

1 Corinthians 14:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

Analysis

Let your women keep silence in the churches—Greek *hai gynaikeis en tais ekklēsiai sigatōsan* (αἱ γυναικεῖς ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν, "let the women in the churches be silent"). This verse requires careful interpretation within its context. **For it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law**—*ou gar epitrepetai autais lalein, alla hypotassesthōsan* (οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν, ἀλλὰ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, "for it is not permitted to them to speak, but let them be subject").

Context is crucial: Paul just regulated prophecy (vv. 29-33), and women prophesied in Corinth (11:5). This "silence" must be specific, not absolute. The reference to "the law" may point to Genesis 3:16 (subordination in marriage) or rabbinic practice. Most likely, Paul prohibits disruptive questioning during prophecy-evaluation (v. 29, "let the other judge"), not all female speech. Verse 35 supports this: "learn at home" suggests inappropriate public interrogation, not prophesying or teaching.

Historical Context

Corinthian women, newly liberated in Christ (Gal 3:28), may have disrupted worship by publicly questioning their husbands during prophecy-evaluation—

culturally scandalous. Paul addresses a specific abuse while affirming women's prophetic ministry (11:5).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do we reconcile this command with Paul affirming women prophesying (11:5)?
2. What specific situation might Paul be addressing rather than forbidding all female speech?
3. How should we interpret 'as also saith the law' given Paul's broader theology?

Interlinear Text

αἱ	γυναῖκες	ὑμῶν	ἐν	ταῖς	ἐκκλησίαις	σιγάτωσαν·	οὐ
G3588	women	your	in	G3588	the churches	Let	not
	G1135	G5216	G1722		G1577	G4601	G3756
γὰρ	ἐπιτέτραπται	αὐταῖς	λαλεῖν	ἀλλ'			
for	it is	unto them	to speak	but			
G1063	G2010	G846	G2980	G235			
ὑποτάσσεσθαι,		καθὼς	καὶ	ό	νόμος	λέγει	
they are commanded to be under obedience		as	also	G3588	the law	saith	
G5293		G2531	G2532		G3551	G3004	

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 3:16 (Parallel theme): Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Colossians 3:18 (Parallel theme): Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:5 (Parallel theme): But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

1 Corinthians 14:35 (Parallel theme): And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Titus 2:5 (Word): To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

1 Corinthians 11:3 (Parallel theme): But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Ephesians 5:33 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.