

**PAUL'S OPPONENTS AND VIEWS OF WOMEN IN
1 CORINTHIANS**

A Thesis Submitted to Middlesex University in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Theology

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April 2021

Abstract

Greg Cowland, Paul's Opponents and Views of Women in 1 Corinthians, Master of Theology (MTh), Middlesex University/London School of Theology, 2021.

This thesis will aim to explore the identity of Paul's opponents in Corinth and seek to prove that they consisted of a group of Jewish-Christians. Different aspects of Paul's styles of writing will be highlighted to support this claim. The thesis will then go on to question, exegete and re-interpret key scriptures concerning women within the Corinthian letter. Finally, Paul's views, and relationships with women will be addressed.

To determine the identity of Paul's opponents, a methodological approach, as outlined by J.L. Sumney, will be undertaken. The possible identities of certain groups named in 1 Corinthians 1:14 will be discussed and rejected, leading to the postulation that Paul's opponents had Jewish origins. To support this, a theory of a Judaistic group following Paul's missionary trail will be highlighted, as will the similarities in Paul's defence and attack styles in both 1 and 2 Corinthians.

Paul will be shown to have a positive view of women, to value them as his co-workers, and to endorse them to have a voice and spiritual identity within the church.

The women passages (11:2-16, 14:34-35) of 1 Corinthians will then be discussed and exegeted with consideration of B.W. Winter's suggestions of the 'New Women' movement in the Roman Empire. The style of *prosopopoeia* within letter writing will be introduced and suggested to be a factor within the modern reader's understanding of the context of Paul's letters. This will be supported by works by S.K. Stowers. Finally, Paul's relation to women as his 'co-workers' and his positive views of them elsewhere in the letter will be addressed.

The Thesis will conclude that the key 'women passages' were not the thoughts or the theology of Paul himself, but were instead instances where the apostle quoted his opponent's arguments, which he went on to refute.

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Paul's Opponents and Views of Women in 1 Corinthians

Introduction – Framing the Problem

The 'women passages' of 1 Corinthians (11:2-16 and 14:34-35) have historically proved notoriously difficult to exegete and have led to accusations of sexism against the Christian faith from its early stages, leading to some identifying the apostle Paul as an advocate of women's suppression and patriarchal domination.¹ Interpretations of Paul's words have been disastrous for women in certain areas of the world during the past two millennia. Fiorenza is correct when she states that 'throughout history... the Bible has been used to keep women in subjection and to hinder their emancipation.'² From women being disallowed any leadership roles within certain churches to complete oratory silence placed on them in others, women have been downgraded and devalued, and some of the justification for these actions stem from the 1 Corinthians 'women passages.'

However, the question must be asked, 'Were the words found in the women sections of 1 Corinthians indicative of Paul's views?' The suggestion that Paul was a domineering degrader of women, based solely on these two small sections of the letter, seems unlikely when the rest of the letter is brought into focus. To imply that Paul was anti-women would be to ignore the themes of 'unity in the body' and 'value of every member' that feature in 1 Corinthians (Chapters 12-14). Arguments that Paul placed a total silence on women, based on 14:34-35, clearly contradict his words in 11:11 and 7:4 regarding his views on the status of women.³ Indeed, as Peppiatt states, 'traditional explanations (i.e., that Paul meant to subordinate women) are riddled with inconsistencies when read with the correspondence as a

¹ See G Beattie, *Women and Marriage in Paul and His Early Interpreters*, London: T&T Clark, 2005, 54. AC Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990, 155.

² ES Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, London: SCM, 1983, 11.

³ DW Odell-Scott, 'Editorial Dilemma: The Interpolation of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 in the Western Manuscripts of D, G and 88,' *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 30.2 (2000) 68-74, citing 68.

whole and with Paul's other letters.'⁴ However, due to traditional exegesis of the 'women passages,' people continue to hear Paul's voice as one of oppression.⁵

Furthermore, if Galatians 3:28 (which contains an equalising statement between men and women) was also written by Paul, how can it be maintained that he was a subjugator of women? To understand these difficult inconsistencies, it is imperative to realise that the historical context is key when interpreting these verses. To understand Paul's views and arguments, one must first realise that they are dependent upon, and can only be understood in the light of, the identity of those to whom he was writing. Therefore, a re-examination of the letter is needed to make sense of these texts, especially since Paul's various statements seem contradictory.

To understand the situation behind the letter, it is essential to ascertain exactly to whom Paul was writing. Who were his opponents in Corinth? The identity of these opponents has been historically difficult to prove, with many theories suggested since the formation of the early Church. That Paul had opponents in 1 Corinthians cannot be in doubt (4:3-5, 18-19, 9:3). Early views on this subject led Calvin to postulate that polemics found in 2 Corinthians were simply an appendix to those found in 1 Corinthians. He remarked, 'during Paul's absence false apostles had crept in... they looked upon Paul's simplicity with contempt.'⁶

However, since the nineteenth-century, a new hypothesis has emerged that suggests the polemics of 2 Corinthians should be viewed as the climax of the disputes found in 1 Corinthians, not as an appendix to them.⁷ Sumney highlights that the problem of identifying the opponents is complicated, with no fewer than thirteen different proposals catalogued in 2 Corinthians. He suggests that most commentators have not attempted to use proper methods for identifying data when assessing the significance of evidence, adding, 'no substantial progress can be made on the question of the identity of Paul's opponents without serious

⁴ L Peppiatt, *Women and Worship at Corinth*, Eugene: Cascade, 2015, 109.

⁵ N Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995, 55.

⁶ J Calvin, 'Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians: Vol 1,' (15/05/2016, <http://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/calcom39/cache/calcom39.pdf>), citing 25.

⁷ D Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians*, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1987, 2.

attempt to method.’⁸ It is therefore vital to investigate the identity of Paul’s opponents in Corinth while attempting to adhere to proposed methodological guidelines, in this case, those of Sumney. Therefore, the following questions will be addressed:

- 1) Who were Paul’s opponents in 1 Corinthians?
- 2) Does the exegesis of key verses in 1 Corinthians offer any more insight?
- 3) Were they specifically Corinthian opponents or is there any evidence of them in Paul’s other Epistles?

Identifying Paul’s opponents has many values. To understand that Paul had opponents allows the reader to also realise that some of the issues Paul addressed in the letter were directly in relation to the *Sitz im Leben* in Corinth, and therefore some would have involved situations that these opponents were entangled in. Furthermore, having an appreciation of the context of notoriously difficult passages in 1 Corinthians is essential for the modern reader and exegete. It also provides a platform to re-evaluate the apostle and his views on certain aspects of ecclesial life, particularly his understanding on the position and importance of women. Therefore, the intention of this thesis is to reconstruct and explore the identity of Paul’s opponents and readdress key passages concerning women, in the light of the findings.

⁸ JL Sumney, *Identifying Paul’s Opponents*: Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 40, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990, 9-10.

1. Paul's Opponents

1.1 Who Were Paul's Opponents in 1 Corinthians?

Sumney highlights that in the first stage of the methodological approach, the problem of dealing with reconstructions of the history of early Christianity should be considered. Two specific questions emerge:

- 1) Can we suppose Paul faced a single front of opposition in the churches he wrote to?
- 2) What bearing does the possibility that Paul misunderstood his opponents have on the process of identifying those opponents from his letter?⁹

Sumney suggests that many authors allow their presupposed reconstructions of 1 Corinthians to determine the identity of the opponents, but the reconstruction can only, at best, present a genuine possibility.¹⁰ Historically, speculation over the situation at Corinth has led to postulations from scholars that are somewhat determined by what they have brought to the text, rather than what they have learned from it.¹¹ These are valid points, as any exegesis of the text can only lead one to surmise what the evidence seems to be leading to. Therefore, although one could say Paul's opponents in 1 Corinthians may be the same as those in 2 Corinthians, it is not possible to state that with total and undeniable proof. However, the question must be asked, 'What if the primary text seems to contradict itself?'¹² (1 Cor 11:2-6 vs 14:34). Should this not lead to deeper research, thus causing the need to formulate a reconstruction? How can sense be made of the text without doing this? Indeed, how is it possible to understand Paul's theological intentions of writing the letter if the letter is not considered within its original context?

⁹ Sumney, *Identifying*, 13-14.

¹⁰ JL Sumney, *Identifying*, 81.

¹¹ JC Hurd Jr., *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, Macon: Mercer University, 1983, 107.

¹² Paul states in 14:34 that 'women should remain silent in the churches.' However, in 11:5, he discusses how women should act when they speak within the services.

In fact, we have a good deal of information already to hand about the Corinthian situation and the doctrinal beliefs of Paul's opponents, precisely through the letter he writes in response. His rejection of some of the Corinthians' behaviours and statements is exactly what enables the reader to reconstruct the situation at hand and hypothesise the identity of the opponents. Essentially, the scenarios that Paul argues against are the biggest clue to the identity of his opponents.¹³

Barclay states that 'unless we have strong evidence to suggest that Paul is responding to more than one type of opponent, we should assume that a single object is in view.'¹⁴ Key verses suggest that there may have been a faction opposing Paul (1:10-14, 4:3, 9:3, etc.). These verses have led to a flurry of suggestions as to the identity of Paul's opponents, each of which must be considered.

1.1.1 Social Party

One of the main scholars who championed the view that there were no specific factions in Corinth, only disunity and bickering between groups, was Johannes Munck. Munck's central argument was that Paul did not address factions of differing leaders, but rather bickering of members within the church who were drawn to prominent individuals, for non-theological reasons.¹⁵ Sumney agrees with this to suggest that 1 Corinthians deals with problems that arise from within the congregation, rather than with specific intruders.¹⁶

¹³ RA Horsley, 'How can some of you say that there is no Resurrection of the Dead? Spiritual Elitism in Corinth,' *Novum Testamentum*, 20 (1978) 203-231, citing 204.

¹⁴ JMG Barclay, 'Mirror Reading as a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case,' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 31 (1987) 73-93, citing 85.

¹⁵ J Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, London: SCM, 1959,137.

¹⁶ JL Sumney, 'Studying Paul's Opponents: Advances and Challenges,' In SE Porter (ed), *Paul and His Opponents*, Leiden: Brill, 2005, 7-58, citing 49.

However, that there was a specific faction opposing Paul is undoubtable. He referred to those who 'sit in judgement on me' (9:3), attacking his apostleship because he would not take payment for preaching. He defended himself against allegations that he was not a true apostle (15:9). He was apparently being accused of wrongdoing through sharing in food sacrificed to idols (10:29-30). All of these examples indicate an opposing group, whose disagreements with Paul were theologically rooted, rather than due to social circumstances.

It is true that social allegiances were being formed within the Corinthian church, which was characteristic of the Greek ambition for self-improvement. Plutarch comments on the Corinthian desire to enhance one's own social position when noting that 'like ivy rises by twining itself about a strong tree, so each of these men, by attaching himself to an older man...being gradually raised up under the shelter of his power.'¹⁷ However, the allegiances Paul was referring to did not so much concern social connections but were instead based on theological importance. Indeed, Paul made no mention of social standing. The list of 4:8-13, which contrasted the difference between Paul and his opponents, spoke instead of spiritual identity. Furthermore, the natural progression of the text following on from where Paul had discussed the factions within the church (1:17), indicated the disharmony was based on theological viewpoints, such as the foolishness of the cross and its comparison to human wisdom (1:18-2:16).

Although Munck states that the reasoning behind the Corinthian factions was not theologically based, the instances he highlights to evidence the divisions are, in fact, all theological (such as wisdom vs folly).¹⁸ Certainly, the faction that Paul faced was primarily rooted in theological issues and should be considered thus. Indeed, if the divisions concerned social standing, either within or outside of the church, it is peculiar that Paul did not include Crispus in his 'factions' list in 1:12. Crispus was a synagogue ruler prior to becoming a Christian and would have therefore been a respected member of the community.¹⁹ Had the factions originated for the purpose of enhancing one's own status, surely Paul would have

¹⁷ Plutarch, *Moralia X: Translated by HN Fowler*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1936, 805:11, 197.

¹⁸ Munck, *Paul*, 137-138.

¹⁹ D P Ker, 'Paul And Apollos - Colleagues or Rivals?,' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 77 (2000) 75-97, citing 78.

mentioned his good relationships with this social leader in the church, rather than those who had a theological influence (Apollos and Peter).

Horrell concurs with Munck, suggesting that the conflict in Corinth regarded a social power struggle between certain members of the congregation who valued ‘worldly wisdom’ and boasted of the messages of their selected leaders.²⁰ Again, this makes no sense. If the Corinthians were following those mentioned in 1:10 and valued their messages, unless the leaders in question were promoting competition and social power, their followers would not have acted in that way. Paul certainly used his own message to oppose competition within the church, so it would be strange to think that his followers would do the exact opposite of his teachings and form their own social party. Would they not instead promote unity within the community? There is also no suggestion that either Apollos’s or Peter’s teachings promoted social superiority, therefore the ‘social struggle’ suggestion has little grounds for acceptance.

Munck is correct, however, when he suggests that the factions in the church didn’t come from the four different groups Paul named in 1:10, as if that had been the case, ‘we should expect to hear of these factions elsewhere in the letter,’²¹ and we do not. The four factions did not reappear, as the issues that arose from the Corinthian letter (7:1) concerned theological questions and misunderstandings that came from the influence of one specific group.²² Therefore, to answer Sumney’s first question of whether Paul faced a single front of opposition, in the context of 1 Corinthians, it seems most likely that he did. This leads to a further necessity to ascertain the precise identity of the opposing group.

²⁰ D Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996, 115.

²¹ Munck, *Paul*, 139.

²² Munck, *Paul*, 140.

1.1.2 *Apollos Party*

The Alexandrian Jew Apollos has been suggested as Paul's opponent²³, supported by the argument that he went to Corinth to oppose the apostle's message. As Apollos was highly eloquent and had a sophist nature that he demonstrated while preaching (Acts 18:24-25) he possessed a skill which the Corinthian's would have highly valued. In this context, Paul's attack on wisdom vs folly, (1:18-2:16), could be seen to be directed against those who despised his own simple preaching style and valued Apollos's 'superior' elaborate teaching. Horrell certainly sees the language and ideas that Paul attributed to the Corinthians as influences that stemmed from Philo's philosophical teachings, which were in turn taught by Apollos.²⁴ Munck, writing earlier, adds weight to this by suggesting that Paul had both Jews and Greeks in mind when commenting on those who strive after wisdom (1:18), which highlights that the argument was directed at the Alexandrian Jew Apollos.²⁵

Fee, however, refutes the Apollos' party view, insightfully noting that Paul admitted that Apollos's work was not in competition with his own, but rather a complement. (3:5-9).²⁶ Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest that Apollos was striving after a worldly wisdom, akin to the Greeks.²⁷ Paul seemed to value Apollos, and spoke positively about him in 1 Corinthians, considering him a 'fellow worker in the gospel' (3:6-8, 4:1).²⁸ Furthermore, Paul himself urged Apollos to return to the Corinthians to visit them (16:12), which he would not have done if Apollos was spreading a message detrimental to his own gospel. All of these points indicate that Apollos was not seen by Paul as a competitor and therefore he cannot be the source behind the opposition that Paul faced in Corinth.

²³ By scholars such as Munck and Weiss. See Horrell, *Social*, 112, for this.

²⁴ Horrell, *Social*, 112.

²⁵ Munck, *Paul*, 148.

²⁶ GD, Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2014, 58.

²⁷ Munck, *Paul*, 144.

²⁸ FC Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011, 274.

1.1.3 Peter Party

The final traditional suggestion is that Paul's opposition in Corinth was formed of Jewish-Christians who adhered to the apostle Peter and preached a message of Judaistic Law into the church. Baur was one of the first to formulate this, distinguishing two types of early Christianity, the Law-obedient Jewish-Christians led by Peter, and the Law-free Gentile-Christians led by Paul.²⁹ In fact, Baur went further to suggest a fundamental opposition between the factions that essentially formed two groups: one made of Paul and Apollos, who promoted Gentile Christianity whilst the other consisted of Peter who taught a Jewish Christianity. According to Baur, the 'Christ party' was a Jewish-Christian group who followed Peter whilst emphasising a direct relationship to the historical Jesus through the original apostles whom Christ had appointed.³⁰ Essentially, for Baur, evidence of the two factions opposing one another was obvious, as the name of Peter stood in natural opposition to Paul.³¹ These groups were largely formed due to the heritage of the followers. Within the Peter-Christ party, the Jewish-Christians considered themselves the *bona fide* Christians, as they could identify themselves with Christ in a special manner. Christ had come to the Jews in the first place and had been promised to them alone, therefore perhaps also to them alone did he truly belong after his death.³² 'They called themselves the Peter party, Baur suggests, because Peter held the primacy among the Jewish apostles, but the Christ party because they relied on the direct connection with Christ, and on this account, they wouldn't acknowledge Paul as an apostle.'³³

Baur read 1 Corinthians 1:11-12 as a basic framework for understanding a conflict between Christian Gentiles and Jews, represented by Paul and Peter respectively, which then dominated the rest of his exegesis of the New Testament. For example, he suggested that as Paul first mentioned himself and Apollos, then Peter and Christ (1:12), this was suggestive of a direct conflict between followers of Paul and Apollos vs Peter and Christ.³⁴ Here, Munck's

²⁹ Georgi, *Paul*, 2.

³⁰ SJ Hafemann, 'Paul and His Interpreters Since FC Baur,' in RP Martin (ed), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993, 666-679, citing 667.

³¹ Baur, *Paul*, 270.

³² Baur, *Paul*, 275-276.

³³ Baur, *Paul*, 277.

³⁴ Baur, *Paul*, 304.

accusation that Baur exaggerates these party contrasts holds weight, as does the suggestion that Baur's presupposed reconstruction of the scenario biases his views.³⁵ In fact, due to Baur's over-reliance on his theory and consequent application of this when exegeting the New Testament epistles, by 1875 Baur argued that the authentic Paul could only be found where a conflict between Pauline and Petrine Christianity was evident. His conclusion was that only Romans, Galatians and the Corinthian letters could be considered authentically Pauline. The rest of the Epistles, for Baur, emanated from late second century documents (Pseudo-Clementine writing 'Homilies,' as well as Papias, Iraneaus, and Clement).³⁶ Thus, his theory suffers considerable damage as although these sources are valid historical documentations, the fact that they come from a century later than the time of Paul should cause doubts as to their reliability in identifying Paul's opponents. Inevitably, as time went on, scholars rightly rejected Baur's dating of the Pauline letters, although academic New Testament studies still bear traces of Baur's central idea that the New Testament was shaped by a conflict under the surface between Gentile and Jewish Christianity.³⁷

Schoeps comments, 'we realise today, in opposition to Baur, that the contrast which he suggested between Paul and the twelve, although containing some truth was still even for the earliest period an oversimplification.'³⁸ Indeed, although Baur's extreme theory has led to a total rejection of his work by some modern scholars, perhaps we should rather consider that there are elements of truth that lie among the inaccuracies. In fact, since Baur, many scholars have also formulated theories as to the opponents of Paul in Corinth, based on variants of his postulation.

WL Knox, writing in the 1930s, was one of the first scholars to take Baur's base theory on to concur that Jewish-Christians formed the opposition to Paul in 1 Corinthians. Knox, admitting that the evidence at our disposal is fragmentary, based his account of the situation on the letter itself, which he suggested 'is our only authority.'³⁹ Knox saw the basis of Paul's opposition in Corinth stemming from the apostle's anxiety to prove that the Gentiles were not

³⁵ Munck, *Paul*, 135.

³⁶ Hafemann, 'Paul,' 667.

³⁷ Hafemann, 'Paul,' 668.

³⁸ HJ Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, Philadelphia: InterVarsity, 1961, 68.

³⁹ WL Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1929, 309.

bound to obey the Jewish Law, which led to certain aspects of his teaching being misconstrued as championing ungodly liberty by Jewish-Christian opponents.⁴⁰

Paul's teaching, for Knox, 'failed to substitute for the Jewish Law any basis of morality for those who had not been educated for some considerable time in the traditions of Judaism.'⁴¹ Therefore, the Jewish-Christian opposition against Paul came from a misunderstanding of his teaching and a deep aversion with what it led to. In addition, people in the Corinthian church who manifested spiritual gifts were regarded with admiration by the rest of the congregation. However, 11:17-34 highlights that these people were of low moral conduct and were able to sin wilfully whilst having a position of dominance in the church.⁴² Paul was teaching a freedom from the Law that was inherently dangerous and there needed to be intervention to stop the misconduct of the church deepening. Furthermore, Paul might claim to be an apostle, but he could not compare with the kind of apostleship possessed by the twelve (15:9). In fact, that Paul had not claimed any support for preaching proved he was not equal to the twelve (9:1-15). Ultimately, the view of the Jewish-Christians was that Paul had no real authority and therefore the Corinthians needed emissaries from the main church to intervene.⁴³

Knox bases his theory on the two Corinthian letters as one overarching narrative, rather than two distinct writings. He sees the reasons they disparaged Paul due to his victory over them at the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) and therefore identifies them as the 'members of the circumcision' seen in Acts 15:2. This hypothesis is based on places in 2 Corinthians where Jewish-Christians are indicated (3:1, 11:13, 12:2, etc.).⁴⁴

Although Knox makes some valid observations, there are elements of his theory that show inaccuracies. For example, Knox rightly sees the topic of Paul's key arguments in 1 Corinthians (celibacy in Chapter 7 and avoiding meats sacrificed to idols in Chapter 10) as issues the Judaizers sought to attack as although they had previously been addressed at the

⁴⁰ Knox, *Paul*, 309.

⁴¹ Knox, *Paul*, 310.

⁴² Knox, *Paul*, 310.

⁴³ Knox, *Paul*, 314.

⁴⁴ Knox, *Paul*, 321.

Council of Jerusalem, Paul seemed to promote the opposition of the rulings found by the apostolic council. Yet, Knox claims, Paul did not refer to these rulings as any reference to them would be an admission of the superiority of the twelve apostles, including Peter, over Paul himself.⁴⁵ Thus Knox relies on an argument from silence or the omission of a reference to something which is not explicitly inferred in the letter itself. Furthermore, Knox reads 11:2 as a ‘sarcastic tribute to their (the Corinthians’) profession of loyalty to himself’ after which he (Paul) went on to condemn the disorders in the church.⁴⁶ Knox provides no evidence for these claims and simply relies on an assumption of Paul’s intentions in this verse. Again, although parts of Knox’s reading of the epistle have been refuted, the idea of the Jewishness of the opponents has not.

In the mid-twentieth century, CK Barrett furthered the support of Baur’s idea of Judaizing opponents with his own reconstruction of 1 Corinthians. Barrett sought to examine the references to Peter within the letter and then formulate a ‘tentative assessment of their bearing on wider issues,’ namely the nature and identity of Paul’s opponents.⁴⁷ A summary of Barrett’s observations of Paul’s references to Peter is as follows: 1:12 follows on naturally from 1:11 where Paul talked of ‘strife’ within Corinth, thus when the Corinthian church met, they were divided into parties. Paul’s reference to baptism (1:13) suggests the Corinthians aligned themselves to the evangelist under whom they had been won to the faith. 3:22 shows that no one should glory in men as they were all Christ’s. If unchecked, the natural inclination of some would have been to glory in Paul, Apollos, or Cephas. At 9:5, Peter is explicitly named, although previously Paul had named the other apostles (which naturally included Peter), therefore Peter was named because he was deemed an outstanding person in Corinth. Finally, the material in 15:5 was collected by Paul and passed on. The fact that Peter was mentioned first suggests that this was part of the tradition, and highlighted Peter’s eminence among the twelve.⁴⁸ These observations, for Barrett, led to two conclusions: the Cephas adherents were objectively related to their leader, and Peter had definitely visited Corinth with his wife (9:5).⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Knox, *Paul*, 315-316.

⁴⁶ Knox, *Paul*, 316.

⁴⁷ CK Barrett, ‘Cephas and Corinth,’ in O Betz (ed), *Abraham Unser Vater: Festschrift Für Otto Michel*, Leiden: Brill, 1-12, citing 1.

⁴⁸ Barrett, ‘Cephas,’ 3-5.

⁴⁹ Barrett, ‘Cephas,’ 5-6.

These observations, in themselves, do not suggest a Judaizing faction opposing Paul in Corinth. However, on the basis of these observations, Barrett makes further key claims. First, Barrett suggests that in 3:1-9, Paul dealt with the relationship between himself and Apollos. However, in 3:10-17, he remarks that an unmade person is trying to build on the foundations he had laid in Corinth, which is Christ himself (3:11). This situation, Barrett states, must be understood in terms of Matthew 16:18, and therefore either Peter himself or someone acting in his name, was claiming that Peter was the foundation of the church, as Christ claimed.⁵⁰ Here Barrett draws understanding from TW Manson who comments, ‘what “other foundation” would anyone think of laying? There is only one alternative so far as I know, mentioned in Matthew 16:18 where Peter is the rock on which the church is to be built.’⁵¹

Furthermore, Chapters 8-10 contain discussion of the legitimacy of certain foods, punctuated by Paul’s defence of his own apostolic rights. Similar to Knox, Barrett links this problem with the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. ‘Why then does Paul not refer to the decisions of the Council?’ Barrett asks. His conclusion states that it was the Peter party in Corinth who raised the question of why the Corinthians were not adhering to the council ruling, and Paul’s way of dealing with it was meant to be a snub. Ultimately it is no accident that the discussion of Paul’s apostleship intervenes into the topic, as on this issue Paul’s authority was being directly challenged.⁵² Barrett concludes, ‘1 Corinthians teaches us in the plainest possible terms that in Corinth there was a party, or group, which did not consider Paul as its head, adopted a Jewish-Christian standpoint, and venerated one who could undoubtedly describe himself as an apostle and Israelite (i.e., Peter).’⁵³ This group was at work in the city and although the church remained united (for now) and Paul’s influence was still evident, other influences were now at work.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Barrett, ‘Cephas,’ 6-7.

⁵¹ TW Manson, *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles*, Manchester: Manchester University, 1962, 194.

⁵² Barrett, ‘Cephas,’ 7-8.

⁵³ Barrett, ‘Cephas,’ 9.

⁵⁴ CK Barrett, ‘Christianity at Corinth,’ *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 46.2 (1964) 269-297, citing 271-272.

Recent studies on ‘the new perspective on Paul’ have brought serious doubt to any who maintain that Paul’s opponents were in some sense ‘Judaizers.’ Scholars such as Dunn and Wright bring doubts that Paul’s polemics had anything to do with the position of Paul’s opponents and suggest that there is simply no direct evidence from any of Paul’s opponents themselves to suggest an opposing Judaistic faction existed at all. The understanding of Baur on a reformation understanding of Law vs Grace which underpinned his argument has seen a shift in recent years, and Paul’s Law-and-Gospel contrast is now so seriously contested that the apostle’s understanding of the Law is currently the most debated topic among modern scholars.⁵⁵ However, although these studies are united by their common conviction concerning the non-legalistic nature of first-century Judaism and rejection of the reformation understanding of Paul’s view of the Law, these works are often at odds with one another and suffer as much from internal dissent as they do from external critique. Despite all the points argued against Baur *et al* regarding the nature of Paul’s opponents, no consensus has yet been reached concerning the reasons why Paul actually rejected the ‘works of the Law.’ In fact, ‘a growing number of studies continue to argue that the ‘paradigm shift’ in Pauline studies has been misguided and there is more of Paul in Luther (and the reformation views) than many twentieth-century scholars are inclined to allow.’ Indeed, as Hafemann rightly states, the positive result of searching for the identity and nature of Paul’s opponents is that it drives interpreters back to the primary text itself.⁵⁶

Therefore, although the reconstructions of Baur *et al* come with weaknesses, they may still give valuable insights into the Corinthian situation; and back to the primary text of the letter, we must go, in order to ascertain the issues that lie therein and finally arrive at a postulation as to the identity of Paul’s opponents. Indeed, by asking the question, ‘What do we know from the letter?’, it is my intention to provide evidence for the suggestion that the Jewish-Christian opponents Paul faced in 2 Corinthians were already within the church in 1 Corinthians. Furthermore, I seek to highlight that these opponents had, by the writing of 1 Corinthians, already begun to influence the Corinthian church by sowing discord against Paul’s apostleship, message and mission.

⁵⁵ Hafemann, ‘Paul,’ 671. For ‘New Perspective’ arguments see JDG Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2005. NT Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, London: SPCK, 2013.

⁵⁶ Hafemann, ‘Paul,’ 674.

1.1.4 What Do We Know from the Letter of 1 Corinthians?

Although the situation at Corinth is by no means clear, there are some firm statements we can make regarding the opposition that Paul faced:

A) Peter had visited Corinth at some point.

Horrell denies evidence of Judaizing activity in Corinth due to the fact that there is no mention of any Petrine theology in the letter.⁵⁷ However, although one could say that there is no explicit evidence of Petrine theology in Corinth, it is certainly possible that Peter had been present in the city at some point. The very fact that Paul makes mention of Peter concerning ‘quarrels’ (1:12) and defends his own rights as an apostle for the financial support from preaching (9:5-6), as opposed to Peter, suggests that not only was Peter known to the Corinthians but had attended Corinth at some point, along with his wife and therefore might have had either a direct or indirect influence on the Corinthians. Indeed, not only had Peter been present in Corinth but it seems that he was highly revered as an apostle by some members of the church.

Barrett, referring to 15:3-11, comments that Peter was singled out by Paul (as he was in 9:5) as some in Corinth viewed him as ‘an outstanding representative of the apostolic group.’ Effectively, the fact that Paul personally named Peter, in and above ‘the other apostles and the Lord’s brothers’ (9:5) and ‘the twelve’ (15:5), highlights that Peter must have had some personal standing and reverence in Corinth which led to some sort of competition with Paul in the minds of some of the congregation.⁵⁸

B) There was a ‘group’ or ‘faction’ who claimed adherence to Peter as their leader.

The claims that ‘I am of Cephas’ (1:12) provide clear evidence that some of the congregation saw themselves aligned to the name and eminence of Peter as their apostle. The objective relationship between leader and congregant possibly came in the context of whoever had led the person to Christ, baptised them, or both. That Paul saw people claiming allegiance to a

⁵⁷ Horrell, *Social*, 112.

⁵⁸ Barrett, ‘Cephas,’ 4.

leader as divisive brings light as to the reason why Paul was thankful that he hadn't baptised more members of the church himself (1:13-16).⁵⁹

C) Paul was being directly opposed on his title as an apostle.

That Paul was being 'judged' by some from within the congregation in 1 Corinthians can be in no doubt (4:3-5, 9:3, 10:29-30). Fee points out that Paul's use of the term 'judged' in 4:3 did not allude to a verdict that had been reached, but more to a judicial inquiry that assessed him on criteria important to some in the Corinthian ranks. Paul responded that his own criterion was faithfulness to a trust committed by God alone, and therefore only the one who gave this trust to him was able to judge him.⁶⁰ What was the nature of the group which was attacking Paul? The answer to this question can be tentatively suggested when we consider the topics of the issues on which he was being confronted.

D) Many points on the attack on Paul stemmed from predominantly Judaistic issues and argumentation.

Manson insightfully suggests

In each topic (of 1 Corinthians) we must try and get behind Paul's answer to questions raised in Corinth to the minds of those who put the questions to discover what purpose lay behind the enquiry... this will assist us to discover how the questions and Paul's answers square with Jewish, Jewish-Christian, and Gentile sentiments and convictions.⁶¹

When assessing the letter, it is noticeable that there is overwhelming evidence to support the fact that Paul responded to issues that were dominated by areas of importance to a Judaistic context. Indeed, it is through the basis of understanding that many of the questions raised to Paul suggest the identity of those raising them that might strongly indicate a Christian-Jewish group.

⁵⁹ Barrett, 'Cephas,' 5.

⁶⁰ Fee, *Corinthians*, 175.

⁶¹ Manson, *Studies*, 192.

Paul's structure within the writing of 1 Corinthians includes four main elements: wisdom, sexuality, worship, and revelation.⁶² This outline has a close affinity with the Jewish moral teachings of Paul's day.⁶³ The Testament of Judah⁶⁴ points to wisdom about sexuality when it states, 'guard yourself... against sexual promiscuity and love of money... for these things distance you from the law of God... My children, love of money leads to idolatry.'⁶⁵ The Sibylline Oracles⁶⁶ speak of worship and revelation, 'you do not worship, neither fear your God, but vainly go astray and bow the knee to serpents... and idols... you forget the judgement of the immortal saviour who made the heavens and earth.'⁶⁷

This has led Ciampa to support the contention that Paul's ethics in 1 Corinthians are best read in line with Jewish moral teachings.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Ciampa suggests that the Old Testament and Jewish sources are the appropriate places to look for the origin of Paul's instructions to the Corinthians, as the Jewish writings were the lens through which Paul perceived the relevance of scriptures to the Corinthians' problems.⁶⁹

The Sibylline Oracles, Ciampa notes, should be read in the context of the promise of a renewed holy race that fully honours God's Temple. Intriguingly, commentators have linked Paul's allusion to the 'field and building' in 1 Corinthians 3 with Solomon's Temple in Jewish history. The connection between the illustrations of fields and buildings becomes easier to understand when compared with allusions spoken of both in the Old Testament. In

⁶² This pattern also occurs in Eph 4:1-30, 4:30-5:17, Col 3:1-17, and Tit 1-2.

⁶³ RE Ciampa, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Nottingham: Apollos, 2010, 26-27.

⁶⁴ Kee dates The Testament of Judah (part of the larger Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs) which are suggested to be 'final utterances of the twelve sons of Jacob' to 150BC. He suggests the provenance is Syrian. However, Vanderkam adds 'it is likely that The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is a Jewish work.' For more on this discussion see HC Kee, 'Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs,' In JH Charlesworth (ed), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Volume One*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983, 775-829, 778. JC Vanderkam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2001, 100-102.

⁶⁵ Kee, 'Testament,' 18.1-19.1, 800.

⁶⁶ Vanderkam dates these oracles which 'in manifold ways... tell of certain past history' to mid-second century BC, suggesting this third oracle is the 'oldest Jewish material in this... assorted collection of texts.' For more on this discussion see Vanderkam, *Judaism*, 107-110.

⁶⁷ JJ Collins, 'Sibylline Oracles,' In JH Charlesworth (ed), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Volume One*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983, 3:29-35, 317-473, 362.

⁶⁸ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 28.

⁶⁹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 36.

the scriptures, the Garden of Eden (field) was equated with a Temple (building) and spoke of future restoration.⁷⁰ Supporting Barrett's theory that Paul was referring to either Peter, or someone acting in his name, when writing of the person who 'was building on his foundations' (3:11),⁷¹ this link would have provided Paul with an ideal illustration that his gospel was the planted field, which had been ordained by God, and now someone else was building upon.

The assertion by Paul that 'no one lay any foundation than that which is laid, which is Christ' (3:11) is the one piece of evidence that Munck accepts as reasonable to suggest Judaizing activity in Corinth. He suggests that Paul constructed the argument of this passage to correct his opponents, who misinterpreted Jesus's words (Matthew 16:18). Paul stressed that it is Christ, and not Peter, who is the foundation of the church. Indeed, this view presupposed that those who acknowledged Peter as their teacher had misinterpreted the passage about Peter as the 'rock.'⁷² Furthermore, the only other place in Scripture where a 'foundation of a building is laid upon gold, silver, and precious stones' speaks of Solomon's Temple (1 Kgs 6:20-35, 1 Chr 29:2).

Paul also referred to himself as a 'wise master builder' (3:10), which echoed the same words used in Exodus 35:31-32.⁷³ The two words 'wise' and 'builder' can also be found in combination in Isaiah 3:3, which highlights wisdom and judgement in relation to God's leaders.⁷⁴ All of these examples highlight Paul's intentional Jewish connection behind using the 'field and building' allusions, which suggest a Judaistic group lay in view.

Furthermore, many scholars read Chapter 8 in the context of Jewish tradition in the first century, commenting, 'it is becoming increasingly clear that... Jewish theology... offers the most convincing background and most helpful elucidation for the Corinthian situation that

⁷⁰ GK Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, Westmont: InterVarsity, 2004, 246.

⁷¹ Barrett, 'Cephas,' 6-7.

⁷² Munck, *Paul*, 142.

⁷³ Beale, *Temple*, 247.

⁷⁴ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 152.

Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians.’⁷⁵ However, scholars disagree on whether this had roots in ancient traditional or Hellenistic Jewish culture.

Therefore, by linking the truths of ‘what we know’ together, we can make the following firm statements: There was a group in Corinth who claimed allegiance to Peter as their ‘apostle.’ Peter had, at some point, possibly visited Corinth and was highly revered there. Paul was under attack for his function and title as an apostle. Finally, much of the criticism Paul faced stemmed from a Judaistic understanding of the Torah and how that should manifest in society. All of these examples found in 1 Corinthians highlight the undercurrent of Jewish ideology that lay behind Paul’s letter.

It is possible, of course, that a Jewish writer like Paul would use Jewish references and themes to Gentiles who have no notion of Judaism. However, knowing Paul’s propensity to use images and ideas that he has in common with his readers (such as the allusions to the games when writing to the Corinthians), it is much more likely that he is suiting his argument to the character of his readers and opponents.

1.1.5 Postulation

Acts 15 testifies that Paul had an encounter with a group of Jewish-Christians, whose mission entailed travelling from ‘Judea to Antioch’ in order to teach believers, ‘unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved’ (Acts 15:1). This brought Paul in sharp dispute with them and precipitated his travels to Jerusalem to ask the apostles and elders about this matter. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they found a similar group, possibly linked to the travelling Judaistic-Christians, who were part of the inner council and reaffirmed the need for Christians to be circumcised (15:5). Therefore, there was an opposition of parties in questions relating to the mission to the Gentiles and the

⁷⁵ RA Horsley, ‘Consciousness and Freedom Among the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 8-10,’ *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 40.4 (1978) 574-589, citing 575. See also Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 373.

practices to be adopted by them.⁷⁶ These questions were discussed at the Council and the subsequent ruling involved a letter to the Gentiles that they should abstain from food polluted to idols, from sexual immorality, and from the meat of strangled animals and blood (15:29). However, on the matter of circumcision, the ruling was that this was a burden to which the Gentiles should not be subjected.

Schoeps, who views the apostolic decree (Acts 15:20, 28) as a compromise of the Jerusalem Council, comments that it should be regarded as a Jewish-Christian version of a Noachide minimum obligation of the Law.⁷⁷ He notes that, in a ritualistic sense, the decree took Mosaic requirements from Leviticus 17-18 and set them in the same order as found in the Old Testament book. The other requirements found in Leviticus 17-18 (the prohibition of blasphemy, robbery, blood-shedding, and the positive command of justice) were omitted from the decree, doubtless because they were not controversial, and their recognition was taken for granted.⁷⁸

Many commentators suggest that Paul's opposition in Corinth stemmed from these same Judaizers found in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:5) with whom Paul was engaged in bitter and far-reaching strife.⁷⁹ They had received from Jerusalem some general commission to preach the gospel on their travels and could claim in some loose sense to be apostles.⁸⁰ Their claim of 'I am of Cephas' (1:12) suggests that the group adhered to and made use of Peter's name,⁸¹ although this does not infer that Peter himself was directly involved with the group. Indeed, Peter was only mentioned twice in connection with divisions, which somewhat weakens any suggestion of his involvement in the Corinthian opposition. Had Peter been directly involved with Paul's opponents, there would have been evidence of a resulting response from Paul, such as his disagreement with Peter in Galatians 2:11-14, but there is not.⁸²

⁷⁶ Schoeps, *Apostle*, 64.

⁷⁷ Schoeps, *Apostle*, 66.

⁷⁸ Schoeps, *Apostle*, 66-67.

⁷⁹ See Schoeps, *Apostle*, 66-69. Manson, *Studies*, 191-194. Knox, *Paul*, 309-325. Barrett, 'Christianity,' 271-275.

⁸⁰ Knox, *Paul*, 311.

⁸¹ Barrett, 'Christianity,' 273.

⁸² Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 79.

However, the Judaizing group, using Peter's name, readily accepted the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem, and on their arrival in Corinth they were naturally shocked at the disorders that opposed the rulings and found much to criticise (i.e., what they viewed as a perversion of the Gospel through Paul's apparent teachings on Christian liberty), therefore, they naturally felt it their duty to attempt to bring about a change.⁸³

Therefore, the main hint that a Jewish-Christian group lay behind the criticism of Paul is observed from the contents of the letter itself (Chapters 7-10), and their relation to these rulings of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15.⁸⁴ In these chapters, Paul was challenged as to his teachings on all of the three main topics that were discussed and ruled upon in Acts 15. He responded to situations regarding sexual immorality in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 and Chapter 7, to food sacrificed to idols in 10:14-33, and to meat of strangled animals in 10:25-26. That all three of the main topics that arose in the Council of Jerusalem were used to attack Paul's apostleship is highly suggestive that the questioning of his conduct arose from some of those linked with the council itself. Schoeps comments that 'the fact that all three points raised and ruled on in Jerusalem were occurring in Corinth would give the Judaizers from Acts 15:1-2 or 5 ammunition to attack Paul's apostleship before James and Peter, especially as Paul contradicts their rulings in some of the matters.'⁸⁵

Furthermore, Paul punctuated the response to his teaching on the legitimacy of these issues with defences of his own apostleship and his apostolic rights. Indeed, the inclusion of Paul's defence evidently suggests that he faced more than mere innocent questions from the Corinthians; rather, he once again had to reply to 'those who sit in judgement on me' (9:3). For Paul, however, as the letter included 'requirements' that 'you would do well to avoid,' it denoted guidance and advice given in grace, rather than firm restrictions based on Law. If

⁸³ Knox, *Paul*, 312-313.

⁸⁴ Bockmuehl suggests that in 1 Corinthians 5-10... Paul's practical exhortation clearly parallels the *halakic* concerns of Acts 15. See M Bockmuehl, 'The Noachide Commandments and the New Testament Ethics: With Special Reference to Acts 15 and Pauline *Halakah*,' *Revere Biblique*, 102.1 (1995) 72-101, citing 96.

⁸⁵ Schoeps, *Apostle*, 64.

this is true, it is not surprising that Paul did not seem to affirm the advice given in the letter from Jerusalem, but instead gave his own opinion on the matter.⁸⁶

One must assume that Paul taught a liberty to eat meat ‘sold in the market’ (10:25) to the Corinthians when founding the church. Jews themselves found food sacrificed to idols abhorrent, as Justin Martyr noted when agreeing with Trypho, ‘those who confess Jesus and eat meat sacrificed to idols’ were ‘not teaching his doctrines, but those of the spirit of error.’⁸⁷ The Judaizers were shocked by this scandal, attacking Paul as they considered his teaching and conduct did not reach the standards of piety set out in Jerusalem.⁸⁸ Therefore, in Chapter 8, regarding the appropriate nature of food sacrificed to idols, Paul sarcastically commented that certain people had knowledge that others did not seem to have (8:7), i.e., those who were ‘enlightened.’ Horrell suggests that these verses (8:1-11) provide evidence that ‘the knowledge’ Paul referred to spoke of a social elite, as ‘the strong regarded their knowledge as the basis on which to defend their freedom to eat idol food.’⁸⁹ However, Ciampa rightly points out that their view of monotheism, based on the *Shema* (Deut 6:4), served as the basis for a Judaistic argument against food sacrificed to idols.⁹⁰ The suggestion that Paul was responding to Jewish-Christian claims of subverting Council rulings is evident from the insertion of the *Shema* (8:4). Paul responded by claiming that food sacrificed to idols, in his view, should be permitted as ‘no idol really exists.’ He certainly had no personal problem with the matter and later defended his own rights to eat meat sacrificed to idols (10:27-30).

In conclusion, although Baur’s postulation of an opposing Judaistic group comes with obvious problems, as stated above, there is ample evidence to suggest that one should not throw out his whole theory as a result. Dahl suggests that reconstruction is a final step that can safeguard against anachronism if there is a demonstration that the interpreter’s view can fit into the situation at hand. Through this, it is possible to link the opposition to a particular

⁸⁶ Schoeps, *Apostle*, 64.

⁸⁷ Justin Martyr, ‘Dialogue with Trypho,’ (11/02/2016, http://www.theologynetwork.org/Media/PDF/Justin_Martyr-Dialogue_with_Trypho.pdf), citing 35.1-2.

⁸⁸ Knox, *Paul*, 321.

⁸⁹ Horrell, *Social*, 122.

⁹⁰ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 374.

group (i.e., Judaizers), but characteristics for the group must not be imported if not warranted by the letter.⁹¹

However, by reconstructing the situation at Corinth, there do seem to be issues that point to the Judaizers of Acts 15, as Stowers, Knox, *et al* suggest. Indeed, although it is true that most commentators do not hold Baur's position anymore and suggest that there was no Judaizing activity in 1 Corinthians, it is also true that some of the details in the text that suggested his position have not gone away. Furthermore, recent commentators are still having the issue of struggling with the Jewishness we find in this letter. By reconstructing the letter of 1 Corinthians, and comparing it with 2 Corinthians, it is evident that there are, in fact, many points that suggest Judaizing activity within the first letter.

1.2 Links Between 1 and 2 Corinthians

One main argument for the Judaizing theory comes from the similarities that can be found between 1 and 2 Corinthians. By reconstructing the two letters, we find a progression of the issues contained within the first letter to the second. If 1 Corinthians was the second step in a four-letter progression (the first lost letter, 1 Corinthians, the severe letter, 2 Corinthians), one can view an escalation in Paul's rebuke to his opponents.

It is impossible to state what was in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 5:9), but 1 Corinthians itself shows glimpses of the debate with Paul's opponents, as discussed above. The next letter (the 'severe letter' - 2 Cor 2:2-4), again cannot be commented upon, only to say that it contained an escalation of the events at Corinth. Finally, the four-letter progression culminated in 2 Corinthians, demonstrated in Paul's hostility evident in Chapters 10-13. Thus, we see a worsening of the situation throughout the letters. Indeed, by the culmination of 2 Corinthians, the situation had worsened to the point where Paul's anger led to him

⁹¹ NA Dahl, 'Paul and the Church at Corinth,' in WR Farmer (ed), *Christianity, History and Interpretation*, London: Cambridge University, 1967, 313-336, citing 317-318.

labelling the opponents as false apostles, deceitful workmen, and workers of Satan (11:14-15). Certainly, there are themes that suggest the Jewish-Christian opponents of 2 Corinthians are the same that can be found in 1 Corinthians.

1. Paul was attacked for the same situations in both letters: In 2 Corinthians 11:7-9, Paul defended himself against the Judaizers' accusation that he would not accept finances for preaching. In 1 Corinthians 9:1-18, he was also accused of the same thing. In 2 Corinthians 11:5-6, he defended the fact that he was not a trained speaker, unlike the 'Super Apostles'. In 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, he also defended his own speaking style against a similar attack. In 2 Corinthians 10:10, Paul was attacked for his meek character. In 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, he defended himself against the same charge, giving the reasoning behind this defence in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.
2. He used the same phraseology in both letters: In 2 Corinthians 11:19, Paul noted that the Corinthians gladly put up with fools since they are 'so wise'. In 1 Corinthians 4:10, he made the same declaration. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 and 12:10, he used a tribulation list to defend his actions and concomitantly attack the opponents. In 1 Corinthians 4:11-13, he used the same tactic with a similar tribulation list.
3. He attacked the opponents for the same errors in both letters: In 2 Corinthians 10:15, Paul insinuated that the Judaizers were boasting of work done by others that they were now building upon. In 1 Corinthians 3:10, he also remarked that someone else was 'building' upon his own work, adding that they needed to be careful. In 2 Corinthians 10:12-13, he accused the opponents of judging themselves due to their own commendation. In 1 Corinthians 4:1-5, he also defended himself against not judging himself, although here he may not have been fully aware of what he was being accused of.
4. Further defences can be seen when reading the letters in a different way to the traditional viewpoint. 2 Corinthians 10-13 was an attack on Paul's apostleship against claims of timidity (10:1), worldly living (10:2), and poor oratory skills (10:10), etc. In 1 Corinthians 15:9, he admitted that he was the least of all the apostles. Classic reading of this verse would understand this to be Paul's self-chosen assessment. However, by reading this from the context of the Corinthians' letter written to Paul (7:1), it could equally be read as an accusation made against him by the opposition. In this way Paul was agreeing with them and stating that, yes, he was the least of all the

apostles. However, an apostle he still was, and therefore he held authority over the Corinthian situation, regardless of what ranking he had within the ‘apostolic league’. Some scholars certainly take the view that the slur of ‘abnormally born’ was likely to have originated from the Corinthians, and not from Paul himself.⁹²

More similarities could be mentioned,⁹³ but these should suffice to show the inherent probability of a single group of opponents behind both letters.

It may be pertinent here to tackle the second of Sumney’s questions, i.e., ‘What bearing does the possibility that Paul misunderstood his opponents have on the process of identifying those opponents from his letter?’

One of the main issues that some commentators have with the theory of Judaizers in 1 Corinthians is that the Paul of 1 Corinthians looks markedly different to the Paul of 2 Corinthians (and Galatians), especially in the aggressive language found within these letters against his opponents.⁹⁴

However, Barrett argues that in 1 Corinthians, Paul seemed partially unaware of the gravity of the situation in Corinth, and it was only after he had written the first epistle that the general deterioration of events in Corinth took place. Thus, the seriousness of the effects of the Judaizing group within Corinth began to emerge in its fullness. By the writing of 2 Corinthians, Paul realised the seriousness of the situation and the *modus operandi* of the opponents, which was to preach a different Jesus to the one of Paul’s gospel.⁹⁵

⁹² See Fee, *Corinthians*, 813.

⁹³ In both letters, Paul threatens to come to meet his opponents with force, if need be (1 Cor 4:18-19, 2 Cor 10:11). When contrasting himself to his opponents, Paul uses similar ‘procession’ analogies (1 Cor 4:9, 2 Cor 2:14).

⁹⁴ For example, MD Goulder suggested that in 1 Corinthians ‘wisdom’ is linked with ‘word’ in Paul’s discussion, which had a particular link with Torah in the Jewish community. Goulder concludes ‘thus, words of wisdom are the halakhic rulings of Jewish-Christians and this should inform our understanding both of Chapters 1-4 and indeed, the whole Epistle.’ Tuckett, critiquing Goulder, however, claims that this has difficulties as ‘the Paul who emerges from Goulder’s theory is very different from the Paul of Gal and 2 Cor.’ See Ker, ‘Paul,’ 80 for this discussion.

⁹⁵ Barrett, ‘Cephas,’ 12.

Knox concurs with this and proposes a reconstruction of the clarity of Paul's understanding from the first epistle to the second. However, he admits that 'the course of events can only be conjectured from the situation implied in the epistles.'⁹⁶ Knox suggests that there was a section in the church loyal to Paul, which was represented by 'those of Chloe' and those mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:15. Opposing Paul, were a group of Jewish-Christians. A letter had been written to Paul initially, asking for advice on certain issues including the attitude to be adopted to fornicators, to which Paul had replied but his reply had remained ineffective. Therefore, a further letter was written to which 1 Corinthians was a reply. Only the issues contained in the letter from the Corinthians and hearsay (probably from 'those of Chloe') had been made known to Paul. Therefore, there was a situation whereby Paul had been informed of certain points but not those he regarded as the most important. This is intelligible if the contents of the Corinthians' letter to Paul arose from questions regarding his teaching when he was on mission in Corinth. Knox concludes to state, 'it is very difficult to discover any other explanations which suit the evidence.'⁹⁷

Thus, if Paul misunderstood the severity of the division in Corinth, and the identity of the group that it stemmed from, in the first epistle, it would explain why his tone was different from that of 2 Corinthians. The fact that the divisions do not reappear in the second epistle would suggest that by the writing of the letter, Paul had become fully aware of the dangerous nature of his opposition, which is represented by his harsh statements that his opponents were not actually Christians, but 'false apostles' (2 Cor 11:13). Paul no longer needed to discuss 'divisions' within the church as it had become obvious that the attack did not stem from rivaling factions, but instead from one particular group. With this explanation as to the differences in Paul's tone and terminology between the two epistles, we can now further support this theory by observing further links between them; namely the style of the four-point defence and attack that Paul used in both letters.

⁹⁶ Knox, *Paul*, 324.

⁹⁷ Knox, *Paul*, 324-325.

1.3 Does the Exegesis of Key Verses In 1 Corinthians Offer More Insight? - Paul's Four-Point Defence and Attack

That Paul was being 'judged' by some from within the congregation in 1 Corinthians can be in no doubt (4:3-5, 9:3, 10:29-30). Fee points out that Paul's use of the term 'judged' in 4:3 did not allude to a verdict that had been reached, but more to a judicial inquiry that assessed him on criteria important to the Corinthians [or Judaizers]. Paul responded that his own criterion was faithfulness to a trust committed by God alone, and therefore only the one who gave this trust to him was able to judge him.⁹⁸ Paul made the same assertion about boasting of one's own criterion in 2 Corinthians 10:12-13. In 1 Corinthians, Paul stated that he would not play their game and judge or defend himself (4:4); however, by the second letter the situation had become so dire for him, he was forced to both defend himself and attack his opponents.

Lake highlights four aspects of Christian life that the Judaizers of 2 Corinthians valued and boasted in possessing, namely, apostolic authority, power in oration, ability to perform miracles, and heavenly experiences.⁹⁹ 2 Corinthians 10-13 shows Paul's defence and attack regarding these categories, and why he had more reason to boast in them than his opponents. Kruse concurs with Lake to state, 'Paul's opponents in 2 Corinthians were Jewish-Christians who highly prized eloquent speech, displays of authority, visions and revelations, and the performance of mighty works as the signs of a true apostle.'¹⁰⁰

Although Paul did not directly attack the opponents so virulently in 1 Corinthians as he did in 2 Corinthians (due to his lack of awareness of the situation in the first epistle), the same defences and attacks can still be found in both letters. However, certain passages need deeper exploration and consideration to highlight these links.

⁹⁸ Fee, *Corinthians*, 175.

⁹⁹ K Lake, *The Earlier Epistle's of St. Paul*, London: Rivingtons, 1927, 223.

¹⁰⁰ CG Kruse, *2 Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Nottingham: InterVarsity, 1987, 166.

Indeed, Theissen highlights that the structure of the conflict in the second Corinthian letter is comparable to the first also, as Paul combatted his opponents with arguments using allusions from popular philosophy in both letters.¹⁰¹ This, therefore, highlights further evidence for the weight of the Judaizer argument against scholars who suggest no link between 2 Corinthians with 1 Corinthians.¹⁰² It also answers Sumney's question of certain passages yielding better information than others, when attempting to assess the opponents in view.¹⁰³ It would be prudent to investigate these four points further, and exegete any relevant passages to understand any link between the two Epistles.

1.3.1 Apostolic Authority

The accusation against Paul in both letters was that he did not have the proper appearance of an apostle, which manifested in different ways. Although his defence of his apostleship is not as evident in the first epistle as in the second, the very fact that he chose to defend himself over why his message was lacking (2:1-5) and didn't accept payment for preaching (9:1-18), highlight that he was under attack. He was repeatedly caused to defend his theology on subjects (marriage, food sacrificed to idols, ecclesial propriety, etc.), which he would have already taught the Corinthians when founding the church. Why would he need to repeat these instructions unless someone had entered the church and questioned his apostolic methodology? Paul's re-assertion of his teachings makes sense if someone in Corinth was now questioning a point Paul had already taught, and ultimately, his apostolic authority. For example, 'it is good for a man not to marry' (7:1) comes from the letter they had written to him, which asked that very question. The diversion in 8:1b-3, away from the topic of food sacrificed to idols, came from the assertion that the Corinthians had been shown a different theological understanding to the one he taught them, which relied on superior 'knowledge.'

Paul's defence of his apostleship can be seen from the outset of 1 Corinthians (1:1), which he termed as a 'divine' calling to mark his ecclesial authority. He was called to be an apostle by

¹⁰¹ G Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982, 57.

¹⁰² Fee, *Corinthians*, 8.

¹⁰³ Sumney, *Identifying*, 14.

‘the will of God’, not by human standards or selection. Thiselton remarks that for Paul, ‘apostleship points away from self to Christ... and precludes personal merit as its basis.’¹⁰⁴ Paul viewed apostleship in terms of servanthood and forgoing one’s personal ambitions or egos to serve Christ. This was a theme that he repeatedly returned to throughout his letter (3:5, 4:1, 9:19-23). Similarly, the debate of servanthood appears throughout 2 Corinthians. Georgi comments that ‘*diakonos*’ (servanthood) is a key word in 2:14-7:4 and Chapters 10-13.¹⁰⁵ Paul emphasised that ‘calling’, and ‘servanthood’ are both designations from God that should denote the true apostle, and concomitantly deflate the pride of the false apostles. God’s calling is free and gracious in character, undermining any sense of achievement.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, if one has something they received it, how can they boast as if it were not a gift? (1 Cor 4:7).

One of Paul’s main apostolic defences was the self-imposed, humble status of his calling. In 2 Corinthians 2:16-17 and 3:4-5, Paul was reluctant to speak of his own qualifications and abilities.¹⁰⁷ For Paul, vindication in his calling came from God, not from man who needed ‘letters of recommendation’ (2 Cor 3:1). In 1 Corinthians 4, he drew a similar defence, to suggest that if he was going to be judged and regarded as anything, it should be as a servant. Noting the similarity in Paul’s tactics, Georgi suggests that ‘1 Corinthians 4:3 could be a good circumlocution of what Paul means in 2 Corinthians 2:16-17.’¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Paul used the same tactics in both lines of defence. His opponents had no grounds to judge him, as only God had the ability to do that, for God was the one who called him to be an apostle and anointed him for the role.

In both letters, the theme of judgement can be viewed in eschatological terms. Paul clearly felt he could assess people’s behaviour, but one’s calling and office from God, no one could judge. Ciampa sees these as attacks from the Corinthians who were judging Paul.¹⁰⁹

However, the ‘us’ in 4:1 referred to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, as mentioned earlier in 3:22,

¹⁰⁴ AC Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2000, 30.

¹⁰⁵ Georgi, *Paul*, 229.

¹⁰⁶ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 100.

¹⁰⁷ Georgi, *Paul*, 231.

¹⁰⁸ Georgi, *Paul*, 232.

¹⁰⁹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 169.

and therefore could equally be read as a defence of Paul's self-assessed equality with Peter, in response to the Judaizers. This was a subtle defence that Paul similarly gave in 2 Corinthians 11:22. In both, he compared himself with his opponents or their supposed leaders. By mentioning Peter, the Judaizers' spiritual icon, Paul highlighted his own apostolic equality in order to defend his own status (1 Cor 4:1).

Paul's controlled defence in 1 Corinthians 4:1, and his seemingly arrogant and autocratic words in v3 highlight his defence/attack tactics. Whereas v1 urged the Corinthians to view his apostolic ministry in terms of 'servanthood,' v3 was designed to attack his opponents and their 'judgement' upon him. The sentence, 'some of you have been arrogant' (4:18) supports this view, as it shows that although the entire community was affected by the situation, Paul's opponents consisted of a smaller group. This has led Fee to conclude that 'the letter is addressed to the church, but continually it evidences tension between the "some" and "the whole" (2:15, 3:12-15, 4:3, 6-7).'¹¹⁰

Paul continued, in 4:7, to speak about boasting in one's own accolades, which is usually understood to be the apostle's confrontation of the competitive nature of the Corinthians. However, Fee points out that this view places the emphasis on supposed 'internal quarrels by factions' which here did not seem to surface in the argument. With Fee's point in mind, the view of competitive factions may not have been Paul's meaning. The alternative view is to see 4:7 in direct correlation with the preceding verse, in which Paul questioned the Corinthians' reasoning for proclaiming one man, i.e., Peter, over himself. 'The implication then turns to the fact that their boasting in wisdom, which allowed them to examine Paul, is strictly self-proclaimed.'¹¹¹ Paul's attack on his opponents being 'self-proclaimed' in 1 Corinthians correlates with the same attack in 2 Corinthians 10:12-13. Ultimately, they might have had thousands of guardians or supposed 'leaders' influencing them within the church, but they 'only had one father' (4:15), their founder Paul. Even that statement brought connotations of Paul being tied to them spiritually, which he repeated in 2 Corinthians 3:3. Paul was certainly their apostle, and he was going to fight for them philosophically, spiritually, and emotionally.

¹¹⁰ Fee, *Corinthians*, 206-207.

¹¹¹ Fee, *Corinthians*, 186.

1.3.2 *Oratory Power*

A major focus of the attack on Paul came from his oratory ability. In 2 Corinthians 11:5-11, Paul responded to allegations that he was ‘unskilled in speaking’ against the boastful claims of the opponents’ talents in speaking. For the opponents, the fact that Paul did not accept money for preaching suggested he was aware of his own substandard speaking style. The same issue arose in 1 Corinthians 9 where Paul maintained that he chose to relinquish his apostolic ‘rights’ to payment for preaching. In 9:7-13, it is not inappropriate to suggest that Paul was defending himself against Judaistic claims due to his reference to Jewish Law. Indeed, it would be strange for Paul to even mention the Law, which provided the basis that those who proclaim the gospel should receive a living from the Gospel (Deut 25:4)¹¹² if the opponents were not knowledgeable about the Old Testament scriptures.

Within these passages, Paul simultaneously defended himself as one who was happy to relinquish his apostolic rights (1 Cor 9:10, 2 Cor 11:7) for the Corinthians to be exalted, whilst attacking the opponents for ‘putting an obstacle in the way of Christ’ (1 Cor 9:12), which served to undermine the opponents’ claim (2 Cor 11:12). He turned the attack of the opponents back on them; in both instances, by forming a series of questions designed to force the Corinthians into a position where they would have to choose sides (1 Cor 9:1-12, 2 Cor 11:7). Were they to side with the opponents they should not be surprised if they were treated in shameful ways (2 Cor 11:20)? However, should they accept that Paul was indeed their apostle (1 Cor 9:1), and also had not erred by preaching free of charge (2 Cor 11:7), then they would need to admit that the opponents’ claims were false.

Paul put the emphasis on the Corinthians by inserting questions designed to challenge them to make a mental choice on evidence they had already received from their apostle (1 Cor 9:13, 2 Cor 11:7).¹¹³ The construction of these questions, therefore, was designed to polarise the

¹¹² MA Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2014, 415.

¹¹³ DE Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003, 403.

recipients against Paul's opponents in an expertly subtle way. Paul's tactics in 2 Corinthians can be seen as follows:

- A) The letter written to the Corinthians was in direct continuity with Paul's gospel.
- B) The Corinthians submitted to the letter (highlighted by the fact that they submitted to Paul's traditions, 1 Cor 11:2).
- C) This letter and gospel opposed the false teaching of the opponents.
- D) Therefore, the Corinthians must also oppose the false teaching of the opponents.¹¹⁴

It is my contention that these tactics should also be applied to both 1 and 2 Corinthians.

Paul, for his part, would continue to boast in not accepting payments for preaching in order not to be a hindrance to the Gospel (1 Cor 9:15, 2 Cor 11:18). The wisdom of Paul's decision thus became manifest. His reasoning not to accept payment in order to allow the gospel to be unhindered should prove to show the Corinthians that suspicions against him were groundless, whilst also pointing to the main difference between him and his opponents. The Corinthians, for their part, would need to decide whether they were going to judge him by the standards of the world or by the standards of the crucified Lord.¹¹⁵

In both epistles, Paul's defensive tactic of accusations against his 'ineloquent' oratory skills was to show self-imposed humility or weakness (1 Cor 2:1-5, 2 Cor 12:9-10). He chose to humble himself to exalt the Corinthians (1 Cor 9:15-27, 2 Cor 11:7), and that humility was applied to his oratory style and message. Paul's 'humble' defences subtly served to attack the opponents for forcefully imposing their own apostolic authority on the Corinthians.¹¹⁶

Furthermore, 1 Corinthians was designed to refute any allegation of Paul as a tyrant. Paul admitted that he arrived in Corinth with trembling and fear (2:3) and became 'all things to all men' (9:19-23). However, he was still their apostle, and rather than coming with a whip, he instead chose to pastor them with a fatherly love (4:15). The opponents, however, were over-

¹¹⁴ DA Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2009, 499.

¹¹⁵ Seifrid, *Corinthians*, 416-417.

¹¹⁶ Campbell, *God*, 502.

bearing and abused the believers (2 Cor 11:20), therefore the Corinthians should be able to ascertain the contrast between Paul and his opponents. Paul had a humble leadership and ‘determined to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ’ (2:2), desiring to have a spiritual relationship with the Corinthians. In contrast, the opponents’ interest in the Corinthians came second to their own egos.¹¹⁷ Through this, Paul contrasted his humble leadership with that of his power-mongering opponents. These were expert tactics indeed.

1.3.3 Signs, Wonders, and Mighty Works

In 1 Corinthians, Paul played down his own oratory skills in order to elevate Christ whilst also de-emphasising the importance of his ability to work miracles (2:1-5). Although his viewpoint was the same in 2 Corinthians on this matter, he seemed to change tactic slightly to go more onto the offensive and boast about his accomplishments, although he conceded that his boasting was that of a ‘madman’ (2 Cor 11:23). From the outset of 1 Corinthians, Paul attributed any ‘power’ that the Corinthians held to God working in them via his (Paul’s) own gospel (1:6, 2:4-5). In 1:6, the Corinthians were called to question his apostolic legitimacy through the validation of the thing they valued and boasted of - their gifts. For Paul, those gifts were the evidence of the testimony that confirmed his apostolic authority, as it was God himself who affirmed Paul among them by giving them these very gifts.¹¹⁸ Were the Corinthians to deny Paul as their apostle, they would effectively be denying their own abilities and gifts in the process. For some ambitious Corinthians who valued ‘power’, this would have proved to be a conundrum. If the ‘gifts of the Spirit’ were Paul’s example of his apostolic bond with the Corinthians in the first epistle, the witness of the Spirit on ‘tablets of human hearts’ provided a similar allusion in 2 Corinthians (3:2-3). In both letters, Paul used the Corinthians’ own self-esteem to show the difference between himself and his opponents and force the Corinthians into a choice of who they would accept as their apostle(s).

¹¹⁷ Georgi, *Paul*, 240.

¹¹⁸ Fee, *Corinthians*, 38.

Again, Paul used the theme of humility to point the Corinthians' understanding of mighty works and signs away from themselves, to the cross. While his opponents' claims of apostleship were based on 'signs, wonders, and mighty works,' Paul's confidence rested on suffering and humility (1 Cor 2:1-5, 2 Cor 11:23-29). Seifrid concurs with this to suggest that, for Paul's 'superiority as an apostle consists in his lowliness (2 Cor 11:28)'.¹¹⁹ Thus, in both letters, Paul's apostolic claims rested not on what mighty works he had performed, but on his service for others in humility and suffering. In both letters, he made his love for the Corinthians clear through this.¹²⁰

1.3.4 Heavenly Experiences

In both Epistles, Paul's major claim to apostleship legitimacy was his original encounter with Jesus and the associated spiritual experience. Seifrid suggests that one of the Corinthians' values of their chosen apostle would entail experiences of apparitions of Christ, as the apparition served as evidence for the presence of Christ within the apostle. Certainly, the Corinthians valued spiritual power and revelations as a part of their ecclesial services, which focused heavily on speaking in tongues (1 Cor 14:1-25). Therefore, it would be quite natural for the Corinthians to demand these elements of their apostle.¹²¹ To defend his superiority in heavenly experiences was essential for Paul, as it was likely his opponents were claiming something similar. However, although in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, his defence was delivered through undeniable boasting of his heavenly experiences, his similar claims in 1 Corinthians were far subtler, due to the fact that he was unaware of the magnitude of the situation at hand. In the first letter, Paul had downplayed the revelations he had experienced to promote the humbler mutual love and unity (13:1-7). Indeed, in most things, Paul would rather present himself to the Corinthians with fatherly love, rather than the whip of rebuke. However, if needed, his apostolic instincts would lead him to resort to lowering his levels to those of his opponents (4:21).

¹¹⁹ Seifrid, *Corinthians*, 426, 428.

¹²⁰ Seifrid, *Corinthians*, 431.

¹²¹ Seifrid, *Corinthians*, 437.

Thus, although Paul's claims of heavenly revelations in 1 Corinthians were not as overtly evident as in the second letter, they similarly focused on Paul's encounter with Jesus, a claim which his opponents could not match (1 Cor 9:1-2, 15:3-11). Indeed, Paul's subtle spiritual revelatory claims can be seen as a thread throughout 1 Corinthians. Paul spoke God's 'secret wisdom,' which came in a revelatory way (2:7).¹²² He had been entrusted with the 'secret things of God' (4:1). He had seen the Lord and linked that heavenly experience to his apostolic legitimacy (9:1). He spoke in tongues and did, 'more so than all of the Corinthians,' which served as a reminder that even on matters of spiritual gifting he was able to outdo his opponents (14:18). However, in Chapter 15, Paul employed his greatest defence tactic by using the one thing his opponents valued to prove his apostolic call, the apostle Peter. If the Judaizers were so insistent on their valuation of Peter as an apostle because he had seen Jesus and had had company with him, Paul's inclusion of his Damascus road experience would enable him to use their apostolic criteria against them. Indeed, the Lord *had* also appeared to him, as he had to 'all the apostles' (15:8). Paul made use of this opportunity to place himself in the same position as the other apostles, after making a conscious point to include Peter by name, thus vindicating his apostolic call.¹²³

An argument could be that as Paul called himself the 'least of all apostles' and 'one abnormally born' (15:8-9), he realised the weakness in the validity of his apostolic claims. However, when read in the context of his defence against claims from the opponents, the phrase makes more sense. To read Paul calling himself the 'least of all apostles' out of context could suggest a sense of self-deprecation of his apostolic office. Certainly, his view of apostleship was a calling that relied totally on 'the grace of God' (15:10). However, earlier in the letter he had been keen to point out that he was not going to assess himself in relation to his apostolic legitimacy, as God alone could judge (4:3). With this in mind, his self-deprecating statement makes little sense. However, if the statement is read as a response to his opponents claiming via the Corinthians' letter that, '*if* he were an apostle, he would be the very least,' Paul's admittance becomes evident as a defence. In this context, it could be read as 'yes, the opponents are right, indeed *I am the least of all apostles*... but I still am an apostle nonetheless.' For, like Peter, he had seen the Lord, and had a heavenly experience that his opponents could not match. He had also been given a divine mandate that equated to

¹²² Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 170.

¹²³ Baur, *Paul*, 281.

an apostolic call. He might have been ‘abnormally born’ on the road to Damascus, and therefore not called in a similar fashion to the other apostles, but he had indeed been called and could uniquely make that claim.

However, Paul’s claim to be one ‘abnormally born’ did not only serve as a defence but also provided another attack against his opponents. The exclusion of any human principle in his calling, and claim to direct and unmediated divine revelation, allowed Paul to highlight another difference between his opponents and himself.¹²⁴ His opponents had to rely on ‘letters of recommendation’ from humans, whereas Paul’s credentials as an apostle came straight from God and therefore superseded the Judaizers. Thus, if the Corinthians were to apply Paul’s apostolic claims to authority, on the basis of heavenly experiences, they would have to concede in his favour. If they were to judge by applying the opponents’ understanding of the same topic, they would face exactly the same verdict. Either way, Paul’s claims trumped his opponents’. Paul used similar tactics in 2 Corinthians, whereby he pointed to a ‘revelation from the Lord’ that would completely outweigh any opposition claim of spiritual experiences (12:1-6).

All of these points highlight that Paul had opponents in 1 Corinthians, and that they opposed him on key issues of his apostolic style within the church. However, the questions now must be asked, ‘Who were the Corinthians that they would enticed by prominent Judaizers and their theology?’ Furthermore, is there any evidence of the presence of the Judaizers in any other of Paul’s Epistles? To these questions we must now turn.

¹²⁴ NH Taylor, ‘The Composition and Chronology of Second Corinthians,’ *Journal of the Study of the New Testament*, 14.44 (1991) 67-87, citing 87.

1.4 Were They Specifically Corinthian Opponents or is There any Evidence of Them in Paul's Other Epistles?

1.4.1 Demographic Considerations

Why would the Corinthians be influenced by Jewish interlopers within the church? In order to understand Paul's mission, and its resulting problems, one must first appreciate the demographics of those to whom he was writing.

Paul states that the majority of the congregation were not of 'noble birth or wise by human standards' (1:26). Poverty and deprivation were certainly evident in Corinth. Alciphron remarks about the misery of the poor in Corinth, 'I saw some young fellows moving about... near where the women peddle bread... others would actually gather and greedily devour the pieces that fell from the loaves of bread, pieces that had by that time been trodden under many feet.'¹²⁵

The inferiority of Paul's Corinth stood in stark contrast with the glory of ancient Corinth. The city had in the past been glorious and boasted wealth from, among other things, highest quality bronze which was valued 'before silver and almost gold.'¹²⁶ Its location and ports, to one direction facing Asia, to the other facing Rome, made it a perfect centre for business and trade.¹²⁷ Ancient Corinth was set up to be one of the major business centres of the region, wealthy and powerful. However, when Roman domination came, Corinth's inhabitants failed to embrace the new regime, and 'behaved so contemptuously towards the Romans that certain persons ventured to pour down filth on the Roman ambassadors when passing by their

¹²⁵ Alciphron, 'Letters to Parasites,' (12/02/2016, https://www.loebclassics.com/view/alciphron-letters_book_iii_letters_parasites/1949/pb_LCL383.209.xml?result=1&rskey=hlnBdR), citing 24.3.60, 208-212.

¹²⁶ Pliny, 'The Natural History,' (19/02/2016, https://www.loebclassics.com/view/pliny_elder-natural_history/1938/pb_LCL394.127.xml?readMode=recto), citing 34.1, 127.

¹²⁷ AC Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2006, 1.

houses.’¹²⁸ The failure of the Corinthians’ ability to accept Roman rule led the Statesman, Lucius Mummius, to attack and destroy the city in 146BC.

Julius Caesar, realising the importance of its location rebuilt Corinth in 44BC, sending colonists there to repopulate it, which led to restoration of its former wealth. The new Corinth, however, was an imitation of the glory of its past, a pale reflection of what it once was. The bronze that was once highly sought after for its quality ‘failed and was mostly not well executed.’¹²⁹ Corinthian bronze was symbolic of the new city, trying but failing to reach its former dizzy heights.

However, by Paul’s time in Corinth, around 90 years after its reformation, some of the citizens had become people of considerable means.¹³⁰ People were rich enough to bemoan the fact that preachers would not accept financial remuneration (9:1) and had enough assets to warrant litigation against each other (6:1-11).¹³¹ Thus, although Christianity was primarily a movement among the lower strata of society in Corinth, there was also a minority contingent of socially pretentious, wealthy people.¹³²

Indeed, first-century Greece was a mixture of Romans, ex-slaves, Greeks, and Jews. Inhabitants of a new era of socially ambitious people, who yearned for wealth, success, and cultural reform. In this climate, Judaism appealed to Greeks of the first-century. Some Jewish groups made it their mission to promote Judaism to the pagans for a long time before 1 Corinthians was written, emphasising features particular to Judaism and the superior history of the religion.¹³³ Georgi notes that the Jewish Law wouldn’t have been treated as just another book by the Hellenes. It was superior with age, and was surrounded by a mysterious veil, which would have been extremely appealing to the Corinthians.¹³⁴ The Jewish community also would have been an attractive proposition to some of the Greeks as it

¹²⁸ Strabo, ‘The Geography,’ (18/04/2016, <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/home.html>), citing 8.6.23.

¹²⁹ Strabo, ‘Geography,’ 8.23.

¹³⁰ J Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002, 65.

¹³¹ Theissen, *Social*, 97.

¹³² Theissen, *Social*, 69.

¹³³ Georgi, *Paul*, 41.

¹³⁴ Georgi, *Paul*, 42.

displayed a close-knit family with a high moral code, which must have ‘shone out in an environment so corrupt and libertine.’¹³⁵

However, although Judaism and the Jewish community was attractive to the Greeks in theory, the actual practice and status of being a Jew were not always desirable. Seneca recounted the story of when, in his youth, he had become a vegetarian after listening to a lecture of Sextius who endorsed the abstinence from meat. However, he was forced to eat meat sometime later, for fear of being identified as a Jew and persecuted along with other Jews by Tiberius Caesar in AD19.¹³⁶ Although Judaism was an attractive proposition, their persecution and strange rituals made them somewhat an enigma for the first-century Greek.

How could it be, then, that the Judaizers could influence the Corinthian minds? The Corinthians within the church had turned their attitudes of pride towards becoming ambitious to be spiritually superior. To pander to this desire, incoming preachers would be required to have superior oratory skills, which was something the eloquent and educated interlopers could offer. Competition among first-century speakers was rife, as the prize for a skilled orator and teacher, newly arrived into a city, was the securing of students to train, and the desired fees that came with them. Upon first arriving in Corinth, the teacher would send invitations to the wealthy and powerful, to advise of the time and place they were to be presenting their credentials. They then invited any topic the audience wished for them to present. If the speaker was able to impress, the socially-elite would send their sons to his school, they would gain citizenship of the city, and would be welcomed as an ambassador.¹³⁷

This is not to say that all orators needed to be skilled. In some circumstances they merely needed to appear to be skilled, dependent upon the foolish gullibility of the listeners at hand. Quintilian remarks on some of the lesser adept orators

¹³⁵ M Whittaker, *Jews and Christians: Greco-Roman Views*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1984, 15.

¹³⁶ Seneca, *Moral Letters*, (01/03/2016, https://archive.org/stream/Seneca/Seneca_djvu.txt), citing 108.98.22.

¹³⁷ BW Winter, *After Paul left Corinth*, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2001, 36-37.

They shout on every occasion and bellow every utterance with uplifted hand, dashing this way and that, panting and gesticulating wildly and wagging their heads with all the frenzy of a lunatic. Smite your hands together, stamp the ground, slap your thigh, your breast, your forehead, and you will go straight to the heart of the dingier members of your audience.¹³⁸

Therefore, the opponents' highly skilled rhetoric, combined with their superior Hebrew background (2 Cor 11:5-6, 22), would certainly appeal to the Corinthians. Paul's self-imposed oratory style, which lacked eloquence and wisdom, in contrast, would have seemed diminished and foolish. Why proclaim Christ without eloquence when eloquence is freely available to be had? If Paul's proclamation of the messiah was delivered in a weak manner, perhaps his understanding of the messiah was also weak. However, the new preachers might reflect a different facet of the messiah to consider, one who is eloquent and powerful. The Corinthians' mind-set considered 'messiah' to mean power, splendour, and triumph. On the other hand, 'crucifixion' symbolised weakness, defeat, and humiliation. No wonder both Greek and Jew were scandalised by the Gospel that Paul brought.¹³⁹

Paul's tribulation list (4:8-13) suggests that the Corinthians had chosen to adopt this exact style of Christianity; of one that sought wisdom and power. These types of list were well known to both Greek and Jew and would have appealed to both of them. For the Greek it would have brought connotations of Stoic philosophers, such as Epictetus, who stated, 'show me a man who though sick is happy, though in danger is happy, though dying is happy...'¹⁴⁰ For the Jew, familiarities of the uses of lists by writers such as Josephus would be invoked, 'when plundered you submit, when beaten you are silent...'¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Quintilian, *Institutes Books I-III: Translated by HE Butler*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1933, citing 2.11.9-11.

¹³⁹ Fee, *Corinthians*, 79.

¹⁴⁰ Epictetus, 'Discourses II,' (19/04/2016, https://www.loebclassics.com/view/epictetus-discourses/1925/pb_LCL131.357.xml?result=2&rskey=suUHTb), citing 2.19.165, 356-359.

¹⁴¹ Josephus, 'The Jewish War IV,' (22/04/2016, http://www.loebclassics.com/view/josephus-jewish_war/1927/pb_LCL487.207.xml), citing 4.166-167.

Paul's overriding Gospel throughout 1 Corinthians, however, was the lowly message of the cross, which stood against the Corinthians' inflated self-esteem.¹⁴² The crucified Christ, who stood opposed to a victorious messiah who would restore the glories of Israel, was a stumbling block to the Jews (1:23). Paul had brought exactly the opposite message to worldly wisdom and was roundly opposed for it. He constantly rebuked the recipients of his letter, reminding them that they were not noble when called (1:26-27), foolish to believe in man's wisdom (1:20-25, 2:6-16), and childish, due to their self-inflated esteem (3:1-4).

Paul's message of weakness and humility was difficult for the Corinthians to embrace. The Judaizers, realising this, were able to bring a contrary gospel, which would prove to be an attractive proposition. They were able to display an oratory style that was closer to Greek expectations and would have been attractive to the Corinthians due to its worldly appeal. For the Corinthian desiring power, social standing, and authenticity, the opponents' message would have been ideal. With the 'grace' of Christianity and the 'power' of Judaism, the Corinthians had a ready-made formulation of a religion that could allow them social and spiritual ambitions to provide a better, victorious life for themselves.

Thus, we find, that the suggestion of a Judaizer presence in 1 Corinthians is valid. However, to further the argument of the presence of Judaizers opposing Paul it would be prudent to assess whether there is any evidence of them in Paul's other Epistles.

1.5 Paul's Opponents in Other Epistles

A major objection to the Judaizing theory comes from the timeline of Acts and the Galatian letter. One might rightly ask, 'If Galatians was written before 1 Corinthians, and Paul was facing a single front of Judaizing opposition in both letters, why then does his tone change from anger in Galatians to relative calm in 1 Corinthians?' If Galatians was written first, then this does indeed make no sense. Paul, being aware of the situation should surely have

¹⁴² Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 182.

followed Galatians with equal ire to the Corinthians, whose heads had been similarly turned by the Judaizing interlopers.

However, the timeline of Paul's writings is by no means assured and there are contentious chronological issues between Acts and Galatians, centring around Paul's travels from Jerusalem to Cilicia, via Syria.¹⁴³ According to Luke, Paul travelled from the Jerusalem Council to Syria and then onto Cilicia, 14 years after his conversion, around AD53 (Acts 15). However, from Paul's own account, the Jerusalem-Syria-Cilicia journey happened 14 years before the Council of Jerusalem, and therefore at around AD39. Most scholars who place Galatians at an early date rely on Luke's accounts in Acts. However, the discrepancy between Luke and Paul's accounts brings a question to the evidence of their timeline, especially if one considers that Paul should be considered a more reliable source of knowing the chronological timeline of his own life than Luke. Hansen points out that scholars are also divided upon the date and destination of Galatians itself, with some suggesting it was written to Northern Galatians only, as the Southern territories were considered Galatian by Roman rule, not by race. Other scholars oppose this and suggest it was written to the whole Galatian area.¹⁴⁴ Lightfoot comments that 'Galatians has been placed by different critics both the earliest and the latest of Paul's writings, and almost every intermediate position has at one time been assigned to it.'¹⁴⁵ Therefore, the discrepancies between Paul and Luke's dating of Galatians, and the lack of scholarly agreement of the Galatians' date and destination, bring serious doubts to the order in which Galatians and 1 Corinthians were written.

Although it is not in our remit to ascertain the complete chronology of Paul's Epistles within this thesis, many scholars have posited the presence of a Judaizing group, opposed to Paul's

¹⁴³ Fee argues that Galatians was written after 1 Corinthians. See GD Fee, *Galatians*, Pentecostal Commentary Series, Dorchester: Blandford Forum, 2011, citing 4. See also the discussion in CJ Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic Christianity*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1989, 1-29.

¹⁴⁴ GW Hansen, *Galatians*, The IVP New Commentary Series, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994. 16-17.

¹⁴⁵ JB Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957, 36.

missionary programme, that appear in many of his letters.¹⁴⁶ This group followed the apostle around to sow discord against his message into the churches he had planted, by promoting teachings that Paul considered deeply destructive.¹⁴⁷ Although some of these scholars (Schmithals and Campbell particularly) may have extreme interpretations of Paul's Epistles, there is evidence of their basic presuppositions that are supported from the primary evidence of the New Testament.

The initial first-hand evidence available, independent from Paul, comes from Luke and his testimony of Acts. Luke recorded that there was a group of Jewish-Christians who travelled from Antioch to Judea preaching a Law-based salvation, dependent upon circumcision (Acts 15:1), which initiated a 'sharp dispute' with Paul and necessitated the Council of Jerusalem. Luke also noted the presence of a Pharisaical Christian group within the inner chamber of the Council who again promoted the Mosaic Law and circumcision as a requisite for Gentile believers (Acts 15:5). The rulings of the Council highlight the content of the discussed topics that were important to the Jewish-Christians (i.e., the issues of sexual immorality and the abstention of food sacrificed to idols, the meat of strangled animals, and blood – Acts 15:20). Therefore, these issues were initially associated, by Luke, with the Judaizing controversy and group in Acts.

However, although the Council effectively ruled against circumcision as a requisite for Gentile believers, the *modus operandi* of both Judaizing groups (Acts 15:1 and 5) certainly promoted the opposite. With this in mind, we turn to Paul's Epistles where it is evident that the same cluster of issues kept repeating in different locations of his ministry, which significantly suggests the same group of contentious Jewish-Christians is in view in each situation.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ W Schmithals locates them in Galatians, Romans, Philippians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and 2 Thessalonians. See Schmithals, 'Zur Abfassung und Ältesten Sammlung der Paulinischen Hauptbriefe,' *RNTW* 51 (1960) 225-236, citing 226-228. Campbell locates them in Galatians, Romans, and Philippians. See Campbell, *God*, 505-506. R Jewett locates them in Philippians and Galatians. See Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their use in Conflict Settings*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1971, citing 19-23. G Fee locates them in Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy and Colossians. See Fee, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, *New International Biblical Commentary*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988, 177

¹⁴⁷ Campbell, *God*, 505.

¹⁴⁸ It is not in the remit of this thesis to discuss the authenticity of the authorship of the Pauline Epistles, but the following passages are linked with the knowledge that some scholars may cast doubts as to the authorship of Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy and to a lesser extent Colossians and Ephesians.

Paul used similar catchwords or argumentation in many of his Epistles which link the same group together. That they were a Judaizing group is evident in Paul's term of them as 'the circumcision' (Gal 2:12, Phil 3:3, Eph 2:11, Tit 1:10). Fee, who links Paul's opposition found in Titus 1:10-16 with 1 Timothy and Colossians 2:16-23, suggests, 'it looks as if this subtle and apparently attractive deviation (Judaizing impositions of the Mosaic Law for believers) was catching on all over this part of the world.'¹⁴⁹ In Galatia, there was also a hint of a strained relationship between Paul and the 'pillars' of Jerusalem, who although on face value seemed to acknowledge his ministry at the Council, subsequently backtracked and sanctioned the mission of 'the circumcision.'¹⁵⁰ Paul noted with disdain that 'the circumcision' group 'came from James' (2:12) and were associated with Peter in Antioch. These were the 'false brothers' who had earlier travelled to Antioch, or their allies in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1,5).¹⁵¹ Paul, in turn, seemed to dispute that any injunction of the Jerusalem Council was given to him at all (Gal 2:6). Indeed, it is hardly likely that he felt the compromise of Acts 15 to be binding on him for his later missionary journeys.¹⁵² His views of James *et al* seem to be quite off-hand, referring to them as 'those held in high esteem... whatever they were makes no difference to me... they added nothing to my message' (Gal 2:6).¹⁵³

Whichever the location of the Judaizers, when Paul encountered these 'false apostles' (2 Cor 11:13, Gal 2:4) along his missionary journey, his anger was justifiable. Their mission, he declared, was designed to 'enslave' (Gal 2:4, 5:1, 2 Cor 11:20, Col 2:8) and 'deceive with confusion' (2 Cor 11:13, Gal 5:10, Tit 1:10) by enforcing Jewish customs (including circumcision) onto Gentiles (Gal 2:14) just as they had tried with Titus (Gal 2:3).¹⁵⁴ It is clear that circumcision and the Law, for Paul, represented a form of slavery, from which Christ has

¹⁴⁹ Fee, *Titus*, 177.

¹⁵⁰ MC De Boer, *Galatians*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011, 104.

¹⁵¹ De Boer, *Galatians*, 114. RYK Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1988, 94.

¹⁵² Schoeps, *Paul*, 69.

¹⁵³ Harris instead suggests that the Judaizers' backing came not from the 'pillars of Jerusalem' but instead from 'one of the Churches of Judea' or the Pharisaic wing on the Jerusalem Church seen in Acts 15:5. See MJ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2005, 260.

¹⁵⁴ Murphy-O'Connor suggests that although Paul makes no mention of circumcision in 2 Corinthians, it is possible that circumcision was in fact a part of the dispute in Corinth. Here he links the theological situation with Romans (2:25-29, 3:1, 4:9 etc). See J Murphy-O'Connor, *The Theology of the Second Letter to the Corinthians*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991, 36.

freed us (Gal 5:1).¹⁵⁵ Paul, instead, preached liberty from the necessity of circumcision in terms of justification before God.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, in Galatia they separated themselves from the Gentiles and no longer ate with them, splitting the church effectively into two groups, which led to the Gentile believers being under pressure to ‘practice Judaism’ in order to be once again included with the ‘elite’ leaders.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, although the opponents in 2 Corinthians identified as apostles, for Paul, they were in reality deceitful and divisive workers, Satan’s servants disguised as servants of righteousness.¹⁵⁸

Their ‘confidence’ or ‘boast’ came by means of the flesh (i.e., the physical symbol of circumcision) (Gal 6:12-13, Phil 3:3-4) or in ‘what is seen (physically) rather than in what is in the heart (2 Cor 5:12).¹⁵⁹ Boasting was a big part of the Judaizers’ strategy to commend themselves to congregations above Paul’s authority. They also ‘boasted’ in the believers’ circumcision in the flesh and their own Jewish identity which they saw as superior to the Gentile believers (2 Cor 5:12, 7:4, 9:2, Gal 6:13, etc.).¹⁶⁰ Paul, in turn, often responded with ‘boasts’ of his own Jewish credentials (2 Cor 11:18-33, Phil 3:4-6), although he considered such boasting foolishness.

They ‘rejected the truth’ (2 Cor 11:4, Gal 1:6-8, Col 2:19, 1 Tim 1:6, Tit 1:10) and instead preached a ‘different Gospel’ to the one Paul gave (2 Cor 11:4c, Gal 1:11). Their Gospel was a different Gospel to Paul’s, one that turned the ‘true Gospel of Christ’ into the very opposite,¹⁶¹ revelling in ‘meaningless talk’ regarding ‘Jewish myths and endless genealogies’ (1 Tim 1:4, 6, Tit 1:10, 3:9). Therefore, they were not acting in line with the Gospel (Gal 2:14) and, in Paul’s estimation, were purposely deceiving Gentile believers, for which he considered them ‘dogs, evildoers,’ and because of their insistence on circumcision,

¹⁵⁵ De Boer, *Galatians*, 114.

¹⁵⁶ Fung, *Galatians*, 94.

¹⁵⁷ De Boer, *Galatians*, 130.

¹⁵⁸ On this point MacArthur links the Judaizers of 2 Corinthians 11:13 with Romans 16:18, 2 Timothy 3:13, Titus 1:10, Galatians 6:7, Ephesians 5:6, Colossians 2:4 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3). See J MacArthur, 2 *Corinthians*, The MacArthur Commentary, Chicago: Moody, 2003, 371.

¹⁵⁹ Jewett links the Judaizers in Philippi and Galatia due to Paul’s claims of ‘trusting in the flesh.’ See Jewett, *Conflict*, 105.

¹⁶⁰ P Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1997, 39.

¹⁶¹ De Boer, *Galatians*, 114.

‘mutilators of the flesh’ (Phil 3:2). Paul, on the other hand, was keen to promote the discernment of ‘true speech from foolishness’ (Gal 2:13, Phil 3:2, 1 Tim 1:6, Tit 1:10).¹⁶²

Thus, we can see that a plethora of scholars have argued that the same Judaizing group can be located in 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus (others also include Romans into this trajectory). Sumney opposes the idea of a single front of opposition to Paul, suggesting that the quick spread of Christianity within the first-century should lead us to expect diversity and therefore multiple fronts of opposition.¹⁶³ This view is valid; however, the Judaizing theory does not require that this group were the sole opposition for Paul. It merely suggests that the Judaizers were the opponents he chose to write his letters against. There were, no doubt, other opponents also vying against Paul. Indeed, if Acts is to be believed, Gentiles opposed Paul as much as Jews (Acts 17:5, 19:28), yet he simply chose not to deal with these opponents within his letters.

Part of the reason why some scholars may argue that the Judaizers who are found in some of Paul’s Epistles cannot also be located in 1 Corinthians is because he does not seem to confront them as overtly, if at all, in 1 Corinthians. However, if the opponents’ tactical mandate were to settle into a community before imposing the Mosaic Law onto the congregation, and if 1 Corinthians was written early on in Paul’s Epistles, as suggested, Paul would have struggled to ascertain the true nature of the Judaizers’ intentions at the point of writing 1 Corinthians. Perhaps the Judaizers even felt it pertinent to scale back their tone after the admonishing of the Acts 15 Council rulings, making it harder for their true intentions to be realised.

Either way, a hint of the uncertainty of the severity of the situation that Paul may have faced in Corinth can be found in Galatians 2:4 where Paul stated, ‘some false believers infiltrated our ranks’ or ‘came in alongside.’ The Greek term here (*pareiselthon*), usually implies an element of ‘stealth’ ... or ‘to spy out.’¹⁶⁴ Therefore, if ‘stealth’ was the tactic of the Judaizers entering the church in Galatia, it is fair to suggest that it was the same in Corinth. If 1

¹⁶² DE Garland, *Second Corinthians*, The New American Commentary (Vol 29), Nashville: B & H, 1999, 28.

¹⁶³ Sumney, *Identifying*, 81.

¹⁶⁴ De Boer, *Galatians*, 113.

Corinthians was written early on in Paul's missionary journey and during the early period of the opponents' infiltration process into the church, it is possible that Paul was unaware of the opponents' intentions, and possibly even their existence. Furthermore, the Judaizers' intentions were clearly to alienate Paul's congregation from him (Gal 4:17), and therefore before they could implement their Judaistic expectations on the Corinthians, they would first need to spend a period of time turning the church against the apostle. However, by the time of writing 2 Corinthians, Galatians, etc., Paul had realised the seriousness of the situation and constructed his argument to directly attack them in return, thus bringing a change of tone and language from the apostle.

Therefore, whether or not 1 Corinthians was written before or after Galatians, the conclusion, to answer Sumney's question, must be that Paul was not fully aware of the situation he was writing to in 1 Corinthians. Marshall suggests that comprehensive statements can only be trusted when many witnesses comment.¹⁶⁵ In 1 Corinthians, reports only came from a few of Chloe's household (1:11) and Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17), and Paul would therefore only have had a few limited accounts on which to base his understanding of the events in Corinth. This would have been hardly enough to base a full knowledge of the situation upon.

Sumney argues that the original author behind an ancient document would be more likely to understand the situation at hand than a modern scholar.¹⁶⁶ However, Paul was writing with the knowledge he had to hand of the situation at the time. Indeed, given that the modern scholar has the benefit of the whole scope of Paul's future letters, it could be argued that we are now in a better position to understand the developing situation than the original writer, especially if the letter was written at the beginning of the line of events. We have the benefit of hindsight, even of Paul's developing understanding of the situation, which is apparent from his transition of thought between 1 and 2 Corinthians and onwards through his other Epistles. Certainly, in Paul's later writings we see an evolution of the situation that emerged in Corinth. Therefore, our scope of the whole array of Paul's letters as a collective must paint a broader picture than the individual.

¹⁶⁵ RL Marshall, *The Historical Criticism of Documents: Help for Students of History*, London: SPCK, 1920, 47.

¹⁶⁶ Sumney, *Identifying*, 84.

A final objection we might find against the suggestion of Judaizers in Corinth is summed up by Lake, ‘there is from the beginning to the end of the Epistles to the Corinthians not the faintest trace of any controversy as to that insistence on circumcision and on the Law, which we recognise as cardinal in those to the Galatians and Romans.’¹⁶⁷ However, as Harris correctly points out, this is a matter of what is meant by the term ‘Judaizer’. One might argue that as a Judaizer is defined by the insistence of circumcision as a prerequisite for salvation, the Corinthian letters do not contain Judaizers as there is little evidence for this dispute in the content. However, if a Judaizer is instead defined as one who tries to impose Jewish practices upon Gentiles as conditions for either salvation or for the purpose of fellowship, then the opposition to Paul in Corinth can, and should, be labelled as a Judaizing one.¹⁶⁸

Furthermore, as we shall see, there is evidence of all three criteria set out by the Jerusalem Council in 1 Corinthians, plus circumcision. Therefore, to further argue the presence of the Judaizers in Paul’s Epistles, we must explore the cluster of issues found within the Council ruling (sexual purity, circumcision, and food laws) of Acts 15 and, if so, link them to 1 Corinthians. To these issues, we must now turn.

¹⁶⁷ Lake, *Paul*, 222.

¹⁶⁸ Harris, *Corinthians*, 2005.

1.6 The Council's Rulings in Paul's Epistles

1.6.1 Sexual Immorality

The first ruling of the Jerusalem Council involved an issue about which both Paul and the Judaizers would agree; that believers should abstain from sexual immorality (Acts 15:20).

Whether Paul was being attacked by the Judaizers on matters of sexual immorality, or whether he knew it was a general problem in the churches, is not determined. However, as Paul's letters consisted of situations he was writing to address in the churches, and not just his own random theology, it is possible that Paul would have needed to defend himself on matters of licentious living. This is especially relevant if attack came through the suggestion that Paul's teaching on salvation by grace alone served as a justification for sexual immorality in the churches.¹⁶⁹

If this was the opponent's tactic, there is evidence of Paul's defence of the misunderstanding of using God's grace as a means to immoral living in many of his Epistles. Primarily, Paul defended his theology with theologies of righteous living, sin, and death, whereby Christians will either reap eternal life or destruction, according to what they have 'stored up for themselves' (Rom 2:5-8) or 'sown' (Gal 6:8). These themes are mirrored in Philippians 3:10-11, 19, where Paul spoke of his faith that will result in the resurrection of his body, while the sexually immoral could expect 'destruction.'

Indeed, in both Romans 2:5-11, and Galatians 6:7-10, those who 'persist in doing good' and 'sow to please the Spirit' will inherit eternal life. However, those who are 'self-seeking' or 'sow to please their sinful nature' will inherit God's wrath, anger and ultimately destruction.

¹⁶⁹ Howard suggests that Paul offered a defence against charges directed against him that his gospel was antinomian in Romans, as well as other Epistles. See G Howard, *Paul: Crisis in Galatia: A Study in Early Christian Theology* (2nd Ed), Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990, 12.

Paul concludes these arguments with the repeated phrase, ‘God shows no partiality (in his judgement)’ (Rom 2:11, Gal 2:6, Col 3:25), which may have been included as a sidenote to Judaistic-Christians who believed they were righteous purely due to their heritage and religious identities. God will judge the Jew and Gentile in the same way, regardless of their ethnic history. The moral nature of believers’ lives and hearts is what counts.

These ‘judgement’ themes are also dominant in 1 Corinthians, where Paul functionally argued in the same way.¹⁷⁰ In 1 Corinthians Paul wrote of the ‘day of reckoning’ (1:8), which he went on to develop later in 3:13-15. Again, in 3:13-15, the subject of one being assessed by how they have laid their foundations, i.e., the works they have sown, is evident. In all three letters God judges people impartially, assessing each according to the same standard: works.¹⁷¹ However, although in Romans and Galatians Paul contrasted sinful living and holiness in terms of eternal life against destruction, in 1 Corinthians he was less direct about the implications of their actions. Ciampa highlights that Paul’s use of the verb ‘to suffer loss’ (1 Cor 3:15), does not mean punishment, in terms of destruction, but rather ‘to be deprived of something.’¹⁷² 1 Corinthians 3, therefore, is different from the Romans and Galatians passages in terms of Paul’s ultimate soteriological statements. However, Fee notes that Paul does go on to link his thought with a warning against those who persist in their sinful activities being in eternal danger (3:17).¹⁷³

Certainly, sinful living leading to death is a theme that Paul spoke repeatedly of in his letters, including 1 Corinthians (15:21, 56).¹⁷⁴ Paul often included sinful behaviours that led to destruction (Rom 13:13, Gal 5:19-21, 1 Cor 5:11). In fact, in 1 Corinthians Paul used a Deuteronomistic formula to parallel the ‘sinful acts’ list, which would have held specific significance for the Judaizers.¹⁷⁵ Finally, in all three letters Paul urged the respective

¹⁷⁰ Thistleton and Fitzmyer link Pauls’ argumentation in 1 Corinthians 15:56 with Romans 4-7 and Galatians 3. See Thiselton, *Epistle*, 1301. JA Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, London: Yale University, 2008, 607.

¹⁷¹ CG Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2012, 124.

¹⁷² Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 156.

¹⁷³ Fee, *Corinthians*, 156.

¹⁷⁴ Kruse, *Romans*, 127.

¹⁷⁵ See Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 217.

congregations to act quickly, because the ‘hour had come’ (Rom 13:11), the ‘evil age’ was coming to an end (Gal 1:4), and ‘the time was short’ (1 Cor 7:29).

‘End of the age’ and ‘holy versus sinful living’ links can be observed between Paul’s letters. In fact, the themes are so closely linked that Paul used exactly the same metaphors within all three letters (i.e., Paul’s analogy of ‘dough’ in the context of good works versus sinful living, Rom 11:16, Gal 5:9, 1 Cor 5:6-7). In Galatians, as in 1 Corinthians, Paul used the exact same phrase of ‘a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough,’ suggesting that in both situations the respective congregations were to rid themselves of their unholy interlopers, ‘dough’ therefore becoming a metaphor for ‘holiness.’¹⁷⁶ Paul adopted this phrasing as a part of the oral Jesus tradition, which spoke positively of the kingdom of heaven infecting a person ‘like yeast... that worked through all the dough’ (Matt 13:33). However, the phrase was also used by Jesus in a negative sense as a warning against the ungodly nature of the Pharisees. This was a linked association that served Paul to polarise the defence of his God-approved ministry against the divisive nature of his opponents’ mission.

In Romans (11:16) and 1 Corinthians (15:20), Paul further linked his eschatological understanding by referring to another analogy, of ‘first-fruits.’ Both used metaphors adopted from the Old Testament (Num 15:17-21), whereby ‘first-fruits’ denoted the first portion of the crop offered in thanksgiving to God.¹⁷⁷ Ciampa comments, ‘Paul mixes metaphors in Romans 11:16 to show the concept of dough and first-fruits have a similar kind of relationship. Just as the introduction of leaven into dough ends up changing the rest of the dough, what is done with the first fruits also changes the status of the larger group that it represents.’¹⁷⁸

Essentially, Paul amalgamated two strands of argument from 1 Corinthians (5:6, 15:20) into one in Romans (11:16). In Galatians, Paul also drew on an agricultural metaphor (6:7-8), furthering the link between Paul’s Epistles.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, Paul’s usage of the ‘end of the age’

¹⁷⁶ Kruse, *Romans*, 433.

¹⁷⁷ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 761.

¹⁷⁸ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 762.

¹⁷⁹ JL Martyn, *Galatians*, The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, New York: Doubleday, 1997, 553.

themes should highlight the similarities between the letters and the same opposition whom Paul was addressing. Furthermore, that sexual immorality was one of the specific rulings of the Council of Jerusalem links this issue, and any subsequent attack on Paul on this point, directly with the Judaizers of Acts 15:1, 5.

1.6.2 Circumcision

Although the Council rulings concluded that there should be no expectation for Gentiles to be circumcised this issue was certainly important to the Judaizers within the inner council (Acts 15:5). Why this issue was still being promoted into the churches from ‘certain men who came from James’ (Gal 2:12), and why Paul did not answer them with reference to the ruling of James and the Council in any of his letters is uncertain. However, what is not in doubt is that Paul referred to Judaizers promoting circumcision in many of his letters and therefore this was happening in many of the churches (Galatia, Philippi, Colossae, Crete). Whether they had the backing of the apostles is debatable.

1 Corinthians 7 entails Paul’s direction to the church on matters of marriage and celibacy, with a short discourse in the middle of the text which addressed questions from the Corinthians about a ‘change of status’ (vv17-20). It is within these verses that Paul mentions circumcision, culminating in the statement, ‘circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts’ (v19). On first reading it might seem implausible that the Judaizers were attempting to promote circumcision in Corinth, as elsewhere, based on just these few verses.

Many commentators take this line of thinking, suggesting that Paul’s inclusion of the subject of circumcision was included as a theoretical situation where Paul envisaged theoretical possibilities within the church,¹⁸⁰ or because it was a subject uncontroversial to the

¹⁸⁰ Dunn, *Perspective*, 335.

Corinthians,¹⁸¹ or even commenting that the lack of urgency in the content of the verses indicate that they were not an issue in Corinth.¹⁸² Therefore, for these scholars, Paul included circumcision as one example of a change of status that would be readily understood in a Gentile church ‘precisely because it was never an issue for them.’¹⁸³ However, this argumentation makes no sense. One must question that if Paul wanted to include an theoretical example purely to prove a point for the necessity to stay in one’s social condition at the point of conversion, why would he not have chosen a status common to the Gentile Corinthians that would appealed to their own experiences? If it were not an issue for the Gentile Corinthians, as Fee suggests, how would they be able to understand and relate to Paul’s intended point?¹⁸⁴ Would it not have made more sense to include a Greek Gentile social condition (such as patronage or tutelage) as a social condition one should not change, rather than including a religious marker of identity (such as circumcision) which would have been an alien and irrelevant concept for any Gentile?

In fact, given that Paul had previously noted that he was turning to matters the Corinthians had written to him about (7:1), the inclusion of his reference to a change of social situation in 7:17-20 likely came from the original questions of their letter (i.e., “Paul, should we be circumcised or uncircumcised? Which is better?”). If this is true, there is much within these verses to suggest a Judaizing argument lay behind the Corinthians’ questions.

First, we find unpauline language or terms contained within the passage. In v17, Paul tells the Corinthians no matter what situation they find themselves in when converted to Christ, they should not seek to change status to improve their social standing but rather focus on their ‘walk’ with God.¹⁸⁵ Ciampa claims that ‘walking’ was a ‘Jewish term or metaphor,’ where in Judaism, one was called ‘to walk,’ or conduct one’s life, according to the teachings of the Law of Moses (*halakah*).¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 310.

¹⁸² Fee, *Corinthians*, 340.

¹⁸³ Fee, *Corinthians*, 346.

¹⁸⁴ The reasoning behind Fee’s claim, however, may stem from the evidence of his footnote which seeks to defend Paul on charges of being ‘pro-slavery.’

¹⁸⁵ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 309.

¹⁸⁶ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 309-310.

The phrase ‘keeping God’s commandments’ also contains a concept that stood against Paul’s usual theology of Law and grace (v19). Pauls used the word ‘commandments’ thirteen times in his letters and the majority (ten) referred to the Jewish Law (Rom 13:9, Eph 2:15, 6:2, Titus 1:14, and six times in Rom 7). In addition, the verb ‘to keep’ was used regularly in the New Testament with reference to ‘keep... the Mosaic Law.’¹⁸⁷ Martyn concurs with this to point out that the whole phrase of ‘keeping God’s commandments’ was traditionally Jewish, found many times in the Old Testament and various pieces of Jewish literature.¹⁸⁸ In addition, when Paul spoke of Christians positively, vis-à-vis the Law, he did not usually say they ‘kept’ it but rather that they ‘fulfilled it’ (Rom 8:4, 13:8, Gal 5:14).¹⁸⁹ Finally, Dunn points out that even the balancing word ‘but’ in ‘but keeping God’s commandments’ is a typically Jewish one (Sir 32:23, Wis 6:8, Matt 19:17).¹⁹⁰

All of these examples highlight that the verses contain language unusual to Paul but common, even characteristic, of first-century Judaism. However, we must also ask the question, ‘Can this line of argumentation truly be attributed to Paul as his own thinking?’ ‘Is Paul promoting the Mosaic Law?’ It would seem strange if Paul were promoting *halakah* in v17, to then go on a few verses later (v19) to say that one of the fundamental requirements of *halakah* (circumcision) counts as nothing, even more so to then state, ‘keeping God’s commandments’ (what *halakah* is all about) ‘is what counts.’¹⁹¹ Furthermore, Paul elsewhere states that he is ‘not under the Mosaic Law, bur under the law of Christ’ (1 Cor 9:20, Gal 3:25, 5:18).¹⁹² How then do we resolve these seemingly paradoxical statements and contradictions? Fee answers this question, ‘the answer of course is that Paul did not consider obedience to the ‘commandments of God’ as works of the Law... this [commandments of God] refers instead to the ethical imperatives of the Christian faith.’¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 312.

¹⁸⁸ Martyn, *Galatians*, 518-519. Although Martyn does not go on to point to specific examples unfortunately.

¹⁸⁹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 313.

¹⁹⁰ Dunn, *Perspective*, 336.

¹⁹¹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 310.

¹⁹² Scholars agree that 9:20 refers to Paul not being fully Torah observant as a Christian. See Thiselton, *First*, 703. Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 476.

¹⁹³ Fee, *Corinthians*, 347.

Essentially, Paul, prompted by the Corinthian questions posed in 7:1, promoted ‘*halakah*’ as a concept but not in terms of the Jewish-Christian perspective based in Old Testament Law (which ‘is nothing’). Instead, he insisted on *halakah* from a new Christian perspective (‘which is what counts’). Thus *halakah*, in Paul’s view, entailed ‘helping the Gentiles to live holy lives, to walk before God, and to please him in every respect’.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, circumcision, which was assigned to Judaism and old creation, for Paul, had been superseded by the new creation replaced by Christ with the cross as the break point between them.¹⁹⁵ Paul was, in effect, saying, ‘were you uncircumcised when saved? Then remain so. Were you circumcised? Again, remain so. The outward appearance is unimportant. If you want to equate identity with *halakah*, then I will respond with the necessity of the *halakah* of the heart.’

Martyn comments that it is clear from the verse itself that Paul did not consider circumcision to be one of the commandments of God.¹⁹⁶ This begs the question, ‘if not Paul then whom?’ If Paul was not promoting *halakah* in terms of circumcision, then, why was it even mentioned in the letter? It is not inappropriate to suggest that 7:17-20 was Paul’s answers to matters they had written to him about (7:1), which stemmed from Judaizers who had become present in Corinth. After all, Christian-Jews were the ones who continued to think like Jews and assume that conversion to the Messiah meant entry to the people of the Messiah (I.e., Israel) through undergoing circumcision.¹⁹⁷ Only Jews would identify others as ‘uncircumcised’ and give significance to the absence of circumcision.¹⁹⁸ In fact, Paul made it clear that it was ‘the circumcision’ (i.e., those who ‘came from James’ and forced Gentiles to follow Jewish customs, Gal 2:11-14) who were the group who referred to Gentiles as ‘the uncircumcised’ (Eph 2:11) in the first place. They were the ones who viewed circumcision and uncircumcision as the representation of ethnic identity... signified by a way of life epitomised by its most physically visible expressions.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 310.

¹⁹⁵ Dunn, *Perspective*, 314.

¹⁹⁶ Martyn, *Galatians*, 519.

¹⁹⁷ Dunn, *Perspective*, 315. Dunn points to Pauline terms of Christ/Cross as the Christian antithesis of circumcision as the cultural identity marker of Christians, see Dunn, *Perspective*, 323-327.

¹⁹⁸ Dunn, *Perspective*, 330.

¹⁹⁹ Dunn, *Perspective*, 330.

Furthermore, the suggestion that Paul was answering questions regarding Judaizing views of circumcision in 1 Corinthians 7 gathers weight when compared with associated passages in Paul's other Epistles where he addressed Judaizing situations. That Paul called his opponents 'the circumcision' highlights a marker of the nature of their theological beliefs. However, as we shall see, there are further theological points between the Epistles that can elaborate on their mission against the apostle

Paul used exactly the same 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision' formula in 1 Corinthians and Galatians to defend himself against heretical practices that had pervaded the churches (1 Cor 7:17-20, Gal 5:6, 6:15). In all three passages Paul contrasted the irrelevance of circumcision to a new aspect of the Christian value system (i.e., 'faith through love,' 'new creation,' and 'keeping God's commandments'). Ciampa highlights that in all three cases the repudiation of circumcision is replaced with a positive aspect of faith. Through this Paul rebalanced the negative catchwords and underlying theologies of 'circumcision/Law' with positive 'love/new/creation/commandments' in Christ's kingdom. Thus, in 1 Corinthians 7:17-20, the negative view of *halakah* from an old creation perspective (referred to in the Corinthians questions of 7:1) was rebalanced with a positive view of *halakah* from Paul's understanding of new creation faith (i.e., keeping the commandments of God).

Ciampa concludes, 'since "faith through love" and a "new creation" cannot be understood as Paul endorsing the Law of Moses in part or in any sense, it seems that "keeping God's commandments" should probably not be taken that way either.'²⁰⁰ Effectively, Paul denied in 1 Corinthians 7:17-20 that ethnic identity counted for anything with God, which Dunn sees as a 'close complementary thought' that Paul also expressed in Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 3:11.²⁰¹ God values neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but instead the new life that flows from love (Gal 5:6, 6:15, Rom 2:25-26) hence the real point of obeying God's commandments (1 Cor 7:19).²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 315.

²⁰¹ Dunn, *Perspective*, 330. Or 'a shorthand for something very similar to what Paul argues in Gal 5:1-6 and Rom 2:12-29 (especially v25).' P La Grange Du Toit, 'Paul's Reference to the "Keeping of the Commandments of God" in 1 Corinthians 7:19,' *New Testament Society of Southern Africa*, 49.1 (2015) 21-45, citing 35.

²⁰² CS Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005, 66.

Even if one were to argue that Paul was promoting circumcision, in the context of *halakah* in 1 Corinthians 7:17-20, it could also be retorted that he certainly didn't expect any of the Gentile converts to keep the commandments themselves. In other words, as La Grange Du Toit comments, 'between the lines Paul seems to be saying, "does circumcision really matter to you? Then keep the whole Torah. It is all or nothing"'²⁰³

Paul argued effectively in the same way in Romans 2:25 and Galatians 5:3-4. Circumcision should matter if one keeps the whole Torah but if the Law is broken one would become as if they had not been circumcised (therefore circumcision is nothing). However, should one who is not circumcised manage to obey the Law they would be regarded as though they were circumcised (therefore the outward physical sign of uncircumcision is also nothing). Once again, for Paul, keeping Torah is all or nothing. There is no half-way point. However, the point in Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 7:19 is that he neither considers it possible or applicable to keep the whole Torah anyway (a notion that is also evident in both Rom 3:4-20 and Gal 5:1-6).²⁰⁴

Ultimately, 1 Corinthians 7:17-20 discusses why one should not change their social status with respect to the need for circumcision (v18). The desire to change status by circumcision would constitute 'old age' Judaistic thinking where outer distinctions in some way contributed to one's status before God. The same strand of thought can be seen in Galatians (5:2-4, 6:12-13a), and Romans (2:25-28), in terms of the insignificance of circumcision. Finally, there is a leveller of a new faith command found in Christ of 'keeping God's non-*halakic* commandments,' which mirrors other levellers of 'faith expressing itself through love' (Gal 5:6), and 'the new creation' (Gal 6:15). 1 Corinthians 7:17-20, therefore, might only be a passing comment compared to the other examples mentioned, but it implies a larger discourse of the Law and faith in Christ.²⁰⁵ In 1 Corinthians 7:19, as in Galatians 5:14, Paul presupposed Christ's act of differentiating the promising and guiding law of God from the cursing and enslaving Law of Moses. In all three Epistles, (1 Cor 7:19, Gal 5:14 and Rom

²⁰³ La Grange Du Toit, 'God,' 35.

²⁰⁴ La Grange Du Toit, 'God,' 41.

²⁰⁵ La Grange Du Toit, 'God,' 42.

13:9), Paul saw the commandments as brought to their completing sum total in ‘loving neighbour.’²⁰⁶

Paul’s opponents, however, did not have the same theology and were instead determined to ‘boast’ about the Gentiles circumcision in the flesh, should they convince them to adhere to the procedure (Gal 6:13). Paul accused them of giving ‘merely human commands’ (Tit 1:10-16) and would himself put no confidence or ‘boast’ in the flesh as opposed to ‘the circumcision’ (Phil 3:3, Col 2:11-13). For Paul, the greater understanding of ‘keeping the commandments’ was equivalent to ‘faith operating through love,’ leading the apostle to observe a demotion of commandments including circumcision, sacrifice and matters of religious uncleanness. All of these issues, uncoincidentally are found in the rulings of Acts 15.²⁰⁷

My suggestion as to the ‘circumcision’ issue in Corinth, then, is that Paul was responding to questions asked by the Corinthians in their letter to him (7:1). This included questions of the necessity of marriage, celibacy and finally, of circumcision and how that linked with their spiritual identity in terms of *halakah*. Paul, after stating that one should remain in the situation to which the Lord assigned to them (v17), and linking this explicitly to circumcision (v18), concluded with the phrase ‘circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commandments is what counts’ (v19). Although the Corinthians were speaking from a viewpoint of old creation *halakah*, Paul responded to show the irrelevance of circumcision and instead insisted on a new creation understanding of *halakah*, which involved obedience to Christ. The necessity for this discussion was not of Paul’s instigation, neither was it of the Corinthians alone. It stemmed from a Judaizing group who had entered Corinth and had begun to press the Gentile believers for the need to be circumcised to be religiously acceptable to God (as was the case in other churches Paul had formed).

Thus, we have explored two issues found in 1 Corinthians (and other Epistles) that link the Judaizing situation from Acts 15 to the church in Corinth. However, as we shall see, the final

²⁰⁶ Martyn, *Galatians*, 518.

²⁰⁷ Dunn, *Perspective*, 336-337.

ruling of the Council (food sacrificed to idols and associated food laws) also featured in a lengthy discourse in the letter.

1.6.3 *Food Laws*

The final attack on Paul's apostolic leadership, based on the rulings from the Jerusalem Council, came on the matter of food regulations. 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 reflects an A-B-A structure. Paul addressed the issue of food sacrificed to idols (8:1-13), before seemingly moved to a different topic in 9:1-23 (his own example of waiving rights for preaching). He then returned again to the issue of food sacrificed to idols (9:24-11:1).²⁰⁸ It seems that the Judaizers saw Paul's teaching of the freedom to eat anything sold in the market (8:10, 10:25) as endorsing something that contravened the explicit rulings of the Council, thus providing another point of attack on him. However, was Paul really endorsing eating 'idol food?' did he really believe that one could celebrate with pagan feasts? There is so much theological depth in these Chapters that it would be impossible to exegete every point fully. However, in order to highlight how Paul's opponents' link with these verses it would be pertinent to display some of the Judaistic arguments that Paul was responding to.

Paul began the section with the familiar 'now about' (mirrored in 7:1), which suggests he was responding to questions given in the Corinthian letter he had received.²⁰⁹ However, one should refrain from believing that Paul's response was simply a standard matter of questions and answers. The evidence of the nature of Paul's vigorous and combative answer suggests that this is yet another issue on which Paul and some in Corinth were at odds.²¹⁰ Indeed, before Paul could even get to the matter of the questions, he seemed irked by a citation found within the Corinthian letter. 'We know that "we all possess knowledge" (v1). What is the 'knowledge' that the Corinthians (or indeed Judaizers) claimed to possess? Paul stated it in v4 with the repeat of 'we know that' before citing two more statements they had made (i.e.,

²⁰⁸ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 367.

²⁰⁹ Ciampa states that most scholars agree that Paul cited a Corinthian position in these verses, but there is debate as to which words are his and which are from the Corinthians. See Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 373-374.

²¹⁰ Fee, *Corinthians*, 396.

‘an idol is nothing in the world’ and ‘there is no God but one’). Therefore, it seems that the basis of the Corinthians’ questions about the approach to food sacrificed to idols was not founded on any Greek or Gentile discussion, but instead on the Jewish understanding of *Shema*.²¹¹

There seemed to be some confusion from the Corinthian side of the issue. Some, quoting the above Old Testament passages, thought that as an idol was effectively a nonentity, eating idol food held no real danger as there was no alternative spiritual being involved to acquire you or your allegiance. Why should it be an issue to go to cultic temples to eat if the ‘gods involved had no entity?’²¹² Other ‘weaker’ members seemed to remain troubled about this issue, resulting in a possible elitism of the strong vs the weak. If the Judaizers had arrived to find this kind of thinking in the church it is not surprising that they would have found it abhorrent, especially more so if it were deemed that this came from the apostle’s teaching itself. Therefore, Paul needed to respond with clarification of his understanding.

For Paul, going to the temple of the idol and participating in the cultic meal was the real issue here and he argued that the Corinthians should not be participating in this whatsoever (this was something the Judaizers would align with). However, with regard to food sold in the market (most of which would have previously been sacrificed to an idol) Paul had a different answer. The Corinthians may do as they wish in this area, unless someone called attention to the matter (something the Judaizers would have been vehemently opposed to).²¹³ For Paul the real issue was not with the food itself, but with those whose consciences were strong enough to eat ‘idol food’ leading weaker believers into idolatry and therefore causing them to ‘stumble’ or leading them into sin (8:9, 13). This rebalancing of Paul’s reason for conducting oneself to benefit ‘other’ mirrors his views of circumcision. Paul was unwilling to be bound by Judaistic ritual food laws as ‘an idol is nothing.’ Just as Paul used the phrase ‘circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing,’ so he could have input ‘idol food’ in the equation. These things were nothing to Paul; faith displayed through love was what really mattered.

²¹¹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 374.

²¹² Fee, *Corinthians*, 398.

²¹³ Fee, *Corinthians*, 396-397.

Paul might not be willing to bend to legalistic religious expectations, but for the sake of the ‘weaker brothers’ he would readily do that which demanded giving up his rights.

Thiselton argues that the Corinthian argument was based on the fact that influential pagan friends would invite the more esteemed members of the church to social functions in the pagan temples, and it was only the ‘weak’ Christians who made a fuss about eating ‘idol’ food anyway.²¹⁴ However, if these arguments formed the basis of Corinthian protest, why did Paul not answer them directly or make any comment towards them? If Paul had received Greek Gentile arguments for the social need to eat food sacrificed to idols, why did he answer from a Jewish Old Testament perspective? It is not inappropriate to suggest that Paul, responding to the questions from the Corinthian letter, included the *Shema* because that was the foundational basis of the issue (which stemmed from Judaizing influences in Corinth).

Furthermore, there is much more than the *Shema* contained within 1 Corinthians 8-10 that hint of Jewish arguments, contained within the Corinthian letter.²¹⁵ Creational monotheism of the Old Testament has a significant part of Paul’s approach to dealing with these issues (8:4-6, 10:26-30).²¹⁶ Paul’s use of the motif of ‘building’ (8:1) was based on the Old Testament prophetic promises of God to Israel.²¹⁷ Paul’s phrase ‘food offered to a God’ (8:4) reflects a Jewish perspective (also found in 2 Macc 5:2) and has the same wording of the ruling of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:29. Paul argued from the background of the Exodus referring to ‘our ancestors’ as historical agents of idolatrous sin (10:1-11). All of these terms and arguments, Ciampa concludes, places the whole discussion within the context of Jewish concerns regarding idolatry and the historical role of avoiding such food out of loyalty to the God of Israel.²¹⁸ This hardly seems to suggest that Gentile Greek Christians lay behind the attack on Paul which caused him to ask why his freedom was being judged and denounced for his own conscience regarding eating ‘idol food’ (10:29-30). For Paul, in predominantly

²¹⁴ AC Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary, Grand Rapids, William B Eerdmans, 2006, 125.

²¹⁵ There are too many links to discuss fully, but it is pertinent to highlight a few in order to suggest the Jewish basis of the argument.

²¹⁶ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 371.

²¹⁷ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 375.

²¹⁸ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 373.

Gentile-Christian churches, such as Corinth, Jewish taboos did not count, and Jewish-Christian visitors could not presume to legislate matters for Gentile-Christian churches.²¹⁹

However, if it were deemed that Paul's teaching endorsed behaviour that directly contravened the Jerusalem Council rulings, the issue of food sacrificed to idols would have provided a justified point of attack for the travelling Judaizers. As Manson suggests, 'there is a presumption that where this question (regarding idolatry) was raised, Jews or Jewish-Christians were involved.'²²⁰

Although the issues raised about food laws in Paul's other Epistles do not necessarily correspond to that of Corinth (i.e., involving idolatry), the fact that 'food laws' was regularly linked to Paul's Judaistic opponents should highlight the *modus operandi* of the same group. In Galatia, the Jewish-Christians withdrew from table fellowship with the Gentiles probably because the Judaizers insisted on strict observance of Jewish dietary laws. This led to the necessity for the Gentile-Christians to observe the Jewish food laws, or else face the prospect of being ostracised from table fellowship (Gal 2:12).²²¹ Barrett links this issue, and therefore the same group, in Galatia directly to both that of 1 Corinthians 8-10 and the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.²²² In Colossae, Paul was dealing with 'the circumcision' (2:11-15) who were pressurising the Gentile believers with rules of 'what to eat/what to drink' on Sabbath days (2:16-22), something Paul termed 'merely human commands and teachings' (2:22). In both Crete (Tit 1:14), and Ephesus (1 Tim 4:3), Paul's opponents were also preoccupied with ritual purity, which Towner suggests, 'had some affinity with the teaching about food and defilement in Colossae.'²²³

That Paul had to defend his teachings of supposed libertinism (including sexual immorality, circumcision, and food laws) in multiple Epistles highlights that the same group lay behind each letter and that they stemmed from a Judaistic sect linked with the Jerusalem Council in

²¹⁹ Manson, *Epistles*, 200.

²²⁰ Manson, *Epistles*, 200.

²²¹ Fung, *Galatians*, 110.

²²² Barrett, 'Cephas,' 7.

²²³ PH Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series, Nottingham: InterVarsity, 1994, 231-232.

some way. In Corinth, even the very fact that Paul had to add qualifiers to their use of the slogan ‘everything is permissible’ (6:12-13,10:23-24), with the leveller ‘however, not all things are beneficial’ (10:23), highlights that he had to defend himself against accusations of an endorsement of promoting immoral lifestyles.²²⁴ Indeed, Paul faced the same accusations regarding his approval of liberty in Corinth as he did in Rome (Rom 3:8).

All of these indications serve to suggest that Paul was under attack from Judaizers in many of the churches he had founded, and therefore, that a single group of opposition is in view. Even Sumney, who is opposed to Baur’s theory of a Judaizing opposition, concedes that any verbal similarity between documents provides a sufficient basis to defend the supposition of a single front of opposition.²²⁵

The link between issues in the Epistles points to the same Judaizing opposition, but the lack of clarity of the depth of the situation in 1 Corinthians suggests that this was Paul’s initial letter of defence against them. By the writing of Galatians, Paul’s tone and manner of attack had changed as he had become fully aware of the situation. This tone was also evident in Paul’s next letter, 2 Corinthians (11:13-15). In the earlier letters, Paul’s response was bound by the limits of his knowledge of the oppositions’ identity. As Sumney states, ‘the closer and more repeated contact between an author and his opponents, the more likely that he or she is to understand them correctly.’²²⁶ Therefore, as his letters progressed so did his understanding of the *modus operandi* of the opponents.

Now that a postulation has been made as to the Judaistic nature of Paul’s opponents, it would be beneficial to address Paul’s general views on women. What did Paul really think about his female counterpart?

²²⁴ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 251.

²²⁵ Sumney, *Identifying*, 41.

²²⁶ Sumney, *Identifying*, 85.

2. Paul and Women

Was Paul really a misogynistic leader who wanted to suppress and silence women in the churches? While some²²⁷ see Paul as the voice of oppression, others²²⁸ propose the opposite and suggest that Paul was actually someone who promoted women's liberation. The basic truth is that Paul's views have been repeatedly misinterpreted and incorrectly used to provide ungodly justification for everything from war to slavery to championing the inferiority of women. As Elliott insightfully states, 'Paul has been made an instrument in the legitimisation of oppression. But he is only one of its victims.'²²⁹ His views on women were too radical for the first-century church to appreciate and implement and today nothing has changed. Elliott remarks

The voice we hear today as Paul's is a highly synthetic voice, thoroughly filtered, modulated, and fine-tuned by centuries of Christian theologising. The Paul we hear has been thoroughly depoliticised, the social and political dimensions of his work have been suppressed, and a narrow band of theological tones has been amplified.²³⁰

Indeed, the church today have painted such a distorted vision of Paul that we are just as unable to come to terms with his views as the church were in the first-century.²³¹ Careful reading of Paul's letters shows the apostle not to be a domineering suppressor of females, but someone who deeply valued working relationships with women, endorsed them to high positions within the church setting, and sought to re-balance the male-dominated favour found in his society.

²²⁷ See Wire's work on *The Corinthian Women Prophets* (1990) for an example of this view.

²²⁸ See WR Allison, 'Let the Women be Silent,' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 32 (1988) 26-60 for an example of this view.

²²⁹ Elliott, *Paul*, 4-9.

²³⁰ Elliott, *Paul*, 57.

²³¹ R Scroggs, 'Paul and the Eschatological Woman,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 40 (1972) 283-303, citing 283.

2.1 Working Relationships

The greetings lists within Paul's letters highlight the number of women involved in his ministry and to what degree he acknowledged their gifting and involvement. Greek women of high standing were attracted to the apostle's teaching and subsequently joined him (Acts 17:4, 12). Bailey makes the valid point that these women would not have been attracted to a movement, or indeed a leader, that did not respect them.²³² Indeed, why would wealthy and influential women, who to some degree had a role and voice in society, forgo their social standing to become second class citizens in an environment where they would not be able to speak? That they associated themselves with Paul must suggest that the apostle was promoting an empowering message for women. The evidence that Paul was pro-women is also evident in his association with a number of women and address of them with various titles, dependent upon their standing in the Lord.

While in Corinth, Paul stayed with Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who earlier had taught Apollos in 'the way of God' (Acts 18:26). It is quite unimaginable that Paul would have written a letter to the Corinthians that would demean Priscilla, and also that she would maintain her friendship with the apostle if he had.²³³ Paul was supported by Phoebe (Romans 16:2) and entrusted her to deliver his letter to the Romans, which shows that he must have held her in high esteem.²³⁴ In Romans, Paul honoured many of his female co-workers by naming them in his letter (Chloe, Mary, Tryphaena, Tyrphosa, and Persis - Rom 6:1, 6, 12). In none of these instances did Paul demean the women for their social or spiritual standing, in fact the terms he used to commend them highlight that he did the exact opposite. Indeed, 'when we read Pauline references to women, we recognise that the Pauline literature saw women as prominent leaders and missionaries who toiled for the gospel.'²³⁵

²³² KE Bailey, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes*, London: SPCK, 301.

²³³ Bailey, *Paul*, 301.

²³⁴ PB Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, 62.

²³⁵ Fiorenza, *Memory*, 161.

In Romans 16:3 Paul addressed Priscilla as his ‘fellow worker,’ the same term he also used to describe men such as Apollos (1 Cor 3:9) and Timothy (1 Thess 3:2). In 1 Corinthians 16:16 he urged the Corinthians to be ‘subject to everyone who joins in the work and labours at it,’ (i.e., his co-workers), therefore implying an affirmation of women having the ability to serve God in an equal way to men.²³⁶

Certainly, Paul’s affirmation of these women, as ‘co-workers,’ and Phoebe as a deacon (*diakonos*) in Romans 16:1, show that he valued their godly abilities in a way that contradicts the suppressive interpretation of his words of 1 Corinthians 11:2-10 and 14:34-35. The term of *diakonai* had direct connotations to that of a teacher/preacher, and one to whom had been entrusted the task of communicating the word of God. They represented a special class of co-workers, who had a calling and ministry which was distinguishable from the congregation.²³⁷ Payne understands Paul’s address of Phoebe as ‘*diakonos*’ to therefore mean he saw her as a minister, rather than a servant. For, if Paul had intended to consider her work merely as a pattern of service, he would have used the expression ‘one who serves’ instead of *diakonos*. Payne is correct that the address of *diakonos* must highlight that some women were appreciated to have an office of ministry that was recognisable above the laity, otherwise Paul would have termed all of his co-workers that way.²³⁸

It is important to realise that within Paul’s listing of spiritual gifts, the emphasis focuses heavily on the personal gifts of *all* members of the body of Christ, rather than a structured hierarchy of a select elite *few* (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).²³⁹ Indeed, concerning prophecy, Paul stated that he wished ‘all’ to partake in the spiritual gift, not just the males (14:5). This statement should not be perceived lightly, as Paul had a high view of prophecy and of those who administered the gift. In four of the five ‘gifting lists’ within Paul’s letters, prophecy occupied the first or second placed position of importance (1 Cor 12:28, 29, Eph 4:11, Rom

²³⁶ Fiorenza, *Memory*, 169. See also 1 Thessalonians 5:12.

²³⁷ A Lemaire, ‘Ministries in the New Testament,’ *Biblical Theological Bulletin*, 3.1 (1973/1974) 133-166, citing 156. EE Ellis, ‘Paul and His Co-Workers,’ *New Testament Studies*, 17 (1971) 437-453, citing 442.

²³⁸ However, Payne stretches his understanding of the situation between Paul and Phoebe too far when he states that Paul was himself under Phoebe’s leadership. Although they had a working relationship, there is no evidence to suggest that Phoebe was in leadership over Paul. See Payne, *Man*, 61-63.

²³⁹ S Smalley, ‘Spiritual Gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-16,’ *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 87 (1968) 427-433, citing 427.

12:6-8).²⁴⁰ In fact, in all of Paul's gifting lists (Rom 12:6-8, 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28; 13:1-3, 8; 14:1-5, 6, 26-32; Eph 4:11, 1 Thess 5:11-22), the one single constant spiritual gift is that of prophecy.²⁴¹ Smalley suggests that 'the three main gifts (in these lists) accord with a Semitic habit of singling out for particular mention the first three (presumably as most important) of a general group and apostles, prophets and teachers were obviously leading, if not *the* leading figures in the primitive church'.²⁴²

Whether it is true that prophecy was seen to be distinguished from preaching,²⁴³ or included preaching,²⁴⁴ the fact is that it had many important functions in Paul's understanding. Prophecy, for Paul, 'strengthened, encouraged and comforted' (1 Cor 14:3), 'edified the church' (14:5), and 'convinced people of their sins' (14:24). All of these attributes came in the context of 'following the way of love' (14:1), and prophecy was therefore linked to the previous chapter (13), which focused on love that shows no elitism or discrimination. Therefore, if Paul considered prophecy to consist of oratory speaking by using a word of revelation that edified the church, brought proclamation to unbelievers for salvific purposes, and endorsed women to lead in this gifting (11:5), it is impossible to say that either he diminished women's abilities or called for their silencing.

Indeed, the fact that Paul authorised women to pray and prophesy in 11:5 highlights his intentions for women. The apostle's authorisation for women to have a voice, in a time where this was socially rare, shows Paul not as a subordinator of women, but as a liberator and revolutionary. However, Paul's endorsement of women prophesying and having a voice was not the only area to which Paul brought liberation, he did the same in other parts of the letter. For further understanding on this subject, we need to turn briefly to 1 Corinthians 7.

²⁴⁰ Smalley, 'Gifts,' 428.

²⁴¹ JDG Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, London: SCM, 1975, 227.

²⁴² Smalley, 'Gifts,' 430.

²⁴³ B Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Church*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009, 93.

²⁴⁴ Lemaire, 'Ministries,' 144.

2.2 Paul the Liberator

Payne highlights that Paul had a positive view of women and treated them with respect, which he perhaps gained from his Pharisaic teacher, Gamaliel. This, for Payne, should caution us against the assumption that Paul had a low view of women, which characterised much of Pharisaical Judaism, and that of Paul's opponents.²⁴⁵ This is evident in Chapter 7, where in the same way that Paul pushed social boundaries regarding women and prophecy, his address on marriage endorsed practices that confronted and contradicted the social norms of his day.²⁴⁶

Dio Chrysostom wrote about the cultural acceptance and expectation of men's infidelity within marriage, remarking of practices that happened during parties,

Men condone even the matter of adultery in a somewhat magnificent fashion and the practice of it finds great and most charitable consideration... where husbands suffer the adulterers to be called guests and friends... at times even entertaining these themselves and inviting them to their tables. Where I say, these intrigues of the married women are carried on with such an air of respectability...²⁴⁷

Russell translates the last line of this to suggest that instead of supplying their guests with *hetaerae*, some of the men actually supplied their wives.²⁴⁸ Indeed, free men had legal sexual access to their slaves, prostitutes, or concubines and any case of sexual involvement was not considered adultery for the husband. The wife, however, was considered to be an adulteress if she had sexual relations with anyone other than her husband.²⁴⁹ In this context, Paul's

²⁴⁵ Payne, *Man*, 37-40. Gamaliel had a favourable attitude toward women, such as promoting their welfare and considering their practical needs by allowing midwives to go anywhere to help a delivery etc. (*Ros. Has.* 2:5).

²⁴⁶ Just as Paul confronted and pushed social regarding the status of Jews & Gentiles, slaves and free etc. (Gal 3:28).

²⁴⁷ DA Russell, *Dio Chrysostom, Orations VII, XII, XXXVI*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992, citing 7.141-142, 155.

²⁴⁸ Russell, *Chrysostom*, 155.

²⁴⁹ E Fantham, *Women in the Classical World*, Oxford: Oxford University, 1994, 300.

insistence that the Corinthian men should remain committed to one woman (7:2) was not only revolutionary, but evidence of his positive views of women. ‘Paul’s concern for mutuality, reciprocity, and most especially the presupposition that sexual intimacy provides mutual pleasure remains distinctive and far ahead of its times.’²⁵⁰ In a time of debauchery and hypocrisy, Paul stood out as a beacon of spiritual reform, as Chapter 7 highlights.

Chapter 7 is characterised by Paul’s series of carefully selected ‘levelling statements’ that regarded the marital responsibilities of both women and men. In a time, dominated by patriarchal leadership, where men were sexually, legally, and morally expected to be the dominant person within a relationship, Paul amazingly wrote instructions designed to empower the women and bring them to equality with men on a variety of issues. The significance of this cannot be overstated. No contemporary of Paul’s, within Greek or Roman literature, ever suggested the same mutuality in any way.²⁵¹ In these verses Paul proclaimed the same equality of freedom and responsibility between men and women in the issues of:

1. Marital duties (v3). It would have been easy, and in keeping with times, for Paul to stop with women belonging to men, but he did not.²⁵² Fee comments that Paul here was using a ‘language of obligation,’ which emphasised the responsibility of inter-marital sexual intimacy. This implied that within Christian marriage one partner should come under the authority of the other. However, against the male-biased understanding of this view in the ancient world, Paul put sexual relations within a marriage on a ‘much higher ground that one finds in most cultures... where sex is often viewed as the husband’s privilege and the wife’s obligation. For Paul, the marriage bed is... an affirmation that the two belong to one another in total mutuality.’²⁵³ Indeed, the implication was that, in the area of sexual relations, the woman would have authority over the man in equal measure to the reverse. Women, in Paul’s revolutionary ideology on marital duties, attained a much higher and more respected position than most in society.
2. Bodies belonging to each other (v4). Again, this line of thinking was revolutionary in the ancient world. The *paterfamilias* had legal authority not just over his own body,

²⁵⁰ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 102.

²⁵¹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 281.

²⁵² Scroggs, ‘Paul,’ 295.

²⁵³ Fee, *Corinthians*, 310-311.

but also of his wife's body and those of the members of his household. As discussed previously, it was morally and socially acceptable for the man to take sexual advantage of those in his house as he wished. Paul's statement in v4 declared the complete reverse of the social norm, i.e., that 'the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.' This radically restricted the husband's sexual freedom and communicated his obligation to fulfil his marital duty to his wife alone.

3. The responsibilities not to deprive each other of sexual intimacy (v5). Thiselton comments that in the ancient world sex was seen as something necessary for procreation or as a service that a woman provided for the man. Again, 'Paul appears to be the first writer to suggest that such 'pleasure' could be mutual... this was entirely absent from Greek and Roman writings of the day.'²⁵⁴
4. The order for the wife and husband to stay married to their partners (vv10-11). Divorce was rife in the Greco-Roman first-century and very easily executed. For men, the simple utterance of the sentence '*tuas res tibi habeto*' was all that was needed for a man to divorce a woman.²⁵⁵ For women, they could divorce equally as easily by simply telling their husband to leave, or by leaving themselves.²⁵⁶ Although this does not specifically benefit the women alone, the very fact that the *paterfamilias* was the norm in most households, it is likely that men held power of dowries over the women and were therefore more likely to divorce than their wives.
5. The order not to divorce an unbelieving partner (vv12-13, 15). Gillihan suggests that these verses were *halakic*, and that Paul wrote them to apply the newly realised commandments from Jesus on divorce (Mark 10:1-12), that would have been perceived to regard Jewish practices, onto mixed marriages between believers and unbelievers.²⁵⁷ The signification of this is evident when specifically looking at v14.
6. The affirmation of mutuality in spiritual relations (vv14 and 16). Paul, in v14, went far beyond what one might expect of him to make his point. To 'sanctify,' in the Jewish tradition, meant 'to take someone in marriage.' However, in Judaism, the woman was always the one consecrated by her husband as his spouse. The extension of consecration that Paul extended to the women was untraditional and unheard of.

²⁵⁴ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 101-104.

²⁵⁵ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 105.

²⁵⁶ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 292.

²⁵⁷ YM Gillihan, 'Jewish Laws on Illicit Marriage, The Defilement of Offspring, And the Holiness of the Temple: A New Halakic Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:14,' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 121/4 (2002) 711-744, citing 713.

Paul, here, ascribed the same consecrating power that was traditionally bestowed upon the husband, to the wife also.²⁵⁸ The significance of Paul stating that the woman could sanctify the husband was that by doing this Paul effectively put the woman into a more powerful role, while the unbelieving husband would implicitly become ‘feminised’ in the eyes of society.²⁵⁹

7. The concern of married/unmarried women and men (vv32-34). By equalising men and women, when discussing his desire for them to remain single, Paul gave Christian women the freedom either to gain the measure of security that marriage brings, or to abstain from marriage. Paul thus brought a new dimension of mutuality and reciprocity to the male-female relationship.²⁶⁰

It is unarguable, when realising Paul’s usage of equalising statements regarding the male-female relationship, that it was not the apostle’s intention to lower the status of women or to affirm any validity to the *status quo* within the Corinthian church. Instead, he sought to quash any self-elevated male status within the church and level the gender gap.

Some feminist scholars read Paul’s ideology differently, however. Fiorenza concedes that Paul championed equality and mutuality between men and women, but suggests that it is incorrect to conclude that this led to equality or freedom as Paul only ‘stressed interdependence for sexual relationships and not for all marriages.’²⁶¹ Unfortunately she fails to recognise the contradiction of her own words as she goes on to point that, by advising women to remain unmarried (7:34), Paul was opposing the intentions of existing Roman law and encouraging ordinary women to become independent.²⁶² How can Paul have stressed freedom for sexual relationships and marriages alone if he also addressed the virgins and widows of the congregation? For some scholars, the classic patriarchal misinterpretation of 11:2-16 and 14:34-35 incorrectly leads to the assumption that he was not fighting for equality of the sexes.²⁶³ They tend to observe Paul negatively as someone who ‘disqualified married

²⁵⁸ Fiorenza, *Memory*, 222-223.

²⁵⁹ Gillihan, ‘Jewish,’ 718.

²⁶⁰ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 119.

²⁶¹ Fiorenza, *Memory*, 224.

²⁶² Fiorenza, *Memory*, 225.

²⁶³ D Daube, ‘Pauline Contributions to a Pluralistic Culture: Re-Creation and Beyond,’ in DG Miller (ed) *Jesus and Man’s Hope*, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971, 223-243, citing 239.

people as less engaged and dedicated Christians,²⁶⁴ rather than positively as someone who sought to promote and elevate women's status in society and the church. Wire suggests that Paul aligned himself only with those who accepted their own loss of status as a Christian. Women sought to gain status for themselves, and therefore they were among those who offered Paul money for preaching in order to establish friendships with Paul. However, his rejection of their monetary offer and friendship came because their offer constituted a breach of their assigned status, and furthermore Paul chose to align himself with the elite in the Corinthian society. Wire concludes that his refusal of payment from the women could only be seen as Paul's 'rejection of friendship between equals.'²⁶⁵ Elliott points out that the opponents of Paul considered themselves to be superior to him and abused him in an attempt to humiliate and shame him.²⁶⁶ If the elite of Corinth were opposed to Paul and abused him because of his refusal to accept payment, how can they have been his compatriots as Wire suggests?

Unfortunately for scholars who wish to suggest Paul was anti-women, Chapter 7 provides a major stumbling block to their argument. Indeed, as Thiselton highlights, 'the implications of 7:2-6 are ground-breaking against the background of the times. They also serve to question Wire's radical feminist reading that Paul wants to manipulate Christian women in Corinth into retaining more home-based, less public roles.'²⁶⁷

That Paul's message elevated the spiritual and social status of women, who were normally peripheral within the ecclesial setting, cannot be denied. The praise that he gave the Corinthians for holding onto his egalitarian teachings of allowing women to have a voice (11:2) was contrasted with his disdain for the way they were negatively treating the marginalised during the Lord's Supper (11:17). Certainly, Paul was a man who fought for the weak and oppressed in society. For him, those who were deemed 'weaker' were actually entirely valuable and had a God-given status of greater honour (12:23-24). Each part of the body was indispensable (12:22) and no matter how important one thought of themselves, if they did not possess love, their gifting became immaterial (13:1-3). This is why, for Paul,

²⁶⁴ Fiorenza, *Memory*, 226.

²⁶⁵ Wire, *Corinthians*, 193-195.

²⁶⁶ P Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1987, 217-218. Elliott, *Paul*, 64.

²⁶⁷ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 103.

division was so destructive, as it led to competitive ranking and members of the body putting themselves over others (12:25). Indeed, it was the Spirit who gave to each member as the Spirit willed, regardless of their sexual identity (12:7, 11) and therefore restricting women to minister was not simply to deprive the church, it was seen by Paul as an obstacle to God's command (14:1).²⁶⁸ Essentially, then, one of Paul's intentions for writing the letter must have been to urge God's children to accept their new-found status-change in the Lord. Through the endorsement of praying and prophesying, the acknowledgement of women as his 'co-workers,' and the equalising statements in Chapter 7, the Corinthian women undoubtedly experienced a surge in status from Paul's teaching.

Now that we have discussed Paul's views on women it would be beneficial to explore the 'women passages' of 1 Corinthians. How can we say that Paul was a liberator of women when certain passages seemingly depict him in an opposite light? Is there any inter-play of these opponents within these verses? Therefore, to these verses, we must turn.

²⁶⁸ Payne, *Man*, 72-73.

3. Liberated Women (1 Corinthians 11:2-16)

3.1 Roman and Greek Women in Society

Were women liberated or suppressed in Greco-Roman society? Did Paul subscribe to the cultural understandings on this topic? How can we make sense of the fact that Paul seemed to endorse the veiling and silencing of women in the Corinthian congregation? In order to understand Paul's view, it is imperative to have an appreciation of the *Sitz im Leben* from which he was writing. Roman cultural influence into the Greek Corinthian society in Paul's time cannot be overlooked. As Winter suggests, 'there is an urgent need to integrate Roman history within the wider discipline of history... This has not been considered, and as a result, has coloured our understanding of texts dealing with first-century women.'²⁶⁹

There was a stark contrast between the way law treated men and women in first-century Rome and its colonies, and there were certain social expectations of how people should behave, according to their gender. The general view was that women were held in high societal regard if they displayed moral characteristics such as 'dignity, good behaviour, and modesty.'²⁷⁰ This depended on women submitting to their husbands, having strict morals, and being full of character and decorum. Plutarch even goes on to state,

When the moon is at a distance from the sun, we see her conspicuous and brilliant, but she disappears and hides herself when she comes near him. Contrariwise a virtuous woman ought to be the most visible in her husband's company, and to stay in the house and hide herself when he is away.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ BW Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2003, 3.

²⁷⁰ Plutarch, *Moralia II: Translated by FC Babbitt*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1928, citing 2.141.26, 319.

²⁷¹ Plutarch, *Moralia II*, 2.139.9, 305.

Women were expected to hold a demure and chaste type of character, one which pledged complete monogamous allegiance to their husbands, whilst ensuring a morally high upbringing of the family's children. Indeed, marital fidelity and harmony were the desired virtues of women from all spheres of Roman society, and marriage presumed the growth of respect, affection, and loyalty of the wife towards her husband.²⁷²

Corinthian views on how women should appear proved to be no different from the Roman ideal. The Council of Corinth erected a statue to honour Regilla, a wife of a famous Sophist, stating, 'this is a statue of Regilla, and all her prudent moderation.' Of her it was also said, she enshrines the virtue, which epitomised a traditional Roman wife. Her virtue transcended the Greek/Roman divide and became an 'Empire' virtue.²⁷³

However, although the Roman women were expected to act in a virtuous way, the same cannot be said of empirical expectations of the men. Although chastity was expected of the woman, it was culturally acceptable for men to be sexually promiscuous with their household slaves if they so desired.²⁷⁴ Roman thinkers, whilst viewing procreation as a natural instinct, saw it as nothing more than 'human behaviour being a subset of animal behaviour.'²⁷⁵ Sexual encounters in terms of 'pleasure' were not on the minds of many Roman men when involving their wives, who were viewed as morally higher than one with whom a husband might wish to gratify lusty desires. Therefore, by sparing their wives of carnal encounters, and enacting these instead with the *hetaerae* and slave girls, Roman men considered themselves to do an honourable thing, which showed full respect to their wives. Plutarch encapsulates the justification for these actions,

The lawful wives of the Persian kings sit beside them at dinner. But when the kings wish to be merry and get drunk, they send their wives away and send for their music-girls and concubines. In so far they are right in what they do, because they do not concede any share in their licentiousness and debauchery to their wedded wives... the

²⁷² Fantham, *Women*, 320.

²⁷³ Winter, *Roman*, 36.

²⁷⁴ Winter, *Roman*, 19.

²⁷⁵ S Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, Oxford: Oxford University, 1991, 134.

wedded wives ought not to be indignant and angry, but she should reason that it is respect for her which leads him to share his debauchery, licentiousness and wantonness with another woman.²⁷⁶

The same freedom of debauchery could not be applied to Roman women, however. Women in Rome were made to ‘wear what they were,’ as the regulation of clothing was designed to signal legal status and class. Women found to be adulterous were forced to wear a toga designed to be a symbol of shame, one that the community would observe and understand to bring dishonour to her.²⁷⁷

Rawson suggests that although there was some discrimination against women, the area for this was much narrower than sometimes suggested.²⁷⁸ However, the truth is that husbands had complete power over their wives and even had the legal rights, should they find their wives engaging in adulterous acts, to murder her for those crimes. Many wives accused of impure relationships were tried, found guilty, and executed in their homes, usually by their kinsfolk.²⁷⁹ To kill a woman for licentious relations was generally accepted; in contrast, the wife could not ‘dare to lay a finger on you (the husband), if you commit adultery.’²⁸⁰

Thus, from early Rome, there comes a picture of inequality and suppression of women that infiltrated all classes of society. It is little surprise, then, to learn of an appearance of a moral rebellion to this system at around 44BC. Winter describes an emergence out of Rome of the ‘New Women’ - women who were of high social position yet claimed for themselves the indulgences of sexuality and pleasure.²⁸¹ These were women who were tired of the double standards and injustice of their men-folk, and who wished to indulge their sexual desires by throwing off the shackles of submission and enjoying a hedonistic lifestyle. Juvenal, commentating on Emperor Claudius’s wife Messalina, captures the depths of depravity of the

²⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Moralia II*, 2.140.16, 309.

²⁷⁷ Winter, *Roman*, 42.

²⁷⁸ B Rawson, *The Roman Family in Italy*, Oxford: Oxford University, 1999, 34.

²⁷⁹ Winter, *Roman*, 18.

²⁸⁰ Aulus Gellius, ‘Attic Nights,’ (05/01/2016, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Gellius/10*.html), citing 10:23, 279.

²⁸¹ Winter, *Roman*, 21.

time. ‘She snuck out and went to an empty cell reserved for her in a brothel and did the deed with many men.’²⁸² However, the rebellion against social expectations was not limited to sexual prowess, but for the ruling classes was much more alarming, even stretching to allowing the woman to terminate a marriage herself and demand the whole dowry of the marriage back.²⁸³

To combat this alarming new trend, Emperor Augustus formed a moral marriage legislation, the Lex Iulia De Adulteris, in 17BC. This legislation, concerned with sexual promiscuity primarily in marriage, made adultery a public crime that a specially created court would govern.²⁸⁴ These reforms concerned both *adulterium* (adultery by and with a married woman) and *stuprum* (fornication with a widow or unmarried free woman, who was not a prostitute). Men and women could be charged with *adulterium*, but only women could be charged with *stuprum*.²⁸⁵ By introducing these reforms, Augustus gave the impression of a ruler who had morality and honour at his heart, However, when looking closer at the legislation it becomes clear that a different motive lay behind it. The reforms did not legislate for slaves or prostitutes and therefore paved the way for men to legally, and ethically, continue to indulge in sexual liaisons with women, as long as the woman was not married.

In effect, the 17BC legislation would ensure that the upper classes alone were considered. Augustus banned the daughters of senators from marrying freedmen and other reputable people, and in doing so, effectively created a senatorial class and endorsed a hierarchy of the elite.²⁸⁶ It was doomed to fail as emancipated women and Sophists who endorsed equality, saw the legislation as a breach of the very principle of equality, and fragmentation within society.²⁸⁷ Indeed, even Augustus’s own daughter, Julia, renounced the reforms, by having been ‘accessible to scores of paramours, that in nocturnal revels she had roamed about the city... and laying aside the role of adulteress, there she sold her favours.’²⁸⁸ For such

²⁸² Juvenal, *Juvenal and Perseus, The Satires VI: Translated by SM Braund*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University, 2004, citing 6.114-134, 245.

²⁸³ Treggiari, *Marriage*, 446.

²⁸⁴ Winter, *Roman*, 41.

²⁸⁵ RA Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome*, London: Routledge, 1994, 105 and 310.

²⁸⁶ Winter, *Roman*, 44.

²⁸⁷ Winter, *Roman*, 51.

²⁸⁸ Seneca, ‘Moral Letters,’ (01/03/2016, https://archive.org/stream/Seneca/Seneca_djvu.txt), citing 6.32.1.

rebellion against the Empire, Julia, like many other women, was banished forever from Rome.

Thus, in Rome, a moral battle was evident between the traditional respected way that women were deemed to behave, and the capricious, unashamed pleasures of the emerging 'New Woman.' As Rome efficiently transferred its social values and may have been seen as holding the fashionable and forward-thinking ideals that its colonies wished to attain to, it must be assumed that in Corinth, both traditional and new values were equally desired. Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 1:26 that not many of the Corinthians were 'wise or of noble birth when called.' What better way for the gullible and easily led Corinthians, who viewed wealth and high social standing in such esteem (4:10-11), than to attempt to emulate the trendy Romans and live capriciously themselves. It is in this context that we must understand Paul's situation when writing the 'women passages' of 1 Corinthians.

3.2 The Veiling of Women (1 Corinthians 11:2-16)

It is important to recognise that the sexually immoral Roman living also happened in Greek culture, including the Corinthian community. Dio Chrysostom asked, 'do not many Athenian men have intercourse with their maidservants, some of them secretly, but others quite openly?'²⁸⁹ Of the 'New Women' he commented, 'many other wives of distinguished and wealthy men... have had relations with other men and sometimes had children by them.'²⁹⁰ Greek society mirrored Roman expectations of women's chastity within marriage whilst viewing adultery as something that women would be appropriately punished for. However, for males, it was not considered adultery to have sexual liaisons with *hetaerae*, or to keep concubines as mistresses.

²⁸⁹ Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 12-30: Translated by JW Cohoon*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1939, citing 15.5, 148-149.

²⁹⁰ Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses*, 15.6, 148-149.

The double standards of Roman leadership were evident for all to see, and in Corinth, the ‘New Woman’ found allies in various Greek philosophers who viewed the body not as a prison, but as a house for the soul. This bodily house had senses and these senses were naturally meant to be indulged.²⁹¹ Empowered by philosophers and poets, the Greek New Woman embraced sexual immorality with such desire that Juvenal could not help but cry out, ‘what think you of searching for a wife of the good old virtuous sort? So few are the wives from whose kisses their own father would not shrink.’²⁹²

At the same time as the empowered ‘New Woman’ emergence, some men were voluntarily submitting themselves to dominant women and forcing a deliberate inversion of gender roles.²⁹³ For men on the lower scales of society, this provided a rare chance to grasp a degree of social standing, even if it came through submissive allegiance to elitist women.

The dress code in first-century Roman culture was important as it served as a symbol to highlight what class people belonged to. At one end of the spectrum was the *mater familia*, held in esteem and high importance. At the other end was the prostitute, despised and dishonoured by all. The easy aesthetic way to distinguish between the two was to control the way they dressed by making some clothing a symbol of honour, while others a symbol of shame.²⁹⁴ In the context of bestowed honour, the veil was considered the most important feature of the bride’s dress, symbolising chastity, virtue, and respect.

Augustus realised the important symbolism that the veil held and cunningly used it to endorse his own political agenda. By allowing the marriage veil to represent the classless icon of chastity and honour, he gave every Roman woman something to aspire to. Should a lower-class woman wear the veil, they would instantly extend their social standing as they became enabled to wear the same highly respected clothing as the upper classes.²⁹⁵ In contrast, for

²⁹¹ Winter, *Roman*, 62.

²⁹² Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.45-51, 239.

²⁹³ Winter, *Roman*, 24.

²⁹⁴ TAJ McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality and the Law*, Oxford: Oxford University, 1998, 156.

²⁹⁵ McGinn, *Law*, 156.

women convicted of adultery, part of the punishment resulted in legal ineligibility to wear this veil, thereby stripping them of the honour that it represented.²⁹⁶

In Corinth, as in all Roman colonies, women were demonstrating their liberation by imitating the 'New Woman' and discarding their veils to display their faces and hair to all. Therefore, some might understand the issue of the unveiling of women in 11:2-16 as the Corinthians' adoption of the 'New Woman' liberation from Rome. In this context, Paul's refusal to allow these practices would have stemmed from what the unveiled woman represented to society, and in turn how that reflected on the glory of God. In essence, the removal of the veil gave a signal of the woman's withdrawal from marriage, displayed herself as sexually available, and therefore shamed her husband.

If this is true, Paul was quite correct to insist on women's veiling and equally the unveiling of men. If the Corinthian women in the congregation, by unveiling, gave an appearance of infidelity and immorality to the surrounding community, Paul was well within his rights as the apostle to rebuke the practice. Essentially, it wasn't simply a matter of the choice of dress, but more the appearance of the dishonour that that dress choice brought to God. Equality was not a central issue, for if Paul was keen to berate women for unveiling, he was equally keen to do the same for those men who were covering their heads during worship (v7).

Many suggestions have been made to attempt to describe what Paul meant when he spoke of men covering their heads. Statues of Augustus at the time, designed for propaganda, show him with head veiled, making a sacrifice in the style of a civic leader. Some, therefore, state that 'men veiling' endorsed pagan sacrifice, and that the appearance of pagan ritual sacrifices could be the contentious issue that Paul was referring to in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.²⁹⁷ If these statues do indeed show Augustus in the veiled fashion, it is no surprise that the Corinthians, who saw position and wealth as things to be attained, would attempt to emulate the cultural symbol of power. Winter suggests that the social elite adopted this fashion in Rome and therefore it would have been the same with the Corinthians, who would have covered their

²⁹⁶ Winter, *Roman*, 42.

²⁹⁷ DWJ Gill, 'The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,' *Tyndale Bulletin*, 41.2 (1990) 245-260, citing 247.

heads to emulate the pagan priests.²⁹⁸ However, in 11:2-16, Paul made mention not only of men veiling, but also of having long hair, and interspersed these two issues together. The fact that Paul mentioned long hair must mean that it had direct application to his message, and therefore that his intention in this passage cannot simply have concerned the veiling of men, but of something more.

Plutarch alternatively asks why men cover their heads when they escort their parents to the grave, in the funeral procession, while the women uncover their heads. He goes on to suggest that in Greece, when misfortune comes, such as a death to a parent, women cut off their hair while men let it grow long in mourning. He links this ritual to the children seeing the parent as a god and honouring them thus.²⁹⁹ Winter supports this by suggesting that the normal Greek verb used for veiling (*kalupto*) is not used in 11:2-16. Instead, in this passage, '*kata*' is added to signify an action of covering the head that was a considered response to a crisis situation.³⁰⁰ In this context, then, perhaps Paul was speaking against the custom of veiling and unveiling in order to maintain the sovereignty of God against any notions of human deification or a crisis situation. However, it would be strange if Paul had either of these in mind yet did not mention them. Indeed, he placed this section of instruction within the larger topic of 'orderly worship' and, therefore any reference to human deification would be entirely inappropriate in this context.

The main link throughout the passage (11:2-16) is between men and women, which suggests that perhaps Paul's intentions for apostolic address concerned gender. Speaking at a slightly later time than Paul, of how the man had become more effeminate, Juvenal states that 'one of these men has blackened his eyebrows with damp soot...another is drinking from a phallus-shaped glass with his substantial hairdo filling a golden hairnet.'³⁰¹ Dio Chrysostom adds 'the dyeing and perfumery, along with the dressing of men's and women's hair... [is] nearly the same for both sexes today.'³⁰² Ciampa suggests that long hair in the Greco-Roman world was

²⁹⁸ BW Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2001, 122.

²⁹⁹ Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume IV: Translated by FC Babbitt*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1936, citing 4.14.1, 24-37.

³⁰⁰ Winter, *Roman*, 94.

³⁰¹ Juvenal, *Juvenal and Perseus, The Satires II: Translated by SM Braund*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University, 2004, citing 2.93, 157.

³⁰² Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 1-11: Translated by JW Cohoon*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1932, citing 7.117, 353.

also associated with homosexuality, and therefore for a man to have long hair would endorse this practice within the church.³⁰³

Jewish views of the time spoke negatively about homosexuality, declaring legal death as the punishment for the act.³⁰⁴ Was Paul, in 11:2-16, addressing a gender inversion at the time, where men were becoming more effeminate and projecting a secular image that was bringing dishonour to God? To investigate this, it would be prudent to assess each of his views on 'headship,' 'natural order' and 'image,' in turn.

3.2.1 *Headship*

Paul's primary concern in the bulk of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 was to set up an appropriate understanding of men's relationship to women within the context of public worship and ministry. By inserting Christ's relationship to God as his head, and linking this to male/female relationships, it could be argued that Paul was addressing the gender imbalances in the church. In this scenario, the New Woman had begun to dominate the meetings whilst unveiled, and the submissive men were endorsing gender inversion by concomitantly covering their heads. Paul decided to redress the balance by evidencing God's desired relationships of men and women through using a series of 'heads.' God stood at the top and Christ clearly honoured God in the way he conducted himself and lived his life. The Corinthians should also think about the way they were conducting themselves in the worship setting in order to honour, and not bring shame, to their respective heads (vv4-5).³⁰⁵

However, problems arise with this view, as different interpretations of the word 'head' have been suggested to bring alternate meanings of Paul's intentions for headship. Some uses of the word '*kephale*' are literal, whilst others within the passage are metaphorical, which brings

³⁰³ Ciampa, *Corinthian*, 512.

³⁰⁴ Josephus, 'Antiquities of the Jews,' (11/01/2017, <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-14.html>), citing 2.25.

³⁰⁵ RE Ciampa, 'Flee Sexual Immorality: Sex and the City of Corinth,' In BS Rosner (ed), *The Wisdom of the Cross*, Nottingham: Apollos, 2011, 100-133, citing 139.

confusion. It is imperative, therefore, to gain a correct understanding of Paul's meaning of 'headship.'

Some suggest that the head to which man and woman bring shame is to their literal head (vv4-5).³⁰⁶ However, it cannot mean this, as it would make no sense of the preceding verse (v3), where Paul lists an order of metaphorical 'heads' in terms of superiority. Man's literal head is not Christ, nor is man woman's literal head. Barrett suggests that in verse 7, Paul intended to show that for man to veil his literal head would bring shame to the glory of God, as man's literal head is the image and glory of God.³⁰⁷ However, verse 7 clearly links shaming and glorification of one's head, with imaging a person of superiority, one whom Paul has already stated is metaphorical (v3). Therefore, the meaning of bringing shame to one's head must be referring to something other than one's literal head and should be understood in an allegorical sense.

In this context, by veiling and unveiling, the Corinthians were bringing shame to their metaphorical heads, the men to Christ, and the women to their husbands. Indeed, in Roman times, the issue of a woman bringing shame to her husband was of fundamental concern, and to glorify or dishonour him would be determined by any deviation she undertook from the cultural expectations of her society.³⁰⁸ Therefore Paul's intended meaning for the one whom shame can be brought to by veiling and unveiling could be seen as the series of 'heads' that he sets out in verse 3, and any further 'heads' should be read in this context. However, this brings another problem with the question of what the Greek meaning of *kephale* actually signifies.

The main interpretations of *kephale* have been of 'authority,' 'source' and 'prominence.'³⁰⁹ Grudem, arguing for the first of these, sees the relationships of the passage within the context of subordination and hierarchy. As God has a relational priority over Christ, in terms of authority, so the man has relational priority over woman. In 1985, Grudem conducted an

³⁰⁶ CK Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2nd Ed), London: Adam and Charles Black, 1971, 250.

³⁰⁷ Barrett, *Epistle*, 252.

³⁰⁸ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 517.

³⁰⁹ See W Grudem, 'Does *Kephale* ("Head") "Mean Source" or "Authority Giver" in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples,' *Trinity Journal*, 6.1 (1985) 38-59. Barrett, *Epistle*, 233-248. Fee, *Corinthians*, 554.

electronic search of *kephale* in Greek literature (including the LXX), which resulted in 2336 instances of the use of *kephale*. Of these words, 2.1% denoted ‘authority’ and 0% ‘source’.³¹⁰ Grudem highlighted that within the instances that denoted ‘authority,’ some came from Old Testament examples (Judg 10:18, 2 Kgs 22:44, Isa 7:8-9, etc.), whilst others came from primary literature, such as Philo (On Dreams 2.207).³¹¹

Therefore, for Grudem, *kephale* denoted a hierarchical authority within the Corinthian church that was being undermined by the woman’s removal of the veil. This is evidenced by the fact that Paul included a Trinitarian example of relationships in verse 3. The Trinity, although equal in *ousia*, is different in terms of *hypostasis*, which denoted authority. The Father commands and the Son obeys, therefore there is an ontological subordination. This must be the same for men and women, and in the Corinthian case, the woman should have understood the man’s authority over her.³¹² Ciampa agrees with Grudem that *kephale* must denote ‘authority’ but argues that Paul was not concerned to press authority as an issue of submission, but to affirm the Corinthians’ need to honour their respective ‘heads’ within the public setting.³¹³

Fee, in response to Grudem, points out that nothing in the passage suggests an authoritarian sense of the word *kephale*, and that the Greek word denoting ‘authority’ (*exousia*) only appears once (v10). Fee argues that Grudem’s 1985 paper was misleading, as the instances of *kephale* that Grudem suggested meant ‘authority’ were ungrounded. Some of them, Fee states, were prejudged to mean ‘authority’ after being exegeted by Grudem. Others were Greek translations of the Old Testament, which brought translation issues. Finally, Fee argues that Grudem misused Philo’s understanding of *kephale*, as Philo clearly used *kephale* to mean ‘source.’³¹⁴

³¹⁰ Grudem, ‘Kephale,’ 50.

³¹¹ Grudem, ‘Kephale,’ 54-55.

³¹² Grudem, ‘Kephale,’ 56.

³¹³ Ciampa, ‘Wisdom,’ 141.

³¹⁴ Fee, *Corinthians*, 554.

For Fee, Paul's use of *kephale* denoted the series of 'heads' in v3 as the 'source' or 'origin' of those following in the verse, which is evidenced in vv8-9, 'the only place where one of these relationships is picked up further in Paul's argument.'³¹⁵ Barrett concurs with *kephale* being understood as 'source' by Paul in this passage. He points to v8 as evidence that Paul suggested man is not the lord of the woman, but the source of her being.³¹⁶ Therefore, Barrett surmises that man can be the head of woman in a sense of 'origin,' as the Father is the head of Christ as the source of the Trinity.

The problem with understanding *kephale* in terms of 'source' comes precisely from the fact that Paul intentionally included it in verse 3 and applied it to the relationships of the Father and Son. If Paul meant it in terms of source, then applying it to the Trinitarian relationships would not make sense. The Father is the source of the Son, but as Paul points out in v11, the man is not the source of the woman, as 'all things come from God.' If Paul had intended for *kephale* to have meant 'origin' he effectively defeated himself through his statement in v11. Indeed, Grudem points out that 'source is not listed as a possible meaning for *kephale* in any of the major Greek lexicons.'³¹⁷ Those who suggest *kephale* to be a metaphor of the 'head' being foremost and a representation of the whole also make the same error.³¹⁸ Verse 11 shows that the woman represents the man in equal measure as the man represents the woman.

Therefore, *kephale* should be understood to mean 'authority' in 11:2-16. Perhaps the 'New Women' influences of Rome were infiltrating the church, and the unveiled women were bringing shame to their heads, i.e., their husbands. In addition, the men, who were endorsing an inversion of genders by becoming submissive to women and dressing themselves effeminately, were bringing shame to their 'heads', Christ.

However, was Paul really endorsing men as the 'heads' of women in an authoritative sense? This seems to oppose the themes of 'unity' that flow throughout the letter. Indeed, the levelling statement of men and women 'in the Lord' (v11) seems to argue against this and

³¹⁵ Fee, *Corinthians*, 555.

³¹⁶ Barrett, *Epistle*, 248.

³¹⁷ Grudem, 'Kephale,' 40.

³¹⁸ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 172.

concur with Paul's general theology about one's newfound position in Christ (Galatians 3:28). If Paul used '*kephale*' in an authoritative sense, did he really mean to use it to subordinate women? Perhaps Paul's inclusion of the issue of 'natural order' may assist to answer this puzzle?

3.2.2 *Natural Order*

Some, such as Barrett, suggest that Paul's ideology of gender authority came from his understanding of the natural order of men and women, as highlighted in Genesis 1 and 2. Man is the image and glory of God because he was created first and primarily (Gen 2:7). Women, on the other hand, are the glory of men as the woman was made from the rib of Adam, and her fulfilment is found in adhering to man's authority (Gen 2:27).³¹⁹ To highlight this, Ciampa suggests Paul adopted creation language from Genesis to ground his views of 'headship' in. God created with a functional hierarchy between men and women in mind, and Paul drafted it into his argument in 11:7-12 to remind the Corinthians of that fact.³²⁰ Women are not only functionally subordinate to men, but also are the glory of the man. Therefore, they must act and dress in a fashion that will glorify their 'heads' in obedience to them. That was the way that God made it at the beginning, and that is therefore how God intends it to be now also. For this reason, Paul added the fact that 'angels' are concerned with the woman having 'the sign of authority on her head,' i.e., wearing the veil to signify her place in the natural order. Angels were seen as the guardians of the created natural order and would therefore be expected to ensure that God's created world maintained its proper and correct place, especially in the sanctity of worship.³²¹

Reading the passage in this way gives a view of Paul as an advocator of patriarchal domination within the church. Some scholars disagree, however, and point out that Paul's intention of using 'created order' was to affirm the establishment of 'proper' distinction

³¹⁹ Barrett, *Epistle*, 253.

³²⁰ Ciampa, 'Wisdom,' 141.

³²¹ MD Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990, 116.

between male and female, not to promote a dominating authority.³²² Whatever view one might take, if vv7-10 are believed to be Paul's views, then it must also be believed that he was expressing a derivative theology, i.e., that women are derivative of men in the natural order and therefore subordinate in authority. However, this understanding of his argument makes no sense in reference to the narrative of Genesis 1-2. In 1 Corinthians 11:7 Paul stated that woman was the glory of, and derived from, man. He continued to state that man was the glory of, and derived from, God. However, in Genesis, if women are the derivative of man, then man is the derivative of dust, not of God.³²³ If Paul was using a derivative theology to argue for whatever reason, he was simply incorrect in his theological views, which is highly unlikely. Thus, we still do not have an exegetical reason why Paul would refer to the created order as a reason for the 'authority' of men, then contradict himself in v11. Exegetical problems within this passage remain. Perhaps Paul's understanding of 'image' will provide an answer.

3.2.3 *Image*

Some scholars suggest that Paul's understanding of man as the 'image' and glory of God should have resulted in the Corinthian men not covering their heads, as that would symbolise a hiding of the natural glory that God has bestowed upon them.³²⁴ In fact, the signal the men were emitting would have serious implications, as by hiding their image of glory while prophesying they would not only shame God, but also fail to meet the obligation that they owed to their 'head.'³²⁵ For the women, to shame their respective head was seen to be as bad as having a shaved head as that would symbolise prostitution, harlotry, or even the loss of her very identity as a woman.³²⁶

Thus, to summarise a traditional reading of this passage, the Corinthian women were being called to veil their literal heads in submission to glorify their metaphorical heads, i.e., men, which was evidenced in the natural created order of Genesis 1-2. In turn, men must let their

³²² Horrell, *Corinthian*, 173.

³²³ Peppiatt, *Women*, 101.

³²⁴ Horrell, *Corinthians*, 118.

³²⁵ Winter, *Paul*, 131.

³²⁶ Ciampa, 'Wisdom,' 141. Also, Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 521.

literal heads be unveiled in order to not shame the image of God that they held. Within their worship, prophesying, and praying, the Corinthians should be careful to dress and act in ways that would not bring shame to their metaphorical heads. Furthermore, the Corinthians were veiling/unveiling for cultural reasons, but Paul was keen to highlight that by doing this, they were bringing shame on each other, and that they needed to consider the use of veils in a way that was honouring to each other and to God. There was a natural order, and if that was being subverted, Paul would not hesitate to stamp it out in order to promote the authority he intended men to have over women.

However, the fact that there are so many alternative readings of what Paul meant within this passage should lead the reader to question if the traditional reading is accurate. The traditional reading is still unable to answer why Paul included a levelling sentence in v11, therefore seemingly contradicting himself against the earlier content of the passage. Nor can it reach a consensus over the meaning of certain words (*kephale*). It cannot explain why Paul would introduce a practice that would comply with social expectations on women, whereas, in other parts of the letter Paul affirmed actions that would do the exact opposite (i.e., ordering men to be relationally monogamous to their wives in 7:2).³²⁷ Finally, it cannot provide a way to qualify Paul's views of subordination and hierarchy with his seemingly opposing views of equality (Gal 3:28). With so much contention and uncertainty regarding different readings of the passage, perhaps another possibility should be explored.

3.3 Another View (*Prosopopoeia*)

How, then, can we resolve the confusions and seeming contradictions of the passage and attempt to 'bring an end to the need to explain Paul's theology of male/female, where he appears to be conveying confusing messages?'³²⁸ Reading the passage traditionally might

³²⁷ Peppiatt, *Women*, 77.

³²⁸ Peppiatt, *Women*, 78.

lead to the understanding that the content reflects Paul's own theology and beliefs, which may in turn, lead to exegetical error, so there is a need to exegete this passage further.³²⁹

It is clear that 1 Corinthians was at least the third stage of an ongoing discussion between the two parties. Paul had originally written to the Corinthians (5:9), they had replied (7:1), now Paul was responding to their letter. My hypothesis is that the Judaizers, by this time, were influencing the Corinthians, leading to some having doubts about Paul's ecclesial practices. With this in mind, an alternative way of reading the passage is that Paul interwove ideas and phrases that stemmed from questions he received from the Corinthians' letter (influenced by the views of the opponents), and quoted these views back to them, along with his own qualifying statements.

The suggestion that Paul included his opponents' views within the flow of 1 Corinthians gathers more weight when considering one of the popular writing devices³³⁰ of the first-century in the Greco-Roman world, *prosopopoeia*.³³¹ Stowers defines *prosopopoeia* as 'a rhetorical and literary technique in which the speaker or writer produces speech that represents not themselves, but another person.'³³² In the first-century, students throughout the Roman Empire were trained in *progymnasmata* ('preliminary exercises') as a basic part of their education, including the skill of *prosopopoeia*.³³³ In this, they were trained to study certain literary passages and ask the question, 'who is speaking?' Ancient texts sometimes contained characters speaking and significant words being inserted without the author indicating the new speaker, therefore the only way for the student to ascertain whose voice the words belonged to was to link the words with the character of the speaker.³³⁴ It might be that the only sign of a new speaker would emanate from a change in style within the letter.

³²⁹ Peppiatt, *Women*, 25.

³³⁰ *Prosopopoeia* is a device with obvious links to Paul's use of Corinthians' slogans and his use of irony, both so prominent in 1 Corinthians.

³³¹ For instances of Ancient writers using *prosopopoeia* see SK Stowers, 'Romans 7:7-25 as Speech-In-Character,' In T Engberg-Pedersen (ed), *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995, 180-202, citing 183-191.

³³² SK Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, New Haven: Yale University, 1994, 16.

³³³ GA Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, Leiden: Brill, 2003, 115.

³³⁴ Stowers, *Rereading*, 18.

Thus, the reader of the text was trained not to assume that the voice portrayed in the text was the voice of the author himself but to work out, through *prosopopoeia*, who was speaking.³³⁵

Quintilian concurs with this to state, ‘we may also introduce some imaginary person without identifying him, ...or speech may be inserted without any mention of the speaker.’³³⁶

Quintilian continues to give an example of what an unspecified Trojan might say as he visited a Greek camp, adding, ‘this involves a mixture of figures, since to impersonation we add the figure known as ellipse, which in this case consists in the omission of any indication as to who is speaking.’³³⁷

Furthermore, an ancient letter-writer knew he could depend on his intended readers to know the situation behind the letter and the strongly held views of the people involved. The letters would be read aloud to the community by someone trained in *prosopopoeia*, in the form of a monologue with rhetorical styles, such as mockery and satire, included. The reader would be more like an actor performing a play, rather than simply reading the letter aloud. Therefore, the accurate interpretation of the content of a letter was dependent upon a level of awareness in the first-century reader, who knew the situation that lay behind events highlighted in the letter. If the historical context of a letter is key to understanding what is being said, Kennedy is correct when he states that when we read Paul’s Epistles, ‘we need to... try and hear his words as a Greek-speaking audience would have heard them’.³³⁸

One might ask the question, ‘Did Paul use *prosopopoeia* and include phrases, statements, or points of view, that belonged to those to whom he was writing his letters?’ The answer to this question would be an undoubtable yes. The argument that Paul would have used the style of *prosopopoeia* in his letters cannot be underestimated. He was educated enough to be able to quote classic Greek and Roman texts (for example, his quote of, ‘bad company ruins good

³³⁵ Campbell, *God*, 533-534.

³³⁶ Quintilian *Institutes Book VII-IX: Translated by HE Butler*, Loeb Classical Library, London: William Heinemann, 1958, citing 9.2.36. See also, Quintilian, *Institutes*, 6.1.25-26, 9.2.30, *Rhetoric Ad Herennium*, 4.53.66.

³³⁷ Quintilian, *Institutes*, 9.2.37.

³³⁸ GA Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984, 10.

morals' in 15:53 emanated from a Menander play).³³⁹ Kennedy argues that Paul was 'at home in the Greek idiom of his time,' and was able to reference Greek Classical literature when debating (Acts 17:28, Tit 1:12, etc.). Therefore, Kennedy suggests, Paul must have been trained in advanced rhetorical studies, without which 'Paul could not expect to be persuasive.'³⁴⁰ For Paul to be able to read and understand ancient texts, he must have at least been aware of the style of *prosopopoeia*.³⁴¹ Furthermore, again, all contemporary commentators are convinced that in this letter, in particular, Paul uses devices that are closely related to *prosopopoeia* including the quoting of the Corinthians' own slogans, to which we now turn.

3.3.1 Paul's Practice of Quoting Corinthian' Phrases

7:1 shows a change of focus from reports he had received from 'Chloe's household' (1:11) to 'matters' stemming from a letter Paul had received from the Corinthians. In response to both oral reports and written matters, Paul used certain phrases cited from the Corinthians themselves. Usually, in these verses, we can observe Paul's style of quoting or summarising the Corinthians, (or opponents), statements, and then qualifying his own view on the matters.

There are evidences of veiled statements of defence by Paul throughout the letter, which must have stemmed from spoken or written attacks from Corinth on the apostle (4:3, 7:40, 9:3, 10:29-30). Although these are not direct quotes, they highlight areas whereby Paul referred to arguments and evaluations of his apostolic office that evidently stemmed from some in Corinth, which is also evidenced in 2:1-4.³⁴² However, there are more overt examples of Paul using direct quotations stemming from the Corinthians, especially in the phrase 'everything is permissible for me' (6:12, 10:23) which Paul then corrected and qualified with his own

³³⁹ AJ Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983, 42.

³⁴⁰ GA Kennedy, *Interpretation*, 9-10.

³⁴¹ See AW Pitts, 'Paul in Tarsus: Paul's Early Education', in SE Porter (ed), *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric: Theory and Practice in the Hellenistic Context*, New York: Cambridge University, 2016, 43-67, citing 49-50.

³⁴² Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 172.

responses.³⁴³ The majority of scholars agree that these words stemmed from the Corinthian letter and not initially from Paul himself.³⁴⁴

Most scholars agree that the same is true of Paul's use of 'we all possess knowledge' (8:1) where Paul took the slogan quoted in the letter received from the Corinthians and, while agreeing with it in principle, used it to provide a levelling statement of his own.³⁴⁵ The statement 'foods for the belly and the belly for food' (6:13) is also suggested to be a slogan attributed to the Corinthians.³⁴⁶

We find a more tentative possibility of *prosopopoeia* in 4:6 with the saying, 'do not go beyond what is written.' Some scholars, such as Ciampa, suggest Paul's use of this phrase referred to his previous mentions of Scripture in Chapters 1-3 of 1 Corinthians. For Ciampa, the meaning of 4:6 'is best understood as instructing the Corinthian not to transgress the exhortations found in and constructed from the scriptures to boast exclusively in the Lord (not in human leaders).' Ciampa argues that the Scriptures Paul is exhorting the Corinthians not to go beyond are spotlighted in 1:19, 31, and 3:19, 20 and that by boasting in human wisdom would be to go beyond Scriptural understanding of trust in God alone.³⁴⁷ Fee argues, however, that this 'leaves us with the question of it not being clear how the Corinthians would have understood the cited texts as something they were not to go beyond.'³⁴⁸

A second opinion on the meaning of this phrase is that it was a slogan or proverb that was well known to the Corinthians, and which Paul cited to prove a point. Fitzmyer suggests that to 'not go beyond what is written' was a slogan commonly used by 'philosophers who addressed those who sought to arouse discord in an effort to conciliate.'³⁴⁹ Paul, therefore, by

³⁴³ Although modern readers would expect the quotation of a view with which Paul disagreed, such as 'everything is permissible for me' to be prefaced by words like 'you people think...' However, this is not the way that the device of *prosopopoeia* was used.

³⁴⁴ See Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 164. Fee, *Corinthians*, 528. Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 485.

³⁴⁵ Fitzmyer, *Corinthians*, 338. See also Fee, *Corinthians*, 403-404, Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 373-374.

³⁴⁶ J Murphy-O'Connor, 'Corinthian Slogans in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20,' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 40.3 (1978) 391-396, citing 394.

³⁴⁷ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 176-177.

³⁴⁸ Fee, *Corinthians*, 184.

³⁴⁹ Fitzmyer, *Corinthians*, 215.

using this phrase would mean something like ‘keep playing within the rules.’³⁵⁰ Tyler adds to this understanding by linking Paul’s discourse on himself and Apollos in 4:6 with the first-century style of teaching children to write the alphabet ‘within the lines,’ and how a teacher would imitate to the children the correct way of staying within the lines. Thus, for the Corinthians, ‘do not go beyond what is written’ equates to a proverb they would already know. Now, Paul used a childhood proverb to highlight the relationship of the Corinthians to himself and Apollos in the terms of student to teachers.³⁵¹

It is impossible to prove whether 4:6 is a reference to Scripture or, as some scholars believe,³⁵² a proverb known by the Corinthians, but suffice to say the very suggestion that it may be a Corinthian phrase adds weight to the possibility of Paul’s use of *prosopopoeia* within the letter of 1 Corinthians. As Fee states on this matter, ‘we must finally plead ignorance. Here is a case where the apostle and his readers were on a wavelength that will probably be forever beyond our ability to pick up.’³⁵³ All of these examples highlight what has become the consensus view that Paul quoted Corinthian slogans and arguments within his epistle and therefore used *prosopopoeia* within his rhetoric argumentation.

3.3.2 *Prosopopoeia in The Bible and Ancient Literature*

The strategy of *prosopopoeia* was not purely a Greco-Roman affectation, alien to Paul’s Jewish heritage either. Jewish rhetoric often made use of irony, but also of texts which displayed a variety of voices. Indeed, any time that God speaks without human interaction, as no one was present to actually hear his words, they must be evidences of later *prosopopoeia* (Gen 1-2, Job 1:6-12, 2:1-7).

³⁵⁰ Fee, *Corinthians*, 183.

³⁵¹ RL Tyler, ‘First Corinthians 4:6 and Hellenistic Pedagogy,’ *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 60.1 (1998) 97-103, citing 99-100.

³⁵² See Fitzmyer, *Corinthians*, 215. Tyler, ‘Corinthians,’ 99-100. Thiselton, *First*, 355. LL Welborn, ‘A Conciliatory Principle in 1 Corinthians 4:6.’ *Novum Testamentum*, 29 (1987) 320-346.

³⁵³ Fee, *Corinthians*, 184.

In Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman and given speech by the use of *prosopopoeia* (Prov 1:20-33). In the Gospels, there are evidences of *prosopopoeia* through certain speeches (i.e., Luke 1).³⁵⁴ Finally, Luke employed the technique of *prosopopoeia* by giving colouration to speeches delivered to different audiences (to the Jerusalem Jews in Acts 2-3, to the Diaspora Jews in Acts 13, and, to the pagans in Acts 17).³⁵⁵ The examples of *prosopopoeia* that Kurz provides stems from the fact that Luke was not present at the speeches in Acts and therefore must have formulated the speeches roughly designed to fit each speaker and from second-hand sources.

While these examples evidence instances of *prosopopoeia* where the author is sympathetic to the views being portrayed, there are also Biblical occasions where protagonists are also given voice. In Genesis 3:1-5, Satan enters into dialogue with Eve which also evidences the device of *prosopopoeia*. Although this example is translated in the Biblical text with the use of speech marks, denoting which character is speaking, the motivation of the serpent's actions is not explicitly described (except for the author describing the serpent as 'crafty'). Therefore, interpretation of the serpent's morality is open, and the reader is expected to know what is right or wrong, which is only confirmed by later events. In Job, Satan is also portrayed far less negatively than the reader would expect, and his actions and words are again expected for the reader to assess.

Therefore, if there are instances of *prosopopoeia* that are located throughout the Bible, then it must be appropriate to suggest that Paul was aware of them, understood them, and included *prosopopoeia* within his Epistles.

³⁵⁴ Kennedy, *Interpretation*, 23.

³⁵⁵ WS Kurz, 'Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Luke-Acts,' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 42.2 (1980) 171-195, citing 186.

3.3.3 Arguments Against *Prosopopoeia*

Letters in the first-century were written with no speech marks, spaces between words, or meaningful textual arrangements. Greeks and Romans wrote in ‘*scriptio continua*,’ or ‘continuous script,’ leaving the reader to assess and assimilate the letter into cohesive arrangements and actively intervene to produce their own understanding of ‘periodicity and differentiation.’³⁵⁶ Quintilian confirms this, writing about training young boys in rhetorical reading he states, ‘there is much that can only be taught in actual practice, as for instance, when the boy should take breath, at what point he should introduce a pause into a line, where the sense ends...’³⁵⁷ Therefore, regarding 15:35 as an example, Fee suggests that the verse forms a continuation of the preceding diatribe (vv. 29-34) and that Paul may have used an interlocutor to raise a question that they wished to take up.³⁵⁸ Indeed, the fact that later editors have put quotation marks around statements, such as 15:35, does not diminish the possibilities of Paul quoting the Corinthians, or his opponents, in other parts of the letter that have not been classically attributed to the Corinthians. Indeed, the speech marks must follow the decision of the reader as to ownership of the views, not vice versa.

It could further be argued that as any quotations attributed to the recipients of Paul’s letters are pithy and short, how can one suggest a lengthy statement could be included in the category of *prosopopoeia*? Again, Quintilian highlights that *prosopopoeia* is not limited to short slogans but can also ‘take the form of a monologue, soliloquy, address and dialogue, or a combination of these.’ Quintilian places all kinds of speech including imaginary speakers, interlocutors, and addresses under the category of *prosopopoeia*.³⁵⁹

Cicero highlights one such example of a lengthy monologue using the style of *prosopopoeia* during a court case in 54BC. In this trial, Cicero’s friend, Marcus Caelius Rufus, stood accused of plotting to poison his former mistress Clodia. Cicero delivered a speech in defence

³⁵⁶ S McCaffrey, *Prior to Meaning: The Protosemantic and Poetics*, Evanston: Northwestern University, 2001, 110.

³⁵⁷ Quintilian, *Institutes*, 1.8.1.

³⁵⁸ Fee, *Corinthians*, 862.

³⁵⁹ Quintilian, *Institutes*, 9.2.30-33, cited by Stowers, ‘Speech-In-Character,’ 186-187.

of Caelius which included the technique of *prosopopoeia*. Cicero declared, ‘if (she prefers me to deal with her) in the old grim mode and method, then I must call up from the dead one of those full-bearded men of old.’³⁶⁰ Cicero then moved on to speak as if he were Clodia’s ancestor, Appius Clodius Caecus. Stating reasons that Appius may have pointed to as examples of why Clodia should be ashamed of her behaviour, Cicero, in the character of Appius, went on to state, ‘was it for this that I brought water into the city that you should use it for your impious purposes? Was it for this that I brought water to Rome, that thou mightest use it after thy incestuous debauches? Was it for this that I built up a road, that thou mightest frequent it with a train of other women’s husbands?’³⁶¹ Cicero’s use of *prosopopoeia* to expose Clodia’s behaviour was so powerful and effective that the jurors were persuaded, by her imagined ancestor, to disregard any charges.³⁶²

Although Cicero’s writing shows that *prosopopoeia* took the form of extensive address in ancient writing, can the same be said of Paul? Stowers suggests that there is evidence of Paul using a lengthy form of *prosopopoeia* in Romans 7:7-25. Romans 7:7-25 has classically been viewed as ‘Pauline Christianity being the antithesis of an imagined Jewish religiosity.’³⁶³

A key indicator that Paul was not speaking of himself in Romans 7:7-25 comes from the fact that it contradicts what Paul says of himself elsewhere in his Epistles.³⁶⁴ Furthermore, Origen points out that Jews do not speak of a time in their lives when they lived ‘without the Law.’³⁶⁵ The passage also begins with an abrupt change of voice from previous passages where Paul addressed the readers explicitly in moral conduct to speaking in the first person about seemingly personal matters, which ancient readers would have noticed a difference in change from the authorial voice.³⁶⁶ For Stowers, then, Romans 7:7-25 was not Paul talking of

³⁶⁰ Cicero, *Orations, Pro Caelio: Translated by R Gardner*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Harvard University, 1958, citing 33, 444-447.

³⁶¹ Cicero, *Caelio*, 34, 448-449.

³⁶² C Bruun, ‘Water for Roman Brothels: Cicero Cael. 34,’ *Phoenix*, 51 (1997) 364-373, citing 364.

³⁶³ Stowers, *Rereading*, 259.

³⁶⁴ For example, in 1 Cor 9:27 Paul suggests that he has self-mastery over his body and therefore his sinful nature.

³⁶⁵ Origen, *Romans*, 6:8-1052, as cited by Stowers, *Rereading*, 266.

³⁶⁶ Stowers, *Rereading*, 269.

himself but ‘*prosopopoeia* used... to characterise not every human or every human who is a Christian but rather Gentiles, especially those who try to live by works of the Law.’³⁶⁷

Many scholars agree with Stowers and suggest that Romans 7:7-25 should be read as an example of *prosopopoeia*.³⁶⁸ In fact, there are not many authors who have formulated a critique to argue against Stowers’s postulation. One such scholar, however, is Bruce Dyer³⁶⁹ who noted three main issues with Stower’s theory.

First, Dyer suggests that the biggest obstacle to viewing Romans 7:7-25 as *prosopopoeia* is the lack of clear indication that the technique was being used. He concedes that Quintilian allows for *prosopopoeia* to be used without the introduction of a speaker³⁷⁰ but suggests that Quintilian ‘goes on to specify that by leaving out the identity of the speaker, the orator moves into the territory of a different rhetorical figure... who is used when the missing element is obvious to the audience.’ Therefore, for Dyer, one would need to provide a clear rhetorical reason as to why Paul intentionally omitted the identity of the speaker in this passage in order to defend Stowers’s point.³⁷¹ Furthermore, Dyer suggests that the only change in voice seen in Romans 7:7 is a shift from the first-person plural to the first-person singular.³⁷²

However, as discussed above, one of the main elements of *prosopopoeia* was a familiarity of the situation that lay behind the writing and to notice a shift in the character’s voice, which Paul’s Roman audience surely were aware of. Indeed, Jewett concurs to state, ‘Paul assumes that his hearers in Rome will have an instant grasp of who this character is.’³⁷³ Dyer is also incorrect about the elements of Paul’s change of voice in 7:7 as it is quite clear that not only

³⁶⁷ Stowers, *Rereading*, 273. For the argument of Romans 7:7-25 using *prosopopoeia* as a Gentile newly converted to Christianity, please see Stowers, ‘Speech-In-Character,’ 198-202, and Stowers, *Rereading*, 273-278.

³⁶⁸ See Kruse, *Romans*, 207. AA Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007, 227-231. R Jewett, *Romans*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006, 443-445. TH Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric in its Context: The Argument of Romans*, Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2004, 227-228. B Witherington III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament*, Eugene: Cascade, 2009.

³⁶⁹ BR Dyer, ‘I do not understand what I do’: A challenge to understanding Romans 7:7-25 as *prosopopoeia*,’ In SE Porter (ed), *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric*, New York: Cambridge University, 2016, 186-205.

³⁷⁰ Quintilian, *Institutes*, 9.2.36-37.

³⁷¹ Dyer, ‘Challenge,’ 200.

³⁷² Dyer, ‘Challenge,’ 201.

³⁷³ Jewett, *Romans*, 445.

does the verb structure change, but Paul also changes direction from general theology and direction to the epistolary audience (7:1-6) to a seemingly auto-biographical language.

Dyer's second obstacle comes with Stowers's reliance upon it being obvious to early interpreters (such as Origen) that Paul was using *prosopopoeia* in Romans 7:7-25. Dyer suggests, 'one should not confuse Christian exegetes of the first few centuries with Paul's original audience. That later interpreters understood Romans 7 as *prosopopoeia* does not mean that the original audience did.'³⁷⁴ Dyer, here, simply dismisses the whole category of evidence and makes no specific refutations to ancient literature, such as Origen's commentary on Romans. Witherington concurs with Stowers, however, to suggest that early interpreters were better acquainted with rhetoric than modern readers and therefore that their interpretation should carry extra weight.³⁷⁵

Origen, for example, not only understood and used *prosopopoeia* but also highlighted how it was sometimes used incorrectly, which we see in Celsus's polemic against Christianity and Origen's critique of his work. Origen criticises Celsus's use of *prosopopoeia*, whereby Celsus constructs an imaginary Jew who theoretically dialogues with Jesus. Origen comments, 'he... introduces an imaginary character... and brings in a Jew addresses childish remarks to and says nothing worthy of a philosopher's grey hairs. This too let us examine to the best of our and prove that he has failed to keep the character entirely consistent with that of a Jew in his remarks.'³⁷⁶ Origen then moves on to accuse Celsus of using *prosopopoeia* to incorrectly construct someone who neither fits a typical Jewish character, whose words to Jesus are unrealistic, and who therefore misrepresented the character.³⁷⁷

Finally, Dyer questions modern scholars' assumption that Paul understood and was trained in *prosopopoeia*. Dyer concludes to say that, as modern scholars cannot prove Paul was trained in *prosopopoeia*, 'they cannot account for the level of knowledge and application suggested

³⁷⁴ Dyer, 'Challenge,' 202.

³⁷⁵ Witherington III, *Rhetoric*, 133.

³⁷⁶ Origen, *Contra Celsum: Translated by H Chadwick*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1952, citing 1.28, 27-28.

³⁷⁷ See *Contra Celsum*, 1.28, 28.

for Paul by advocates of interpreting Romans 7 as *prosopopoeia*.³⁷⁸ As discussed previously, many scholars believe that Paul was highly trained in rhetoric, which would include *prosopopoeia*.³⁷⁹ Furthermore, the letter to the Corinthians is full of related rhetorical techniques and devices. Dyer seems to be in the minority of his assertion that Paul was not skilled and trained in *prosopopoeia*. Once again, no attempt is made to try to prove that Paul did not receive this training or education.

Cicero's example of *prosopopoeia* in *Pro Caelio* highlights evidences of lengthy addresses found in ancient writings. Biblically, Stowers argues that there are evidences of lengthy *prosopopoeia* not only in the Scriptures but from the hand of the apostle himself. If this is true, it is not far-fetched to suggest that there could be possible evidences of Paul using *prosopopoeia* in his other Epistles. This must lead us to deeper research of Paul's letters as 'the difficult task of imagining a reading possible for readers in Paul's time must preclude Christian assumptions and readings that make sense only in epochs later than Paul.'³⁸⁰ Furthermore, in the case of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, if it is possible to identify that the voice within the passage is not that of Paul, that leads to the possibility that Paul was arguing against and not for the silencing of women.³⁸¹

One might ask, 'if Paul's writings do not completely portray his own theology, but also, in parts, the position of his opponents, how can one decipher to whom a certain passage's words can be attributed?' Certainly, the suggestion that the use of *prosopopoeia* can be applied to anything Paul wrote would be extremely dangerous, leading to suggestions that any of his works are simply rhetoric. Heresies and misuses of Scripture to build false theologies are made by such errors. However, in instances where Scripture seems to contradict itself, (e.g., in the case of women speaking, 1 Cor 11:5 vs 14:34), deeper research must be conducted in order to ascertain Paul's true intention behind his writings. Indeed, William Ramsey comments, 'we can be sure of the presence of a quotation whenever Paul alludes to their

³⁷⁸ Dyer, 'Challenge,' 203.

³⁷⁹ One chief proponent of this view is Kennedy, *Interpretation*, 9-10.

³⁸⁰ Stowers, *Rereading*, 269.

³⁸¹ Peppiatt, *Women*, 15.

knowledge, or when any statement stands in marked contrast either with the immediate context or with Paul's known views.³⁸²

Such an apparent contradiction can be found in 14:22-25. Having stated that the value of tongues was for unbelievers and prophecy was for believers (v22), Paul then apparently contradicted himself by claiming that unbelievers would not comprehend tongues, but instead would benefit from prophecy (vv23-25).³⁸³ Johanson suggests the way to solve this apparent contradiction is to also understand v22 as Paul's quote of the Corinthians' misunderstood views, to which he provided correction. Johanson bases his evidence on the fact that the wording of Isaiah 28:11-12, quoted in 14:21, was changed from the normal structuring of the LXX and MT versions. He suggests that the instigation of this change of wording came from the Corinthians themselves [or opponents] and was used to justify speaking in tongues for the purpose of witnessing to unbelievers. Paul understood that the real reason the Corinthians attempted to justify speaking in tongues was instead to endorse the glossolalists' elevated spiritual status. Johanson, therefore, sees v22 as Paul's quote of a question that the Corinthians asked him in their letter, 'are tongues, then, meant as a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is meant as a sign not for unbelievers but for believers?'³⁸⁴ By understanding v22 as the quotation of the Corinthians, problems with the exegesis of this difficult text, with seeming contradictions, can be resolved.

Furthermore, ancient writers who used *prosopopoeia* saw that 'inventions... will meet with credit only so far as we represent people saying what is not unreasonable to suppose that they may have mediated.'³⁸⁵ 'For a speech which is out of keeping with the man who delivers it is just as faulty as the speech which fails to suit the subject to which it should conform.'³⁸⁶ Therefore, instances where Paul, or any ancient speaker or writer, seemed to blatantly

³⁸² WM Ramsey, as cited by KC Bushnell, 'God's Word to Women,' (12/03/2017, https://godstowomen.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/gods_word_to_women1.pdf), citing paragraph 205, 85.

³⁸³ Peppiatt, *Women*, 114.

³⁸⁴ BC Johanson, 'Tongues: A Sign for Unbelievers? A Structural and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 14:20-25,' *New Testament Studies*, 25 (1979) 180-203, citing 193-194.

³⁸⁵ Quintilian, *Institutes*, 9.2.29.

³⁸⁶ Quintilian, *Institutes*, 3.8.51.

contradict themselves or speak out of character may mean that their words should be attributed to a real or hypothesised interlocutor or opponent.³⁸⁷

It is the task of the twenty-first century exegete to be as committed as the first-century student was to determine who is speaking by assessing whether the passage uses the same terminology or theological viewpoint as the rest of the author's work in its entirety. That we are not trained in *prosopopoeia* to answer questions of the identity of a speaker in a text may be part of the explanation as to why so few contemporary interpreters have explored this possibility for this passage. Indeed, regarding 1 Corinthians, in order to safeguard the integrity of the apostle, the modern exegete must attempt to understand these difficult passages, rather than merely accepting a traditional reading without question.

By asking questions such as, 'Who is speaking?', 'Do the words fit the moral dispositions of the person writing?' and, 'Do the words reflect the individual's history?', one can begin to ask whether a given statement fitted in with the rest of Paul's theological statements or was seemingly contradictory to them.³⁸⁸ Any discrepancies should cause us to carefully consider the identity behind the ideology. In fact, Campbell states that any objectors need to prove that the detection of *prosopopoeia* by the original readers of Paul's letters was impossible. 'Anything less than a categorical exclusion leaves the question essentially open, allowing us to move forward.'³⁸⁹

Indeed, if we read 11:3-10 as a summary of the opponents' views, and 11:11-16 as Paul's rhetorical rebuke and counterargument of those views, it becomes evident that Paul did not endorse subordination of women but actually declared them valued and empowered members of the community. Both Peppiatt and Flanagan argue that 11:2-16 should not be read as Paul speaking in his own voice, but rather as the apostle imitating his opponents.³⁹⁰ Therefore,

³⁸⁷ Stowers, 'Speech-In-Character,' 184.

³⁸⁸ Stowers, *Rereading*, 18-19.

³⁸⁹ Campbell, *God*, 530.

³⁹⁰ Peppiatt, *Women*, 68. NF Flanagan, 'Did Paul Put Women Down in First Corinthians 14:34-35?,' *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 11.1 (1981) 216-220, citing 218.

with *prosopopoeia* in mind, we turn back to Paul's instructions on matters of the veiling of women.

3.4 Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Paul began 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 by referring to the traditions that he had passed down to the Corinthians, with praise for applying them.³⁹¹ What traditions Paul had in mind is impossible to state assuredly. However, considering that this passage fits into the larger context of public worship, it is fair to suggest that they referred to certain aspects of how the Corinthians were conducting themselves in worship. Certain scholars comment that 11:3-16 stem from Paul's referral to statements made in the Corinthians' letter.³⁹² Horrell locates Paul's praise for them within the situation in which both men and women were free to prophesy and pray, a tradition he is convinced Paul had established in his original mission to Corinth.³⁹³ However, Horrell does not give any evidence for this suggestion. Ciampa similarly argues that one of the traditions, which Paul may well have passed onto them, would have been the teaching that in Christ there is neither male nor female, as he did with the Galatians (Gal 3:28).³⁹⁴

One can imagine the attack on Paul: by allowing women to pray and prophesy unveiled, he was advocating an anti-cultural expression of 'women's liberation.' Paul's opponents' claims could be seen thus, 'you endorse women to pray and prophesy unveiled – look at our society – women are walking around prostituting themselves. Are you really siding with such women and giving them power and position in the church?' The question must be asked, 'Is it more likely that the Corinthians had misunderstood Paul's intentions and taken them too far, believing that he had endorsed the unveiling of women in public worship, where in fact he

³⁹¹ Fee comments that 'certainty (about which traditions Paul was referring to) at this point is simply not to be had.' Fee, *Corinthians*, 543.

³⁹² See FF Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, New Century Bible Commentary, London: Oliphants, 1971, 102-108. Fee, *Corinthians*, 542-543.

³⁹³ Horrell, *Corinthian*, 169.

³⁹⁴ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 503.

had not? Or was Paul promoting cultural subjugation of women, contradicting other parts of the letter where he championed liberation?’ This question brings many problems.

However, by reading 11:3-10 as Paul using *prosopopoeia* to summarise his opponents’ arguments, followed by his own levelling statements in 11:11-16, Paul’s intentions within the passage become evident. Although irony or other instances of deliberately incongruous speech are notoriously hard to detect at a cultural remove, there are a few literary clues within the text that indicate *prosopopoeia* and assist in investigating this suggestion.

3.4.1 *Rhetorical Styles and Questions*

Tobin, commenting on Paul’s use of *prosopopoeia* in Romans 7:7-25, sees the inclusion of rhetorical questions as a major clue for the evidence of a change of speaker.³⁹⁵ Stowers concurs with this to suggest that one characteristic of *prosopopoeia* is indicated by the inclusion of one or a series of rhetorical questions within the text.³⁹⁶ Rhetorical questions, for Stowers, imply a lack of perception on the part of those who they are aimed towards and may be included for the purpose of ‘highlighting the wrong opinion or erroneous logic of the opponent.’³⁹⁷ Indeed, ancient Greek writers adopted rhetorical styles in order to allow the author to confront and correct their opponents’ views in a subtle way, rather than as a full-scale attack. Epictetus highlights this, indicating that its purpose is to lead opponents to realise the logical errors of their own arguments,

A guide, when he has found a man out of the road leads him in the right way, he does not ridicule or abuse him and then leave him... Socrates... used to make the

³⁹⁵ Tobin, *Rhetoric*, 228.

³⁹⁶ SK Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letters to the Romans*, SBL Dissertation Series (57), Missoula: Scholars, 1981, 88.

³⁹⁷ Stowers, *Diatribe*, 89.

conclusions drawn from natural notions so plain that every man saw the contradiction and withdrew from it.³⁹⁸

We see the use of rhetorical questions in v14 with Paul's inclusion of the phrase, 'does not the very nature of things teach you?' This echoes an ancient rhetorical question formula within the category of *prosopopoeia*, as highlighted by Quintilian. Regarding this, Quintilian states, 'it is also convenient at times... that we have before our eyes the images of things, persons or utterances, or to marvel that the same is not the case with our adversaries... it is with this design that we use phrases such as... 'does it not seem to you?''³⁹⁹ The rhetorical questions employed in vv13-15 evidence direct opposition to the views expressed in vv3-10 and were designed to bring Paul's opponents' logic into question. For Paul, whatever relationship man and woman may have had before was now changed through Christ. Indeed, nowhere in these passages did Paul suggest women should be under man's authority. In fact, Horrell argues that his corrective comments in vv11-12 suggest the exact opposite of such an interpretation.⁴⁰⁰

Paul included the rhetorical questions with the intention of polarising the Corinthians to decide who they would accept as their apostolic leader, his opponents or him. The questions served as a challenge that the Corinthians had a duty to 'judge for themselves' what was 'proper' for female worshippers to do, and thus must either accept or refute Paul's instructions and authority on the matter. For Paul, there should be no contention about this issue (v16): his instructions were clear enough. To ascertain what, exactly, his instructions had been, we must further consider Paul's use of rhetoric within the passage.

When assessing the passage of 11:3-16, it is not far-fetched to suggest that Paul used rhetorical styles to highlight the erroneous logic stated within the letter he had received from the Corinthians. For example, 11:3-10 is written in the style of *narratio*, designed to present one side of an argument in the form of a common statement of facts. This would have

³⁹⁸ Epictetus, 'Discourses II,' (19/04/2016, https://www.loebclassics.com/view/epictetus-discourses/1925/pb_LCL131.357.xml?result=2&rskey=suUHTb), citing 2.12-4.6.

³⁹⁹ Quintilian, *Institutes*, 9.2.33.

⁴⁰⁰ Horrell, *Corinthian*, 175.

presented a shared set of beliefs, designed to induce the reader to believe Paul was arguing in favour of the views they would so vehemently have agreed with and therefore giving the impression that the apostle's views matched their own (*narratio*). However, thereafter (in vv11-16), Paul turned the argument in such a way that it showed why their views must lead to unacceptable consequences if followed through to the logical end, and therefore a denial of their own argument must be the only suitable outcome (*refutatio*). In order to support this, it would be advantageous to assess our theorised rhetorical flow of the passage.

11:3-10 sees Paul set up the series of 'heads' (vv3-6), an argument quoted from the Corinthians' letter and designed to insinuate that he agreed with their views of the patriarchal authority that men hold over women, as evidenced in creation (*narratio*).⁴⁰¹ Man is head of the woman and therefore she should be veiled in public, lest she disgrace her head, i.e., her husband. As Genesis 2-3 highlights, woman came from man and was created for man, not vice versa (vv8-9). Due to this, the woman should have the authority of the man placed on her head, the cultural symbol of which included covering her head during worship (v10). This argument is straightforward and in line with cultural expectations on women from Jewish and Greco-Roman societies of the first-century. However, in vv11-12, Paul seems to refute the logic of his own argument by suggesting that, now 'in the Lord' both man and woman come from God and are therefore equally dependent upon each other (*refutatio*). These are confusing statements. How can 'man not come from woman but woman from man' (v8), yet 'as woman came from man... also man comes from woman'? (v12). Was Paul contradicting himself? Was the apostle confused?⁴⁰²

By reading vv3-10 through the lens of *prosopopoeia*, these questions can be addressed. One evidence of *prosopopoeia* is highlighted in vv5-6, where Paul mimicked the opponents using a rhetorical style termed '*reductio ad absurdum*.' This rhetorical device was designed to expose the absurdity of the opponents' argument by taking it to its logical conclusion and was widely used in first-century authorship.⁴⁰³ Traditional reading of 11:5-6 understands Paul

⁴⁰¹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 510.

⁴⁰² This question, which has two conflicting principles that the author wants the reader to resolve, has caused Bible translators many problems. NASB render the phrase 'in the Lord.' Modern translations, however, such as NRSV, resort to brackets and 'Nevertheless' to try to side-line any incongruity.

⁴⁰³ Peppiatt, *Women*, 99. Dio Chrysostom, 'Homily XXVI,' (12/03/2017, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/220126.htm>), citing 26.4.

instructing that every wife who prays with her head uncovered dishonours her head and therefore, were a woman to be unveiled, she may as well have her head shaved, such was the shame she brought to her head. However, when reading closely we see that Paul did not make an affirmative statement that for a woman to have her hair unveiled was equal to the cultural symbol of having her head shaved (v6). He simply stated that as a possibility, using the word ‘if’. This could alternatively be read as a quote: ‘If (*as you say*) a woman not covering her head is equal to having her head shaved, and if (*as you say*) it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved, (*then*) she should cover her head.’ Through using *reductio ad absurdum*, the extreme statement in the second half of the argument highlighted the absurdity of the opponents’ views within the first half. Paul used a similar tactic in Galatians 5:1-12 where, after having argued the absurdity of circumcision for the believer, he finished with an extreme statement suggesting he wished those who taught circumcision would go the whole way and emasculate themselves (5:12).

In 1 Corinthians 11:3-10, having highlighted the absurdity of the argument, Paul then moved on to mimic the Judaizers’ statements of man’s authority in vv7-10, which stemmed from Genesis’s creation language. Woman comes from man, and women are the glory of men, not vice versa. Again, this can lead one to believe that these are Paul’s views; however, he also refuted this statement to affirm that in the Lord, all things come from God (v12). Thus ‘in the Lord’ becomes the key verse in the *refutatio* turn of the passage. This suggestion might answer the issue of the two contradictory statements in the passage as a whole. If one statement (vv2-10) was based on Jewish tradition and the other (vv11-16) on Paul’s views on the new situation in Christ, then the *refutatio* turn of the passage would act as a link between the two.⁴⁰⁴

We find evidence of arguments of women’s subordination, based in creation language (particularly Gen 1-4), that Judaizers might have used against Paul, from two early Jewish writings.⁴⁰⁵ Both texts roughly follow points included in the argument to subordinate women

⁴⁰⁴ The levelling statements between men and women who are ‘all one in Christ Jesus’ (Gal 3:28) may also highlight Paul’s views on this point.

⁴⁰⁵ Namely, The Apocalypse of Moses and The Life of Adam and Eve. For suggestions that these texts date back to mid-first century AD and first century BC, respectively, see *Apocalypse of Moses: Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, Scriptural Research Institute, 2019, 2. L Rost, *Judaism Outside the Hebrew Canon*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1976, 154.

through 1 Corinthians 11:7-11. Both texts point to Eve as the chief culprit for the fall from Eden and therefore promote man's (Adam's) innocence in the event. 'Then Eve rose and went out and fell on the ground and said... "I have sinned against you... all sin in creation came about through me.'⁴⁰⁶ 'Eve said to Adam "You live on... since you have done neither the first nor the second error, but I have been cheated and deceived.'⁴⁰⁷ Both texts indicate that Eve's actions alone brought repercussions for Adam, including his right to the glory of God (linked with 11:7). 'And he (Adam) said to me, "O evil woman. Why have you wrought destruction among us? You have estranged me from the glory of God?'⁴⁰⁸ 'My Lord (Eve speaks to Adam) how much did you intend to repent, since I have brought toil and tribulation on you?'⁴⁰⁹ Finally, within the Apocalypse of Moses, we find a reference to why women (following Eve) should be more cautious as her position is less secure than men, and that she should take cover herself for protective power 'because of the angels' (v10).⁴¹⁰ 'I have sinned against your chosen angels... against the cherubim.'⁴¹¹ The inclusion of the mysterious allusion to 'having a sign on her head because of the angels,' Trompf suggests, stems from cues in these Jewish writings. 'Eve, these books indicate, was tempted by the Devil when her guardian angel was absent and even after being expelled from the garden for the great transgression, her first attempts at penitence were foiled by angels of light.'⁴¹² Thus the argument of 1 Corinthians 11:3-10 could have been designed to remind women of their proper position and place. By showing no signs of repentance or submission, they would bring dishonour to themselves, especially as the visual sign of their repentance (head covering) was being dismissed in the presence of angelic beings. Trompf comments

I suggest that it is not only a woman's vulnerability but also the relative hierarchical status of females, vis-à-vis the angels, which is being alluded to in v10. The two issues are inseparable because the traditional Jewish separation of the sexes at worship was breaking down in the newly fledged Gentile churches. If the old discriminations were

⁴⁰⁶ MD Johnson, 'The Life of Adam and Eve,' In JH Charlesworth (ed), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Volume Two*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983, 32:1-2, 249-297, 287.

⁴⁰⁷ Johnson, 'Life,' 18:1, 264.

⁴⁰⁸ Johnson, 'Life,' 21:6, 281.

⁴⁰⁹ Johnson, 'Life,' 5:3, 258

⁴¹⁰ GW Trompf, 'On Attitudes Toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and its Context,' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 42.2, (1980) 196-215, citing 206-207.

⁴¹¹ Johnson, 'Life,' 21:1-2, 287.

⁴¹² Trompf, 'Women,' 207, citing, 'Eve,' 33:2.

being undercut the author [ed - or in our theory, Judaizers] still felt the necessity to define relationships within the created order.⁴¹³

Trompf concludes that the view here presented shows ‘a decidedly Jewish-Christian theology.’⁴¹⁴ Trompf does not continue to suggest what seems likely: that we are reading Paul’s artistic impression of his opponents’ Jewish-Christian theology.

For, rather than Paul contradicting himself, it seems likely that it was, in fact, Judaizers who were arguing from creation in 1 Corinthians 11:3-10, based on Jewish texts, rather than Paul. The apostle, however, replied that ‘in the Lord,’ i.e., ‘since Christ had come’, everything had changed and turned the Judaizers’ use of creational language against them, suggesting that it was nature itself which gave woman long hair as a natural head covering (v15). If the Judaizers were equating a woman being unveiled with the shame of a shaven head (v6), Paul counter-argued to suggest that it was through creation (i.e., ‘the nature of things’) itself that women had been provided with a natural veil, which was her glory. Furthermore, ‘in the Lord’, whatever had been lost in the garden had been restored to both sexes by Christ, and therefore women need not be culturally veiled in order to be ‘properly’ acceptable for worship. What had once been understood as ‘creation’ highlighting women’s subordination to men, through ‘natural order’ expressed in Genesis 1-4, had now been equalled and rebalanced by Christ.

Indeed, many scholars see Paul’s use of the phrase ‘in the Lord’ as a reference to the new creation established through the Gospel.⁴¹⁵ If the Judaizers were intent on influencing the minds of the Corinthians by using arguments from an ‘old creation’ perspective, Paul was even more resolute to knock those very arguments down by implementing his ‘new creation’ understanding into the situation. The new creation had come to supersede the old. In this new creation, men and women should be treated equally, as both come from God.

⁴¹³ Trompf, ‘Women,’ 208.

⁴¹⁴ Trompf, ‘Women,’ 206-207.

⁴¹⁵ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 535.

Thus, Paul included the rhetorical questions with the intention of polarising the Corinthians to decide who they would accept as their apostolic leader, his opponents or him. The questions served as a challenge that the Corinthians had a duty to ‘judge for themselves’ what was ‘proper’ for female worshippers to do, and thus must either accept or refute Paul’s instructions and authority on the matter. For Paul, there should be no contention about this issue (v16), his instructions were clear enough. *Kephale* could mean ‘authority’ or ‘source,’ but it was irrelevant, as Christ had levelled issues of gender authority. Even if one were to argue that Paul was arguing for *kephale* as ‘headship,’ a counterargument could be that he was enforcing himself as the ‘head’ of the church and using his apostolic credentials to endorse women to be unveiled in worship. Those who suggest Paul was endorsing a hierarchy in this passage, due to gender differences, must also be able to explain the seeming contradictions in Paul’s argumentation.

3.4.2 *Change of Authorial Voice*

Stowers’s second characteristic of indications to the presence of *prosopopoeia* consists of a change of authorial tone within the text, which manifests as a ‘sudden turning to the interlocutor.’⁴¹⁶ Ancient readers, Stowers comments, would have looked for a difference in the characterisation from the authorial voice.⁴¹⁷ For example, he argues that Romans 7:7 begins with an abrupt change in voice that serves as a transition from Paul’s authorial voice, which has previously addressed the readers.⁴¹⁸

Stowers’s definition of Paul’s use of *prosopopoeia* in Romans 7:7-25 characterised a Gentile addressing Jewish Christians who valued themselves as superiorly theological. However, by reversing the characterisation in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, we see the opposite scenario. In the Corinthian letter, written primarily to Gentiles, Paul instead addressed them with a Jewish voice and Jewish argumentation (11:3-10). Both Romans 7:7-25 and 1 Corinthians 11:3-10

⁴¹⁶ Stowers, *Diatribes*, 96.

⁴¹⁷ Stowers, *Rereading*, 269.

⁴¹⁸ Stowers, *Rereading*, 269.

show Paul's 'voice' as different to the one his readers might expect, as his use of *prosopopoeia* was determined by the identity and situation of those to whom he was writing.

Furthermore, if the inclusion of rhetorical questions denotes the change of voice in Romans 7:7-25 from the immediately surrounding passages, then the opposite could be true of 1 Corinthians. Romans 7:7 marks the turn of a change from Paul's authorial voice to *prosopopoeia*, through which the change of voice is determined by a rhetorical question (7:7) imitating the character of a supposed Gentile. Paul's use of *prosopopoeia* in Romans 7:7-25 is therefore flanked by passages written with Paul's authorial voice. However, in 1 Corinthians 11:3-10, the opposite is true. 1 Corinthians 10:30 and 11:13-15 contain rhetorical questions, but now from the apostle's own authorial voice, which instead flank the main body of *prosopopoeia* in 11:3-10. Although these situations are essentially reversed, both evidence a shift in character and voice with the use of rhetorical questions to serve the transition, different argumentation from the passages that flank them, and are rhetorically designed to show the erroneous illogic of the situation encased in *prosopopoeia*. Indeed, in the case of 1 Corinthians 11:3-10, there are no rhetorical questions evident, precisely because the passage is not the voice of Paul, but of his opponents.

Furthermore, Ciampa highlights that although the Greek does not signal the insertion of quotation marks to represent the viewpoint of the Corinthians, there are good reasons for the modern reader to do so. Every time Paul uses quotations with the Corinthians, Ciampa argues, he then corrects them with an assertion of his own, introduced with an adversative conjunction, such as 'but' or 'however', which denotes a change of speaker.⁴¹⁹ We see these conjunctions occur twice in the passage. First in v3, Paul's use of 'but' denotes the change from his authorial voice to that of a statement of the opponents' argument by use of *prosopopoeia*. Then in v11 Paul's use of the word 'however' highlights the grammatical marker denoting the return in the argument from their views to his own.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 251.

⁴²⁰ Paul employed the same style of rhetoric in 15:1-11 to discuss the validity of Christ's resurrection from the dead (*narratio*), before demonstrating how that premise must then refute some views that denied the resurrection of the dead for believers, as the logic in the first premise must lead to the destruction of that in the second (*refutatio*). For this argument see Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 264.

Therefore, as highlighted, there appear to be many similarities between Stowers's argument of *prosopopoeia* in Romans 7:7-25 and this author's postulation of *prosopopoeia* in 1 Corinthians 11:3-10. However, one key difference between the passages is evident. Whereas Romans 7:7-25 could be argued as the use of *prosopopoeia* for a fictitious situation, it is my suggestion that those who Paul was addressing in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 consisted of a real situation with specific opponents. Although for Stowers, 'the person in Romans 7:7-25 whom Paul so carefully constructs by means of *prosopopoeia*... represents someone caught between two cultures' and is, therefore, an imaginary Gentile, 1 Corinthians dealt with real opponents and their erroneous views.⁴²¹

3.4.3 *Contradictory Theology*

Stowers's final criteria of indications to the presence of *prosopopoeia* consist of assessing whether the language or theology contained within a passage shows contradictions to other parts of the letter. In other words, 'does the passage concur with what we know of Paul from other parts of the letter or his wider Epistles?'⁴²² To argue that the views contained in the passage are Paul's, one must also prove that they are consistent with his theology as a whole. In refuting Romans 7:7-25 as Paul's autobiographical views, Stowers quotes Origen who points out that Paul would not have written these words of himself as 'Jews do not speak of a time in their life when they live without the Law.'⁴²³ For Origen, then, any use of words or thought in a passage that would contradict Paul's general theology in other parts of his Epistles would denote the possibility of *prosopopoeia*.

The question then must be asked, 'Is it reasonable to suppose that Paul's Judaizing opponents may have spoken out against women being liberated to have hair uncovered in Corinth?' 'Would cultural and scriptural arguments of women's subjugation, based in the Old

⁴²¹ Stowers, *Rereading*, 278.

⁴²² Stowers, 'Speech-In-Character,' 194.

⁴²³ Origen, *Romans*, 6:8-1052, as cited by Stowers, *Rereading*, 266.

Testament, be fitting for Judaizing Christians?’ The answer to this would undoubtedly be, yes, it is certainly possible that this is something Judaizers may have mediated.

The suggestion that women who were unveiled brought dishonour to God stemmed from Jewish synagogue worship practices, which dictated that women were unable to take part in either prayer or prophesy.⁴²⁴ At least since the time of the redaction of the Mishnah (around 200AD), head covering has marked the institutionalised class distinction among Jewish women based on their sexuality.⁴²⁵ Early texts show Rabbis likening a woman who lets her hair grow long and wild to the demon Lilith, who uses her hair to seduce men to acts of prostitution.⁴²⁶ Rabbis encouraged the husband of a woman who uncovered her hair in public to divorce her, branding him evil if he did not.⁴²⁷ All of these examples are suggestive of an early Jewish society that theologically and socially subjugated women who did not live up to cultural expectations. Although the redaction of the Mishnah occurred after the time of Paul, it is unlikely that the Mishnah was preserving new innovations. Instead, these are likely to be rulings and views that were common and already traditional in Jewish society in Paul’s time.

As with the early Jewish cultural understandings of disgrace associated with women having uncovered hair, one can also find Old Testament scriptures that would have guided Judaizers’ views and rulings on this subject. Numbers 5:18 instructs priests to publicly signify the unbridled sexuality of a suspected adulteress by unbinding her hair. Ezekiel 16:8 shows God’s love and possession of Israel with the words, ‘I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your naked body.’ Greenberg comments on this verse to emphasise that ‘in early Arabia... throwing a garment over a woman symbolised acquiring her.’⁴²⁸ This is further evidenced in Ruth 3:9, where Ruth asks Boaz to cover her with his garment and thereby to take her as his wife. The Bible curses the man who sleeps with his father’s wife as the one who ‘uncovers the garments of his father’ (Deut 27:20).⁴²⁹ Finally, the phrase ‘neither

⁴²⁴ Hooker, *Christ*, 119.

⁴²⁵ S Weiss, ‘Under Cover: Demystification of Women’s Head Covering in Jewish Law,’ *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women’s Studies and Gender Issues*, 17, (2009) 89-115, citing 93.

⁴²⁶ BT Eruvin, 100b, as cited by Weiss, ‘Cover,’ 94.

⁴²⁷ Tosefta Sotah 5:9, as cited by Weiss, ‘Cover,’ 94.

⁴²⁸ M Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, New York: Doubleday, 1983, 27.

⁴²⁹ Weiss, ‘Cover,’ 94-95.

man without woman, nor woman without man,’ in v8 stemmed from a rabbinic tradition that had special importance to Jews through the invocation of Genesis creation language.⁴³⁰

Most interestingly for the argument of *prosopopoeia*, we find an early scriptural reference in Deuteronomy 21:12, which may have provided some of the basis for the Judaizing argument in 1 Corinthians 11:6. In this verse, it is commanded that any foreign woman captured in the war should have her hair shaved before her captor is allowed to take her as a wife, as the shaving of hair was a public sign of humiliation and affliction (see also Job 1:20, Isa 22:12).⁴³¹

All of these Old Testament and early Jewish literary examples could well have influenced any Judaizer view and argument against women being unveiled in the first-century church. However, the fact that these seeming contradictions and evidences of wording are not consistent with Paul’s usual writing give us good reason to question whether they stem from the apostle himself or represent his own point of view.

Furthermore, when assessing specific language or terms used in 1 Corinthians 11:3-10, we find many inconsistencies with phrases Paul used elsewhere in his Epistles. Trompf, commenting on how 11:3-16 links to Paul’s preceding instructions in 10:27-30, provides an insightful challenge:

The onus of proof is now on those who wish to argue that Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who has given careful (but by Jewish standards) conspicuously liberal conditions for dining with pagans, now wants to impose a very culture-bound regulation...⁴³²

⁴³⁰ *Shekinah*, 8:9, as cited by Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 534.

⁴³¹ Weiss, ‘Cover,’ 94.

⁴³² Trompf, ‘Women,’ 202.

Trompf's observations of the 'linguistic idiosyncrasies in this passage' compared to the rest of Paul's Epistles does not, he suggests, 'yield positive conclusions.'⁴³³ His explanation for these inconsistencies, however, is to suggest 11:3-16 as a later interpolation, rather than assess the passage through *prosopopoeia*. Nevertheless, he does make interesting observations based on the language used in the passage highlighting that it contains words that do not appear anywhere else in the Pauline Corpus, or even in the New Testament. The introductory gambit 'now I want you to understand' (v3), for example, was not Paul's usual formula (which was usually 'I would not have you ignorant...' or 'now concerning...'); in fact, it only appears once elsewhere in the New Testament (Col 2:1) in an entirely different context.⁴³⁴

Trompf even picks out phrases like 'praying and prophesying (v5),' claiming its uniqueness in the New Testament, suggesting it did not stem from the apostle himself.⁴³⁵ Trompf perhaps goes too far here as that an author only used a phrase once, on its own, does not indicate a quotation for certain. However, Paul uses the word 'disgrace/shame' or 'disgraceful/shameful' only twice in the whole letter, both times in the 'women passages' (11:6 and 14:34-35). The use of these phrases, in conjunction with the reference to the women of Corinth, appeals to an unapostolic sense of shame which women should feel in not executing propriety.⁴³⁶

All of these examples, along with the theological flow of the argument in 11:3-10, are not consistent with Paul or his character and therefore must suggest that they do not stem from the apostle himself. Indeed, Trompf suggests that the argumentation of 11:3-16 does not carry the conviction that occurs in the rest of the letter. Elsewhere Paul laid down his rules for the churches and even when he had no direction from Jesus himself (7:7), Paul was keen to implant his own judgement into the situation by claiming to have the Spirit of God. 'By contrast, the arguments of head covering are much less assured and their grounds much more diffuse... not only are his readers asked to judge for themselves (v13) but there is an appeal both to nature and custom as guides (vv14 & 16). These show up as flimsy supports... and

⁴³³ Trompf, 'Women,' 202.

⁴³⁴ Trompf, 'Women,' 203.

⁴³⁵ Trompf, 'Women,' 204.

⁴³⁶ Trompf, 'Women,' 209-210.

the editor can hardly have considered his own logic convincing.⁴³⁷ Trompf explains these contradictions as a later interpolation from an unknown editor. However, as Walker succinctly states, ‘this conclusion does not of course, necessarily deny Pauline authorship.’⁴³⁸ Indeed, whatever one makes of assertions like Trompf’s, many facets of this passage can be addressed and explained if Paul used the ancient device of *prosopopoeia*.

In view of all the evidence highlighted above, i.e., the style of *narratio* (vv3-10) and *refutatio* (vv11-16) employed, the inclusion of rhetorical questions (vv12-13) challenging the theological flow of vv3-10, the change of authorial voice (v3), and again (v11), the contradictory theology based on Jewish texts, and the unusual Pauline formulas and wording found throughout (vv3-10) it would be appropriate to suggest that vv3-10 begins with Paul’s use of *prosopopoeia* quoting the Judaizers. Thus ‘I want you to understand’ (v3), which is not a usual formula of Paul’s, can be seen as a term quoted from the letter received from the Corinthians instructing Paul on where he had erred in allowing the Corinthian women to be unveiled. In turn, vv11-16 contains Paul’s retort to the Corinthians (and Judaizers) of the reasoning behind his apostolic decisions and authority on the matter.

One key piece of evidence for this postulation regards the inclusion of the term ‘shame’ (v6), and due to this, we come to the crux of the matter for Paul. For the apostle, issues of veiling and women ran much deeper than a social model of equality. The women in Corinth were bringing the word of God to his people via prophecy and were being attacked purely due to their attire. Instead of the shame being brought onto the man by the unveiled woman, as in the Judaizers’ line of thought, Paul saw it instead being transferred onto the women and Christ by the Corinthians’ refusal to accept the freedom that the new covenant allowed. In the glory vs shame debate, the unveiled and free women were being shamed by the authoritative traditions of their culture, and the Corinthians’ inability to move towards the freedom of the new covenant.

⁴³⁷ Trompf, ‘Women,’ 204.

⁴³⁸ WO Walker, ‘1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul’s Views Regarding Women,’ *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 94 (1975) 94-110, citing 99.

Rather than viewing woman's liberation to pray unveiled as something 'shameful', Paul instead affirmed the message he had brought in his founding mission to Corinth as one that allowed for godly freedom from the Law. Although the Corinthians had, in some cases, exploited this freedom (5:1-2), in this instance (11:2) Paul praised them by indicating that they had not erred. He was happy for the women to continue to worship unveiled, as it opposed the suppressive nature of society towards women and promoted the freedom of the Gospel. As he endorsed believers to have the freedom to 'eat anything sold in the meat market' (10:25), so he also allowed women the freedom to worship unveiled. Paul, in 11:3-16, was not rebuking the Corinthians for the mistake of allowing women to be unveiled, he was providing them with justifiable arguments as to why women should be allowed to worship God unveiled, with freedom unparalleled in their society.⁴³⁹

He did not admonish either the attire that women were wearing or the fact that they were doing so whilst praying and prophesying. In fact, he assumed that women would have naturally been vocally active within the services, precisely because that was what he had implemented in his founding mission in Corinth. Finally, 11:3-16 follows on naturally from Chapter 10, where Paul was discussing the 'believer's freedom.' Therefore, it is appropriate to suggest that this passage was intended to be an extension of that very freedom, which empowered women to have a voice in their community. 'If woman, in contrast to Jewish custom, takes part in prayer and prophecy, it is because a new power has been given to her.'⁴⁴⁰ This power was the positive affirmation of women to pray and prophesy free from social restraints, with heads unveiled, equal to men, in the new covenant of Christ.

A possible argument against this theory is the view that Paul was instead endorsing the veiling of women and affirming women's subordination to men, which could be understood from v5. In this, Paul stated that 'every woman' who prays with her head uncovered shames her metaphorical head, i.e., her husband. The problem with this argument is to ask how this applies to single, unmarried women? How can women wear a marriage veil if they are not married?⁴⁴¹ Kahler takes this point one step further to ask that if women are to be obedient to

⁴³⁹ Ciampa, *Corinthians*, 506.

⁴⁴⁰ Hooker, *Christ*, 119.

⁴⁴¹ Hooker, *Christ*, 117.

God alone in the context of prayer and prophecy, how then can they wear a symbol of obedience to their husbands?⁴⁴² Furthermore, in Chapter 7, Paul went to great lengths to address each different section of women, such as married, single, virgins, etc. If 11:3-16 was meant to address unveiled married women, would he not also be more specific in whom he addressed? Indeed, to suggest that Paul's intentions were for women to become subordinate to men stands against the flow of the rest of the letter, where Paul endorses mutuality and the promotion of 'other.' The answer must be the reiteration that Paul was not addressing women about their forbidden acts of unveiling, but instead was quoting and answering the claims of the opponents and was therefore writing in a defence of his own apostolic direction.

Therefore, if Paul was writing to defend his views against the subordination of women, the passage has been disastrously misunderstood to mean the opposite. Thiselton comments, 'it is a travesty of this passage to construe Paul's treatment of mutuality into supposed misogyny of patriarchalism.'⁴⁴³ Unfortunately, this passage, although based on cultural issues of its time, has indeed become an authoritative ground of women's subjugation, which lasts to the present day. However, it is not this passage alone that has caused problems for women due to exegetical errors. The 'silenced women' verses of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 have also been notoriously problematic and also need consideration.

⁴⁴² Kähler, *Frau*, 43, as cited by Hooker, *Christ*, 117.

⁴⁴³ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 170.

4. The Silencing of Women (1 Corinthians 14:34-35)

4.1 Interpolation

One of the primary ways scholars have attempted to defend Paul on possible charges of misogyny, regarding 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, is by suggesting that the passage is an interpolation from a later editor. This allows for an array of postulations: that the passage has been edited due to scribes who were attempting to find an appropriate location in the context for Paul's directives concerning women⁴⁴⁴ came from an interpolator who misinterpreted the meaning of v36,⁴⁴⁵ and came from later editors who looked to 'shelter the verse fragments which provide biblical support for female subordination.'⁴⁴⁶ The conclusion of many scholars that 14:34-35 is an interpolation comes due to many reasons, namely,

- 1) Early majuscules have the verses displaced to the end of v40, and sometimes as an additional marginal gloss.
- 2) The verses do not join smoothly to their context, as 14:37 follows 14:33a more easily, whilst the intrusion of 14:34-35 interrupts the flow of thought and the topic under discussion.
- 3) The verses contradict 11:5

It is helpful to consider these points in turn.

⁴⁴⁴ BM Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the New Greek Testament* (2nd Ed), Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005, 499.

⁴⁴⁵ J Murphy-O'Connor, 'Interpolations in 1 Corinthians,' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 48 (1986) 81-94, citing 92.

⁴⁴⁶ Odell-Scott, 'Interpolation,' 70.

4.1.1 *Early Majuscules*

One of the main champions for the interpolation theory is Gordon Fee, who points to the argument for interpolation stemming from a displacement of 14:34-35 in some early majuscules, namely the ‘entire Western tradition,’ from its normal location to the end of the chapter, after verse 40. While the original Eastern Greek text has vv34-35 in its traditional place, the Western witnesses attest to a displacement of the verses. This, Fee suggests, ‘should cause any New Testament scholar to have serious doubts as to its authenticity,’ which is further strengthened by the unpauline language contained within the verses.⁴⁴⁷ For Fee, the idea of vv34-35 being an ‘early marginal gloss that was subsequently placed in the text at two different places’ is the most appropriate postulation. This can be explained by suggestions of early editors attempting to check rising feminine movements in the early centuries, or the fact that they desired to reconcile the text with 1 Timothy 2. It is easy to imagine a process by which a comment originally written in a different hand came to be incorporated into the text; however, as Fee states, there is ‘nothing close to being similar to it in the entire copying tradition of any part of the New Testament.’⁴⁴⁸

Fee further states that those who argue that Paul wrote these verses originally in their current location do so without asking the crucial question as to how the Western text, with the verse displacements, came into existence. To suggest that the Eastern text had been edited, without offering reasonable solutions as to why, is ‘a shot in the dark,’ as ‘it would never have occurred to a copyist to take such an unprecedented step as to rearrange Paul’s argument.’⁴⁴⁹

Collins argues against this point, however, to state that although it is rare in the Pauline Corpus for textual dislocation and movement, it is not unknown and certainly happened in other places within the New Testament (John 7:53-8:11).⁴⁵⁰ Witherington also refutes Fee’s

⁴⁴⁷ Fee, *Corinthians*, 780.

⁴⁴⁸ Fee, *Corinthians*, 782.

⁴⁴⁹ Fee, *Corinthians*, 783.

⁴⁵⁰ RF Collins, *1 Corinthians*, Sacra Pagina, Collegeville: Liturgical, 2007, 516.

suggestion that Western dislocation came from an attempt to reconcile these verses with 1 Timothy 2, as the texts are not close enough to each other to warrant the argument.⁴⁵¹

Indeed, Fee's argument of dislocation of 14:34-35 in the Western, edited manuscripts as evidence of interpolation is flawed. Niccum accuses Fee of juxtaposing the Eastern and Western witnesses to a falsely, unbalanced level.⁴⁵² The 'entire Western tradition' that Fee points to as an attestation of the dislocation of the verses, is hardly as broad as he would suggest. Niccum highlights that one single, unknown, Latin translation of 1 Corinthians was the source for a further two trajectories, namely the K-Text (Africa in the mid-third century) and the D-Text (Italy in the mid-fourth century), thus suggesting a very close original source for all majuscules.⁴⁵³ Wire adds weight to Niccum's argument to highlight that the four manuscripts that place vv34-35 at the end of the chapter are so closely related to each other that the theory of a single common origin of these texts is well established. She proposes that this single, Latin archetype comes from an oral reading of the Greek text as the gospel spread among the Roman provinces in the fourth century.⁴⁵⁴ For Wire, the Latin original text evolved when the multiple oral translations became more uniform as ears became accustomed to certain readings. Furthermore, all Latin texts derived from one original majuscule, which contained the textual displacement.⁴⁵⁵ Therefore, a genetic relationship can be observed between all Western variants of an original manuscript, as all variations stem primarily from two texts (K-text and D-Text), which themselves stem from one original Western source. Thus, Niccum states, 'this genetic relationship alone reduces their value for Fee's position since most cannot be considered separate witnesses.'⁴⁵⁶

If Niccum and Wire's evidence is correct, then the consideration of interpolation due to textual dislocation does not depend upon weighty multiple witness attestation, as Fee suggests, but rather more from a single, tenuous, edited source of unknown origin. The variants are not an 'entire Western tradition' made up of independent sources but stem from

⁴⁵¹ B Witherington III, *Conflict and Community*, Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1995, 288.

⁴⁵² C Niccum, 'The Voice of the Manuscripts on the Silence of Women: The External Evidence for 1 Corinthians 14:34-35,' *New Testament Studies*, 43 (1997) 242-255, citing 247.

⁴⁵³ Niccum, 'Women,' 247-248.

⁴⁵⁴ Wire, *Corinthian*, 149.

⁴⁵⁵ Wire, *Corinthian*, 150.

⁴⁵⁶ Niccum, 'Women,' 251.

one source, which is hardly weighty enough to hang historical accuracy upon. Niccum accuses Fee's position of relying on external evidence yet suggests that that same external evidence actually 'unanimously supports the inclusion of these verses.' For the external evidence to give any credence to a possibility of interpolation, 'evidence of a text lacking vv34-45 needs to be found.'⁴⁵⁷ Walker adds weight to this, stating that 'the strongest evidence for interpolation is direct text-critical evidence, that a particular passage was or may have been missing in early manuscripts of the document in which it now appears. Some scholars would argue that such evidence is an absolute prerequisite for the identification of any passage as an interpolation.'⁴⁵⁸ While the Western manuscripts show transpositions of the verses in a 'few, closely related versions,' no early extant majuscule offers evidence of an original omission of the verses.⁴⁵⁹ Therefore the lack of external evidence for vv34-35 as an interpolation must be seen as what it is: a lack of evidence.⁴⁶⁰

Furthermore, as Walker highlights, there was a vast time gap between Paul's writing of the Corinthian letter and the earliest extant manuscript, the earliest source being from the 'late second century at best, and most of the evidence comes from the fourth century or later.' Therefore, we cannot know whether an interpolation was inserted into the original letter but must rely on any evidence that supports interpolation by other considerations, which in the case of vv34-35 amount to none.⁴⁶¹ Indeed, the earliest manuscript that places vv34-35 after v40 came as late as AD375.⁴⁶² Thus, when comparing Eastern to Western witnesses to identify the interpolation possibilities of 14:34-35, the evidence must lead to conclusions that vv34-35 are original Pauline verses and in the intended place within the passage. Indeed, once the evidence has been assessed, the only assumption that can remain for scholars who argue for interpolation is that, perhaps, a careless scribe placed vv34-35 into the wrong location or misinterpreted their original meaning.⁴⁶³ Neither postulations could be seen as weighty or probable.

⁴⁵⁷ Niccum, 'Women,' 243.

⁴⁵⁸ WO Walker, 'Text-Critical Evidence for Interpolation's in the Letters of Paul,' *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 50.1 (1988) 622-631, citing 625-626.

⁴⁵⁹ Niccum, 'Women,' 254.

⁴⁶⁰ Walker, 'Evidence,' 630.

⁴⁶¹ Walker, 'Evidence,' 630.

⁴⁶² Witherington III, *Women*, 91.

⁴⁶³ Murphy-O'Connor, 'Interpolations,' 92.

4.1.2 Smooth Transitions

The suggestion that 14:34-35 disrupts the context of the themes of prophecy within the chapter, and links badly with v33b, has also led authors to postulate interpolation.⁴⁶⁴ The first point of contention comes from the question of whether ‘as in all the congregations of the saints’ (v33b) links with what precedes or follows. If linked with what preceded and Paul was declaring a general rule for the correct conduction of prophecy, it becomes a holistic directional statement for all believers. However, if linked with what followed, and Paul meant it as an instruction that all women should be silent in all churches, it was actually a harsh, prejudiced command to a minority of his congregation.

Horrell suggests vv34-35 as an interpolation due to the apparently tenuous link between v33b and 34. For Horrell, the repetition of ‘in the congregations’ makes for a clumsy literary error, and usually when Paul used such a phrase, whilst discussing church practice, it concluded a comment, rather than introducing one (4:17, 7:17, 11:16).⁴⁶⁵ Witherington argues against Horrell, however, to suggest that the two uses of ‘in the congregations’ were not a repetition, but dealt with two separate issues. The first use (v33) referred to the universal church and Paul’s views of prophecy in general, whilst the second use (v34) was intended solely for the Corinthian congregation and the specific issues Paul faced there.⁴⁶⁶ Grudem also states that v33b links with v34, and not v33. Rather than Paul using the phrase to conclude a comment, per se, as Horrell suggests, Paul actually used this phrase to strengthen his commands on ecclesial practice (4:17, 7:17, 11:16, 16:1).⁴⁶⁷

However, to remove vv34-35 upon the understanding that they are not part of the original text, would actually make the passage construct even more rough and uneven, as the rhetorical questions of v36 highlight. The question must be asked, ‘Who was Paul asking if the word of God originated with them?’ Witherington maintains that the Corinthians were arguing that their views were the same as in all the churches, and therefore that Paul’s

⁴⁶⁴ H Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975, 246. Horrell, *Social*, 186.

⁴⁶⁵ Horrell, *Social*, 186.

⁴⁶⁶ Witherington III, *Women*, 96.

⁴⁶⁷ W Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, Washington: University Press of America, 1982, 239.

rhetorical accusation dealt with their thinking that the word of God originated with them.⁴⁶⁸ Horrell concurs to suggest that having appealed to the Corinthian prophets to discipline their activities in the church, Paul sarcastically ridicules any rebellious resistance that may oppose his instructions. For Horrell and Witherington, then, the text makes sense with the omission of vv34-35, as v33b links perfectly with v36.⁴⁶⁹ However, one could equally argue that as the language of v36 is hostile and confrontational it, would be strange to suggest that Paul was directing it towards the Corinthians, considering his tone in the section preceding vv34-35 contained calm language concerning general directions about prophesying in the church service. There are no linguistic clues within the language of v26-33a to warrant the rhetorical rebuke of v36. However, in vv34-35, Paul used strong words such as ‘remain silent, submission and disgraceful,’ highlighting an apparent situation that allowed for the harsh rhetorical questions that immediately followed.

Thiselton supports the smooth transition of the passage by highlighting that the subject matter contained within vv34-35 contains a large amount of significant vocabulary from the verses preceding (vv26-33a). These key terms include ‘speak’ (v34 linked to repeated use of the word in vv14-32), ‘church’ (14:28 linked to v34 and v35), and ‘submission’ (v32 linked to v34). Bailey proposes 1 Corinthians 11:2-14:40 as an interesting chiasmic structure which contains 14:34-35 within its framework.⁴⁷⁰ To suggest that these seminal verses should be omitted would be to create an ‘abrupt hole into the set of the seven carefully balanced sections.’⁴⁷¹

One can understand the reasoning behind suggesting vv34-35 as an interpolation, as these verses could appear to interrupt Paul’s flow of thought in the passage. Allison suggests that the concepts discussed within vv26-33 do not carry through to the women’s section.⁴⁷² From this viewpoint, the ‘silence’ placed upon the Corinthian prophets involved silence which was conditional upon certain situations (vv26-33), whereas the ‘silence’ Paul demands of the women in vv34-35 seemed to be absolute.⁴⁷³ Providing a reason for this difference in the

⁴⁶⁸ Witherington III, *Women*, 98.

⁴⁶⁹ Horrell, *Social*, 187.

⁴⁷⁰ See Bailey, *Paul*, 410, for details of the structure.

⁴⁷¹ Bailey, *Paul*, 412.

⁴⁷² Allison, ‘Women,’ 38.

⁴⁷³ Horrell, *Social*, 191.

degrees of ‘silence’ placed on the two groups could then lead one to deem vv34-35 an interpolation, which would lay any accusations of ‘misogynist’ on someone other than Paul himself. However, Thiselton is correct when he suggests that the use of the direction to ‘stop speaking’ should be seen as the ‘catchword’ connection between verses 28, 30, and 34, which scholars who suggest interpolation tend to overlook.⁴⁷⁴ Indeed, the whole chapter addresses order within the context of church services. Both the glossia/prophecy and women’s sections contain elements about speaking and its cessation in certain situations. Both concern order in the setting of church meetings. With this in mind, vv34-35 cannot be out of the flow of Paul’s thought, as it also concerns these matters, albeit with a slightly different emphasis on instruction.

Due to all of this evidence, whether one considers that Paul was speaking to women or not in vv34-35, it should be observed that v36 follows on perfectly from v35, and the suggestion of vv34-35 as an interpolation, on the grounds of rough linguistic transition, should be rejected.

4.1.3 Contradiction

Some scholars suggest that 14:34-35 must be an interpolation as it appears to clearly contradict 11:5 and suggest that those who accept 14:34-35 as authentic must explain its content in such a way that will allow for the harmonisation with 11:5.⁴⁷⁵ This is perhaps the most convincing argument for interpolation yet does not come without its counterarguments. Witherington asks the insightful question, ‘If the contradiction is so obvious, why did the interpolator not notice it?’⁴⁷⁶ Another, equally valid question, would be, ‘If the interpolator had the choice of anywhere to place the verses, and desired to highlight that the verses were intended ecclesial directions from Paul, why put them immediately before rhetorical questions that could actually bring doubt to Paul’s intentions?’

⁴⁷⁴ Thiselton, *Epistle*, 1152.

⁴⁷⁵ Meeks, ‘Image,’ 203. Horrell, *Social*, 186.

⁴⁷⁶ Witherington III, *Women*, 92.

Some have tried to argue that Paul was speaking about two different settings in the two passages. Whereas 14:34-35 spoke of a central setting for all members of the church, the context of 11:5 was the house-church, which was considered the women's sphere and therefore they were not exempt from the inclusion of its activities.⁴⁷⁷ However, Fiorenza argues that the public sphere of the early Christian community was in the woman's house, and therefore 14:34-35 makes no sense in a central church setting.⁴⁷⁸ Alternatively, Barrett comments that there is nothing to suggest that Paul referred to 'speaking' that took place in a private house-gathering setting, and therefore 11:5 makes no sense in a house-church setting.⁴⁷⁹ Whichever view one takes, the point is that any suggestion of contradiction of the two verses, leading to acceptance of interpolation, is not as clear-cut as some scholars might insist.

In order to convince one of interpolation, an argument must be given to put significant doubt into the mind of the reader as to the original text's authenticity. From the arguments and counterarguments given above, it is evident that each point cannot only be placed in doubt, but actually refuted, and therefore interpolation theories of 14:34-35 should be dismissed. However, the points raised do hold some value, as they pose a problem that is not solved by suggestions of interpolation yet must still be answered.

4.1.4 Further Arguments

If these controversial verses are indeed from the Apostle's own hand, then what can be made of them? Feminist scholars, such as Wire, insist that these verses highlight Paul as a dominating leader, who 'threw the blanket of propriety over this attempted rape of the women's divine gift.'⁴⁸⁰ Wire suggests two possible readings of 1 Corinthians: either that

⁴⁷⁷ SB Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences*, Ann Arbor: Servant, 1980, 135.

⁴⁷⁸ Fiorenza, *Memory*, 176.

⁴⁷⁹ Barrett, *Corinthians*, 331.

⁴⁸⁰ Wire, *Corinthian*, 156.

Paul was a divisive misogynist who constructed the whole letter to build an argument designed to ensure women were silent,⁴⁸¹ or that he was indecisive and ‘feeling his way’ intuitively towards an outcome designed to silence women.⁴⁸² Therefore, for Wire, Paul was either an tyrant who wrote the letter with the primary intention to silence women or a hesitant leader who was influenced by the arguments of others (in Wire’s view, his elitist friends who controlled the Corinthian church). Either way, Wire sees Paul as a dominator and suppressor of women. For Wire, by introducing the Spirit (14:37), Paul’s demands on the silencing of women came from ‘the Lord’s command,’ which gave him added authority. Furthermore, those who did not agree that women should be silent would not have been considered spiritual or prophetic, which provided Paul with a perfect theological support (v37).⁴⁸³

Wire’s views of Paul are biased towards her understanding of his misogynistic characteristic. For example, where most see his claim to be the Corinthians’ ‘father in the gospel’ (4:15) as a claim which displays ‘pastoral sensitivity,’⁴⁸⁴ her reading of this statement views his intentions instead of ‘pastoral control.’⁴⁸⁵ Other scholars also understand that her view of Paul’s mission was to place a complete silence on women in the Christian assembly because he wanted to appeal to the privileged male class of Corinth.⁴⁸⁶ Wire’s view of Paul as a ‘male oppressor’ paints him in a picture that contradicts the entire letter. How can ‘Paul the dictator,’ who supposedly wrote to suppress women’s voices, be reconciled with the apostle’s views of the liberation of women (7:4, 11:11-12, 12:22, etc.?) If Paul is the author of 14:34-35, as has been concluded, how could he have written from two different perspectives in the same letter? Wire’s answer is biased and limited. Perhaps views of Paul as a ‘misogynist’ are skewed by scholars who have faced harsh treatment from men who have misused Paul’s words. Perhaps this viewpoint needs to be reconsidered.

Others see the apostle as he who ‘singled out a segment of the congregation who were not allowed the exercise of spiritual gifts so that one particular group (the male ecstasies) may

⁴⁸¹ Wire, *Corinthian*, 153.

⁴⁸² Wire, *Corinthian*, 154.

⁴⁸³ Wire, *Corinthian*, 155.

⁴⁸⁴ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 79.

⁴⁸⁵ Wire, *Corinthian*, 45-47.

⁴⁸⁶ Collins, *Corinthians*, 514. Elliott, *Paul*, 52.

exercise theirs.⁴⁸⁷ Clark states incorrectly that ‘Paul instructs the women to be silent because they are women’ as for women to speak was a ‘shameful action.’⁴⁸⁸ Perhaps Paul thought women were taking on roles of instructors that were above their social position and their misguided loquaciousness would have discredited Christianity, much to the apostle’s concern.⁴⁸⁹ As the immediate context of the chapter is on the sifting of prophetic speech, it could be argued that Paul’s admonition must have referred to women seeking to join in on the sifting and testing of prophecy.⁴⁹⁰ However, why would Paul enforce complete silence on women here, yet endorse them to speak freely, with roles of power in the church, elsewhere (11:5)? If women using prophetic gifting was such an issue in Corinth, why did Paul not mention it at length as he did with the problems surrounding the Lord’s Supper (11:17-34)? Furthermore, considering Chapters 11-14 concern every member using their gifting for the common good, such a major modification on what Paul had just been speaking about would not come in two short verses and would be seen as misleading and deceptive.⁴⁹¹

For others, it seems that Paul was referring only to married women who had believing husbands in the church or even more specifically the wives of the glossolalists and prophets, to whom Paul had just been referring.⁴⁹² Fiorenza is one of the main scholars who promote this view, as she seeks to explain the apparent contradiction between 14:34-35 and 11:5. For Fiorenza, the double rhetorical question of v36 underlines the importance of Paul’s last point, namely that ‘wives’ were not allowed to speak. However, by her understanding that ‘the injunction does not pertain to all women, but solely to wives,’ the contradiction can be explained, and Paul’s endorsement of unmarried women to speak remains credible. She understands this viewpoint from her reading of Chapter 7, which makes it clear that not all women in Corinth were married, and therefore ‘could not ask their husbands at home.’⁴⁹³ Fiorenza’s reading of 1 Corinthians is a primary example of someone constructing a theological viewpoint to champion their cause, i.e., as a feminist writer seeking to provide theological justifications for women’s speech. Her understanding that Paul’s ban on speaking related only to wives comes from her reading of 7:32-35. In this section, Paul’s apparent

⁴⁸⁷ Allison, ‘Women,’ 38.

⁴⁸⁸ Clark, *Christ*, 185-186.

⁴⁸⁹ L Morris, *1 Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Nottingham: InterVarsity, 1985, 193.

⁴⁹⁰ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 250.

⁴⁹¹ Grudem, *Prophecy*, 247.

⁴⁹² Bailey, *Paul*, 410.

⁴⁹³ Fiorenza, *Memory*, 230-231.

‘ascetic preference for the unmarried state is plain.’ 7:32-35 shows Paul’s Christological missionary perspective which ascribes special holiness to the unmarried women (vv34), ‘apparently because she is not touched by a man (7:1).’ Her summing up of this subject then is ‘we can surmise that Paul is able to accept the pneumatic participation of such “holy women” ... but argues in 14:34-35 against such an active participation of wives.’⁴⁹⁴

Fiorenza neglects to realise that Chapter 7 contains Paul’s general opinions on marriage, which were not foundational orders from the Lord (7:25) and responded to questions that the Corinthians had asked him (7:1). Therefore, rather than Paul speaking under the authority of an apostle ordering the direction of the worship service, as in Chapter 14, one should read Chapter 7 as advice from the Corinthians’ spiritual father (4:15). Paul certainly wasn’t attributing special holiness to unmarried women in Chapter 7, as that would contradict the egalitarian flow of the whole letter elsewhere (1:26-30, 3:5, 4:7, etc.). In fact, were Paul to suggest that unmarried women were spiritually superior to married, this would simply have placed prejudices on those who would be penalised for their marital status. Indeed, Paul’s views were that holiness was a characteristic of all members of the church, and nowhere else did he claim that married Christians were any less dedicated to holiness.⁴⁹⁵ Furthermore, if the fact of being unmarried was a qualifier for spiritual superiority, would Paul not have mentioned this in regard to his own standing among the apostles and against those who were married, such as Peter?

Others suggest that the word ‘silent’ in the New Testament did not always imply a total, unrestricted silence at all times, and therefore Paul’s use of ‘silent’ towards women in vv34-35 reflected this. Paul had told the glossolalists and prophets to be silent whilst others were talking (vv26-33), and he merely advised women in the same way.⁴⁹⁶ Therefore, vv34-35 simply contain further instructions regarding prophecy and were Paul’s modification of v29. Through this modification, the first half of v29, ‘two or three prophets should speak,’ was then modified by further instructions in vv30-33a. Then v29b, ‘others should weigh carefully what is said,’ was modified by Paul’s instructions in vv33b-35. For Grudem, this provides a

⁴⁹⁴ Fiorenza, *Memory*, 231.

⁴⁹⁵ Allison, ‘Women,’ 40.

⁴⁹⁶ Grudem, *Prophecy*, 242.

logical structural solution to the problem.⁴⁹⁷ This route, however, is not structurally sound because, in this context, the transition from v35 to v36 is not logical. If vv33b-35 simply contain further instructions on the general conduct of prophecy, why does Paul then berate the opponents? Furthermore, the silence Paul ordered onto the earlier groups was only secondary to prevent uninterrupted speech. However, in the case of women, Paul introduced those not under discussion and immediately required silence. Therefore, the situations behind the required silence were different, in the first two cases for the upbuilding of the church, and in the last case, due to 'law' and 'shame.'⁴⁹⁸ The address towards the different groups cannot be counted as similar and equal in Paul's mind.

Finally, some suggest that during the Corinthian church services, some women were shouting questions across the meeting area, and disrupting the services. Paul's order for silence simply corresponded to that situation, and therefore did not declare a total ban on speaking for women. Instead of 'chattering' loudly during the service, they should ask their husbands when they got home. Witherington defends Paul to highlight that the apostle 'was correcting the abuse of a privilege, not taking back a woman's right to speak in the assembly, which he had already granted in Chapter 11.'⁴⁹⁹

The modern basis for these suggestions comes from early ancient literature that stated women were speaking out of turn in meetings.⁵⁰⁰ However, this literature comes from a later date and a different geographical area of Paul's writing, so it should not be applied as a general rule to all churches or meetings. Barrett argues that the 'speaking' which Paul writes about in Chapter 14 does not refer to uninspired, idle chatter, but specifically to praying and prophesying. Indeed, Paul's use of the word is used in the sense of 'inspired speech', and it would be strange for Paul to suddenly change the usage in vv34-35 in a different context, before reverting to his original intention for the word in v39.⁵⁰¹ Furthermore, Allison asks the valid question, 'Why should we presume that only wives were subject to outbursts of female curiosity and loquacity?'⁵⁰² This is a very good point, especially as Paul had just spoken to

⁴⁹⁷ Grudem, *Prophecy*, 249-250.

⁴⁹⁸ Wire, *Corinthian*, 153.

⁴⁹⁹ Witherington III, *Conflict*, 287.

⁵⁰⁰ Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.451-456, 277.

⁵⁰¹ Barrett, *Corinthians*, 332.

⁵⁰² Allison, 'Women,' 39.

the whole congregation and instructed them in the appropriateness of speaking in order, which would suggest that men and women alike were speaking out of turn in the meetings. If ‘chattering’ was a female problem, why did Paul not address it directly, rather than giving a coded, vague order, as some might suggest? As with the arguments mentioned before, this theory does not hold up. So, what can we surmise about the reason Paul writes 14:34-35?

It is easy to understand why modern readers would prefer vv34-35 to be an interpolation by early editors. For those attempting to defend Paul’s character, the authenticity of these verses as Paul’s views could be disastrous. To suggest that they are the later work of early editors, in a time when women’s subordination in the churches was rife, allows for the focus of blame to be removed from Paul, and placed onto others. Exegetically, 14:34-35 does cause problems as the verses appear to contain wording and theology that seem out of line with Paul’s egalitarian views seen elsewhere in the letter.

Attempting to assimilate the difficult verses within the wider context of the passage has led some to incorrectly state that ‘the only current exegetical option left is that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 was an interpolation.’⁵⁰³ Actually, the only exegetical option left, that most scholars have failed to acknowledge, is to understand the passage with *prosopopoeia* in mind. This allows the reader to make sense of Paul’s position on the matter and explains the exegetical consistency of these verses.

The aforementioned evidence is that Paul received a letter from the Corinthians, which contained questions requiring him to defend his reasoning for how he had organised the ecclesial set-up during founding the church. The attack that Paul faced was from his Judaizing opponents who influenced the Corinthians by putting doubts in their minds as to the legitimacy and motives of the apostle’s leadership styles. Therefore, 14:34-35 can be seen as a direct quote from Paul’s Judaizing opponents, which came in the form of an attack on his allowance of women to speak freely in the ecclesial meetings.⁵⁰⁴ With *prosopopoeia* in mind, it becomes evident that vv34-35 are not Paul’s misogynistic directions designed to silence

⁵⁰³ Allison, ‘Women,’ 39.

⁵⁰⁴ Odell-Scott, ‘Interpolation,’ 68.

women at all. In fact, by viewing v36 as Paul's rhetorical objection to the preceding verses, it is clear that the inclusion of the verses, into the passage as a whole, was designed to allow for his critique of his opponents' views. Furthermore, this theory allows for every strand of the mystery to be resolved as it brings clarity to the un-Pauline language contained within them, the apparent rough transitions in the passage, the exegetical set-up of the argument, and the apparent contradiction to 11:5.

4.2 Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

Many scholars acknowledge the fact that the language in 14:34-35 is un-pauline, but assume this to prove interpolation, rather than considering the possibility that although Paul wrote these words, they did not emanate from him.

Fee argues that to suggest 14:34-35 is a quote has considerable difficulties as there is no hint of any kind that Paul has taken to quote them.⁵⁰⁵ However, by failing to consider that Paul is using the *prosopopoeia* style of writing, Fee makes the mistake of assuming these verses are an interpolation. Collins argues that some of the phraseology and content of 14:34-35 has a non-pauline sense and that this may be due to Paul summarising not his own thought, but the argument of another.⁵⁰⁶

Indeed, the statement contains wording that could suggest his opponents were appealing to Jewish Law. The endorsement of women's silence in public worship services certainly emanated from the views of prominent first-century Jews. Although women were active in the community in some ways, the Tannaim held that they should not officiate during community prayers.⁵⁰⁷ Other early Jewish literature supported women's silence in the synagogue: 'all are qualified to be among the seven (who read the Torah in the synagogue on a Sabbath morning), even minors and women. However, a woman should not be allowed to

⁵⁰⁵ Fee, *Corinthians*, 788.

⁵⁰⁶ Collins, *Corinthians*, 516.

⁵⁰⁷ PJ Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990, 134.

come forward to read (The Torah) in public.⁵⁰⁸ Therefore, women attended the synagogue but prayed silently and did not officiate in public prayer. The influence of this Jewish patriarchal view was echoed in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, from the view of Paul's Judaizing opponents, who looked to promote law (Acts 15:5) and place Pharisaical practices within the church (Galatians 2:4, 12).

The argument that these were not Paul's words is enforced by the fact that the literary style in these verses is very unpauline. Initially, there is an appeal to the law to subordinate women, with the phrase, 'as the law says.' Although Paul used the law in other parts of the letter to support a point he was making (9:8, 14:21), in every other instance he always cited the text as a rule. In no other part of the entire Pauline Corpus did Paul appeal to the law in such a general, but absolute way, when directing ecclesial behaviour.⁵⁰⁹

Paul also seemed to have a generally negative view of the law within the letter (15:56), so to use it as a validator for the suppression of one section of his congregation would seem to oppose his general view of unity.⁵¹⁰ Furthermore, only here in the whole of the letter did Paul use the phrase 'not permitted.' Elsewhere, he was hesitant to use words that would assert his authority (7:6, 25; 9:4-18).⁵¹¹ Grudem suggests that 'such a prohibition would be unreasonable for Paul. It would neither be required by his central concern in this passage, nor by any elements in what we know of Paul's thought from his other writings.'⁵¹² Blum highlights that this is not the only place where Paul used the law to give directions for community life.⁵¹³ However, if Johanson is correct in his assertion that the Corinthians [or Judaizers] attempted to use a quote of the law from Isaiah 28:11-12 to justify their beliefs, it gives support to the suggestion that they were also doing the same in vv.34-35.⁵¹⁴

⁵⁰⁸ LI Irvine, *Women in the Ancient Synagogue* (2nd Ed), New Haven: Yale University, 2005, citing *T.Meg*, 4.11.226.

⁵⁰⁹ Fee, *Corinthians*, 791.

⁵¹⁰ Collins, *Corinthians*, 515.

⁵¹¹ Witherington III, *Conflict*, 288.

⁵¹² Grudem, *Prophecy*, 247.

⁵¹³ GG Blum, 'The Office of Women in the New Testament,' *Churchman* 85 (1971), 175-189, citing 180.

⁵¹⁴ Johanson, 'Tongues,' 193.

Again, the lack of understanding of *prosopopoeia* behind these difficult verses leads scholars such as Blum to perceive these views to be from the mind of the apostle. Blum, however, betrays his ideology when he changes speaking in the past tense about how New Testament women prophesied, to the present tense with the statement that ‘women are not allowed the office of preaching, whether in a free, charismatic or a specific, official form.’ Blum also indicates that the command to women to keep silent and to refrain from teaching in the assembly is still valid and binding today.⁵¹⁵ Unfortunately, for some scholars, the suppression of women’s voices, based on the misunderstandings of the apostle’s words, is still as evident today as it has been for the last 2000 years.

Aalen believes that the link between ‘as the law says’ and ‘is not permitted’ firmly highlights that 14:34-35 contains Jewish phrasing and falls into the genre of a ‘Rabbinic formula.’ Matters of fundamental importance to the Jewish community, such as the public oration of women, were usually based on what was permitted in the Torah.⁵¹⁶ When something that was permitted or not permitted was based on anything outside of the Torah, it was usually because the Torah was not explicit in the matter at hand.⁵¹⁷ The Jewish historian Josephus certainly used a negative form of ‘to not permit’ in accordance with the law in his writings. Antiquities 14.63 states, ‘for though our law gives us leave then to defend ourselves against those who fight with us, and assault us, yet does it not permit us to meddle with our enemies, while they do anything else.’⁵¹⁸

Aalen further argues that the majority of uses of the word ‘command’ from the first-century Rabbis, which is synonymous with Paul’s intended usage of the word in 14:34, was ‘only applied to the commandments of the written Torah.’ He concludes, ‘the word ‘command’ in 14:34 must have the same pregnancy as an Old Testament commandment because ‘command’ was reserved for prescriptions from Scripture.’⁵¹⁹ Allison concurs with Aalen to state ‘the term, “it is not permitted” was a Rabbinic usage and was part of a Rabbinic formula

⁵¹⁵ Blum, ‘Women,’ 185.

⁵¹⁶ S Aalen, *A Rabbinic Formula in 1 Corinthians 14:34: Studia Evangelica II*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961, 521.

⁵¹⁷ Aalen, *Rabbinic*, 513-515.

⁵¹⁸ Josephus, ‘On the Antiquity of the Jews Against Apion II,’ (17/09/2016, <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-2.html>), citing 14.63. Also, see Josephus, ‘Antiquities,’ 20.216-217.

⁵¹⁹ Aalen, *Rabbinic*, 522-523.

for applying Biblical law to contemporary life situations. These features do not support a Pauline origin.⁵²⁰

If, as was argued previously, 11:2-10 can be seen as the quote of Paul's Jewish opponents, then the same can be suggested of 14:34-35, which some scholars attest to.⁵²¹ The link between the two passages (11:2-10 and 14:34-35) serves to highlight the same identity of the group who lay behind them. Both involved restrictions of women in the context of the public ecclesial setting, based primarily on arguments from the Torah. Specifically, Tomson suggests, 14:35 appealed to language based on the Genesis narrative (Gen 1:27, 2:18-23), which also is evident in 11:2-10.⁵²² Furthermore, these appeals to veil/silence women both stemmed from Jewish views on the nature of the creative order. As women were not allowed to be unveiled due to the act of shaming her 'head,' so they were not to speak out of turn, for the same reason. They should instead ask their 'head' of such matters at home.

Both appealed to arguments based on the appearance of 'shame' or 'disgrace.' Other instances where Paul used 'shameful' or 'disgraceful' came in the context of Paul's views of the distortion of God's word (2 Cor 4:2), indecent sexual acts (Rom 1:27), and 'deeds of darkness' (Eph 5:12).⁵²³ Whilst these three examples could be seen to warrant the harsh judgement and rebuke from the apostle, the same can hardly be said about whether women had their heads veiled or prayed publicly.

Furthermore, the passages contain wording that was not characteristic of Paul. However, the use of 'shame' in conjunction with the law in both situations highlights the tactics of a double-pronged attack whereby Paul's opponents combined the patriarchal views of the society of the day and the commands of the Torah. 'Shame' arose from violation of social values and led to rejection of the transgressor by their society.⁵²⁴ The law had history and

⁵²⁰ Allison, 'Women,' 45.

⁵²¹ See Flanagan, 'Paul,' 218. Peppiatt, *Women*, 108-111. W Kaiser, 'Paul, Women and the Church,' *Worldwide Challenge*, 3 (1976) 9-12, citing 11.

⁵²² Tomson, *Paul*, 137.

⁵²³ Even if one were to argue that Ephesians was not written by Paul, this point is still consistent with Pauline thought.

⁵²⁴ Allison, 'Women,' 45.

authority as the basis of the Jewish-Christian faith. Therefore, by linking these together, Paul's opponents were able to influence the Corinthians that Paul's apostolic commands were wrong on both a social level, as well as that according to the Jewish law.⁵²⁵

4.2.1 *Change of Authorial Voice and Rhetorical Questions*

The view that these verses are a quote from Paul's opponents is further enhanced by Stowers' second and third criteria of *prosopopoiia*, seen through the apostle's immediate exegetical rebuke of the statements on both occasions (11:11-16, 14:36). Talbert argues that v36 serves as proof that the preceding verses are not Paul's words, but that of a group of men within the Corinthian church. Therefore, v36 could be more accurately read as 'Are you saying either that the word of God originated with you, or that it has come to you only?' He qualifies this by suggesting that 14:34-35 is so out of step with Paul's position stated in 11:2-16, and general theology, that any effort to make them fit is contorted.

On the other hand, taking 14:34-35 as an assertion that had initially stemmed from the Judaizers, and v36 as Paul's indignant response yields a coherent position with reference to women in Paul's letters.⁵²⁶ Therefore, in vv34-35, as with 11:2-16, Paul stated their ideologies before using rhetorical questions to show why that very ideology should be rejected. Paul's style of quote and rhetoric forms a pattern that appears numerous times within the letter. 'What is discernible in 11:2-16, 14:20-25 and 14:34-35 is rhetorical patterns that, if read in particular ways, resolve the textual, exegetical and theological contradictions that arise from all these passages. In all these passages, Paul is citing the Corinthians' letter.'⁵²⁷

⁵²⁵ DW Odell-Scott, 'Let the Women Speak in Church; An Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36,' *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 13.3 (1983) 90-93, citing 92.

⁵²⁶ CH Talbert, 'Paul's Understanding of the Holy Spirit: The Evidence of 1 Corinthians 12-14,' *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, 11.4 (1984) 95-108, citing 105-106. Allison concurs with this to argue that Paul's use of the word 'or' (v36) was a common grammatical feature of Greek and that its introduction would serve as a rebuttal against a point of view in the immediately preceding clause. See, Allison, 'Women,' 46.

⁵²⁷ Peppiatt, *Women*, 128.

Furthermore, Paul's use of rhetoric in 14:36 provides weight to arguments against interpolation theories. If vv34-35 are an interpolation, the interpolator could not have picked a worse place to insert them, if their intention was to silence women. To place these verses immediately before two rhetorical questions that were designed to refute the preceding statement can only lead to confusion. Surely there would have been a better place to insert the verses.

Exegetically, to view 14:34-35 as a quotation also answers the seemingly rough transition from v33 to v34, and the apparent repetition of 'in the churches.' If Paul was quoting his opponents in 14:34-35, these verses must have been applicable to a specific situation in Corinth. The silencing of women would not, therefore, correspond to the context of 'as in all the congregations of the saints' (14:33b). Indeed, the fact that 14:33b related to the preceding section on general church conduct, any problem with repetition of the phrase is resolved. Thus, the change of construction, which seems 'more wooden and less flexible' than the rest of the passage, coupled with un-pauline Jewish language contained within, actually highlights the evidence that these verses are quotes from Paul's opponents.⁵²⁸

4.2.2 *Exegesis*

14:34-35 comes at the end of a long discourse on appropriate conduct within the public worship setting (Chapters 11-14) designed to focus on the oppression of those deemed 'lesser members' by elitists within the Corinthian church. Paul began, in Chapter 11, by commending the Corinthians who had held to his teaching of allowing women to pray and prophesy, before providing a rhetorical rebuke for some who now wished to suppress their voice (11:2-16). He continued by contrasting his commendation of appropriate Corinthian practices with his disdain of their destructive actions, which subordinated the very same members of the church (11:17-34).

⁵²⁸ Barrett, *Corinthians*, 330.

Paul followed this to teach that, as Christ's body was made up of 'many parts,' each should be involved in the ecclesial setting, and those deemed 'lesser members' should be treated with special honour (12:1-31). He then focused on his reason as to why all should be included and none oppressed, i.e., that the centrality of love should be of primary importance and override any sense of competition or spiritual elitism (13:1-13). Having given justification of why all members should be included within the ecclesial setting, Paul returned to this theme to give instructions of how this should be carried out (14:1-33b), including his desire that 'all should prophesy' (14:5). 14:34-35 returned to the fact that the elitist element in Corinth was subordinating the supposed 'weaker members of the body,' in particular, women. Finally, Paul responded once again to those who would suppress the voice of women, with another rhetorical rebuke (14:36-40).

This discourse forms a chiasmic structure as follows:

11:2-16 – Women should not be included in the ecclesial setting (Yes, they should!)

11:17-34 – Some are subordinating others and dishonouring God (Low in society)

12:1-31 – All involved in church (Unity & Holy Spirit leads to gifting for all)

13:1-13 – Love central to everything

14:1-33b – All involved in church (Unity & Holy Spirit leads to gifting for all)

14:34-35 – Some are subordinating others and dishonouring God (Women)

14:36-40 – Women should not be included in the ecclesial setting (Yes, they should!)

Within Chapter 14, 14:1-33b dealt with direction for the whole congregation, who were equally able to speak in tongues and prophesy. In this community, 'the one' (v2) who spoke in a tongue and 'the one' (v3) who prophesied were included. Paul allowed for 'the one' to speak in the community; but did not differentiate between men and women (14:5). Paul endorsed a community where they could come together, and for 'the one,' whatever sex they may be, to bring hymns, words of instruction, and revelations, etc. (v26).

Although on first reading, it appears that vv26-33 limit the majority of the congregation so that only the few may speak, Paul's intentions were instead to promote an environment that allowed the space for all to speak without fear of competition or dominance. Paul, here, was speaking of gifts that emanate from the Holy Spirit, having previously been careful to note that these gifts were given to all members of the congregation as God willed (12:29-30). Indeed, oratory gifting should not be seen as to be restricted to an elite few in Paul's mind, as his desire was for all to prophesy so that the whole church may be edified (14:5). Therefore, these gifts should be used to unify the body and not degrade those members who are lacking or seen as weaker (12:23-25).

The central understanding of this long discourse regarded the importance of spiritual gifting as secondary to loving one another and unity, resulting in the inclusion of all church members (Chapter 13). Paul had previously commended the Corinthians for their acceptance of women in praying and prophesying (11:2), which demonstrated the inclusion of those who society outside of the church might subjugate and subordinate. This highlights that in Paul's view, women should share in the pneumatic gifts of the Spirit in corporate worship and were under the influence of the divine spirit, in equal measure to their male counterparts.⁵²⁹

In Chapter 14, after Paul had spoken of how the Corinthians should conduct themselves when using their spiritual gifting (14:1-33b), he returned to the two issues of some members being wrongly subjugated (14:34-35), and the reasons that the subjugated should instead be included in the services (14:36-40). After spending time discussing the importance of love and unity through working together in the gifting of the Spirit (14:1-33b), Paul expertly inserted the opponents' quote to emphasise why the opposite of these virtues was so destructive (14:34-35). In both instances (of glossolalists/prophets and women), Paul was addressing issues that resulted in the Spirit being quashed. With the former, the Corinthians were obstructing God's work through their lack of consideration for each other when prophesying and speaking in tongues. Those who complimented themselves on having spiritual gifting and authority should instead consider one another, as well as those in the congregation who might be deemed 'lesser parts of the body' (12:22).

⁵²⁹ Fiorenza, *Memory*, 226.

In comparison, the latter were equally obstructing the work of God by silencing women whom they also deemed the ‘lesser parts of the body.’ The ‘disorder’ (14:33) the Corinthians were projecting by simultaneously speaking over each other was every bit as abhorrent to God as the unjust silencing of their Corinthian women.

Paul’s strategic placement of the opponents’ quote directly after addressing the prophets and glossolalists not only allowed the apostle to rebuke the Corinthians, but also served to highlight his positive views on women. Having piqued the Corinthians’ excitement by discussing those who they valued highly, i.e., the spiritually gifted prophets and glossolalists, Paul followed it with the importance he placed on women, whom the Corinthians should understand to be equally valuable. By silencing the women, the Corinthians were in danger of bringing disunity into the house of God. If the prophets claimed that their utterances were inspired by God, one test of their genuineness was whether such utterances promoted or undermined order within the church.⁵³⁰ Through appealing to the subject of the ‘control of the spirits of the prophets,’ Paul was able to challenge the prophets directly. If love and unity were central to the purpose of prophecy, how could they possibly consider ill-treatment of their women?

The fact that he held women in high esteem is evident from the double-rhetorical questions in 14:36. Having summarised the opponents’ position in vv34-35, he swiftly rejected it out of hand. For those who would use the law and arguments of nature from Genesis in order to place subordination on others, Paul would remind them that the very things they boasted of did not actually originate from them. If, as he previously discussed, the Holy Spirit empowered those who prophesied for the purpose of building the community (14:4), women should certainly be involved just as much as men (12:11). In fact, ‘to prevent a woman from speaking was an obstacle to God’s working within the community.’⁵³¹ This use of negative rhetorical questioning served to reinforce Paul’s intentions to cause a divide between the Judaizers and the Corinthians. Those Corinthians who answered ‘no’ to his questions in 14:36 must also reject any notions of the exclusion of women from participation in the worship

⁵³⁰ Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 248.

⁵³¹ Collins, *Corinthians*, 515.

services. Anyone who said ‘yes’ would find themselves standing against Paul and the non-legalistic members of the Corinthian church.⁵³²

If 14:36 put the Corinthians into a situation where they were forced to consider sides, the next verse (v37) ensured that the side they would have to choose would be Paul’s. Those who took pride in their ecclesial position of spiritual gifting and ability to prophesy, for which Paul had previously endorsed and blessed them as their apostle, were called to use that very gifting to discern and vindicate his argument. Those who chose to oppose him, by their own volition, would also negate their own gifting and position within the church. If they had previously boasted that Paul had acknowledged them as gifted with prophetic abilities, it would be impossible for them to now turn around and reject their apostle’s authority. Indeed, if they ignored this matter, they themselves would be ignored (14:38), by both apostle and community. They would no longer have the respect, recognition, and authority to prophesy or be eminent in the community they valued so much. Checkmate.

In summary, the understanding that some of Paul’s female co-workers and *diakonai* had a recognised and official capacity within the churches, whose duties included teaching and preaching the word of God, surely highlights the inconsistencies with those who would attribute 1 Corinthians 11:2-10 and 14:34-35 to the mouth of Paul. If this preaching and teaching came in the form of an oratory address, as 11:5 would suggest, then it must be accepted that women were allowed to teach men. Indeed, in 11:2-16, as with Priscilla who taught Apollos, there is no evidence that Paul reprimanded women addressing men, in fact it is quite the opposite. The fact that Paul endorsed women to prophesy at all shows his appreciation of their gifting, when one considers his view of prophecy.

Furthermore, in Chapter 7, 11:2-16, and 14:34-35, there is the same theme running throughout. In Chapter 7 he used the same kind of rhetorical balance of how women should now be perceived through their new status ‘in the Lord’ as he did in 11:2-16. Chapter 7 focused on relationships that were seen by the Corinthians as intrinsically hierarchically based on the ‘created order,’ after which Paul went on to correct their views, as with 11:2-16

⁵³² Odell-Scott, ‘Women,’ 92.

and 14:34-35.⁵³³ In all three Paul began the section by quoting from the Corinthians' letter (7:1a, 11:2-10, 14:34-35) before modifying the quotation and retorting with an antagonistic response (7:40b, 11:16, 14:36).⁵³⁴ This egalitarian theme that runs through the letter has led some scholars to correctly affirm that 'Paul approved, in the Corinthian church, an equivalence of role and a mutuality of relationships between the sexes in matters of marriage, divorce and charismatic leadership of the church to a degree that is virtually unparalleled in Jewish or pagan society at that time.'⁵³⁵

In view of all these arguments, both 1 Corinthians 11:2-10 and 14:34-35 should not be seen as Paul's views or even his words, but his use of the quotation of the opponents' comments in the letter he had received. The incorrect acceptance of these words as Paul's has led to the acceptance and justification of two thousand years of silencing and subjugation of women in the church. This view stands on an incorrect understanding of Paul's views of women, based on a limited view of a few, cherry-picked verses within his letters. However, Pauline exegesis today must be consistent with Paul's egalitarianism and his treatment of female co-workers.⁵³⁶

⁵³³ Payne, *Man*, 106-107.

⁵³⁴ Hurd, *Corinthians*, 185-186.

⁵³⁵ Meeks, 'The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Early Christianity,' *History of Religions*, 13.3 (1974) 165-208, citing 199-200.

⁵³⁶ Allison, 'Women,' 31.

Conclusion

This thesis was conducted to explore whether Paul's two-thousand-year castigation as a misogynist has been justified, especially as certain passages in 1 Corinthians clearly depict him in a contradictory way. Passages such as 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:34-35 have been used to promote women's silence, subordination, and spiritual subjugation, in the ecclesial setting. Yet, Paul's letters portray the apostle instead as a man deeply invested not only in the spiritual identity of men within congregations, but also of women.

Initially, in Chapter 1, the thesis sought to investigate if there were opponents of Paul present in 1 Corinthians, and if so, to attempt to propose their identity. By eliminating suggested opponents, such as Apollos, Peter, or a social party, the remaining possibility led to the hypothesis that Paul's opponents were Judaizers who had originated from the Jerusalem church (Acts 15) and were following Paul's mission to sow discord into his congregations. Further links with the letter of 2 Corinthians suggested that this group were also the opponents Paul addressed predominantly in Chapters 10-13 of his second letter to the Corinthians. An outlay of the similarities between Paul's method of defence and attack in both letters was highlighted to further support this theory.

Once the theory of Judaizers within 1 Corinthians had been established, Paul's view of women, from Biblical evidence was discussed. It was shown that he certainly honoured women as his 'co-workers' and spoke of how important their ministries in the church were. He spent time with women, such as Chloe and Priscilla, and formed working relationships with them. He accepted women as ministers and respected them as those who 'laboured for God,' not as his subordinates but as partners and equals. In conclusion, then, Paul endorsed women to have voices and to be spiritually active in a time where society demanded and expected the opposite.

Chapters 3 and 4 then sought to readdress key passages concerning women whilst considering the possibility of the Judaizers' influence on Corinthian views. Unfortunately, for Paul, severe misunderstandings about the identity of his opponents, whether they were present in 1 Corinthians, their impact on the occasion behind his writing of the letter, and the resulting theology that followed, was misconstrued to suggest the interpretation that these passages contain Paul's own opinions. This has led for some to interpret notoriously difficult passages, such as 11:2-16 and 14:34-35, as a justification for dictatorial control in churches and societies around the world.

This thesis, then, sought to reassess 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:34-35, suggesting that they contained views that did not stem from Paul, but instead came from the views of his opponents. This was supported by one of the first-century key writing styles, i.e., the use of *prosopopoeia*. Indeed, by exegeting these passages with *prosopopoeia* in mind, one begins to understand that they are not as straight-forward as first thought. All major scholars agree that Paul certainly quoted certain Corinthian slogans, such as 'everything is permissible,' within his letters. This thesis simply extends that understanding to further passages that have been historically difficult to exegete. Indeed, Caird is insightful when he comments on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 stating, 'it can hardly be said that the passage has yet surrendered his secrets.'⁵³⁷

The conclusion of this thesis is that Paul's views in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:34-35 were not his own, but those of his Judaizing opponents. Paul's views on women were positive and he fought for liberation through issuing equalising statements on the relationships between men and women, that no one had written before. A reworking of the churches views on women leaders and ministers needs to be addressed, if the understanding of this thesis is correct. By understanding Paul's use of *prosopopoeia* in this letter, the possibility of reviewing notoriously controversial passages, and reinterpreting them is left open. Indeed, one wonders what other secrets Paul's letter hold, and how examination of them would have an impact on women in the future, for their liberation, spiritual acceptance, and realisation that, at last, the apostle has won their freedom.

⁵³⁷ GB Caird, 'Paul and Women's Liberty,' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 54 2 (1972) 268-281, citing 278.

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