

## The Woman's Artificial Covering

Esteemed reader, there is definite proof that God, the Creator of the universe, is a God of order. Paul argues before the church at Rome over material things governed by divine mandates that serve to prove undeniably the existence of God. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). Everything that was created has boundaries by his design! "Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" (Job 38:8-11). Furthermore, even the place of our habitation is limited to this earth by divine order (Acts 17:26), "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation..."

Let us briefly consider the law of reproduction (Gen. 1:11-12, 29). Moses, the author of the book of Genesis tells us that during the creation of all things, God established the law of reproduction that governs what each species produces. Everything that reproduces is limited to reproduce according to its own kind. So then this law, together with every divine decree visible or invisible, established during the process of creation cannot change, nor will ever change. This is the law of nature. This law deals with all created beings and material things existing in the universe in which man has not intervened. It also deals with the fundamental arrangement of all things. Similar to this pattern, God has established order in his spiritual creation, the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. And as in the beginning, the Lord inscribed certain limitations that both man and woman should not trespass. Remember that "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." And also, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:33, 40). This last admonition applies both esthetically and sacrificially. Were the Lord not concerned with the esthetic order of the worship service he would have not ordered men to speak one at a time in the assembly, (1Cor. 14:29-31).

In another part of the scriptures, the apostle Peter affirms, in so many words, that God has given us all we need to live piously in Christ. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," (2 Pet. 1:3-4). These passages tell us that God has supplied us with all that is needed to arrive at oneness with the Father and the Son. This applies to the divine decrees that govern material things, i.e., the order of the universe, etc., as it can also apply to the sufficiency of the word of God. Therefore, without any doubt, the word of God contains the solution to the issue concerning the proper place and service of the woman within the church, as well as without. The matter of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 is already complicated enough without having scholars making the issue much more difficult to understand by way of so much erudition and conjecture. Individuals who attempt to explain the text through exegesis serve to confuse the matter more than explain it. The apostles never used this method of interpretation to make known God's commandments. On the contrary, Paul condemned contending over words, questions, and

opinions; "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers," (2 Tim. 2:14). Listen also to Paul's warning in 1 Tim. 6: 3-5; "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." In addition to condemning the use of such devices to interpret the mysteries of the word, Paul indicates man's avidity for wealth. Bribes only serve to corrupt, not only the one receiving it, but by extension, the innocent follower who trusts in men. The most common error committed when attempting to explain the topic of the artificial head covering is that there is a lack of consistency in the argumentation presented. I do not think there is room for error if we seek to be consistent with the subject of the text. Certainly, this method allows for a more precise interpretation of the Scriptures than one's own systematic theology. The greatest hurdle to overcome is probably the swallowing of our own pride, admitting that we don't know it all, and of course, being willing to accept the Creator's direction without objection.

Approximately 45 years ago when the order of authority and the head covering issue were being greatly debated among Hispanic conservative churches of Christ, (issues that have divided many Hispanic congregations since), brother Wayne Partain, a well-known evangelist among Hispanic churches, rang out against the covering advocates, so-called, warning on the dangers of contending over personal opinions. In his publication, aside from warning about the dangers of dividing the church, he challenged every defender of the veil (head covering) to prove certain key points necessary to support the present practice of the precept. The words that mostly resound in my mind are the following: "...instead of giving opinions and suppositions, it is necessary that he be expert exegete and expositor of the text and others related." This saying shows the kind of argumentation upon which many preachers base their convictions. At times, exegesis, a form of erudition, can be a reliable method for reinforcing the scriptures, but a better method by far is to allow the context to rule. Exegesis is an alternative method of examining the scriptures, not an indispensable one. In my view, it serves to confirm what the Spirit already reveals as genuine through a direct commandment and an approved apostolic example, much like archeology serves to confirm biblical history. However true this may be, Christians do not place their trust in archeology. The understanding of a context, is only allowed by the Spirit within its proper season, and not by the literary codes supplied by the context, unless the text is strictly to be understood contemporarily. Brother Partain's words make the majority of the brethren feel as inept "layman" incapable of interpreting the scriptures or of being able to formulate their own opinions over the subject. To be quite honest, brother Partain himself did not offer his own analysis, but instead, relied on the writings of Bill Cavender, the author of the tract, "The Woman and her Covering." Neither men endorse the precept as an article of faith.

Isaiah speaks of individuals that use a certain type of stratagem to entangle the innocent in search of truth: "For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right" (Isa. 32:7). Scholars are not "poor and needy" spiritually speaking, because of their rich knowledge in

discerning over biblical texts, not to mention their powerful influence over the masses. The instruments in question here represent the unlawful and crafty methods used by church leaders to deceive the brethren. Preterit interpretations and human inferences are the main causes for deviations from the gospel truth. Not everything that was written in the first century was intended for the early church! A huge portion of the NT calls for an eschatological application! Therefore, to trust in the Lord for answers to all scriptural matters is better because in the first place, does not all interpretation belong to God? Undoubtedly, "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets..." (Dan. 2:28; Job 33:23). Paul spoke of a time when elders would lead the church astray, (Acts 20: 17, 30). Therefore, the underlying message is that commending one's soul to men instead of God, is sin.

What else can be said regarding 1 Corinthians 11 that hasn't been said already? As Elihu, I feel that as though the hoary head and years of experience have all had their say on the matter. However, there still remains certain areas that have not been touched, that in my opinion, are relevant to the thesis. Job 32:6-13. In the first place, is the subject of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 spiritual gifts or headship? In my opinion, the subject is rather obvious throughout the text, and that is, an order of authority or headship. Verse 3 establishes this order. Statutes that should be respected also govern God's spiritual creation. As the physical creation was made and arranged perfectly by the word of God, so also is the Church through the doctrine. Deut. 32:4; Heb. 11:3.

Subsequently, another opinion relative to the subject.

#### 1. " Be ye followers of me..."

God forms the church as he wills through divine ordinances. The Spanish version (Reina Valera) renders more accurately, "be ye imitators of me."

a. "Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." Isa. 44:21

b. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Rom. 9:20.

c. As in the beginning the earth was "without form, and void" until the Lord established order. Here also does the Spirit of God proceed to establish order in the church. Paul is arranging the proper manner of worship and service as it relates to the role of all believing men and women in the church. At this point in time the church was still in a spiritual state of gestation being formed by New Testament standards that serve as a pattern for all ages according to Gal. 4:19; "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you..."

#### 2. "I praise you, brethren..."

This passage teaches that it is through apostolic ordinances that God is forming the church till it reaches the state of maturity. The church, up to this point, had not failed to observe any the apostolic traditions and as a result, Paul praises the brethren. But as for the matter of the

“artificial covering”, it is my opinion that the church has been judging over this controversial issue ever since Paul introduced it without the church ever coming to full knowledge of the truth, hence, without achieving spiritual maturity. That is not to say that the church has not come to a consensus about it; which thing it has done by relegating the issue to the context of Romans 14 as a question of personal faith and a doubtful disputation. There it has remained latent for centuries. Nowhere does the New Testament record a single example of a believing woman covering to pray or prophesy. This lack of evidence indicates that Paul’s counsel to the Corinthians, represents the introduction of the precept into the worship service. Bear in mind that it was the apostolic missionary calling to introduce all the necessary ordinances to the church, while it is the church’s responsibility to either deny or accept them. Therefore, the Spirit, through Paul, is leading the church to the perfect development of the sacred worship service which includes the head-covering precept. With regards to this counsel remaining latent, indicates that the saving arm of the Lord had not yet arisen in the heart of any of Christ’s disciples to perform and ratify the precept as a universal practice and a genuine article of faith worthy to be accepted as part of the doctrine of Christ. This fact is self-evident as the church remains divided over the issue never having come to the complete state of unity. This state of uncertainty corresponds to the spiritual cry found throughout the OT prophetic word, including the church’s longing for the fullness of redemption, which thing equates, the adoption into *sonship*. In practical terms, it is obvious that even church leaders have not come to a universal agreement over the precise role of both genders within the worship service. Some churches have Sunday school and other forms of divisions of the members for the purpose of edification. Other churches practice the head covering as a matter of doubt, while others as a matter of personal conscience. Various other interpretations of the subject exists as well. However, there is one entity of believers that utterly condemns and denies fellowship with those that reject the ordinance refusing to acknowledge those that deny the practice as faithful Churches of Christ. This entity represents the end-time spiritual working arm of the Lord executing judgment against the church composed of many nations. This body of faithful believers is embodied in the House of the Elect Lady and her children in the truth (2Jhn.), confirmed as genuinely faithful by the apostolic presbytery, the Father and the Son. Another reason the apostolic supplication has remained dormant corresponds to the Lord’s longsuffering. As in Noah’s time, God’s patience awaited the building of the ark before unleashing his fury upon the apostate world, (1Pet. 3:20) during which time “...the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.” So also, when the time of visitation of the church arrived, the Lord found no one keeping the commandment, as it is written; “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:” (Prov. 1:24-25). And also, “Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?” (Isa 50:2). At the inauguration of the Kingdom, around 3,000 souls received Peter’s message. Not long after that, around 5, 000 other individuals received the gospel (Acts 4: 4). However, when the Lord looks down from his lofty abode to examine whether the church is abiding in the covenant through the epistle of Jude embodied in one of his faithful disciples, he finds no one answering his calling.

### 3. "But I would have you know..."

In this passage God’s arrangement of church order is established. The matter the apostle has in mind is the subject of the authority; this should be obvious. I must insist on this point because all

the remainder of the context maintains this order so that verse three serves as the nucleus of the entire text. That the subject deals with ranks of authority is evident by the term "head" used in the text. Consider the relation between Father and Son to better understand the manner in which each should be subordinate to his "head". Although in essence Jesus is in all ways equal to the Father since both possess attributes applicable only to God wherefore the title "Lord" applies to both, nonetheless, regarding the church, there is a notable difference in ranks. The Jews of Jesus' day understood that when he accepted the title "Lord", he was in fact declaring himself equal to the Father. In function, a member of the Trinity can for a period of time or to fulfill a specific role, be subordinate to one or to both other members. However, that does not signify that He is in essence, lesser in His permanent nature (that of being God) in contrast with the temporal state of man as with the incarnation of the Son. Each one of the three persons of the Trinity has had certain particular functions for a period of time in which they acted alone. This should be understood as a temporal acting role for the purpose of reaching a specific end, not a change in position nor in essence. The Son did not become less than the Father during his earthly incarnation, but he was functionally subordinated to the will of the Father. The same applies to the man and the woman. The woman is not inferior to the man in essence, but in function only. Equal in reward or in recompense, but different in service. In the church, Jesus is Lord. Every believing man is subject to Christ. Any intent of man to be equal to Christ would be an attempt to usurp Christ's Priesthood. In the same manner, by reason of the order of authority, (that primarily emphasizes the woman's subordination), God forbids the woman to usurp the place of the man, thus prohibiting her from publicly teaching in the congregation. Simply stated, the role of the man differs from that of the woman in the social community as well as in the Christian community as a result of divine decree (Gen. 3:16; I Cor. 14:34). Paul's reiteration of God's natural law helps to solidify his argument in favor of the superiority of the man in the church. Serving as illustration, in the church, the woman occupies the place of a true servant, because as a servant has no authority, thus also in the case of the woman. To elaborate a little more over the role of a servant, a servant has a lower social place in life than those in authority do. Subjection and obedience to his master characterizes his life. In the congregation Paul characterizes the behavior of the woman as one that has absolutely no authority, and therefore, should learn in "silence". According to this order, the woman is not given a place of honor in the church. The remainder of the context does not contradict this order. Because if it does, the skillful Maker's work (the church) becomes a place of chaos, as with the natural order of creation. One must understand that man's God-given dignity is in danger when allowing the woman the same rights as the man in the congregation. In doing so signifies that the woman abandon her own place to exercise the role of the man, and the man will be reduced to the level of the woman, for "silence", does not characterize his position. This would evidently contradict the order of authority of verse three. The determined order in this passage is for every believing man and woman of every age. This point is much too obvious to criticize as non-bonding today.

#### 4. "Every man...every woman..."

Verses 4-5 include all the aforementioned in verse 3. Otherwise, prophets and prophetess remain exempt from the order of authority. In other words, it would mean that every believing man, except the prophet, is subject to Christ. And that every believing woman, except the prophetess, is subject to the man. Many accept that the subject of 1 Cor. 11:1-16 is found in the verse three, but then claim that the application of verses 4 and 5 applies only to certain exceptional members.

But in claiming thus, they're also claiming that although God included all the church in verse three, the laws governing the subordination of the church do not apply to those with the gift of prophecy. Because if both prophet and prophetess discharged the same function, that is to say, directing the worship in the congregation, where is the subordination in practice? Does the established order of verse three include men and women with the gift of prophecy? Without a doubt! Then, how can anyone claim that the only individual with the right to violate this order was the prophetess upon exercising her gift? The order of authority names the *heads* of the church: God, Christ and the man. In this category the woman is not included. But, according to the ideas of some, the woman rises to the level of the man when she puts on a veil giving her the same authority to lead the assembly. What then, is the true purpose of the covering? Is it to demonstrate equality between man and woman? Is it a type of symbol that gives her the right to edify publicly, or is it a sign of subordination confirming the divine order established? Verse 3 denies emphatically that the woman is an authoritative figure in the church. In view of this, how does this command given in A. D. 56 affect the believing woman today? Verses 4 and 5 have caused many unfortunate souls to "stumble at the Word". In truth, these verses have become a pit and a snare to many stewards in their own efforts to interpret the text. These passages are the cause for the prevarication against God because preachers dare to affirm things that they've never before seen nor heard. Whosoever does this is a meddler in that he dares to affirm things that God never revealed (Col. 2:18-19). Bear in mind that the Holy Spirit simply asks the question, "...is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered"? It remains our responsibility to judge within our own selves accordingly, that is, draw our own conclusion based on what God has spoken with respect to the order of authority and not based upon His silence. It is said that the terms "praying or prophesying" obligate the woman to violate every fundamental principle concerning her own place including the divine decrees that God established forbidding the woman the same function as the man in the congregation. A few tricks are done with phrases and definitions, and practices are labeled as binding or non-binding in the congregation. In this case, a play with words is made through the use of exegesis and the order of authority is held as non-binding in the church. Based on the term "prophesying", it is said that the woman directed the prayer and the preaching in the congregation. Some have gone as far as to define the prayer of verses 4 and 5 as "articulating words" to support the idea that the prophetess directed prayer. Personally, I do not believe that the purpose of the divine order is to elevate the woman to the level of governor over the worship service. Plainly stated, it is a false vision born in the heart of man relative to the charismatic period that took place during the first century. No one that knows the Bible denies the existence of the prophetess. The question is, where did she exercise her gift? If we say that in the congregation the same as the man because she was granted the right by virtue of the veil (head covering), this would contradict the order of authority. Where does the woman get permission, if such order teaches that she, as any other believing woman is absolutely void of any authority? It is a fact that there were prophetesses and that the purpose of prophecy was to edify the church (1 Cor. 14), but those facts do not allow us to infer with certainty that the prophetess exercised her gift in the congregation. Do verses 4 and 5 apply exclusively to the time of the miraculous? What does anyone that supports this contention actually know about the charismatic age other than what is plainly written in the Bible? There is not one person alive today that has witnessed the charismatic age with his own eyes, neither knows with certainty the operation of the Spirit in the primitive church aside from what anyone can understand by reading the scriptures. Absolutely all conclusions regarding the covering are based upon the term "prophecy" of verses 4 and 5. Incredible, considering that in Romans 12:6-8 *prophecy* is

included among other various ordinary gifts. Does the noun *prophecy* change the entire subject of Romans 12 to that of miraculous gifts simply because it is mentioned by Paul in the text? When have Churches of Christ allowed a single word within a context to dictate the entire context? Other denominations might allow this type of interpretation, but not conservative Churches of Christ. Or, on the other hand, is prophecy included among these ordinary gifts because it corresponds to ordinary preaching? As anyone who studies the Word knows, the New Testament was written in the "koine" Greek language that represents the common Greek language. The *koine* should be differentiated from the classical Greek. The use of the *koine* by New Testament writers should tell us that God has used a common language so that every man without respect of person might arrive to the knowledge of his will. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence." (1 Cor. 1:26-29). "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight, Lk. 10:21." It is he that is accustomed to reading between the lines that is inclined to wrest the word as well, and is more liable to judge amiss. There are some that are not satisfied with the arguments and conclusions most preachers are accepting with respect to the head covering issue of 1 Cor. 11:1-16. I do not believe that the term "prophecy" always refers to the miraculous gift of direct inspiration. Hear the prophet Amos, "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8) And Solomon also: "Where there is no prophecy the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law." (Prov. 29:18) –RSV. That is, the absence of prophecy promotes apostasy. Without the word that comforts, exhorts and edifies (1 Cor. 14:3) the church is without divine direction. On the one hand, I understand that we are not living in the dispensation of miracles, such as was the apostolic age. But on the other, the church continues to witness the testimony of Jesus Christ, and that testimony is the "spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). The church at Rome for example, did not have any extraordinary gifts at the time of Paul's writings (Rom. 1:11). However, they did have prophecy and is listed among several other ordinary gifts. Either prophecy is ordinary "forth telling" the Word of God or, the servile gifts mentioned in Romans 12 required miraculous intervention for their implementation, based on the manner of interpretation of some. Opposing arguments say that the terms "praying or prophesying" are inseparable in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5. That prophecy always refers to the miraculous and therefore by virtue of this fact the term "praying" must be defined as "articulating words" under the direct influence of the Spirit. Hence, because we are no longer living during the age of the Earnest of the Spirit, there is no longer a need for the covering. Did the prophetess preside in the assembly as some envision; leading prayers, songs and preaching as God's spokesperson before the congregation? Many would answer yes to this question absolutely ignorant of the fact that the weight of all their contention is based on the term "prophecy". Sadly, there is not a single example of a prophetess teaching during the worship service (1 Cor. 14: 34). The assumption that the woman publicly edified the church is as inconsistent as it is illogical based on the order of authority of 1 Corinthians 11: 3. That the prophetess prophesied to edify the church I have no doubt, but where she prophesied is the question. If she used her gift in the assembly, then she violated the order, but if she taught in private she would not be dishonoring

anyone coinciding with all other scripture that corresponds to her place and service. In addition, the Old Testament recognizes all of God's covenant people as prophets saying: "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." 1Chr. 16:22; Ps. 105:15. Note that in these passages the terms "anointed" and "prophets" are utilized to describe the same group of people. Not all the Israelites were prophets, but they all served as representatives of God's name to proclaim His Will before all other nations. It is evident therefore, that in this prophetic passage the term "prophets" is used in a collective sense. Although this may not be the case in 1 Corinthians 11, even so, the same order of subordination applies to us today as it did to the primitive church. We too, as well as they, possess the responsibility of the proclamation of the Word for the same purposes as those mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14: 3, because after all, a "prophet" is primarily one that speaks of the mind and counsel of God.

Verses 5b through 10 should be read with a great deal of care. In the first place the argumentation that begins with verse 5b serves as divine counsel. We will consider Paul's reasoning beginning with verse 5b. The argumentation clearly establishes the difference between the sexes, not equality between the same! Meaning that the purpose of the veil is not to equate the woman with the man. The divine counsel does not permit such an equality of function in the church. All of Paul's logic argues in favor of an order of subordination that places the woman under the man in function, not in worth. Paul concludes midway through his course of thought with verse 10 by saying "for this cause..." Which cause? The reasons indicated previously by the apostle Paul, which prove that there is a great difference between the function of the man and the woman in the church. It is a spiritual arrangement that must be kept or the result is chaos (1 Cor. 14:33). How can some continue to argue in favor of equality between the sexes when the sum of all of Paul's argumentation disallows such a practice? It is absurd to conclude therefore that the sum of all the argumentation yielded, add up to just the opposite of what the order of verse 3 clearly teaches. Is the covering a symbol of power on her head as a token of might and power? Or is it instead a symbol of subordination that publicly displayed her subjection to the man? If the veil is a token of power enabling her to preach and to pray publicly, then why isn't the man commanded to wear it when he prays and prophesizes? It's obvious that the artificial covering (the veil) corresponds to the woman's physical hair. And that not wearing it equates her with the man who feels no shame wearing short hair or even a bald head. Verse 14 establishes that it is a shame for a man to have long hair. For a man to veil his head to pray or to prophesy would correspond to him wearing long hair physically. And the woman not wearing the veil would then correspond to her having her head shorn or shaven. Therefore, the veil does not equate her with the man but rather the unveiled head. But then, she ought to feel shame in this instance for such a practice corresponds to the rejection of her own glory (v. 15). It is evident to see the connection between verses 5-10 with the order of authority of verse 3. Consider Paul's first letter to Timothy, a young ascending preacher, (1 Tim. 2:11-15). One of Paul's reasons for requiring the Christian woman's silence not mentioned in the context of 1 Cor. 11 or in chapter 14 is that of Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." What some men inevitably affirm is that the prophetess is absolved of this divine accusation, exonerating her of every responsibility to submit to the principle of subordination by virtue of the definition of the term "prophecy". Does verse five (5) of First Corinthians eleven (11) deliver the prophetess from remaining subject through her silence during the worship service? Or, does not rather the artificial covering serve to remind all women of the original transgression of Eve, including the prophetess in spite of her exceptional gift of

prophecy. I fail to see how the gift of prophecy or any other gift, could qualify any women to exercise priestly duties in the assembly the same as performed by the believing man. Why didn't Paul urge Timothy to take advantage of such a rare and useful woman to assist him with governing and edifying the church? Chapter 2 of first Timothy would have been a perfect place to remind him of it. He remembers to exhort men to pray but made no mention of the prophetess' virtues that could play a vital role in the edification of the church. Why didn't Paul mention it to Timothy? Dear reader, you be the judge of that. Ah, but he did remember to establish a difference between the man and woman saying "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" (I Tim. 2:12-13). And to Titus, Paul charged him to command the "aged women," not the prophetess, to serve as instructors of the younger women; "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed," Titus 2:3-5. Their training would be within the realm of domestic virtues and responsibilities, not in the exercise of any gifts within the worship service!

#### 5. Verses 6-7 "For if the woman be not covered... but the woman is the glory of the man."

These passages, not only illustrate, but also mark the obvious distinction between both genders. The purpose of the text is to instill in both a sense of appreciation for their respective roles. The Spirit does this by attempting to imbue the women with shame by inviting her to shave her head. Society does not regulate the length of the woman's hair, the Spirit of God does. If the artificial covering is commensurate to the women's physical hair, then her hair should flow, according to verse 15; "But if the woman have *long* hair, it is a glory to her." Contrariwise, Paul's counsel also serves to remind the man of his dignity as one that has been given authority and made worthy of being entrusted with the leadership role both within and without the assembly. Therefore, his physical appearance and works during the holy convocation should reflect the aforementioned authority. In short, the woman should wear a covering, otherwise she should feel the same shame as if her head were shorn. Note also that verse 7 makes an important distinction between the man and the woman. "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the *image* and glory of God." In this passage the woman is not included as bearing God's image because she has not been given that characteristic that would equate her to the man in the congregation and liken her to God and to Christ (v. 3). That characteristic is "dominion" to direct the assembly. By contrast, the man does possess that particular divine trait that enables him to administer in the assembly. That trait is authority (v. 3). Of course, in some respects the woman is on a par to the man (v. 11-12). For example, they are both equal in fundamental worth, and with respect to recompense and remuneration God makes no difference. However, when it comes to the exercise of *functions* in the congregation, they are not equal.

#### 6. Verses 8-9 "For the man is not of the woman..."

These passages serve to support the headship of verse 3 using the creation of the Lord's established arrangement and its purpose. The preeminence of the man is made evident by the enduring reasons Paul appeals to and that according to God, should be recognized. Paul cites this

same contention in first Timothy with the same end in mind as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:9. It was necessary that Timothy, Paul's pupil, understood how to direct the church appropriately, thus Paul shares the same matter with him as with the Corinthians. In both letters to Timothy, no mention is made of a supposedly exceptional woman that performed a greater service to the congregation by prophesying, other than ordinary believing women with experience in the word and in life itself, (1 Tim. 2:11-12). Paul reminds him of man's preeminence and the privileged birthright he possesses in verses 8 and 9. He cites another reason to justify his supremacy over the woman in 1 Timothy 2: 14, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Both texts, the Corinthian and the one to Timothy, should be considered as one since both deal with headship.

#### 7. Verse 10, "For this cause..."

The expression "power on her head" cannot possibly begin to imply that the purpose of the covering was symbolic of the woman's might and right to edify the church publicly. This assumption is contrary and incoherent with all that Paul has previously upheld, especially verse 3. In verse 10 Paul speaks with a forewarning tone. The woman must wear her symbol of subjection (alluding to the veil) by reason of those that have authority to punish her disobedience. Up to this point in Paul's counsel, he has established sufficient and very convincing reasons for anyone to deny that God demands subordination from the part of the woman. This passage summarizes Paul's argument beginning from verse 5. Jesus' apostles are able to retain sins against those that rebel against their authority (Jn. 20:22-23); "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Jesus described this power as "binding and loosening" in the church, (Mt. 16: 19, Mt. 18:18). The apostolic office is foreshadowed in the OT in many ways. In the story of Esther, they are depicted as the wise men surrounding King Ahasuerus' in his court (Est. 1: 13-21). Notice their power to "loose and to bind" as well as their refusal to remit the queen's sin against the entire Kingdom. Another example is found in Daniel 4: 17. Again, the loosening of King Nebuchadnezzar from his throne suggests the same authority given to the apostles. In both accounts, the allusion to judgment is present. To question the apostolic direction or dispute it equates striving against God. These divine judges are set to approve the just and to punish transgressors in the church. The apostles form the highest court of appeal in the New Testament. The epistle of Jude describes them as "dignities", Jude 8. The apostles were divinely chosen to proclaim the word of God throughout the world, therefore they remain as watchmen guarding over the church through their testimony. Do conservative Churches of Christ excommunicate disorderly members without the spirit of Paul? "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ...", (1Cor. 5:3-4). Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Church of Christ has no such custom as to despise or contend against any apostolic teaching (1 Cor. 11:16). To do so would be to speak evil of "dignities". The apostles are "dignities" because Jesus granted them thrones in his kingdom. Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30. If then, the apostolic order has deprived the woman of all authority, commanding her to keep silent in the assembly, why then would the head covering give her the right to conduct priestly duties in the church the same as the man? Therefore, to avoid any contradiction to the order of authority (v3) or to any other

portion of Paul's counsel, the expression "power on her head" reveals that the woman must acknowledge the authority that is above her.

#### 8. Versus 11 and 12, "Nevertheless neither is the man..."

In these two verses we are able to see the fundamental equality between the man and the woman. Essentially, both are of equal value before God as far as basic worth is concerned. However, both must remain faithful to him within the limits of their respective roles. God does not discriminate as far as recompense or remuneration is concerned. Psalms 32:1-2; Revelation 2:17; Romans 2:1. These passages in no way contradict the order of verse 3. Spiritually speaking, there is a position in Christ where God sees neither man nor woman. This spiritual condition is referred to as "sonship" or "adoption." This process gives the believer the right to enter into a relationship with God as a son. Interestingly enough, the term "son" is an androgynous term, meaning that, standing alone, it neither specifies feminine nor masculine gender. The term is gender-neutral because both men and women are in the fight for the same reward; and that is to reach the stature of the Son of God "unto a perfect man"; Ephesians 4:13 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, *unto a perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ..." When the church reaches this state of doctrinal perfection, the Father will no longer view his people as a Church, but as his adopted Son. This blessed achievement and exaltation is what the prophets spoke about with little understanding if any. This has also been the church's longing since the birth of the promise, however, it also falls short of understanding its meaning. Hebrews 2: 6-8 speaks of this exaltation to sonship regarding Jesus. But if Jesus is Son by nature, how is he also adopted through the promises given to his followers under his very covenant? Revelation 21:7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Be it far from man to consider Jesus as a mere son of man, for that would represent a direct denial of his true essence as God Almighty. So then, the apostle's point is that although the man and the woman are of equal fundamental value, they are very different as it pertains to each other's function in the church.

#### 9. Verse 13 "Judge in yourselves..."

It is evident in this particular verse that Paul establishes the covering issue as a matter of opinion. This is absolutely necessary because otherwise salvation would not be an individual matter. We have heard this truth throughout our Christian lives in many a lesson. This is a true fact and verse 13 is one reason why that is. In no other place in scripture does the Spirit extend such an invitation to every single Christian throughout Christianity to make a choice regarding whether one thing or another qualifies as binding law and part of the NT covenant! Each individual must choose what should be the proper manner in which the woman should present herself before God in worship. It is written: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death," (Proverbs 14:12). In my opinion, this passage alludes to the pseudo-Christ in the form of false doctrine that would usurp Christ's throne in the last days, thus ushering in the church's ruin, Matthew 24: 24; 2 Peter 2: 1. And also: "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" Proverbs 20:6. In my view, it is in this place of scripture (1 Cor. 11) where according to Peter, many preachers "promise liberty" to God's people only to enslave them by deceiving them through subtlety into accepting their personal verdicts over the issue (2 Peter 2:19). The apostle Paul calls for a logical conclusion based upon the subject

as concerns verse 3. Any conclusion that contradicts the divine decree and that serves to dissolve the natural distinctions between the man and the woman is heresy. It is only proper to remind the reader what the Bible teaches concerning heresies. Paul says to the Corinthians in so many words that heresies are a necessary means to determine those that are genuine among the church. 1 Corinthians 11:19 "It is necessary to have factions among you, so that it will become plain which of you are true" -- Simple English. Yet in other places, both Paul and Peter predict an apostasy caused by the infiltration of false teachers introducing heresies that would mark the destruction of, not only the Christian conversation, but of the proper manner of worship (2Thess. 2. 3; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

Notice that the term "prophecy" is absent in verse 13. However, it is automatically included as a result of the continued use of both terms in the preceding verses. If the reader would consider a parallel text that once again includes the order of headship as a means to establish order in the church; viz., God, Christ, man and the woman. 1 Tim. 2: 1-15. In verse 8, does the statute "lifting up holy hands" apply to all men throughout the Christian dispensation, or only through the provisional age of the spiritual gifts? Could verses 9-10 refer, not only to the woman's everyday apparel, but to the artificial covering since the dress code addressed here includes the woman's silence and subjection during worship? Does not the citing of the same reasons why men and women "that pray and prophecy" should worship according to their own respective roles prove that both the Pauline discourse to the Corinthians and to Timothy are one. However, how many local Churches of Christ exist today that observe the lifting up of holy hands? The plain fact is that the artificial covering and the lifting of hands would inconvenience even the more conservative of Churches of Christ. That is that main reason they reject the statutes!

Those who relegate this issue to the field of the undecided (Romans 14, a field commensurate to the dreaded Aceldama), do so under the pretense that God allows a diversity of personal opinions and practices, all of which are gladly approved by him as long as the believer does not place a binding law where there is none. The question is, who determines what is a binding or what should be loosed in the Kingdom of Heaven? This scenario reminds me of the days of the judges when there was no king in Israel; "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes," (Judges 17: 6). Personally, I don't understand why church leaders choose to discard the legislative scepter of Christ to place their feet on a context as slippery as Romans 14. In my opinion, preachers use this context over *doubtful disputations* to introduce the same anarchy that existed in Israel during the time of the judges, allowing each member their personal household god, according to the vision of Zechariah 10: 2, which says, "For the idols (teraphim- household idol) have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd." I for one, prefer to have my feet firm on my high places, as it is written; Psalm 18: 30-33, "As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God? It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places." The context of Romans 14 represents the realm of the fickle and the undecided. Make your minds up, brethren! Why attempt to bring back the "times of ignorance" and expose the church to shame before the gentiles? The apostolic direct command or the approved example; let us make our words few before the Oracle and choose either "yea or nay" rejecting all lukewarmness and hypocrisy!

#### 10. Verses 14-15— “Doth not even nature... given her for a covering.”

Verses 14-15 in no way even attempt to teach that after so much reasoning to compel the woman to cover, at the conclusion of the discourse, the apostle Paul would contradict himself by announcing that her natural hair serves as a replacement for the artificial covering. This conclusion is very unjust toward the apostle Paul who already established that if the woman be not covered she should also shave her head, (v.6). Paul does not change the subject nor shifts his direction toward a separate group of people. He is dealing with the same issue and with every believer in general, only now he appeals to the laws of nature. Certainly, anyone that rejects the natural law has lost every concept of proper decorum and morality, (Psa. 49:20) “Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.” It is as if Paul is punctuating his entire discourse by implementing the logical and common sense of nature. He presents his point in the simplest manner possible, noting that nature clothes the woman with long hair and man with short hair following the divine manifestation of God’s natural law of subordination. This natural order corresponds to the spiritual order of the church. Our spiritual conversation in the church must agree with those delineated by the apostle both in the physical and in the spiritual sense. Is the natural law that says that long hair on a man brings him shame binding today? What of the other side of the coin that says that long hair on the woman is her glory? Is it natural for men to wear long hair? Is it natural for the woman to wear her hair short or to have her head shaven? What should be the natural length of the hair on both men and women based on an inherent sense of right and wrong? Therefore, the distinction between man and the woman must be exhibited in the different apparel and length of hair worn by both. This practice also applies to the artificial covering. If the woman won’t wear it, why not complete the transformation into a man and wear men’s clothing and shave her head? Psalms 50:23 submits a challenge for all who profess godliness; “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.”

Consider the following points:

- The *veil* corresponds to the woman’s long hair. Is her long hair a token of power making her equal to the man? On the contrary, it is an indication of her own natural estate and a symbol of her subordinate place in society as man’s glory (1 Cor. 11:7).
- Why does Paul argue that a man should not wear long hair? Because he would be abandoning his own place as a man reducing himself to the level of the woman. Our inherent knowledge of right and wrong tells us that long hair belongs to the woman.
- In the event the woman shaved off her hair, would her actions contradict the order of authority in any way? What would be the obvious significance according to Paul? To be consistent with the context and the main point, the answer is that the woman would be equating herself to the man, thus violating the order of authority.
- How can anyone claim that the veil that corresponds to the woman’s long hair somehow raises the woman to the level of the man, instead of serving as an indication of her own subjection to him? This is why I believe that there is inconsistency in claiming that the prophetess exercised her gift in the assembly as the prophet did. The only Biblical conclusion is that neither the prophetess nor any other woman ever received authority to

preside over the assembly as that duty corresponds solely to the man by virtue of his position in the order of authority (verse 3). To allow the woman this duty would introduce confusion into Paul's divine counsel.

11. Verse 16—"But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."

Verse 16 concludes Paul's instruction with a word of caution to opponents of the newly introduced order of ranks in the church. No one calling himself a Christian and a follower of Paul and Christ can possibly disregard the authoritative power with which this arrangement is founded. And it is founded upon function, not essential value. Conservative Churches of Christ do not follow denominational patterns that ignore the authoritative New Testament teachings. Does the church dare introduce action based upon God's silence? Do we not hold fast that God's silence condemns action rather than approve it? And will a single individual or even a consensus of the mighty in seats of power through much erudition decide on behalf of all the rest that the order of authority of 1 Corinthians 11:3 is not valid today? The issue with the covering precept is determining whether it represents a provisional or a permanent commandment. However, because Paul allows us to form our own opinion over the matter, the frightening possibility exists that some would quarrel with the Author of all order and peace in the assembly. Whatever the church decides to do with it, it must involve a universal verdict and enforced with disciplinary measures in order to ensure the integrity and unity required in religious conservatism. To allow arbitrary practices and opinions over the matter, thus allowing more conscientious women to cover while other refuse to comply, and furthermore for preachers to refuse to cut off fellowship with other churches holding different views over the subject equates a mockery to the Spirit that guides to all truth and disdain for the Blood of the Lamb representative of the new covenant. The same God and author of all ages and dispensations; does he not govern in the congregation of the mighty? Anyone therefore, that strives with God presenting an opinion inconsistent with the order of verse 3 makes himself a god in the assembly by usurping the authority of Christ. Wherefore the psalmist declares: "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations." Psalms 82. The Holy Spirit of God warned the Church long ago of the possibility of defection from the truth using the day of provocation as an example of their contention against the Lord; Heb. 13: 7-8, 13-15, (key verse, 13) "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." The appointed time "today" borrowed from Psalm 95: 7-8 alludes to the appointed period of time of divine forbearance. Hence, the writer to the Hebrews warns about the possibility of the church provoking the Lord to wrath as did Israel at Massah and Meribah thus preventing entry into his rest. Lest the Lord become an enemy and be motivated to fight against his people. The apostle Paul himself warns of this possibility in 1 Corinthians 11:16. Examine what the prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 63: 8-10 "For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare

them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.”

### Conclusion

Serious Bible students should not confide in commentaries or dictionaries, lexicons or the like as final authoritative ground for approving or rejecting any religious practice. The reason for this is basic in that they are all uninspired. The context under consideration should dictate and govern one’s final decision. Take for example the Greek definition for the term Psalm (psallō, Jms. 5: 13). Thayer defines it primarily, to pluck off or to pull out. And as a secondary definition, “to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate.” While it may appear that the believer is given the go ahead to implement musical instruments in the worship service, priestly duties is not the subject of James chapter 5. The chapter deals with oppression of the poor, rash speech, healing by anointing, admonishment to worship (pray and sing). James did not write to introduce mechanical instruments into the assembly worship. Do those that think otherwise also encourage the elders of the church to practice anointing the sick with oil? Not hardly. Is there at least one example of an apostle playing an instrument while reciting one of the psalms? Is there a direct commandment found in any of the apostle’s writings urging any local church to accompany the “fruit of the lips” with instrumental music? No to both questions! One could reply that instruments were played to accompany the singing in the OT. To those that attempt to achieve religious justification under the OT law there is only one sentence; “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace,” (Gal. 5:4). Those that trust that the term “prophecy” in the Corinthian text dictates that the subject deals with miraculous gifts are guilty of doing the same thing as those eager to hear instruments in the assembly. However, in their case, they are prone to discard the artificial covering precept out the proverbial window as a provisional and an archaic practice.

Careful observation of other correlating examples must also be considered. Scholars themselves support the primary law of interpretation, that is, to let the context rule. This rule should govern always in the discernment of the word as we search the pages of inspiration for wisdom in doing the will of God. All lexicographers tend to give their own interpretation, especially touching esoteric writings based upon their own convictions. Their definitions are trustworthy, but their applications are not always accurate. They are human beings apt to err given that their work is uninspired. The final word always belongs to God who “has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” (2 Pet. 1:3).

### Synopsis over the epistle of Jude

First of all, the development of this epistle throughout the history of the church should be acknowledged. To be as brief as possible, this particular epistle among a few others initially belonged to a group of books called in the Greek language “antilegomena”, meaning “disputed”. That is, that these books were not readily received as inspired books of the New Testament canon as were the greatest majority categorized as “homologoumena”. Their authenticity was much disputed for several reasons. In the case of Jude, and besides its damnatory nature, scholars claim that the writer quotes from 2 spurious sources; “The Assumption of Moses” (v.9), and

“The Book of Enoc” (v14) none of which belong to the OT canon. Though questionable, Jude could not be rejected as spurious, for to reject it would automatically signify the rejection of 2 Peter as chapter 2 is identical to Jude except for the time of application. That would put Peter’s first epistle into question as well. In the process of time, as heretical groups tended to break off from the original church, Gnosticism appeared in the religious realm. Church leaders began finding application for this epistle. However, until the present day, Jude’s message has found very little circulation within the church’s courts. The other books of the Bible that also belonged to this category are Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd John, and Revelation. This New Testament letter has not had fair circulation within the Churches of Christ with the exception of verse 3. Jude’s imprecatory tones do not make it a popular pulpit subject. After all, who wants to hear “lamentations, and mourning, and woe?” (Ezek. 2:10)

First John for example, lacks geographical or historic mention to place it in a specific time or place. Observe, for example, that the author does not give his name. Neither mentions any key person by name, notable event or succession that could serve as proof to locate its recipients. Based on the uniqueness in style and content we can only determine without doubt that the nature of the letter is esoteric. In character, it seems to serve as an epistle of confirmation to the children of God already having defeated the deceiver in the form of the Antichrist and have resolved all doctrinal doubts for they “know all things”. In short, this letter as others contains the necessary characteristics that qualify it as a “sealed” letter until the time of its specific fulfillment. Why then did the epistle of Jude remain out of the canon at the beginning of Christianity? Do we understand more about this letter today than at that time? Why didn’t it circulate within the church as did the *homologoumena* writings? The obvious answer is because it remained sealed until the time of judgment (Jude 14-15), then were the seals broken that prevented the understanding of its message (Is. 45:1-3). Scholars fail to render a unified interpretation of Jude because of the lack of literary codes that could allow for a more accurate placement in time and application. Exegesis also fails to offer a perfect record of the internal circumstances Jude deals with, therefore its writings remain dark and troubling. Only the God who dwells with light and to whom “no secret troubleth him” could resolve the mystery in its own appointed time, (Dan. 4: 9). The conclusion is obvious, that those that undertook the task of grouping the books that form the NT Canon had no application for the antilegomena at the outset of Christianity.

It is my position that the epistle of Jude puts an end to any doubt regarding the head covering issue the apostle Paul introduced to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11: 1-16). A careful look into this letter will demonstrate its connection to the context of 1 Corinthians 11 and 2 Peter 2. The popular belief among commentators is that the book of Jude refers to the doctrine of Gnosticism. But in reality, when certain distinctions are noted along with their severe implications, it becomes apparent that its theme is utter condemnation and judgment (v.4) which makes it more applicable as an end-time epistle (vv. 3, 9, 15, 17-18). The application is obvious, Jude is condemning the once faithful leaders of the church due to their rejection of the faith. The letter is addressed to the few that have been *preserved* through God’s grace from the ominous presence of the Lamb unveiled in the person of Jude. Jude unmasks the antichrist that “crept in unawares” through the introduction of their own lusts; an allusion to the heresies dangerously inoculated by the same, (Cf., Matt. 13: 25, 29). Notice that the heresy implanted in the doctrine by the devil’s agents remain in the kingdom until the harvest, implying the time of the Lord’s

awakening judgment against them. Both Peter and Jude refer to this “latent” period of time in 2 Peter 2: 3 “...of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not;” and in Jude 4 “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation...” They crept in unawares because they came in “while men slept.”

Jude is a letter for a certain “present” time, while 2 Peter Chapter two, which is without doubt identical to Jude’s message, refers to a “future” time. Nevertheless, both detail the same ungodly men. It is obvious that Peter’s writing is for a future time, especially when the connection to chapter 3 is made that plainly includes Christ’s Second Advent. Peter may be sounding the trumpet warning of the coming presence of the antichrist, but Jude warns of their presence in the Church. Therefore, because Peter includes the Second Coming in his message, it must call for an eschatological fulfillment and not a contemporary one. Jude’s epistle had no application or fulfillment in the first century because its content is also eschatological in nature. Jude tells us that the men Peter prophesized about would come are now, not just present, but *exposed* within the Church. If then both epistles received an early dating, between 65 and 68 AD, how does one explain the prophecy of the coming of the antichrist and the Second Coming in Peter’s vision, compared to the presence of the antichrist and the *Parousia* of Christ in Jude’s epistle? It must note that even though neither Peter nor Jude used the term “antichrist”, they unmistakably describe him through characteristics that could only apply to him, (e.g., 1Jhn. 2: 22; 2 Pet. 2: 1; 3: 3-4; Jude 4, 14-15, 18). The only logical explanation is that Jude’s words remained sealed until the appearance of the antichrist in the church, then, at the perfectly appointed time his words came to life as the time for contention (the harvest) was at hand due to the great danger of being seduced by apostate dissidents. In contrast to Jude, 2 Peter did have application, but served only as a trumpet sound or warning of the coming apostasy and future presence of the antichrist.

It is not known with accuracy to whom Jude’s letter was written. This is the general consensus most commentators share. We are left with having to make the connection using the linguistic phrase “preserved in Jesus Christ” surrounded by the dire circumstances that besiege them. Nevertheless, Jude’s many appeals to Old Testament accounts reveal certain characteristics that serve as clues to identify his intended recipients. Old Testament examples point to a certain end-time remnant preserved from the captivity and appointed to reinhabit the land of promise and to reestablish the priesthood. It must be understood, of course, that God’s intended audience has full knowledge of Jude’s admonition. Evidence shows (internal and prophetic) that by the time this epistle becomes applicable, those remaining in the church have obtained perfection in the doctrine, as indicated in verse three. Some choose to believe that the church reached maturity at a very early stage of Christianity. This epistle dispels that theory. That Jude was written around A.D. 65 does not necessarily mean that the church achieved maturity by the time this epistle was written. Its message indicates by implication that by the time Jude’s seal is broken by the working of the lawlessness revealed in the church (the apostasy) by reason of the abandonment of the Lord’s covenant, certain individuals “preserved in Christ” are already standing in the complete gospel truth. That is to say, that by the time this particular contention (v.3) against the antichrist begins, all of God’s commandments have been revealed, received and performed by the church. Thus, instead of: “contend earnestly for the faith once given to the saints”, the more precise wording should be “contend for the faith *once for all time* given to the saints.” The same wording is found in Hebrews 10:10; “By the which will we

are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*.” The image of a perfect and efficient sacrifice that lacks nothing else for the necessary atonement for our sins is inherent in the phrase, “once for all,” the same wording as found in Jude verse 3. Therefore, there are no more apostolic tenets to submit to the church for all have been faithfully delivered to the saints for all time. The law of Christ demands no more from the NT Christian (Gal. 6: 2)! Whosoever possesses the complete gospel truth, to them, death has been swallowed up in victory!

Jude expresses a great danger of being led astray by false teachers that crept in disguised as faithful brethren. Jude says they “crept in unawares” but not in description of outsiders, but of the faithful that became disloyal to the apostolic teachings by rejecting certain of God’s commands, specifically, they denied the principle of authority and government (1 Cor. 11: 3; 2Pet. 2: 10). Not only did they err in the discerning of the word but substituted lies in place of the truth. This interpretation coincides with John’s description of the antichrist’s works when he said the following: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” 1 Jn. 2:19. “They went out from us” does not mean that they physically walked out of a geographic place. It means that they ceased to continue in the traditions of the apostles and therefore “went out from them”. They continued to call themselves Christians but denied the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11), thus the term “antichrist”.

According to Jude, the sin introduced by false teachers caused the church to rebel against the established church government (v. 8), this a reference to church order. This characteristic indicates that they deny the authority or dominion established in the church and speak evil presumptuously against “dignities”, a term that applies by implication to the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Reina Valera Spanish Version translates “dignities” as “higher powers”. In the ecclesiastical order of the Church the apostles are first (1 Cor. 12:28). Another Bible passage that uses the expression “higher powers” is found in Romans 13:1. The apostles serve as spiritual magistrates with power to punish evildoers (Matt. 5:25; Lk. 12:58). Jude gives us a short description of the apostate’s characteristics to help identify them utilizing the Old Testament as a witness of their licentiousness and condemnation. The style, nature, and depictions afforded us in Jude, place the appropriate time of fulfillment of this letter at the end times, depicted by the Spirit as the “harvest” (judgment)! This means that the epistle of Jude must be eschatological in nature. Another critical and striking point is that Jude brings the Dispensation of Grace to a close and ushers in the Dispensation of Judgment, otherwise known as *The Day of the Lord*.

The church’s sin corresponds to that of sexual immorality, but in a spiritual sense. This is the same type of immoral perversion committed by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorra (v.6-7), cities that God destroyed due to their nefarious lifestyle. This is the same conduct the church follows when allowing disorder in the assembly. Certain practices that can be considered “against nature” are being practiced in the worship service. Specifically, the woman rejects the covering of 1 Corinthians 11 and is allowed to speak in the assembly when divided, even though the church has no authorization to divide the assembly when it comes together to edify. Church leader’s reasoning is that when its members are classified into separate groups according to age or proportion of knowledge, there is no more assembly, thus the woman has permission to teach. Meanwhile, the New Testament pattern disallows this capricious preference. The church must

come together into one place for edification (1 Cor. 14:23, 26). Any practice that undermines the apostolic command or the established precedence that serves to preserve the established order of worship, automatically equates the rejection of Christ's doctrine and the forfeiting of fellowship with the Father and the Son (2 Jn. 9-11).

The consequences of accepting the legitimate application of Jude's letter only affords the reader with bitter impressions. One reason is because Jude speaks of an inevitable universal apostasy, first prophesied by Peter, and finally consummated by Jude's faithful testimony that the church's once faithful preachers have turned to folly and converted the grace of God (the gospel doctrine) into lasciviousness. This apostasy would be a sure sign of the presence of the antichrist in the church and more importantly, an unequivocal sign of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in his Second Coming (2 Thess. 2:3). Another reason is that Jude presents no hope of salvation for those that adamantly reject the gospel of salvation, and those that can be saved must be seized with difficulty from the fiery indignation of the Lord (vs. 22-23). Therefore, it is impractical that this letter could apply to the church in the early gospel era.

Jude does what the Lord did in John 2: 14-17. Jesus cleansed the temple of those that defiled it with their practices, which serves as an example of what Jesus would do at his Second Coming, 2 Thess. 2: 3-8. Jesus would purge the temple (church/kingdom) of all things that offend, (Psa. 101:8; Prov. 20: 26; Matt. 13: 41-42, 1 Joh. 3: 8; Jude 1: 24; Rev. 21: 27; 22: 14-16). This epistle functions as the threshold to the eschaton as the scourge that the Lord took in his hand to rebuke the proud, also serves to chastise the nations before those that are found worthy can be accepted as sons and daughters of the Most High; (Heb. 12: 5-8; Jms. 1: 12).

In conclusion, it is my opinion that this epistle stands as a public rebuke against the church, including all creation itself for abandoning the immutable course of nature and the principle dealing with headship and the artificial covering that would "set man's conversation aright," as it is written, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God." Psa. 50:23

\*The following references relate to the Antilegomena books of the New Testament canon.

1. Clark's Commentary. Introduction to second Peter, Thess. – Rev., pg. 790.
2. Fathers Ante-Nicene, v. 10, pg. 212. Recently discovered addition to early Christian literature, Apocalypses, and Romances, The Revelation of Peter, Introduction.
3. NT Light of Modern Research, pg. 32. The Origin of the NT.
4. Derickson, Notes on Theology (Study Book); pg. 53. The Scriptures, Canonicity, New Testament Guidelines.
5. Vincent—NT Word Studies—Vol. 3&4, pg. 916. Word Studies Vol. 4, Epistle to the Hebrews, Intro.