than faith alone (Acts 8:12-24; James 2:14-26).
- In fact, nothing “alone” saves, because there are several things and beings involved, with God being the one who made it all possible through His Son (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8-10; 1 Jn. 2:1-2; 4:9, 10).

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## Many Will Be Lost and Few Will Be Saved

Aaron Dodson - Jonesboro, AR

Perhaps the greatest tragedy in our time is that many think they are right with God and they are not (Matt. 7:21-24). Looking at the Bible objectively it is clear that many have practiced things religiously professing to be God's people but were not and were not pleasing to God (Lk. 6:46; Matt. 15:8-9; 23:13-36; Acts 17:16, 22-31). Jesus said many will be lost and few will be saved. Listen: *"Enter ye in by the **narrow** gate: for **wide** is the gate, and **broad** is the way, that leads to **destruction**, and **many** are they that enter in thereby. For **narrow** is the gate, and **straightened** [confined] is the way, that leads unto **life**, and **few** are they that find it"* (Matt. 7:13-14 ASV).

**Enter by the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction.** The prevalent false doctrine of "faith alone" is not narrow. It's so common to hear religious leaders say things like "say this prayer," or "all you gotta do is believe and trust Jesus," or "faith alone is sufficient." **But the Bible does not teach this gross error** (Jam. 2:24; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Matt. 10:32-33; Rev. 2:10). The false doctrine of "faith alone" excludes repentance, confession and baptism - **all of which King Jesus said we must do** (Lk. 24:47; Mt. 10:32; Mt. 28:19). Truth is narrow/confined and excludes all that is false. On the other hand, error is common, popular and "easier." Most false teachers look nice, do good deeds, and smile a lot (e.g., Joel Olsteen, Billy Graham, Pat Robertson, Charles Stanley, etc.) They are wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15-20)! But when their teachings are weighed in the balance of God's word, sadly they are found wanting (Dan. 5:27; 1 Thes. 5:21). Since error is not narrow but broad, is it any surprise that these popular religious leaders have huge numerical followings? **Ultimately the way of error leads to eternal destruction no matter how popular or humanly academic it sounds** (Ex. 23:2a; Jn. 17:17).

**There are many who go in by it...and are lost.** Sadly, being married to "faith alone" and not to the teaching of Christ many are lost. Instead of teaching what Jesus commanded in the Great Commission, many are led to say the unbiblical "sinners prayer" and now have a false hope of salvation. Only God knows the untold millions who have **not** been taught the conditions of salvation found in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-17; Lk. 24:47). The God ordained model for all time reveals that all those who obeyed the apostles' doctrine were added to *"the church"* (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; 5:11). They were not told to join anything. That's because they understood the two go together.

Salvation is directly tied to being added by Jesus to Jesus' church, not a denomination. Not, "find a church you like."

**Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way....few find it.** When the planet was flooded only 8 souls were righteous (1 Pet. 3:20). When Israel perished in the wilderness only two souls of that generation were righteous (Num. 14:38; 26:65). There are some two plus billion self-professing Christians in the world today, yet most of them have not obeyed the Great Commission baptism, serve in unbiblical churches and don't think twice about it; yet Jesus taught one doctrine and died for one church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4-6; 5:23; Jn. 14:6). This necessitates that we identify God's will in the passages of Holy Writ and follow it.

**Not everyone who says "Lord Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven..."** Ok, who will?? **"He that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven..."** (Matt. 7:21-24). Jesus said **many** will say to Him on that day that He is their Lord, **but will be told to depart.** Jesus said whoever *"hears these saying of Mine and does them..."* (Matt. 7:24). **Why do so many refuse to "do"**

**the will of the Father found in Mark 16:16?** Why do they set themselves to find every way out of the necessity of Jesus' command to be baptized for the

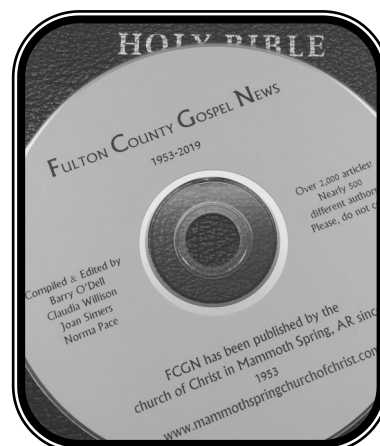
remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)? Why do so many deny the singularity of the church, the pattern for organization, worship and living as detailed in the Gospel? **Perhaps they find it in conflict with what so many "good" people teach or find it incompatible with what they desire?** Truly the way that leads to life is narrow and few find it.

*"Truth is narrow/confined and excludes all that is false."*

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- We also now have a YouTube channel (Mammoth Spring Church of Christ) so that we can further share the gospel.



### The Churches of Christ

- Bible only (2 Pet. 1:3)
- Name of Christ (Rom. 16:16)
- Began in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-4)
- Established by Jesus (Matt. 16:18)
- Purchased with Jesus’ blood (Acts 20:28)
- Established in the 1st century (Acts 2:47)
- Jesus is the Head of the one body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23)
- Added by God to the church (Acts 2:41, 47)

### Salvation

- Saved by grace, though faith (Eph. 2:8-9)
- Not by faith alone (Jas. 2:20-26)
- Not by grace alone (Matt. 7:21)
- Belief and baptism (Mk. 16:16)
- Repentance and baptism (Acts 2:37-38)
- Belief, confession, and baptism (Acts 8:37-38)
- Hear, belief, baptism (Acts 18:8)
- Faith in the operation of God (Col. 2:12)
- Faith and baptism (Gal. 3:26-27)
- Baptism does save us (1 Pet. 3:21)

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